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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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February 28, 2022
Start: 1:00 p.m.
Recess: 4:52 p.m.

HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING (VIRTUAL ROOM 4)

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

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

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

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

COUNCIL MEMBERS: (CONT.)

Lincoln Restler
Pierina Ana Sanchez
Lynn C. Schulman
Althea V. Stevens
Sandra Ung
Vickie Paladino
Gale A. Brewer

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A P P E A R A N C E S

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3 Carolyne Quintana
4 Deputy Chancellor of Teaching and Learning
5 Opportunities for New York City Public Schools

6 Mirza Sánchez-Medina
7 Deputy Chief Academic Officer for Multilingual
8 Learners

9 Kleber Palma
10 Executive Director of the Translation and
11 Interpretation Unit

12 Scott Strickland
13 Director of Technology

14 Sufan Wan(SP?)
15 CACF Asian American Student Advocacy Project

16 Oscar Wang(SP?)
17 CACF Asian American Student Advocacy Project

18 Kaveri Sengupta
19 Coalition for Asian American Children and
20 Families

21 Estrella Juárez
22 Student

23 Aracelis Lucero
24 Translator for Estrella Juárez and Executive
25 Director of MASA

Francois Nzi
Founder and Executive Director of New York Math
Academy and Coaching Services, NYMACS

Rita Rodriguez-Engberg
Director of the Immigrant Students' Rights
Project at Advocates for Children of New York

Andrea Ortiz
New York Immigration Coalition

Natasha Capers
Director of the New York City Coalition for
Educational Justice

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

1
2
3 Tazin Azad
4 Elected Parent Leader from District 22 and Parent
Empowerment Advocate

5 Colin Buckingham
6 Active in Community Organizing

7 Victoria Munoz
8 Parent of a Student in Queens District 28

9 Chauncy T Young
10 New Settlement Parent Action Committee

11 Herman Younger
12 Parent Action Committee

13 Lois Lee
14 Chinese American Planning Council

15 Somia Elrowmeim
16 Women's Empowerment Coalition of New York City

17 Joseph Ko
18 Youth Program Counselor of the Korean American
19 Family Service Center

20 Salma Mohamed
21 Arab American Family Support Center

22 Tara Foster
23 Legal Services NYC

24 Kim Sykes
25 Delivering testimony for Zulma Vizcarrondo

Ray Lopez
LSA Family Health Service

Alejandra Vazquez Baur
Policy Entrepreneur at Next100

Debora Mulrain
Chief Organizational and Community Advisor for
Literacy Inc

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

Albania Jimenez
Literacy Inc.

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SERGEANT LUGO: PC Recording started.

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SERGEANT PEREZ: Cloud recording is rolling.

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SERGEANT LUGO: Thank you. Good afternoon everyone. Welcome to today's Remote New York City hearing of the Committee on Education. At this time, would all panelists please turn on your video.

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To minimize disruption, please place electronic devices to vibrate or silent. If you wish to submit testimony, you can send it to

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testimony@council.nyc.gov. Again, that's

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testimony@council.nyc.gov. Thank you for your

13

cooperation. Chair, we are ready to begin.

14

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CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Wonderful, thank you so much. Good afternoon everyone and we will start.

16

Hear me loud and clear correct?

17

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, we can.

18

19

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay, good afternoon and welcome to today's Education Hearing on COVID's

20

Impact on English Language Learners. For this

21

hearing, we'll use the abbreviation ELLs when

22

referring to English Language Learners. I am Rita

23

Joseph, Chair of the Education Committee.

24

Since May 2020, the Education Committee has

25

examined how COVID-19 pandemic has affected our

1
2 education system. In particular, the Committee has
3 explored the pandemic's impact on students' health and
4 safety, social emotional learning and wellbeing.

5 Academic achievement as well as interruption of
6 students' access to art instructions and
7 extracurricular activities. It is imperative that
8 this Committee pays particular attention to the
9 effects on vulnerable student populations such as
10 students with disabilities and students in shelters.

11 One student population that is near and dear to
12 my heart is English Language Learners, ELLs. The
13 Committee has not previously examined the pandemic's
14 impact on ELLs and as a former educator who also
15 served as English as a new language teacher and
16 coordinating, I know first hand the challenges and
17 struggles facing non-English speaking immigrant
18 students and families. English Language Learners
19 have faced significantly more challenges in schools
20 even before the pandemic.

21 I saw how immigrant families struggled to
22 navigate language barriers and other challenges that
23 impeded their students' academic achievement and I
24 grapple with how educators could assist in closing
25 the achievement gap between ELLs and their U.S. born

1
2 classmates. For example, on the pre-COVID State
3 Exam, only 9.3 of ELLs in in grades three through
4 eight scored at or above proficient, compared to 47.4
5 of all students in those grades citywide. Graduation
6 rates for ELLs in city schools also have historically
7 been much lower than those of other students.

8 According to DOE in 2020, 45.7 percent of ELLs
9 graduated within four years of entry into high
10 school, compared to 78.8 percent for all students
11 citywide. The challenges that ELLs and immigrant New
12 Yorkers face in public schools have only worsened.
13 Immigrant neighborhoods saw much higher rates of
14 COVID positive -19 than White affluent neighborhoods.
15 And immigrant communities are higher risk of poor
16 health as well as COVID-19 exposure due to high rates
17 of crowded living arrangements, poverty, and
18 inadequate access to healthcare and insurance.

19 The onset of COVID and the abrupt move to full
20 learning remote, full remote learning in March 2020
21 heightened the existing challenges ELL students.
22 Some of the most significant obstacles face ELLs
23 during full-time learning, included a lack of digital
24 devices and broadband, coupled with their parents
25 limited capacity to support home learning due to

1
2 language barriers. For many ELLs, being in school
3 every day and engaging with their school community,
4 is typically their only exposure to listening,
5 speaking, reading and writing English and remote
6 learning restricted that critical exposure for ELLs.
7 That also been a shortage of bilingual teachers and
8 staff to provide technical support regarding
9 instructions and assignments in families native
10 language.

11 In addition, compared to overall attendance
12 during 2019-2020 school year, ELLs have shown a much
13 greater decline in attendance. This dramatic change
14 in attendance is especially concerning given that
15 ELLs have the highest rate, highest drop out rate of
16 any student group. Last May, then Mayor Bill de
17 Blasio announced a new initiative, the New York City
18 Universal Academic Recovery Plan, which designated
19 approximately \$500 million for academic recovery
20 effort including support for ELLs. I can't think of
21 a better way to use federal dollars. However, since
22 the announcement, there has been no updates or
23 details available on the DOE's website as to how they
24 spent the funding.
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At today's hearing, the Committee hopes to learn what DOE has been doing since the start of the pandemic in March 2020 in order to identify and address, how can we reverse ELLs student learning loss? In particular, I would like to hear about the academic recovery instituted since July 2020, what progress, if any ELLs have made as a result and now that we have a new Mayor and Chancellor, we also welcome any information about the current administrations future plan or proposal to help at risk ELL students.

I want to thank everyone who testify today. I want to thank the City Council staff for all the work they put in today's hearing, Malcom Butehorn, Jan Atwell, Chelsea Baytemur, Masis Sarkissian. If I messed it, I'm sorry and Frank Perez. I also want to thank my staff Sam Weinberger and Conner Irving. I will now turn today's Moderator to Malcom Butehorn, Counsel to the Committee.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair and good afternoon everyone. My name is Malcom Butehorn, Counsel to the Education Committee. I would first like to make sure that we acknowledge Council Members present for the record. Council Members Louis, Ung,

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2 Narcisse, Menin, Stevens, Sanchez, Feliz, De La Rosa,
3 Krishnan and Abreu.

4 Before we begin testimony, I want to remind
5 everyone that you will be on mute until you are
6 called on to testify. I will be calling on public
7 witnesses to testify in panels of four after the
8 conclusion of the administrations testimony and
9 Council Member questions. Council Members who have
10 questions, should use the raised hand function in
11 Zoom. I will call on you in the order with which you
12 raise your hand after the full panel has completed
13 testimony.

14 We will be limiting Council Member questions to
15 five minutes and for the purposes of this virtual
16 hearing, we will not be allowing a second round of
17 questioning. For public witnesses, once your name is
18 called, a member of our staff will unmute you and the
19 Sergeant at Arms will give you the go ahead to begin
20 after setting the timer, so please listen for that
21 queue.

22 For fairness for all present, all public
23 testimony will be limited to three minutes per
24 person. When the Sergeant announces that your three
25 minutes is up, we ask that you please wrap up your

1
2 comments, so that we can move on to the next person.

3 I will now call on the following members of the
4 administration to testify: Carlyne Quintana, Deputy
5 Chancellor of Teaching and Learning Opportunities;
6 Mirza Sánchez-Medina, Deputy Chief Academic Officer,
7 division for Multilingual Learners; Kleber Palma,
8 Executive Director, Office of the Translation and
9 Interpretation and Scott Strickland Deputy CIO.

10 I will first read the oath and after I will call
11 on each member from the Administration to
12 individually respond. Do you affirm to tell the
13 whole truth and nothing but the truth before this
14 Committee and to respond honestly to Council Member
15 questions? Deputy Chancellor?

16 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: I do.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Ms. Sánchez-Medina?

18 MIRZA SÀNCHEZ-MEDINA: I do.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Kleber Palma?

20 KLEBER PALMA: I do.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And Scott Strickland?

22 SCOTT STRICKLAND: I do.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Deputy
24 Chancellor, you may begin when you are ready.

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2 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Thank you. Good afternoon,
3 Chair Joseph and all the members of the Education
4 Committee here today. I am Carlyne Quintana, Deputy
5 Chancellor of Teaching and Learning Opportunities for
6 New York City Public Schools. I am joined today by
7 Mirza Sánchez-Medina, my Deputy Chief Academic
8 Officer for Multilingual Learners. Also joining me
9 today are Kleber Palma, Executive Director of the
10 Translation and Interpretation Unit, Scott
11 Strickland, Director of Technology and additional
12 staff. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the
13 New York City Public Schools' efforts to address the
14 impact of COVID on English Language Learners. I know
15 this is a topic of significant importance to the
16 Chair. We've had several conversations about English
17 Language Learners and as a former long-time educator
18 in our public schools, I know she cares very much
19 about the students and we welcome the City Council to
20 be part of this conversation with us as well.

21 Since this is my first time appearing in front of
22 the Committee, I want to just share a little about my
23 background. I began my career as a first grade dual-
24 language teacher at a private school in Argentina.
25 My public-school career started about 20 years later,

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2 in the Bronx, first as a ninth grade ELA teacher and
3 then as a literacy coach. I was the District
4 Coordinator of Literacy for grades K-12 in the City
5 of White Plains before becoming the principal of
6 Bronxdale High School in the Bronx and that one is
7 still my favorite job.

8 I had an opportunity to support the development
9 of new principals citywide as a principal coach, I
10 got to see a range of schools across New York City
11 before leading the Affinity Schools Citywide Office.
12 I am excited to take on the role of Deputy Chancellor
13 of Teaching and Learning Opportunities under the
14 leadership of Chancellor David Banks. We have put
15 together a fantastic team but more importantly, I
16 believe wholeheartedly in his vision that each and
17 every one of our students can and will graduate on
18 the pathway to a rewarding career and long-term
19 economic security, equipped to be a positive force
20 for change in our communities and our city.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Deputy Chancellor, I'm sorry,
22 could you just speak just a little louder? It's just
23 coming in a little muffled, sorry.

24 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: I think it's the mask. Is
25 that better.

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COMMITTEE COUNSEL: It's a little better, yes.

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CAROLYN QUINTANA: Okay.

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COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

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CAROLYN QUINTANA: Yup, no problem. Sorry about that. You have heard Chancellor Banks state that every young person is filled with brilliance, promise, and gifts. He believes that all children deserve a strong academic foundation that prepares them to graduate with an employable skill set.

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To advance those goals, Chancellor Banks has outlined four essential pillars to improving our school system. And if you are available on

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2 Wednesday, he will be sharing this information and
3 his plan for this Administration on Wednesday
4 afternoon. These four pillars include: Reimagining
5 the student experience so that they are excited about
6 learning through group work, solving problems and
7 wrestling with issues that connect to their
8 communities; We will do that by scaling, sustaining,
9 and restoring what works, identifying amazing
10 practices around our system and sharing them so that
11 they can be models or examples for other schools to
12 emulate and from which to learn. We will prioritize
13 wellness and its link to student success, including
14 safe schools, access to green spaces, high-quality
15 nutrition and comprehensive whole-child support, so
16 that we can reach a broad range of each student's
17 needs. And finally, and this one really applies to
18 the group of people that we have here, empowering the
19 community and families to be our true partners.

20 As I think about the role we all play guiding our
21 young people to success, and as we begin this hearing
22 grounded in the impact of COVID on our English
23 Language Learners, I am reminded of the heroic
24 efforts and resiliency that all of you, including our
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2 staff, families, and students, have demonstrated thus
3 far during this global pandemic. Thank you.

4 We are fortunate to live in a city built by
5 immigrants, and to have a school system that reflects
6 the rich diversity of our communities. Over 140,000,
7 that's about 16 percent, of our almost one million
8 students receive services as identified English
9 Language Learners, and an additional 229,000 students
10 speak a language other than English at home. Our
11 students and their families come from over 200
12 countries and we speak over 175 different home
13 languages.

14 This administration is committed to providing our
15 multilingual and immigrant students with equitable
16 access to rigorous instruction and high expectations
17 in a safe and welcoming environment. The science of
18 learning and development tells us that we must
19 provide an education that affirms students' racial,
20 cultural, and linguistic identities. I firmly
21 believe that all people have the capacity for growth.
22 It is our responsibility, then, to build and
23 strengthen a multi-tiered system of learning and
24 development that equips adults with the competence
25 and confidence to create the conditions for all

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2 learners to thrive so that students can leave school
3 as positive forces for change, on a pathway to
4 independence.

5 We fully recognize that as a system we need to do
6 better to improve outcomes for English Language
7 Learners. The COVID-19 pandemic, as you heard the
8 Chair say already, disproportionately impacted our
9 multilingual and immigrant students and families,
10 many of whom serve as essential workers or live in
11 the neighborhoods that were hardest hit by the
12 pandemic. Remote learning was especially disruptive
13 for our ELL students who benefit most from an in-
14 person learning environment. Our full return to in-
15 person learning this year provides all students with
16 the sanctuary and support they need each day.

17 As the city continues to turn the corner on
18 COVID, we must support every student in their
19 recovery. We can't return to the way things were
20 before, and I'm thankful to this Council for your
21 advocacy that has helped to make much of this already
22 possible.

23 With federal stimulus funding and the support of
24 this Council, we made a historic \$350 million
25 investment to support schools with meeting the

1
2 social, emotional, and academic needs of students.
3 This includes an allocation targeted at multilingual
4 learners, with weights for newcomer and long-term
5 ELLs and for students with interrupted or
6 inconsistent formal education. Using formative
7 assessment data, every school was required to
8 determine multilingual learners that may need
9 additional support and intervention, and subsequently
10 design a support plan for those students. In
11 addition, New York City Public Schools made a
12 historic investment to bring to 100 percent Fair
13 Student Funding for all schools. The FSF formula
14 also includes weights for ELLs that schools can use
15 to provide ELL services.

16 As I mentioned prior with the pillars, we know
17 that families are our closest partners in helping
18 students thrive and we recognize that communicating
19 with our immigrant families was especially
20 challenging during the pandemic. As part of the
21 Chancellor's commitment to empowering families, we
22 are welcoming all families and will be seeking input
23 on the policies that affect their children. We want
24 to bring in our parents who are not typically engaged
25 with the school system and elevate their crucial

1
2 voices. I would like to thank the Council for being
3 partners in this critical effort and for its
4 unprecedented \$4 million investment in language
5 access to New York City Public Schools. You've
6 helped us improve outreach, engagement, and
7 communication with multilingual and immigrant
8 families.

9 With this funding, we are working with immigrant-
10 led community-based organizations and other
11 stakeholders to pursue several initiatives, including
12 a Know your Rights citywide campaign for families of
13 students with disabilities, enhancing the Parent
14 University platform, interpretation training for
15 bilingual school staff, and strengthening language
16 access supports in hard-to-reach communities.

17 Our shared mission is more vital than ever given
18 all our school communities have been through. We
19 know that there is much more to do to ensure that
20 every student and family receives the support they
21 need in order to be successful. I look forward to
22 our continued partnership and I thank you for all you
23 do for New York City Public Schools. I'm now going
24 to turn it over to Mirza, who will share a more
25 detailed account of our efforts to support our

1
2 multilingual and immigrant students and their
3 families during these unprecedented times. Thank you
4 for the time.

5 MIRZA SÀNCHEZ-MEDINA: Thank you, Deputy
6 Chancellor Quintana. I also want to begin by
7 thanking Chair Joseph and all the members of the
8 Committee, Education Committee for providing us this
9 opportunity to discuss our efforts on behalf of
10 multilingual and immigrant students and families.

11 Before I begin, I would like to provide you with
12 an overview of my background, a quick one. I have
13 been an educator for 36 years. I was first recruited
14 from Puerto Rico to be a bilingual chemistry teacher
15 at Martin Luther King High School. In 2003, I
16 founded Manhattan Bridges High School and designed
17 the school to specifically serve English Language
18 Learners. I led the school as a principal for over 15
19 years. I joined the Division of Multilingual
20 Learners in 2019 with the goal of improving outcomes
21 for our multilingual learners and immigrant students
22 citywide.

23 While we have seen increased graduation rates, as
24 the Chair alluded to or spoke to for ELLs over the
25 past several years, from 34.7 percent prior to my

1
2 arrival to the most recently announced 60.3 percent,
3 we still have considerable work to do to ensure that
4 every student can access and attain high quality
5 instruction in a supportive and inclusive
6 environment.

7 The Division of Multilingual Learners serves the
8 unique needs of students who speak a language other
9 than English at home. To accomplish this, we focus
10 on three parts. First, programs and services,
11 capacity building, and family and community
12 partnerships. This includes a multiyear strategy to
13 strengthen, sustain, and scale bilingual education
14 programs; developing research-based resources and
15 targeted professional learning opportunities;
16 supporting the college and career readiness of
17 multilingual learners and immigrant students; and
18 supporting families to exercise their rights to make
19 informed decisions about their children's education
20 through targeted resources and training for our
21 families and school-based staff.

22 Throughout the pandemic, we have provided
23 targeted support to ensure continuity of services for
24 our multilingual learners, including priority for
25 devices, technical support in families' home

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2 languages, and instructional units designed
3 specifically to support their learning.

4 For school year 2020-2021 schools developed an
5 updated ELL service plan to address the needs of
6 their multilingual learners during the remote and
7 blended learning. These updates included the use of
8 digital curriculum and texts in students' home
9 language, online videos to build background knowledge
10 and vocabulary, and virtual parent engagement in
11 families' preferred languages.

12 As we fully resumed in-person learning in Fall of
13 2021, we took a multifaceted approach to supporting
14 our multilingual learners that started during the
15 summer using the multitier system of support
16 framework. We also allocated approximately \$8
17 million to schools in all five boroughs to conduct
18 outreach to multilingual learners in the summer and
19 early fall. This included wellness checks with
20 students and families to identify any social and
21 emotional support needed and to collect valuable
22 information on our multilingual learners' language
23 development during the pandemic.

24 To support the academic recovery efforts Deputy
25 Chancellor Quintana shared, our office offered

1
2 guidance and professional learning on screening and
3 the use of data to support student progress. For our
4 schools with bilingual Spanish programs, we ensured
5 that screeners were available in both English and
6 Spanish. Schools with an existing bilingual
7 education program also received funding to purchase
8 or develop classroom libraries in their home
9 language. As we planned for a full return to in-
10 person learning, we further considered the type of
11 programs and resources schools serving a high number
12 of multilingual and immigrant students and families
13 would need to make them feel engaged and welcomed.

14 We provided these schools with funding to support
15 Dream Squads, school-based teams designed to
16 cultivate a safe and inclusive environment for
17 multilingual learners, immigrant youth, and
18 undocumented students. We also created programs to
19 help schools strengthen family engagement and cross
20 the digital divide.

21 Finally, strengthening graduation rates and post-
22 secondary readiness for multilingual learners and
23 immigrant students remains a priority, a very big
24 priority for me as well. With stimulus funding, we
25 designed the Immigrant Ambassador Program. An

1
2 initiative that matches our immigrant students with
3 CUNY students to foster mentorship and early college
4 awareness. We also expanded the Post-secondary
5 Readiness for ELLs Program PREP, to provide
6 multilingual learners and immigrant students with
7 culturally responsive advising toward a post-
8 secondary pathway of their choosing.

9 To support our overaged and under credited ELLs,
10 we are focused on re-engagement and dropout
11 prevention, particularly for those who took on work
12 or additional responsibilities to support their
13 families during the pandemic. Our division is
14 working closely with school community and advocates
15 to strengthen and scale what works best for our older
16 ELLs, including expanding access to ELL-focused
17 transfer schools in areas of need. We have heard
18 valuable feedback on the need for us to better
19 support these students from advocates, our City
20 Council partners and other stakeholders and we look
21 forward to continued community dialogue on this
22 important work.

23 We recognize that communicating with families
24 during remote learning was a significant challenge
25 for schools. To ensure our multilingual and

1
2 immigrant families remained informed during remote
3 learning, we continued to provide translation and
4 interpretation supports for schools to communicate
5 with families in their preferred language, including
6 over-the-phone interpretation services 24/7 in over
7 350 languages. We engaged with multi-media outlets
8 to share key updates around the device survey, remote
9 learning survey, and Parent University.

10 We also conducted live workshops for families in
11 languages other than English alongside our community
12 partners and city agencies such as the Mayor's Office
13 of Immigrant Affairs. We recognize that we are only
14 at the beginning of the recovery process, not the
15 end. Supporting the needs of ELLs will be one of our
16 most important ongoing priorities, and we will adjust
17 and refine our approach to ensure all students
18 receive the targeted services they need to excel. We
19 remain committed to addressing the needs of our
20 multilingual learners and the detrimental effects of
21 the pandemic on our students' development however
22 long that may take, while giving them a strong
23 academic foundation so they can thrive in school and
24 in life.

