

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION JOINTLY
WITH THE COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND
INVESTIGATIONS

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June 24, 2022
Start: 12:02 p.m.
Recess: 6:44 p.m.

HELD AT: HYBRID HEARING-Council Chambers-
City Hall

B E F O R E: Rita Joseph,
Chairperson of the Committee on
Education

Gale A. Brewer,
Chairperson of the Committee on
Oversight and Investigations

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Speaker Adrienne Adams
Diana Ayala
Rita C. Joseph
Shekar Krishnan
Rafael Salamanca, Jr.
Nantasha M. Williams
Julie Won
Marjorie Velázquez
Kalman Yeger
Keith Powers
Crystal Hudson

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COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

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COUNCIL MEMBERS: (CONT.)

Sandy Nurse
Selvena N. Brookes-Powers
Chi A. Ossé
Tiffany Cabán

A P P E A R A N C E S

Dan Weisberg
First Deputy Chancellor at the New York City
Department of Education

Lindsey Oates
Chief Financial Officer at the New York City
Department of Education

Robert Jackson
Senator

Brad Lander
Comptroller

Sarita Subramanian
New York City Independent Budget Office

Niyo Gumbs
Sophomore in High School in the Bronx and a Youth
Leader with Sisters and Brothers United and the
Urban Youth Collaborative

Anari Coleman
Ninth Grader and a Youth Leader at Make the Road
New York and the Urban Youth Collaborative

Daniella Rodriguez
Youth Leader at Make the Road New York and the
Urban Youth Collaborative

Keneisha Buckley
Urban Youth Collaborative

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

Brielka Rodriguez
Urban Youth Collaborative

Zuleima Dominguez
Speaking on behalf of Brielka Rodriguez

Mark Gonsalves
PS199 PTA

Michael Athy
Retired after 18-years at the Department of
Education

Nicole Giaco
Parent

Cloya Huggins
Parent Action Committee

Anna-Maria Thomas
39 years Working in the New York City Department
Education, Retired Educator

Paulette Healy
Citywide Council on Special Education

Lucas Healy
District 75 Student Advocate

Leonie Haimson
Class Size Matters

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

Andrea Ortiz
New York Immigration Coalition

Greg Monte
UFT

Renee Freeman
Para-Professional at the Academy of Medical
Technology

Chanel Quintero

Elton Dodson
Executive Director of the Mural Justice Project

Kahris Salas
Manhattan Borough Presidents PEP Appointee

Smitha Varghese
New York City Campaign Coordinator for the
Alliance for Quality Education

Shirley Aldebol
Representing the Chancellor's Parent Advisory
Council

Natasha Capers
Mother of Two Public school students

Michael Mulgrew
UFT

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

Eman Gad
Girls for Gender Equity

Quadira Coles
Girls for Gender Equity

Kaveri Sengupta

Lori Podvesker
Include NYC

Randy Levine
Policy Director at Advocates for Children of New
York

Gregory Brender
Daycare Council of New York

Camille Casaretti
CEC15

Cloya Huggins
Parent Action Committee

Chauncey Young

Herman Younger
Community Organizer with New Settlements Parent
Action Committee

Jenna Weinberg
Theater Teacher

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

Lupe Hernandez
Borough President Appointees

Emily Helstrom
PTA President of PS343

Christine Ramirez
Parent Leader with the Parent Action Committee

Stephen Lampert
Parent

Meagan Scott

Bella Sarugo
Parent

Lauren Clavin Organizer for Equity and Justice in
our Schools

Ron Brit
Parent

Sheree Gibson
Queens Parent Leader

Kelan Madden
Parent

Melissa Keaton
Parent of Melanie

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

Melanie
Nine-Year-Old Student

1 COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATION

3 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Check one, two. Check one,
4 two. This is a pre-recorded sound test with the
5 Committee's on Education and Oversight and
6 Investigation to be recorded by Michael Leonardo in
7 the Council Chambers. Today's date is June 24, 2022.

8 SERGEANT PEREZ: Sergeants, please start all the
9 recordings. Good afternoon once again. Welcome to
10 the New York City Council Chambers. If you are here
11 for the Committee on Education jointly with Oversight
12 and Investigations, you are in the right place. If
13 you want to testify, you can see the Sergeant at
14 Arms, they're rolling around to pick up your slips
15 now. Make sure that if you have any electronic
16 devices, once again, please turn those off. If you
17 have any questions, just get the attention of one of
18 the Sergeant at Arms and we'll answer your question
19 to the best of our ability.

20 Anybody that's on Zoom that would like to testify
21 or send us testimony, you can do so at
22 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Again, that is
23 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Madam Chair, we are ready
24 to begin.

25 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: [GAVEL] Good afternoon and
welcome to today's joint Oversight Hearing of the

Education and Oversight and Investigations Committees
on 2022-2023 Department of Education School Budget.
I'm Rita Joseph, Chair of the Education Committee.

Today, we're having a Hybrid hearing with Council
Members and some witnesses in-person while others
will be testifying remotely via Zoom. We ask for
your patients as we navigate this new environment.

Before I turn to my opening statement, I would like
to acknowledge Speaker Adams, that's joining us today
for the important hearing. I will turn to the
Speaker for her opening remarks.

SPEAKER ADAMS: Thank you very much Chair Joseph
and before I give my remarks, I would just like to
say as I just said at our press conference and noting
the news of the morning and restating my statement a
bit, that it is infuriating that the Supreme Court
made up of a majority of men has made the outrageous
decision to disregard decades of established law and
our right to self-determination.

This Supreme Court believes that guns have more
rights than women to determine what is best for us
and best for our bodies. This decision has an impact
that will impact generations to come, and we promise
to fight back using every lever of power within our

control. And with that, I bid you all a good morning, good afternoon. Thank you, Chairs Joseph, and Brewer, for holding this critically important hearing on the 2022-2023 Department of Education or DOE School Budgets. The changes to school budgets being proposed for the next school year are varied and have raised concerns for this Council, our constituents, parents, teachers, students, and entire school communities.

There is an important distinction that is being blurred and this distinction must be cleared up. The issue at hand is one of DOE decisions on school budgets, not one of the overall city budgets. That distinction is critical because the Fiscal Year 2023 City Budget actually invested over \$700 million more in city funds for DOE than the previous budget, bringing total city funds spent on DOE to the highest level that our city's history has ever seen.

Yet, some of our individual and local schools are facing budgets that are drastically different for the next school year and let me be perfectly clear, that is a DOE determined decision. This hearing will seek to uncover why school budgets determined by DOE have changed in the particular way they have, where the

federal funding used by the DOE is being spent and the many questions that our stakeholders in our schools still have about the DOE's decisions.

I want to thank the department for being here today to answer our questions, questions from these committees. I also welcome, I don't see our Comptroller, but he may be coming in today. I welcome also our IBO and the countless parents, students, advocates and other community leaders who are here today to speak on this topic and offer their insights and perspectives, in person and virtually.

Every person here today is likely aware of how the pandemic widened pre-existing opportunity and achievement gaps, hitting historically disadvantaged students hardest. A research report from last summer on the lingering effects of what it called "unfinished learning" found that at the end of the 2020-2021 school year, "students in majority Black schools ended the year with six months of unfinished learning and students in low-income schools ended the year with seven months based on math proficiency.

High school students became more likely to drop out of school and high school seniors, especially

those from low-income families were less likely to go onto post-secondary education."

This does not even account for multilingual learners. Students in temporary housing and students with disabilities. Our focus must be on equity, ensuring schools and students who have historically been underserved are prioritized. Now, I do not deny the herculean effort the New York City DOE undertook when COVID-19 first confronted us. In fact, I do applaud this work from having to immediately pivot to an all-remote learning environment. To making more than 900,000 devices available to students. And providing meals to anyone who needed them.

One through Grab and Go, prioritizing social, emotional supports to students and so much more. The DOE tried and, in many aspects, did right by our students. Mistakes were of course made during an unprecedented situation but more importantly, lessons were learned, and courses corrected. We came together as a city to ensure our public-school students would have what they needed to succeed academically in these trying times.

Our schools and our students, still need our support because we know that the situation facing

many of our schools even before the pandemic, was not adequate or ideal. Yet, for our schools to now have the proverbial rug pulled out from under them by DOE's decisions to change school budgets as we seek to emerge from this pandemic into a new normal would be the wrong approach. The drastic nature of these DOE decisions for the approaching school year endangers the success of our schools and students. How can we address learning loss and the academic needs of students resulting from the pandemic if teachers and other school base staff they've come to rely on, and trust are no longer there? How can we tell students, parents, and local school staff with a straight face that things will be, okay? School leaders need more time to plan and recover and students should not bear the brunt of decisions by DOE that are too hasty and wed to inadequate policies of past administrations. We're under no illusion that enrollment is down and has been trending downward for some time. We're also aware that the massive infusion of federal stimulus funding for DOE was not a permanent funding stream. It's declining and we will eventually no longer, and it will

eventually no longer be available for our city's
education system. We face that fact.

This federal stimulus has allowed DOE to hold
school budgets harmless despite enrollment declines.
We cannot afford to ignore these realities. We also
need to better understand how federal stimulus funds
are being spent. It's important for this information
to be provided, not only to the City Council and
other city government officials but also to the
broader public.

