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CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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February 25, 2022  
Start: 10:30 a.m.  
Recess: 1:48 p.m.

HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING (VIRTUAL ROOM 3)

B E F O R E: Eric Dinowitz,  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Charles Barron  
Gale A. Brewer  
Oswald Feliz  
Inna Vernikov  
Justin Brannan  
Alexa Avilès  
Rita C. Joseph

A P P E A R A N C E S

Donna Linderman  
Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Jeanette Kim  
University Associate Dean for Pre-Matriculation  
Programs and Assessment

Andrea Soonachan  
University Dean for K-12 Initiatives

Karines Reyes  
Member of the New York State Assembly

James Davis  
President of the Professional Staff Congress

Lorraine Cohen  
Professor of Sociology in the Social Science  
Department at LaGuardia Community College

Felicia Wharton  
Treasurer of the Professional Staff Congress

Adela Effendy  
CUNY Start Math Start Programs

Lia Guzman Genao  
Young Invincibles

Sean Miller  
Young Invincibles

Ayesha Schmitt  
New York Public Interest Research Group

Pamela Stenberg  
PSC CUNY

Dr. Heather James  
PSC CUNY

Rebecca Smart  
PSC CUNY

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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

Daniel Casey  
Instructor with the CUNY Language Immersion  
Program at Hostos Community College

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[HEARING BEGINS AT 13:40]

SERGEANT LUGO: Good morning everyone. Welcome to today's Remote New York City Council Hearing of the Committee on Higher Education. At this time, would all panelists please turn on your video. To minimize disruption, please place electronic devices to vibrate or silent. If you wish to submit testimony, you may do so at [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov). Again, that's [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov).

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

CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you. Good morning and welcome to today's Virtual Oversight Hearing on CUNY Start and Developmental Education and Resolution Number 20, sponsored by Council Member Justin Brannan. A Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign the New Deal for CUNY. Which is intended to reestablish the City University of New York as an engine for social and economic mobility by waiving all tuition and creating certain staff to student ratios in order to increase students success.

1  
2 I'm Council Member Eric Dinowitz, Chair of the  
3 Committee on Higher Education and a proud CUNY alum.  
4 This is my first hearing as Chair of this Committee  
5 and I'm looking forward to exploring the City  
6 University through a series of hearings that will  
7 showcase the path of a CUNY student.

8 Starting with today's, which is focused on  
9 ensuring CUNY students are prepared for college work  
10 and set up for success. I want to acknowledge some  
11 of my colleagues that have joined us today Council  
12 Members Brannan, Brewer, Barron, Feliz, Vernikov,  
13 Avilès, and Joseph and Assembly Woman Karines Reyes.

14 Founded in 1847 as the free academy, CUNY has  
15 long been committed to offering accessible quality  
16 education to all New Yorkers. The University  
17 operates under a legislative mandate to maintain and  
18 expand its commitment to academic excellence, provide  
19 equal access and opportunity and serve as a vehicle  
20 for the upward mobility of the disadvantaged in the  
21 City of New York. Now more than ever, a college  
22 degree is necessary to ensure strong employment  
23 prospects with a solid middle class income.

24 According to the latest available data from the  
25 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics from June 2021,

1  
2 workers who have higher levels of education typically  
3 earn more and have lower rates of unemployment  
4 compared with workers who have not attained the same  
5 degree. And in the challenging economy created by  
6 the pandemic, the data tell a similar story.

7 In 2020, the typical worker with a bachelor's  
8 degree earned an estimated 67 percent more than  
9 someone with a high school degree. While a typical  
10 worker with an Associates Degree, earned an estimated  
11 20 percent more. Concerning unemployment, the  
12 unemployment rate for bachelor's holders was 5.5  
13 percent compared with 7.1 percent for associate level  
14 workers and 9 percent for workers with a high school  
15 degree. Moreover, studies have shown that Americans  
16 with college degrees are more likely to live  
17 healthier lives, be satisfied with their jobs and be  
18 more civically engaged than their peers without a  
19 college degree.

20 Despite the clear advantages of having a college  
21 degree, far too many high school students are  
22 graduating unprepared for college level course work.  
23 Aggregate data from the 2018-2019 school year,  
24 indicates that 62.5 percent of students who graduated  
25 that year, were deemed college ready, per the New

1  
2 York City Department of Education's College Readiness  
3 Index, which is based on CUNY standard.

4 For the 2019-2020 school year, it was 57.7  
5 percent. Meanwhile, CUNY's graduation rates are  
6 slightly below national average. For CUNY's  
7 associate programs, the attainment of associate  
8 degree's tends to peak four years after initial  
9 enrollment.

10 For the cohort that entered two year CUNY schools  
11 in 2015, the four year rate was 25.7 percent. For an  
12 earlier cohort that entered college in 2009, the four  
13 year rate was 18.5 percent. The ten year rate was  
14 lower 17.3 percent as soon as become reclassified as  
15 bachelor's degree recipients. Overall, after ten  
16 years 21.3 percent of students who have started in  
17 associate programs earned a bachelors degree for a  
18 total degree completion rate of 38.6 percent compared  
19 to the national rate of 42.1 percent. And as a  
20 result of taking longer than customary to complete a  
21 degree, at least one-third of students are burdened  
22 with additional education costs and comparatively  
23 higher debt. These issues are most egregious amongst  
24 students enrolled at community colleges and have the  
25 greatest impact on minority and low-income students

1  
2 who are more likely to enroll at community college as  
3 a gateway to a four year college.

4 Nearly half of all bachelor's degree recipients  
5 attended community college at some point in their  
6 college career. Consistent with CUNY's commitment to  
7 access, opportunity and social mobility, CUNY Start  
8 was developed to better prepare students with  
9 remedial education needs for college course work to  
10 set them on path toward degree completion.

11 CUNY Start is an intensive 15 to 18 week college  
12 preparation program that allows students to delay  
13 matriculation so that they may save their financial  
14 aid for credit there in courses. The program is 25  
15 hours a week, offers sections in reading, writing and  
16 math in addition to a weekly college success seminar  
17 and costs \$75.

18 For those students who only need remedial  
19 instruction math, Math Start is a 12-hour a week  
20 program and costs \$35. Participating students have  
21 full access to campus resources including academic  
22 and career counseling, libraries and athletic  
23 facilities and receive free metro cards to offset  
24 transportation costs. In a similar vein, the New  
25 Deal for CUNY is intended to reestablish the City

1  
2 University of New York as an engine for social and  
3 economic mobility by waiving all tuition and creating  
4 certain staff to student ratios in order to increase  
5 student success.

6 When in 1847, the city voted to approve the  
7 creation of the free academy of the City of New York.  
8 It was based on the idea that a rigorous college  
9 education should be available to the children of the  
10 whole people and not only the privileged few.

11 In 1976 at the height of the city's financial  
12 crisis, CUNY instituted a full tuition model that  
13 remains today. Since then, chronic under investments  
14 in the University has negatively impacted students  
15 and faculty as well as allowed tuition to rise. The  
16 New Deal for CUNY represents a comprehensive approve  
17 providing the appropriate academic social and  
18 emotional supports students need to stay on track to  
19 graduate.

20 At today's hearing, we will discuss an overview  
21 of CUNY's developmental education programs including  
22 CUNY Start. More specifically, I'm interested in  
23 learning about the current status of CUNY Start,  
24 including enrollment and staffing as well an  
25 understanding of metrics used to determine its

1  
2 efficacy over the years. The Committee is also  
3 interested in learning about plans for the future of  
4 CUNY Start, how the future of developmental education  
5 programming at CUNY will better serve students and  
6 their academic as well as financial needs.

7 I would now like to turn it over to my colleague  
8 and friend Council Member Brannan who will share  
9 remarks on the Preconsidered Resolution.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Thank you. Can you hear  
11 me?

12 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Yes.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Thank you Chair  
14 Dinowitz. I'm excited to be here with you as you  
15 gavel in on your first hearing as Chair of this  
16 Committee and I couldn't be more proud to advance  
17 this Resolution in support of the New York State New  
18 Deal for CUNY.

19 The Bill, which would wave all tuition and  
20 mandate serious investments in the University  
21 staffing and resources would be clear proof of our  
22 commitment to academic excellence and economic  
23 opportunity for all residents. As you noted, CUNY is  
24 truly a success story for our city. It is the  
25 largest urban public university in the united states,

1  
2 it serves over 275,000 degree and non-degree seeking  
3 students. And it's often the best higher education  
4 option available for poor and working class New  
5 Yorkers, students of color, new immigrants, and the  
6 urban middle class. CUNY has been a proven stepping  
7 stone to economic prosperity for these communities  
8 despite decades of underfunding, cuts, and lacking  
9 staff to student ratios. That's why I believe now is  
10 the time for us to double down on our city's public  
11 higher education system and we can end these  
12 challenges and truly equip CUNY to build even further  
13 on what it has delivered to New Yorkers for so many  
14 decades.

15 It's truly time for something big and bold and  
16 New York needs the New Deal for CUNY and I appreciate  
17 my colleagues in Albany, Assembly woman Reyes and  
18 Senator Gounardes for pushing this bill. And with  
19 this Resolution, the City Council has your back and  
20 we want to do everything we can to get this passed  
21 and make this a reality.

22 So, thank you Chair Dinowitz, I appreciate this  
23 hearing today. For you taking up this important  
24 Resolution and I thank you.

25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you Council Member  
3 Brannan. You know, we're serious about the success  
4 of our city and its residents that we have to be  
5 serious about investing in education.

6 So, I thank you for putting this Resolution forth  
7 and of course to my colleagues in state government,  
8 Assembly Member Reyes and Senator Gounardes. I will  
9 now turn over to the Moderator Emi Briggs who will  
10 review some procedural items relating to today's  
11 hearing and call on the first panel.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair Dinowitz. My  
13 name is Emi Briggs, I serve as Counsel to the  
14 Committee on Higher Education at the New York City  
15 Council and I will be moderating today's hearing and  
16 calling panelists to testify.

17 Before we begin, please remember that everyone  
18 will be on mute until I call on you to testify. And  
19 after you are called on, you will be unmuted by a  
20 member of our staff. Note, that there will be a few  
21 second delay before you're unmuted and we can hear  
22 you.

23 For public testimony, I will call up individuals  
24 in panels. Please listen for your name. I will  
25 periodically announce the next few panelists. Once I

1  
2 call your name, a member of our staff will unmute you  
3 and the Sergeant at Arms will set a clock and give  
4 you the go ahead to begin your testimony.

5 All public testimony will be limited to three  
6 minutes. For today's hearing, the first panel will  
7 include representative from CUNY, followed by Council  
8 Member questions and then public testimony. On  
9 behalf of the CUNY Administration, we will have Donna  
10 Linderman, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic  
11 Affairs, Jeanette Kim, University Associate Dean for  
12 Pre-Matriculation Programs and Assessment and Andrea  
13 Soonachan University Dean for K-12 Initiatives.

14 I will now administer the oath to the  
15 Administration. When you hear your name, please  
16 respond once a member of our staff unmutes you. The  
17 oath will go as follows. Do you affirm to tell the  
18 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth  
19 before this Committee and to respond honestly to  
20 Council Member questions? Associate Vice Chancellor  
21 Linderman?

22 DONNA LINDERMAN: Yes.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Associate Dean  
24 Kim?

25 JEANETTE KIM: Yes.

1  
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and Dean Soonachan?

3 ANDREA SOONACHAN: Yes.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you all. Associate  
5 Vice Chancellor Donna Linderman, you may begin  
6 presenting your testimony when ready.

7 DONNA LINDERMAN: Thank you. Good morning  
8 Chairperson Dinowitz and City Council Members of the  
9 Higher Education Committee. I'm Donna Linderman,  
10 Associate Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and  
11 thank you very much for the opportunity to speak to  
12 you today about the status of developmental education  
13 at CUNY.

14 I'm joined by Jeanette Kim, University Associate  
15 Dean for Pre-Matriculation Programs and Program  
16 Assessment and Andrea Soonachan, University Dean for  
17 K16 Initiatives. Together, I hope we can provide you  
18 with a better understanding of the major reforms CUNY  
19 has undertaken in recent years to improve  
20 developmental education, to better serve our current  
21 and perspective students.

22 In 2016, following the culmination of a CUNY-wide  
23 taskforce, examining developmental education at CUNY,  
24 a set of reforms were put into motion to address  
25 longstanding challenges with all aspects of how

1  
2 developmental education was delivered at our  
3 Associate Degree granting colleges. Which include  
4 seven community colleges and three comprehensive  
5 colleges. These challenges included assessment and  
6 placement methods, instructional models, and policies  
7 governing exit for remedial course work that were  
8 collectively determined to be ineffective and were  
9 not reflective of a growing body of national research  
10 that found traditional delivery of remedial  
11 instruction was not effective and could in fact harm  
12 students changes of advancing in their degree  
13 pursuits.

14 Traditional remediation involves a series of  
15 noncredit bearing forces that students must pay  
16 tuition for using financial aid or their own  
17 resources that do not help students advance towards  
18 their degree credit requirements. National Research  
19 and CUNY's own data, show that many students never  
20 completed these sequences to enter credit bearing  
21 course work, especially in mathematics.

22 Further, CUNY data demonstrated that students who  
23 placed into traditional remedial education and  
24 specifically math, were about half as likely as other  
25 students to complete an associate degree within three

1  
2 years. Before our reform work began, 78 percent of  
3 new students who enrolled in our associate programs,  
4 were assigned to developmental education in at least  
5 one subject most commonly math. Some students were  
6 overwhelming low-income students of color with Black  
7 and Hispanic students twice as likely as White and  
8 Asian students to be assigned to remediation.

9 Exacerbating opportunity gaps to both associate  
10 degree completion and access to our bachelor's  
11 programs. Part of the motivation for CUNY's  
12 remediations reforms were therefore a clear  
13 recognition that remedial policies had  
14 disproportionately barred Black and Hispanic students  
15 from taking credit bearing courses and progressing  
16 towards desired degrees. And since one in ten  
17 students who enter our community colleges aspire to  
18 eventually earn a bachelor's degree, ensuring that  
19 more of them have access to their general education  
20 or gateway math and English classes as soon as  
21 possible, enhances early academic momentum and clears  
22 the clear barriers students have to access our  
23 baccalaureate pathways.

24 Our developmental education reform efforts  
25 encompass the following broad areas: One, changing

1  
2 remedial placement practices to better identify  
3 students likely to succeed in credit bearing courses  
4 to refine placement methods. Two, enrolling more  
5 students in corequisite courses that allow them to  
6 take credit bearing gateway math or English course,  
7 while receiving additional instruction or tutoring  
8 versus enrolling in standalone zero credit remedial  
9 courses that they must pass before enrolling in a  
10 credit bearing course. Three, better guiding  
11 students to the appropriate gateway math course  
12 required for their major. And four, targeting and  
13 promoting evidence based programs, such as CUNY Start  
14 and Math Start and the University Skills Immersion  
15 Program or USEP that allow students to complete their  
16 developmental education assignments at little or not  
17 cost before matriculating.

18 Traditionally, most associate degree seeking  
19 students were placed in or out of developmental  
20 education based on their score on a placement exam.  
21 Specifically, and most recently, ACCUPLACER taken in  
22 person prior to enrollment. Evidence suggested that  
23 these exams were inaccurate and then incorporating  
24 high school grade information in addition to  
25 available standardized New York State Regents and

1  
2 SAT's provided a much more accurate method of  
3 placement.

4 So, beginning in 2019, for students admitted for  
5 the Spring 2020 Semester, CUNY discontinued use of  
6 ACCUPLACER tests for students who had not  
7 demonstrated proficiency through their SAT, ACT or  
8 New York State Regents scores and instead, we adopted  
9 the use an algorithm that incorporated high school  
10 grades, SAT scores, Regents scores to produce a  
11 proficiency index that assess the likelihood of  
12 students succeeding in a gateway English and/or math  
13 class.

14 So, use of the algorithm aims to assign each  
15 student to the minimum affective dose of  
16 developmental supports needed. Three score bans were  
17 determined, each accompanied by a recommended  
18 placement, which I'll describe now. Students who  
19 were determined to have an index score of 60 or above  
20 in math and 65 or above in English were determined to  
21 be proficient and may enroll directly into freshman  
22 composition or a gateway math class such as college  
23 algebra, statistics or quantitative reasoning,  
24 depending on their course of study.

1  
2 Students with index scores that suggested that  
3 the had light developmental need, which was defined  
4 as a proficiency index score between 40 and 59 in  
5 math and anything below 65 in English, were  
6 encouraged to enroll in a corequisite gateway English  
7 or math class. That included additional supplemental  
8 support in addition to standard course instruction.  
9 Additionally, students with light need were  
10 encouraged to consider the CUNY Skills Immersion  
11 Programs, which provide short-term offerings at no  
12 cost to students throughout the academic year and  
13 summer.

14 And finally, students with index scores that  
15 demonstrated need in both math and English or deep  
16 need in math, specifically an index score below 40,  
17 were strongly encouraged to enroll in CUNY Start or  
18 Math Start. These programs as Chair Dinowitz  
19 described, provide intensive tailored instruction in  
20 reading, writing and math by specially trained  
21 teachers before students begin their degree programs.  
22 And they have well documented success rates. You'll  
23 hear more about CUNY Start and Math Start from my  
24 colleague Jeanette Kim shortly. For students with  
25 deep developmental need who could not enroll in CUNY

1  
2 Start or Math Start effective this fall, Fall 2022.  
3 Such students may enroll directly into corequisite  
4 courses in English and math, rather than traditional  
5 standalone remedial courses.

6 Since our reforms began in earnest in 2017, CUNY  
7 has assigned fewer students to developmental  
8 education, particularly in math. As I mentioned in  
9 Fall '16, nearly 80 percent of students entering our  
10 associate degree students were assigned to  
11 developmental education. In 2018, the percentage of  
12 new students assigned had fallen to 53 percent and  
13 the preliminary assignment rate for Fall 2021 is 43  
14 percent.

15 An overarching goal of our remediation reform  
16 efforts agenda is to support students to earn credit  
17 in math and English during their first year of study.  
18 And this goal firmly links our developmental  
19 education reforms to our ongoing Systemwide Academic  
20 Momentum Campaign, which focuses on helping more  
21 students gain and maintain academic momentum in order  
22 to increase timely completion.

23 So, one of the largest systematic changes that  
24 we've made to further this goal is phasing out  
25 traditional noncredit prerequisite remediation

1  
2 whereby students must take a separate remedial course  
3 or courses prior to enrolling in credit bearing math  
4 or English courses. Instead, students who were  
5 determined to have need, directly enroll in a credit  
6 bearing course and receive additional supplemental  
7 support or tutoring. This is called the Corequisite  
8 Model and a robust body of research including a large  
9 scale random assignment study conducted at CUNY has  
10 consistently demonstrated the positive impact of this  
11 corequisite model over zero credit traditional  
12 standalone developmental education.

13 I'm pleased to share that despite the pandemic,  
14 CUNY is on track to meet our deadline to fully phase  
15 out standalone remedial math and English courses  
16 effective fall 2022. Four colleges have already fully  
17 met this target in both subjects. Four have  
18 completed the transition in English and all remaining  
19 colleges are on track to completely transition in  
20 both subjects by this fall.

21 Since 2019, more than 27,000 students have been  
22 assigned a corequisite courses in math or English  
23 versus traditional standalone courses. In Fall 2021,  
24 as compared to Fall '20, we had significant increases  
25 in the numbers of students assigned a corequisite

1  
2 remediation. In math for example, we increased from  
3 26 percent of remedial enrollments to 39 percent in a  
4 corequisite offering and in English, we increased  
5 from 51 percent to 57 percent.

6 So, this represent a total of over 6,500  
7 corequisite placements in Fall 2021, providing many  
8 more students with the opportunity to both earn  
9 English and math credit while also addressing their  
10 developmental needs at the same time.

11 Before we began our developmental education  
12 reform, all students who were determined to have  
13 remedial needs in math were assigned to a zero credit  
14 elementary algebra course and potentially pre-Algebra  
15 depending on their assessment test scores.

16 Elementary algebra is designed specifically to  
17 prepare students for college algebra, not necessarily  
18 the gateway math course that is best aligned to a  
19 students chosen major. For example, college algebra  
20 is the correct math pathway for students entering a  
21 stem or a business major but statistics is  
22 appropriate for students pursuing a social science  
23 degree and quantitative reasoning for students in the  
24 arts and humanities.

1  
2 Evidence for targeted math pathways and  
3 corequisite math offerings together is specially  
4 robust and informed our work. A large scale random  
5 assignment study conducted at CUNY on the affects of  
6 corequisite statistics, versus traditional elementary  
7 algebra for non-stem students found that students who  
8 took the corequisite stats course were much more  
9 likely to pass the course and earn credit than a  
10 controlled group of similar students.