1
2 We welcome the partnership of this Committee of
3 Education in pursuit of these goals. I am happy to
4 address any question you may have. Thank you very
5 much.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, we'll now turn to you
7 for your questions. I just want to remind Council
8 Members that if they have questions following the
9 Chair, to please use the raise hand function on Zoom,
10 I will call on you in the order with which you raised
11 your hand. You will receive five minutes for
12 questions. We'll turn to the Chair.

13 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Malcolm. Thank
14 you Ms. Medina, thank you for all those who spoke.
15 We know that during the pandemic that attendance was
16 really low. What is the current EML population K-8
17 and from 9-12? Do you have any members?

18 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Thank you for that question
19 Chair. I don't have the numbers broken up but I can
20 absolutely get that for you. As of last week, the
21 year to date through February 15th, the attendance
22 for ELLs was 86.8 percent and citywide, that rate is
23 87.5 percent.

24 So, we're in increasing on prepandemic attendance
25 rates and we're very, very excited about what we're

1
2 able to offer and how we're reengaging student to
3 come back to the classroom.

4 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: How is the outreach looking
5 for that to bring back the students that fell through
6 the crack? We lost? What does the outreach look
7 like?

8 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Yup, a good question, thank
9 you. I think it's a multipronged approach and part
10 of that is ensuring that we have strong instruction
11 in the classroom. Part of that is also, we have been
12 engaging with parents and communities around the
13 different initiatives that we have in schools and
14 schools have been reaching out to their families.
15 And so, PCO's and family coordinators from the
16 superintendent offices are working very closely with
17 the schools to ensure that students are returning and
18 parents know what to offer the schools as safe spaces
19 and the parents continue to communicate that schools
20 are the best place for our students to be. It is
21 where we can offer them the special environment that
22 they need that we know is important for their
23 development. It's where they can receive the
24 academic support that they need but then also, just
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1
2 the space and welcoming space in terms of health and
3 wellbeing too.

4 So, we continue to communicate that and you hear
5 the Chancellor talk about that always. That school
6 is where we want to see our children now.

7 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Is that message being sent
8 out in language spoken to the families? Because that
9 was one of the biggest struggles we had during COVID-
10 19. It was getting the messaging out. The languages
11 were not being sent out to the native speakers in
12 their native languages.

13 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Yup, thank you for that
14 question and I know that it is something that we
15 absolutely have been working on. And Kleber, I don't
16 know if that's something that you want to speak to
17 more carefully about. The way that we are engaging
18 with our families in different languages?

19 KLEBER PALMA: Absolutely, thank you Deputy
20 Chancellor. During the pandemic, there was a
21 constant messaging of updates, changing of policies
22 and a lot of those communications were neatly made
23 available in translation, online for dissemination
24 and distribution in schools. That content was also
25 available online as HTML content. However, I think

1
2 that where we have room for growth is at the school
3 level and to ensure that any communication is
4 initiated at the school also. Again, to translation,
5 there was a heavy reliance during the pandemic on
6 machine translation tools and that's something we are
7 looking into very seriously to gauge and assess the
8 quality of those tools, to give guidance to schools,
9 to supplement the central TNI unit, which provides
10 translations supported by human translations.

11 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: As an educator who left the
12 classroom last week, I can say one of the biggest
13 challenges we faced is my ENLs had no access to
14 digital devices. So, the communication with parents
15 at home is to go on the website. If they have no
16 access, how can we look at that in a different way
17 because that was the biggest barriers for our ELLs,
18 no access to devices, no access to broadband.

19 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Thank you for that question
20 Chair and really fortunate to have Scott Strickland
21 on with us as well. It has been a commitment of this
22 cabinet to make sure that we have a device in the
23 hands of every child who needs one. And in a little
24 while Mirza can talk a bit more too about the steps
25 we took to ensure that our families also knew how to

1
2 use the devices once they had them, including
3 workshops done, google classroom, and other google
4 functions. But Scott if you can talk a little bit
5 about the devices, I think that's helpful.

6 SCOTT STRICKLAND: Sure, appreciate that and
7 appreciate the question. When we first went 100
8 percent remote from March and did not come back even
9 in part till September, we needed to send devices
10 directly to students homes and the only way we had to
11 communicate with that was the online form for people
12 to fill out. They could call the help desk at the
13 Department and also get a device sent home. We
14 realize that was maybe an impediment to some.

15 Since September of 2020, devices have been
16 shipped to schools based on student needs. So, as
17 students were coming back, the devices and the needs
18 for those devices were identified by the schools and
19 the schools have been distributing devices to
20 students since that time. We are now up to 650,000
21 either iPads or Chromebooks distributed to our
22 students. These were purchased centrally, all with
23 data plans and then those devices were loaned to
24 students while they were with the DOE, similar to
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1
2 loaning a textbook. They were supposed to turn the
3 devices in when they leave the DOE.

4 So, we've covered a lot of our students, that
5 would include certainly a high percentage of our ELL
6 students and even today, we have additional iPads and
7 Chromebooks available for any student that needs
8 them. The past administration made a statement I
9 guess I would say, a goal to have a one to one
10 correspondence between devices and students. So, any
11 student that does not have one that's currently
12 enrolled is entitled to one and we do have inventory
13 to get them one if they do not have one.

14 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Wonderful.

15 MIRZA SÀNCHEZ-MEDINA: Yes, and I would add that
16 to while students who are waiting for devices, we
17 make sure that we send printed materials home and
18 this was extremely important to us to ensure that
19 every student was connected to learning instruction,
20 quality instruction. And one of the strategies that
21 we used, our division was to provide workshops and on
22 even how to navigate Google Classroom. How to
23 navigate, how to use a translation feature and to
24 ensure the students were getting the information and
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1
2 the families and the parents feel comfortable in
3 navigating the system.

4 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Something that I wanted to
5 add, thank you Mirza and I love that point about
6 families feeling comfortable and that's part of the
7 idea behind, families no longer having to fill out a
8 centralized form for a device. Schools can ask
9 central directly for the internet enabled devices and
10 that removes an unnecessary barrier for families,
11 barriers that families have faced. And so, again, it
12 increases that level of comfort that we're talking
13 about.

14 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Because in the beginning of
15 COVID, I recall that we were the ones filling out
16 forms for families. I was in the center of that
17 because they had no access and they didn't know how
18 to fill out the forms and once the devices arrived,
19 they also didn't know how to set them up. So, we
20 were setting up and I said this so many times, we
21 were using What's App to communicate with families to
22 make sure they knew how to set it up using video
23 calls and the packets, again, these are language,
24 English Language Learners. If I have a barrier, a
25 language is a barrier for me, a packet won't serve

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2 any good for me because I can't do the work and
3 there's no one to provide the support at home.

4 So, those packages to me were - parents were
5 calling us and those packets served no good for our
6 students and so, a lot of them were pulled away from
7 learning and that discouraged them. So, hopefully
8 we'll get it better this time around to make sure
9 that none of our students are ever, ever left behind
10 again.

11 My other question for you is, can I get a
12 breakdown of your dual languages, your transitional
13 bilingual programs and your standalone ENL
14 classrooms? Do you have those numbers for me?

15 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Mirza, do you want to answer
16 that question or I can do that. So, in 2021, 25
17 percent of our ELLs were entering proficiency levels.
18 This is important to know as well but in terms of
19 bilingual programs, last year or the 2021 school
20 year, we had 538 bilingual programs. 24 of them were
21 newly opened.

22 We had 266 dual language programs, 223 of those
23 were general education and 43 of those were special
24 education and 272 transitional bilingual. 171 of
25 those general education and 101 of those special

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2 education. So, if there's additional information
3 that you want as far as that 97 percent of our ELLs
4 received bilingual or ENL services and about 17
5 percent of them received both.

6 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Uhm, then Mayor created an
7 initiative, the New York City Universal Academic
8 Plan. Can you tell me what the status of those
9 recovery efforts are? Because we've never heard
10 anything after that.

11 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Could you repeat that
12 question? I'm sorry Chair.

13 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Concerning the academic
14 recovery plan, there was a \$500 million then
15 allocated by Mayor de Blasio about that effort and
16 the targeted students were ENL students and we've
17 never heard any updates or any numbers or data's as
18 to what's happening with that.

19 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Yup, great, okay thank you
20 for that question. I just needed to make sure I
21 understood the question correctly.

22 So, we're prioritizing that funding for students
23 who need it most and we'll be focusing on communities
24 that have been hardest hit by the pandemic. And
25 there's funds more absolutely applied to all of our

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2 students and as we know the most needs that are good
3 for all are necessarily good for our ELLs. In
4 addition, the \$350 million that New York City public
5 schools invested – of the money that was invested,
6 \$350 million of it was satisfied for socio-emotional
7 and academic support. And so there has been a series
8 of tools and resources made available specifically to
9 meet the socio-emotional and academic needs of all of
10 our students.

11 The funding also included a targeted allocation,
12 as you just mentioned for multilingual learners with
13 weights as we mentioned earlier for new comers, long-
14 term ELLs and the way that that worked was every
15 school has been required to determine the groups of
16 students who need additional support and the
17 intervention that best fit their needs and then
18 there's schools actually created plan.

19 And so, they use the funds to both design and
20 implement a support plan for ELL's with identified
21 need. Additionally, the Division of Multilingual
22 Learners invested \$11.9 million to support schools
23 with large populations of multi-language learners and
24 immigrant students. And those are broken up about
25 \$7.6 million went to 682 schools for [INAUDIBLE

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2 41:41] and wellness checks. \$1.25 million went to
3 450 schools for culturally responsive home language
4 libraries, which you heard Mirza speak about during
5 her opening statement.

6 About \$2.2 million went to 108 schools for family
7 leadership and digital literacy for multilanguage
8 learners and ELLs. And about \$500,000 went to the 22
9 schools for the Dream Squads that Mirza had also
10 mentioned. And about \$200,000 to 20 schools for
11 post-secondary readiness for ELLs program, which we
12 call PREP. And finally, \$200,000 to 21 schools for
13 the Immigrant Ambassador program.

14 We do have some new investments that we are
15 exploring, that we're hoping to look into further for
16 the upcoming budget cycle but no commitments yet.
17 We're really thinking about opportunities and as you
18 heard Mirza talk about, the expansion of [INAUDIBLE
19 42:48] School. The strengthening and expansion of
20 bilingual programs and we've been having
21 conversations about a language curriculum
22 development.

23 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Wonderful. In your
24 testimony earlier Ms. Medina, you suggested older
25 ELLs. That's one of another population that suffers

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2 a lot. We noticed that I know for sure that your
3 transfer schools, you have five of them that are
4 located in Manhattan. We're looking to find out if
5 they will be - I would love to see as an educator
6 myself to expand it to the five boroughs so other
7 students can attend, they don't have to travel so
8 far. And your plans to help bring back those older
9 ELLs would be also helpful.

10 MIRZA SÀNCHEZ-MEDINA: Thank you Chair and thank
11 you for addressing a population that it's extremely
12 important. One of the strategies of what we did, is
13 that we mapped out where our older ELLs who were also
14 under credited lived. Where the students who had
15 dropped out, where they lived. And then we also
16 looked at the proximity of ELL focused transfer
17 schools citywide.

18 And yes, we knew about the concentration of ELL
19 focused transfer schools in Manhattan and one in the
20 Bronx, and together with the advocates and District
21 79, we've been working to develop a plan to see how
22 we can expand the ELL focused transfer schools for
23 older ELLs. And especially in Queens, in Brooklyn
24 and hopefully also in the Bronx.
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We've partnered with these folks who are extremely passionate, the advocates about this work and have really taught us a lot in terms of what the needs of the families. I as a Principal of an ELL focused school, work with this population and also worked with transfer schools and we partnered especially in developing a very clear plan to ensure that these students, not only receive the credits that they needed but also had a clear path for college or career.

So, we want to make sure that we are following up with the older ELLs, especially in providing them the support either in transfer schools or the support that we can provide in the school that they are in. So, reengaging these students is extremely important. This is why we go back to what's the core, right. If we use the multi-tier system of support, how we can shorten the poor instruction, that's to you one. To ensure the students are engaged, that they are receiving instruction. That it's standard-based, that the content, it's great level. That we are addressing the linguistic and literacy of our multilingual learners and then at the same time, providing them the interventions in tier two and tier

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2 three that they need and the resources that schools
3 need to do that. So, a very strong instruction with
4 a clear plan for you know, the pathway in moving
5 forward works not just for an ELL but works for our
6 older ELLs as well.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, I'm just going to
8 interrupt one moment. Deputy Chancellor, I'm sorry,
9 I got a message from a few Council Members, if it's
10 possible to answer questions without the mask,
11 because they're having trouble hearing some of the
12 data that you are providing in response to Chair
13 Joseph. Sorry, Chair, I'll turn it back to you.

14 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Not a problem and if for some
15 reason that doesn't work, I can log in for sound via
16 my phone so please let me know.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Malcom, would you like her
19 to repeat the data on the standalone, dual language
20 and bilingual program for those Council Members who
21 did not hear it?

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, Deputy Chancellor, if
23 you could that would be great, thank you.

24 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Sure, not a problem. I'm not
25 sure where we started. So, we have 147,287 students

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2 who are ELLs, so about 16 percent of the population.
3 And I know earlier we had asked about a breakdown of
4 attendance by grade. I don't have that but I do have
5 enrollments by grade band if you wanted that
6 information as well.

7 But what we have said was that of the programs
8 available, 97 percent in 2020-2021 received bilingual
9 education or ENL services. And 17 percent of our
10 ELLs just use both bilingual and ENL services. We
11 talked about 538 bilingual programs, 24 newly opened.
12 272 transitional bilingual ed, 171 of those are
13 general education and 101 of those are special
14 education. Can you hear me clearly now or is this
15 still not clear enough?

16 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Can you guys hear her
17 Council Members? Can you all put your thumbs up if
18 you can hear?

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I'm seeing nodding heads.

20 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Okay, fantastic, thank you,
21 appreciate it, okay. 266 dual language programs, 223
22 of those are general education and 43 special
23 education. And I'm not sure if there was anything
24 else that I had said in that response but I'm happy
25 to answer any questions that come up because of that.

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2 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: To support your
3 multilanguage learners, your immigrant – your Title 3
4 funding, how much fundings are your schools getting
5 for your immigrant populations in Title 3?

6 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: So, \$17.8 million goes to
7 1,012 schools for Title 3 English proficient. A
8 total of \$30 million went to public and non-public
9 schools and that was through a school allocation memo
10 regarding supplemental instruction, relevant PD and
11 family engagement. Within that \$30 million, 17.8
12 went to 1,012 schools for Title 3, limited English
13 proficiency \$1.7 million to 184 schools using Title 3
14 immigrant funds.

15 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Wonderful. One of the
16 things I noticed that being in the classroom and
17 working with the you know population a lot, we
18 noticed that during the pandemic, there was a high
19 call of ASC on English Language Learners families.
20 How is that being addressed and where are we now on
21 that?

22 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: My understanding was that the
23 ACS calls were related to the initial need for
24 devices and for abstinences that were generated as a
25 result of the pandemic. And we have messaged quite

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2 frequently that devices could not be a reason to
3 contact ACS. But also, as you heard, Scott say we
4 are making sure that we have devices in the hands of
5 every child who needs one and have been working with
6 borough field offices as well as superintendent to
7 ensure that students have what they need.

8 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And last year, we know that
9 – can you give us some data on your ENLs taking the
10 math exam and the ELA exams, how are the numbers
11 looking now in terms of data? How proficient? Where
12 are we in that realm?

13 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Thank you for that question
14 Chair. I'm going to bump that one over to Mirza, I
15 do know that state tests were offered on a limited or
16 were limited rather, this past year but I will bump
17 that over to the Deputy's accurate data.

18 MIRZA SÀNCHEZ-MEDINA: We're looking for that
19 data for you and we'll bring it back.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay Chair, so we'll go ahead
21 and turn to you colleagues and then we will come back
22 to you but for the record, we were joined by a host
23 of Council Members. Council Member Gutiérrez,
24 Paladino, Dinowitz, Gennaro, Brewer, Hanks, Lee,
25 Restler and Avilès.

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2 The first Council Member we will turn to
3 questions is Council Member Menin followed by
4 Dinowitz and Narcisse and there's more after that and
5 I just want to remind Council Members that we are
6 doing five minutes for Council Member questions. So,
7 we will first turn to Council Member Menin.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Thank you so much. I want
10 to thank Chair Joseph for this hearing as a daughter
11 of an ELL. This hearing has personal residence to
12 me, so I thank you for holding it.

13 While the Committee Report notes drop out rates
14 both pre-COVID and after COVID, there's no indication
15 that adequate follow-ups occurred to determine the
16 whereabouts and the current status of students
17 labeled as ELL dropouts. Does this mean that the DOE
18 does not know what happened to these students and can
19 you please clarify this? Because obviously specific
20 outcome information is sorely needed here.

21 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Thank you for that question
22 Council Member Menin. I can look into that further;
23 I don't have a response to that question at this time
24 but we are absolutely invested in ensuring that we
25 know where all of students are and we are absolutely

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2 invested in making sure that our students are
3 prepared to graduate.

4 It is and I am now aware of and want to make sure
5 that I can follow-up with you, so we'll look into
6 that in just a moment and if not, than I will follow-
7 up with you directly.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Okay, great thank you and
9 then can you also answer, what particular boroughs
10 have more ELL dropouts and can you also talk about
11 how the DOE is going to determine how to distribute
12 funding amongst the boroughs, really to ensure that
13 there is equity?

14 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Yes, thank you. So, as far
15 as the distribution of funds, those are being made,
16 those prioritization, sorry, as far as the [INAUDIBLE
17 54:14-54:17] interrupted formal education, ELLs are
18 weighted more into schools that have very specific
19 student populations will receive those funds. We are
20 also focusing on the communities that were hardest
21 hit by the pandemic and will make decisions based on
22 need.

23 And so, for example, with the Immigrant
24 Ambassador Program, we went first with the – so there
25 are only 21 schools that are participating but we

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2 look first at the districts that had the largest
3 number of immigrant populations to start those school
4 programs. It's a very small program right now, only
5 21 schools so we're really piloting [INAUDIBLE
6 54:58]. But we started with the two boroughs that
7 have the largest number of immigrants first and then
8 moved into the other boroughs.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Okay, and if I still have
10 time, if I can ask one more question. I want to
11 piggyback on something that Chair Joseph talked
12 about. So, aging out of the system obviously becomes
13 a more significant problem when you count for ELL
14 students education loss during the entirety of the
15 pandemic. How can the DOE create flexibility for
16 older ELL students to stay in the programs to
17 compensate for the loss during the pandemic?

18 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Thank you for that question
19 and a very important one. So, I think that the
20 response to that question is multipronged and I'll
21 pass it over to Mirza in just a moment. But it
22 involved collaboration with local and state agencies
23 and it also involves some of the planning that we're
24 doing around offering more opportunities for larger
25 under credited students. I'm sorry, older under

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2 credited students so that we have more institutions
3 that are available to offer very specific supports
4 and instruction that will help them meet the
5 requirements. But Mirza, I'll turn that one over to
6 you.

7 MIRZA SÀNCHEZ-MEDINA: Yes, thank you Deputy
8 Chancellor. So, District 79 has been working really,
9 really hard and very intentionally diligently to
10 provide the supports to prevent drop out and to work
11 with student who are older and I know they continue
12 to advocate for an age increase for service but we
13 are doing everything we can within the programs that
14 we have right now to ensure the students again are
15 engage, reengage and that we continue to prevent
16 right, prevent best measures, prevent measure. So,
17 how do we prevent students? So, we look at
18 attendance. Obviously behavior and credit
19 accumulation and when we speak about behavior, we
20 talk about the social emotional learning. So, how do
21 we ensure that these elements are included in this
22 work?

23 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Okay, thank you.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member and
25 next, we will turn to Council Member Dinowitz.

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

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COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Thank you. Thank you Chair Joseph. You know in 2018, I remember every second period I would sit with one of my students who only spoke Spanish and I would spend half my time in the class, in my ICT class translating for her in Spanish and one of her friends next to her would help out. That was how she and I and her friend spent most of the math class.

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I would venture to guess, most people would say, we do everything we can to help students but it's probably not the best use of time. This is a student who almost exclusively spoke Spanish. She was in this program you keep talking about, the ENL program I think three periods a day she was in ENL class. But that story is not a unique story in my career or in really any teachers career in the Bronx or anywhere in the city. And I'm just wondering have you ever audited your programs to evaluate one, the effectiveness of the programs and of course the effectiveness of your assessment for the placement.

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I mean, according to your data, it's clear we need to do more. Lower exam scores, lower graduation rates, but I hear more talk of the same program. So,

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2 have you done auditing or evaluation of your old
3 programming and placement for students?

4 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Thank you for that question
5 Council Member Dinowitz. Know that we place great
6 value in professional development and search case
7 opportunities for our ELL teachers and I think your
8 question speaks to so two different things and one is
9 ensuring that we are offering very strong tier one
10 instruction with the needed supports for the
11 students, so that they can in those classrooms,
12 engage and find success. And so, I'll Mirza talk a
13 little more about the professional development and
14 the ways that we are making sure that our educators
15 can meet the need -

16 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: So, I'm sorry to
17 interrupt. You understand limited time. I just want
18 to make sure that we're getting to the question. So,
19 I don't mean to interrupt, I apologize. I understand
20 professional development exists and I'm sure it's
21 quality. What I'm asking is, if you've evaluated how
22 effective programs that we keep talking about are?
23 Not whether the teachers are trained. I have the
24 upmost faith in our educators. The effectiveness of
25 the program and the effectiveness of the placement

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2 and the assessments you provide for the students to
3 place them in the right setting.

4 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: So, I'm going to just ask a
5 clarifying question.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Sure.

