

**Testimony of NYC Schools Chancellor David Banks
On the FY2023 Executive Budget
Before the NYC Council Committees on Finance and Education**

May 10, 2022

Good morning, Chair Brannan, Chair Joseph, and all the Members of the Finance and Education Committees here today. I'm New York City Schools Chancellor David Banks, and I'm pleased to join you along with First Deputy Chancellor Dan Weisberg, Deputy Chancellor Carlyne Quintana, Senior Advisor Camille Varlack, Chief Financial Officer Lindsey Oates, Jade Grieve, Chief of Student Pathways, Dr. Jawana Johnson, Chief of School Culture, Climate and Wellbeing, Chief School Operations Officer Kevin Moran, Executive Director of Family and Community Empowerment Cristina Melendez, and other senior members of my team. Thank you for the opportunity to testify about the Mayor's Executive Budget for NYC Public Schools.

Before I begin, I would like to express my deepest thanks to this Council for your partnership, advocacy, and insight. Your dedication to our city's children is truly a gift. As I have said before, we are committed to working with you hand in hand as partners in improving the educational experience of our students.

The City Council has enabled us to provide **100 percent Fair Student Funding** to all schools for the first time ever this year. This is an incredible investment in our students, and it would not be a reality without the advocacy of so many –especially the City Council.

The Council has also been instrumental in securing funding through the American Rescue Plan Act that is helping our school communities to rebound from all the disruptions caused by the pandemic. This has crucially provided the resources for academic recovery investments as well as ensured that every school, from every Zip Code receives funding to hire a full-time social worker. We've expanded PSAL so that students across the system have access to sports teams and we are in the process of hiring dedicated staff for the first ever office for students in foster care. And we are expanding community schools to over 400 schools by next school year.

And with direct funding from the Council, we are also expanding language access, mental health services, and community access to school playgrounds. These are a lot of vital successes we have accomplished together.

Since I was last here with you almost two months ago, I have continued to visit schools across all five boroughs and been so impressed at how our students are bouncing back academically and socially through the hands-on support and dedication of our educators. Returning to face-to-face learning has restored a sense of normalcy in our classrooms, which you can see in the attentiveness and joy expressed in the faces of our students. You can really feel the sense of excitement and energy as you walk through our buildings.

One powerful indicator of that renewed enthusiasm is the overwhelming response to this year's **Summer Rising** program. Summer Rising will be jointly administered by the Department of Education with the

Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), connecting 110,000 elementary and middle school students to fun, culturally-relevant, hands-on experiences to strengthen their academic, social, and emotional skills. This is a real opportunity for students to sustain the joy of learning after June with rigorous academic programming while also experiencing all our city has to offer beyond the classroom walls. We are prioritizing students in temporary housing and students with 12-month IEPs to ensure equitable access to the program, and we are really thrilled by the immense response to date.

We also recently announced the expansion of our **Gifted and Talented** program, an important step toward ending the era of scarcity for our families. We are adding 100 kindergarten seats and 1,000 third-grade seats, expanding both entry points to all districts. Through this expansion and updates to the admission process, the city's Gifted and Talented program will serve every community citywide for the first time, providing more opportunities for accelerated learning to more families. At the same time, we will be implementing a much more equitable process than in the past to identify students who will most benefit from accelerated learning.

These expansions of Summer Rising and G&T are products of robust community engagement sessions that we organized with stakeholders from across the city. As I have said before, engagement is not a slogan for me. It is in my DNA and something we take seriously day in and day out.

Let me turn now to the details of the **Mayor's Executive Budget**.

The Department of Education's 2023 budget totals \$37.6 billion, including \$31.0 billion in operating expenses. Our funding is a combination of City, State, and Federal resources, with City tax levy money making up the largest share at 54%, State funds at 36%, and Federal dollars at 10%. The 2023 Executive Budget reflects a reallocation of a portion of the federal coronavirus aid provided through the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act and the American Rescue Plan aligned with the priorities of the Adams Administration.

We are expected to spend over \$3 billion of stimulus dollars in FY 2022, and we are working with OMB to ensure the Adopted Budget reflects our final spending projections. \$2 billion of this funding has already been spent, including \$500 million in the last two months alone. We expect spending to continue apace this year, including significant payments for goods and services received in FY 2022 but not invoiced or paid until the summer. I want to reassure the Council and the public that federal funding is available over the next several years - anything not spent this year as a result of pandemic-related supply chain and staffing challenges is available to support our work next year.

The investments in this budget reflect and advance the vision for the Department of Education that you have previously heard me put forward. I believe that for our schools to deliver on their original promise of serving as the engine of the American Dream, we need to do things very differently in ways that build trust among our families and school communities one big step at a time. Our schools need to connect our students to the real world and what matters to them, preparing each and every one of our students to graduate with a pathway to a rewarding career, long-term economic security, and equipped to be a positive

force for change. My vision for our schools is built on four pillars that this budget makes real investments in.