11 And three years later in that same study, they  
12 found that the graduation rates of students in the  
13 corequisite stats scores were eight percentage points  
14 higher than the control group. Analysis of CUNY's  
15 own data also found that corequisite math courses led  
16 to higher gateway course completion rates than  
17 traditional elementary algebra courses for students  
18 at all levels of preparation.

19 We're pleased that all colleges now provide clear  
20 guidance to new students about which math pathway is  
21 best matched to their chosen major. In the form of  
22 early advisement and degree maps which were created  
23 for all undergraduate majors as part of our related  
24 Academic Momentum Campaign.

1  
2 A bit about our targeted pre-matriculation  
3 offerings including CUNY Start and Math Start. In  
4 addition to the corequisite offerings I just  
5 described, our reforms include better targeting of  
6 our evidence-based pre-matriculation interventions  
7 depending on students needs.

8 So, as above for students with lighter need,  
9 lighter developmental education needs based on their  
10 proficiency scores. If they're able to, students are  
11 encouraged to enroll in our no cost University Skills  
12 Immersion or USIP Program, which offers short-term  
13 workshops and interventions throughout the year. And  
14 these interventions have been refined to allow  
15 students to know which intervention is best for them.  
16 And there's a special focus on utilizing the summer  
17 to ensure students can take these courses. And  
18 excellent record of helping students gain and  
19 maintain momentum once they've participated.

20 We've also refined USIP so that students that  
21 take that intervention have the opportunity to fully  
22 address their developmental education need upon  
23 completion. So, not just getting part way up the  
24 ladder but all the way up. And we also established  
25 much clearer online that between the use of CUNY

1  
2 Start and Math Start so that both of these  
3 interventions can be better targeted. CUNY Start and  
4 Math Start specifically target students with deeper  
5 need USIP students with a lighter level of need. And  
6 both have ample evidence of success.

7       So, to synthesize, our developmental education  
8 reform has been very successful in helping CUNY  
9 realize our overarching goal of increasing credit  
10 accumulation with many more students completing key  
11 gateway credit bearing courses in their first year.  
12 In math, 48 percent of the follow-up 2020 associate  
13 freshman cohort completed a gateway math course in  
14 their first two terms, up from 34 percent from the  
15 Fall '16 cohort. And that includes an additional 77  
16 percent of freshman in baccalaureate programs also  
17 completing their gateway courses.

18       We noticed some declines in English where the  
19 percentage of associate freshman who passed gateway  
20 English in their first year declined to about 58  
21 percent for the Fall 2020 cohort versus a steady  
22 state of around of 66 percent for the previous four  
23 years.

24       And our analysis and discussion with our advisors  
25 suggests that this decline is represented of

1  
2 challenges students faced in pivot to remote  
3 instruction during the pandemic. But we did want to  
4 also note that the percentage of bachelors freshman  
5 who pass gateway English courses also declined a few  
6 percentage points during this same period from just  
7 under 90 percent to about 85 percent. So, this  
8 suggests that this overall decline in freshman  
9 competition completion is at least partially the  
10 result of the pivot to remote instruction.

11 I wanted to take a moment to express our  
12 gratitude to the City Council for the generous  
13 support that we've received for the past five years  
14 to support our reform efforts. This support has been  
15 invaluable to address both local and systemwide needs  
16 to develop and scale our corequisite offerings. At  
17 our associate programs, funds have been used for  
18 redevelopment of traditional remedial courses and to  
19 corequisite offerings in English, in all three math  
20 pathways, faculty training and professional  
21 development to improve delivery of corequisite  
22 models, support for assessment and continue an  
23 improvement of these models. Refinement of our  
24 immersion offerings to ensure students have access to  
25 a broad array of pre-matriculation interventions for

1  
2 all levels of need. Development of early advisement  
3 and intake processes specifically designed to improve  
4 the academic momentum needs of students assigned to  
5 developmental education and at our senior colleges,  
6 we've supported strategies to raise the success rates  
7 for students enrolled in gateway courses in English  
8 and math. And have high rates of failure or  
9 withdrawal, including interventions that address  
10 academic recovery of skills that may have been lost  
11 during the pandemic. And supports for remote  
12 learning such as enhanced access to tutoring and  
13 study groups.

14 Another key use of City Council funding that I'd  
15 like to call out has been extensive faculty  
16 development and dialogue with the University of  
17 Virginia's Motivate Lab, that helps faculty members  
18 redevelop their courses and instructional practices  
19 to enhance students learning mindsets. Research has  
20 shown that students with productive learning mindsets  
21 are more motivated to take on challenging course work  
22 and persist in the face of setbacks and achieve at  
23 higher levels.

24 Participating faculty have learned how to create  
25 a course that supports students to develop adoptive

1  
2 beliefs about learning in school, with a focus on  
3 supporting students from traditionally marginalized  
4 and minoritized backgrounds. Since 2019, more than  
5 1,000 faculty members have been trained and  
6 integrated growth mindset practices into their  
7 classrooms. And this is predicated to impact more  
8 than 30,000 students collectively.

9 We do have ongoing need for City Council support,  
10 which will allow us to maintain, monitor and improve  
11 our dev ed reforms. This will include making  
12 adjustments to our corequisite models that will now  
13 be available at all colleges this fall and increasing  
14 the number of students who are taking any math and  
15 English course in their first year.

16 So, key areas of need include continued support  
17 for our two CUNY academic affair staff, who provide  
18 high level leadership. University coordination,  
19 faculty professional development and reporting and  
20 monitoring of our remediation reform efforts. In  
21 Fall 2022, some colleges will be offering full-scale  
22 corequisite models for the first time and many  
23 colleges will be offering their corequisite courses  
24 to new populations.

1  
2       So, these efforts will require continuous  
3 assessment and improvement, which our CUNY OAA staff  
4 are very well equipped to provide. We also need  
5 continued support for faculty and staff development  
6 to continue to refine our corequisite offerings,  
7 including adjustments to the type and modality of  
8 supplemental instruction. This is very much a work  
9 in progress that will require ongoing assessment and  
10 adjustments to ensure instructional quality based on  
11 analysis of student outcomes and feedback from  
12 faculty.

13       We also are very committed to continuing to scale  
14 our mindset faculty development work because we've  
15 observed that student motivation is as critical to  
16 student success as their academic skills, if not  
17 more. The importance of faculty development for that  
18 reason, we believe should be incorporated into our  
19 ongoing work and we would like to place just as  
20 strong a focus on professional development and  
21 pedagogy, which are critical features of CUNY Start  
22 and Math Start, which you're going to hear about in a  
23 moment from Jeanette.

24       Finally, our ESL work within our broader reform  
25 agenda is still very much in its infancy and requires

1  
2 continued support. So, we are now beginning to  
3 design how we assess student need in English as a  
4 second language. We plan to implement a new ESL  
5 assessment for the incoming Spring 2023 cohort  
6 collaboratively with ESL and English faculty. We  
7 will develop a common description of all levels of  
8 ESL assignment and determine the benchmark scores for  
9 each level. We anticipate potentially 9,000 students  
10 annually will be impacted by this new process.

11 And additionally, we want to be sure that  
12 students determine to have more significant ESL need,  
13 have full access to our CUNY Language Immersion  
14 program or CLIP. Especially working adults who we  
15 hope to serve in increasing numbers in both our  
16 degree and continuing education programs. Jeanette  
17 will briefly describe CLIP in her testimony.

18 So, in conclusion, thank you so much to the  
19 Higher Education Committee for the opportunity to  
20 share information about our broad, developmental  
21 education reform efforts, which we consider to be  
22 critical to CUNY realizing its mission of access and  
23 excellence and our deep commitment to serving as an  
24 engine of upward mobility through degree attainment.

25

1  
2 I welcome taking any questions from you after my  
3 fellow panelists have delivered their testimony.

4 And at this time, I'll turn it over to my  
5 colleague Jeanette Kim to speak about CUNY Start and  
6 Math Start. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.  
9 Associate Dean Kim, you may begin when you're ready.

10 JEANETTE KIM: Thank you. Good morning Chair  
11 Dinowitz and members of the Committee on Higher  
12 Education. I am Jeanette Kim, University Associate  
13 Dean for Pre-Matriculation Programs and Program  
14 Assessment at CUNY. Thank you for the opportunity to  
15 testify today about CUNY Start and Math Start and  
16 thank you to the City Council for its ongoing support  
17 of and commitment to improving access and success in  
18 Higher Education for all New Yorkers.

19 In 2009, CUNY launched CUNY Start, an affordable  
20 semester long multifaceted program aimed at  
21 addressing the needs of collegebound students with  
22 significant remedial needs in English and math before  
23 they enrolled in an associate degree program. Five  
24 years later, in response to the significant barrier  
25 faced by students in math in particular, CUNY began

1  
2 offering a math only option of the program called  
3 Math Start. For both programs, students delay  
4 matriculation to receive intensive preparation in  
5 English and/or math, as well as engage in college  
6 success advisement seminars.

7 Students only pay a small fee to participate.  
8 \$75 for CUNY Start or \$35 for Math Start, which  
9 enables them to save tuition and financial aid  
10 dollars for credit bearing course work leading toward  
11 a degree. Traditional text books are not used in  
12 CUNY Start or Math Start keeping program costs low  
13 for students and all instructional materials used are  
14 included in the student fees. CUNY Start offers both  
15 a full time and part time program and students can  
16 enroll in either the fall or spring semester.

17 Full-time students attend 25 hours per week and  
18 receive instruction in both math and English and  
19 attend a college success seminar. Part-time students  
20 attend 12 hours per week and receive instruction in  
21 either math or English and also attend a college  
22 success seminar. Math Start follows a similar  
23 intensive instructional model and is offered in eight  
24 to ten week cycles throughout the year, with its most  
25 popular session offered in the summer.

1  
2 Both programs enroll students who are  
3 representative of the student population at CUNY.  
4 During the 2020-2021 academic year, 42.1 percent of  
5 CUNY Start students were under the age of 18. 28.8  
6 percent were between 20 and 24-years-old and 29  
7 percent over the age of 25. Approximately 30.6  
8 percent of students were Black, 23.6 percent  
9 Hispanic, six percent White and 11.4 percent Asian  
10 and 59.1 percent of students identified as female.

11 In Math Start, 49.8 percent of students who are  
12 under the age of 20, 20.8 percent were between 20 and  
13 24-years-old and 29.3 percent over the age of 25.  
14 Approximately 31.3 percent of students were Black,  
15 30.4 percent Hispanic, six percent White and 6.1  
16 percent Asian and 63.8 percent of students identified  
17 as female.

18 Since its inception, both program models have  
19 demonstrated strong impacts in helping students with  
20 significant remedial needs, defined as needs across  
21 multiple skills areas and/or deep needs in math,  
22 eliminate or significantly reduce those needs prior  
23 to matriculation and achieve strong outcomes once  
24 they matriculate into CUNY degree programs.

25 Typically almost all students who enroll in CUNY

1  
2 Start are assessed as having developmental education  
3 needs in two to three skills areas. On average 80  
4 percent of students complete CUNY Start.

5 For students with developmental education needs  
6 in math, approximately 70 percent become fully skills  
7 proficient and for students with needs in reading and  
8 writing approximately 65 percent are deemed  
9 proficient in English. For Math Start, we have an  
10 average completion rate of 92 percent and 78 percent  
11 of students are proficient after program completion.  
12 CUNY Start does not typically enroll in students  
13 identified with significant ESL needs. Those  
14 students are instead referred to the CUNY Language  
15 Immersion Program or CLIP. A similar pre-  
16 matriculation program designed to improve students'  
17 academic English skills. On average, 75 percent of  
18 CUNY Start and Math Start students who complete the  
19 program matriculate into a degree program. The  
20 majority of which move directly into ASAP. CUNY's  
21 nationally recognized associate degree completion  
22 program.

23 ASAP is presented as a highly recommended next  
24 step for students to maximize time and graduation.  
25 CUNY Start and Math Start is modeled after CUNY's

1  
2 successful English Language Immersion Program or  
3 CLIP. CLIP leverages full-time study, delayed  
4 matriculation, and wrap around supports to help CUNY  
5 bound ESL students improve essential English,  
6 reading, writing, speaking and listening skills  
7 before starting their degree program. The CLIP  
8 program has been shown to have positive effects,  
9 increasing the odds of passing the first college  
10 level English course and increasing the likelihood of  
11 college completion.

12 In addition to the intensive program designed  
13 elements, CUNY Start and Math Start success can also  
14 be attributed to its specialized curriculum and  
15 pedagogical approach, which was designed by  
16 instructional experts from CUNY's adult literacy  
17 program. I believe that traditional lecture methods  
18 were not effective in helping students with  
19 significant developmental education needs prepare for  
20 college.

21 CUNY Start and Math Start Instructional approach  
22 is student centered and encourages learning and  
23 independent thinking to really use of strategic  
24 questioning, exploration and collaboration with  
25 peers. Students are active participants in the

1  
2 classroom and the program emphasis student talk over  
3 teacher talk. Students are empowered to take charge  
4 of their own learning and engage in classroom  
5 activities that demand their consistent input and  
6 collaboration. Which is intended to build confidence  
7 and increase the likelihood of their success.

8 CUNY Start and Math Start success also relies on  
9 its structure within CUNY. Mainly as a single  
10 university-wide program that operates at nine  
11 colleges. The MCC and Guttman Community College in  
12 Manhattan, New York City College of Technology and  
13 Kingsborough Community College in Brooklyn, LaGuardia  
14 in Queens Borough Community Colleges in Queens, Bronx  
15 and Hostos Community Colleges in the Bronx and  
16 College of Staten Island. CUNY Start and Math Start  
17 operates as consortium model.

18 The CUNY Office of Academic Affairs, CUNY Start  
19 and Math Start administrative and professional  
20 development staff are responsible for fiscal  
21 oversight and budgeting, data management and  
22 reporting, curriculum development and refinement and  
23 ongoing professional development and training for all  
24 instructors and advisors. College staff are  
25 responsible for the on the ground implementation of

1  
2 CUNY Start and Math Start at their colleges,  
3 including student recruitment, classroom instruction,  
4 advisement, data collection and maintenance of  
5 intercollege partnerships in support of the program.

6 This structure allows the program to offer  
7 extensive professional development and training and  
8 implement the programs unique curriculum and  
9 pedagogical approach while remaining nimble,  
10 responsive and connected to the universities policies  
11 and practices that determine proficiency and  
12 developmental educational placement.

13 Rigorous evaluation and assessment are one of the  
14 cornerstones of CUNY Start and Math Start. An  
15 externally federally funded evaluation conducted by  
16 MDRC in collaboration with CUNY and the Teachers  
17 College Community College Research Center in 2019  
18 found that CUNY Start increased college readiness,  
19 college accumulation and graduation rates for  
20 participants compared to a randomized control group  
21 of non-CUNY Start students.

22 Internally, program staff worked closely with our  
23 own research and evaluation team within CUNY's Office  
24 of Applied Research, Evaluation and Data Analytics to  
25 unpack the range of data providing insights into the

1  
2 program, outcomes and impact. When CUNY transitioned  
3 to distanced learning in response to the pandemic,  
4 CUNY Start and Math Start, like the rest of the  
5 university, was given a very brief window to make all  
6 the necessary changes to move all operations and  
7 instruction to a virtual mode. Everyone, students,  
8 advisors, instructors, support staff and program  
9 staff, had to learn how to adapt what was  
10 traditionally a very interpersonal and interactive  
11 experience to the online space without losing any of  
12 the high quality student centered focus that the  
13 program is recognized for.

14 For program staff and teachers, it was also  
15 important to have a clear understanding of the way  
16 that students and staff experience the programs new  
17 remote classroom. In an internal report published in  
18 January of 2021, explored some of the barriers that  
19 affected students and staff engagement in the remote  
20 classroom and their experiences with distance  
21 learning instruction and advisement. Survey  
22 responses from students and staff echoed the  
23 unprecedented non-academic challenges caused by the  
24 pandemic ranging from job loss to struggles in  
25 personal and mental health to widespread unstable

1  
2 internet and infrastructure necessary to teach and  
3 learn online.

4       Throughout the pandemic however, CUNY Start and  
5 Math Start students performed incredibly well.  
6 Outcomes data for the spring 2020 cohort were  
7 comparable to that of the outcomes in prepandemic  
8 times for the program. Program completion ranged  
9 from 75 to 85 percent and proficiency gains in the  
10 program ranged from 60 to 80 percent. The program is  
11 currently experiencing a slight decline in average  
12 reenrollment but this trend seems to mirror the  
13 overall enrollment declines in associate degree  
14 programs since the pandemic.

15       Furthermore, in November of 2021, a quasi-  
16 experimental study was conducted that looked at post-  
17 matriculation outcomes of CUNY Start students to a  
18 matched comparison group of non-CUNY Start students  
19 to get a better understanding of how students fared  
20 after they exited the program. The study found that  
21 one, CUNY Start students are retained at higher rates  
22 than their non-CUNY Start peers. And that this was  
23 most pronounced by the third semester at CUNY.

24       Two, CUNY Start students are able to close the  
25 credit accumulation gap over time. The concern since

1  
2 CUNY Start students defer a whole semester while  
3 comparison group students are potentially earning  
4 credits immediately.

5 And three, CUNY Start students earn their  
6 associate degrees at slightly higher rates than their  
7 non-CUNY Start peers. Over the past 12 years, CUNY  
8 Start and Math Start has served more than 25,000  
9 students, enrolling approximately 4,000 students  
10 annually. CUNY Start and Math Start success has  
11 positioned them as an integral part of CUNY's  
12 developmental education reform initiatives as a  
13 powerful evidence-based model that operates in the  
14 pre-matriculation space. Both programs are  
15 recommended interventions for students with deep  
16 English and/or math needs and the flexible scheduling  
17 options and instructional modalities make them a very  
18 attractive option to a wide range of students.

19 We are grateful to the Council's interest and  
20 support of CUNY Start and Math Start over the years  
21 and we look forward to continuing to share our  
22 outcomes with you. I'll now turn it over to my  
23 colleague Andrea Soonachan. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you.  
25

1  
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.  
3 Dean Soonachan, you may begin when ready.

4 ANDREA SOONACHAN: Thank you. Thank you Chair  
5 Dinowitz and Committee Members for this opportunity  
6 to speak with you today about developmental  
7 education. As the University Dean for K16  
8 initiatives, I oversee and coordinate CUNY's work  
9 with the New York City Department of Education.

10 K-16 initiatives is a unit within CUNY's central  
11 office. We represent CUNY's deep investment in and  
12 commitment to our future students and our  
13 understanding that we must work in partnership with  
14 the New York City DOE to reach our shared goals for  
15 equity and access. CUNY's Office of K16 Initiative  
16 supports the reciprocal partnership between these  
17 systems, as well as community partners to help ensure  
18 that entering undergraduates are prepared for  
19 success.

20 The unit is home to more than a dozen innovative  
21 programs that prepare students for post-secondary  
22 success and strong onramps including pre-college  
23 curriculum, dual enrollment opportunities, near peer  
24 college advisement tutoring and career connected  
25 activities.

1  
2       The risks to succeeding in college degree  
3 completion for students not meeting proficiency  
4 standards are well documented and my colleagues have  
5 addressed them deeply. In the vanguard, among higher  
6 education systems nationally, CUNY colleges have been  
7 transitioning from traditional noncredit bearing  
8 remedial offerings to corequisite offerings and  
9 courses as my colleagues have described.

10       In these courses, students are placed in credit  
11 bearing courses with additional hours of support.  
12 Compared to remedial courses, these corequisite  
13 courses serving the same student populations have  
14 higher pass rates, and there's evidence that the  
15 students are more motivated to succeed in their  
16 courses.

17       As CUNY colleges have begun this transition, we  
18 have begun offering these same courses to high school  
19 students through our College Now program. College  
20 Now is a collaboration between CUNY and the  
21 Department of Ed that offers dual enrollment to high  
22 school students in college courses across 400 New  
23 York City high schools enrolling about 20,000  
24 students annually. College Now corequisite courses  
25 provide a clear path to readiness with the benefit of

1  
2 students earning transferrable college credits. For  
3 many non-stem majors, this course also satisfies the  
4 required college credit math course in its entirety.

5 We currently offer nine different corequisite  
6 math courses through seven different colleges. In  
7 the 2020-2021 school year, 643 students enrolled in  
8 these courses. Just under half of those students  
9 were served in collaboration between Borough  
10 Manhattan Community College, College Now Program and  
11 K16's Linked Program, which in addition to the  
12 course, provide intensive math professional  
13 development to high school instructors who teach a  
14 high school math course during the school day in the  
15 fall semester to prepare students for success in the  
16 college credit math corequisite, provided by the MCC  
17 in the spring.