7 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Because the program is
8 necessarily with the teachers. Are you asking about
9 how the students are placed into the different types
10 of ENL, the designations that we just talked about,
11 whether they're placed in transitional or immersion,
12 right is that what you're asking about?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: I am asking if you've
14 done it and if not, it's good to know. Not how they
15 are placed, but how accurate the placement is, how
16 flexible it is. If a student is in a school with no
17 transitional bilingual programming, if they are able
18 to be placed in the right setting for themselves and
19 how effective? If a student is in an ENL class for
20 many years in a row, are you determining - how are
21 you determining the effectiveness of the programming.

22 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Okay, yup, I just want to
23 make sure that the teacher necessarily is a part of
24 the effectiveness of that programming. And so, there
25 is a piece that is about making sure that our

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2 teachers are up to par in terms of what we need for
3 that programming and that means also ensuring that we
4 are aware of what the best approach is for our
5 students currently. Part of that is what Mirza was
6 talking about in terms of extending opportunities to
7 have more folks learn about bilingual programs and
8 the priorities language curriculum that we were
9 talking about.

10 To you point though, you know I think that we
11 need to do a better job of accessing whether or not
12 we are having the impact in that moment. And part of
13 what we're doing is using data to now get more
14 frequent, blunt information about students to see how
15 they're progressing in terms of their literacy and
16 language levels. And we're using that information to
17 create reading groups or those specific groupings for
18 students where I have witnessed in schools for
19 example, assisted reading period where students were
20 working very specifically on the level that they
21 needed to make the progress that they needed.

22 The catch is, that was one school and what we
23 need is to see that with consistency across the city.
24 And so, to your point, we are seeing some fantastic
25 practices that are absolutely in line with what we

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2 want to see in terms of programming. And that are in
3 line with the research and the evidence. That is not
4 yet a consistent practice across the city and so,
5 part of what we are learning is how do we gauge where
6 schools are to provide them specifically with the
7 support that they need, so that they can make that
8 kind of progress because in schools where they those
9 types of periods, they were able to make that kind of
10 progress.

11 I'm going to pass it over to Mirza, who can
12 answer this question with a lot more specificity.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time has expired.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Chair, may I be
15 permitted to continue just for a couple more minutes
16 so they can answer and I can ask one more question?

17 MIRZA SÀNCHEZ-MEDINA: And I would like to add to
18 that question, if I may?

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Please go ahead.

20 MIRZA SÀNCHEZ-MEDINA: So, we have – the
21 blueprints from New York State Education Department
22 is very clear on how you develop programs for
23 students who are ELLs and also how you provide
24 monitoring visits. And we rely on our BCO partners,
25 folks to help us look at schools that we have

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2 identified that could use additional support. And
3 they provide monitoring visits and they provide
4 additional support for these students. I'll keep it
5 short.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Okay, Chair Joseph, may
7 I be permitted to just ask you know a couple short
8 questions about data, if they have this data?

9 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Sure, go ahead.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Thank you. So, well I
11 think I'll have to do is follow-up about some of that
12 because I think what you're saying doesn't match the
13 experience of so many teachers in our system. I just
14 want to know if you have the vaccination rates of -
15 we know we have it per school, do you have it broken
16 down by ELLs and non-ELLs? No, okay.

17 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: No, I don't but we can
18 certainly - I can see if that's information that is
19 collected in that way and we can follow-up with you.
20 And if you can just be a little more clear, you said
21 that it doesn't match what uhm, the information
22 doesn't match what you have seen about teachers.
23 Were you talking about the vaccination rates or about
24 the -
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CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Sorry, sorry, I'll just clarify. I'm speaking quickly because I understand the time constraint. Speaking about the programming and the placement of the programming and whether students are getting what they need. That you know, I want to match the ideal that we're all talking about and what the kids need with the experiences of what is actually happening on the ground in the schools.

The vaccination rate was separate, so I really appreciate following up on that and just on the same line, I really deeply value how much emphasis is placed on social emotional learning and mental health. As we know when students came back into the building, there were a number of issues, interpersonal issues that arouse between students and I'm wondering if you have a breakdown of how ELL's, how their incidents, number of incidents or number of times mentioned in reports compared to non-ELL students? Do you have that data broken down? Are they being suspended more or being recommended for counseling at a higher rate, higher percentage, as they are coming back full-time in-person compared to their non-ELL peers?

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2 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Thank you. I know that the
3 Department does put down data by subgroups and so, we
4 should have that information. I can see if we can
5 get that for you before this call is over. And
6 Council Member Menin, I have some information
7 regarding the questions that you have asked, if we
8 have a moment later to follow-up with you as well.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member
10 Dinowitz. Deputy Chancellor, if you just want to
11 give the answer to Council Member Menin now. Council
12 Member Menin are you still there?

13 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Yeah, that would be great.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Alright, you know we'll
15 circle back when she has her video activated because
16 she may not be at the desk. So, next, we're going to
17 turn to Council Member Narcisse followed by Council
18 Member Louis, Krishnan, Brewer and Stevens. And for
19 the record, we also want to say that we were joined
20 by Council Member Schulman. We will now turn to
21 Council Member Narcisse.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Hi, good afternoon
24 Chair, Rita Joseph and all the members and everyone
25 that's doing fantastic, phenomenal work and all the

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2 questions. I enjoy listening, some of them are
3 already gone from the previous Council Members. So,
4 I thank you.

5 As an individual whose first language is not
6 English, I can empathize with the plot and the
7 challenges that we face, our young folks face in New
8 York. I know that learning English can be extremely
9 difficult in so called, normal environment but with
10 the COVID pandemic, made it much tougher and we know
11 that. What makes learning easier for ELLs is being
12 surrounded by individuals who speak the first
13 language. If they speak the first language; like I
14 heard CM Dinowitz refer like in the Spanish but we
15 know in other languages like Creole, it's been very,
16 very, very hard. What efforts are being made by DOE
17 to place students who speak the same first language
18 with each other?

19 MIRZA SÀNCHEZ-MEDINA: Thank you Council Member
20 Narcisse for that question. As a bilingual teacher
21 and a founded principal of bilingual schools with a
22 transitional bilingual program and dual language
23 program, that's a question that it is very near and
24 dear to me. And you are absolutely right, research
25 shows that when you are strategically using the

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2 students home language and instruction. These
3 students move much quickly through the process of
4 learning, not just language but also being on great
5 level. So, we are working on sustaining, developing,
6 strengthening bilingual education in New York City.
7 That is the plan that we have. How do we increase
8 programs but at the same time, ensure that the
9 programs that we have are strong and are growing.
10 And that students are doing well. So, we want to
11 engage the community. We want to engage
12 superintendents. We already know where there are
13 opportunities for growth and development. We are
14 engaging with experts in the field. We've been doing
15 that for quite a while.

16 As a founding principal, I know it's not just
17 opening a program, you need to engage the community.
18 We need to ensure that we have teachers. We need to
19 make sure that we have curricula. We need to ensure
20 that the environment is the right environment for our
21 students and then we also have to grow. It's easier
22 perhaps to find you know a Spanish speaking teacher
23 but it's more difficult to find another language.

24 So, we want to make sure that we're working with
25 human capital you know to ensure that we have

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2 interest to do this program. So, we are excited
3 about the learning that we have been doing and the
4 work that we have been doing in addition to all the
5 professional learning that we have provided; provided
6 teachers to ensure that all students have high
7 quality instruction and we also, as you heard Deputy
8 Chancellor Quintana speak about piloting a home
9 language curriculum to ensure that we are using
10 students home language and we also provided funding
11 for schools to purchase home language libraries.

12 So, we are very excited. Thank you very much for
13 this question and yes, using students home language
14 is one of the greatest leverage to ensure that
15 students are doing well and at the same time are
16 learning English. And developing both of their
17 languages, you know having two languages is much
18 better than just having one.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Thank you.

20 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: And I think a big part of why
21 parents are part of that process is, we want to make
22 sure that students are placed in the most supportive
23 programs for them. And so, we ensure that families
24 are informed of the different program types and the
25 types of services that are available to their

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2 students and so they are a part of that process as
3 well.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: And the mental status,
5 mental health. We have to make it accessible and
6 especially for ELL's programs because a lot of young
7 folks are not receiving mental health the same way
8 that we in the – those that are born in the country.

9 So, we have to be mindful of the tabu that attach
10 around in term of mental health too as well.

11 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Thank you.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member.
13 Deputy Chancellor, if you just wanted to provide that
14 data that you had pulled up for Council Member Menin.

15 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Sure. Let's see and it was
16 uhm, Council Member Menin's question on students
17 aging out of instructional services during the
18 pandemic. The Department of Education is sending a
19 memo encouraging just to provide over age students
20 with the opportunity to return to school in the 2021-
21 2022 school year.

22 So, that allowance was made and the high schools
23 allowed overaged students who needed continued
24 education and support services in order to graduate
25 with a diploma or an exit credential. They were

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2 permitted to return to summer school and if
3 necessary, attend school in the 2021-2022 school
4 year. So, there was that allowance made.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next, we're going
6 to turn to Council Member Louis followed by Council
7 Member Krishnan. We'll turn to Council Member Louis.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Thank you Chair Joseph for
10 holding this meeting. As a daughter of an immigrant,
11 I remember being a support to my parents and
12 communicating with school administration and I see
13 the same practice happening till this day. So, I
14 wanted to ask the Administration, how is the DOE
15 engaging and supporting parents of ELLs to understand
16 their children's academic process during parent
17 teacher conferences and other meetings, especially
18 during the pandemic?

19 CAOLYNE QUINTANA: Thank you Council Member
20 Louis. As a parent, I'm sorry, well, as a parent but
21 also as a child of immigrant parents who did not see
22 themselves represented in the school and had a really
23 hard time, that question matters. And we absolutely
24 want to empower our parents and our families as
25 partners and they have to have a trusting

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2 relationship with the school but mostly, they have to
3 have access. And so Kleber, if you want to talk a
4 little bit about how we've made that possible with
5 schools in general.

6 KLEBER PALMA: Yes, absolutely thank you Deputy
7 Chancellor. So, the effort around just general
8 parent awareness on initiative programs, parent
9 teacher conferences. It follows suit with whatever
10 initiatives are rolled out by the DOE. Everything
11 follows in translation but in addition to those
12 standard messages, we do have a network of language
13 access coordinators at the school level who work with
14 borough offices and their field language access
15 coordinators to make sure that we raise awareness and
16 alert folks at the school level to always think about
17 language access. We're always trying to make sure
18 that it's something proactive, not reactive and
19 something that's embedded in processes, plans,
20 calendars to make sure to make arrangements for
21 interpretation, to make sure that flyers that go out
22 to families, promoting an upcoming conference are
23 translated in languages.

24 And these are the efforts that are happening
25 behind the scenes and slowly but surely the culture

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2 is changing. There's still a lot of work to be done
3 obviously, but this is the value of having a network
4 of folks out there because at the central unit, we
5 could only send messages so often and they are often
6 mixed in with 100 other email messages that
7 principals or schools get but we also have the
8 ability to contact and point people at schools to
9 make sure that they are always raising that language
10 access flag, to raise awareness about being proactive
11 when it comes to parent teacher conferences. We know
12 where they are, when these dates are every single
13 year. It happens twice a year, so it's not catching
14 us off guard and so, making arrangements, preparing,
15 reserving interpreters, having the over the phone
16 interpretation services readily available as well,
17 are all things that we share as best practices to
18 staff through training and just general
19 communications.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Thank you Executive
21 Director Palma, it would be great if we could work
22 with your team so that that's effectively
23 communicated to all communities, so that they are
24 aware that resource is there.

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2 The second question I have is, how does the DOE
3 plan to close the achievement gap and graduation gap
4 between ELL's and non-ELLs?

5 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Thank you for that question
6 and I especially appreciated hearing you ask a
7 partner in the works with Executive Director Palma.
8 I think it's incredibly important to hear that and
9 that's part of what we would ask is we'll have the
10 Council be partners with us. As far as how we're
11 aiming to close the achievement gap.

12 I did want to point out first that those are the
13 steps that we've taken already in the three years
14 that Mirza has been here, we went from 34 percent
15 graduation rates to almost 46 percent graduation
16 rates. And in this past year, it was at 60 percent
17 graduation rate and we know that that one is a little
18 bit different than our other years but even with that
19 46, we've made tremendous strides in a short amount
20 of time. Not enough and certainly not at the point
21 where we are satisfied yet. Part of that is going
22 back to the question that Council Member Dinowitz had
23 asked just making sure that our programs are actually
24 effective. They are grounded in research and
25 evidence-based practices and creating that

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2 consistency citywide. And so that does include the
3 professional development of our teachers and it
4 includes making sure that we have the right
5 resources. And so, you heard Mirza talk a little bit
6 about the heritage language curriculum. We talked
7 about expanding bilingual programs and just making
8 sure that students have an opportunity.

9 I went to a school where I actually got to watch
10 – it's a school that has both dual language in
11 Chinese and Spanish to reflect the needs of the
12 neighborhood. But I had an opportunity to see
13 students in a heritage language setting, learning
14 about literacy strategies and having fantastic
15 conversations about the text in their respective
16 languages, knowing that overtime, they were
17 practicing English as well but they're learning how
18 to do that meaning making, which is incredibly
19 important and learning to value what they bring to
20 the table. Their own language, their own capacity
21 and so, that's part of what we want to make sure our
22 schools know and can do and when we do that, we know
23 that those rates will continue to increase.

24 And the other piece is for our students who have
25 not had those opportunities to date, how do we touch

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2 them and that's part of what Mirza was sharing as
3 well, is whether the types of school opportunities,
4 whether it's expanding PPE. Whether it's expanding
5 our transfer schools. What are other opportunities
6 to touch students, so that we engage them in school
7 and can make sure that we're offering them
8 opportunities to stay. To leave with the skills and
9 the knowledge to be successful during high school.
10 And so, part of that is assessing what's here,
11 building on what's working, and revising where it's
12 not and that will be a process that will take time
13 and we hope that you will be on that journey with us
14 over the next several years.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Of course Deputy
16 Chancellor.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: That approach that you
19 just shared, I wanted to – this is my last question.
20 How could the Mayor's Preliminary Budget affect ELLs
21 and the approach that you just shared? Thank you.

22 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Thank you and so, you know I
23 think Mirza can probably answer this question about
24 how we can apply those funds but I think we've
25 launched some pilot programs that could really be

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2 expanded. We want to make sure that we are creating
3 curricula that is reflective of the needs of our
4 students but also, I think incredibly important is
5 going to be to hear or rather, for you to say maybe
6 what you are hearing from the community and what you
7 know are needs that we can address, so that if there
8 are funds that we can apply, we make sure that we are
9 applying them where it's needed.

10 MIRZA SÀNCHEZ-MEDINA: Deputy Chancellor Quintana
11 thank you and Council Member Louis, thank you for
12 that question. Closing the achievement gap and
13 increasing graduation rates is definitely at the
14 center of the work that we do and like I said before,
15 we're looking at a three approach. What are the
16 programs and services? What is that capacity
17 building that we need to do and how do we ensure the
18 family community partners are working with us? And
19 we're working with them at the same time and building
20 that piece is extremely important. I want to and I
21 want to add just a bit, that again, as a high school
22 professional, I knew that making sure that the
23 instruction was strong. That students were engaged
24 and their families were part of the decision making
25 process was extremely important.

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2 This is why, if we have launched a college and
3 career readiness initiatives like the college and
4 career readiness school allocation plan with schools,
5 develop a plan of how they're going to engage their
6 students. How are they going to prepare a plan for
7 students to be successful for college. Also the PREP
8 program; how do we ensure that families and students
9 are involved and also, it's a tiny pilot but very
10 promising. The Immigrant Ambassador program. How do
11 we ensure that families of immigrant students and not
12 necessarily ELLs. These are students who are
13 immigrants coming from immigrant families are also
14 have a pathway for college and career. So, closing
15 the achievement gap is at the center of what we do in
16 professional learning and providing curricula and
17 providing resources for schools, engaging families
18 and definitely partnering with you in this work and
19 at the same time, learning. Continuously learning
20 from research-based, how do we you know we make this
21 happen better. Thank you.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Deputy Chief
23 Academics Officer. Council Member Krishnan, I'm just
24 going to ask your indulgence if Council Member
25 Stevens can quickly cut in line in front of you? She

1
2 has to run somewhere but I promise we'll turn it to
3 you as soon as she's done with her questions.

4 Okay, I saw an absolutely being awarded there.
5 So, Council Member Stevens, thank you.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: Thank you so much. I'm
8 be very quick but I just had a question, I believe
9 Council Member Louis and Mercedes Narcisse already
10 kind of alluded to it but I had a question, because
11 we know that students who have support from family
12 members who speak English is just so much more
13 successful. Could you talk a little bit about how
14 you are partnering with like CBO's and ELL programs
15 to support them? Because I find that a lot of times,
16 we kind of just talk about the kids and them being in
17 school but we know once they get home and they're
18 with their parents so much longer, that that support
19 is just not happening. So, what is the collaboration
20 looking like between these programs? How are we
21 making sure that there's a through line and a
22 connection? And not just, and I think sometimes we
23 just focus on like the elementary schools but even
24 through high school, those things are just as
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2 important. And so, could you talk a little bit more
3 about that please?

4 MIRZA SÀNCHEZ-MEDINA: Yes, thank you for that
5 important question. We are so excited. We have
6 developed guidance for schools and helped partner
7 with families but we've also provided professional
8 learning courses on how to engage in the [INAUDIBLE
9 1:23:16] families. And we partner with CBO's to help
10 us understand and help us have increased reach for
11 our families. As it was alluded here before, it's
12 been a wrap around service right? It's not just the
13 instruction but it's also the social emotional
14 learning, it's also ensuring that students are
15 feeling affirmed and welcome in the environments and
16 then, you're right, as they go home, how then
17 families can support them or if they go to an after
18 school program, how are they supported there.

19 And we have resources that we have shared here
20 with how to support families of immigrant and
21 multilingual learners in schools and then also, we
22 partner— we have partners that help us develop
23 resources for families as well.

24 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Something that I'm really
25 excited with this and the Administration too, a

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2 priority that Chancellor Banks has is to make sure
3 that we're increasing the number of minority and
4 women-owned businesses that are participating with
5 the Department of Education and so, one of those
6 really exciting conversations that we've already had
7 are about what are the organizations that are in the
8 communities in which our students live, that can be a
9 bigger role in the lives of our students so that
10 we're really targeting the people who are in the
11 neighborhood, who know the neighborhood, who are
12 potentially much like the families of the students
13 and speak in those languages as well to be part of
14 the partnership with school and families. And so,
15 really expanding from the current list of CBO's that
16 we have through others that might be representation
17 and more local.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: Yeah, thank you for that
19 and please share any information that you might have
20 with that and I'm excited that you're trying to
21 expand some more local organizations but you know,
22 through that, we also have to work in our procurement
23 process, which is another issue because we've
24 expanded it but we're not able to get them the
25 payment that they need, it becomes an issue. But

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2 thank you for those answers. I appreciate it, thank
3 you.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member, Executive Dr.
5 Palma has a quick answer for you as well.

6 KLEBER PALMA: Thank you. I just wanted to add
7 something we're really excited about with regards to
8 working with immigrant groups and community-based
9 organizations. Thanks to the City Council's recent
10 investment with regards to language access, part one
11 of the initiatives that we're ruling out is to
12 actually do exactly what you just described. Was to
13 engage groups to help us bridge those gaps that exist
14 in communities, hard to reach communities the
15 literacy, digital literacy and come up with creative
16 ways to engage and inform and to help amplify the
17 services and supports that are current available.

18 We have about – we've received about 12
19 proposals, about a dozen proposals so far from
20 different CBO's from throughout the city, which we'll
21 be going through the next couple of weeks and we're
22 really excited to partner with these groups to make
23 sure that we do even more amplification of language
24 access and engagement in general.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: Yeah and thank you for
3 that. I really appreciate that, sounds really
4 exciting. I would love more information and any way
5 I can support in that effort but just one more
6 statement before I run off. I just think that it's
7 important that we're not only getting people access
8 and working with CBO's but we're having a pipeline of
9 people who are in the pipeline for teachers to come
10 up to be able to teach these languages. I think that
11 that is something we often fail to do because there
12 are so many languages and so many people but we need
13 to start creating a pipeline and making sure that all
14 of our teachers are multilingual and making more
15 efforts to make sure that's happening. So, thank
16 you.

17 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Yes and we absolutely agree.
18 Thank you Council Member Stevens.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member
20 Stevens and thank you Council Member Krishnan. We'll
21 now turn to you for your questions.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Times starts now.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Thank you so much.
24 First, thank you Chair Joseph for today's meeting and
25 for raising these issues that are extremely important

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2 and no doubt we face them going forward as we come
3 out of this pandemic for our schools.

4 As a public school parent of two small children
5 as well, these are issues that I'm also observing.
6 And living in Jackson Heights and Elmhurst, two of
7 the largest and most diverse immigrant communities on
8 the planet where bilingual education and dual
9 language are so important for us in just the
10 prospective that I bring.

11 So, I want to make one comment and then one
12 question. My comment is just to echo what Council
13 Member Joseph had said before too about really
14 ensuring, it was very concerning to me and of many of
15 my colleagues to see the way in which especially
16 under the last administration ACS was being called to
17 intervene. In instances where students, either
18 students in shelter or and of course, otherwise
19 students who are ELLs who often times were affected
20 disproportionately by a lack of technological access
21 we talked about where ACS was called to intervene in
22 these families too. And I think that's shocking and
23 really appalling and that should not be happening.

24 So, I know Chair Joseph touched on that question
25 and I wanted to echo that some of it's very important

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2 to me to and I hope that this Administration to and
3 this DOE will pay special attention to not having ACS
4 intervene in those situations, it's very concerning.

5 I'd like to shift gears to the question I wanted
6 to ask on dual language and bilingual education.

7 This is an area, as I mentioned before coming from

8 Jackson Heights and Elmhurst that's very important to

9 me and I think it's crucial to have dual language

10 programs in our schools. But one of the things I see

11 working especially with dual language experts here

12 and into Jackson Heights and Elmhurst that have been

13 strong advocates on these issues, that although we've

14 gotten more dual language programs, only seven

15 percent of multilingual learners are enrolled in

16 these programs by the DOE's own data. And if we want

17 to talk about dual language and bilingual education,

18 really being to foster bilingualism and biliteracy,

19 especially among multilingual learners, it is crucial

20 that we have far more MLLs in these programs and that

21 the programs are geared especially towards and

22 centering our multilingual learners.