The central issues at hand are the decisions and
formulas that DOE are using to determine school
budgets. Major questions were raised about the DOE's
funding formula. Even before the forthcoming school
years budgets were an issue. For several years, the
Council and other stakeholders have been contributors
to efforts with the Department aimed at resolving
gaps in its school budget formula, but the DOE has
failed to fulfill commitments and take action.

This administration is unnecessarily continuing
with and shouldering the inaction of its predecessors
on this issue. Leaving policies in place that leave
students underserved. Now, that federal funding is
diminishing, there is an opportunity to address the

issues it leaves behind in both the short and long term. The Council remains committed. We remain committed to these efforts and to partnering with our schools and communities to address these issues with the department. We must provide transparency about every federal dollar received by this city and enroll our communities and helping us solve the challenges for our schools and students.

We need Mayor Adams Administration and the Department of Education to come earnestly to the table, so our city's leaders are all working together to fulfill our promise to the students and families that rely on our school system.

We will not stop advocating for solutions and collaborations to achieve it. We all need to be forthcoming and clear-eyed about the challenges, so we can unite and commit towards closing gaps for our students who are relying on our leadership. We will not stop using the full weight of this legislative body to fight for solutions, stand up for our schools and students and compel collaborative action towards solutions. This is what our city needs and what our children deserve.

I would like to thank everyone, everyone for their efforts in organizing this hearing today and I will now turn things back into the hands of Chair Joseph.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Madam Speaker. We're here today to examine the impact of DOE's 2022-2023 School Budget. We're also here to call on Chancellor Banks and Mayor Adams to address to the DOE's decisions on its school budgets for the upcoming school year. That will impact many schools when they reopen in September.

It's important to note here that the Fiscal 2023 budget and Council adopted includes over \$700 million more in city funds for schools compared to the current fiscal year. New York City's also receiving an increase in state foundation aid for the schools in 2023. Despite these increases, the DOE school budgets are still reducing funding's to schools in the new school year.

For the past two years, New York City public school students have suffered tremendous harm as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Remote instruction led to serious learning loss for students in New York City, as well as across the country, especially among

vulnerable student populations. In fact, the pandemic has exacerbated inequities and widened already existing achievement gaps. Hitting disadvantaged students hardest including low-income students of color, English language learners, students in temporary housing and students with disabilities.

Beyond the academic impact, the pandemic has also taken a huge toll on students' mental health due to the loss of family members to COVID-19 or lost their jobs and economic insecurity. The pandemic also negatively affected students social, emotional development through long months of isolation from friends and classmates. From the outset of the pandemic, New York City had a large rate of COVID transmission and was considered the epicenter of the pandemic. It should not be surprising that many families left New York City at the height of the pandemic or enrolled their children in Charter schools, private schools, or homeschooling and consequently, enrollment in New York City public schools have declined.

However, enrollment declines are not distributed evenly across the system with some schools

1
2 experiencing large decreases while others lost only a
3 small number. And some schools actually gain
4 students. The federal government allocated stimulus
5 funds to states and school districts across the
6 country to address pandemic related issues such as
7 learning loss, mental health and social emotional
8 impacts on students and education and budget
9 shortfalls.

10 Last year, the DOE used some of the federal
11 stimulus fund to hold schools' budget harmless for
12 enrollment declines. However, this year, the
13 Administration is deciding to return to a school
14 budget formula that's now less federal stimulus
15 funding available. Federal stimulus funds will
16 completely dry up in two years and much of it seems
17 to be allocated towards core DOE programs, but we
18 need to prioritize our schools and better understand
19 the use of federal dollars with public transparency.

20 This is not the time for DOE to change school
21 budget in a way that drastically impacts our schools,
22 especially when students are still suffering from
23 serious learning loss and mental health impacts from
24 the pandemic and need all of our supports they can
25 get to help with their recovery.

Reducing the negative impacts on students should be our priority. If previous administration failed to use this federal stimulus funding to protect our students, we all need to understand the reality and find solutions to help our schools. Schools with the largest enrollment declines, with these budget reductions and hundreds and thousands or millions of dollars despite the city devoting more city funds towards education than ever before.

This could result in the loss of many teachers as well as vital supports and programs. Allowing reduction in the school budget this year will result harmful impacts for our students. We have begun to learn about the devastating impact of the DOE's decision on individual schools. In my school district alone is 15-23 schools \$578,000 each or 14 percent of their budget. We expect to hear much more about the impact of these DOE decisions from the educators, parents, advocates joining us today.

We believe the lower school budget at the time, especially for schools serving historically underserved students are unacceptable. By working together, we can completely avoid unnecessary DOE initiative school budget reductions, especially when

the Chancellor has acknowledged that the fair student funding formula needs to change and has vowed to do so.

The DOE formula is the problem, not the overall education budget. Why not amend the FSF formula and avoid this problematic outcome for our students? To reduce the harmful impact on our schools, this administration has indicated and wants to prioritize student's success, particularly students of color, while creating true partnerships with families. We can only achieve this if DOE decides to bend in this formula and poorly served our school before the pandemic.

There's no reason to take a big step backward based on the formula of previous administration. We urge the Mayor and the Chancellor to listen to students, parents, educators, and advocates and hold off of any budget reduction for the upcoming school year.

At today's hearing, the Committee hopes to learn more from the DOE about the expected impact and its changes to school budgets. We seek to understand this administration's effort to provide schools with resources needed to maintain, support and services

for students, which its formula driven school budget creates. We'd also like to hear details about how this administration is planning on using remaining federal stimulus funds for schools. We also expect to hear about the impact of proposed cuts on schools from educators, parents, advocates, and other stakeholders.

I want to thank everyone who's testifying today, and I want to thank the City Council staff for all they put into today's hearing, Malcom Butehorn, Masis Sarkissian, Jan Atwell, Frank Perez. I also thank my staff Sam Weinberg and Connor Erving.

I'd like to remind everyone who wished to testify in person today that you fill out a witness slip, which is located at the desk of the Sergeant at Arm, near the entrance of the room. To allow as many people as possible to testify, testimony will be limited to two minutes per person, whether you're testifying on Zoom or in person. I'm also going to ask my colleagues to limit their questions and comments to five minutes.

I would like to now turn to my colleagues Gale Brewer, Chairperson of Oversight, and Investigation Committee for her opening remark. I would like to

acknowledge my colleagues who have joined us this
afternoon.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you very much. I am
Gale Brewer, Chair of the Committee on Oversight and
Investigations and I certainly, certainly thank
Council Member Rita Joseph, Chair of our Education
Committee for all of her hard work in putting
together this really important hearing and I want to
thank our speaker, Adrienne Adams for her strong
leadership today.

Today, these two committees will be reviewing the
Department of Education's Adopted Budget for Fiscal
Year 2023 and how DOE is determining school budgets.
I've been a public servant for a very long time, and
I have fought to ensure that New York City's public
schools have the resources they need to serve our
students effectively. We've advocated for more
school social workers. We've fought for healthy food
options in our school cafeterias, and I've tried to
always make the needs of students a top priority. I
look forward to continuing those efforts today, but
we need to work to ensure the critical gaps in
education funding are addressed before school opens
in September.

Our public schools each have individual budgets that are funded by DOE through a combination of city, state, federal and other sources. As Chair Joseph already noted, in FY23, the amount of city funds allocated to DOE, thanks to the speaker and my colleagues with \$700 million greater than the amount allocated in the previous fiscal year. Nevertheless, the Department of Education has indicated that due to federal funding losses, declined in enrollment; and we don't really have the numbers on declines to be honest with you from DOE and DOE determined formulas. School budgets are facing drastic changes and a net reduction of roughly \$250 million for Fiscal Year 2023 as compared to the previous school year.

Some schools are receiving more money in their budgets while some have received significant declines from DOE. And I just want to say this morning, I was at a graduation. We were all at graduations. I did three this morning and the principal said she has a 27 percent cut and the information says zero. There's something wrong with that. We do not have the data from DOE. Like so many others, I am deeply concerned about how this will impact individual schools in our city.

As we all know, now is not the time to be cutting back on support for our schools. I've heard from many, many, many parents, students, teachers, and principals across the city, not just from my district, about the difficulties our students have faced over the past two years and about the increased needs they face in light of the pandemic.

Today the Committee's will work to understand the specific impacts of DOE's decisions on budgets for individual schools in the upcoming year. More importantly, we will examine how resources can be redeployed to help fill the devastating gaps in school budgets before the school year begins.

Trust me, we are not going to leave any stone unturned. The Committee's will be examining how the \$7.78 billion; as Randi Weingarten pointed out earlier at the press conference. In federal stimulus funding allocated to the Department of Education is spent and how these funds or others may be reallocated to help address the most urgent needs of individual schools. We will be examining how state funding including funds provided in connection with the campaign for Fiscal Equity Lawsuit; thank you Robert Jackson. Will impact DOE's need for federal

and other funds going forward. We'll be looking to Chancellor Banks and Mayor Adams to help us identify opportunities for DOE to shift money from bloated areas of its central operation, 52 Chamber Street and to clarify how much needed changes to the Fair Student Funding formula can be achieved on the timescale that is necessary to support our students.