18 Across all of those different corequisite course  
19 types, the success rate last year was 84 percent.  
20 Given the success rate of these courses to date and  
21 their critical importance to supporting a strong  
22 post-secondary start for students, we look forward to  
23 working with our partners at the Department of  
24 Education to continue to expand these courses in  
25 addition to offering more sections of these courses

1  
2 at high schools and on campuses. Success with online  
3 instruction and math corequisite presents an  
4 opportunity for us to expand the reach of these  
5 courses citywide through online delivery.

6 In the coming months, we will be planning for the  
7 next school year and anticipate that we will expand  
8 the availability of these courses. I want to thank  
9 you for your interest in this important topic and for  
10 your support of CUNY's efforts to increase access and  
11 readiness for all students. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Thank you for  
14 your testimony and before I turn to Chair Dinowitz  
15 for questions, I'd like to remind Council Members to  
16 use the raise hand function in Zoom to indicate that  
17 you have a question for the panel. Chair Dinowitz.

18 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you. So, students  
19 who have these remedial needs need to be in the CUNY  
20 Math Start Program, CUNY Start or Math Start Program.  
21 At what point in the application or acceptance  
22 process does a student learn that they have remedial  
23 needs and are made aware of CUNY Start? And at what  
24 point during that process do they enroll in CUNY  
25 Start?

1  
2 DONNA LINDERMAN: So, thank you. I'll take that  
3 question, thanks Chair Dinowitz. So, if students  
4 have not – under our new policy, students are  
5 considered proficient if they meet you know current  
6 benchmark scores on SAT, ACT or Regent scores.

7 So, if they do not realize those exemption or  
8 proficiency scores, they're run through our  
9 proficiency index and their scores are determined  
10 based on need. So, at that point, students who are  
11 determined to have significant needs, which as I said  
12 are defined as a proficiency score, you know in both  
13 below the minimum threshold in both English and math,  
14 specifically below 40 in math and below 65 in English  
15 or a very low score below 40 in math only, would be  
16 referred to CUNY Start and Math Start.

17 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Can I pause you? And it's  
18 not out of disrespect, I want to be clear to any of  
19 the panelists if I interrupt, it's because –

20 DONNA LINDERMAN: It's okay, yeah, no, no.

21 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I want to make sure the  
22 question is clear.

23 DONNA LINDERMAN: Yeah.

24 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: And that may be on me for  
25 not asking it properly or I'm going to blame

1  
2 technology. But when? I understand the what. When  
3 is that a student finds out that they have these  
4 remedial needs or they don't make that benchmark  
5 score.

6 DONNA LINDERMAN: Okay. So, once if a student is  
7 proficient, it's placed on their CUNY First Checklist  
8 and they know you're good to go. You can enroll  
9 directly in a gateway math or English course. If the  
10 proficiency index indicates that they have need, this  
11 would also be placed in their CUNY First Checklist  
12 and a service indicator would be put on their record  
13 in CUNY First so that they would then be directed to  
14 the appropriate intervention. So, in the case of  
15 CUNY Start, a student that meets the criteria that  
16 they would be a good candidate for CUNY Start or Math  
17 Start, the service indicator begins the process where  
18 the program staff immediately begin to reach out to  
19 students to say, we want you to come in and learn  
20 about the program and its benefits and why you would  
21 be a good candidate for it.

22 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay, sorry, hold on,  
23 sorry. When is immediately? Is the student a  
24 senior? Is it after they have graduated high school?

1  
2 DONNA LINDERMAN: Okay, sorry, okay. Sorry, I  
3 should have backed that up. This is after they have  
4 applied and been accepted to the university.

5 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay.

6 DONNA LINDERMAN: So, a student has applied and  
7 been accepted to an associate degree program if they  
8 are run through our proficiency index. It is at that  
9 juncture in their admissions process as an accepted  
10 student that the recommended developmental  
11 intervention either corequisite USIP or CUNY Start  
12 you know, would be placed in their CUNY First record.  
13 And in the case of students in CUNY, for CUNY Start  
14 and Math Start, our program staff would then be  
15 reaching out to them at that junction of their  
16 admissions process. So, they're finding out about it  
17 after they have been admitted to a CUNY associate  
18 degree program.

19 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay, great, thank you.  
20 Thank you, I did like hearing about this K-16  
21 initiative, that there is collaboration between the  
22 Department of Education and CUNY. What is the data  
23 sharing model? Is there essential data collection  
24 for DOE and CUNY? How does that work, before they  
25 are accepted to college.

1  
2           DONNA LINDERMAN: Okay, so I'll take that. So,  
3 CUNY has an ongoing data sharing that's governed by a  
4 longstanding agreement between the two systems. So,  
5 we have two data feeds. One is data feed for  
6 admissions purposes. So, this is regular ongoing  
7 feeds of data on students as they are applying to the  
8 university. And we also receive a regular data feed  
9 for research and evaluation purposes. Both include  
10 all key transcript and Regents score data and for  
11 students who apply to CUNY through the portal, which  
12 is kind of the main way you apply to CUNY online,  
13 they don't have to submit their DOE transcripts.  
14 It's already part of this data feed, which is  
15 refreshed on a regular basis.

16           CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Cool, so let me rewind a  
17 little bit in a life of a student. Right, because  
18 we're talking about senior, so now, you're actually  
19 getting this information about the student as they're  
20 applying and they find out that either they have a  
21 need or that they have an opportunity to fulfill a  
22 need only after they've been accepted. But the  
23 senior year for most students I'd say, right?

24           DONNA LINDERMAN: Yes, students are applying in  
25 this in a year but actually, I'll let Andrea speak a

1  
2 little bit about kind of the preemptive you know why  
3 that the programs in her area are identifying  
4 students that are likely to have developmental need  
5 before they even apply. That's sort of the crucks of  
6 the work in her area.

7 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Great, because that's the  
8 crucks of my question. Alright, yes.

9 ANDREA SOONACHAN: So, we work in deep  
10 partnership with central DOE and individual high  
11 schools in partnership for that College Now Program.  
12 And so, when we offer those corequisite courses  
13 through College Now, the high schools that we partner  
14 with are identifying students who can benefit from  
15 those courses. Students who are most likely to need  
16 additional skill support to be proficient on entering  
17 college. And so, they are offered the opportunity to  
18 take those courses in their senior year before  
19 exiting DOE.

20 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay, good. So, getting  
21 it sooner. And by the way, and I'll just share you  
22 know it feels as though a lot of these programs exist  
23 to fill gaps in the high school setting. Right, if  
24 the student had a gap, a learning gap, which is kind  
25 of its own problem. But regarding the data sharing,

1  
2 students take the Math Regents freshman year and  
3 students take their first math course freshman year.  
4 And by the time they get to senior year, they may not  
5 even be in a math course. They need to do three  
6 years of math and yet, typically it sounds like  
7 senior year, where the students are finding out  
8 whether they have the right Regents scores, they meet  
9 your algorithm. So, is there any work done or is  
10 there any partnership, relationship to address the  
11 needs of freshman? We know what their Regents scores  
12 are. We know they get below that 70 and the Regents  
13 is again, a terrible metric of whether a student  
14 knows math or not but it's the metric that's used.

15 But if you do the data sharing, don't you know  
16 after their freshman year, whether or not they have  
17 these developmental needs?

18 DONNA LINDERMAN: So, I'm going to let Andrea  
19 talk about kind of besides the work that she  
20 mentioned in the senior year that's done in K16 to  
21 try to help students become prepared for college  
22 earlier. The purpose of the two data feeds I  
23 mentioned you know for admissions and for research  
24 and evaluations purposes, the goal is to kind of look  
25 at trend data over time and for the purposes of

1  
2 admissions to have real time data, so that we can  
3 make decisions as quickly as possible for students  
4 that want to come to the university. But the broad  
5 work of our K16 you know partnerships with the  
6 schools is specifically designed to kind of work with  
7 students at the earliest possible juncture.  
8 Obviously in dialogue with the high schools.

9 Andrea, could you just say a little bit more  
10 about some of the other programs in your area that do  
11 you know look at students in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade?

12 ANDREA SOONACHAN: Sure, yeah, one of the largest  
13 of those actually is the CUNY Tutor Corp, which  
14 partners deeply with the DOE's Algebra for All  
15 Initiative. CUNY Stem majors into DOE algebra  
16 classrooms and computer science classrooms and in  
17 those partnerships our CUNY tutors are working very  
18 closely with the DOE teachers, identifying the  
19 students who could most benefit from that sort of  
20 individualized tutoring in those core algebra skills.

21 So, that's one of our largest or 9<sup>th</sup> grade focused  
22 programs. College Now in addition to those  
23 corequisite courses offers a range of courses in stem  
24 areas and onramps to college readiness, one credit  
25 courses for example, that often start as early as

1  
2 10<sup>th</sup> grade engaging students in that early college  
3 experience and credit accumulation.

4 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: And can I just pause?  
5 Those College Now programs are, who typically  
6 benefits from those College Now programs and in my  
7 experience, which by the way was that as a public  
8 school teacher. So, it's nowhere that the  
9 beneficiaries of those programs have typically been  
10 the students who are already on track. Who aren't  
11 repeating courses who kind of have prerequisite  
12 skills. Is that the overall experience for College  
13 Now?

14 ANDREA SOONACHAN: Well, with 20,000 enrollments  
15 annually, it's you know, it's a very broad group of  
16 DOE students who are participating in those courses.  
17 The largest or fastest growing segment of courses in  
18 the College Now portfolio are the one credit first  
19 year studies and introductory college experience  
20 courses and those prerequisite courses that I talked  
21 about.

22 So, certainly those are probably newer to the  
23 portfolio of College Now courses where historically  
24 we may have offered a lot of advanced or more  
25 advanced courses. There is a growing number of these

1  
2 intro-level courses that target 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade  
3 students and particularly students who may not be  
4 thinking of themselves collegebound. And we really  
5 see part of the value of College Now. It's helping  
6 students to see themselves as successful college  
7 students.

8 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Right, I guess I'm talking  
9 about - I guess if we're talking with the students  
10 who really benefit and need CUNY start, we're talking  
11 about the - you know the students who need the most  
12 in terms of that remedial instruction. So, I want to  
13 use a pedagogical term that I heard the associate by  
14 Chancellor used which is synthesize. I kind of want  
15 to synthesize that it sounds like there are great  
16 programs associated with the high schools like  
17 College Now, like the CUNY Tutor Corp. But it is not  
18 as robust or systemic as the CUNY Start program,  
19 which looks at every child. These individual  
20 programs target or are only available in a certain  
21 number of schools. Is that fair to say?

22 DONNA LINDERMAN: I would - I'll take it and then  
23 I'll kick it over to Andrea. Absolutely not. You  
24 know our K16 initiatives essentially work with every  
25 single high school in the city and the commitment of

1  
2 our duo – and I can say this as someone who you know  
3 has the vantage point of looking nationally at work,  
4 our duo enrollment with work in Andrea's area is  
5 probably the most wide ranging partnership I've ever  
6 seen across the country in terms of work with the  
7 public schools and a deep commitment to that core  
8 CUNY mission of access and excellence. It's not just  
9 a program for high performing students to take  
10 college credit courses, like I took when I was in  
11 high school you know many moons ago.

12       It's a model that looks you know at all the high  
13 schools and attempts to meet students where they are  
14 in many, many ways. So, it's a vast portfolio that I  
15 would say and again, I'm not in anyway contradicting  
16 perhaps the vantage point you had when you were a  
17 public school teacher. You know, it is certainly a  
18 program that provides opportunities for high  
19 performing students to take a college credit courses  
20 but the broad array of initiatives that serve over  
21 20,000 students, more actually when we consider – as  
22 well. 25,000, 26,000 a year. It really, it's  
23 probably the most systemic partnership I've ever seen  
24 of a university and a public school system in the  
25 country. But Andrea, I don't know if you – I don't

1  
2 want to steal your thunder. Your best equipped to  
3 synthesis that.

4       ANDREA SOONACHAN: Yeah, I would reiterate with  
5 Donna. It's a large diverse school system and we are  
6 deeply embedded within it. We serve over 10,000  
7 students through a network of 20 early college high  
8 schools. Over 20,000 annual enrollments in College  
9 Now. In addition, we are supporting every graduating  
10 DOE senior with near peer college advising and  
11 supports through out bridge to college program. So,  
12 we are, as Donna said, have a sort of nation leading  
13 level of integration. All supported by that type of  
14 data sharing that Donna also described.

15       I will also be the first to say there is so much  
16 work to be done and so much need and that we welcome  
17 the conversation that we're having every day with our  
18 DOE colleges about what needs are emerging for  
19 students. Some of the questions you asked about  
20 algebra Regents are actually very evolving because  
21 algebra regents haven't been administered for a few  
22 years now right, so even just the way that we talk  
23 with our DOE colleagues about what students need and  
24 how we can meet those needs are continually evolving  
25 and always at the forefront for us.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: And just to be clear of  
3 something Ms. Linderman. It's okay to contradict me.  
4 Please do. The purpose of my questions is to not  
5 show that I'm right. The purpose of my questions is  
6 to not show that I'm right, the purpose of the  
7 questions is to bring to light all the information  
8 and find gaps and needs and address those needs for  
9 our students, right.

10 DONNA LINDERMAN: And I welcome this dialogue so  
11 much. It's wonderful to hear you asking these  
12 questions.

13 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Yeah, so it sounds like  
14 there's a lot of passion around the College Now  
15 program. I will say the CUNY Tutor Corp, I am  
16 personally and I'm less familiar with because I  
17 haven't seen it but that seems to address or it  
18 sounds like it's addressing some of the issues that I  
19 see as areas of growth, which is going farther back.  
20 Right, again, if a child gets a 65 on a math regents  
21 freshman year, that student doesn't necessarily need  
22 to wait till junior or senior year to take a College  
23 Now course or to find out after they have been  
24 accepted that they are going to need to take some  
25 sort of extra developmental course. And so, is there

1  
2 room to grow that CUNY Tutor Corp program or is there  
3 room to incorporate some of the data sharing with the  
4 CUNY Start program, so that you can identify those  
5 students who have those needs much earlier?

6 DONNA LINDERMAN: Absolutely. I'm going to  
7 piggyback on what Andrea said. There's always room  
8 and you know one area that we're - actually Jeanette  
9 and Andrea and I were just talking about, the  
10 opportunity to also think about teacher, staff  
11 development, teacher development. That's a big piece  
12 of CUNY Start and Math Start where we're committed to  
13 ongoing training of teachers which is why we're able  
14 to achieve the high success rates we are. Area, a  
15 fertile ground for more opportunities you know to  
16 integrate you know past success rate, pedagogical  
17 approaches in curriculum and to think about kind of  
18 that direct service piece to students.

19 So, lots of opportunity, 100 percent and again, I  
20 just want to emphasize this notion of shared  
21 responsibility. We really think in the DOE as our  
22 prospective future student, so we think of all -  
23 there is no finger pointing. We work in full  
24 partnership with the DOE. And really approach all of  
25 the things you've heard about today from me, Jeanette

1  
2 and Andrea kind of public health approach to college  
3 readiness. You know, we want to address as much  
4 preventative work as we can in partnership with our —  
5 use that pre-matriculation space before students move  
6 into their space so they can preserve their financial  
7 aid and then help them move as quickly as possible  
8 with the right support through their course work.

9       So, it's kind of this push and pull approach you  
10 know where we're thinking about it you know  
11 comprehensively.

12       CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Right, and I love that  
13 value of thinking of it comprehensively and I'd love  
14 to get there because like I said, CUNY alum. I'm  
15 very proud. I taught in the high schools. You know  
16 I went to public schools and whether it was a few,  
17 I'll say many moons ago when I was a student of  
18 public school or having been involved in my adult  
19 life. It doesn't always feel like that goal is being  
20 met and it does in fact often feel that elementary,  
21 middle, high school and college are all these  
22 separate camps that have separate goals. So, I mean,  
23 that's why I'm spending so long on talking about you  
24 know what is that through line? How far back do you  
25 go? Because we know early on what the needs of

1  
2 students are. And there's a lot more work to do in  
3 terms of that collaboration but it is good that the -  
4 that that value is there and there are programs,  
5 whether they are robust to the college now or perhaps  
6 need a little more work and you know more  
7 collaboration between the DOE and CUNY.

8       Regarding these corequisite courses, I just want  
9 to get a little more clarity. Remedial courses, one  
10 of the things I would tell students is one of the  
11 things that was reflected in your testimony is, you  
12 know you don't want to spend all your time and your  
13 money on courses just to do work you know, just to do  
14 this work. You're wasting time, wasting money in  
15 work you could have done in high school or hopefully  
16 would have done in high school but it seems these  
17 corequisite models you're talking about help address  
18 that time. I wasn't clear on the money and the  
19 credits. Do these corequisite courses sound like  
20 they're extra tutoring or you know, extra help after  
21 class? How much do they cost and do they provide any  
22 credits?

23       DONNA LINDERMAN: So, it's a fully integrated  
24 model, so the students register for the - in the case  
25 of English freshman composition or in the case of

1  
2 math, it would be the appropriate math course for  
3 their major. The supplemental instruction is  
4 included in the tuition base. They don't pay  
5 separately for it. They register for one course  
6 that's logged in our system as the corequisite  
7 version of freshman composition for the appropriate  
8 gateway math course and there is typically up to two  
9 hours of integrated supplemental instruction or  
10 tutoring that's connected with that.

11       So, it's - think of it as when you were in  
12 college, of possibly registering for a recitation you  
13 know accompanying a class. So, it's part of the same  
14 class. They don't have to - it's not an optional  
15 piece. It's an integrated piece and they pay regular  
16 CUNY tuition for this but it's a much more productive  
17 use of students financial aid because they don't have  
18 to take a standalone course or courses, pass those  
19 and then register for the gateway course. They just  
20 register for the gateway course that has this  
21 attached supplemental instruction which would be in  
22 the form of tutoring. The faculty might provide you  
23 know an additional you know window of time after  
24 class for students, so that they can better access  
25 and do well during you know with the core course

1  
2 curriculum. So, it's something that's fully  
3 integrated into the course. They don't pay  
4 separately for it.

5 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay, so it's no addition  
6 course? It's additional time and who is - if it's  
7 fully integrated, it sounds like it's then the  
8 professor or the adjunct professor, whatever the case  
9 may be, that is providing that course work, is that  
10 right?

11 DONNA LINDERMAN: So the supple- the regular CUNY  
12 faculty teach the course. The supplemental  
13 instruction could be delivered by the same faculty  
14 member or it could be a tutor or a nonteaching  
15 adjunct who's assigned to work with that faculty  
16 member. It looks a little bit different at each  
17 college whose delivering the supplemental instruction  
18 but it is part of the content of the course. It's  
19 not, go over there and talk to Donna you know or Eric  
20 who's going to help you out. Something that's fully  
21 integrated. So, the model could be the faculty  
22 member delivering the course content, a tutor, you  
23 know or an additional faculty member who's attached  
24 to it. But it's considered one piece.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: In the case of that one  
3 piece, where it is that single faculty member, are  
4 they then being compensated extra for providing this  
5 extra work? I mean, it's extra work, it's extra  
6 time. It's probably extra assignments. Are they  
7 being compensated more than they would be for a non-  
8 corequisite course.

9 DONNA LINDERMAN: Yes and all of these  
10 corequisite course you know have an appropriate kind  
11 of instructional load that would be factored into  
12 whether they are full-time or an adjunct faculty into  
13 their workload. So, all faculty members or in the  
14 case of tutors, who provide this additional support  
15 are fully compensated. It's not an add on. No one  
16 is asked to do it for free, it's considered part of  
17 their workload.

18 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay, so compensated –  
19 you're compensated appropriately. I have you know a  
20 million more questions but I do want to get to my  
21 colleagues, so I'll just ask one from – I want to get  
22 the quote right. I think it was Associate Dean Kim  
23 said that students in the – except for the ESL  
24 students, or ELL's students in the CUNY Start program  
25 are representative of the CUNY population. What I

1  
2 didn't hear or missed, was if that includes students  
3 with disabilities.

4       JEANETTE KIM: So, college students have to  
5 declare their disabilities. It's not like when they  
6 are in the DOE, where their tagged as having a  
7 disability. So, unless a student identifies  
8 themselves as having a disability, we would never  
9 know on the program side. So, it really is hard for  
10 us to kind of unpack that data point about the number  
11 of students you know with disabilities in the  
12 program. Anecdotally, we have heard from our  
13 instructors that they have been seeing over the  
14 years, a significantly increased number of students  
15 who have accommodations or who have requested  
16 accommodations who are in the CUNY Start program.