23 In addition to that, here in Jackson Heights and

24 Elmhurst, you know we could use far more in the way

25 of dual language programs. I'd like to see a dual

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2 language program in every single public school in my
3 district and for example, at PS69 in Jackson Heights,
4 we have a large Bangladeshi population. We still
5 don't have Bangla, a dual language program for Bangla
6 as well, it's only been in Spanish. In some schools,
7 in Mandarin too but the importance, my question would
8 be how can we ensure an increased participation of
9 multilingual learners in dual language programs? And
10 how can we ensure that we expand the number of dual
11 language programs available? Particularly, really
12 all over the city but especially in districts like
13 mine, where that's a core priority.

14 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Thank you Council Member
15 Krishnan, we are absolutely in agreement with both
16 statements. One, regarding the concern about ACS and
17 two, this desire to expand bilingual education
18 services, only 17 percent of our ELLs receive
19 bilingual education at this point. And so, I'm going
20 to turn it over to Mirza to talk a little bit about
21 that plan and what we're looking to do because we are
22 in absolute agreement. We need more of that and
23 that's a great way for our students to learn in our
24 communities to thrive.

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MIRZA SÀNCHEZ-MEDINA: Thank you Council Member Krishnan for that question and I just want to start by saying, I would love to speak with you more about how we can develop a specific plan for your district. The reality is that we want to ensure - you know we want to start with partnering and planning. I don't want to go into a district. This is you're going to go and open a bilingual program. Really when a bilingual program starts from the families, for example, my school the way the dual language program was open because if parents came to me and said we have a TV, now we want to do language because this is what our population needs.

So, we want to make sure that we're partnering and planning and being very strategic in that planning with the community and the school. We also want to build capacity like I said before, in the school and with the families and the community and design a program that is appropriate for the community.

And you're absolutely right, we want to ensure that dual language programs are at least 50 percent ELL's to ensure that both students population, English proficient students and English Language

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2 Learners are benefiting from the dual language
3 program, which is an amazing program. We also want
4 to ensure that there is a strong implementation and
5 support that goes beyond, right? That's this
6 continuity of services that it doesn't close after
7 the second, first year because that plan wasn't
8 there. And we want to you know, speaking about the
9 scaling and sustaining, it's extremely important.

10 So, I would love to sit down with you to map out
11 you know the district and really good and communicate
12 with the families and also work with the
13 superintendents to ensure that we are being very
14 strategic and intentional about this development, so
15 sign me on.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Same here, absolutely
18 and looking forward to working together and welcome
19 partnership on this issue in my district as well.
20 Thank you.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member and
22 next, we will turn to Council Member Avilès followed
23 by Council Members Schulman, Sanchez, Lee and
24 Gutiérrez. We'll turn to Council Member Avilès.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÈS: Thank you so much Chair
3 Joseph for hosting this hearing and thank you
4 everyone for being here, my colleagues and certainly
5 our education partners. I have a two part question.
6 One, I'd love to talk about – hear a little bit more
7 in terms of data provided last year, 15 percent of
8 our ELL students also have IEP's. In my district,
9 District 38 in South Brooklyn, I would venture to say
10 that that percentage is higher in my anecdotal
11 experience in the schools both as a mom and a parent
12 advocate. But I'd like to know, we understand that
13 there have been staffing shortages that really have
14 plagued special education specifically. How has the
15 special education recovery services being rolled out
16 IEP students who are also ELLs? If you could talk a
17 little bit about that student that sits at that
18 intersection.

19 And also, how much funding is being dedicated to
20 this population in particular?

21 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Thank you Council Member
22 Avilès, an incredibly important question. And when
23 we think about the shortage of the staffing, this is
24 an area where we absolutely see a shortage of
25 staffing.

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2 So, my latest shows that 27 percent of our ELLs
3 are students with IEP's. So, as you guessed, an even
4 larger number than you had originally seen. One of
5 the things that – we have about 2,000 teachers
6 currently with bilingual licenses. But where we're
7 seeing a shortage isn't just with teachers, it's with
8 our bilingual speech teachers and with bilingual
9 counseling services as well.

10 There are 325 bilingual guidance counselors,
11 approximately 400 bilingual school psychologists.
12 250 bilingual school social workers and only 200
13 bilingual speech teachers. We have about 20 teacher
14 vacancies for bilingual teachers and 29 vacancies
15 including those improvements. And as you can guess,
16 the students are not served for counseling. 21.4
17 percent of our bilingual counseling services have not
18 been rendered and 11.6 in speech and language
19 therapy. That's a big concern for us.

20 And so, we are hiring 32 new staff were hired
21 this year. Three additional staff have been
22 identified and are in the hiring process. As you may
23 know, we're in the middle of a freeze and so, we're
24 in that process and then 15 vacancies have been
25 identified by supervisors. But no candidates have

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been identified to date and so, the candidate pool is not as large as we would like and that's actually an initiative that Mirza and her team have been working on with our HR Department is how do we better recruit, develop and retain bilingual teachers, counselors and speech service providers and one of the wonderful things about this Administration is that we have really been emphasizing working collaboratively across divisions.

It's something I'm incredible excited about and so, not only have we been working with other divisions but within the frame division teaching and learning, we're working very closely with special education - to think about what are the different ways that we can ensure that students needs are being met and that we're allocating funding to hire speech and language providers. We just allocated - I actually don't have how much funding but we're moving money from one area to another to make sure that we can actually hire service providers. I don't have funding amounts but we absolutely are prioritizing this. This is an area of improvement for us and it's one where we have already started to accept to make

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2 sure that we're meeting those needs. So, thank you
3 for this question.

4 And obviously, if any of your districts have
5 folks who are interested in becoming teachers, we
6 absolutely want to build up - or counselors or
7 therapists, we want to build up from the community
8 out. So, we welcome folks to be part of the process
9 with us.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Yeah, thank you, thank
11 you so much. It is definitely an area that should
12 have no freeze at all. Given the shortage, there is
13 no room for a freeze here. We should be investing
14 heavily, so thank you for that work.

15 I just wanted to make a quick comment. In terms
16 of really commend the transitional care being
17 provided and the Immigrant Ambassador Program and we
18 know that the transfer programs for high school work
19 really well for our ELLs but they are just far, way
20 too limited right. All being concentrated in
21 Manhattan with very little for the outer borough, for
22 our communities and our students. So, of course, I
23 would be remiss to say, we really need to see an
24 expansion in that, in that program. The model works,
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1
2 we know it. So, there's no rocket science here, it's
3 a matter of will.

4 I also just want to say, that being said, that
5 this model of transitional support would be
6 instrumental at the Family Welcome Centers for new
7 arrived families, right.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: For — Chair, if I could
10 just finish that quick comment.

11 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Absolutely.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Okay, sorry about that.
13 So, the transitional support would really be
14 instrumental for the Family Welcome Centers for those
15 newly arrived families. Particularly, at this
16 earlier stage of elementary and even PreK, right. We
17 shouldn't have to get those services in high school
18 only.

19 So, I would just love to see if we could create a
20 similar model to the Ambassador but a much earlier
21 time.

22 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Thank you for the idea.

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

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Thank you very much. I
3 want to thank Chair Joseph for this important hearing
4 and also, to congratulate Chair Joseph on your first
5 hearing as Chair of the Education Committee,
6 congratulations.

7 So, a couple of things. One is, I wanted to
8 reiterate what my colleague Council Member Dinowitz
9 talked about, the ELLs and the non-ELLs in terms of
10 the vaccination rates. If you don't have that, I
11 want you to think about doing that because it helps
12 us to figure out where we need to put resources, in
13 terms of getting the vaccinations up. And also, I
14 want to ask - my understanding is that mask wearing
15 has been a barrier a little bit for English Language
16 Learners in the classroom and particularly, since
17 kids are back in school. So, I want to know what
18 you're doing in terms of that and also, with the mask
19 mandates now loosening up, how are you going to deal
20 with kids that may still want to wear a mask but need
21 to have English Language Learning services and all of
22 that?

23 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Good questions, thank you
24 Council Member Schulman. As far as the vaccination
25 data, I'm not sure if we get the vaccination data by

1
2 student information, whether they're – but we could
3 potentially, we would have to look into that to see
4 whether or not there would be any concerns about data
5 privacy but I appreciate the suggestion to think
6 about where we need to provide more support or do a
7 greater push for vaccinations.

8 As far as the masks, you're absolutely right.
9 Those masks, you know I had to take mine off because
10 you couldn't hear me on a microphone here right and
11 so, they can be a bit of a hindrance in terms of
12 speaking and hearing.

13 City Hall is reviewing the data and I know that
14 they are set to make a decision and an announcement
15 by the end of the week. And so, we'll know whether
16 or not schools will be removing masks but I
17 appreciate that other view, right. That is, what
18 about the kids who want to continue to wear masks?
19 And I know that in many spaces, masks will be
20 encouraged publicly and so, I'm sure that folks will
21 be wearing masks in many spaces.

22 I think that's something that we can begin to ask
23 already before this announcement gets made, so that
24 we can start to think about what are some of the ways
25 that we can address that, to either normalize it or

1
2 to offer different types of masks and see what our
3 options are. So, thank you for bringing that up.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Yeah, what I want to
5 say – so the English Language Learners, because a lot
6 of times they learn from watching their friends or
7 their peers you know in terms of them talking. So,
8 if they're wearing a mask, it's a little bit of
9 hindrance. So, I want to make sure that that's not a
10 barrier to them in terms of learning and all of that.

11 And then the third thing that I would like to ask
12 is as an LGBTQ member of the Council, I want to know
13 – there are a lot of kids in the immigrant
14 communities who are LGBTQ and they have other
15 barriers in terms of you know coming to class and
16 dealing with social stigmas and things like that.
17 Are there ways and particularly those that don't
18 speak English very well. Do you have service for
19 them in particular or social services or you know?

20 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: We do have social services
21 for our LGBTQ community, LGBTQ plus community. I'm
22 not sure if it's specific in different languages or
23 for those specific communities. So, that's something
24 that interests me very much. I would like to look
25 into that and if you would like to connect to have

1
2 further conversations about that. One of the things
3 that again is great about this Administration is, the
4 cross communication. And so, really working with
5 also other divisions to think about whether that
6 falls under student well-being or communication with
7 our superintendents to really think about what are
8 the different ways that we can create opportunities
9 and services for students.

10 Thank you for asking this question. I'm
11 definitely going to continue to think about this, so
12 I appreciate it.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Thank you. Thank you
14 very much.

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

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You should get a prompt
19 asking you to accept the unmute. There we go. Now
20 we can hear you.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Okay, alright, thank you
22 so much. Excellent, thank you. First and foremost,
23 I'm in the Department of Education, thank you all for
24 testifying here today. This topic is really
25 important to me personally. I was an ELL student.

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2 I've always said my whole life ELL till today, I'm
3 going to ELL to match up with everyone else but I
4 just want to thank you for holding this hearing and
5 especially for me in my district where about 75
6 percent English Language as a second language in our
7 district.

8 So, my question is really about you know the fact
9 that ELLs have a right to receive bilingual
10 instruction or English as a second language or sorry,
11 English as a new language instruction but many ELLs
12 do not receive this instruction during pandemic. So,
13 given the immense challenges that ELLs face in
14 participating meaningfully during remote learning and
15 the lack of language support, how, if at all, is the
16 DOE now ensuring the ELLs that did not receive their
17 mandated English as a new language instruction are
18 able to catch up and are there new investments that
19 are going to accompany these changes?

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Can we go ahead and unmute
21 the Deputy Chancellor? There we go.

22 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Thank you. I appreciate
23 that, thank you. Good question Council Member
24 Sanchez and I too was a multilingual or am a multi-
25 language learner and so, I appreciate the

1
2 personalization of that question. Absolutely, we
3 want to make sure that in all of our classes, high
4 quality instruction, high quality teachers are what
5 we have in place because that's going to offer
6 English Language Learners the highest impact leverage
7 of support to their academic achievement and to make
8 sure that they feel comfortable and confident in the
9 schools spaces. In addition to that, part of the
10 funding that we talked about earlier, was provided
11 for schools to give targeted support plans for their
12 ELLs. And so, much of those additional services are
13 being offered through those support plans.

14 In addition, as a whole, not for our
15 multilanguage learners specifically, multilanguage
16 learners but as a whole, we are looking at pilots for
17 programs and opportunities like embedded tutoring,
18 extended day opportunities and the programming that
19 will be bring into our summer session as well.

20 And so, there are those opportunities that are
21 beyond the school day. But the most important part
22 for the students is going to be during their school
23 day in that core content with the support of the
24 teachers and just making sure that we have adequate
25 supports available from the central office and from

1
2 the BCO's so that teachers have what they need in
3 order to provide students with those supports.

4 Mirza, if you want to add to that?

5 MIRZA SÀNCHEZ-MEDINA: Yes, thank you. In
6 addition to what Deputy Chancellor has indicated and
7 I said this a little bit before, we work with the
8 multitiered system of support to strengthen the core
9 instruction and then at the same time, provided
10 guidance for schools on how to provide intervention
11 services for students and what kind of digital
12 materials they could use to ensure that these
13 students would - we work with unfinished learning for
14 our students.

15 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: I also want to add that part
16 of what we talked about earlier was the use of
17 screens. And so the screeners are incredibly
18 important to provide us again, with quick data,
19 right. The snapshots of how our students are doing
20 and how they're progressing. And so, those screeners
21 give teachers information about whether or not their
22 students are falling behind and what else they need.

23 And in addition to that, our schools have access
24 to, as Mirza just mentioned, a number of digital
25 resources Panda Rama, Scholastics Word, and then,

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2 I've even seen in use in some of those reading
3 periods, Sorry and so there are lots of opportunities
4 for the students to receive those embedded supports
5 where they're working in small groups. It is very
6 specific to the need, the literacy levels, so that
7 they can receive supports in real time.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you so much and a
9 quick follow-up if I have enough time, is around
10 parents and interactions with parents. So, are those
11 schools required to hold a yearly meeting with
12 parents of ELLs to discuss their children's
13 programming and progress? I understand that these
14 rarely happen, so what is the DOE going to be doing
15 to ensure that the schools are meeting these
16 requirements and engaging the parents of ELLs?

17 MIRZA SANCHEZ-MEDINA: Council Member Sanchez,
18 thank you very much for that question. It should be
19 the first meeting of the year with the families, so
20 we will continue to inform and inform schools about
21 the importance. Sometimes people don't understand
22 the importance of it but absolutely, schools should
23 have a meeting with all of their families and in
24 talking about the programs and that's a perfect
25 opportunity for them to illicit their interests in

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2 developing a program if there isn't one. So, we will
3 follow-up. Thank you.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

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

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Hi everyone. Congrats to
9 Chair Joseph for your first hearing. This is
10 exciting and thanks to those who are here from DOE, I
11 appreciate all of you and the work that you have been
12 going through, especially during the pandemic. And
13 I'm just kind of putting on my previous hat in the
14 CBO Social Service world of things, where we provided
15 services specifically to Korean immigrant families
16 you know and did more on the adult literacy side of
17 things versus the youth but I think you know there's
18 a lot there that is very similar. But I wanted to
19 actually piggyback - I had two questions actually.
20 One was piggybacking off of what Council Member
21 Stevens was saying before and just out of curiosity,
22 because you guys have mentioned that you're
23 contracting or had contracted and identified certain
24 groups and nonprofits that you're partnering with for
25 the translation piece. And you know obviously, you

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2 know we know it's not just simply about translation
3 and interruption but it's really understanding the
4 cultural nuances as well. And so, I just wanted to
5 know what efforts you guys did to outreach to certain
6 groups out there in the community? Because I know
7 that there's always an open RFP process but was there
8 more intentional outreach beyond just posting the
9 RFP? And I know that if you're in the phase right
10 now of figuring out who those contractors are, you
11 probably can't discuss it but, I just wanted to know
12 if you guys, my first question was around just the
13 process of outreach that you did. You know, which
14 groups and how you reached out to the community?

15 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Thank you and thank you for
16 that question. It's incredibly important for us to
17 consider not just the language base but how we
18 interact with different groups of people. And
19 Kleber, I don't know if you want to talk a little bit
20 more about the partnering with the immigrant led
21 community-based organizations and especially, much of
22 that was able to happen again, thank you to the
23 Council, through the funding that we received from
24 the Council. So, Kleber, do you want to talk a
25 little bit about that or anything else you think

1
2 might help answer this question. I know it's a hard
3 thing to come by, so.

4 KLEBER PALMA: Yes, absolutely. Thank you for
5 that question Council Member. Yes, the funding came
6 obviously from the City Council in hope of just
7 closing these gaps, filling the areas that were
8 identified as deficiencies in the past. And right
9 from the beginning, we engaged and were heavily
10 engaged with a group of advocates, community-based
11 organizations to think through how best to implement
12 some of the concerns – how to respond to some of the
13 concerns that were raised because of the pandemic and
14 we've kept with this group meeting every couple of
15 weeks consistently for the last several months to
16 make sure that the workstreams and the initiatives
17 that stem from this funding – that they were partners
18 in that process.

19 And so, this group was something that is solely
20 focused on language access which had not been done in
21 a consistent level in the past, which is very
22 exciting. So, this group that helped us kind of
23 articulate this piece. In addition to that, we also
24 worked with our partners in the Office of
25 Multilingual Learners to make sure that their

1
2 networks and advocates and community groups are also
3 aware of this opportunity and we also engage the
4 Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs. So, we covered
5 as many different areas to make sure that that word
6 got out about this. It wasn't simply just on the
7 website or something that you have to dig for. We
8 wanted to make sure it was out there.

9 And so, we're very excited that we have had the
10 responses that we've received so far and hopefully
11 there will be more to come.

12 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: We've offered these language
13 access kits and other opportunities but the reality
14 is Council Member Lee that we don't have all of the
15 ideas or may not necessarily have what's best for the
16 community, so we absolutely welcome an opportunity or
17 accept recommendations to be considered because that
18 will help us get better at what we do.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: No, that's awesome because I
20 feel like often times on the community-based
21 organization side of things, like we were like, oh my
22 gosh there's so much we could do to help and we
23 wanted to help and we wanted to offer that support
24 but we just didn't know how to get at the table. So,
25 I think that was one of the things, so I would love

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2 to you know at some point soon, recommend any groups
3 that maybe are not on the list. So, that's one
4 thing.

5 And the second thing, maybe I'm opening up a can
6 of worms by asking this question but how is the
7 coordination between DOE as well as the DYCD after
8 school programs? Because it's like two city agencies
9 that have their own way of doing things and I got to
10 say as a provider in my previous hat, you know, it
11 was frustrating because we wanted to provide the
12 culturally competent in-language services to these
13 families, especially in the after-school setting but
14 often times it was either the administration of the
15 schools or the principals or just the contracting
16 process I would say, right, that sort of became a
17 barrier. And so, I just wanted to know what your
18 thoughts are and what you can do to better coordinate
19 that effort with DYCD because often times a lot of
20 these families do need the after school support as
21 well and so, how do you continue that service?

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time has expired.

23 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: The responder or this time
24 expired?

25 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Oh, no, please go ahead.

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2 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Okay. So, thank you. Thank
3 you for that question Council Member Lee. I can't
4 speak necessarily to happened in the past in terms of
5 the after school. What I can say is summer school
6 planning with DYCD, City Hall, and other partners has
7 been an incredible experience and it has been an
8 opportunity for us to really get to know the other
9 agencies, to understand where each of us are coming
10 from. To put our needs on the same table and have to
11 negotiate and work together so that we understand
12 because from a parents perspective or from a students
13 perspective, we're all the same agency. They have
14 one experience right, after school is after school.
15 It doesn't matter to them who is offering it, right.
16 Summer school is summer school. It doesn't matter.
17 And so, we're working together very closely. We're
18 meeting at least three times a week and talking about
19 the ways that we can support one another and in fact,
20 we'll be offering this spring, workshops together so
21 that we each understand the role the other will be
22 playing for summer, so that we're prepared to support
23 and build off one another to have greater alignment.

24 So, I absolutely thank you for bringing that up.
25 I won't say by any means that we've got it down. You

1
2 know there's a lot of work and a lot of room for us
3 to learn but we hear that need and unfortunately have
4 the right people in place to begin to respond to
5 that. So, thank you for bringing that up.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
7 turn to Council Member Gutiérrez followed by Council
8 Member De La Rosa and then back to the Chair. But
9 we'll first turn to Council Member Gutiérrez.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you and thank
12 you Chair Joseph. You're doing an amazing job. All
13 your years of educating. I have three questions.
14 So, I will just ask them and you know you answer them
15 when you can. The first one and I make this a point
16 to do this in all the hearings that I attend as one
17 speaking about language access. Can you explain the
18 process or highlight the process for the DOE when you
19 are looking to integrate a new language or when you
20 have students from a particular language that is not
21 at the school? For example, Kichwa, which is an
22 indigenous language for me and Richwood and parts of
23 Bushwick in my district. It's a growing population,
24 as I believe it's also in part to the Bronx.

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2 And so, I have a keen interest in mind to connect
3 with those families and I know from my time spent at
4 some of these schools, there has been traditionally a
5 barrier in connecting with these families and making
6 sure that the students are supported.

7 So, I'm not sure, I just checked the DOE website.
8 I know it's not one of the like ten languages but if
9 you could speak to it. If there is something in the
10 pipeline for these families or just highlight what
11 the process would be? And then what it takes to
12 integrate this new language and what it takes for the
13 DOE to kind of build something out for these
14 families?

15 Second, is how do we prevent EL resources from
16 being jeopardized or cut in gentrifying communities.
17 What I've seen in Bushwick, what we've seen in
18 Williamsburg, and likely what we'll see in Ridgewood
19 is under enrollment. Families are getting displaced.
20 Folks moving in aren't necessarily having children
21 right away and so, we see a lot of open seats in our
22 school districts. And we see a lot of loss of funds
23 and so, unfortunately, what also happens is that our
24 ELL students, some of them that are able to remain
25 are still very much in need.