1. The first pillar is *reimagining the student experience*, which means redesigning what happens in our schools to be relevant and exciting to our students, while providing them with skills and knowledge attractive to employers. This starts with our \$33M investment in Pathways Expansion to improve economic mobility and security for all NYC public school students. We are going to be launching career-connected pathways programs, expanding apprenticeship programs, and broadening early college opportunities to bring the full scope of post-secondary options to life for our students.

Our Pathways expansion efforts will build on the effective programs we already have in place, such as the Thomas Edison CTE High School in Queens, which provides training in fields like engineering and medicine to prepare its students for life after high school.

Another way our budget is reimagining the student experience is better supporting students with print-based disabilities by expanding access to cutting-edge learning strategies throughout the system.

Finally, in acknowledging the importance of 21st century learning and building on what we learned during the pandemic, the Department will enhance **digital experiences** across the system. That effort will also increase access to in-demand coursework while further supporting students who face challenges in attending school in person.

2. The second pillar, *scaling, sustaining, and restoring what works*, entails identifying amazing practices throughout our system and sharing them so that they become models that other schools can emulate.

In addition to our expanded **Summer Rising** and **Gifted and Talented** programs, we are enhancing **Bilingual Education**. Bilingual education is the favored program model for supporting the long-term success of English Language Learners, who we hold to the same high expectations as all of our other students. Our plan includes:

- Strengthening and sustaining the quality of existing bilingual education programs
- Opening or growing 50 bilingual education programs in 2023
- Supporting district-wide planning to ensure a pathway to multilingualism for every student.

To accomplish this, we will be investing in:

- Purchasing and developing curriculum and materials in students' home languages
- Recruiting, training, and staffing high quality, certified bilingual teacher candidates
- Empowering families of multilingual learners with resources to enable them to make informed decisions about bilingual education through increased awareness of bilingual program options and benefits
- Ongoing professional learning, program design, and implementation support for school leaders and staff

We have so many amazing practices throughout our system to hold up and share so they can be more broadly emulated. For example:

- Mark Erlenwein, principal of Staten Island Technical High School, was recently honored as New York State Secondary School Principal of the Year in part for encouraging students to have opportunities to re-do some of their learning versus relentlessly being pushed forward and wondering how to catch up. That approach of creating second and third chances cultivates perseverance and deeper learning.
- And the Brooklyn Occupational Training Center, a District 75 School, has continually innovated to engage students with wide-ranging learning needs in a quality civics education. Teacher Matt Gorin has adapted participatory budgeting resources to engage students through big circle mapping in the cafeteria, which allows verbal and non-verbal students to graphically represent their ideas and engage in discussion, debate and to show support for each other.

Good things are happening in our schools and we want to use technology to capture these practices in a way that makes sense for principals. To help better share best practices and enable schools to collaborate, we are planning to create an app that school leaders can easily access from their phone or desktop. We will ensure that principals are able to give feedback/partner before any future rollout.

3. The third pillar is *prioritizing wellness*, because students who feel healthy, safe, well-nourished, and intellectually stimulated are best able to concentrate and engage with their academic work.

To that end, under this budget our schools will contract with community-based organizations that specialize in **violence interruption** programming, which empowers and equips young people with tools to make positive choices for themselves and uplifts pro-social development pathways as an alternative to crime. These strategies include social-emotional support for students, violence interruption techniques (de-escalation, mediation, conflict resolution), and extended learning opportunities to ensure that students feel safe, supported, and empowered in their school communities.

Given that the pandemic is by no means over, we are also going to continue to strive to ensure that all NYC Public Schools continue to have **nurse coverage** in 2023.

4. Finally, with respect to our fourth pillar, *engaging families to be our true partners*, one of our top budget priorities for this year is to enhance our **Family and Community Engagement** office by hiring community coordinators from underrepresented groups. We want to make sure we are reaching parents we have rarely heard from in the past and elevate their voices. Since approximately 40 percent of NYC Public Schools families speak a language other than English at home, we are also investing in improving response time for families requesting **translation and interpretation** services.

Many of these investments are not only DOE priorities, but outgrowths of conversations and collaborations with Council, as well as other stakeholders. We are acting on our promise to not only

engage with this Council, but directly incorporate your feedback in helping to shape our budgetary and policy decisions. That is the true partnership we will continue to nurture.

These investments will build on the progress we have begun to make in rebuilding the trust of our families and further excite them about sending their children to our schools.

I again want to underscore that we deeply appreciate the vital role that the Council plays in working with the Mayor, OMB, DOE, and the various stakeholders in shaping this final budget. Together, we are creating a budget that advances the needs and priorities of our students and families.

Thank you, and we are here to answer your questions.