17       We think that this is kind of attributed to the  
18 wrap around services and the intensity of the  
19 program. The time that students are taking in the  
20 program to get through learning their English and  
21 math skills to become proficient. But again, this is  
22 not a data point that's tracked on the college side  
23 at all because students have to declare that they  
24 have disabilities or that they need accommodations.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Is that a result of — what  
3 law is that a result of? Right, if you're sharing  
4 data about students grades and I assume other, other  
5 personal data, what is the law that prevents that  
6 data sharing? And if there's someone preventing it,  
7 do students even know to declare that they an IEP in  
8 high school or that they have a 504 plan?

9 DONNA LINDERMAN: So —

10 JEANETTE KIM: I don't know if you —

11 DONNA LINDERMAN: I was just going to say, I  
12 would have to get back to you about the specifics  
13 about you know the exact law but you know every CUNY  
14 campus, every CUNY college has an Office of  
15 Disability Services and it's clearly stated upon you  
16 know admission to CUNY that if a student does want  
17 reasonable accommodations in additional support  
18 services. They do have to come and register with the  
19 office but I would have to get back to you on the  
20 specifics of exactly what that looks like. But it is  
21 something that is broadly communicated to students  
22 who might be coming out of the DOE. You know who  
23 have an IEP that they have to present themselves to  
24 the Colleges Office of Disability Service to look  
25 over their documentation and determine which services

1  
2 are appropriate once they become a college student.

3 But I will say that you know we of course welcome  
4 students that you know receive accommodations and  
5 extra supports into CUNY Start and Math Start, as we  
6 do in any of our DEVED reform.

7 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I didn't doubt that you  
8 welcome all students. I guess my real question is  
9 you know the CUNY Start Program, based on the  
10 description, provides robust support and I know more  
11 broadly students are, there's a disability  
12 coordinator but I guess my question is proactively,  
13 as you are enrolling, reaching out to students and  
14 enrolling students, is that information being  
15 explicitly? Because I'm going to take a guess -

16 ANDREA SOONACHAN: So, yeah, I can just step in a  
17 little bit of that. So, students, once they are  
18 adults, they are the federal Americans with  
19 disabilities law covers them, which is different than  
20 the set of laws that support K12 students in  
21 receiving Special Education. So, it's a set of  
22 federal regulations that shift from secondary to  
23 post-secondary in terms of how students need to  
24 actively disclose. There's a final IEP meeting that  
25 students have in their last year of high school where

1  
2 that is explicitly discussed and it's often raised  
3 multiple times leading up that in check-in meetings  
4 with students and their caregivers. So, that they  
5 understand that difference and the process of  
6 actively seeking out services once they are enrolled  
7 on a campus versus how the IEP process works in K12.

8 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: So, in defense of my  
9 fellow Special Education teachers and in defense of  
10 students with disabilities, that final IEP meeting or  
11 any IEP meeting is extremely overwhelming and  
12 providing you know just of information for students  
13 who are a member. And when you mail the IEP and  
14 documents home, it's a thick document. I guess there  
15 are two questions that stem from that. One, relating  
16 back to my previous questions. Students doing  
17 college now or students who benefit from the CUNY  
18 Tutor Corp, who are juniors, sophomores and freshman,  
19 are not typically not 18-years-old.

20 And so, is there room while the grades are being  
21 shared, and while students are not adults, so while  
22 grades are being shared from the high school to the  
23 colleges, which you say they do and the students are  
24 not adults. They are below the age of 18-years-old,  
25 is there room to share that information to take the

1  
2 weight off? You know it's hard enough having a  
3 disability and it's hard enough remembering all of  
4 the different things involved with that and our job  
5 is to help as many students as possible. Is there  
6 room legally and functionally to share that  
7 information? And is there room for the CUNY Start  
8 program to proactively in part of their onboarding,  
9 explain to students and ask them if you know, provide  
10 them the guidance that if they have a disability, if  
11 they had an IEP in college, in high school rather.  
12 If they have a 504 plan, that these are the steps  
13 they need to take while helping making the call.  
14 Whatever is necessary. Is there room for any of  
15 those things?

16 DONNA LINDERMAN: I certainly think there's room  
17 for improvement on you know always on better  
18 communication. So, it's an excellent question. So,  
19 I will personally bring this back to discuss it in  
20 more detail with my colleagues. So, I appreciate the  
21 question and certainly will circle back to you guys  
22 on that.

23 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you. I want to turn  
24 it over now typically in these instances, we turn it  
25 over to Committee Members to ask questions. But I

1  
2 first want to briefly turn it over to Council Member  
3 Avilès who has prepared a statement that she wants to  
4 share.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÈS: Great. Hello everyone,  
6 thank you so much. Thank you Chairman Dinowitz for  
7 giving me the opportunity to speak today and thank  
8 you Council Member Brannan for introducing the  
9 Resolution.

10 So, first, I have to say I'm also a proud alumni  
11 of alumnus of CUNY. The School of Public and  
12 International Affairs. To be succinct, I just want  
13 to say CUNY is not only a rare gem in our city but  
14 obviously in our country and the City University of  
15 New York just continues to offer access to the  
16 opportunity at a time when access to so many things  
17 continue to disappear for our communities.

18 From its inception, CUNY was meant precisely to  
19 offer this tuition free high quality education to  
20 poor working class immigrant populations in New York  
21 City. And so, while over the years, the government  
22 continues to underfund and increase the tuition, we  
23 know that trend follows along the trend with as more  
24 students of color entered CUNY. More Black and Brown  
25 students entered CUNY. The government felt less and

1  
2 less generous and we see this issue is an issue of  
3 racial justice.

4 We see that from its enrollments, CUNY majority  
5 of students come from households that earn less than  
6 \$40,000 a year. 48 percent have experienced food  
7 insecurity in the past month and 14 percent of CUNY  
8 students are homeless in the past year. In my  
9 district where so many people I represent are  
10 immigrants, children of immigrants. Black and Puerto  
11 Rican public housing residents, CUNY means economic  
12 and social mobility.

13 We are also home to many CUNY faculty and  
14 employees who are committed to this institution and  
15 the critical role that it plays in our city. The New  
16 Deal for CUNY as outlined in S4461 would put CUNY and  
17 our city at the forefront of social and educational  
18 policy once again. Offering a high quality tuition  
19 free education for our city's most promising  
20 students. Regardless of any barriers they may face.  
21 In our city and in our country, we are at a juncture.  
22 We are now grappling with the end result of  
23 divestment and practice of exclusion from our  
24 collective future. Our country grows weaker for  
25

1  
2 every young person and not so young person denied the  
3 promise to access and education.

4       Passing the New Deal for CUNY will send the  
5 strong message in our country that New Yorkers will  
6 not continue this dangerous and destabilizing trend  
7 and racist trend. And even in the midst of this  
8 pandemic, we can make the bold investments. We are a  
9 rich and wealthy country, a wealthy city, and we  
10 deserve to invest in our children's, in our people's  
11 future. A free CUNY is a commitment to racial and  
12 gender equity. It is a commitment to opportunity for  
13 all. It is the real kind of public safety investment  
14 that actually yields safety in our communities.

15       I look forward to the passage of New Deal for  
16 CUNY and thank you for all the work that you do.

17       CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you Council Member.  
18 I'm now going to turn it – oh, alright, I'm going to  
19 turn it over to Emi Briggs who will moderate the next  
20 portion of this hearing.

21       COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair Dinowitz. I  
22 will now call on Council Members who have questions  
23 in the order that they used the raised hand function  
24 in Zoom. Council Members, if you would like to ask a  
25 question and you have not yet used the raised hand

1  
2 function in Zoom, please do so now. Also, please  
3 remember to keep questions and answers to five  
4 minutes. The Sergeant at Arms will maintain a clock  
5 and a member of our staff will unmute you. You may  
6 begin after I call on you and the Sergeant gives you  
7 the queue. We will now hear questions from Council  
8 Member Barron, Council Member Brewer and Council  
9 Member Brewer and Council Member Feliz. Council  
10 Member Barron.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. Oh, there it is.  
13 Thank you very much for this opportunity. I could  
14 not have followed a better presentation than that of  
15 Council Member Avilès. I really appreciate you  
16 raising the question of race, racism. This is very,  
17 very critical. So, I want to start off by saying, I  
18 too am a graduate of Hunter College and also, New  
19 York City Tech, it was New York City Community back  
20 then. And Chair of the Higher Ed Committee for eight  
21 years and my wife was Chair of the Higher Education  
22 Committee for eight years as well.

23 But the race question has never been resolved in  
24 CUNY. They skirt over it. They don't deal with it.  
25 A classic example of that is this presentation today.

1  
2 55 percent of the students are Black, Latino, Latina,  
3 and none of the presenters are Black, not one. And  
4 if you look at the student composition of CUNY Start  
5 and Math Start, ASAP, College Now, all of that, it's  
6 still majority, us and yet, what's the percentage, my  
7 first question, what's the percentage of the faculty  
8 members that are Black in these programs? The  
9 faculty members, the staff, the project coordinator.  
10 Not one person, you all couldn't bring not one person  
11 that was Black in an institution that's majority  
12 Black and Brown. And not one of us are presenting  
13 today. This is a typical indication of what's  
14 happening in CUNY.

15       Secondly, remediation when I left, is it still  
16 just in the community colleges and not in the senior  
17 colleges? Because I found that to be ridiculous.  
18 Stanford, Harvard and many other elite colleges have  
19 remediation but yet CUNY decided that all of our  
20 students and when we come out of these public  
21 schools, you know 80 percent of the students that  
22 come out of high school need remediation because of  
23 the failure of the education system in New York. But  
24 they have to go to the community colleges. That's

25

1  
2 where I left it, I hope that changed and they can  
3 still get remediation and the senior colleges.

4       So, I'm just concerned that we need Black  
5 faculty. We need Black people giving our perspective  
6 on what's happening in CUNY and all of these  
7 programs, CUNY Start, Math Start, all of that. This  
8 is the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, we had about 50 hearings on it.  
9 Not one Black person is presenting today. That's  
10 unconscionable and unacceptable.

11       Secondly, Mr. Chair, I would strongly suggest  
12 that when we have meetings like this because that the  
13 Chancellor be present at least at the first meeting.  
14 We're going into a budget negotiating. We'll soon be  
15 doing the CUNY Budget you know hearings on it and all  
16 of that. Usually the initial meeting, we need the  
17 Chancellor here. People who are in power to make  
18 decisions and they can bring someone from  
19 developmental education and other college programs  
20 and all of that but to go from a - to a micro  
21 perspective when we're facing macro problem coming up  
22 with this budget because - and don't be too alarmed  
23 when they cut everything from CUNY because that's the  
24 annual budget dance. They usually cut you and then  
25 they'll reinstate the cut and say you've made

1  
2 progress. But don't go for the okie doke. When they  
3 cut all of that, still fight for enhancements, not  
4 just reinstating what they cut and they know they got  
5 to put back.

6       So, I think it will be good if we could and I  
7 know it's once a month but it would have been good to  
8 have the Chancellor here, so that we can get to those  
9 macro issues as we pay attention to the micro issues.  
10 So, that's my concern with CUNY, with CUNY faculty  
11 and none of you are probably responsible for hiring  
12 faculty, I don't think and so, when we get these  
13 programmatic, micro-programmatic presentations which  
14 are extremely important. Everything you said is  
15 important but it's still the perpetuation of the  
16 racism in CUNY that we can come in our first meeting  
17 and the Chancellor's not here and not one person, I  
18 don't know if one of you are Latino or Latina descent  
19 but not one Black or Latino person presenting.

20       Because it does make a difference, it makes a big  
21 difference. Things that you might think is important  
22 is important but it makes a difference when we have  
23 no representation in an institution and by the way,  
24 it's 20 percent Asian as well. So, like 75 percent  
25 of CUNY is Black, Latino and Asian.

1

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

2

3

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Alright, thank you.

4

That's my comments and just if you ask the question on remediation because I don't know and the Black faculty involved in these programs.

5

6

7

DONNA LINDERMAN: Thank you Council Member

8

Barron. Your points are very important and well

9

taken. In terms of the remediation question,

10

remediation or developmental education does continue

11

to be offered you know at our associate granting

12

colleges. But the changes that we made that have

13

significantly reduced the percentage of students who

14

enter our colleges that are deemed in need of

15

developmental education has broadly you know provided

16

much more access to our bachelor's programs.

17

So, while developmental education is not formally

18

offered within those programs, the reforms that you

19

heard about today have certainly broadly created many

20

more pathways into those -

21

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Yeah, but that's not my

22

issue. My issue -

23

DONNA LINDERMAN: No, I understand.

24

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: It should be presented in

25

the senior colleges so they don't have to stop by

1  
2 community colleges. They can go directly to the  
3 senior colleges.

4 DONNA LINDERMAN: Point taken; point taken. I  
5 actually taught at Brooklyn College when they still  
6 offered those opportunities, so I absolutely hear  
7 you. And then we would have to get back to you on  
8 exact percentages. Jeanette, I know you have, you  
9 can give overall numbers of folks that are within the  
10 program but I'd have to get back to you. We'd have  
11 to get back to you on the percentages within the  
12 programs you've heard about.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Well, that's why the  
14 Chancellor needed to be here because they have all of  
15 that stuff and I don't think it's fair to have you  
16 have to answer those kind of macro questions when you  
17 are more micro involved.

18 DONNA LINDERMAN: No, but you know it's an  
19 absolute legitimate question and we will certainly  
20 provide that information to you in writing after the  
21 hearing. So, it's a welcomed question.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you very much.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you very much Council  
24 Member Barron. Council Member Brewer, you may begin  
25 your questions.

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very much and I want to in full disclosure, I survived Higher Education with Council Member Barron for eight years. Just so you know, we were partners in that Committee, so I just want to, that's my full disclosure. I also teach at Hunter College.

So, I am also a huge fan of CUNY but I want to understand just the different programs because Council Member Barron and I were in the era of John Mogulescu who did ASAP and that is my favorite program. With all due respect, every program at CUNY. So, I'm wondering, how does that program work with some of the discussions you had and also, there was something in the wonderful material that was provided by University Skills Immersion Program and I don't know if that's a different program.

I guess what I'm trying to say is we all want, I mean, I'm going to talk about the community colleges just because that's what the city funds. Not to say that Charles isn't right about the need for more support in terms of students in the four year, because I see that with my own eyes.

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My question is though, what are the programs? Not that you have to go into depth but how do they relate to what you're talking about and then second, I must admit I've always said that CUNY should take over DOE because the DOE programs that are working with the CUNY colleges, right? Some of them are screened, some of them are not. I started one of them, so I know, Hunter Science.

But they're really good and they work. So, DOE is so messed up. Sorry for those who may feel differently. There shouldn't have to be all of this remedial because the DOE should do their job. So, I'm just, I guess I'm looking forward. What should we be doing maybe you can't say it all but say what you can. What should we be doing at DOE to get students ready, so we don't have to have the remedial.

I'm so upset with DOE generally. I don't know if it's going to change and the other thing I want to just say is I am a big fan of CUNY in the heights, because I helped get it started and I just didn't know if in your discussions, if there were some issues that you have learned from but that fabulous campus I hope would be able to take advantage of.

1  
2 So, mostly I'm interested in, what are the programs  
3 that exist and how do your programs fit in to them  
4 and I'm a big fan of John Mogulescu, I know he is  
5 retired but I know Charles is a big fan of his also.

6 And then the question is, what about the future?  
7 And I want to thank Chair Dinowitz because your  
8 background as a teacher has been extremely helpful  
9 today.

10 DONNA LINDERMAN: So, thank you Council Member  
11 Brewer, it's great to see you again. So, you  
12 probably know I personally have led ASAP. I directly  
13 oversee ASAP and have for many, many years. I was  
14 one of John Mogulescu's staff. So, ASAP is the  
15 biggest program in my portfolio along with CUNY  
16 Start, Math Start, CLIP and you know our Edge  
17 Programs.

18 So, I'll start from the beginning. So, first, we  
19 see all of these programs to the extent you know that  
20 we can create synergies as intended to move students  
21 towards their desired goals. You know which for  
22 students is a degree attainment at CUNY. So, I'll  
23 specifically speak about the relationship between  
24 CUNY Start, Math Start and ASAP. They are considered  
25 sister programs. When a student is coming into and

1  
2 it's our most successful degree completion program.  
3 So, it's very much held up as the next step for a  
4 student when they come into the university. If they  
5 are deemed as having a significant developmental  
6 need, they are strongly encouraged to join CUNY Start  
7 and Math Start with the promise that there's a place  
8 waiting for them in ASAP when they complete and we  
9 have excellent relationships between these two  
10 programs. They recruit together, they promote  
11 together. You know there's constant dialogue between  
12 the programs. So, that's very much seen as a  
13 continuum rather than a silo and we feel the same way  
14 about the programs that operate you know in the K16  
15 space. Any student that is currently in the DOE and  
16 you know your concerns about the DOE are of course  
17 points taken.

18       You know we think of them as our partners. So,  
19 all of the challenges and the issues you know are  
20 seen as collective problems because these are simply  
21 our future students. So, anything that we can do you  
22 know through the good work in Andrea's area, to  
23 better prepare students to head off the issue of  
24 remediation. To you know, in response to Chair  
25 Dinowitz's response, create a clear opportunity so

1  
2 students know the resources that are available to  
3 them and how you know and when and where to access  
4 them. We want to make that possible.

5 So, there's - I don't know Andrea,. Maybe you can  
6 just speak for example about kind of the coaches and  
7 how we're talking about like helping them understand  
8 as students are moving towards moving into CUNY.  
9 They clearly know about every single one of these  
10 programs, so that they can move into them  
11 potentially.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: But they can move into  
13 them but we actually need, if we're going to make any  
14 change in the city -

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

16 DONNA LINDERMAN: Sorry, did someone else ask a  
17 question?

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: No, I was just saying  
19 that if we get the list of some of the programs or  
20 some of the issues that exist. I know people at CUNY  
21 sometimes nervous to say, I don't want to criticize  
22 DOE. I got that but you know what, in order to get  
23 these change done, we have to do that because these  
24 students are not being supported. They are by CUNY  
25

1  
2 but not necessarily by DOE. So, go ahead Andrea, I  
3 know what you can say.

4 DONNA LINDERMAN: Yeah, I'll let Andrea - Andrea,  
5 you should take that.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: It's not working. Go  
7 ahead.

8 ANDREA SOONACHAN: Sure, Council Member Brewer,  
9 you are very familiar with our programs, so I don't  
10 know how much I can add to that. To Donna's point,  
11 the expansion of that Near Peer Advising Program is a  
12 good example of how we work deeply with DOE to be  
13 responsive and to build on successful programs. So,  
14 we were doing college advising with graduating  
15 seniors at about 100 high schools. When COVID hit,  
16 we quickly saw the need to expand that program. We  
17 were able to obtain funding for it and now for the  
18 last two years, have been able to ensure that every  
19 graduating DOE senior receives that individualized  
20 support from a CUNY college coach and integrated that  
21 support into the texting program that DOE launched.  
22 So, the students are getting messaging from CUNY and  
23 DOE in a really integrated way, starting in that  
24 Spring of junior year.

1  
2 We've also expanded that program to the winter  
3 months for students because of the challenges of  
4 COVID did not successfully make that leap directly  
5 from high school graduation into college. So, again,  
6 we're sort of continually looking at the data,  
7 working with our DOE partners to innovate and expand.  
8 I think the only thing I would add is that we are  
9 optimistic about current DOE leadership. That  
10 elevation of post-secondary pathways through the  
11 creation of the Chief of Student Pathways role and  
12 what that really signifies about the current  
13 leaderships priorities and commitment to strong post-  
14 secondary access and readiness.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Alright, we can leave it  
16 at that. I could always, I still think you need to  
17 be constantly letting us know or somebody what the  
18 challenges are, so we don't end up with so many  
19 remedials at CUNY and so that the students get a  
20 better shot. And certainly Chair Dinowitz is  
21 concerned about those with the IEP and 504. They're  
22 real and I'm not surprised you're going to end up  
23 with more and the pandemic is not going to help.

24 So, I understand we have to coordinate but I just  
25 wish we would talk more about what the challenges

1  
2 are. Something is wrong with what's happening at  
3 DOE.

4 DONNA LINDERMAN: Council Member Brewer, if I  
5 could just add one thing. First of all, I just want  
6 to say how much I welcome your passion and your  
7 constant focus on solving problems. That is so  
8 welcome and please don't ever lose that quality.  
9 It's fabulous. I did want to say that the broad  
10 reforms that I described that you know where we've  
11 literally halved the percentage of students who are  
12 entering CUNY that have any developmental need. That  
13 is herculean effort and I do want to say while CUNY  
14 drove that work, it was very much based on kind of  
15 our ongoing kind of dialogue you know with the New  
16 York City Department of Education. So, more students  
17 are leaving high schools, college ready and at the  
18 same time, CUNY has addressed some real structural  
19 barriers that were 100 percent our fault.