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2 So, how does the DOE grapple with the threat of
3 resources being cut with the obvious need that there
4 are still folks that need help. And then lastly,
5 just as the Tech Chair for the Council, what were
6 some of the unique challenges to the best of your
7 ability, that ELL students were facing working
8 remote, ELL students and their families? And what
9 are some of the lessons learned or best practices
10 that we can start to integrate into the future for
11 the way that we look at supporting ELL students
12 digitally, whether remote learning or at schools?
13 Thank you.

14 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Thank you. I'm going to turn
15 it over first to Mirza to answer some of those
16 questions. I don't know that we had looked very
17 closely at the impact of gentrification but certainly
18 have considered the impact of enrollment declines in
19 different communities. And so, really important for
20 you to frame it in that way. So, I appreciate that
21 question.

22 Mirza, do you want to speak a little bit? Yup,
23 okay.

24 MIRZA SÀNCHEZ-MEDINA: Sure, so we have lower
25 incidence languages and while we might not have all

1
2 the resources for these languages, we try to look
3 also at the schools. Sometimes the schools have
4 resources. This is one of the reasons we send to
5 schools money for them to open, to purchase home
6 language libraries and lower incidence languages and
7 we continue to find ways to support the lower
8 incidence languages. So, would like to hear more
9 from you Council Member Gutiérrez on how we can –
10 what are the needs of these families? And how can we
11 continue to support them and what resources they will
12 need?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Absolutely, I'd love
14 to do that with you. Let's do it. There's a ton of
15 need. They're a huge population in my district and
16 in other parts of the city and the beautiful thing is
17 that they are staying. And so, I want to be able to
18 support them. They're active. They are going to
19 after-school programs, so I want to support them.
20 Thank you.

21 MIRZA SÀNCHEZ-MEDINA: And schools have the
22 funding for translation interpretation as well.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Yeah, but you need
24 someone to do the interpretation. Thank you.

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COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member.
And finally, we will turn to Council Member De La Rosa.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

COUNCIL MEMBER DE LA ROSA: Hello, hi, how are you. I want to thank Chair Joseph for this wonderful and informative hearing I have a few questions and some of them may have been asked already. I had to jump off at some point during the hearing but my question is mostly about students who come in and it usually happens in some of our high schools more than in the elementary schools. But students who come in after, like the October, I think October 31st funding deadline that are considered over the counter, although I don't like that use of language. But they come into the schools after the funding decisions have been made for per people allocation and in my district in upper Manhattan, most of those students are coming from Latin American countries and they need extra funding in order to supply services directly for the ELL population.

Can you walk us through what it looks like when a student comes in after that deadline and what

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2 services are offered to those schools that are taking
3 in those students?

4 MIRZA SÀNCHEZ-MEDINA: So, thank you for that
5 question and that's a person who lived my entire
6 career in New York City at high school level. I
7 truly understand that process. Again, schools have
8 funding and then their funding is revisited after the
9 October 31st to ensure that the services – all
10 students must receive services. And also, schools
11 have a way of asking for additional funding if needed
12 and additional supports.

13 So, we are aware there's a post process also to
14 hold harmless schools if they have lost a register,
15 but in the case of when the students are coming,
16 enrolling throughout the entire year, we ensure that
17 the services, the schools are able to provide the
18 services and at the same time, if the school needs
19 additional support to contact us to help them with
20 that.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER DE LA ROSA: Great and this might
22 have been asked already but as far as the academic
23 recovery funding that was allocated, what does the
24 allocation look like for English Language Learners
25 and what is the type of supports that exist right now

1
2 for like small group counseling, small group
3 instruction for ELL students within the current
4 structure especially during the COVID-19 pandemic?

5 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Thank you for that question.
6 So, we did review that but essentially it's
7 distribution of funding and resources to schools, so
8 that they can do everything from participating with
9 dream squads to some post-secondary readiness. There
10 are family leaderships and digital literacy programs.
11 We sent culturally responsive home language
12 libraries, wellness checks, so a number of programs
13 that have been funded using that academic recovery
14 funding.

15 In addition, we have – so rather to the question
16 that you asked about the small groups portion, making
17 sure that schools are using a range of data,
18 including the screener data, student work to monitor
19 progress and really thinking about the different
20 diagnostics and ways that they can collect it. And
21 that's where the small group comes in and for that
22 kind of construction, we actually offer the range of
23 professional development sessions. Ranging from how
24 to analyze, collect and analyze the data to actually
25 how to see some of that small group work with

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2 templates and conferencing and things like that. And
3 there are also Spanish, bilingual, dual language and
4 transitional programs that have been offered and then
5 other ENL standalone programs and national geographic
6 Pana Rama, digital ENL standalone lessons for
7 elementary, middle and high. But a number of
8 different programs that have been offered that can be
9 used with a rotation model where teachers really make
10 decisions about different groups of students and
11 during a designated time in the day, can work with a
12 group of students that may need that one on one
13 support or small group support, while the others are
14 working independently on other pieces.

15 So, there's also very specific interventions for
16 students who are reading at different grade levels
17 behind. So, Sorry, is the program that I mentioned
18 that I've actually in action in schools. That
19 includes booklists and really specific [INAUDIBLE
20 2:06:59] and creates common language and consistent
21 practice across the school. We use passport, that I
22 mentioned earlier to with small groups and that small
23 group is key to four students and again, it's a space
24 that's a teaching model.

25

1
2 So, there's a lot of opportunity for that. The
3 concern that we brought up earlier when Council
4 Member Dinowitz had asked was that it's not
5 consistent across all of our schools yet and so,
6 that's where we really want to make sure is how do we
7 know how well schools are using these resources. And
8 then, really paying attention to the impact and
9 that's part of what we teaching teachers to do is to
10 take a look at that blunt data, that those
11 assessments offer throughout.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER DE LA ROSA: Great and just to
13 piggyback one last second, I heard Council Member
14 Sanchez and Avilès put this very eloquently but one
15 of the troubles that we see; I was a former ELL
16 student myself with parents that spoke not a word of
17 English. Having that help when a child brings home
18 homework that for many of our parents, it may not
19 even be at the grade level that they ever completed
20 for example or just the language, the way it's
21 explained. Having that support for parents is super
22 important. I like the Council Member Avilès's ideal
23 about the welcome centers but if there's any other
24 resources that we can actually bring into our schools
25 for parents, it's important for us to pilot you know

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2 parent academy's and things of that nature to help
3 with the gaps that exist in the home. Thank you so
4 much.

5 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Thank you for that.
6 Especially given the role that parents played this
7 past year, really helping with – not this past year,
8 the past two years, right? With helping with
9 schooling at home, so I appreciate that. Kleber, I
10 saw that you had your hand up.

11 KLEBER PALMA: Yes, thank you Deputy Chancellor.
12 I wanted to piggyback a little bit on what was just
13 said but also respond to Council Member Gutiérrez's
14 comment earlier, which I think was a great point.
15 The DOE proactively and systemically does things in
16 nine languages, right. The top nine and with
17 English, that covers about 95 percent of our parent
18 population. That sounds great. The tricky part
19 there is that there's 160 languages we're not
20 covering because the city is so diverse and as my
21 colleague mentioned, schools do receive a small
22 budget of funding for translation interpretation.
23 That's intended to cover local needs and local
24 languages that aren't covered with the top nine.

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But to your point Council Member, who is doing the work? Who is doing the work in these languages? And that's something that we want to get into and would love to partner with you, not you but anybody else to partner, to identify these new language groups. Our setting is always evolving. These new language groups coming in constantly and to find out who these are, where they're coming from, what languages are being spoken. It allows us to work with our contracted vendors, so that they can start identifying these resources for us to lean on.

One of the services that is heavily leaned on by schools is our over the phone services, which is available in 350 different languages. So, that's a start. That's a start, but we have to find ways to professionalize folks in this field. Speaking of the parents and giving them an opportunity to grow. Being the first interpreter – to get an interpreter would be fantastic. We don't have any interpreters, it's very rare for example right.

But there are families who may begin that profession and maybe there's an opportunity here to help us bridge that communication gap using the community itself to be the interpreter in the long

1
2 run. To professionalize in that effort and so forth,
3 so a lot of exciting opportunities but I think if we
4 can be further engaged to identify where these
5 languages are and what languages are emerging, I
6 think we'll be better off.

7 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: That's a fantastic idea
8 Kleber and how we can all work together to affirm our
9 families to really allow folks to see what they bring
10 to the table is value and they can add, right? And
11 so, thank you, I love that suggestion of using the
12 community to see that research.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And that concludes your
14 colleagues questions Chair, so I turn it back to you.

15 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Wonderful, thank you
16 colleagues, great questions and definitely we know
17 communities are formed every ten years, so languages
18 and communities change every ten years and that
19 include language.

20 I know that one of things we talked about in
21 sustaining and maintaining our multilanguage learner
22 population is teacher training. Teacher training
23 will be very, very important in terms of ESL,
24 bilingual education. Also, special ed backing,
25 speech pathologists is a shortage area. I had to

1
2 wait almost a year to get a bilingual speech
3 therapist for one of my students. I had to threaten
4 to burn the school down in order for my child to get
5 that. Oh, yeah, I did.

6 So, I was able to get one and there was only one
7 for D17. I came out of D17, there was only one
8 bilingual speech pathologist, one for the whole
9 district. So, that child was waiting so long by the
10 time she came to me in fifth grade. So, those are
11 the type of training that we need to create for our
12 teachers, the pathways to create. I became an ESL
13 teacher with common branch. I got an extension,
14 which was like 15 credits but I already had a
15 background in bilingual education and I saw the
16 shortage area for our ESLs. So, I'd like to hear
17 from you guys, what are the pathways to creating more
18 multilingual, bilingual teachers, ENL teachers, also
19 with special education. Some of our students also
20 have a double whammy.

21 They're English Language Learners and yet they
22 have a learning disability, so we have to be able to
23 meet them. So, I would love to hear what great ideas
24 you guys have for pathways for teachers to become
25

1
2 bilingual teachers, ESL teachers and so on and so
3 forth.

4 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Thank you. Thanks for that
5 question Chair Joseph and Mirza, I'll let you answer
6 most of it. But we are working with [INAUDIBLE
7 2:12:50] department to ask if we recruit bilingual
8 teachers, speech providers, counselors, through both
9 traditional and alternative pathways. And those you
10 know, include the ones that you already know, right.
11 So, Teaching Fellows, Teaching Collaboratives and the
12 local university.

13 What we think are excited about too is that we're
14 supporting teachers to bilingual extension, as you
15 just mentioned through the Subsidized Bilingual
16 Extension Program. The Step Program and our extended
17 certification programs, so we have some other
18 programs in place to support educators in getting
19 those extensions and I think that that's going to be
20 really important for us right now, particularly
21 because we're seeing this shortage.

22 We also have the application and funding support
23 for the state teacher training programs for bilingual
24 extension and for ESL Certification. So, some of
25 that additional support, so that folks can go through

1
2 that process more readily. Mirza, I don't know if
3 you want to build on some of that or if there's
4 anything else that -

5 MIRZA SÀNCHEZ-MEDINA: That's good. I would say
6 that DML continues to partner with the Office of
7 Teacher Recruitment and we are always looking at
8 where the needs are and trying to foresee before the
9 vacancies come up, to ensure that we know how to get
10 more teachers. And I appreciate Chair Joseph
11 mentioning about you getting that extension because
12 that's the message that we want to send to teachers.
13 We have a number of teachers who speak the language
14 and could get the added certification at no cost or
15 little cost and that's part of the process that we
16 have that we want to ensure that we communicate.

17 You know, I did that with my teachers, got them
18 dually licensed and it was great to have that
19 process. So, that's what we're doing and we continue
20 to look at partnering with Higher Ed to ensure that
21 we get more teachers recruited and we keep them.

22 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: That's the other part of
23 that, is that the more teachers that we have trained
24 for those extensions, even if they don't move into a
25 position where they are teaching an ENL or bilingual

1
2 class, they now have the strategies and they have the
3 know how so that they can support all learners
4 better.

5 And you know, there are other programs that are
6 already in existence too that I also wanted to
7 mention, that are about credentialling for bilingual
8 – essentially the scholarship and loan forgiveness
9 programs, including the Jose Peace. Both scholarship
10 and learn forgiveness for positions like bilingual
11 speech because those are ones that are working
12 directly with our students with disabilities.

13 And then the Bilingual People Services Program,
14 so the Paraprofessionals who want to move into
15 teaching can get an extension program essentially
16 too.

17 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Wonderful, thank you.

18 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: And connections you have, by
19 all means, please.

20 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Definitely, I love Bilingual
21 People Services for the work that they do. Thank you
22 so much. How can the Council support you and how can
23 we help with funding and making sure that we support
24 our ENLs. I'm not here just for the fight but I want
25

1
2 to make sure, how can we partner to make it stronger
3 and better for our children of New York City?

4 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Yup, thank you and I think
5 actually we heard it a great deal in this hearing
6 today, right? Each and every time that someone said,
7 I would like to talk to you more about, you know I'm
8 walking with a page full of ideas and people I need
9 to follow up with ranging from LGBTQ supports for
10 students in different language to thinking about
11 culture, to making sure quality control and impact,
12 right? And even potentially a Bangla bilingual
13 program in Jackson Heights, right?

14 So, we want to make sure that we're following up
15 with folks and I think part of that is obviously the
16 Council's interests in areas of expertise. But the
17 other part is something that I mentioned earlier.
18 You necessarily represent the community and so, what
19 are you hearing? What can we learn from you, the
20 folks who need and want, so that we know what to
21 tackle and what to pay attention to and we're always
22 making sure that we're being responsive to the
23 largest community that we serve.

24 And so, I think that's one way that we absolutely
25 would benefit from working with the Council. Any

1
2 feedback that you have. You know as much as
3 sometimes it's painful to hear, it's really important
4 for us to be aware of where we may be falling short.
5 Because either we weren't paying attention to that
6 specific lens or point of view, or it's something
7 that we just need to have an outsider point out for
8 us so that we can get better at what we do. I mean,
9 ultimately what we want to do is better meet the
10 needs of our students and so, we need to hear that
11 feedback.

12 And then just make sure that we're maintaining an
13 open door. You know, you and I have had an
14 opportunity already to share even a car ride. And
15 so, I think it's that opportunity to have
16 conversations with the different members of the
17 Council and to maintain an open door. You know, you
18 have our contact information and we want to make sure
19 that you're using it and visa-versa. So, I think you
20 know, I don't know if you want to add anything else.

21 MIRZA SÀNCHEZ-MEDINA: Yeah, like Deputy
22 Chancellor Quintana, I have annotated many ideas and
23 questions. How do we know that students are
24 learning? The auditing, the monitoring of schools,
25 the ELL visits, ensuring that we are doing more for

1
2 parents and I also would like to hear where is it
3 working well? So, we can go and visit and learn from
4 those places where it's working well because you
5 know, the best learning happens in schools. So, how
6 do we – you know, you're hearing from your districts.
7 How can we improve where we're not measuring but at
8 the same time, where are the places that we can learn
9 from? Thank you very much and I really appreciate
10 having you focusing Chair on this population. It's
11 really a warm coming, thank you.

12 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Yup.

13 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you very much. Best
14 practices for one of my favorite schools in Brooklyn
15 is PS189. One of the best bilingual programs in the
16 city. It's a model where these best practices; if
17 you're looking for a model, PS189.

18 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Alright.

19 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you so much.

20 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Thank you.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair.

22 CAROLYNE QUINTANA: Thank you for the thoughtful
23 questions.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And that concludes questions
25 and answers for the Administration, so we want to

1
2 thank the Department for being here today for the
3 first hearing of this new Chair in this new session.

4 So, ladies and gentlemen, next we are going to
5 turn to public testimony and I just want to – sorry,
6 my screen froze.

7 I just want to remind everyone that we will be
8 doing three minutes for each person for public
9 panels. I will be calling people in panels of four.
10 Council Members, if you have questions for any
11 particular panelist, please use the raise hand
12 function in Zoom and we will call on you at the
13 conclusion of the panel.

14 So, the first panel that we'll be calling has two
15 students on it, Sufan Wan CACF Asian American Student
16 Advocacy Project and Oscar Wang, CACF Asian American
17 Student Advocacy Project and Kaveri Sengupta, CACF.

18 The panel following will be Estrella Juárez, who
19 is also a student and providing translation for
20 Estrella will be Aracelis Lucero followed by Francois
21 Nzi, the New York Math Academy and Coaching Services.
22 Rita Rodriguez-Engberg, Advocates for Children and
23 Andrea Ortiz, the New York Immigration Coalition.

24 But we will first turn to Sufan.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

1
2 SUFAN WAN: Good afternoon. First, I want to
3 thank Chair Joseph and the Council for allowing this
4 conversation. My name is Sufan Wan, a Junior at
5 Francis Lewis High School in Queens. I'm an advocate
6 for language access at the Asian American Student
7 Advocacy Project.

8 Our language access team aim to ensure that all
9 students participating in NYC English Learning
10 programs are able to set themselves up for success in
11 their academic futures. We hope to inspire salary
12 changes and to identify the flaws and needs of the
13 current ELL curriculum. This month marks my fourth
14 year arriving in the U.S. My English level was at
15 elementary second grade English speaker at the very
16 beginning when I came here. Thus, my parents and I
17 have experienced cultural struggles often times. The
18 COVID pandemic interrupted education systems so
19 unexpectedly.

20 Also, create a huge academic gap for ELL
21 students. Only speaking my native language at home,
22 when most of the time that's spent speaking English
23 was only at school. No doubt, ESL remote learning
24 was devastating for us. Without consistent
25 opportunities to listen, speak, and read English,

1
2 because ELL students to lost and helpless as we try
3 to reach out for fullest potential.

4 I didn't even know if my pronunciations were
5 correct when I learned new words. In addition,
6 there's new learning limit adequate translation
7 support to ELL families. For example, there was a
8 rare chance to have a translation into parent teacher
9 conference. Families either rely on student to
10 translate for them or are not able to communicate
11 with teachers. The pandemic also extended one year
12 of stay in the ESL program for those people who are
13 already capable to pass it because we were not able
14 to take the NISIS slot in 2021. Every September, ELL
15 students concerned about their futures didn't pass
16 the slot.

17 There needs to be alternatives ways to measure
18 our success. Rather than using the standardized
19 test, the extension of state in the ESL program
20 significantly matters to us. It prevents ESL
21 students from taking advanced classes such as AP and
22 Honor, which exceedingly affects our academic
23 performance and college readiness.

24 The COVID pandemic intensified the deficiencies
25 in ELL education. I am aware of this. Everyone

1
2 should also be aware of ELL education. Schools
3 should constantly provide bilingual staff to deliver
4 support and communicate with ESL students and their
5 guardians to better understanding needs.

6 ELLs are not a group portion of the total
7 citywide enrolled students. I am not an individual.
8 We, the entire ELLs should be heard and seen.
9 Together, we work for students for their academic
10 futures. I urge you to support ELL education in our
11 community. Thank you.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
13 hear from Oscar Wang, CACF Asian American Student
14 Advocacy Project.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

16 OSCAR WANG: Hi everyone. My name is Oscar, I'm
17 currently a Stuyvesant high school senior. I want to
18 thank Councilwoman Joseph and everyone here today for
19 today's conversations.

20 As for me, I finished my ESL education when I was
21 in first grade at PS89 in Elmhurst, but after that I
22 continued to struggle speaking outside the classroom
23 and expressing myself in public until the seventh
24 grade. For years, like for the years that I spent
25 distancing myself for my parents and my culture, I

1
2 think those are largely the reasons why I couldn't
3 give this testimony to my own mother in Chinese even
4 if I wanted to.

5 I think to me, my ENL education focused too much
6 on the results of building fluency in English and not
7 enough on building the cultural literacy and the
8 feeling that I really belong here. I think it's the
9 precedent set by this results oriented system today,
10 that concerns me about the futures of our next
11 generation of MLLs. For the past few years, I've
12 been working alongside my team in the Asian American
13 Student Advocacy Project, CACF on the same campaign
14 that Sufan mentioned. And during April of last year,
15 we reached out to several ESL teachers from FDR high
16 schools Nazareth High School and other schools with
17 prominent ELL, API student populations and here's
18 what we gathered from the surveys and interviews that
19 we conducted.

20 The teachers that we contacted discussed their
21 general thoughts on how remote learning was going for
22 them and their students. While the issues noted in
23 the briefing covered a lot of what we gathered, many
24 of the teachers elaborated on ways that things could
25 have gone better for them. While some teachers felt

1
2 more organized and at ease due to the nature of
3 remote learning. Others felt like they were holding
4 up a wall and doing nothing and they paid out of
5 pocket for certain learning software's. However,
6 they all agreed on one thing, which is that
7 standardized testing wasn't really helping anyone.

8 They argued that while the expectation on an ISIS
9 slot created good guidelines for teaching, the fact
10 that teachers didn't receive results until August,
11 left little room to plan for their curriculum and
12 completely addressed their students weaknesses.

13 In addition, our teachers also agreed that the
14 cutoffs for proficiency levels were too drastic.
15 That placed some students at a level where they were
16 either over prepared or under prepared for their new
17 environments. I think the inefficiencies created by
18 standardized testing and also the loss and engagement
19 created by the pandemic, makes the situation where
20 students are only trained to answer these sort of
21 academic questions, rather than express themselves
22 and articulate their own identities and interests.

23 In other words, I feel like, as we implement
24 changes to help students recover from the gaps
25 created by remote learning, I feel like we need to -

1
2 it is crucial that we discuss these opportunities
3 that allow students to really flourish as individuals
4 who aren't afraid of their identities, who aren't
5 afraid of speaking their voice, right?

6 And I think it's all because at the end of the
7 day, the last think I want to see is another
8 generation of students who like myself years ago,
9 remove themselves from their native culture and do so
10 to fit into the cultural norm. I really commemorate
11 the focus on bilingual education today and I want to
12 thank you for your time.