I just want to say one principle. I don't dare give any names or any schools but generally, lots of principals have the same situation. Four teachers, she's told; might be more to be re- to be moved. She'd have to make classes larger. She's supposed to balance her budget before the end of the school year, yet the Department of Education did not tell her how many teachers she needs per class. She did, however, have to name the teachers. She would have to excess, and parents of course are calling all of us as a result. Her teachers and this particular school have been around nine to eleven years and she has had to excess some of them.

It is also unclear to her, and this principal is a very intelligent person. If the base of Fair Student is lowered. She doesn't know. Her enrollment is up from October of '21. So, this is

1 terrible, and it encourages New Yorkers to send their
2 children to other schools or to move and this
3 particular principal as this wonderful Chair Joseph
4 has indicated, doesn't understand if central funds
5 pay excess teachers, why in the world can't it pay at
6 her school.
7

8 So, with that, I'd like to thank members of the
9 central staff who helped prepare this meeting. Jan
10 Atwell, Malcom Butehorn, Masis Sarkissian, Frank
11 Perez, CJ Murray. And from the Office -- from the
12 Investigations and Oversight Aaron Mendelson and
13 Wanita John and I certainly want to thank Leo
14 Balaro(SP?), Ann Schuller Putter(SP?) from my staff.

15 You can see we're pretty angry. I know turn it
16 over to the great Chair Joseph.

17 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Council Member
18 Brewer. I'd like now to acknowledge the Council
19 Members that are here, Council Member Hanif, Council
20 Member Restler, Council Member Del La Rosa, Council
21 Member Gutierrez, of course Speaker Adams, Council
22 Member Brewer, Dinowitz, Council Member Louis,
23 Council Member Powers Brook, Council Member Ung,
24 Council Member Avilés, Council Member Hanks, Council
25 Member Velázquez, Council Member Schulman, Council

3 Member Menin, Council Member Dinowitz, Council Member
4 Won, Council Member Lee, Council Member Krishnan,
5 Council Member Williams, Hudson, Ayala and Majority
6 Leader Keith Powers. Oh, and also Council Member
7 Abreu, Sanchez and Cabán.

8 I'd like to call on the first two witnesses from
9 the Admin Dan Weisberg and Lindsey Oates.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, uhm, my name is Jan
11 Atwell, I'm Policy Analyst with the Committee and I
12 will now administer the oath. I will call on each of
13 you individually for a response and please raise your
14 right hands.

15 Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth
16 and nothing but the truth before these Committees and
17 to respond honestly to Council Member questions?
18 Deputy Chancellor Weisberg?

19 DAN WEISBERG: I do.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Lindsey Oates?

21 LINDSEY OATES: I do.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. You may start.
24 You may begin.

25 DAN WEISBERG: Thank you very much. Good
afternoon, everybody, Speaker Adams, Chair Joseph,

Chair Brewer, all the Members of the Education Oversight and Investigations Committee here today. My name is Dan Weisberg, I'm the First Deputy Chancellor at the New York City Department of Education. I'm also the proud product of the New York City public schools, the son of a mom and dad who came through the New York City public schools and the proud father of two sons who came to the New York City public schools. I'm joined by our outstanding Chief Financial Officer Lindsey Oates, and I really do thank you Chair Joseph and everybody for the opportunity to discuss this important issue of school budgets for the New York City public schools.

The budget the City Council approved last week, continues last year's historic achievement of providing every school in our system with 100 percent Fair Student Funding for the first time in history of the New York City public schools. For this school year that means an increased investment of over \$600 million, as several of you have already noted, directly to the schools.

City-funded spending on schools in Fiscal Year 2023 Adopted Budget will be the highest it's ever

been at \$20.2 billion, compared to \$18.9 billion in the current year.

As you know, New York State is in year two of a three-year payment plan to comply with the Campaign for Fiscal Equity decision. We are grateful for the increased foundation aid from Albany, and each increase we have received thus far has gone directly to school budgets to fund every school at 100 percent of the FSF, Fair Student Funding formula.

The State's Foundation Aid Formula, the City's FSF formula and Federal Title 1 funding are all based on student enrollment. The state allocates foundation aid to us based on our total enrollment and in turn, we allocate funding to schools based on their enrollment.

As the Chancellor has made clear repeatedly from day one, 120,000 families have fled the system over the past five years. So, it is not good but it's also not surprising that many schools, though certainly not all, has seen a drop in enrollment. For the last two years, the previous administration used temporary federal stimulus funding to hold schools harmless for enrollment decreases.

As everybody here today knows, that funding is going away over the next two years, and it will be completely gone by Fiscal Year 2025. As a result, we are using \$160 million in temporary stimulus funding to hold schools partially harmless for enrollment declines, so they don't see steep budget declines all in one year. Of course, schools that have seen precipitous enrollment declines are facing some really tough decisions. As schools in that situation always have including pre-pandemic.

So, these are the facts: Federal stimulus funding has provided our schools and our city as a whole with much needed resources during a tumultuous time. But we cannot rely on that funding source forever. That funding source is rapidly diminishing and going away. The DOE has used and plans to use stimulus funding for a variety of important school and student purposes, including the aforementioned cushion of \$160 million for school enrollment drops but also, expanded, and extensive Summer Rising program, starting in less than a couple of weeks, increasing early childhood programming and our planned Community Schools expansion, among many other critical investments.

We are expected to spend over \$3 billion in stimulus funding by the end of this Fiscal Year, which is rapidly approaching. Well over \$2 billion of this funding has already been spent this year, including \$800 million in the last three months alone. We expect spending of the stimulus funds to continue apace this coming year, including significant payments for goods and services that were received in Fiscal Year 2022 but not invoiced or paid until Fiscal Year 2023. Those include goods and services that are part of the programs I mentioned, and my colleague Lindsey Oates will go over this in much more detail shortly and we want to get you whatever information you need, so we are completely transparent.

It's never easy to manage decreases in school funding. This is not a good thing. Nobody here is going to claim that decreases in school funding for enrollment are a positive thing, but the Mayor and the Chancellor have taken a hard look at our financial picture for the coming years and chartered a path that avoids major disruption for schools, students, and families to the greatest extent possible. That plan was reflected in the Mayor's

Preliminary and Executive Budgets and after negotiations with the City Council it was adopted by the Council last week.

Now that the budget has been adopted, any discussion about targeting more resources towards school budgets, would mean pulling those resources from elsewhere in the approved DOE budget. It's important to remember that schools across the city right now are making plans based on their budgets for the coming year.

As I mentioned, we know, we are talking to them every day that some schools are making tough decisions. We also have some schools that have seen enrollment increases. They are looking now to hire teachers and other staff to meet that elevated need. Because of stimulus funding, we also have schools that are preparing for their Summer Rising programming. Others that are planning for their transition to become a community school and new Early Childhood programming that is coming online.

In addition, stimulus funding is paying for nurses, for social workers, and other support staff whose schools have made part of their communities. As well as new PSAL teams that schools are planning

for the next year. Any decision to change the way we are using or planning to use stimulus funding will impact at least some of those investments, some of that critical programming that is filling critical needs that are already allocated.

So, let me be clear, every dollar of stimulus funding has been allocated to critical programs. Using additional stimulus funding that holds schools harmless completely for enrollment declines is a bad idea for two reasons. I understand it but it's a bad idea. First, it would mean cutting funding at the last minute for programs like Summer Rising in community schools.

Second, it would mean that schools would face a much bigger funding drop next year, leaving them in a much worse position. This administration is committed to transforming students' experiences and putting them, putting each of them on a path to long-term economic security as part of Chancellor Banks and Mayor Adams vision. Many of the initiatives you voted for in this budget are essential to that new vision. Those include reimagining how we teach kids, so they all become strong readers, increasing support to families that speak different languages other than

English. Deepening investments in the mental health of our young people and expanding student pathways in bilingual programs; all critical needs.

Exciting our students and families about the learning experience through those kinds of investments, is how we will reverse past enrollment losses. I thank you for your time and now I'll turn it over to Lindsey Oates who will provide you with an overview of DO's budget, DOE's budget, and school budgeting process. We'll then be happy to answer any questions that you have.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you, you may begin.

LINDSEY OATES: Thank you Chair and if I may on a personal note, Speaker Adams, thank you for your statement about the news this morning.

Uhm, okay, hopefully everyone can see the presentation or has a copy in front of them. I wanted to take this — we wanted to take this opportunity to talk through some basics about our budget and our school budgeting process.

So, as the Chair and Speaker — the Chairs and Speaker pointed out uhm, the Department of Education's budget for Fiscal Year '23, which starts on July 1st, is \$37.6 billion and you can see how

that breaks out here between city, state, and federal funding. Predominantly funding from city but a growing share from state and federal funds.

In the Fiscal Year '23 budget, approximately \$1.8 billion of the \$3.9 billion in federal revenue is stimulus funding. Next slide please. The DOE's \$37.6 billion budget goes to the following places, and I like this table, it helps to I think illustrate how the Department of Education's budget is broken up by sort of general topics. And again, this is all funding, so you can see that the orange portion of this pie chart shows our school budgets. Forty-six percent or \$17.3 billion goes directly to school budgets for principals and their school leadership teams and communities to make decisions about how best to serve their communities.

And then going clockwise around, you see that a significant portion, this green triangle is fringe pension and debt service. That goes to support our staff, our teachers, as well as their health insurance and their pensions as well as debt service on our school buildings. You can see that the smallest portion of our budget, two percent, \$600

million represents our central and what we call
Central Administrative Budget.