20 You know large numbers of students - so I just  
21 wanted to say, you know the, the, I think the very  
22 positive place we're at fully recognizing we have  
23 more of a mountain to climb, is we're proud of it but  
24 we also want to you know share that with our DOE  
25 partners.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I just want to let you  
3 know right now, many students, high school kids  
4 dropped out and are working Amazon in Staten Island  
5 and God knows where else, they're gone. So, now the  
6 question is, again, this is not part of this hearing  
7 but what is CUNY and the city going to do to get them  
8 back, so that they are getting educated at Amazon or  
9 wherever else they're working. Hundreds of high  
10 school students are gone.

11 As I'm just letting you know is another — you  
12 think about remedial, this is a ten time remedial.  
13 So, there's just a whole lot of work to be done.  
14 Congratulations on having it but the challenges are  
15 even more intense, in my opinion than ever. So, but  
16 thank you very much Chair.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your questions.  
18 I will now turn to Council Member Feliz.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Good afternoon everyone.  
21 Thank you all for being here and thank you Chairman  
22 Dinowitz for having this very important hearing on  
23 this very important topic. And I also want to thank  
24 Council Member Justin Brannan, the Chair of the  
25

1  
2 Finance Committee for working on the Resolution to  
3 make CUNY free.

4 CUNY has opened so many doors to so many  
5 students, for all students but especially for low-  
6 income disadvantaged populations. Low-income  
7 populations, many who would not be able to afford  
8 tuition at other institutions and the positive  
9 results of CUNY are well documented. Year after  
10 year, CUNY has ranked high in terms of economic  
11 mobility for low-income populations. Its created a  
12 lot of opportunity and its opened a lot of doors for  
13 some of our most vulnerable students.

14 And my neighbors in the Bronx are examples of  
15 that. I too am an example of that as well. I  
16 proudly attended Bronx Community College, also Lehman  
17 College where I had the privilege of obtaining two  
18 different bachelor's degree and also, CUNY School of  
19 Law. I became the first lawyer in my family and just  
20 like myself, so many residents in the Bronx have had  
21 so many doors open due to the CUNY institution and we  
22 have to do everything within our power to continue to  
23 expand those great opportunities, life changing  
24 opportunities that CUNY is providing.

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2 A few questions about the CUNY Start Program.  
3 The first question is about the curriculum. So,  
4 obviously different students have different needs.  
5 Some students might need some help with writing.  
6 They might need much more help with math. So, can  
7 you provide a summary of the curriculum and  
8 placements and also information about whether the  
9 curriculum was ever modified depending on whether, if  
10 the needs change? Whether it is needs based on math  
11 and then needing much more help with writing or  
12 reading or other topics.

13 DONNA LINDERMAN: Jeanette, I'm going to kick  
14 that over to you and I just wanted to let Council  
15 Member Feliz know, I'm actually at your Lehman  
16 College right now attending at one of their retreats,  
17 so I'll let them know I spoke to a proud alum when I  
18 join them again but I'll kick it over to Jeanette.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Very nice and by the way,  
20 I was the President of the Student Government back in  
21 2013. We got a lot of good work done.

22 DONNA LINDERMAN: Oh, I'm writing that down,  
23 okay.

24 JEANETTE KIM: Thank you. So, the CUNY Start  
25 curriculum, as I mentioned was developed by a group

1  
2 of professional developers in their teen adult  
3 literacy program and what they identified was that  
4 traditional learning and instruction wasn't working  
5 for those students who were coming in with remedial  
6 needs. That they needed a different way of engaging  
7 students. On the math side, it really focuses on  
8 basic skills and numeracy building. It's not about  
9 memorizing formula but it's about understanding how  
10 the math works.

11 So, really encouraging students to problem solve,  
12 talk through why they think that the answer is what  
13 it is and then working collaboratively together in  
14 small groups to kind of understand the reasons why  
15 the answer, the right answer is the right answer and  
16 how they worked through it. And to recognize that  
17 not one - to get to an answer might not be one way  
18 but students might figure that out in different ways.  
19 And so, that small group collaborative work and  
20 discussion really kind of enforces that and prompts  
21 that for students.

22 On the English side, I would say that the reading  
23 and the writing are kind of combined and that they  
24 are taught together. That in order to be a better  
25 writer, you have to kind of be a better reader. And

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2 so those are all integrated in the way that students  
3 are engaged in that English curriculum. Students are  
4 taking them, you know if you're in math, you're in  
5 math. If you're in English, you're in English. If  
6 you're in both, you're in a full-time program  
7 studying 25 hours a week. So, it is very, very  
8 intensive in that nature.

9 Your question about curriculum, curriculum is  
10 modified constantly. That we have conversations with  
11 instructors on the ground, in the classroom, with our  
12 central office professional development team and  
13 slight modifications are made constantly. When we do  
14 - again I think the nimbleness of the program in the  
15 way that we work with our college partners also  
16 allows for modification and improvements to the  
17 curriculum. Most recently we launched CUNY Start  
18 math quantitative reasoning courses and working with  
19 college faculty. Really looked at the way that we  
20 engage students on the math side in CUNY Start and  
21 then integrated quantitative reasoning type  
22 activities and courses and then launched a  
23 quantitative reasoning CUNY Start math course that  
24 ties really closely in with college credit, either  
25 quantitative reasoning courses or statistics courses,

1  
2 which is where we see the students [INAUDIBLE  
3 1:57:34].

4 So, that is always happening and we can do that -  
5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

6 JEANETTE KIM: With our central office  
7 professional developers kind of embedded in the  
8 program.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Okay and also, how long  
10 does the program run for and how many students per  
11 class?

12 JEANETTE KIM: Typically, it's about 20 to 25  
13 students per class. The CUNY Start program runs  
14 semester long, so it's you know 12 to 15 weeks. Math  
15 Start runs in eight to ten week cycles. So, it's  
16 given in shorter durations and it usually starts  
17 after the semester and becomes a catch for students  
18 who might be applying to CUNY a little bit late. So,  
19 they missed the start of the semester and may need  
20 remedial help. They can actually kind of transition  
21 right into a Math Start course and then be on time to  
22 matriculate in the next semester.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Okay and how long does the  
24 entire program take to complete? Are we talking  
25 about one semester or a full year?

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JEANETTE KIM: One semester.

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COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: One semester, okay.

4

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DONNA LINDERMAN: For students that enroll in Math Start in the summer, they can do the whole program in the summer.

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JEANETTE KIM: Right.

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COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Okay, final question.

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When I was a student at Bronx Community College, the average student would graduate in seven years. That is beyond unconscionable, seven years to obtain a two year degree. It takes seven years to obtain a law degree and unfortunately, it will take seven years to only get a two year degree for students attending Bronx Community College for the average student. I think you answered this question already but I just want to confirm that that was the question that were answering earlier. Approximately how long does it take for students who are part of this program to graduate and obtain a two year degree? I think you mentioned four years?

22

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JEANETTE KIM: We looked at in our quasi experimental study, we looked at students outcomes after four years. So, if you imagine the clock starts for a student who enters CUNY with CUNY Start,

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2 CUNY Start becomes their first semester at CUNY,  
3 right? And then, the second semester would be their  
4 degree program start.

5       So, we purposely looked a total of four years to  
6 say a typical student has one semester of CUNY Start  
7 and then let's give them another three and a half  
8 years to see how their outcomes are. Graduation  
9 benchmarks for associate degrees are usually  
10 benchmarked at three years to graduate. So, you're  
11 kind of trying to immolate that. When you look at  
12 three year graduation rates, so it's one semester of  
13 CUNY Start, two and a half years of college. The  
14 graduation rates for CUNY Start students are  
15 comparable to non-CUNY Start students, students who  
16 are coming in perhaps, who - right, to non-CUNY Start  
17 peers. And so, deferring that first semester to take  
18 CUNY Start in its entirety, does no harm to students  
19 in delaying that matriculation for them.

20       But they actually, if you think about it kind of  
21 almost graduate a semester faster that they are not  
22 taking six semesters of their degree program, they  
23 are only taking five semesters. And when you really  
24 see that impact is on their Financial Aid. Because  
25

1  
2 they say Financial Aid for one semester. They are  
3 not using it for that first semester in CUNY Start.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Okay, and for students who  
5 participate in the CUNY Start program, after  
6 completion they need some additional help let's say  
7 writing, are remedial courses still available for  
8 them or other courses before they start taking the  
9 college degree courses?

10 JEANETTE KIM: So, if a student completes CUNY  
11 Start and has not met their proficiency benchmarks by  
12 the end of the program, which most students do, they  
13 are encouraged to enroll in the co-rec courses where  
14 they can earn their college credit that next semester  
15 with some additional supports. That's where we see  
16 most of our students as their next step if they do  
17 not reach proficiency at the end of the program.

18 DONNA LINDERMAN: So, the reforms that you heard  
19 about, this big ramp up of corequisite is very  
20 important. We have very high success rates in CUNY  
21 Start and Math Start. Most students move in you know  
22 fully, fully ready to just go directly into the  
23 gateway math for English course without any support  
24 but for those that might still have some need, those  
25 corequisite supports are so critical because they are

1  
2 not put through another treadmill of you know having  
3 to get you know – go through another series of  
4 courses. They can go directly into that credit  
5 bearing course with support.

6       So, we see this integration of CUNY Start and  
7 Math Start with these broader reforms as so critical.  
8 And that's all fully laid out in very clear policy  
9 that's been broadly communicated to all of our  
10 colleges, so we're very happy about that. That no  
11 one is told, oh, you did CUNY Start and Math Start,  
12 you didn't succeed. Go to the back of the line and  
13 take a traditional remedial course. That's going  
14 away completely effective this fall.

15       COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Okay, got it, thank you so  
16 much for that information. No more questions on my  
17 end.

18       DONNA LINDERMAN: If I could just add one thing,  
19 just because you're a Bronx Community College  
20 graduate. I just wanted to say that large numbers of  
21 students that leave CUNY Start and Math Start  
22 matriculate into ASAP and we're very proud of the  
23 fact that they perform just as well as students who  
24 may not have been in the program. So, the outcomes  
25 are very, very comparable. We still see those very

1  
2 high 52 percent, three year graduation rates for  
3 students you know that may have been in CUNY Start  
4 and Math Start once they join ASAP. So, the program,  
5 it's a very powerful pre-matriculation model.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Yeah, very nice, very  
7 nice. And by the way, I also teach at [INAUDIBLE  
8 2:03:26] Community College.

9 DONNA LINDERMAN: Wonderful.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: So, [INAUDIBLE 2:03:29].

11 DONNA LINDERMAN: Oh, you certainly are, wow.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Yup, so yeah, thank you so  
13 much for all the information and everything that you  
14 do at CUNY.

15 DONNA LINDERMAN: Thank you.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your question  
17 Council Member Feliz. We will now hear from Council  
18 Member Joseph.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Good morning Chair  
21 Dinowitz, Chair Brannan, colleges on this call.  
22 Thank you so much. This was one of the things that  
23 I'm going to echo what Gale Brewer said, Council  
24 Member Brewer said earlier. In terms of — there  
25 should be a connection between the DOE as an educator

1  
2 of elementary school for the past 22 years. There  
3 has to be a pipeline. So, when Chair Dinowitz got  
4 this seat and I said as the Chair of Education we  
5 need to work together to make sure that K-12 and  
6 higher education has a connection. There's no  
7 disconnect.

8 By the time they arrive to CUNY, they should not  
9 be spending most of their time taking remedial  
10 classes if we're doing our part from the DOE and they  
11 should not be coming into remedial classes as  
12 freshman's. They should be able to accelerate,  
13 succeed and move on to the next. As my Council  
14 Member Feliz said, it should not take seven years to  
15 earn an Associate Degree. That's crazy. It should  
16 not happen.

17 So, again, I support the New CUNY Deal for New  
18 Yorkers. You guys deserve a world class education in  
19 New York City. Students should have access to the  
20 best, greatest, urban university in the world. CUNY  
21 propels six times as many low-income students into  
22 middle class beyond all eight IV Leagues. So, we  
23 have the formula here, we just need to make it  
24 better. I support making CUNY free in state  
25 students. Increase the funding for CUNY students as

1  
2 well, urging the number of mental health support that  
3 the students have. Meet rec commended national  
4 standards, hire additional faculty, lower classroom  
5 size. So, I stand with Albany as well to call on  
6 them for them to do the right thing for CUNY. I have  
7 a few questions.

8 I noticed that you talked a lot about CUNY Math  
9 Start and CUNY Start. As successful as they are as  
10 an educator data job, my instruction data job, my  
11 policies as well. How do you plan on expanding that  
12 program? I know it's at about eight to nine  
13 campuses. Are there any plans to extend the program?  
14 Also, I know that proficiency index metric in terms  
15 of remediation, is there a reform being put into  
16 place to address these problems also? So, that's my  
17 question and how do we plan on making CUNY a - DOE a  
18 pipeline to CUNY? How do we support, as my Council  
19 Brewer said, how do we make this better to when our  
20 students come transition into CUNY, that it's also,  
21 it's working for both sides?

22 DONNA LINDERMAN: So, thank you. Thank you so  
23 much Member Joseph for these excellent questions and  
24 for your commitment to seeing more students succeed  
25 that come to CUNY, incredibly grateful for that

1  
2 support. So, I think we've mentioned some of the  
3 synergies you know in our attempts to kind of work in  
4 partnership with the DOE to again, using that kind of  
5 public health preventative approach to at the  
6 earliest possible juncture, you know find out which  
7 students are potentially going to need developmental  
8 education when they come to CUNY and to try to offer  
9 the broadest array of supports that we can at the  
10 earliest juncture. And to think of this in  
11 partnership. So, Andrea, I don't know if you want to  
12 say a little bit more about any of this work but this  
13 is a very unique opportunity you know with a new  
14 Chancellor, with this kind of elevation of students  
15 success that's happened. I think you know we may be  
16 at a very critical inflexion point. Do you want to  
17 say anything more about?

18 ANDREA SOONACHAN: Sure and I think we are in, as  
19 Donna is saying, I happen to add to that, that you're  
20 in a really great moment in terms of you asked about  
21 data, which we really appreciate. We have a lot of  
22 data that shows that experiences like College Now,  
23 earning college credit before graduation, accelerates  
24 students momentum and persistence in higher ed. And  
25 we have strong programs through our Early College

1  
2 initiative and College Now with many years of success  
3 data and an infrastructure to run these programs at  
4 scale. We know that the DOE leadership has seen  
5 that. Is interested in it and sees that as a  
6 critical pathway to supporting students recovery over  
7 the coming years. Thinking about how do we – that  
8 the expansion of our co-requisite courses is a good  
9 example of how we've been looking at what works.  
10 What do we need to do now? What do we need to  
11 continue to expand in the coming years?

12 DONNNA LINDERMAN: Yeah, I just wanted to  
13 underscore that last point Andrea made Council Member  
14 Joseph that the very, very positive data that we're  
15 seeing that students do so much better in these co-  
16 requisite models. Rather than kind of just hoarding  
17 that, kind of on the post matriculation side, we're  
18 so excited that this is being you know shared –

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

20 DONNA LINDERMAN: With our DOE partners, so that  
21 students can access these more impactful models  
22 earlier, so that they completely eliminate you know  
23 those needs before they come in. So, we very much  
24 see that as a bridge, kind of across that continuum.

25

1  
2 In terms of your question about CUNY Start and  
3 its size, because of the broad array of reforms you  
4 heard about today, at the moment, you know and so  
5 many fewer students are now being referred to  
6 remediation you know because we changed our you know,  
7 we improved our placement approaches. You know, we  
8 have the opportunity to students go directly into  
9 gateway course with appropriate integrated –

10 At the moment, we think that the size of CUNY  
11 Start and Math Start are appropriate within the  
12 continuum but I would say, there's a constant need to  
13 analyze the needs of students as they're moving into  
14 the university. So, we're very cognizant of the fact  
15 that learning loss has occurred because of the  
16 pandemic. That some of the students that Council  
17 Member Brewer mentioned, that could potentially be  
18 welcomed back into high school you know, or into  
19 alternative programs, could come to the university  
20 with greater need.

21 So, Jeanette used the term nimble, these are  
22 programs that we can pivot to expand if need be in  
23 response to need. So, at the moment, we think there  
24 are right sized but we are fully prepared to pivot to  
25 address need. You know with these programs to ensure

1  
2 that you know that they are available to any student  
3 who might benefit from them.

4 And then, you had a third question and I just  
5 wanted to make sure I didn't lose track of it. Oh,  
6 it was about the Proficiency Index specifically. So,  
7 I just wanted to make sure I understood the question.  
8 We see the Proficiency Index and kind of the  
9 elimination of assessment tests and the scale up of  
10 corequisite offerings. As one of the most kind of  
11 consequential policy decisions CUNY has made you know  
12 over the past probably 25-years to remove barriers  
13 for students to move into their degree pursuits. So,  
14 we will constantly be tweaking the Proficiency Index  
15 and dialogue with our faculty. You know feedback  
16 from advisors, you know from students directly to see  
17 what we can do but the you know from my point of view  
18 as someone whose been at CUNY for a long time, I have  
19 to say this is probably one of the most consequential  
20 improvements I've seen you know to access and equity.  
21 You know, removing key barriers that stood in front  
22 of far too many students for so long.

23 So, at the moment, you know we're continuing to  
24 tweak it. We're continuing - all colleges are  
25 implementing it, that offer the Associate Degree and

1  
2 you know I think that we're on the right track to you  
3 know ensuring that many, many more students can move  
4 directly into their gateway math and English courses  
5 with the appropriate level of support, whether it's  
6 an integrated model like Co-rec. Participating in a  
7 transition program like CUNY Start or Math Start or  
8 University Skills Immersion Program or one of our  
9 pre-college programs. So, it's kind of all of a  
10 piece but that's - I didn't need to get up on my soap  
11 box about the Proficiency Index but given the thrust  
12 of your question, I thought - I just - I felt it was  
13 important for you to hear that from me.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Definitely, it is  
15 important for you to tell me what you guys are doing,  
16 so we know on my end as the Chair of Education, I'm  
17 talking to the Chancellor to make sure they're doing  
18 the right thing on their part. So, when we come  
19 together, there's no disconnect. There should never  
20 be a disconnect between education and higher  
21 education, even youth services and all those programs  
22 should go hand and hand. So, I'm a little  
23 disheartened that there's a big lack of I can say  
24 from the DOE part. So, we'll make sure we'll get

25

1  
2 them into shape. Thank you so much for today. Thank  
3 you. Thank you Chair Dinowitz for your leadership.

4 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you Council Member.  
5 I hope you get them into shape because as was  
6 mentioned by myself and multiple members here, I  
7 think the mere existence of these programs sure is  
8 helpful to the students but that they exist indicates  
9 a huge gap in the education that we are giving to our  
10 students before they even get to CUNY.

11 But as Ms. Soonachan mentioned that this is a  
12 great moment. It is a great moment for another  
13 reason. In this right here, in this virtual room, we  
14 have two public school teachers. Myself and Council  
15 Member Joseph. You have adjunct professors right  
16 here as Council Members. You have a former Chair of  
17 this Committee. You have people who are deeply  
18 dedicated to ensuring that our students of all ages  
19 exceed throughout their entire school career and into  
20 adulthood. Not just in elementary school, middle  
21 school, high school or in college in these silos. As  
22 it so often seems our education system exists.

23 So, I look forward to working with my colleagues  
24 and continuing to work with all of you to make sure  
25 that is their through line and that we are all

1  
2 working together. So, that K-16 initiative can  
3 really you know fulfill the promise of what it's  
4 supposed to be and maybe one that can even become a  
5 zero through 90 Initiative. Alright, that's the  
6 goal. Now, I'm going to turn it back to Emi Briggs  
7 to introduce the next panel.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair Dinowitz.  
9 Seeing as that we have no other Council Members  
10 waiting to ask any questions and Chair, if you do not  
11 have any additional questions for the Administration,  
12 we can start public testimony.

13 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Yes, please.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Alright, so we  
15 have concluded the Administrations testimony and we  
16 will now turn to public testimony. I would like to  
17 remind everyone that I will call people up in -  
18 individuals in panels. Once your name is called and  
19 a member of our staff will unmute you and you may  
20 begin your testimony once the Sergeant at Arms sets  
21 the clock and gives you the go ahead.

22 All testimony here will be limited to three  
23 minutes. Remember that there is a second - there's a  
24 few second delay when you are unmuted before we can  
25

1  
2 hear you, and please wait for the Sergeant at Arms to  
3 announce to announce before you begin your testimony.