13 Thank you and finally, we'll hear from Kaveri
14 Sengupta, Coalition for Asian American Children and
15 Families.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

17 KAVERI SENGUPTA: Good afternoon. My name is
18 Kaveri Sengupta, I am the Education Policy
19 Coordinator at the Coalition for Asian American
20 Children and Families or CACF. Thank you so much to
21 Chair Joseph and members of the Committee on
22 Education for giving us this opportunity to testify.

23 CACF is the nation's only pan-Asian children and
24 families' advocacy organization and several of our
25 member organizations work with ELLs from diverse AAPI

1
2 backgrounds. And you also just heard from our
3 wonderful current and former ELL Youth Leaders.

4 As a result of the model minority myth,
5 challenges facing AAPI ELLs are often overlooked in
6 public discourse. Although over 42,700 AAPI students
7 are ELLs, making up nearly one quarter of ELLs
8 systemwide. Last year of the top ten languages
9 spoken at home by ELLs, six were languages spoken in
10 Asia.

11 Today, CACF asks the City Council to hold our
12 public education system accountable to these
13 communities' needs. Throughout the pandemic, our
14 member organizations have reported that COVID-19 has
15 had a particularly detrimental impact on AAPI ELLs
16 and their families. These families typically live in
17 multigenerational homes and lack equitable access to
18 healthcare and students need holistic support.

19 We call on DOE to be intentional around hiring
20 social workers, school counselors, and other mental
21 health professionals who are bilingual in AAPI
22 languages, can provide services in language and
23 center culturally humble and responsive practices
24 using guidelines to assess these pieces in hiring.
25

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2 We must also ensure that AAPI ELLs have access to
3 affirming culturally responsive sustaining education,
4 including the universal Mosaic curriculum. There's
5 also a lack of transparency around languages spoken
6 by bilingual school staff which results in difficulty
7 for advocates and other stakeholders to identify gaps
8 in services beyond anecdotal evidence.

9 Thus, we urge DOE to provide these data
10 disaggregated by ethnicity and languages spoken. To
11 provide an example illustrating need that is not
12 unique, a CBO in our membership serves a public
13 school in Chinatown with over 70 percent of limited
14 English proficient Chinese immigrant families, which
15 is about 280 families.

16 Only one staff member at the school, the parent
17 coordinator knows Chinese, which is no where near
18 enough to cover the need. An ELLs grandmother
19 informed the CBO that he was pushed many times by
20 other students and got hurt. He was sent to the
21 school nurse during the day but because none of his
22 teachers or staff can communicate with him in his
23 language, he doesn't know who he can approach for
24 help.

1
2 In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a
3 rise in anti-Asian violence and the impact has been
4 felt by ELLs and their families. To address this, we
5 call on DOE to invest in more sustainable school and
6 CBO partnership in school districts with AAPI
7 immigrant and ELL populations that are often left out
8 to provide wrap around services.

9 Another after school ELL student and our member
10 CBO witnessed an anti-Asian attack against her mother
11 and was traumatized. The students mother has not
12 been willing to discuss it, even though the student
13 really does want to and needs to talk about it. She
14 has expressed worry and fear about not feeling safe
15 in her neighborhood and her school is ill-equipped to
16 support due to a lack of bilingual staff.

17 We also really prioritize better data collection
18 and data disaggregation. The DOE does not collect
19 data on AAPI ethnic groups, which disregards the
20 differences associated with Asian ethnicities and
21 impedes the ability to provide targeted services.
22 Home language data should be coupled with ethnicity
23 data for a more complete picture of students
24 experiences and challenges and we're advocating for
25

1
2 City Council to allocate to DOE \$500,000 for the
3 proper implementation of data disaggregation.

4 We also urge the DOE to release a comprehensive
5 ELL demographic report for the past year as well as
6 the diversity report for the last year, which is a
7 language Local Law 59 and should provide analysis on
8 the impacts of changes in admissions processes with
9 regard to ELL enrollment.

10 Finally, we advocate for the baselining of \$6
11 million for language access funding to DOE to expand
12 on that work that's already being done that we heard
13 about earlier today. We have been working with DOE
14 over months to ensure that our AAPI students and
15 families feel the impact of these funds.

16 We look forward to co-creating a public school
17 system that puts the needs of its students that it
18 has historically marginalized first in all decisions
19 defining their well-being and success as a measure of
20 its strength. Thank you.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and that concludes
22 the testimony for this panel. Chair, did you have
23 any questions or comments for this panel?

24 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Well, good afternoon. Thank
25 you for your voice in that space, that's very

1
2 important and of course we always stand with the
3 Asian community as you go through this and as a
4 partner, as the Chair, you will be hearing more with
5 us. So, we'll be more engaged. No, I didn't have
6 any questions.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Alright, thank you. That
8 concludes the testimony for this panel. I'm going to
9 now call the next panel, but just so folks can queue
10 up, the panel following will be Natasha Capers, New
11 York City Coalition for Educational Justice, Colin
12 Buckingham and Victoria Munoz. But we're now going
13 to go to panel two, so we're going to hear from
14 another student Estrella Juárez but providing
15 translation for her testimony will be Aracelis Lucero
16 and I do apologize for messing up names. People mess
17 up my last name all the time. I'm doing my best.

18 So, Ms. Lucero, do you want Estrella to go first
19 and then you'll?

20 ARACELIS LUCERO: Yeah.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, so we'll go ahead and
22 unmute her.

23 ARACELIS LUCERO: Yes. [SPEAKING IN OTHER
24 LANGAUGE 2:33:00-2:33:02].

1
2 ESTRELLA JUÀREZ: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
3 2:33:03-2:35:20].

4 ARACELIS LUCERO: My name is Estrella, I am 18-
5 years-old and I would like to share my experience as
6 an immigrant and as a student. I came to this
7 country two years ago and I found it very difficult
8 to continue with my studies when I first arrived as
9 an 11th grader.

10 When I first arrived, I was about two to three
11 months without studying because no school wanted to
12 accept me and they would tell me that they did not
13 have any more space or sometimes they would give me
14 no explanation to why they couldn't take me. After
15 visiting three or four schools, I finally found a
16 bilingual school that accepted me, there where I was
17 able to complete the 12th grade.

18 Although I did receive a lot of support from a
19 few teachers, I believe there isn't enough support
20 for students like me. Social emotional support and
21 counseling is needed. It isn't easy to migrate to
22 another country and to reunify with my family that I
23 had not seen for more than 15 years. It isn't easy
24 to migrate without knowing the language and I didn't
25 imagine all the obstacles I would have to face to

1
2 continue with my studies and to be able to be with my
3 family. It has been very difficult to enroll in
4 college because I have not been in the United States
5 a sufficient amount of time to learn the language.

6 It wasn't until I met with Counselors at Bronx
7 Community College to complete my registration after
8 being accepted that I was told I couldn't enroll
9 because I did not have the sufficient level of
10 English to enroll and I was told about CLIP. The
11 purpose of this program is to improve my English
12 language skills and to prepare me academically to
13 enter college. But CLIP also told me that I couldn't
14 enroll in the program because my English skills were
15 low.

16 I have felt very sad and sometimes not as
17 motivated. Losing hope around whether I would be
18 able to continue going to school or not. A professor
19 at BCC gave me a list of programs where I could learn
20 English on my own and finally this 31st of January, I
21 was able to pass a CLIP exam and have enrolled in the
22 program. I am here sharing my story today because I
23 would like to ask the City of New York and the
24 Department of Education to support students like me,
25 so that they can have an equal opportunity to

1
2 continue with their studies and so that they don't
3 feel sad and lonely. Thank you very much.

4 And I was also supposed to testify.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, you can now go. We'll
6 reset the clock and you can now go ahead and testify.

7 ARACELIS LUCERO: Thank you. Good afternoon.
8 Thank you for having me. I'm the Executive Director
9 of MASA, we're a community based organization that
10 works with Mexican and Latin American immigrant
11 children, youth and families in the South Bronx. We
12 have a community led integrated model that engages
13 the entire family and we are grounded in a deep
14 commitment to strengthening literacy, leadership and
15 power for Mexican, Central American, and indigenous
16 people.

17 The community that MASA services is often
18 considered hard to reach, largely undocumented. 95
19 percent of our adults are foreign born, 40 percent of
20 our parents have less than a primary school education
21 and 85 percent have less than a secondary school
22 education. About 30 percent of our community members
23 speak an indigenous language and the majority, 83
24 percent have less than an annual income of \$30,000.

1
2 This is prepandemic data and so, we can only
3 imagine what those numbers may be now. As such, MASA
4 families often face complex and overlapping barriers
5 to accessing resources and services, all of which
6 impact their health, education, income and overall
7 wellbeing.

8 They are navigating a complex web of systems and
9 institutions in an unfamiliar language and often with
10 limited literacy skills in their primary language and
11 very limited sometimes non-existing digital literacy
12 skills. This makes it very difficult for 3K and PreK
13 and quite frankly at all age groups, when they have
14 to do the application online.

15 As of this moment, MASA has been a part of the
16 Linking Immigrant Families to Early Childhood
17 Education Program that is better known as LIFE for
18 four years. This project has support hundreds of
19 MASA's recent nearby immigrant families to apply and
20 enroll in 3K and PreK, where we have also been able
21 to provide additional support through one to one
22 intensive case management and referrals. It is
23 critically important that we do not approach our
24 English Language Learners and their families with a
25 one size fits all solution and provide more funding

1
2 to support the most marginalized communities,
3 including indigenous speaking communities with the
4 resources that they need to ensure their children
5 enter ready to learn at school and to enter 3K and
6 PreK programs.

7 I am here today to advocate for \$4 million in
8 additional support from the City Council to expand
9 the LIFE project across all five boroughs and to fund
10 a diverse set of CBO's to do this work. In addition,
11 another community that is often left behind is our
12 newcomer ELLs, who many times do not find the
13 adequate schools and programs to properly support
14 them in fulfilling their dreams to graduate from high
15 school and to continue their education. I would like
16 to share with you a story about a father from
17 Honduras whose adolescent son migrated to New York
18 after he lost his mother to cancer.

19 All he wanted was a seat for his son but could
20 not find him a placement. The father had to work
21 around the clock making it more difficult for him to
22 support his son enrolling. Eventually, he was sent
23 to MASA and we were able to connect him directly to
24 the enrollment office for a placement. The student
25 also received referrals to mental health support

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2 services that were properly equipped to handle the
3 multiple stressors of migrating to this country as an
4 adolescent, including processing the migration
5 journey, which can be a violent one and working
6 through the family reunification process for those
7 who parents relatives are not familiar to them.

8 As you heard from Ms. Juárez, she is from
9 Guerrero, also Mixteco speaker and I'm here for her
10 and the thousands of older newcomer ELLs advocating
11 for the City Council to fund \$2.1 million in initial
12 investment for a transfer school pilot program to
13 increase access for newly arrived and older immigrant
14 youth. Thank you.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
16 hear from Francois Nzi, New York Math Academy and
17 Coaching Services.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

19 FRANCOIS NZI: Thank you. Thank you honorable
20 Chair Joseph for caring about the impacts of COVID-19
21 on Immigrant families and ELL academic achievement.
22 My name is Francois Nzi, I'm the Founder and
23 Executive Director of New York Math Academy and
24 Coaching Services, also known as NYMACS.
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2 NYMACS is a Harlem-based Academic support program
3 offering tutoring and individualized services to
4 immigrant youth and families in Central Harlem and
5 South Bronx. I'm here to represent New York
6 Immigration Coalition Education Collaborative to
7 request a \$2.1 million initial investment for a pilot
8 program to increase access to quality school options
9 for newly arrived, high school aged immigrants.

10 For over a decade, New York Math Academy has
11 helped hundreds of older immigrants from African
12 French speaking countries enroll in schools that meet
13 their academic and social needs. We seek to find
14 schools that can fuel student academic success, which
15 even before the pandemic was extremely difficult for
16 older students, especially those who are 16 year or
17 older.

18 Unfortunately, every year we are confronted with
19 the same challenges to find older youth quality
20 public education. Right before the pandemic, a
21 parent reached out to our organization to help him
22 find a school for his 17-year-old who just arrived in
23 the US from Senegal. Because we were unable to find
24 him with adequate school, the young man enrolled and
25 matriculating in a nearby charter school. That

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2 school, regrettably, was not equipped to give the
3 student the support or programming that he really
4 needed.

5 Three months later, he was already considering
6 dropping out of school because of frustration. Then
7 in March 2020, came COVID-19, which deepened the
8 desperation. And it is very tragic that due to the
9 pandemic and being in a program that was not simply a
10 good fit for him, he ended up dropping out.

11 Nevertheless, this young man is very resilient.

12 Today, at 19-years-old, he is finally back in high
13 school. This time to an ELL transfer school but one
14 of the things that is very sad, is that the school is
15 very far from where he lives. And now he has even
16 less time and more pressure for him to graduate.

17 This is why I'm here to ask for \$2.1 million
18 pilot program to increase the access of older
19 students like my student. If this young man had more
20 opportunities available to him, this situation would
21 be much different from now. And if ELL transfer
22 schools were available in all places where immigrants
23 lived, all older adolescent students would have
24 options and ready to meet their needs. Thank you.

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
3 hear from Rita Rodriguez-Engberg, Advocates for
4 Children.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

6 RITA RODRIGUEZ-ENGBERG: Hi, good afternoon,
7 congrats Chair Joseph and all the Education Committee
8 Members. My name is Rita Rodriguez-Engberg and I am
9 the Director of the Immigrant Students' Rights
10 Project at Advocates for Children of New York. I am
11 a proud former ELL and immigrant.

12 Prior to the pandemic, the needs of ELLs and
13 immigrant families went largely unmet. ELLs have
14 consistently performed well below standards in
15 reading and math, with only nine percent of ELLs
16 proficient in reading and 19 percent of ELLs
17 proficient in math in 2019.

18 ELLs have a right to receive English as a New
19 Language instruction to help them develop their
20 English language skills, but many ELLs did not
21 receive this instruction during the pandemic.
22 Although over 40 percent of our parents speak a
23 language other than English at home and some have low
24 or no literacy in their language, the DOE relied
25

1
2 almost exclusively on web and email communications
3 during the pandemic.

4 This reliance on digital communication and delays
5 in providing translated information resulted in
6 families being left in the dark and unable to
7 participate in their children's education. In 2021,
8 AFC saw an increase in the number of newly arrived,
9 older immigrant youth seeking to enroll in New York
10 City schools. And we had a very hard time enrolling
11 them surprisingly because the education.

12 Unfortunately, there are few DOE schools able to
13 provide the support these students need. The DOE's
14 ELL transfer schools provide this supportive learning
15 environment, but there are only five such schools,
16 four of which are in Manhattan.

17 I am here today to urge the City Council to fund
18 three Proposals to help our ELLs and immigrant
19 families. First, to address the ELL achievement gap,
20 we urge the city to invest \$12 million for 120
21 schools with underperforming ELLs to hire an ELL
22 Instructional Specialist. ELLs require targeted
23 language and academic instruction to meet their
24 unique needs, but too often we encounter long-term
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1
2 ELLs who have not received enough support and cannot
3 read or write despite being in high

4 school. This is every day, I guarantee you.

5 The ELL Instructional Specialist, a pedagogue who
6 reports to the school principal, would be responsible
7 for ensuring that all ELLs, including ELLs with
8 disabilities, at their school are receiving grade-
9 level instruction in core subjects, developing age-
10 appropriate literacy, receiving additional academic
11 support where needed, are on track to pass to the
12 next grade and their parents are being engaged.

13 Second, we urge the city to allocate \$2.1 million
14 to launch programs to support ELLs, ages 16-21, at
15 existing non-ELL transfer schools in Queens,
16 Brooklyn, and the Bronx. This funding would enable
17 four schools in the first year to hire ENL teachers,
18 bilingual social workers, offer wrap around supports
19 and provide PD, so that all educators are prepared to
20 support their newcomer immigrant youth.

21 Finally, to ensure immigrant parents receive
22 school-related information and can play a meaningful
23 role in their children's education, the DOE needs to
24 strengthen its efforts to communicate with immigrant
25 families, taking into account families' varying

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2 levels of literacy and access to digital media. The
3 city invested \$4 million this school year, thanks to
4 the City Council, but this funding will expire in
5 June 2022 and will be limited in reach. The city
6 should invest and baseline \$6 million for the next
7 year to establish a permanent, central system for
8 immigrant family communications.

9 Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.
10 I'd be happy to answer any questions.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and final panelist
12 for this panel will be Andrea Ortiz, the New York
13 Immigration Coalition.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

15 ANDREA ORTIZ: Thank you. I'm Andrea Ortiz from
16 the New York Immigration Coalition. This year, New
17 York City must address a longstanding injustice that
18 was deeply exacerbated during the pandemic. Quality
19 school programs are inaccessible for thousands of
20 immigrant youth and families.

21 During the pandemic, many immigrant students were
22 feeling especially lost and isolated, and sadly, far
23 too many immigrants weren't even able to enroll let
24 alone find quality programs.

1
2 The city must address this through two proven
3 initiatives. First, we request a \$2.1 million
4 initial investment for a transfer school pilot
5 program to increase access for newly arrived high
6 school age immigrants. A 2022 migration policy
7 instituted analysis found that nearly 4,000 newcomer
8 immigrant students who are 14 to 21 year old, were
9 not enrolled in school that did not have a high
10 school diploma. Nearly 90 percent of these youth are
11 16-21, which is the toughest age range to find
12 adequate placement. Our proposal will create quality
13 programs for them and address the fact that immigrant
14 youth are dropping out now at a rate almost five
15 times that of their native English speaking peers.

16 Older newcomer immigrant youth ages 16-21 who
17 enroll in high school have little time to learn
18 English and fulfill graduation requirements before
19 they age out. Transfer schools are essential because
20 they specialize in supporting youth at risk of
21 dropping out and helping older, under credited
22 students succeed. But unfortunately while there are
23 transfer schools in every borough, four out of five
24 tall transfer schools are in Manhattan. Therefore,
25 the pilot will target our outer boroughs where most

1
2 immigrants live and struggle to find programs that
3 meet their needs.

4 And by developing best practices and identifying
5 solutions that could be replicated to address common
6 challenges, the pilot would test out a model that
7 schools could follow to serve newcomer immigrant
8 youth.

9 Second, the city should invest \$4 million to
10 expand our life project. The majority of the 156,000
11 parents of zero to four-year-old's who are limited
12 English proficient in New York City, also lack access
13 to a computer or internet and even robust community-
14 based engagement and supports to learn about and
15 enroll in 3K and PreK programs. Our LIFE project,
16 through our CBO partners like MASA, LSC Family
17 Services and Fifth Avenue Committee has successfully
18 helped over 400 immigrant families enroll in PreK and
19 3K by providing outreach, counseling and referral
20 services to eligible families. Our success is
21 demonstrated by the fact that despite of the drop in
22 the city's enrollment during the pandemic, LIFE
23 Project partners saw no drop in enrollment within the
24 families we're assisting.

1
2 So, we are here asking for \$4 million for 20
3 CBO's across the five boroughs to provide culturally
4 responsive and linguistically diverse outreach,
5 application and enrollment support, referral services
6 and early intervention to support immigrant families
7 of three and four year old's.

8 Finally, New York City must reject across the
9 board cuts and hiring freezes and instead employ the
10 unprecedented fundings from State and Federal
11 stimulus to invest in programs that replicate success
12 and finally, increase access for immigrants. Thank
13 you very much for this opportunity to testify and
14 congratulations Chair Joseph and the rest of this
15 Committee for this important hearing and paying
16 attention to these issues. Thank you.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you to this panel.
18 We're now going to go to our next panel, Natashaia
19 Capers from New York City Coalition for Educational
20 Justice, Tazin Azad, Colin Buckingham and Victoria
21 Munoz. The panel after that will be Chauncy T Young,
22 New Settlement Parent Action Committee, Herman
23 Younger, Parent Action Committee, Lois Lee, Chinese
24 American Planning Council and Somia Elrowmeim, the
25 Women's Empowerment Coalition of New York City. But

1
2 we'll first turn to Natasha Capers from the New York
3 City Coalition for Educational Justice.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

5 NATASHA CAPERS: Good afternoon. I am Natasha
6 Capers, Director of the New York City Coalition for
7 Educational Justice. We are a parent led organizing
8 multilingual group who unapologetically organized a
9 Black, Brown, immigrant and indigenous communities.
10 We are here in solidarity with multilingual learners
11 and their families. CEJ supports all recommendations
12 made by our sibling advocacy groups, the New York
13 City Immigration Coalition, MASA and Advocates for
14 Children.

15 One of our biggest barriers to a high quality
16 education for ELL students is not only will English
17 speakers lack a basic respect for non-fluent English
18 speaking parents, families and students because of
19 Xenophobia, systemic racism and White Supremacy. We
20 must ensure that culturally responsive pedagogy,
21 teaching training and curriculum is a standard in New
22 York City schools including all forms of language
23 access for students and families. The K-12 ELA in
24 math Mosaic curriculum, all programming, policies,
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1
2 and parent engagement at first must be free of all
3 forms of language barriers and xenophobia.

4 Sadly, there's a long history of New York City
5 schools and all other governmental departments
6 leaving multilingual learners behind along with their
7 families. We have witnessed a lack of translation
8 and interpretation services in all forms of meeting,
9 leading to a deliberate disenfranchisements of
10 parents and families in the education of students,
11 including this meeting. As the invitation was in
12 English only and the part where you have to request
13 interpretation was also in English. CEJ has had a
14 campaign fighting for a culturally responsive and
15 sustained an education for five years and has heard
16 countless stories of parents who have been told that
17 they are a hinderance to their child's education
18 because they do not speak English.