I want to flag what the central and
administrative budgets include our field offices, our
Superintendents, and positions like CSE's. So, this
is including people like our budget directors who are
in the field, many of our unsung heroes are doing the
work right now with our school principals making
decisions about their budgets.

Charter Schools \$3 billion, nonpublic schools,
and other types of contract schools \$2 billion.
School support, which includes things like other
important things we need to run our school system,
transportation, food, facilities, safety, and
utilities. Can't run a school system without that,
it's \$4.3 billion.

Next slide, thank you. This year, as you and
others have pointed out, additional city and state
funding is offset by a decreasing federal support. I
think this is important to remember that the federal
funding, as we've all discussed is temporary and is
phasing out of our budget. This was strategically
frontloaded for a variety of reasons, and you can see
that along with city funds growing, so is state

funding and we are grateful for that investment from the state. Next slide please.

As a result of these increases and federal funding, state funding and city funding, are per pupil spending. This is total spending on our pupils has increased by more than 20 percent since pre-pandemic levels. We are now around \$31,000 per student compared to \$25,000 per student in Fiscal Year '19.

Next slide, thank you. There's been much discussion about DOE Stimulus Budget, and I really want to take a minute to discuss this issue. You can see that in the \$1.8 billion that is currently in the FY23 budget, that it is planned to be spent on these important activities. 3K expansion; this is expanding programs in our communities within our school buildings and with our community-based organizers, our community-based organizations, excuse me, to provide seats for all three-year-old's across our system.

Summer Rising, free summer programming for our students this summer, 110,000 K-8 students. I'm a parent, I think many of you are. You know the value free summer programming. Other school supports,

academic recovery services, special ed recovery services, mental health programming, social workers, guidance counselors, other Mayor, and Chancellor priorities, which I will go into in more detail on the next slide. Devices for our students and other IT supports to make sure that we can continue to support a modern learning environment in our schools. Academic services, including our mosaic curriculum program, special ed pre-K contract enhancements, our arts programming, computer science for all, and continuing to invest in the learning to work program.

School reopening costs, this is the cost to maintain a safe environment for our students. This is the cost of PPE, updates in ventilation and continuing investments in things like air purifiers and the filters we need to be replaced. These are investments by the way that schools do not have to pay for. We are paying for them, and we have always paid for them centrally to not have to burden schools with those types of decisions.

In addition, we've invested funding in expanding our public-school athletic league to ensure that more students than ever have access to athletic programming after school and on the weekends. Next

slide please. Some more on the important announcement that were made in the Executive Budget. That Mayor Adams and Chancellor Banks announced their priorities for our stimulus funding. And again, these are all investments that are in the FY23 budget this coming year.

So, in addition to the Summer Rising program that we've talked about, \$49 million will be invested to continue to ensure that all schools have a nurse. \$33 million to expand career pathways programming. This is funding that will go to schools to ensure access to CTE programs, apprenticeship programs, really important exciting work that the Chancellor has made a north star of his administration.

\$11 million to expand bilingual education classrooms and supports, \$11 million to continue to expand parent engagement, to make sure that we can hire people from underserved communities and engage with those communities as well. Continuing to invest in translation and interpretation services, \$10 million to support things like the announcement made yesterday for virtual schools. \$10 million or excuse me, \$9 million for CBO provided violence interruption programming at high needs schools. \$7 million for

literacy and dyslexia programming and \$2 million for
our gifted and talented program.

So, I want to take a minute to pivot now to talk
about the school budgeting process. So, this really
starts long before the school year begins. In
January, and in January through March, we really
start the enrollment process. Our Office of Student
Enrollment begins sharing initial enrollment projects
with schools. This is a collaborative process, and
it has been as long as I've been at the Department.
Principals in our central and field offices work
together to look at those enrollment projections and
principals have an opportunity and a right to review
and appeal those decisions during these months. And
ultimately a final projection is determined usually
in April, and it is those numbers that is used by my
team to build out the Fair Student Funding formula
and the upcoming budgets for the school year.

In late Spring and this year, a little bit later
than we would have liked, on June 5th, we released
budgets to schools. This includes the Fair Student
Funding formula allocation, but it is not limited to
the Fair Student Funding allocation. There was
something like forty-four other allocations that

remained to schools a few weeks ago. What is happening right now in the month of June is that principals are working with their school leadership teams and their communities to make decisions about how to use those funds to support their schools in the fall.

Throughout the summer, additional funding will be allocated to schools that have a demonstrated financial need. Final budgets are adjusted in the fall based on actual enrollment and the process with individual school budgets changing annually with enrollment shifts has been followed for many years.

I really want to emphasize the point that what we rolled out a few weeks ago is an initial budget allocation. Budgets will increase from here. There are additional allocations that will go out. Principals have a right to ask for additional funding, we will review those requests and that will be a process that will kick off in the next few weeks. Next slide please, thank you.

The Fair Student Funding formula is the primary funding source for most community district schools. Each Fair Student Funding allocation is calculated based on the number of students enrolled at each

1 school and the specific needs of those students. And
2 again, I want to emphasize as First Deputy Chancellor
3 Weisberg mentioned, that many of our funding sources
4 at the state and federal level also are based on the
5 number of students we have.
6

7 This budgeting method is called a Weighted Per
8 Pupil Funding model. Pupil needs are weighted based
9 on the cost of meeting the educational need. Weights
10 include Special Ed, English Language Learner,
11 Academic Intervention Services and so on. School
12 budgets therefore have changed and will continue to
13 change based on the number of students enrolled and
14 their needs under the formula. This goes both ways.
15 Schools receive both increases and decreases
16 depending on their needs and in FY23, approximately
17 400 schools are receiving additional Fair Student
18 Funding due to enrollment increases.

19 In the last two school years, we have been able
20 to use stimulus funding to hold schools harmless for
21 enrollment declines at a 100 percent level. But as
22 we've all discussed today and will continue to
23 discuss, unfortunately the federal funding is not
24 permanent, and we need to be strategic about uhm and
25 financially responsible around phasing out the use of

the federal stimulus funding and that's what this budget includes.

So, stimulus funding will support a hold harmless that is phasing out of the commitment over the last two years. Next slide please. I like this slide. I want to emphasis that Fair Student Funding pays for the K-12 classroom staff. That includes school leadership principals, AP's, Deans, you can read the list. I want to make sure I emphasize the point that Fair Student Funding, while it represents around two-thirds of an average school budget, it is not the only money that goes to schools. There is a lot of other funding that goes for specific purposes. And some of those are listed here. Mandated IEP related services, IEP paraprofessionals, speech teachers, OT's, one to one paraprofessional's. Those are all funded based on the mandated needs of students in that building every year and those in addition to the Fair Student Funding Formula budgets. PreK and 3K programs are funded separately and there are other programs that are allocated separately, and Charter schools and District 75 schools do not receive the Fair Student Funding formula. Title 1 is another

example of funding that's in addition to the Fair Student Funding allocation. Last slide.

As we've discussed and as the Chancellor and the Mayor have mentioned, the Department of Education and the city is committed to improving the Fair Student Funding Formula in the future. Data shows that FSF budget allocations direct additional funding to schools with concentrations of underserved students. However, we know that FSF can be improved. With all schools now finally at 100 percent FSF, DOE and again, thank you Senator Jackson, DOE has committed to convening a working group of parents and advocates to examine the Fair Student funding formula and recommend improvements and steps to organize this working group have begun. Thank you for your patients through this presentation. We are happy to take any questions.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you so much. I'm going to pass it onto the Speaker for her questions.

SPEAKER ADAMS: Thank you very much Chair Joseph and thank you once again for your testimony this morning. I just have a couple of questions because there are a lot of colleagues here today, along with

both of our Co-Chairs this morning that do want to
indulge.

My first question is, was the DOE intimately
aware of the impact that would be done to our schools
as a result of these budget cuts?

DAN WEISBERG: Well, you know those are
conversations. Thank you very much Madam Speaker and
again, thank you for inviting us here today. Those
are conversations as Lindsey says are happening right
now. So, I want to say a couple of things. So, yes,
you know our budget people, our superintendents, and
our folks at Central including me, are talking to
principals, talking to parents, and CBO's about
school budgets right now.

So, as I said in my testimony, I know these are
difficult decisions, so yes, we are definitely aware
of what is happening out on the field. We visit
schools, although last day of school is of course
Monday but we visit schools all the time. I make
sure my staff is visit in schools all the time. So,
we're aware - I want to - I do want to emphasize one
point that Lindsey made. The dust has not totally
settled yet. So, where there are really urgent
needs, for example, it you know it turns out that

there are more students who have mandated services and that can't be paid for out of the budget. This is something that Lindsey in her office will work on to make sure that the school has those resources. There may be other changes that occur over the course of the summer that are occurring right now. This is a normal process, so I would just say yes, we're aware that a lot of schools are going through difficult decision-making processes, but I would also just predict that some of those issues are going to be resolved in the normal process.

SPEAKER ADAMS: I appreciate the answer First Deputy Chancellor, I think I was trying to get to the question was, were you aware prior to the situation happening? It sounds like you're learning as you're going as far as the teachers are concerned. As far as your immediate situation to me, your response sounds like you're learning along with the rest of us. Along with the teachers uhm, of what the situation is instead of proactively looking to engage them prior to them getting the information and now having to deal with this at their front door.