4 In our first panel, we will hear from Assembly  
5 Member Karines Reyes, James Davis President of PSC  
6 CUNY, Lorraine Cohen, Felicia Wharton and Adela  
7 Effendy. Assembly Member Reyes, you may begin.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

9 KARINES REYES: Thank you. Good afternoon, New  
10 York City Council Members, advocates and members of  
11 the general public. My name is Karines Reyes. I am  
12 a member of the New York State Assembly, representing  
13 the Southeast Bronx neighborhoods of Parkchester,  
14 West Farms, Castle Hill, Van Nest and Unionport.

15 I am pleased to be here to testify in support of  
16 the Proposed Resolution calling on the New York State  
17 Legislature to pass legislation and the necessary  
18 investment of state funds to implement the New Deal  
19 for CUNY. This legislation and budgetary proposal  
20 would infuse \$1.8 billion, over 5 years, into the  
21 city's higher education system and turn it into a  
22 21<sup>st</sup> Century, world-class institution that New  
23 Yorkers need and deserve.

24 Specifically, this Proposal would reverse  
25 persistent cuts that the City University of New York

1  
2 has experienced over the course of the last few  
3 decades, while adequately serving the needs of  
4 students and faculty. Over the last 30 years, the  
5 system has seen drastic reductions in funding for  
6 student aid, which has resulted in a loss in vital  
7 services, a scarcity of full-time and tenured  
8 faculty, and a dependence on overworked and underpaid  
9 adjuncts.

10 Further, historic cuts to CUNY and the 1975 New  
11 York City fiscal crisis resulted in the system  
12 charging tuition for undergraduate courses, just as  
13 communities of color finally started to gain access  
14 to the city's public university system. Students of  
15 color, who have been effectively barred from taking  
16 courses at CUNY due to de facto segregation until the  
17 mid- to late-1960s, would experience less than a  
18 decade of free tuition for undergraduate courses,  
19 when the system first imposed tuition in 1976.

20 The increasingly prohibitive cost of higher  
21 education is a matter of dire racial and class  
22 injustice that requires our attention, as leaders and  
23 policymakers. The New Deal for CUNY Proposal would  
24 establish minimum staff-to-student ratios for full-  
25 time faculty, hire more mental health counselors and

1  
2 academic advisors to provide more social emotional  
3 support for students, institute a capital plan to  
4 repair crumbling infrastructure, and make  
5 undergraduate education tuition free, once again.

6       These solutions will greatly improve student and  
7 faculty experience on CUNY campuses and make a  
8 quality, college education more attainable and  
9 affordable for students. All New Yorkers benefit  
10 from the mission of our city university. My Borough  
11 of the Bronx has nearly 40,000 students and  
12 approximately 2,000 faculty that rely on CUNY as  
13 their ticket to opportunity. The wonders that a good  
14 college education, especially a quality CUNY  
15 education, can do in the lives of New Yorkers are  
16 presented in my own personal story.

17       In the early 1990's, after my mother and I  
18 immigrated to this city from the Dominican Republic,  
19 my mother enrolled in CUNY courses for English and  
20 accounting at LaGuardia Community College in Queens.  
21 Many times, she took me with her. In those classes,  
22 I would copy instructor's notes from the board and  
23 it was a way for me to pick up valuable words and  
24 help me develop English proficiency.

25       SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

1  
2           KARINES REYES: I'll finish. These experiences  
3 would allow me to become a registered nurse in Bronx  
4 hospitals and become a productive member of the  
5 middle-class. My story, Senator Gouardes stories  
6 and the stories of countless New Yorkers have been  
7 heavily influenced by CUNY.

8           We need to ensure that the system is the best  
9 that it can be, through massive re-commitment and re-  
10 investment, for current and future generations of  
11 students and faculty. The New Deal for CUNY is  
12 central to achieving that vision and the New York  
13 City Council's resolution in support of this  
14 legislation will help the Legislature take this big  
15 step forward for our city and state.

16           Lastly, I thank you Council Member Justin Brannan  
17 for introducing this important Resolution and Council  
18 Member Eric Dinowitz from the Bronx for calling this  
19 hearing today.

20           COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.  
21 I will now call on James Davis.

22           SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

23           JAMES DAVIS: Good morning. First Of all, thank  
24 you so much Assembly Member Reyes for those powerful  
25 words and thank you Chair Dinowitz and Members of the

1  
2 Committee. It is good to be with you for this  
3 inaugural hearing of the Committee of Higher  
4 Education under its new leadership.

5 I am James Davis, I'm the President of the  
6 Professional Staff Congress, the union representing  
7 30,000 faculty and professional staff at CUNY. And  
8 I'll be followed today by Dr. Lorraine Cohen,  
9 Professor at LaGuardia Community College, and Dr.  
10 Felicia Wharton, Lecturer at the Brooklyn Educational  
11 Opportunity Center and the PSC Treasurer.

12 We are grateful to the Committee for holding this  
13 important hearing and it's been a really rich  
14 discussion so far. On Remediation programs at CUNY,  
15 programs such as CUNY Start and the CUNY Language  
16 Immersion Program, are essential to students' ability  
17 to gain vital skills to succeed in college and to  
18 graduate. According to a 2018 study done by CUNY,  
19 the number of students who need remediation is  
20 significant, approximately 80 percent of New York  
21 City public high school graduates enter CUNY's  
22 community colleges in need of remediation. And that  
23 need, it is safe to assume, has only grown during the  
24 pandemic.

1  
2           At every semester, CUNY welcomes new students  
3 with high school diplomas or the equivalent who lack  
4 some of the academic skills needed to succeed in  
5 credit-bearing college classes. For students with  
6 major remedial needs, CUNY has established pre-  
7 matriculation programs, you've heard about already.  
8 They provide full-time academic support and immersive  
9 skills-development curricula. And as you'll hear from  
10 my colleagues, the positive impact that remediation  
11 programs make on the path of a student's academic  
12 career is profound. And over time the process by  
13 which students are placed in programs however has  
14 changed and shifted students away from a more  
15 rigorous academic experience to a lesser one.

16           And additionally, in the past our members who  
17 taught these courses were full-time faculty but now,  
18 many are contingent faculty, paid hourly or on a  
19 contract basis. And that shift exacerbates wage  
20 disparities in the university and deprofessionalizes  
21 the work, which is unfair to students and our  
22 members. So, the PSC welcomes this Committee's  
23 review of remediation programs at CUNY. We look  
24 forward to working with you to strengthen them in  
25 ways that support students and offers our members the

1  
2 resources to provide students the services they  
3 deserve.

4 With the bounds of my time, I'd just like to  
5 speak on behalf of the Resolution on the New Deal for  
6 CUNY. We're very grateful to the members of this  
7 Committee who support that Resolution, it's a pivotal  
8 moment for this university. Your yes vote on the  
9 Resolution introduced today will show our state  
10 legislatures that public higher education is a  
11 critical priority and a smart allocation of the  
12 states resources. If it's fully enacted, it will  
13 reverse the current enrollment trends and profoundly  
14 enhance educational -

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

16 JAMES DAVIS: Thank you very much for the  
17 opportunity. I don't need to remind you that it's a  
18 unique moment in Albany and we do need your support  
19 to help realize CUNY's promise as the people's  
20 University. Thank you.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.  
22 I will now call on Lorraine Cohen to begin.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

24 LORRAINE COHEN: Good afternoon. Thank you for  
25 having me and the rest of my PSC colleagues. My name

1  
2 is Lorraine Cohen, I am a Professor of Sociology in  
3 the Social Science Department at LaGuardia Community  
4 College. Because of the shortage of time, I want to  
5 focus my remarks on the issue of evaluation and  
6 placement of incoming students who require  
7 developmental education or ESL. Unfortunately, the  
8 history of CUNY and city and state government has  
9 been very resistant to funding developmental  
10 education and ESL. And in fact, I would argue that  
11 many of the changes that are undertaken here are based  
12 on trying to save money rather than looking at the  
13 question of the best possible kind of education that  
14 our students should receive.

15 One of the things and we heard that this was a  
16 very significant change earlier, was the change to  
17 using an algorithm from faculty developed instruments  
18 and this was put in a positive light. I would like  
19 to raise questions about it. Many department Chairs  
20 and faculty have taught full-time faculty and regular  
21 academic programs have challenged the use of this  
22 algorithm. It does not necessarily always identify  
23 students who do need remediation or ESL. It  
24 sometimes can't deal with older adults or students

25

1  
2 that attend specialized high school or immigrant and  
3 foreign students.

4 It's unclear what's happened to these students  
5 but it is possible that their disappearance is one of  
6 the causes of lower enrollment in the community  
7 colleges. Until this semester, four year colleges  
8 have had much less severe enrollment problems. Has  
9 the change and the means of placing students in two  
10 or four years schools been a factor that partially  
11 explains the reason that community college enrollment  
12 has dropped so precipitously? As far as I know there  
13 has never been an assessment of what the difference  
14 is between using the algorithm to identify students  
15 who need developmental schools and prior methods of  
16 evaluation.

17 It certainly is cheaper because you don't need  
18 faculty to read for example, or grade faculty  
19 developed instruments. And in addition, management  
20 you know, I'm sure there are that CUNY Start and the  
21 other programs that have been described are one  
22 important development and one form of developmental  
23 education.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

1  
2 LORRAINE COHEN: However, continuing Ed teachers  
3 are paid much less than full-time academic faculty  
4 and especially part-time faculty. I would ask that  
5 this Committee really prob more deeply into the use  
6 of the algorithm and moreover, really talk to the  
7 people who have PhD's in reading, ESL and have taught  
8 and develop pedagogy over many years in terms of  
9 teaching developmental education and ESL. Thank you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.  
11 I will now call on Felicia Wharton.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now. Felicia, we  
13 can't hear you.

14 FELICIA WHARTON: Can you hear me now?

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Yes.

16 FELICIA WHARTON: Okay, thank you. Good  
17 afternoon, Chair Dinowitz and Committee Members. My  
18 name is Felicia Wharton and I'm the Treasure of the  
19 Professional Staff Congress. Before I took this  
20 office, I spent most of my career, which is about 20  
21 years working in remediation. My research and  
22 teaching Agenda Reflex and addresses the complexity  
23 and significance of mathematics teaching and learning  
24 in classrooms.

1  
2 I prepare students to become independent and  
3 creative thinkers within and beyond the classroom. I  
4 have taught at an alternative high school, community  
5 college, senior colleges and I am a faculty member at  
6 a Brooklyn education opportunity center which is  
7 administered by city Tech. I have observed various  
8 methods to help students succeed in remediation at  
9 each institution and I can tell you, there is no one  
10 size fits all technique to assist under prepared  
11 students to succeed. As the population of learner  
12 changes, we have to be innovative with new approaches  
13 to make a difference. At the BOC, we help students  
14 obtain their high school diploma, many of our  
15 students, then go on to college.

16 One of my students Lynn, was a student at the  
17 BEOC who is now attending BMCC. She began her  
18 academic career in CUNY Start. She said to me last  
19 night that the BEOC provided her with a foundation  
20 and that CUNY Start paved the way to provide academic  
21 momentum. Lynn entered BMCC in the fall of 2019 and  
22 will graduate in spring 2022 with a degree in public  
23 health. She's also on the Dean's list and this is  
24 one of many stories. I've also taught at City Tech  
25 in the Summer Immersion Program. This is a program

1  
2 where the majority of the students are incoming, just  
3 recently graduated from high school and we prepare  
4 them to exit their mathematics remediation class.

5 I urge the city legislator to invest and support  
6 systems for underprepared students and I also support  
7 A New Deal for CUNY. It is time to fill in the gaps  
8 and help students complete their journey from  
9 entrance to graduation. The New Deal for CUNY  
10 increases the ratio of full-time faculty to students  
11 to enhance the quality of students experiences and  
12 also increase student retention. When students enter  
13 college, they are provided with so many choices and  
14 sometimes, very little guidance and adequate access  
15 to advisement is an issue that students face.

16 The transition to college is very challenging for  
17 students whether it's your high school or you're an  
18 adult learner. And we have to provide services to  
19 help students complete. Many students are first in  
20 their families, they are working, they are  
21 caregivers. The New Deal for CUNY will bring the  
22 ratios of academic advisers and mental health  
23 counselors to national standards. Also, many  
24 students drop out of college due to financial burdens  
25

1  
2 and a New Deal for CUNY commits to an undergraduate  
3 first on a free tuition model at all CUNY colleges.

4 I urge the city legislator to provide adequate  
5 funding developmental education because all students  
6 deserve to succeed. I also call upon the state  
7 legislature and the governor to -

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

9 FELICIA WHARTON: To ask the New Deal for CUNY  
10 and reinvest in CUNY. Thank you.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.  
12 I will now be calling on Adela Effendy to testify.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

14 ADELA EFFENDY: Thank you to everyone on this  
15 video call and the City Council Committee on Higher  
16 Education for this opportunity to speak about CUNY  
17 Start Math Start Program. My name is Adela Effendy  
18 and I have worked with the CUNY Start Math Start  
19 Programs in various capacities during the last eight  
20 years of my professional life. I'm also a mother, a  
21 Licensed Social Worker, and an advocate for our  
22 communities having been raised and grown up in Queens  
23 and attended public school my entire life.

24 While I cannot substitute for the voices of our  
25 staff and students, I have had considerable time

1  
2 facilitating direct practice work and would like to  
3 share the essence of the CUNY Start Math Start  
4 Programs, including its level of support to students  
5 who have remediation needs.

6 Last semester, as I attended one of the virtual  
7 classes I was just recently a Student Advisor for, I  
8 observed our Math Instructor expertly attend to the  
9 needs and inquires of students genuinely confused and  
10 intimidated by what they were learning. I heard what  
11 felt like self-doubt in one of our student's voice,  
12 followed by the comment "you know, I was never good  
13 at Math and at 42, I'm still learning how to do the  
14 basics; I'm sure everyone else is getting this",  
15 followed by validation from other students. "No,  
16 some of us just graduated high school and we're still  
17 learning the basics, too". In my role at CUNY Start  
18 Math Start, I wear multiple hats, along with advising  
19 students, I also oversee our entire recruitment  
20 process and very often have these individual and  
21 group conversations that include students' varied  
22 narratives about English and math, and about how  
23 they've never felt like English and math, more often,  
24 math were accessible to them. Often times, during  
25 this process, the first time they may be hearing

1  
2 about remediation would be through our program, which  
3 can make for some challenging, initial conversation.

4 Our level of engagement with students from the  
5 very first call is intentional and consistent. As we  
6 build in multiple layers of support for students  
7 before they even step into our first virtual, in-  
8 person or hybrid classes, they have had numerous  
9 contacts and connections with our staff members  
10 already. Countless times, students have shared their  
11 multiple responsibilities of balancing home, work and  
12 school; of having to navigate housing and/or food  
13 insecurity; of having to be the first person in their  
14 family to attend college; of being survivors of  
15 intimate partner violence; of physical and/or mental  
16 health challenges; the list can go on.

17 The challenges of navigating a huge institution  
18 like CUNY coupled with having remediation needs can  
19 and has been mitigated through a program like CUNY  
20 Start Math Start, where students can bravely disclose  
21 what they feel comfortable with, while working on  
22 their academic basic skills, all the meanwhile  
23 multiple staff members, along with students  
24 themselves, are working behind the scenes and on the  
25

1  
2 front lines to respond to and support students with  
3 said needs.

4 CUNY Start Math Start is unique in that our  
5 pedagogy is inclusive of inquiry, small group work,  
6 intentional scaffolding and uplifts parts of the  
7 universal design framework to ensure that students'  
8 needs and strengths are being met. It's an  
9 intensive, yet supportive program; academically  
10 rigorous, yet confidence-building space for students;  
11 and an intentional space for students to begin owning  
12 their education. From students themselves, they have  
13 let staff in our program –

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

15 ADELA EFFENDY: Know the following: "I kind of  
16 like Math now!", "I can go into my Math credit course  
17 more confidently" and "I am excited to continue  
18 college". Of course, we cannot ignore the  
19 environmental anomalies that continue to act as  
20 barriers for our students' success, much more than  
21 its idea of safety. We aim to provide an academic  
22 and socioemotional sanctuary for students to truly  
23 thrive in all that they are and aim to be, in both  
24 academics and in their personal lives. Thank you for  
25 your time and consideration.

1  
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony  
3 for their testimony. Before I turn to Chair  
4 Dinowitz for additional questions, I would like to  
5 remind Council Members to raise their hand in the  
6 Zoom – use the raise hand function in Zoom to  
7 indicate that you have a question for the panel.  
8 Chair Dinowitz.

9 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you and thank you to  
10 the panelists for sharing your testimony. My first  
11 question is for Assembly Member Reyes. During this  
12 hearing and I think even in the news, a lot of what  
13 we hear about the New Deal for CUNY is free tuition,  
14 which is vital. And we heard Ms. Wharton talk about  
15 academic advisors, better ratios for academic  
16 advisors. So, tuition mostly, a little bit of  
17 academic advisors. Are there other things in the  
18 bill that would benefit students beyond academic  
19 advisors and free tuition at our CUNY schools?

20 KARINES REYES: Yes, the bill would also include  
21 increased mental health counselors, academic advisors  
22 full-time professors. Currently, the CUNY system  
23 relies and I said this in my testimony on a lot of  
24 adjunct professors and we also believe that making  
25 sure that we are paying full-time professors

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adequately and having them have a what we call the ratio, an appropriate ratio of students to professor for in classrooms is important. So, that's part of the language in the New Deal for CUNY as well and there is also allocations for capital improvements. Because we've talked about our crumbling infrastructure that needs significant investment. So, students have a dignified classroom in which to learn and take their classes.

CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: So, to be clear, it's very comprehensive. It is about the students and their academics and their finances but it's also about their mental health. It's about the professors who are in the CUNY system who are providing that education. It's about the physical space. So, it really is a comprehensive piece of legislation.

Ms. Effendy, so as someone who's engaged in the CUNY Start program, you spoke about things beyond academics. Often in these hearings, often as I think we speak about college. We speak a lot about academics, right? It's what we think we go to college for but obviously in Assembly Reyes's bill, it addresses so much in the academics and you mentioned things beyond academics, food insecurity,

1  
2 DV, housing. Just out of curiosity and I don't know  
3 if you can provide a number or a quantity but how  
4 much of your time or energy would you say is  
5 dedicated to the academic aspect of your interaction  
6 with a student? And how much of that time and energy  
7 is focused on non-academic things? Such as, you  
8 mentioned food insecurity, DV, relationship, housing.

9 ADELA EFFENDY: Yeah, I think it's hard to  
10 quantify because for us the academics is the social  
11 emotional and the students if they're having  
12 attendance issues, let's say there usually  
13 symptomatic of other issues or barriers that are  
14 preventing them from being their best academic  
15 selves. And so, a lot of our conversations can start  
16 off as academic but they will turn into a lot of the  
17 needs that they've expressed or a lot of the barriers  
18 that they expressed to attending classes or to being  
19 able to hand in homework or whatever it is. And so,  
20 I would say it's 50/50, sometimes it's 60/40, it just  
21 depends on the student.

22 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Right and that's such an  
23 interesting; I know it's anecdotal but it's such -  
24 even in your 60/40, 50/50, very often - we spoke  
25 about this before how K-16 is important but so often

1  
2 teachers are taught solely about data and academics  
3 and not enough about half of what education in your  
4 view is, which is social emotional and all the other  
5 factors that impact that. And not enough of what  
6 Assembly Reyes is addressing in her legislation.

7 But speaking of that, I do you know in contrast  
8 to what I just said, I do want to go back to Mr.  
9 Davis and Ms. Cohen. You spoken about, you mentioned  
10 80 percent in community colleges need remediation and  
11 it was also mentioned that these programs are  
12 becoming less academically rigorous and Ms. Cohen,  
13 Professor Cohen mentioned lower standards. So, Ms.  
14 Cohen, can you – Professor Cohen, can you speak a  
15 little more about these lower standards and then Mr.  
16 Davis, you can also speak about what you meant by  
17 less academically rigorous.

18 LORRAINE COHEN: I'm not saying that the CUNY  
19 Start and those other programs are doing a terrible  
20 job but I do want to contrast the qualifications for  
21 people on the academic side of the institution. Both  
22 in terms – especially at the community colleges.  
23 Teaching and pedagogy is number one.

24 So, there been – and there have been all kinds of  
25 models of teaching ESL or reading and writing, even

1  
2 math. I do think - I've heard a lot about the  
3 integrated model that has been discussed and it's  
4 gotten fairly positive reviews. Not from every one,  
5 so I'm not sure what the - you know, I don't know how  
6 to evaluate that because it's anecdotal. But I can  
7 say that among the different forms of teaching  
8 developmental education, have been clusters where  
9 students are taking a developmental course for no  
10 credit but they are also taking academic courses which  
11 provide them credit, so they might be taking three  
12 courses together that are interdisciplinary that do  
13 provide credit.