19 In spaces where multilingual learners are the
20 central topic. There are typically no proper
21 translation interpretation services offered and I've
22 witness in meetings with the Department of Education
23 their often a refusal for them to wear or use
24 interpretation equipment, so that they can hear
25 simultaneous interpretation and be in clear and

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2 direct communication with non-fluent English speaking
3 families. We know it is possible to give good
4 interpretation services, as CEJ has done so for 16
5 years in person and virtually over the pandemic,
6 including having four separate languages, English,
7 Spanish, Bangla and French, and ASL interpretation
8 during virtual town halls in a meral forum without
9 any issue. There must be an investment in ELL
10 students and systemic shift in how ELL students and
11 families are engaged to put an end to the continuous
12 disrespect and isolation they face. Thank you.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we're
14 going to turn to Tazin Azad.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

16 TAZIN AZAD: Thank you, my name is Tazin Azad and
17 I am an Elected Parent Leader from District 22 and a
18 Parent Empowerment Advocate and Free Language Access
19 and Language Justice.

20 We could tell that the integrity of a system
21 could be measured during a crisis by its approach to
22 its most vulnerable folks. The pandemic has
23 highlighted the multilingual communities and that
24 their needs have been an afterthought or receiving
25 attention from their DOE policies.

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Although there has been some improvement on the consideration to improve the processes of language access, we are nowhere close to language justice. DOE is still woefully lacking in identifying the nuance needs of the language learner communities and creating sustaining structural support for them. We saw educators and multilingual students suffer because of the lack of support for both of them among remote learning and as well as in-person and refusal to develop pedagogy during a pandemic.

There is a lack of certified ENL teachers and second language teachers who were reduced to be pushing educators as opposed to providing experiences for our students. So, we are doubtful that our MLL students have received adequate access to education.

DOE in response to the opportunity loss and lack of access proposed beyond access and proposed supplementary support systems for our students in after school or weekend classes, however, even those were interrupted and disrupted with erratic and chaotic implementation of COVID guidance's and policies. And the refusal to provide remote options for those who needed it the most.

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Multilingual families with IEP's have been specially vulnerable during this time as they relied on – as they were systematically disenfranchised to when they initiate, monitor, advocate for their students as we are fearful – and so, we are fearful that the pandemic has caused a lack of support for engagement to many families in initiating IEP processes. So, we've encouraged the Council to look into whether or not that is the case.

Multilingual parents engagement and empowerment has been a special issue and an enduring issue. COVID has been extremely difficult, although all the timely notifications are much better now, safety guidance's have been largely been delayed and in the translations happen to be mostly jargony and unreliable as far as being the justified folks.

We also saw a major lack as far as COVID literacy, in testing access and guidance's to multilingual families and those who were most vulnerable during these periods. I also want to touch a little bit on dual language programs that often end up being tracked programs and contribute to segregation. And so, we propose and we ask that the DOE and the Committee really pays attention whether

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2 or not this happens as we look into new options. And
3 also, I want to talk a little bit about the language
4 access the DOE has been providing in all platforms
5 for parent engagement, where language learners are
6 delegated to or segregated to phone lines and dark
7 phone lines, so to speak so we don't see any of our
8 parents speaking in person, which happens to
9 disenfranchise them furthermore. This is a platform
10 or this is the mechanism that we should revisit in
11 order to make sure that we include our multilingual
12 families and give them the respect that Natasha was
13 speaking for.

14 Thank you so much.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time has expired.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
17 turn to Colin Buckingham. Sorry if I messed that up.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

19 COLIN BUCKINGHAM: Hi, my name is Colin
20 Buckingham, I do community - I'm active in community
21 organizing and that kind of thing.

22 First, I want to note that a lot of the questions
23 and testimonies here have been about specific
24 requirements that need to be addressed and given by
25 the Department of Education. Two of the Council

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2 questions specifically seem to amount to mission
3 statements or abstract goals rather than concrete
4 steps that have been taken.

5 But my testimony is regarding the budget cuts
6 proposed by Mayor Adams, who also last year was voted
7 to suggest that one teacher could remotely teach more
8 than 200 students at one time. The proposed budget
9 cuts to the education specifically, to schools with
10 decreased enrollment, which as Chair Joseph said, has
11 been followed by schools with ELLs severely. And
12 will as most budget cuts have historically done harm
13 immigrants, ELL, and marginalized and historically
14 denied students the most.

15 So, I want to urge the City Council and
16 Department of Education to fight for funding for ELL
17 and echo Andrea Ortiz's concerns.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
19 turn to our final panelist for this panel, Victoria
20 Munoz.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time stars now.

22 VICTORIA MUNOZ: Hello everyone. I'm the parent
23 of a student in Queens District 28. I understand
24 that present business concerns much needed equity for
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1
2 language learners in DOE but a matter of some urgency
3 brings me here today.

4 As you know the Mayor is likely to remove the
5 indoor mask mandate for DOE schools starting next
6 Monday March 7th. The proposed measure would also
7 apply to children under age five who currently are
8 not eligible for the vaccine. I find this deeply
9 alarming. For parents like me whose PreK child
10 cannot receive the vaccine, the world has not
11 returned to normal. I live with elderly and
12 immunocompromised parents. The dangers of my
13 daughter bringing COVID home extend beyond my
14 personal fears for her welfare alone. In this
15 multigenerational immigrant household, we live in the
16 same fearful uncertainty about COVID that many others
17 have abandoned in the collective momentum toward a
18 speedy return to normal.

19 I know that parents whose children are themselves
20 immunocompromised also feel this frustration most
21 heartily. We feel abandoned and overlooked. The
22 resounding neglect of our concerns in current
23 shifting public health policies is beyond enraging.
24 It is a stark inequity that requires an adequate
25 redress. Although my child will continue to wear a

1
2 mask, masking only works effectively where it is
3 universal. We can turn to southern and midwestern
4 states where there is not universal masking and
5 consequently infection rates skyrocket for reliable
6 evidence of this maxim.

7 Some years ago, when expressing her decent in
8 Shelby County versus Holder, the late justice Ruth
9 Bader Ginsberg stated that ending the practice of
10 preclearance of the Voting Rights Act was like
11 "throwing away your umbrella in a rainstorm because
12 you were not getting wet."

13 Removing the mask mandate at this juncture
14 presents a similar conundrum and logical fallacy.
15 Those who are not currently as vulnerable to COVID
16 should not so swift to throw up the umbrella because
17 they themselves are not getting wet. We must protect
18 the unprotected. I urge you to do everything in your
19 power to advocate for unvaccinated children under age
20 five and to maintain the indoor mask mandate in DOE
21 schools until all children can be protected. Thank
22 you for your attention.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and that concludes
24 the testimony for this panel. We are now going to
25 turn to our next panel but so folks can queue up,

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2 following the folks I'm going to call, we'll hear
3 from Joseph Ko, Korean American Family Service
4 Center, Salma Mohamed, the Arab American Family
5 Support Center, Tara Foster, Legal Services NYC, and
6 Meredith Jones, City's First Readers but we'll first
7 turn to Chauncy Young from the New Settlement Parent
8 Action Committee.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

10 CHAUNCY YOUNG: Good afternoon. Thank you Chair
11 Joseph and members of the New York City Council
12 Committee on Education. The Parent Action Committee
13 would like to thank you Council Member Rita Joseph
14 for your leadership and concern for English Language
15 Learners and the impact of COVID-19 on immigrant
16 families and English Language academic achievement.

17 The Parent Action Committee is a multicultural
18 group of concerned parents and community members
19 dedicated to improving the quality of education for
20 all children in New York City with an emphasis on the
21 Bronx and we are based in Community School District
22 nine. We also empower and educate parents on their
23 rights in the New York City public school system. We
24 organize parents and community members. We conduct
25 research and outreach, develop leaders network with

1
2 allies and offer training opportunities and workshops
3 for parents and lead public actions to reach our
4 goals. We hold school officials, elected officials
5 and government agencies accountable for the quality
6 education our children receive and we collaborate
7 with citywide coalitions in order to make real
8 lasting change in our public school system. The
9 Parent Action Committee was formed by parent leaders
10 in an afterschool program in New Settlement over 25
11 years ago due to concerns about the quality of
12 education in our neighborhood schools. The Bronx in
13 our neighborhood has always been a community of
14 immigrants and over two-thirds of the residents in
15 Bronx Community Board four speak a first language
16 other than English.

17 PAC is a parent led organization and the fight
18 for language justice, equity and access for all
19 students and family has been core to the mission of
20 the Parent Action Committee for decades. Even prior
21 to COVID-19 multilanguage learners, English language
22 students struggled in District 9 and throughout the
23 Bronx and honestly, many schools struggled to support
24 families that were not Native English or Spanish
25 speakers.

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Over the past decades, the number of students and families whose native language is French, Bangla, Arabic, Fulani, Samika or one of the many African or indigenous languages has continued to grow throughout the borough. What we would like to note in COVID-19 is that so many of our families and our students did not receive devices on time. Did not receive communications from the school because the school was unable to communicate with parents in their native language or with students.

We assume that language access is the only issue but we have cultural differences and we also have a lack of access to technology. It's wonderful that the DOE was writing emails and trying to call parents but many of those schools did not have updated blue cards and no way to really communicate with families. So, as has been mentioned before, many, many of our English Language Learner students and families became very disconnected and had a huge language loss.

We also noted situations where communities from in many cases our West African families did not receive devices in a timely manner and some families waited almost an entire semester before they received devices, so that their students were able to learn.

1
2 These are all concerning issues and issues that I
3 think the Department really needs to work with as
4 moving forward. We need to have more staff that are
5 able to communicate with students and families in
6 their native language. It's one thing to have a
7 language line but many schools and school staff did
8 not know how to utilize this service effectively and
9 frequently just ignore families that do not speak
10 languages that the school can easily address.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time has expired.

12 CHAUNCY YOUNG: We're also here to support the
13 First Step Campaign from our New York Coalition for
14 NYIC Education Collaborative and ask that they
15 support families moving into high school \$2.1 million
16 for the first year and to support a three year \$8.3
17 million transfer school pilot program. Thank you.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And next, we will
19 turn to Herman Younger, Parent Action Committee.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

21 HERMAN YOUNGER: My name is Herman Younger and I
22 am here today representing the Parent Action
23 Committee. I myself am also an immigrant from
24 Honduras and a former ELL student. So, this issue is
25 very near and dear to me.

1
2 During the COVID pandemic, we have learned that
3 several areas have severely impacted English Language
4 Learners, learning technology and instruction,
5 health, access to public assistance and resources and
6 mental health. The COVID pandemic brought to light
7 significant learning challenges for families of ELLs
8 that may result in academic and achievement gaps.
9 Some of those challenges include a lack of access to
10 digital services and internet connectivity. Families
11 limited capacity to support online learning, school
12 and family language barriers and inadequate online
13 learning resources and training for teachers.

14 As an immensely diverse group of students,
15 English Learners will have widely varying experiences
16 during the COVID-19 pandemic and as such, a broad
17 range of educational and schooling needs, not to
18 mention physical and mental health related needs.
19 For example, Asian American ELL students may face
20 bullying and discrimination due to xenophobic
21 responses to COVID-19 while rural and migrant ELLs
22 may not have access to cellphone reception let alone
23 Wi-Fi hotspots and computers for distance learning.

24 The Parent Action Committee has supported
25 immigrants for 25 years in our pursuit toward

1
2 education justice in New York City and as such, we
3 are recommending that districts should ensure that
4 all ELL students have a Wi-Fi connected device.

5 Provided freely and without penalty should a device
6 be damaged. Distance learning should like in-person
7 education provide accessible content and English
8 Language development instructions to ELLs and can
9 benefit from the potential affordances technology
10 offers for supporting multilingual learners.

11 Until access is universal, districts and schools
12 should avoid penalizing students for their inability
13 to access or complete distance learning activities
14 and technology free learning opportunities should be
15 provided. Examples include books, activity packets
16 and educational games.

17 Many students have disappeared since schools
18 closed, among these are ELL students. Districts and
19 schools should draw on existing resources to improve
20 contact and communication with families of ELL
21 students. For example, family liaisons, community
22 partners, school district translators, active parents
23 and bilingual and English language development
24 teachers, all of whom can serve as bridges to ELL
25 students and their families.

1
2 School should in addition send communication in
3 all major languages spoken by the ELLs via platform
4 that are accessible to parents. ELL students, like
5 their peers will have missed out on a great deal of
6 instruction but will likely have had extended time
7 with immediate family. They may have deepened their
8 knowledge of their home language, learn more about
9 cooking and gardening or taking care of family
10 members. Leveraging this knowledge is central to
11 culturally relevant and responsive teaching and
12 content, which entails schools and teachers drawing
13 on students' knowledge and skills and engaging
14 community and family members in ways that bring
15 culturally rich knowledge in schools and instruction
16 and content.

17 We also want to lift up the First Up Campaign
18 proposal from our partners at the New York
19 Immigration Coalition asking for \$2.1 million in the
20 first year and a commitment to support a three year
21 \$8.3 million transfer school pilot to increase newly
22 arrived high school aged immigrants access to
23 programs that meet their needs. Thank you.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.
25

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
3 turn to Lois Lee from the Chinese American Planning
4 Council.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

6 LOIS LEE: Hi, can you hear me?

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

8 LOIS LEE: Okay, hi, I just had to answer the
9 door. Well, my name is Lois Lee, Chinese American
10 Planning Council has early childhood COMPASS, BEACON
11 programs in three boroughs. As an early childhood
12 director, I have to talk about all different levels
13 from early childhood all the way up to high school.
14 Our ELLs are feeling discouraged, disconnected and
15 lost. We need the city to invest more than just
16 language support but to help them transition into
17 education systems and society by supporting
18 culturally competent curriculums and encompassing
19 social, emotional learning.

20 I have to bring up some points. Number one, the
21 ELLs, we have seen that the ELLs and after school
22 programs are unable to complete their homework
23 assignment saying, "I don't know what the teachers
24 are saying in morning school, I cannot do the
25 homework." So, our after school teachers must

1
2 reteach all of the concepts that they are supposed to
3 have learned. So, we want City Council to help fund
4 DYCD COMPASS programs to close the ELLs learning
5 gaps.

6 Two, the parents are complaining about the dual
7 language programs. They say that the homework
8 assignments are too difficult even for parents.
9 There is no curriculum. The curriculum is made up in
10 every district, so we need to have a set curriculum.
11 That parents want to be a part of the conversation
12 that develops curriculum. The curriculum should be
13 teaching basic Chinese skills. Now, their children
14 are not only behind in English, they are also behind
15 in Chinese. The dual language programs are not
16 working.

17 Number Three, high school juniors and seniors in
18 schools like Flushing International High School and
19 Queens International High School of Health and
20 Sciences and YEBC transfer schools, they all have
21 collaborations with CPC. We are looking forward to
22 having a robust SYEP program this summer employing
23 thousands of high school youth in our programs.
24 However, if you are in a public school building like
25 the COMPASS programs or Early Childhood Center, you

1
2 have to passed with just fingerprinting and that
3 costs \$135 to fingerprint each youth. So, for the
4 Flushing International High School and all these
5 International High Schools, they said that in order
6 to have their students graduate from their schools,
7 they must have this academic service learning,
8 community service. And so, one principal says okay,
9 I'll pay for my interns if you would just be our
10 worksite, so I took theirs.

11 But another high school principal said, "we
12 cannot afford it, it's not in our budget." Please
13 take my student. The student is willing to pay that
14 \$135. And then I said, in my budget, I don't have
15 all this \$135 for every intern who needs to graduate
16 at a work site. So, I'm asking the city to wave the
17 \$135 because if they can waiver it in the summer for
18 the SYEP's in the COMPASS programs, why can't they
19 waiver it in early childhood centers? I wish that
20 the Deputy Chancellor of Early Childhood was at this
21 meeting because it would have been very helpful to
22 fight our cause because I have so many students who
23 ran away from home. Who committed suicide. We are
24 the programs that really help the nurturing, early
25 childhood centers have been a life - you know, we

1
2 have really helped out these teenagers because we are
3 nurturing, we are kind, they have a sense of
4 belonging. Please fund our programs by taking away
5 the \$135 waiver. I think my time is up, is that what
6 you're going to tell me to do.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time. Thank you.

8 LOIS LEE: I know because I'm looking at the
9 clock and I was trying to like hurry up and say
10 everything that I wanted to say but there is a lot to
11 say and I really want a pathway for you know for
12 success for the transfer schools. I was going to
13 talk about that, the lower east side PREP that we
14 have and to fund that \$21 million and also for
15 certification. What is the pathway for our parents
16 and teacher assistance? They are bilingual and they
17 need to become teachers. I would like to know about
18 that but I know there's a big shortage. And so,
19 thank you very much.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and I do want to
21 remind everyone that testimony submitted written
22 testimony may be as long as you wish and it is read
23 by Committee Staff and is part of the record. So,
24 folks can email that to testimony@council.nyc.gov.

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2 We accept it for up to 72 hours after the close of
3 this hearing.

4 And the final person on this panel that we'll
5 hear from is Somia Elrowmeim, the Women's Empowerment
6 Coalition of New York City.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

8 SOMIA ELROWMEIM: Hey everyone, my name is Somia
9 Elrowmeim, I'm with the Women's Empowerment Coalition
10 of New York City. Our organization, it's based in
11 South Brooklyn. I'm trying to actually open the
12 video, yeah.

13 So, I'm here today to raise my voice and make
14 sure that you're going to hear what's happening in
15 our community in South Brooklyn. Our organization
16 mission, it's like building power and immunity among
17 women through education and leadership. But because
18 of the pandemic, when the pandemic hit in 2019, we
19 had to jump out of our mission and to start like
20 providing direct services and hotline to help and
21 support the community members in South Brooklyn.
22 Especially, like we see that a lot of community
23 members, they do not speak English very well and they
24 need help with translation and understanding what's
25 going on around them. And so many of the phone calls

1
2 that we received was like you know a concern from the
3 parents about like you know remotely learning and how
4 they can help and support their kids with the remote
5 learning. And if there is any supporting group for
6 parents to educate them about how to use the
7 technology or Google Classroom and also, like you
8 know understand what's happening in their own
9 language.

10 We have so many clients who speak Arabic and we
11 were like you know trying to communicate with the
12 schools to understand, like you know, how we can
13 support those parents. I have witnessed that a lot
14 of kids, especially the ages between 15 and 17 were
15 feeling isolated. Especially the new immigrants who
16 came to this country and they don't know like - you
17 know they entered the school at the year that the
18 pandemic hit and they felt they didn't understand
19 what's going on around them and they didn't receive
20 the support that they need to receive it and deserve
21 it.

22 And I have actually clients whose her daughter is
23 17-years-old who had to drop off school and to help
24 her mom and start working. Because like, and when I
25 tried to help her out and like trying to support her,

1
2 she said like many people, they advised me to go and
3 apply for GED. It's more easy for me, especially a
4 new immigrant and I'm going to time to learn English.
5 And that was like really a red flag for me. That's
6 like you know, a lot of people; it's not only this
7 girl. Like a lot of kids, they are going through a
8 lot in school, especially the kids who like the young
9 people who come to this country and enter school in
10 11 or like you know 12th grade. It's like you know,
11 they didn't feel that they were welcomed and
12 supported in school.

13 And I hope that you - I'm here today like to ask
14 you to make sure to fund this program, which is
15 requesting \$2.1 million initial investment for a
16 transfer school pilot program to increase access for
17 newly arrived high school aged immigrants. Thank you
18 so much.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and that concludes
20 the testimony for this panel. The next two panels
21 that we'll hear from; first we'll hear from Joseph
22 Ko, Korean American Family Service Center, Salma
23 Mohamed, Arab American Family Support Center, Tara
24 Foster, Legal Services NYC, and Meredith Jones,
25 City's First Readers.

1
2 Following that panel, we'll hear from Zulma
3 Vizcarrondo, Fifth Avenue Committee, Ray Lopez, LSA
4 Family Services, Alejandra Vazquez Baur, Next One
5 Hundred, Debora Mulrain, Reads Initiative and Albania
6 Jimenez, Literacy Incorporated. But we'll first turn
7 to Joseph Ko from the Korean American Family Service
8 Center.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

10 JOSEPH KO: I'd like to thank the City Council
11 and the Committee on Education for the opportunity to
12 testify. My name is Joseph Ko and I am the Youth
13 Program Counselor of the Korean American Family
14 Service Center. We provide social services to the
15 immigrant survivors and their children who are
16 affected by gender-based violence. All our programs
17 and services are offered in a culturally and
18 linguistically appropriate setting. KAFC's hold
19 after school programs for Asian American students
20 from kindergarten through 8th grade who are from
21 families at or below the federal poverty level with
22 immigrant parents or caregivers.

23 Although our after school programs targets
24 students who are under the care of single parents who
25 constantly struggle financially and are challenged by

1
2 cultural and language barriers, we also target
3 children who are victims of domestic violence and
4 sexual assaults, as well as children who are
5 indirectly affected from being exposed in their own
6 households.

7 Our program supplements and supports the myriad
8 of challenges faced by our APA students, many who are
9 immigrants themselves and are ELL students. The
10 beginning of every school year, we conduct an
11 assessment and close to 100 percent of them never
12 finish their homework on time. They struggle to meet
13 metrics and their report cards show difficulties in
14 their classes.

15 Challenges due to limited English proficiencies
16 exacerbate already existing issues due to family
17 violence at home, poverty and cultural differences.
18 Teachers and administrators at school often led
19 cultural competencies necessary to properly engage
20 these APA students and often make assessments or
21 decisions based on standards that do not take into
22 account the cultural nuances that are extremely
23 relevant in developing the correct academic plan for
24 these children. The model minority myth is in direct
25 contradiction to the fact that many APA students from

1
2 immigrant families displaced areas emotional, social
3 and behavioral difficulties. Our APA children
4 require additional support from school counselors to
5 mitigate and work to reduce stressors in the school
6 environment that hinder not only their academic
7 performance but also their social emotional
8 development, increase their self esteem and develop
9 healthy communication skills.

10 Our counselors and teachers at KAFC work with
11 families in [INAUDIBLE 3:21:58] as our school program
12 to specifically address the gaps in the education
13 systems that overlook our APA immigrant student
14 population and the failings of school educators and
15 administrators to fund and resource proper protocols
16 for families to address their child's unique needs
17 and challenges.

18 Particularly, the COVID-19 pandemic and
19 subsequent closings of schools and businesses
20 highlighted these gaps even further. When schools
21 closed in March of 2020, then remote learning, our
22 school teachers spent extra hours to bridge the
23 digital gap and education of the school system.