So, there's a very distinctive difference there and I was looking for yes, we were aware. This is

what we've done to kind of prohibit this from happening and the answer explains that the prework; it doesn't sound like the prework was there because now it sounds like in a lot of cases, my district included that these are total surprises to my educators and my principals in the schools.

So, as you said, we still have ongoing work to do with this but as of right now, how many teachers will need to be excessed in the upcoming school year? Do you have that number?

DAN WEISBERG: I don't have that specific number. I will say that we watch that number very carefully, it's still under what it was two years ago. So, we are not seeing unusual amounts of excessing of teachers and those letters as per the UFT contract, notifying teachers of excessing situations had to go out June 15th.

So, at this point citywide, we are not seeing unusual numbers of excess teachers. And if I could just say that Madam Speaker, I didn't mean to say that we were you know caught on aware as we didn't know. We certainly knew that with the step-down amounts of hold harmless, that schools were going to be in difficult situations and so, we are prepared,

and we do have staff and resources prepared to try to mitigate the impacts as much as possible. I would just say every year, school budget, there are issues with individual school budgets. There are more issues this year. Certainly, I would say that because of the enrollment declines. Because of the stimulus being dissipated but this is a back and forth that goes on every year and it goes on I would say into the fall because none of us has a complete crystal ball to say what is enrollment actually going to be in September and even going into October. So, we continue to adjust budgets and look, one thing we could probably all agree on, if the enrollment is much better than expected right now and projected right now, OMB has committed that they will provide the funding for those additional students. Let's hope that that happens. Let's continue to work together to make sure that happens.

SPEAKER ADAMS: And —

LINDSEY OATES: If I — may I?

SPEAKER ADAMS: Yes.

LINDSEY OATES: May I add? Thank you.

SPEAKER ADAMS: Absolutely.

LINDSEY OATES: I think as we all know this was an action that was announced in February in the Mayor's Preliminary Budget. I believe days after this was announced, I believe Deputy Chancellor Weisberg actually sent a communication to principals indicating that this was an action that the mayor had announced. In addition, Deputy Chancellor Blackburn and I gave a presentation to over 1,000 principals on the Friday before Memorial Day reiterating that the hold harmless that had been in place for the last two years were going to start to be phased out. And so, I want to just reiterate that we had been speaking to principals. It was important to us to let them know in February that this was something that was coming and to reiterate that again before school budgets were released.

SPEAKER ADAMS: Okay, thank you very much. I'm going to go back, just like I did for the first question. The question was how many teachers would need to excess in the upcoming school year. So, I'm going to let you know that my colleagues are going to give you numbers of teachers that they have gotten. The numbers that they have gotten so far from principals that have actively been engaging us over

the past couple of weeks. They're going to give you numbers.

So, if you don't know how many teachers will need to be excessed, I guarantee you that my colleagues are going to have some numbers for you today. I also want to get into before I hand it over back to the Chair, we have a very, very large vulnerable population of students who are in shelter right now, temporary housing right now. What was the prework that was done to protect those children knowing what was coming down the pipeline with these decisions.

LINDSEY OATES: Thank you Speaker for that question. So, the FY23 Adopted Budget does not make any changes to the additional supports that we provide to students in temporary housing. We spend over \$100 million on students in temporary housing. And we plan to spend more in Fiscal Year '23 as a result of additional grants that we're receiving from the federal and state government. I believe as well, Speaker that you and your college include additional funding in the Adopted Budget to expand the STH Community Coordinator Program. We are grateful for that, and that program will continue to be expanded

with the funding that you included in the adopted budget.

SPEAKER ADAMS: Okay, that's good to hear. I'll ask one more along the same lines as far as our student populations are concerned, our population of immigrant students or English Language Learners and how will this budget address those students' needs? How were they accounted for?

LINDSEY OATES: So, English Language Learners are — we are expanding as I think I mentioned in my slideshow presentation. We're expanding bilingual programs for English Language Learners, and we are investing additional funding also to continue to build out our translation interpretation teams for parents and families. And we are excited under Deputy Chancellor Quintana's leadership team to really look at further opportunities for those students.

SPEAKER ADAMS: Okay, I was remiss, I said that was going to be the last question for me but I'm going ask the one burning question that's been asked of us over the past week or so. What is preventing the DOE of restoring those cuts today?

DAN WEISBERG: The uhm, you know I think you know if we went back to the slides, what would be required to put additional money into the hold harmless would be to take money away from that stimulus funded programming that Lindsey talked about. Whether it's summer rising, whether it's nurses in schools, whether it's social workers. That's what's in our budget and so, we would need to divert that money and that's not something that I think would ultimately be in the best interest of schools and families.

SPEAKER ADAMS: Okay, thank you very much and I'm going to turn it back over to Chair Joseph and my colleagues for further questions. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Speaker. One of the questions I have for you is what programs or categories of funding are exempt from being cut? What are you -- what is exempt from being cut in this?

LINDSEY OATES: So uhm, thank you Chair Joseph. I think that in general, you know as we often in my time as the CFO, we've had to make hard choices about our budget, particularly during the pandemic, I think we all know the Fiscal crisis that we faced. It is absolutely critical that we maintain legally mandated services for our students. For special ed students,

for English Language Learners. It's important that we continue to invest in students in temporary housing and other special ed populations. Those are not optional, and we continue to maintain investments in those legally mandated services.

We always prioritize looking at our central budget. The FY23 Adopted Budget includes a 15 percent reduction to central administrative budget that DOE including the elimination of 280 positions.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Uhm, we know that for example, that the Council funded a lot of the student STH coordinators. I know in the Federal Stimulus, there was funds designated just to support student on temporary housing. How is that being used? Can you please break it down?

LINDSEY OATES: Yeah, so we are continuing to invest in expanding the community coordinator program. There were two pots of funding. I think there was a \$30 million grant and then another \$20 million I believe, don't quote me on those numbers. The \$30 million I think is going to mostly invest in expanding our community coordinator STH program and other investments in our students in temporary housing.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: We've been talking about FSF, that's one of the reasons why this budget cut is happening. What are you doing as the administration to make sure that the enrollment doesn't decline any further?

DAN WEISBERG: Yeah, I mean, this starts with one of the pillars in Chancellor Bank's vision, which is around engaging our families very intensively and authentically. So, you know, happy to talk more about our plans but you know what we -- to put it simply Chair Joseph, what we need to do is get very good at listening to families and their needs and students and their needs and make sure providing programming in schools that meet those at every level. Birth to already through 12th grade. And so, what you will see over the coming year and years is programming that is opening up. Programming that is expanded under Chancellor Banks scale sustain and restore pillar. That is directly based on what we are hearing on the ground from students, from parents, from families from community organizations and community leaders. If we do that and we have begun to do that with some of the programming we have put out there for example around serving our dyslexic

students, gifted and talented expansion, then I think we are going to win back the trust and ultimately, we're going to win back the students.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: But the families are screaming and yelling right now. Are you listening to them?

DAN WEISBERG: We are listening to them including till very late last night and you know again, what I would say Chair, uhm, what I would say is that you know, we're not claiming that this is a good thing. That some schools are seeing their enrollment decline and their budgets decline. We're not saying that's a good thing, we're just dealing with the reality and how do we take the funds that we have and use them in the best possible way to serve as many kids focusing on chronically underserved kids as we can?

So, we hear them. We are talking to them. We will be able to again mitigate and cushion some of what they're seeing right now but we just don't have the ability to avoid reality.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you for saying that. Uhm, some of the — how does this administration— they — we, we talk about uhm, we want to make sure this is the best public-school system in the country, and

this is the largest and I've taught in it for 22 years. But we're still having the same conversations when it was an educator class size.

Funding inequitable for the school systems. How do you change that to make sure parents want to come back? You have to offer the best, a world class public education despite where the school is, where they are located and who's coming into that building to make sure that they want to come back. So, we're not- I'm not seeing - other schools, they promote themselves. I don't see DOE doing that in order to bring students back in 120,000 that left, because they're not getting what they want. What do you plan on doing to bring these parents back?

DAN WEISBERG: Well, I'm going to do a poor job Chair right now trying to channel Chancellor Banks, who is you know much more compelling in talking about this but as you know, as a veteran who I respect very, very much of the classroom. As many of you and we have other veterans of classrooms here on the Committee. There are great things going on every day. There are incredible programs everywhere you look in every neighborhood. Not just in some neighborhoods and that's one of the reasons why we

are out there in the schools all the time in every borough. We do a terrible job. I'll go even further; you were being diplomatic. We do a terrible job.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: I've said that before. I did say you were doing a terrible job in promoting public schools.

DAN WEISBERG: Thank you. Yes, yes, you were being 100 percent accurate in my view Chair Joseph. So, one of the things we're committed to do, this is real. This is not just a one and done. We have to. This is not a nice to have. We have to for a number of reasons, lift up and elevate those great things. Those great programs that are going on and that does a couple of things. As you say Chair, it helps to -- for those parents and we got a lot of those parents out there who were deciding, where do I send my four-year-old next year and my three-year-old next year? Do I trust my child? My most precious thing in my life to the New York City public schools?

They need to hear that there are great educators, great things going on. The educators themselves also need to hear that we value them. We so appreciate the work they are doing every day and so, stay tuned.