14 The other issue is you know the issue of  
15 financial aid. That's one of the great motivators  
16 for putting so many students in continuing ed. But  
17 that was not written in stone. Financial Aid has  
18 changed over the years. It was reduced under other  
19 governors. Part-time financial aid was reduced. So,  
20 I'd like to think that the scope of financial aid  
21 could change, so that the penalty for taking an  
22 academic developmental course would not be as great.  
23 But I just want to - I mean, I want to just assert  
24 and affirm that the academic teachers who teach  
25 reading, writing, and ESL have gone themselves

1  
2 through you know a whole process of evaluation from  
3 the time they are hired until they get tenured and  
4 promoted and a lot of that evaluation is on their  
5 effectiveness and pedagogy. And we cannot ignore  
6 that these programs in continuing education aren't  
7 cheaper and that that is a main motivation for  
8 shifting from the academic side of the institution to  
9 continuing ed.

10 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you and uhm, to Mr.  
11 Davis, going back to this you mentioned less  
12 academically rigorous. Can you expand upon that  
13 please?

14 JAMES DAVIS: Sure and I think that Lorraine  
15 mentioned a number of things that I was going to  
16 indicate as well. I mean, I think the account that  
17 we heard from the CUNY Administration was that -- had  
18 to do with the fact that national research shows that  
19 you know remediation students entering into  
20 remediation. The effort was to reduce overtime the  
21 number of students who required those courses and to  
22 bring them into co-requisite classes rather than pre-  
23 requisite classes on the basis that it impeded their  
24 pathway to graduation and I think what we're  
25 concerned about is the effort to reduce those

1  
2 numbers. I think the figure that was cited for fall  
3 of '21, was 43 percent in remedial courses. That,  
4 you know that that not compromise the actual needs of  
5 the students in those classes.

6 In other words that that not be artificially  
7 driven but rather be actually driven by the organic  
8 academic needs of the students themselves. To pick  
9 up on something that Lorraine just mentioned, it's  
10 really worth noting that in terms of the labor force,  
11 in - in terms of the full-time instructors within  
12 CUNY Start and CLIP, the College Language Immersion  
13 Program. The most recent data that we have is that  
14 there are 134 full-time instructors in those  
15 programs. Whereas, in the continuing education  
16 programs, there are almost 800 part-time instructors  
17 there.

18 And so, I think what you see is the structure of  
19 the instructional staff weighs so much heavily, six  
20 times more heavily in the part-time titles, which is  
21 not in any way a criticism or an indictment of those  
22 instructors themselves. But rather the funding model  
23 to support the students and the quality that's  
24 available through the funding model that supports  
25

1  
2 full-time instructors with the expertise that  
3 Lorraine has just described.

4 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: The only thing, we have  
5 two of those part-time instructors on the Committee,  
6 so. I didn't really get into - I know the issue of  
7 full-time and part-time instructors is an important  
8 one and one that will be addressed at other hearings.  
9 One that I know has come up in multiple  
10 conversations, I guess I'm concerned that in shifting  
11 models, because I've seen this in the Department of  
12 Education where in a push to increase graduation  
13 rates in the public schools, the need for remedial  
14 courses also increased, right? When there's an  
15 obsession with data and looking good, it's often the  
16 students or another institution that has to make it  
17 up and it just sounded like you were sort of  
18 suggesting that perhaps these programs and changing  
19 the model is also perhaps an attempt to you know kind  
20 of make it look like more is being done for the  
21 student when in fact, they are being less prepared or  
22 receiving less the preparation that they need to  
23 succeed in their courses.

24 Before - I have a few more questions, before I  
25 do, I know Council Member Brewer has a question.

1  
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Brewer, feel  
3 free to -

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very much. I  
6 just wanted to ask Ms. Wharton the same kind of  
7 question because you have so many different  
8 experiences of different aspects of trying to get  
9 students ready. So, I just wanted to ask you,  
10 listening to this conversation, is there one way? I  
11 know you said each student case by case. You were  
12 very clear about that and I really, I agree 100  
13 percent but just thinking about some of the  
14 discussions we have had, do you see that there is a  
15 better path for the future? Because I keep trying to  
16 think of what should we be doing that would be the  
17 best for the students and for CUNY? So, I just was  
18 wondering if you could comment?

19 FELICIA WHARTON: Council Member Brewer, as I  
20 said, when I teach every semester, it's like you have  
21 a different crop of students. They are different in  
22 their abilities. They are different of how they  
23 learn. So, one of the things that I try to focus on  
24 and I think should help is, how do you modify the  
25 curriculum to the students you're serving? How do

1  
2 you meet the students where they're at, so we can  
3 take them further? That's one of the issues that I  
4 see.

5 Also, to make remediation a little bit better, is  
6 I think there has to be communication between all  
7 parts. CUNY Start, the co-requisites, USIP, they  
8 need to be communication because it doesn't end after  
9 students leave remediation. They are still going to  
10 need some resources to help them get to the finish  
11 line and I there needs to be communications in all  
12 parts as students move towards. And I can only speak  
13 for mathematics because I teach mathematics and it's  
14 very - students find it very difficult. They doubt  
15 themselves even though they are on the right path.

16 In terms of retention, I've always found it  
17 strange that when students enter remediation, that  
18 they were in silos. That they weren't allowed to  
19 take credited courses. I think having students in  
20 remediation also take credited courses will also help  
21 with retention and also help students as they  
22 progress. They are not in silos anymore. They are  
23 actually engaging with the whole academic community.  
24 They're engaging with other students. They are  
25 getting motivated. They are seeing their peers and I

1  
2 think that is for me, when I started teaching  
3 remediation many years ago, was you know kind of  
4 shocking that there were these silos. Why can't they  
5 also take a remedial course and also take credited  
6 courses?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very much.  
8 Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you. One of the  
10 questions I asked the previous panel was the burden  
11 or impact of the corequisite model on the professors.  
12 And they answered and I'm just wondering from the  
13 professors, the teachers, PSC's perspective, if they  
14 have thoughts on the burden if any, that will place  
15 on CUNY faculty. That's for you know, any of the  
16 panelists.

17 LORRAINE COHEN: I can answer that a little bit.  
18 One of the big struggles in the English Department at  
19 La Guardia Community College was to make sure that  
20 faculty - you asked this question City Councilman  
21 Dinowitz about compensation and the faculty to get  
22 now compensation for an extra hour where students  
23 comes in individually to talk to the teachers, get  
24 feedback about especially their writing, because most  
25

1  
2 of this is composition. And that has proven to be  
3 extremely important with getting the extra time.

4 And again, my knowledge is anecdotal that for  
5 example, a professor in math at BMCC, has said, this  
6 was very difficult. That the students were so far  
7 behind that she had to spend enormous amounts of time  
8 going over the developmental part and having less  
9 time to do the rest of the course content.

10 I also want to say one thing about algebra, which  
11 I know we're not talking about here but there is a  
12 kind of tracking when you say students don't have to  
13 take algebra. Because students are 18, they may not  
14 know they want to become a nurse or an engineer or a  
15 doctor at 18 but if they haven't taken algebra,  
16 that's not an option. They're going to have to take  
17 it again.

18 So, this idea that social scientists can get away  
19 with statistics, while some other disciplines can  
20 take algebra, is - I think it's to be questioned. As  
21 is the use of this method for placing students in  
22 community and senior colleges. I wanted to make that  
23 point. I don't have the empirical data but I would  
24 like to see research on this, on the part of CUNY  
25 itself.

1  
2 FELICIA WHARTON: Chair Dinowitz, I taught in a  
3 corequisite model for City Tech and I can tell you  
4 that it is very time consuming as Lorraine spoke  
5 about the math teacher. You have to be able to  
6 divide your time and try to figure out what  
7 deficiencies in developmental areas that the students  
8 lack. Also, what I found difficult is if I'm  
9 teaching a developmental class and the corequisite  
10 part is taught by another professor, then you have to  
11 then allocate time to meet with that person, so that  
12 you're working in this whole teacher model.

13 So, it's challenging but yet still doable but as  
14 Lorraine said, it takes a lot of work to try to move  
15 the students through the curriculum.

16 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you. I do have a  
17 question about that but I do, as someone who may have  
18 experience with the nursing and algebra comment, do  
19 you want add Assembly Reyes?

20 KARINES REYES: I actually wanted to agree with  
21 Dr. Cohen. The reality is that the thinking that  
22 some career tracks require, some prerequisites, while  
23 not others and trying to sift that out very early on  
24 before a student decides what their ultimate career  
25 path is, I think can set them up for not just failure

1  
2 but just an extended amount of time before they are  
3 able to complete their course work. And I think many  
4 CUNY students feel that way and have experienced  
5 that, myself included.

6 But I also wanted to add something, just from a  
7 workforce lens. I know we were talking about the  
8 importance of having full-time instructors. There's  
9 something to be said about a model that relies on  
10 part-time workers and the impact that has not just on  
11 the lives of those individuals that have to rely on  
12 part-time work. Peace mill part-time work in order  
13 to survive but also, the impact it has on the  
14 education of students where you interrupt that  
15 continuity of being able to meet with instructors,  
16 having them be more accessible and whether they are  
17 completely focused on the task at hand, which is  
18 educating you.

19 Because they may be too worried trying to make  
20 ends meet because they're only allotted part-time  
21 positions and that is something that through the New  
22 Deal for CUNY and this legislation and this increased  
23 funding that we're seeking we're trying to address as  
24 well.

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CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Ms. Wharton – Thank you Assembly Member and yes, New Deal for CUNY. Ms. Wharton, you mentioned about the challenges of collaboration and the time it takes to do that collaboration or to do the extra work, if you are the one in charge of the corequisite model. We did hear from the Administration that there is training on pedagogy, growth mindset, things of that nature, important pedagogical skills. Is there also training and time and money allotted for what you feel is the – you know is the work associated with the collaboration and time and knowledge needed for this corequisite model.

FELICIA WHARTON: I don't know if there's time or money. I know at City Tech, we had one meeting; I thought it was really great with collaborating with CUNY Start and the developmental faculty. We only met once, so I don't know what happened after that. But I do know that it has to seamless. In addition to being with time, if you have a full-time faculty member working with a part-time faculty member, you have to find a way to coordinate so that you both meet to discuss what needs to be done in the class. Sometimes that might be difficult as Assembly Reyes

1  
2 says with someone being you know a part-time worker;  
3 they might have to be at another college or  
4 university.

5       So, it's very difficult sometimes. When I taught  
6 my corequisite, I was the only person; it kind of  
7 made it easier for me because I was teaching the  
8 entire course and the corequisite part. Sometimes  
9 with a corequisite you might have a peer tutor or a  
10 tutor that has to teach that section. So, you have  
11 to then coordinate with that person. Coordination is  
12 difficult and co-teaching is also very difficult. In  
13 terms of professional development, in the Summer USIP  
14 program, we usually have professional development for  
15 one to two days where we talk about pedagogy,  
16 teaching, and in all the eight years I've taught in  
17 USIP, we've always had that professional development  
18 model. And I thought it was very interesting. We  
19 talk about mindset and grit and I always enjoyed  
20 those sessions. I don't know if that answered your  
21 question.

22       CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you. Thank you and  
23 I see Mr. Davis with his hand up and then after this,  
24 I'll turn it back to the Moderator to move onto the  
25 next panel.

1  
2 JAMES DAVIS: Thanks Chair Dinowitz, so briefly,  
3 and I know some of my other colleagues are going to  
4 be speaking to some of the issues around contingency  
5 and quality. I'm looking here at Pam Stenberg,  
6 Rebecca Smart, Heather James, passionate educators,  
7 all of them. So, they're going to speak to some of  
8 the issues that you've raised. I just wanted to pull  
9 together a couple of threads. You know, when right  
10 before I became President, I was Chapter Chair at  
11 Brooklyn College and some of the toughest meetings  
12 that I had were during the pandemic when funding for  
13 CUNY, which had been budgeted by the state was held  
14 back, 20 percent in 2020. And if you look at where  
15 CUNY went to cut during those moments, it was the  
16 only place that they could go which was a contingent  
17 appointments. And the American Language Academy that  
18 serves English Language Learners at Brooklyn College  
19 was one of the first places that got cut.

20 The English Language Center, which you know  
21 employs contingent faculty at La Guardia Community  
22 College, cut appointments. Some of those managed to  
23 be restored but if you think about why you know, why  
24 are we cutting in the middle of Flatbush Brooklyn,  
25 the American Language Academy? Why are we cutting in

1  
2 the middle of Queens, the English Language Center?  
3 Institutions that aim to be partners with the  
4 community, right in those times. That's not just  
5 people's jobs and livelihoods that being you know cut  
6 during the pandemic, that's providing a really  
7 important service to the students and to the  
8 immigrant communities and English Language Learners  
9 in those communities.

10 So, I just feel like it's important to make the  
11 connection here between the budgetary needs that  
12 we're talking about when we look at legislation like  
13 New Deal for CUNY and the issues of quality and who  
14 we're aiming to serve in the various kinds of  
15 remedial programs that are the subject of today's  
16 hearing. So, thanks.

17 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you, thank you Mr.  
18 Davis. I'm not going to turn it back to Emi Briggs,  
19 the Moderator for the next panel.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair Dinowitz.  
21 The next panel of public testimony will be in the  
22 following order: Lia Guzman Genao from Young  
23 Invincibles; Sean Miller from Young Invincibles;  
24 Ayesha Schmitt from the New York Public Interest  
25

1  
2 Research Group and Pamela Stenberg from PSC CUNY.

3 Lia Guzman Genao, you may begin your testimony.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

5 LIA GUZMAN GENAO: Good afternoon everyone. My  
6 name is Lia Guzman Genao and I am a Junior at John  
7 Jay College of Criminal Justice majoring in Law &  
8 Society. I would like to thank the New York City  
9 Council and the Committee on Higher Education for the  
10 opportunity to testify at today.

11 As a first-generation immigrant student, I  
12 received little to no guidance from anyone when  
13 entering college. I was left to figure out the  
14 difficult financial aid processes by myself. This,  
15 along with many other circumstances that were out of  
16 my control resulted in my inability to get any  
17 federal or state aid in my first year of college.  
18 Anxiety started to build up inside of me because I  
19 knew that neither I nor my parents could afford to  
20 cover my tuition. I also knew that if I wanted to  
21 succeed and build a future for myself, I needed to  
22 attain a college degree. This left me with no other  
23 option than to take out a student loan for my first  
24 year of college.

1  
2       Last semester, I had to resort to having two jobs  
3 while also being a full-time student on top of  
4 balancing extracurricular activities in order to  
5 cover my expenses. This not only had a negative  
6 impact on my academic but on my mental and physical  
7 well-being as well. My feelings of mental exhaustion  
8 and burnout became debilitating and as a result, my  
9 grades and ability to connect with my peers greatly  
10 suffered. I felt extremely hopeless and was very  
11 close to giving up. Many of my peers are  
12 experiencing these issues.

13       CUNY students must deal with the rise in cost of  
14 tuition and other unique stressors. Affording  
15 tuition is just one of our expenses, we must also  
16 cover costs like rent, food, transportation, health  
17 care and more.

18       More than 60 percent of CUNY undergraduates come  
19 from households with an income less than \$30,000 a  
20 year. 80 percent of students are also people of  
21 color and 42 percent report having experienced food  
22 insecurity. Many are also parents and more than half  
23 of us work at least part-time. As soon as we were not  
24 getting the support that we needed in order to thrive  
25 in college and beyond. As a collective, we must work

1  
2 towards the betterment of all CUNY students, and a  
3 way to do that is by helping to alleviate the  
4 financial burdens that we are facing.

5 The New Deal for CUNY provides free undergraduate  
6 tuition and many other investments which would  
7 empower students. These investments will provide a  
8 huge relief for us. Free tuition means that students  
9 will be able to invest more time into their academic  
10 and professional development. And for many students,  
11 free tuition means that they will not have to choose  
12 between paying for rent or paying for tuition.

13 Passing the New Deal for CUNY is an essential  
14 step if we want to ensure the social and economic  
15 mobility of students like me. I am asking that the  
16 Committee urges the New York State Legislature to  
17 pass the New Deal for CUNY for a brighter and better  
18 future for all CUNY students. Thank you so much for  
19 your time.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.  
21 I will now call on Sean Miller.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

23 SEAN MILLER: Thank you Council Members and to  
24 the Higher Education Committee. I'm Sean Miller,  
25 Northeast Regional Director of Young Invincibles.

1  
2 We're a national policy and advocacy nonprofit  
3 dedicated to amplifying the voices of young adults,  
4 18-34 in the political process and expanding economic  
5 opportunity for our generation.

6 I'm here today to share our adamant support for  
7 the Resolution supporting the New Deal for CUNY.  
8 Young Invincible strives to represent and elevate  
9 youth priorities with a focus on access and equity in  
10 higher education, healthcare and workforce  
11 development. The New Deal for CUNY aligns with these  
12 values. In the expressed needs of the young adults  
13 whom we serve. The bill was crafted to make up for  
14 decades of underinvestment which have hurt community  
15 schools, instructors and mostly, our students. Our  
16 working class young folks in New York City although  
17 being a historically, underrepresented constituency,  
18 are speaking loud and clear when they tell us that  
19 CUNY schools cannot have enough counselors, full-time  
20 faculty or financial support.

21 Having working previously in Harlem Children Zone  
22 Center for Higher Education and Career Support, these  
23 transit CUNY schools were also evident. As many of  
24 our students, those supported by HCZ's nationally  
25 renowned cradle to career pipeline, still struggle to

1  
2 find adequate financial aid, instructional support  
3 and mental health resources at CUNY schools. When  
4 your family makes less than \$30,000 a year in New  
5 York City as is the case for almost two in three CUNY  
6 students, even \$100 expense each semester can be a  
7 significant barrier to college matriculation  
8 persistence and graduation.

9       As the pandemic continues to exacerbate systemic  
10 barriers for all New Yorkers but especially from most  
11 marginalized communities, the challenges and expenses  
12 the young adults face from tuition and nontuition  
13 costs, unemployment, healthcare affordability and  
14 rent are rising sharply. The long term impacts of  
15 the pandemic are a clear sign that we must act now to  
16 advance more equitable policies, racial justice and  
17 economic justice for all.

18       The New Deal for CUNY, would transform the CUNY  
19 system into the nations foremost engine for social  
20 mobility and equity. Given the CUNY's population's  
21 immense size and racial composition, being roughly 80  
22 percent students of color, we believe that every New  
23 York student should have an equitable opportunity to  
24 earn a post-secondary degree, find stable living wage  
25 employment and financially support themselves and

1  
2 their families. We know that this long overdue  
3 reinvestment amid the city's pandemic recovery will  
4 more adequately address hundreds of thousands of  
5 young people's mental health, college access and  
6 success and our local economies collective recovery  
7 and growth.

8 We ask the Committee unanimously urge New York  
9 State Legislature to pass the New Deal for CUNY and  
10 help ensure a brighter tomorrow for New York's public  
11 school students. Young folks are our future but also  
12 our present and we need your support now. Thank you  
13 for your time.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.  
15 I will now call on Ayesha Schmitt.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

17 AYESHA SCHMITT: Good afternoon. My name is  
18 Ayesha Schmitt and I am the Higher Education  
19 Coordinator for NYPIRG. Today, we share our support  
20 for the City Council Resolution calling on the New  
21 York State Legislature to pass the New Deal for CUNY.  
22 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

23 While there is a lot to like in the Governor's  
24 Executive Budget, the overall increase in state aid  
25 will not reverse the decade-long state divestment in

1  
2 CUNY. Now, CUNY is experiencing an existential  
3 crisis of dropping enrollment, resulting in dropping  
4 revenue which, in turn, undercuts CUNY's ability to  
5 bolster services that attract new students. The  
6 pandemic triggered enrollment losses at CUNY when  
7 comparing Fall 2019 and Fall 2021. It will take  
8 major new investments to right the ship and it will  
9 be money well budgeted. The research into the  
10 economic benefits of investing in higher education  
11 have been overwhelmingly positive. CUNY is a  
12 critical engine for New York's economy for racial and  
13 economic equity and can power New York's COVID  
14 recovery. Significant increases in tuition have  
15 resulted in students shouldering more and more of the  
16 costs of running New York's public college  
17 institutions.

18 While New York's substantial financial aid and  
19 opportunity programs have shielded some students from  
20 these hikes, there are many who fall through the  
21 eligibility cracks of who cannot apply for reasons  
22 outside of their control. New Deal for CUNY  
23 legislation introduced by Senator Gounardes and  
24 Assembly Member Reyes, would support CUNY students by  
25 phasing out tuition, setting better student-to-

1  
2 teacher ratios so that students can get the classes  
3 they need to graduate and receive adequate individual  
4 attention. These policies together will make CUNY  
5 attractive and attainable for prospective new  
6 students.