24 Many of our families have multiple children,
25 which already did not then and still do not have the

1
2 adequate number of digital devices for virtual
3 school. Not only were our families hindered by a
4 lack of digital devices and access to the internet,
5 they were facing new web base platforms like Google
6 Classrooms or Zoom, which required many additional
7 hours of tech support and training. Particularly for
8 the immigrant children and children of immigrant
9 parents, between remote learning and recent in-person
10 learning have been a huge burden as our parents and
11 caregivers have been struggling financially.

12 Our afterschool programs continues to operate via
13 online classes; however, we still have students that
14 can't participate today because they don't have the
15 proper support at home to help with learning, lack a
16 digital device or are unable to access the internet.
17 Thank you.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

19 JOSEPH KO: Thank you again for the opportunity
20 to testify on this important issue today.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
22 turn to Salma Mohamed from the Arab American Family
23 Support Center.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

25

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: It looks like – there we're
3 go, now your unmuted.

4 SALMA MOHAMED: Hi everyone. Thank you Chair
5 Joseph, City Council Members and community members.
6 My name is Salma Mohamed, and I am the Partnership &
7 Capacity Building Specialist at the Arab-American
8 Family Support Center. At the Arab-American Family
9 Support Center, we provide a range of free social
10 services citywide, in every single district, such as
11 adult education classes, translation services,
12 academic enrichment for youth, mental health
13 services, domestic violence case management support,
14 cash assistance, access to health insurance, food
15 security services, and much more.

16 We welcome all those who are in need, but with 27
17 years of experience, we have developed a research-
18 driven, community-focused, trauma-informed,
19 culturally responsive, and linguistically-competent
20 approach to serving New York's growing Arab, Middle
21 Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian or AMEMSA
22 communities. Communities that have been historically
23 underrepresented and underserved.

24 Our staff is representative of our client base,
25 we speak 36 languages, enabling us to serve people

1
2 that mainstream providers are largely unable to
3 effectively reach. Seeing the increase in need in
4 2021, AAFSC scaled our efforts to provide wraparound
5 supports serving 10,000 people. While we are
6 tremendously inspired by our communities resiliency
7 through COVID-19, we are conscious of the ongoing
8 challenges they face.

9 We completed a COVID-19 Impact Survey with over
10 300 households in our network and found that 55
11 percent of families experienced barriers in their
12 remote learning. And experienced socioeconomic and
13 mental health stressors, all of which hamper
14 learning. Research shows a direct relationship
15 between literacy levels and positive social and
16 economic indicators as well as the informants of
17 immigrants in the New York City economy.

18 Immigrants comprise of 37.2 percent of the city's
19 population but 44.2 percent of the labor force.
20 Today, in New York City, one out of three adults, 2.2
21 million people lack English Language proficiency, a
22 high school diploma or both. This enormous gap
23 reflects decades of insufficient investment and an
24 underlying lack of understanding and support for
25

1
2 immigrant education and its crucial role in our
3 society.

4 To address COVID-19's impact on English Language
5 Learners, AAFSC requests that the city ensures that
6 all legislation addresses the unique and multilayered
7 challenges AMEMSA English language learners face and
8 prioritizes CBO's that provide culturally and
9 linguistically competent services for funding for
10 citywide initiatives. Thank you.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
12 turn to Tara Foster, Legal Services NYC.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

14 TARA FOSTER: Good afternoon. Thank you so much
15 for hosting this oversight hearing on COVID impact on
16 English Language Learners. I am Tara Foster from
17 Legal Services NYC. I work in the Education Rights
18 Project. Legal Services provides free civil legal
19 services to low income New Yorkers. We're dedicated
20 to fighting poverty and seeking racial, social and
21 economic justice for the families we serve.

22 We have a holistic practice and practice in many
23 different areas and there's more in my comments that
24 you can all read about. There's no question that
25 there were many desperate negative impacts of COVID-

1
2 19 for English Language Learners and limited English
3 proficient families. The COVID-19 pandemic has laid
4 bear the racial and socioeconomic inequities that
5 exist in our society, including issues in our city's
6 education system. Many low income immigrant families
7 suffered high rates of food insecurity, job loss,
8 sickness and death due to COVID. ELL and LEP
9 students, many of whom are people of color have also
10 had to grapple with highly publicized instances of
11 systemic racism and violence. Some of our clients,
12 who had already experienced violence and trauma in
13 New York or in their native countries experienced
14 heightened anxiety, stress and even additional trauma
15 and isolation.

16 Tragically, these vulnerable families frequently
17 were shut out of important educational supports and
18 services for their children at high rates due to the
19 systemic technological divide and language access and
20 communication failures. Legal Services NYC's
21 education advocates have taken on a number of
22 individual cases as well as group litigation to
23 combat inequities exacerbated by the COVID-19
24 pandemic.

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We've also in 2021, founded the Healing Center Schools Taskforce, which is a coalition of educators, parents, advocates, mental health providers, and others dedicated to healing centered schools that are culturally sensitive and trauma informed. Students in vulnerable populations who did not have access to remote learning devices or reliable internet and families with low technological expertise were especially adversely affected. And in our experience at Legal Services, low income English Language Learners and Limited English Proficient students suffered higher rates of learning loss due to this digital divide.

Statistically, these immigrant families were less likely to have access to computers and high speed internet and had overall lower digital skills and training than their English fluent counterparts. Moreover, students from households where English was not the primary language experienced additional learning loss and academic setbacks due to the New York City Department of Education's inadequate interpretation and translation services for Limited English Proficient parents. ELL and LEP families with whom we work frequently complain that they never

1
2 or rarely received communication or correspondence in
3 their preferred language and they rarely received
4 interpretation and translation services from their
5 children's schools.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

7 TARA FOSTER: Okay, well, just wrapping up then.
8 I think we at Legal Services feel it's so important
9 and the Council can really help out by encouraging
10 the Department of Education to address and eliminate
11 the digital divide so that all low income families
12 including low income ELL and LEP students have access
13 to free computers and free high speed internet to
14 ensure equitable access to learning. And also that
15 they look into ways to help compensate for the
16 learning loss including academic intervention
17 services, tutoring and other support and that they
18 develop effective systems to ensure that all
19 families, particularly ELL and LEP families receive
20 pertinent information about remote learning and other
21 educational access in their preferred language.

22 Thank you so much and by the way, I wanted to say
23 that I loved hearing from all of the students and
24 there were so many things that people said that were
25

1
2 so important in this hearing today. Thank you so
3 much for hosting this hearing.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Tara and next, we
5 will turn to Meredith Jones from City's First
6 Readers.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

8 MEREDITH JONES: Hi, thank you for the
9 opportunity to testify on behalf of the New York City
10 Council's only early literacy initiative, City's
11 First Readers. My name is Meredith Jones and I'm the
12 City's First Readers Manager at Literacy Inc., which
13 is the managing organization for City's First
14 Readers.

15 To address the impact of COVID on English
16 Language Learners, we need to start with our youngest
17 learners. Long term investment in immigrant families
18 with children five and under, is a preventative
19 approach that can mitigate the negative impact of the
20 pandemic. City's First Readers is one of the best
21 and most effective ways to accomplish this critical
22 task. There are over a half a million children under
23 the age of five in New York City. 44.5 percent of
24 them live in low income households and it is
25

1
2 estimated that an additional 325,000 children have
3 been pushed into COVID related poverty.

4 The burden of poverty is greatest for immigrant
5 children, whose families were not always eligible for
6 safety net programs or who face challenges receiving
7 these funds. Additionally, a disproportionate number
8 of immigrants are employed in essential roles.

9 As a result, a disproportionate number of
10 immigrant parents faced high levels of stressors
11 including exposure of COVID, which resulted in the
12 deaths of many parents and caregivers. It is clear
13 to those of us who work with young children every
14 day. They are not immune to the stress and trauma of
15 the pandemic. City's First Readers delivers proven
16 strategies that directly addresses the early learning
17 opportunity gaps that English Language Learners face
18 and that protect them from the effects of trauma.

19 This initiative delivers free, high quality,
20 culturally relevant and research backed early
21 literacy programming that positions children for
22 academic success and can result in positive long term
23 outcomes, helping to break cycles of poverty. This
24 programming provides the tools for parents to create
25 safe, safe, stable and nurturing relationships that

1
2 interrupt the experience of trauma and help children
3 thrive.

4 The Council recognized the power of early
5 literacy when it began for these first readers in
6 2015. Today, City's First Readers or as we call it
7 CFR, is an impactful cross sector coalition of 17
8 partners. We engage approximately one million
9 families annually in all 51 Council Districts to
10 ensure that New York City children have a solid
11 foundation to start school successfully, thrive
12 academically and succeed beyond their school years.

13 We urge you to recognize the importance of a
14 preventive approach for our youngest learners. Thank
15 you again for the opportunity to testify today.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Meredith and that
17 concludes testimony for this panel. Next, we're
18 going to hear from Zulma Vizcarrondo from the Fifth
19 Avenue Committee.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

21 KIM SYKES: Good afternoon. My name is actually
22 Kim Sykes from the New York Immigration Coalition.
23 Zulma had an emergency but very much wanted her
24 testimony to be heard and asked me to read it, so I
25 will do that.

1
2 Good afternoon. My name is Zulma Vizcarrondo,
3 ESL Coordinator at Fifth Avenue Committee in Brooklyn
4 New York. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

5 This is our fourth year working on the LIFE
6 Project, helping families with the enrollment process
7 for PreK and 3K. I work with my colleague Anna Rong
8 Woo(SP?) who provides Chinese translation. We share
9 out information on PreK an 3K very broadly in our
10 community. We make presentations at the end of
11 Sunday mass. We use We Chat. We go to all the
12 places in our community that families normally go to.
13 Fifth Avenue Committee has assisted over 100 families
14 with enrolling their children in PreK and 3K programs
15 and we have served over 500 families with workshops
16 on the enrollment process, deadlines and appeals.
17 We're serving families that often do not have access
18 to the internet or a device, so we meet with them and
19 work with them individually. We discuss their
20 options and complete the application together and we
21 continue to support our families after placements are
22 announced.

23 We also advise families about services for
24 children with special needs. The families we work
25 with say that having someone guide them through the

1
2 whole process, makes an enormous difference. Many
3 families would not be able to participate in PreK or
4 3K without this type of individual support from
5 someone they feel comfortable with and we need to be
6 able to continue providing this incredibly valuable
7 service to our community.

8 In order to continue the LIFE Project and expand
9 it to other communities, we are asking for \$4 million
10 to fund 20 CBO's across the five boroughs. Thank you
11 very much again.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next, we are
13 going to turn to Ray Lopez from LSA Family Services.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

15 RAY LOPEZ: Good afternoon everyone. Thank you
16 for the opportunity to participate in this very
17 important hearing. LSA Family Health Service is a
18 community-based organization that's been in the East
19 Harlem community for almost 65 years.

20 We're one of the CBO partners on the LIFE Project
21 led by New York Immigration Coalition and we've been
22 part of the project since the beginning. Our work
23 focuses on the zip codes 10026, 10027, 10029, and
24 10035, which cover much of the neighborhoods of East
25 Central and West Harlem.

1
2 During the prepandemic days of the LIFE Project,
3 we realize that many of our families needed
4 significant support setting up and maintaining email
5 accounts to complete, manage online applications for
6 3K and PreK and other early education opportunities
7 for the young children.

8 When the pandemic started, families started to
9 share their struggles to have their school aged
10 children connect to their schools from home. This is
11 due to issues with computer hardware and issues with
12 connectivity. And our staff, quickly pivoted to try
13 and provide support to maintain these vital
14 connections between families and schools.

15 Many families also felt uncertain about enrolling
16 their children in school, especially since they're
17 not eligible for a vaccination. Did not know about
18 each schools COVID precautions. So, our life project
19 team at LSA Family Health Service worked with
20 families individually and in groups on Zoom to
21 provide this information and support them through all
22 of the uncertainty.

23 As a result, many of our families felt
24 comfortable enrolling their children and some now
25 feel more confident about communicating with the

1
2 schools. Now, I've only shared a sliver of the
3 impact that COVID-19 has had on an already fragile
4 situation for families in our community. We're
5 already living in over crowded situations pay check
6 to pay check and with some families, some adults in
7 the families without health insurance.

8 The LIFE Project team and the rest of our LSA
9 program staff, mobilize to connect people to services
10 and reliable information with the resources available
11 to us. We think that a significant investment into a
12 citywide LIFE Project would enable many CBO's like
13 let's say Family Health Service to conduct a massive
14 outreach effort to inform immigrant families of their
15 eligibility for Pre K and 3K programs, meeting
16 families where they are. We can work effectively in
17 conjunction with the DOE to provide one on one
18 intensive support to LEP parents. Taking them
19 through the entire process from learning about school
20 options to enrolling in their program of choice.

21 We can also support parents with early
22 interventions for students with disabilities, provide
23 extensive referral services and we can confirm that
24 when given the information and opportunities the
25

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2 families need, they are excited to take advantage of
3 quality early childhood education. Thank you.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we're
6 going to turn to Alejandra Vazquez Baur from Next
7 100.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

9 ALEJANDRA VAZQUEZ BAUR: Hello, good afternoon
10 and thank you Chair Joseph and members of the New
11 York City Council Committee on Education. My name is
12 Alejandra, I am a Policy Entrepreneur at Next100, a
13 community engagement coordinator at IMM Schools, and
14 a member of the Language Access Working Group. As a
15 former ELL and Teacher of high school aged new
16 arrivals in Miami, I'm grateful to the Committee on
17 Education for your commitment to ELLs prompting this
18 important hearing.

19 Data demonstrate that COVID has had a devastating
20 impact on New York City's ELL students, exacerbating
21 long standing educational inequities. Last January,
22 Advocates for Children released an analysis that
23 demonstrated high rates of absenteeism among ELLs.
24 For example, 10th and 12th grade ELLs missed about one
25 in four school days. According to NYCED ELL

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2 graduation rates rose in the last year to 60 percent
3 as we discussed but we worry this could be due to
4 graduation exemptions granted under the pandemic and
5 even still, is significantly lower than graduation
6 rates for their native English speaking peers.

7 Furthermore, the drop out rate for ELLs is more
8 than five times that of their peers. Additionally,
9 the Migration Policy Institute estimates that
10 thousands of newly arrived immigrant teens in the
11 Bronx and outer boroughs were not enrolled in school
12 in 2019, based on their analysis of Census Borough
13 data.

14 All of these issues are compounded by the
15 systemic language access failures that prevented many
16 immigrant families from receiving up to date
17 information, understanding their choices and making
18 informed decisions about their children's education
19 and safety.

20 Alongside our partners at the New York
21 Immigration Coalition's Education Collaborative,
22 Next100 offers three recommendations. One, please
23 fund the First Step Campaign Pilot Program. A \$2.1
24 million initial investment to support a transfer
25 school pilot that will increase access for a

1
2 newcomer, high school aged immigrants to programs
3 that meet their needs and are accessible in their own
4 communities.

5 Second, baseline a \$6 million investment in
6 language access for all, which will allow the DOE and
7 the Language Access Working Group, to continue to
8 develop linguistically responsive communications
9 infrastructure with and for immigrant communities.

10 Finally, we urge the City Council to provide
11 funding for the collection and reporting of data on
12 immigrant children to more meaningfully increase
13 equitable access to the academic social and emotional
14 supports they need and which may not be fully
15 captured by ELL status data and collection. Since
16 nearly 54 percent of New York City ELLs in 2019 were
17 born outside the United States.

18 Without programs that specifically target the
19 unique needs of immigrant students, they will
20 continue to be left behind. Without adequate and
21 linguistically appropriate communications, made in
22 partnership with CBO's and parent leaders that inform
23 our communities about those programs and services,
24 immigrant students will continue to be left behind.

1
2 And, without the appropriate data to identify the
3 inequities and opportunity that immigrant students
4 face, immigrant students will continue to be left
5 behind. An investment in the First Step Campaign
6 Pilot, the continuation of Language Access for All,
7 and the collection and reporting of immigrant student
8 data, will help to ensure that New York City schools
9 move forward with multilingual communities as we
10 continue to recover from this pandemic. Thank you.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we're
12 going to turn to Debora Mulrain, from Reads
13 Initiative.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

15 DEBORA MULRAIN: Good afternoon everyone and
16 thank you for having me. My name is Debora Mulrain
17 and I'm the Chief Organizational and Community
18 Advisor for Literacy Inc., also known as LINK.

19 LINK is a facilitating – sorry, LINK is a
20 facilitating partner for New York City Reads. New
21 York City Reads is an evident-based model that
22 mobilizes the resources of 11 partner organization to
23 support families and school holistically addressing
24 literacy needs of children from birth through 5th
25 grade in East New York, East Harlem and South

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2 Jamaica. Thank you for the opportunity to submit
3 this testimony on behalf of the many immigrant
4 families and English Language Learners who
5 participate in programs delivered by New York City
6 Reads.

7 We have individually and collectively witnessed
8 that the disproportionate impact of COVID on ELLs.
9 It is important to acknowledge the diversity of ELLs
10 experiences and recognize that even before the
11 pandemic, our ELL population was already facing
12 educational, economic and health disparities.

13 As the state and the city plan to address the
14 broad range of needs of our ELLs, there is a unique
15 opportunity to innovate. To develop an approach that
16 is comprehensive and coordinates cross sector
17 partnerships, so the solutions truly address the
18 diversity of needs from multiple perspectives and the
19 weight doesn't fall on one single institution or
20 stakeholder.

21 We build them to create equity and resilience in
22 New York City will require accelerating the funding
23 of community-based approaches and relying heavily on
24 partnerships and coordinated cross sector efforts.
25 Community-based models and coalitions like New York

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2 City Reads can provide social capital that connects
3 immigrants to each other and to additional services
4 across the community. Often in sustainable ways that
5 empower parents and local leaders to play an active
6 role in helping to provide solutions.

7 Together, New York City Reads partner
8 organizations provides ELLs with increased access and
9 opportunities to strengthen school, home, community
10 bonds throughout the year. Family, family and parent
11 engagement, books, culturally responsive educational
12 resources, enrichment activities, culturally
13 responsive curriculum, Native Language and linguistic
14 support for children and families.

15 Let's start with dedicating the summer of 2022 to
16 making reading a beloved activity by teens and tweens
17 and all the way down to tots and toddlers. ELL
18 students were already at heightened risks for summer
19 slide. Let's create the programming that will return
20 Summer slide to where it belongs, on the playground.
21 Now is the time for the City Council to assert and
22 affirm a commitment to New York City ELLs by
23 investing in a widespread literacy programming that
24 will ensure they emerge from COVID with the skills
25 they need and the interest to enjoy reading.

1
2 We have the resources in every community but we
3 need Council leadership to mobilize them in pursuit
4 of a unified goal of literacy. After all, Literacy
5 Inc is an inoculation against poverty. Literacy is
6 inoculation against poverty. Thank you.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And next, we'll
8 hear from Albania Jimenez from Literacy Inc.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

10 ALBANIA JIMENEZ: Hello and good afternoon. As
11 you said, my name is Albania Jimenez and on behalf of
12 Literacy Inc. or LINK as we are known, thank you for
13 the opportunity to present our concerns about the
14 important of COVID on English Language Learners.
15 LINK's reading testimony is full of citations and
16 facts. I hope that you create the chance to read it.
17 And in my brief time today, I want to leave you with
18 two thoughts.

19 And the first is about the importance and impact
20 of early frequent supportive leadership programming
21 for ELLs. And the second is about the value of early
22 literacy as a pandemic response for ELLs and all
23 immerging readers. And the first strategy comes
24 straight from a Chicago politicians playbook on
25 boarding, early and often.

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So, looking at the third grade, 2019, ELL test scores analyzed by ELL students, there is a big surprise in the category of former ELL students. These are children who by the time that they reach third grade, had already completed the full array of ELL programming offered by the DOE. Care to guess what this former ELL students score? 73 percent reached proficient levels, 73 percent. This speaks to the effectiveness of reaching children early and often. Those who need additional support to become proficient readers can succeed if they receive the support.

COVID has only made the need for early and often more acute. So, the second thought I share includes but most beyond ELL students and that is the value of daily reading as an equity builder and as a pandemic response. Early literacy is about far more than a skills acquisition. By starting early, with picture books and practicing a habit of daily reading, families can make reading together an oasis of count despite other circumstances. Whether directly caused by COVID or a cascade of associated stressors.

So, and I want to end saying that daily cuddle time can anchor conversations and provide deep

1
2 comfort. Unlike many families of young children in
3 immigrant communities not yet in the school and
4 isolated at home throughout the pandemic. Linked
5 families had resources at home to continue providing
6 stimulation to their children and we know that access
7 to literacy resources is an important factor in a
8 child's school success.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

10 ALBANIA JIMENEZ: Access that is weakest in
11 children living in poverty. And I want to end by
12 saying, this impact should make community-based early
13 literacy an important and essential part of our
14 city's pandemic response. At the same time, it
15 creates a base to rebuild as a more equitable city,
16 one where ELL students can thrive. Thank you for the
17 opportunity to present today.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. That concludes
19 our final panel. If anyone had to come and go from
20 the Zoom and we may not have called your name and you
21 haven't had a chance to testify, if you can use the
22 raise hand function now on Zoom, we will call on you.

23 Not seeing any hands, Chair that concludes the
24 public portion of our first hearing for this session.

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2 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Thank you so
3 much. Alright, so we're going to conclude. I want
4 to thank everyone, administration, Committee staff,
5 advocates, Council Members, CBO's and parents who
6 participated in the hearing. So many have testified
7 and asked a lot of questions, so we will continue to
8 be the voice and advocate and we'll follow up with
9 DOE on all the questions and the data's that were not
10 available. Malcom and team, thank you so much, all
11 the CBO's, all the partners, my colleagues, thank
12 you. And we will do this again.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I just need you to say, "this
14 hearing is now adjourned."

15 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Oh, now this hearing is
16 adjourned. [GAVEL]

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Alright, thank you Chair.
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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 26, 2022