We're going to be saying a lot more of that in lots of different ways to make sure we're communicating that every day.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. I look forward to seeing what you will deliver on that front.

Uhm, as you know right now, many teachers are being excessed in upcoming school year. Do you think excessing teachers right now is in the best interest of our students and the future of our city?

DAN WEISBERG: In a word, no. We don't want to see teachers excessed. This is an issue of limited funds and so, this happens every year. It's not -- again, it's not a good thing. We would like every teacher and beyond that. Guidance counselors, social worker, etc., school aid to be able to continue to work, both where they develop the relationships and also, where they want to work.

I mean sometimes they want to change schools, which is great. They ought to be able to do that. We simply don't have the funds to say to every single staff person, stay where there isn't the need instead of going to somewhere where there is the need. And so, we have schools that are hiring. We're going to end up hiring thousand -- I don't know how many

because we still you know have to let the dust settle. We're going to end up hiring thousands of teachers and a lot of those teachers are going to come from other schools.

If we could, if we could — if we could have our ideal, we would allow every teacher to stay where they are if they want to stay where they are. We're not in the ideal. We cannot, we cannot fund — we don't have the new funds to allow every teacher who right now looks like they're going to be excessed to stay where they are. I just will say one potential somewhat silver lining, every year this happens. It will happen this year. Some excess teachers end up staying in their school because somebody retires because a budget adjustment is made by Lindsey's office.

So, some of the teachers who — look I wish they weren't dealing with this, but they got to let them stay in their excess, will end up in September being back in their same school.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Previous Administration's ATR's, which is Absent Teacher Reserve, were allowed to stay in their building and was not on the school

budget but was paid through central. Why isn't that
applying today?

LINDSEY OATES: Thank you Chair for this
question. So, in the prior administration, we
actually eliminated the central budget associated
with the Absent Teacher Reserve. It was \$100 million
in reductions that were taken in the baseline budget
continuing savings over the last several years.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: I'm going to allow my
Council Member Brewer to ask some questions and I'll
come back.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you very much.
Something where it says in your page 6, it says, when
you list a stimulus plan investing in key programs.
It says all other \$21 million. What's that for?

LINDSEY OATES: Thank you for asking that
questions Council Member.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: I don't like units of
appropriation that are too big. This is too big.

LINDSEY OATES: Yes ma'am. It is restorative
justice. Our restorative justice programming. It is
other investments that we have made across our
budgets.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Like what? Because I want
to find 200— I bet if I spent some time on this 1.7,
I could find \$215 million in here.

LINDSEY OATES: So, in addition to the
restorative justice expansion, which I believe is
something like \$9 million, maybe \$12 million, we have
things like MOU's, Memorandums of Understanding with
CUNY to provide college access programming, as well
as investments in accessibility improvements in our
school buildings.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay, so can you break that
down for us in the picture?

LINDSEY OATES: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Because what's interesting
to me, it says, you got to duplicate it. Because I
looked at the Mayor and Chancellor priorities and
it's 132 here, which makes sense and my math isn't
great, but I can add. So, if it adds up — in the
next page seven, it adds up to about \$132 million but
it's also listed there as violence interrupter etc.

It seems to me like the duplication of \$9 million
and you've just said it's also included in the \$21
million.

LINDSEY OATES: The \$132 million that is listed, one, two, three, four lines down, is part of that \$1.7 billion. On the second slide, we're just outlining.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: No, I added it up. It did add up.

LINDSEY OATES: Yes, thank you.

DAN WEISBERG: And I see Chair — I'm sorry to cut in Lindsey but I see your confusion and we probably should have been more specific. The \$9 million that's on Page 7 for CBO provider violence interruption activities. That's actually different programming from Restorative Justice, which is more about training for restorative justice.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: I know what they both are. I'm quite familiar with both programs. Sometimes there could be an overlap. We need to find \$215 million okay. That's what we need in order to solve at least some of our problems, and I can't believe that in this budget as somebody said, it's a rounding error out of \$30 billion. You've got to find 215.

Now, secondly, the \$160 million that you mentioned, nobody seems to know where — which schools are going to get that money. Do you know?

3 LINDSEY OATES: The schools that are losing
4 enrollment, are receiving the Federal Stimulus
5 Funding as a hold harmless against approximately –

6 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: So, every school that's
7 losing enrollment is going to get some of that money?
8 You have enough to go around? So, all of – because
9 every one of my schools is losing enrollment.

10 LINDSEY OATES: Yes.

11 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: So, they're all going to get
12 money?

13 LINDSEY OATES: Yes.

14 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: And so, how are you going to
15 determine that before September because this is what
16 my understanding is. The schools are being told,
17 "whatever you say" after talking to like ten
18 principals. They are all panicked. I've been around
19 a long time. I haven't heard this kind of pandemic
20 before. I know you say this has happened before, but
21 it hasn't.

22 And the other problem is that, when you fight; I
23 know there's a term for this, to keep the school – to
24 keep the teacher, you don't actually know and there
25 are teachers here that know better than I do, until
September, whether or not that teacher is actually

going to be in the classroom. So, as we speak, we've got pandemic fright, everywhere, right? Parents, families, we know that.

So, if you keep saying uhm, don't worry your teacher will be there, which nobody believes. Don't worry, we won't have to come by in your classrooms, which is everybody is being told now is going to happen. I don't know what's going on in Albany but -- and if you are also told, "well, I'm sorry, we can't do the Social Worker." I know every school is supposed to have a Social Worker. Mark Treyger and I worked on that for years. They don't all have Social Workers because they have other priorities. It's a mess and it has not been like this in the past.

So, what I'm saying is, you got to find \$250 million. We'd be glad to go line by line. There are some brilliant people here. We could go line by line and find that. Now, in this report. Somebody got a hold of this report, as you probably know. And it says, this is a DOE report. The DOE has more than \$1.1 billion of unused prior year accruals currently open. And basically, please cancel; this is from DOE to the principals, any encumbrances, and pre-encumbrances you no longer need. These are real

dollars that could be used for other purposes. Why
do we not have \$1.1 billion?

LINDSEY OATES: So, the document that you're
referencing is an internal training document that we
used earlier this week. The \$1.1 billion in accruals
is not unspent funding. It represents planned for
but not yet liquidated. So, not yet paid funding for
services and goods. Accrual accounting is how the
city budgets, as you well know.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: I know. I know.

LINDSEY OATES: And we have to set up accruals
for Comptroller directives. That is the city's best
practice. Payments are accrued when invoices have
not yet been received from a vendor which require an
issue of payment. So, essentially, this is a
technical budgeting activity that we do pursuant to
the city's Comptroller directive to make sure that we
use for example Fiscal Year '22 funding to pay for
Fiscal Year '22 goods and services. Things are still
getting delivered. Services are still being received
and we'll get those invoices from vendors over the
next couple of months.

In order to make sure that we use the right
year's funding to pay for those bills, and examples

of these things are early childhood payments for our community-based organizations, community schools, school maintenance and repair, Charter cases, devices so on. We make sure that we strategically set up this funding as an accrual to make sure that we can pay those bills when the invoices are coming in.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay, but it's still very strange to have it worded like this and going out and of course, you can say all of that and I appreciate that, and I know you're a professional, but I still can't believe that some of that couldn't be paired down so that we can find the magic number that I'm trying very hard to find.

The other question I have is and this is somewhat relevant. I don't know if it's exactly a budget issue but how many teachers picking up on what the Speaker asked are unvaccinated. And so, therefore, we're not able to return to schools. The principals have no idea. I know principals who have such teachers. The teachers are on their budgets, but nobody has told them, are they coming back? Are they not coming back? Are they going off my budget? Are they staying on my budget? How many teachers are in that situation?

DAN WEISBERG: I don't have that number right here Chair, but we have it. I will get that to you. I believe it's several hundred and I also have talked to principals in that situation, and we know it's an issue. This is something that was agree to. There were agreements around how unvaccinated teachers would be treated during the last administration and I know that's still a question mark at school. So, we'll get you that exact number.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Do you know? Like next year? Two years from now? Three years from now?

DAN WEISBERG: I do not. I think there still -- I believe there still negotiating that has to happen about the terms and conditions of that particular group, but I would be happy to get you both the number and the status.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay, and then the other thing is, I do want to take the UFT because they did give us the listing of the schools and the percentages of cuts. Do you have such a listing that you could provide to the City Council? Because we have it for every single school. Thank you UFT but nothing from the Department of Education.

You know the district, the code, the name of the school, the obviously Fair Student Funding, the difference and the budget cut if there is one. How — do you have such a — why are you not sharing that with the City Council or the public?

LINDSEY OATES: It's publicly available on our website. We're happy to be able to —

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: I looked on your website, it's not quite in this more specific information. On a spreadsheet just like the UFT had done. It's not as easily understood.

LINDSEY OATES: Understood. I also just would flag that the UFT analysis doesn't include the hold harmless that were allocated to mitigate those reductions. So, those numbers are not what we would consider the correct reduction.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Oh, so you're going to get us a correct and a spreadsheet in a similar fashion?