7       The need for added mental health resources at  
8 college campuses could not be clearer. With limited  
9 counselors on campus and students may experience long  
10 wait time for services or difficulty being connected  
11 to other resources. Currently CUNY only has one  
12 mental health advisor for every 2,700 students.  
13 Students like Randy Garcia, at the City College of  
14 New York, struggled to schedule an appointment with a  
15 counselor when they felt stressed and burnt out,  
16 sometimes having to wait weeks or months to get an  
17 appointment. Students are also struggling receiving  
18 proper advisement to be able to graduate on time.  
19 Like, Melissa Dominguez from Hunter College ran into  
20 trouble with long wait times and miscommunication  
21 when trying to schedule appointments with advisors to  
22 enroll in classes needed to graduate.

23       She was later caught off guard when they found  
24 out that they are a few credits short for graduation.  
25 This only adds to stress and time it takes for

1  
2 students to graduate. That's why NYPIRG supports the  
3 City Council resolution calling for the State  
4 Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, the  
5 New Deal for CUNY. Thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.  
7 We will now call on Pamela Stenberg.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

9 PAMELA STEMBERG: Good afternoon and thank you  
10 Chair Dinowitz and the Council for holding this  
11 meeting on Higher Ed and good afternoon to all the  
12 panelists. My name is Pamela Stenberg and I'm an  
13 Adjunct Assistant Professor in English. For the past  
14 ten years at City College of New York and Hostos  
15 Community College. I'm also a graduate of City  
16 College and a current student at the Graduate Center.

17 I am here to talk about the New Deal for CUNY and  
18 what it offers our students, faculty and our city.  
19 As you've heard, my students being released. Every  
20 semester, they write to me regarding issues with the  
21 elder care and childcare, jobs and unemployment,  
22 housing and mental health. I can't tell you how  
23 financial issues stress their everyday lives and they  
24 are navigating these issues while COVID hangs over  
25 them. Some of them are trying to figure out how to

1  
2 get money to get to school. Some of them are  
3 homeless. The only way we can begin to lift up our  
4 students is to clear the hurdles that years of racist  
5 austerity policies have put in their way by returning  
6 to a tuition free universe.

7 Assembly Member Reyes referred to our crumbling  
8 infrastructure. At City College, students have  
9 created Instagram and Facebook pages that detail in  
10 images the leaking ceilings, crumbling walls and  
11 broken elevators and escalators, which impact the  
12 daily life of the University and present barriers to  
13 accessibility. The public investment called on by  
14 the New Deal for CUNY would invest in our  
15 infrastructure but that's not enough. Many, actually  
16 the majority of the instructors who educate CUNY  
17 students, especially at the earlier and remedial  
18 levels are in the very same way. Cobbling together  
19 enough classes or other jobs such as bartending or  
20 dog walking to pay their rent, keep on the lights and  
21 feed their children. And this is because over 12,000  
22 instructors are underpaid part-time faculty members,  
23 of which I am one.

24 How can we do our jobs when our jobs are  
25 dependent on budget fluctuations? One year there's

1  
2 money; we're all hired. The next year, 3,000 of us  
3 fired. It's mindboggling that a multibillion  
4 university that educates half a million people a year  
5 can run an institution like a rigid factory, right?  
6 Our students and faculties are human beings with  
7 lives and families, not numbers on a balance sheet.  
8 Imagine the impact it has on students year over year  
9 when they go back to ask for a recommendation or  
10 advice and many of their teachers are no longer  
11 there. How can we encourage, advise and help our  
12 Black and Brown students to join the professor when  
13 it's such an unstable profession? We need stable  
14 full-time faculty and a stable path to full-time for  
15 those who want it.

16 The New Deal for CUNY makes all this possible. I  
17 urge the City Council to pass this Resolution. Thank  
18 you.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.  
20 I will now turn to Chair Dinowitz for any questions  
21 for this panel.

22 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Well, the first thing I  
23 want to say is, I want to thank you all for your  
24 testimony. It's the first Committee hearing I've  
25 been to where an entire panel spoke at or within the

1  
2 timeframe. So, congratulations to all four of you.  
3 I was very impressed the entire time. It's like you  
4 all did your homework.

5 I was you know, deeply touched by a lot of your  
6 testimony, your personal stories but one thing that  
7 Stenberg said was, is that we're not numbers on a  
8 balance sheet and we're people, right. That seems to  
9 be the story all the time. Any city agency, you  
10 know, they look at numbers and spreadsheets but  
11 people in education, we look at people. And I think  
12 there are so many stories to share, like the stories  
13 you all shared. I'm interested to hear some of the  
14 other ways beyond press conferences, that these  
15 stories can be shared. Because this really is about  
16 our students, our professors and the future of our  
17 city. And I think you have to raise your hands to be  
18 unmuted.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Ms. Stenberg.

20 PAMELA STEMBERG: Yeah, thank you. Yeah, my  
21 internet is a little foggy today. Can you repeat  
22 that question?

23 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Yeah, just some of the  
24 other — because again, what you said, we're not  
25 numbers on a balance sheet. Some of the ways that

1  
2 these stories can be shared, so that we as a Council  
3 and the State Legislators and the Governor who are  
4 considering this legislation. Whether the state's  
5 considering it or us considering the Resolution, can  
6 think about the people and not whatever – not numbers  
7 on a balance sheet, as you said. How we can put  
8 those stories front and center.

9 PAMELA STEMBERG: Well, I know that James Davis  
10 and Felicia are here but the PSC has collected these  
11 stories from part-time faculty members, have posted  
12 them. We have a what was it – a Twitter campaign–  
13 we've had Twitter Campaigns. We have also places on  
14 our website where these part-time faculty member  
15 stories can be shared. Also, I'm not sure how the  
16 students are sharing these stories but you know,  
17 these are really important and we're always out there  
18 trying to make sure that the people who are part of  
19 our bargaining unit right, the people that we work  
20 with, are you know heard and that their stories are  
21 out there. So, I don't know Felicia and James could  
22 probably speak even more to what exactly we're doing.

23 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Yes please, Mr. Miller.

24 SEAN MILLER: So, one thing that Young  
25 Invincibles does very well, which I would like to

1  
2 continue is writing blog posts and helping students  
3 to kind of craft and own their story. Rewriting  
4 online and being able to share those articles far and  
5 wide with the media, you know with fellow people who  
6 are organizing. So, we'll certainly be using our  
7 young advocates program. A group of 20 individuals,  
8 14 of which are at CUNY schools to urge them to write  
9 about their own stories and experiences at CUNY  
10 schools and we'll be sure to share that as those are  
11 ready.

12 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Yeah, I encourage you to  
13 share that widely but also specifically with the very  
14 Council Members and Assembly Members and Senators,  
15 who would be voting on the Resolution and the bill  
16 respectively. And now, I'm going to turn it back to  
17 the Moderator for the final panel.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair Dinowitz. As  
19 you mentioned our final panel of panelists will  
20 include the following: Dr. Heather James of PSC CUNY  
21 and Rebecca Smart of PSC CUNY. Dr. James, you may  
22 begin.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

24 DR. HEATHER JAMES: Thank you. Hello Rebecca and  
25 hello Chair Dinowitz and everyone else and it's funny

1  
2 before this started, you were joking about using  
3 salutations and somehow I got my Dr. thrown in there,  
4 so I feel very special. But you can definitely call  
5 me Heather and thank you again for having me here.  
6 It's been a pleasure Chairman to experience your  
7 first hearing.

8       Basically, I'm here to testify on behalf of the  
9 New Deal for CUNY from my perspective but also to tie  
10 that to remediation. When you all know that our  
11 students are struggling to recover from COVID, our  
12 faculty is struggling to keep up, as many have said.  
13 Sometimes I'm a Professor, which I am a full-time  
14 Professor at BMCC but I'm also a mental health  
15 professional and advisor, a childcare provider, tech  
16 support. It's not an exaggeration. We see the same  
17 social, emotional needs that CUNY Start sees and the  
18 reality is that wrap around services require funding.

19       So, CUNY Start, in my understanding based on my  
20 conversations with my colleagues, offer students a  
21 dedicated advisor. That's one of the things Council  
22 Member Brewer that ASAP does as well and that it's  
23 known for. We know that dedicated advising works.  
24 It raises graduation rates. We have that data, it's  
25 right there. So, that's where I come back to the New

1 Deal for CUNY, right? Which would fund more  
2 advisors, for improve and help students, fund those  
3 mental health counselors that we desperately need.  
4

5 As mentioned, a large percentage of our students  
6 came in needing remediation even before the pandemic  
7 and now many have you know all that missed some years  
8 of high school and really have high academic and  
9 emotional needs. And so, we need that greater  
10 investment that the New Deal can give.

11 When the CUNY Administration folks were here, I  
12 did hear a Ms. Linderman mention that CLIP is as  
13 really critical program at the community colleges and  
14 I just want to highlight for you Chairman Dinowitz  
15 that a group of CLIP instructors from BMCC, did  
16 submit joint testimony talking about the crisis of  
17 underfunding of that program. And in fact, in Fall  
18 2021, we had more students than we could actually  
19 enroll. We had to tell 120 students, sorry, you're  
20 on a wait list or go somewhere else. Because there  
21 just wasn't enough space and that Language Immersion  
22 Program is what helps bring people in. So, I'm happy  
23 that we're planning to expand programs like that. I  
24 think it's really important that we encourage the  
25 whole Council to support these types of initiatives

1  
2 just in general and really explain how important the  
3 New Deal is and helping move that forward.

4 I know everyone comes to you saying, you know  
5 this is the time. You get that refrain a lot but we  
6 really do have a crisis here and the fact is we need  
7 this stuff on budget at the state and city levels.  
8 So, I just really appreciate your support and the  
9 opportunity to be here. Thank you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.  
11 We will now call on Rebecca Smart.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

13 REBECCA SMART: Last but not least. Hi, I'm  
14 Rebecca Smart, I am an Adjunct at the Borough of  
15 Manhattan Community College with Heather and I also  
16 am an Adjunct at Baruch. I have also been an Adjunct  
17 at Nassau Community College at Fordham University, at  
18 where else? SUNY Old Westbury, because I'm an  
19 Adjunct. I've never made enough from one school to  
20 survive in New York City and this is a problem for my  
21 students. I am not available the same amount that I  
22 could be if I were full-time. I don't have the  
23 money. I actually have been - since I started  
24 working at BMCC, I've been homeless. I have had to  
25 depend on the generosity of my friends to have a

1  
2 place to live on a CUNY salary. I have – and since  
3 I've gotten an apartment, I have still had months  
4 where, when I'm not teaching, I'm not paid, so I have  
5 had to apply for welfare. And I go to the Department  
6 of Public Services that provides these monies and  
7 they say, wait, you work at CUNY? And they're like,  
8 I went to CUNY and then they give me the money  
9 because they're like, this seems like bullshit.  
10 Sorry, pardon my language.

11 This makes CUNY Walmart, right. That they aren't  
12 paying me sufficiently, so that I can survive and so,  
13 the taxpayers then have to provide support for me to  
14 cover my rental arrears. So, this is a huge problem  
15 and the New Deal for CUNY by both increasing the  
16 number of full-time faculty, which I hope to become  
17 one, since I have been working full-time for CUNY for  
18 ten years just at a part-time salary. But another  
19 thing that's important is, I have a 21-year-old  
20 daughter who was attending Brooklyn college last year  
21 and her frustration with trying to get an academic  
22 advisor appointment, trying to talk to a financial  
23 aid advisor, even trying to talk to a professor. So,  
24 I said, "baby, they are probably adjuncts." And she

25

1  
2 said, "I don't care, they should be able to return --"  
3 She did not reenroll this year.

4 Another reason is because she couldn't - she  
5 doesn't have money and I certainly don't have money  
6 because again, I am an underpaid adjunct. So, the  
7 New Deal for CUNY is life changing, could be life  
8 changing for myself, for my daughter and for my  
9 students who need me to be able to provide time that  
10 I just don't have because of how much work I have to  
11 do.

12 And there's part of me that's really mad right  
13 now because I have been saying these same things  
14 about my living conditions and my working conditions  
15 for at least four to five years now. This is not a  
16 new story. I remember talking to Harvey Epstein in  
17 his office and telling him the same exact thing about  
18 how CUNY is Walmart. Maybe it was three years ago.  
19 So, this is not new and this has been going on for  
20 too long and it needs to stop. And I know everyone  
21 here is in support of the New Deal for CUNY, but I  
22 just want you to understand that and I'm going to  
23 over.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

1  
2 REBECCA SMART: That the students are not the  
3 only ones who are facing these difficult conditions  
4 of housing insecurity and food insecurity because of  
5 the nature of the austerity funding at CUNY. And we  
6 need to make a commitment to the future of New York  
7 City by getting this funding in place for CUNY.  
8 Okay, now I'm done.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.  
10 We actually have one more panelist who's just logged  
11 on. Daniel Casey from PSC, you may begin now.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

13 DANIEL CASEY: Yeah, hi, good afternoon. I'm  
14 sorry, I've been in and out a little bit today. I  
15 had to go and keep my office hours with my students.  
16 I don't know how to be in two Zoom rooms at once. If  
17 someone could teach me how to do that, I'll try.

18 I wish I could have spoken a little earlier  
19 because I would have followed quite neatly behind  
20 Donna Linderman and Jeanette Kim but just to - well,  
21 I don't have to remind you what they spoke about.  
22 They spoke so well about the pre-matriculation  
23 programs at CUNY and they provided statistics and a  
24 great overview. I noticed that they gave the  
25 majority of their attention to CUNY Start and Math

1  
2 Start, both fantastic programs. But I'd like to say  
3 just a little bit more on behalf of the CUNY Language  
4 Immersion Program if I may. And I'm an Instructor  
5 with the CUNY Language Immersion Program at Hostos  
6 Community College. I'm also an adjunct with the  
7 English and humanities departments. I kind of patch  
8 it together the way a lot of people do but I'm  
9 fortunate that I do my patching all on one campus.

10 I've been working for the Language Immersion  
11 Program, CLIP for 15 years now and I'm very, very  
12 proud of what we do and I'd just like to tell you a  
13 little bit about it. Kind of give you close up  
14 rather than you know statistics and such.

15 Just to give you a sense of how we do what we do  
16 right. And I know that this hearing is primarily  
17 concerned with the New Deal for CUNY but I also am  
18 aware that CLIP receives funding from New York City  
19 and so, this seemed like a good opportunity just to  
20 remind you all who we are and what we do and how.

21 We provide 25 hours of - well, students receive  
22 from us 25 hours of instruction and practice in the  
23 English language and also in academic skills  
24 development, reading, writing, listening, speaking,  
25 grammar. And they come to us - well, pre-pandemic,

1  
2 they were in the classroom five hours a day, five  
3 days a week and we have morning programs and evening  
4 programs. And we've been running online and now  
5 we're kind of transitioning back toward campus and  
6 some of us are teaching hybrid now and I guess, we're  
7 hoping to be back on campus and maybe by next  
8 semester.

9 The students can come to us for up to one  
10 calendar year. We have a rolling enrollment, they  
11 can come in spring, summer or fall and not all of the  
12 students need to stay a whole year with CLIP but  
13 those who take advantage of CLIP make enormous  
14 progress with their reading and writing skills  
15 especially, but also listening and speaking and with  
16 their academic skills development. And what we do is  
17 it's called Content based or thematically organized  
18 instruction. So, we use content to teach the  
19 language, right.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

21 DANIEL CASEY: I'm sorry.

22 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Please finish your -

23 DANIEL CASEY: Was that a time -

24 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Yeah.  
25

1  
2 DANIEL CASEY: Okay, thank you. I don't think  
3 I'll need the whole time. Okay, I don't think I'll  
4 need the whole time. I think I'd just like to  
5 explain how we do this.

6 So, we use content to teach the language and  
7 instructors have a great deal of freedom to develop  
8 their own courses if they want to but we have support  
9 in the central office and they also provide you know,  
10 develop and provide materials for us. A program, a  
11 course might be - it might be science-based, it might  
12 be history-based, it might be literature-based, we  
13 don't pretend that we're teaching biology per say,  
14 but we might have a medical theme, a medically themed  
15 CLIP course for example. I tend to use literature  
16 because I was initially trained to be a secondary,  
17 middle or secondary language arts teacher and what I  
18 like to do is to - while I'm teaching the English  
19 language, also giving my students an opportunity to  
20 read the sorts of books that they might have read if  
21 they gone to high school here.

22 So, I want to give you one example of one of the  
23 courses that I developed. It's called, 'I'll see you  
24 in court.' And in that course, we read - well, first  
25 we read 12 Angry Men. We read To Kill a Mockingbird,

1  
2 which isn't of course all in the court room but  
3 there's the famous courtroom scene and we read,  
4 Inherit the Wind and those are our narrative or  
5 fiction text and at the same time, the students are  
6 reading about researching and preparing presentations  
7 about pivotal supreme court cases. So, the reading  
8 is both narrative and non-narrative or fiction and  
9 nonfiction, if you will and the students are learning  
10 a great deal about American Literature, American  
11 Culture and American History while they're also  
12 improving their English language skills.

13       Students tell me often that they'll be reading  
14 one of the books assigned for our CLIP course and  
15 somebody on the train will say, "oh, I remember  
16 reading that book in school." "I read To Kill a  
17 Mockingbird. I remember that. I loved it." And the  
18 students just feel like they're part of it, you know.  
19 Like they're part of this country right? That they  
20 are grabbing a hold of - they've been given a piece  
21 of our culture and being welcomed in. And just - I  
22 don't have it with me and even if I did, I don't  
23 think you'd be able to see it on the screen very well  
24 but I have somewhere here a beat up paperback copy  
25 now of To Kill a Mockingbird. I've marched the

1  
2 students through this book five years in a row. This  
3 is before the pandemic. Five spring semesters and I  
4 have a copy of this book that's held together with  
5 rubber bands and on the bridge of the book, one of  
6 the students wrote in pencil, it's kind of faint but  
7 it's written there in pencil. One of the students  
8 wrote this and I found it in the classroom. Best  
9 book ever. And it's like a trophy. It's like a  
10 trophy for a teacher like me you know and I just  
11 wanted to share that with you and let you know and  
12 give you a little bit of a closeup into CLIP and I'm  
13 just one of 70 some instructors and they're all  
14 wonderful, brilliant people with great ideas. And  
15 we've been very fortunate to have the support of the  
16 city for more than 25 years now and we're very  
17 grateful for that and of course, we hope it  
18 continues. And thank you very much for giving me an  
19 opportunity to share this with you today.

20 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your  
22 testimony. We have now heard from everyone who was  
23 signed up to testify. We appreciate your time and  
24 your presence. If we inadvertently missed anyone  
25 that would like to testify, please use the raise hand

1  
2 function in Zoom now and I will call on you in the  
3 order of your hands raised.

4       Alright, seeing no one else, I would like to note  
5 that written testimony, which is reviewed in full by  
6 Committee Staff may be submitted to the record up to  
7 72-hours after the close of this hearing by emailing  
8 it to [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov).

9       Chair Dinowitz, we have concluded public  
10 testimony for this hearing and I will now turn it  
11 back to you for closing remarks.

12       CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you Emi and thank  
13 you to our elected officials, our panelists, to the  
14 Administration and of course, to everyone who  
15 attended this meeting, for joining us at this  
16 hearing. As we heard today, there are significant  
17 needs in our city for robust support in our CUNY  
18 system. This includes comprehensively addressing the  
19 needs of students entering college without the  
20 requisite skills through programs such as CUNY Start  
21 and of course with corequisite courses.

22       Part of it also means recognizing that CUNY does  
23 not exist in isolation. It exists as part of a  
24 continuum. As discussed today, I look forward to  
25 working with CUNY, the DOE, other relevant agencies

1  
2 to make sure that our students get exactly the type  
3 of support they need, including students with  
4 disabilities and that their needs are met as early as  
5 possible. That data is substantively shared between  
6 CUNY and the DOE. That communication is clear and  
7 that we coordinate efforts, so we can truly address  
8 the needs of our students, the future of our city.

9 I also want to thank those advocates here for  
10 their work towards passing the New Deal for CUNY. If  
11 we were to fulfill the legislative mandate to provide  
12 that equal access, the opportunity and importantly,  
13 to serve as a vehicle for upward mobility of the  
14 disadvantaged in the City of New York including the  
15 students academic and social needs, and our workers  
16 in New York City. It is vital then that we pass the  
17 New Deal for CUNY.

18 I thank you again for attending and participating  
19 in the hearing. This meeting is adjourned. [GAVEL]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date March 21, 2022