LINDSEY OATES: We can certainly provide you with additional information.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay. Those are all my questions for now, but I'd love to come back later if possible. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Chair. Quick question, uhm, with all this reduction, we talked about class size. How about class size ballooning up with all these reductions? Less teachers in the buildings? How will that —

DAN WEISBERG: Uhm, yeah thank you for the question, Chair and look, you know we want to do everything we can to keep class sizes as low as possible. You know the good news just as context is — class sizes have been coming down quite a bit by about 6.5 percent last year. The simple math is, we have about 120,000 fewer students over the last five years. We actually have slightly more teachers this past year.

So, that's a good thing. We want to try to maintain that as much as possible. As I sit here today, I can't tell you exactly what will happen with class sizes this next year but it's, it's obviously something that uhm, that we're always going to focus on to try to do what we can to keep the classes as small as possible, particularly with respect to underserved kids. But it is — I will tell you, compared to when I went to school, class sizes are much, much lower than it used to be.

Now, if you have a child in a classroom that is oversized, that's no comfort. We want to continue to both in a capital program, in a human capital program to keep the class size as low as possible but we can only do that within the budget that we have.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. We'll come back with that. I'd like to invite Council Member Cabán for your question please.

COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Thank you. Thank you Chairs. I appreciate this hearing today and I'm sorry, you said question. Do we have a three- or five-minute time? I'm just trying to get a sense of what kind of time I have.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, Council Member, Council Member questions are five minutes.

COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Okay great, thank you. Uhm, so I just want to start with a couple of numbers questions. What is the current ratio of social workers to students in New York City public schools?

DAN WEISBERG: I don't have that here, but we will certainly get that for you.

COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Okay. What's the ratio of guidance counselors to students in New York City public schools?

DAN WEISBERG: We'll get that for you as well. I
don't have that number right here.

COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Do you have a -- even
though you can't give an estimate?

LINDSEY OATES: We don't. I think we'll come
back to you with additional information about the
exact ratios. We don't want to share incorrect
information. I will say that the FY23 Adopted budget
uhm, that you all approved does maintain the
investments and the expansions that the prior Council
made in expanding at former Council Member Treyger's
leadership, the growth in mental health providers in
our school communities.

COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Well, I look forward to
hearing the exact numbers on what those ratios are.
Last year, the DOE received \$12 million for
restorative justice for FY22, as my understanding and
then \$14.8 million for FY23. What's been done to
expand restorative justice in the schools and how is
DOE going to continue to prioritize support in
schools and create positive school climates in this
such budget cuts?

LINDSEY OATES: The FY23 Adopted Budget continues
the investments made in the Restorative Justice

program to expand universal access to restorative justice programming across school communities. Some of this funding is directly allocated to schools to support this activity that will continue, I believe this upcoming school year.

In addition, at the Chancellor's leadership, we are investing I believe \$9 million in the violence interruption services provided by community-based organizations.

COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: And the funding for school police is a path from the DOE's budget to the NYPD to ensure any money spent on school policing takes funds directly from the DOE's budget and gives it to policing. So, how do you justify filling vacant school cop positions while cutting funding for pedagogical staff and just anecdotally for example, uhm, you know I have had and I'm sure every member has [INAUDIBLE 1:19:14] but I've heard directly from school principals and teachers who have been excessed that special ed stuff has been lost, arts teachers, gym teachers, music teachers, in addition to additional programming being lost.

LINDSEY OATES: Thank you for that question, Council Member. The Department of Education has no

control over the school safety agent staffing, hiring decisions or budget. Those are made by the New York City Police Department.

COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Thank you and again, I would really love follow-up on just the basic numbers of current ratios of supportive staff in our schools for students.

DAN WEISBERG: Thank you Council Member. We'll get you that right away.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Council Member. Next, Council Member Sanchez.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time will begin.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: So, Chair Joseph, this is Malcom. It looks like Council Member Sanchez; we lost her audio. So, let's go to the next Council Member and then we will circle back to Council Member Sanchez.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Council Member Restler.

COUNCIL MEMBER RESTER: Thank you Madam Chairs and to the Speaker. I am red hot mad about these cuts. This is a return to the Bloomberg era when we are flushed with resources and yet, you are all insisting on cuts that are absolutely unnecessary. There were record investments in the city budget and

the state budget to support the Department of Education and yet, you were insisting on cuts where we can least afford them. This budget passed with the implicit understanding that we would continue working together to address this issue. To rectify these cuts to our local schools. But as we look closer at the DOE budget and what you all are imposing as the direct cuts that you are imposing on our schools; it is far worse than I had anticipated. I raised these issues through the budget hearings. I raised these issues in meetings with the Chancellor and I am absolutely livid at the extent of the cuts that we are experiencing. Do you know how many schools in New York City are experiencing cuts in the upcoming school year?

LINDSEY OATES: So —

COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: How many schools?

LINDSEY OATES: So, Council Member, I would respectfully disagree with you about the return to a Bloomberg era. I think as you know in the Bloomberg era, we were not at 100 percent funding levels.

COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I really appreciate Lindsey. You are a great — it's just a simple question.

LINDSEY OATES: Which is a great victory that the Council has actually continued to invest in, and we appreciate the Council's leadership in continuing to maintain --

COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: It's 1,182. 1,182 schools.

LINDSEY OATES: I am aware of the enrollments loss --

COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Across the city are experiencing cuts and those cuts are traumatic. If you want to go up to Council Member Avilés's district in Sunset Park, \$22 million. Council Member Brannan's district in Bay Ridge \$21 million. Council Member Salamanca's district in the South Bronx \$20 million. Council Member Stevens district \$19 million. Council Member Feliz's district \$18 million. Just those five districts, that's \$100 million loss to our schools. These are some of the poorest communities in New York City and we are starving them of resources when we can least afford it.

You all said that and -- you all said that these were vacant positions that were not going to be replaced. That was disingenuous. Talk to the

families at PS37 who are losing art teachers, who are seeing larger class sizes, who are absolutely struggling. Talk to the families at PS54 that are losing their bilingual program. Talk to the families at PS261, one of the most sought-after public schools in all of Brooklyn that's experiencing a 16 percent cut. These cuts are not flesh wounds. These are cutting to the bone at schools where we can least afford it. These are our most vital public institutions, and these cuts are having dramatic impacts right now.

Making adjustments in November has no bearing. It makes no difference to these schools. They will have already excessed all of these teachers. They will have already implemented these significant draconian cuts.

Lastly, I want to ask you about the cuts in per people spending, which you all insisted even again in this presentation that we are continuing to increase but I read about in the New York post that we are now experiencing a decline in per people spending. Is that accurate?

LINDSEY OATES: So, Council Member, the New York Post article is referring to a publicly posted

document on our website that describes the
implementation of the Fair Student Funding formula as
it is currently designed.

COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: So, without any
reduction in federal funding of putting that all
aside, you all are reducing the per people spending
that's going out to each of our schools anyway which
is contrary to what has been stated at hearing after
hearing throughout this budget process and throughout
the public statements by the DOE, correct?

LINDSEY OATES: Uh, no, I would respectfully
disagree. We are making an adjustment based on the
decline and the year over year average teacher's
salary. This is how the Fair Student Funding formula
was designed 15 years ago. It is how we have
implemented. It is how the department has
implemented the Fair Student Formula for the last 15
years. And it is something that the upcoming Fair
Student Funding Working Group is welcome to discuss
and make recommendations.

COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: We look forward to
working with you on that. I just, I have to say,
when you add up these cuts across these 1182 schools,
just at the schools that are losing money. We're

1 talking about in the range of \$440, \$450 million
2 dollars in cuts. Significantly more than what the
3 DOE and the Mayor have been trying to say.
4

5 These are dramatic draconian, shameful,
6 disgraceful cuts and it's time for the Department of
7 Education to look at the \$1.1 billion in
8 underspending, the \$1.5 billion in reserves, the \$8
9 billion in Rainy Day Fund and across the significant
10 bloat in the DOE budget to fix the darn problem. We
11 need results now. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Council Member
13 Restler. Council Member Hanif.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Thank you. I'm just going
15 to dive right in. So, New York City receives \$7.5
16 billion in Federal Aid from CRRSA and ARP. Uhm, and
17 in the last administration, our former Mayor
18 suggested the aid be spent over several years. Of
19 the \$7.5 billion that we received, how much has been
20 spent from FY 2020 to 2021?

21 LINDSEY OATES: So, a little over \$3 billion or
22 about a little over 40 percent of the total funds
23 have been liquidated to date, liquidated spent to
24 date. Obviously, we're continuing to spend this
25

funding this fiscal year and will over the next two
fiscal years.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: So, \$3 billion, then how
much is remaining?

LINDSEY OATES: So, \$3 billion out of the 7.7
base, so a little over \$3 billion, \$3.5 billion.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Why is the DOE budget
unchanged or growing, whereas schools are going to
lose over \$1 billion?

LINDSEY OATES: Can you repeat the question
Council Member.

DAN WEISBERG: I'm sorry Council Member; yeah,
I'm not sure I understand.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Why is the DOE budget
unchanged or growing?

LINDSEY OATES: The Department of Education's
budget is changing for a variety of reasons. Uhm, we
are of course losing some of our Federal Stimulus
funding year over year. We are increasing State Aid,
which we're investing in the Fair Student Funding
formula to ensure that everyone, all students can
maintain the 100 percent Fair Student Funding level
and the City Tax Levy increase is going to fund
planned expenses in Fiscal Year '23 to match, to

ensure that Fiscal Year '23's budget matches Fiscal Year '22's expenses across a variety of different areas.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: And then you mentioned that uhm, you're not seeing unusual numbers in terms of an increase of teachers being excessed. Uhm, how is the city going to save money by moving teachers from schools to the teacher reserves?

DAN WEISBERG: That's a great question Council Member, thank you for asking it. These teachers who are being excessed will end up in funded vacancies elsewhere. So, again, you know, I don't have the exact number, but we will end up with several thousand teacher vacancies. And so, the teachers who are excessed will apply for jobs in the open market system. They will interview, they will get selected or if necessary, they will end up getting placed into those funded vacancies, so they will not be on the central payroll. They will actually be on school payrolls in funded vacancies at the school level.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: So, could you explain why you're unable to have teachers who are at risk of being excessed, not remain in their current schools?

3 DAN WEISBERG: Tell me if I'm getting your
4 question correctly. I want to make sure I'm
5 responsive. If you have a school that has lost
6 enrollment and so, is now funded for fewer teachers
7 and you were to keep the same number of teachers,
8 even though they are funded for fewer teachers, you
9 would need to find additional funds for that
10 somewhere and we don't have the funding for that, so
11 that would have to come -

12 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: How much is that funding?

13 DAN WEISBERG: For the excess teachers?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Correct.

15 DAN WEISBERG: First of all, we'd have to see how
16 many excess teachers there end up being but - and so,
17 I don't have an exact number for you but that could
18 be you know somewhere in the neighborhood of \$100
19 million.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: And at this time, is the
21 DOE able to commit to ensuring that no teacher is
22 excessed and sent to the ATR pool?

23 DAN WEISBERG: Uhm, we don't have an ATR pool as
24 Lindsey said. We don't have a funded, we don't have
25 funding for any pool with ATR's in it as we did in
the past. So, they will have to go into funded

vacancies. They will go where they are needed, where the students need them for sure.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: And do you agree that teachers being excessed in this moment, is absolutely unjustifiable?

DAN WEISBERG: It's justifiable Council Member, only in a world of scarce resources. So, it's not desirable. I would totally agree that it's not desirable. It's unfortunately how we have to manage the budget that we do have based on the adopted budget.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: And then, could you share, yesterday, I listened in on the PEP meeting and then also it was shared earlier that the Taskforce or the group is getting onboarded around studying the FSF formula. Council you share what the timeline of that work looks like and other information that you could provide to us?

DAN WEISBERG: Absolutely. So, we begun talking to our panel for education policy members about the working group. We have talked to uhm experts who can provide a financial analysis.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: What's the timeline?

3 DAN WEISBERG: We hope to have that working
4 group, a plan for that working group in the next two
5 to three weeks.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: And is that public
7 information?

8 DAN WEISBERG: No, it's developing right now but
9 we will make it public. We want to make this as
10 transparent as possible from the meetings themselves
11 until the recommendations. We want them to be
12 released to the public as soon as they exist.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you so much Council
15 Member. Council Member Ayala.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Thank you Madam Chair.
17 Thank you all. My question is — I have a few
18 questions, but I just want to understand. Uhm, I
19 mean obviously we all knew that stimulus funding
20 would only last us for so long. What level of
21 preparation did the DOE put in place to prepare these
22 schools for such cuts and when did those
23 conversations begin?

24 LINDSEY OATES: Uhm, thank you for the question
25 and I just want to correct, I believe I shared the
wrong number with you before. I apologize. So, we

1 have about \$4.5 billion in unspent stimulus funding
2 at this point and again, we are continuing to spend
3 that funding so apologies, I gave you the wrong
4 number. I wanted to correct the record.
5

6 We are continuing – so, in the start of the – so,
7 uhm, so we received the Federal Stimulus Funding in
8 three waves. There were three different federal
9 packages that we received for stimulus funding. The
10 two that we are talking about, most commonly are what
11 we refer to ESSER and ARPA. Uhm, the CARES funding,
12 which is the first package is long since gone. THE
13 ESSER and ARPA funding is meant to support
14 supplemental activities in schools. It's meant to
15 support learning loss. It's meant to support
16 investments in mental health services, community
17 school programs, etc.

18 There are federal rules and regs around how we
19 can spend that funding. We worked, I worked very
20 hard on scheduling and setting up the initial
21 stimulus budget when that funding first came in and
22 we were thrilled to receive that funding. I know
23 many of you remember the deep fiscal cliff that we
24 were all facing if that funding did not come in. We
25 were hugely and are continuing to be incredibly

grateful for those billions of dollars of investments made in our schools. It has made a tremendous difference as you all know in school communities, and it will continue to do over the next couple of years and we would urge the federal government to continue to make these investments in public education across the country and I'm sure you would all join us in that.

One of the things that we did to be strategic about the use of stimulus funding is frontload the money. We wanted to make sure that in Fiscal Year '22, this fiscal year that will end next week, that we were maximizing those resources. Schools were going to be back in person full-time. There was no hybrid option. We wanted to make sure that school communities that you know were coming back for the first time, we're going to benefit from that funding now.

COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: I'm sorry, I don't want to interrupt you but —

LINDSEY OATES: Yep, sorry, I'm going on.

COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: No, my time is very limited and I just, I want to know, the question is, we see — we know right that there's a student

1 enrollment issue. Enter a pandemic, we were already
2 in trouble. We are holding schools harmless because
3 we received a stimulus funding, which is temporary.
4 At what point in the game does the DOE sit down with
5 educators and say, "we're going to be in trouble in
6 two years. This is the plan. This is how we're
7 going to work our way around it."

8 Like, I don't, I haven't heard yet, what level of
9 engagement, I mean I'm hearing that as of February
10 there was some conversations. From February to
11 adoption, it's not a long time. I don't feel that
12 it's an appropriate enough amount of time to prepare
13 schools for such a cut. And I think that this is
14 what's led to so much you know confusion and chaos
15 and you know; people are freaking out because they
16 have no idea what's going on.

17 And listen, I have a child in public school. I
18 still have not received a letter. I know all of this
19 because by virtue of working in the City Council.
20 Most parents don't know what's going on. So, when
21 did, when did these conversations start? When did
22 you start planning to fall off the cliff? Because
23 you were going to fall off the cliff at some point.
24 So, when did that start happening?
25

LINDSEY OATES: So, during the months of May and June, we have met with every single CC in the City to discuss our stimulus budgets and to talk about what the budget will be next year and to remind people that this is temporary funding that will end.

COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Last year? This happened last year?

LINDSEY OATES: No, it has happened this May and this June.

COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Why did it take so long?

LINDSEY OATES: We did five borough townhalls last spring. This is a continuation of public engagement. We did engagement last school year, and this was the engagement that we've done this school year.

COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Okay, and you mentioned that there was a possibility that schools could submit an appeal. Could you tell us what the number of appeals is to date and what does the appeal process actually look like?

LINDSEY OATES: So, as I said, school communities have the right to make a budget appeal. We haven't yet received any that I'm aware of from schools. Schools have until the end of this month to schedule

their budgets and then they will start to submit appeals and we will receive them throughout the month of July on a rolling basis and make decisions about allocating additional resources on a rolling basis during the month of July.

COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: And how were schools notified? Did they have an opportunity to appeal?

LINDSEY OATES: This is an annual process and the budget directors that work with schools on a daily basis are aware of this process and work with principals to submit those appeal requests.

COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Okay, now, do these cuts impact district 75 schools at all?

LINDSEY OATES: No.

COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: They don't, okay. I represent two boroughs. I have East Harlem in the South Bronx and in the South Bronx, I have huge retention issues. Does this impact your ability to retain teachers in communities like mine?

DAN WEISBERG: You know we; we have been fortunate, and the teacher attention has been quite high. So, teacher attrition has been running at about six percent.

COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: In the South Bronx?

DAN WEISBERG: That I'd have to look in that particular district. So, you know we certainly are watching that number very carefully.

COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Okay, I would love to know what that number is and finally, uhm, in your opinion, does the current Fair Student Funding Formula work? Does it still work?

DAN WEISBERG: I mean, as the Chancellor has said, no it can be improved, and I believe that. I believe that as well and I was around in 2007 when the original version was designed.

One thing I do want to say Council Member is that as much as the formula, I'm sure can be improved, and I think the working group will submit great recommendations that everybody will get to see and discuss including the Council. The Formula itself, doesn't add or subtract dollars to the pie.

So, you can change right. If all you do is change the formula, for example, to direct more funding to underserved students, you're going to be ending up with winners and losers. Some schools will be getting more. Some schools will be getting less. What we really need to do in connection with Fair Student Funding in my opinion, since you asked for my

opinion, is definitely improve the formula. At the same time, we are looking to the state and advocating with the state to support more dollars. So, then we're not just robbing Peter to pay Paul but we're actually better serving more kids who deserve it.

COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Follow you on that question. Uhm, there was a Taskforce formed prior and the report never came out. What are you going to do differently this time around when the Commission? Who's going to be on it? Are there going to be expert — will the Council also have a voice in who we add in this taskforce?

DAN WEISBERG: So, oh my gosh, where do I start Chair Joseph? No, I can't speak to why that report was never released. I'm just going to leave that to the side. In this case, Mr. Treyger may have something to say on that. The Sergeant at Arms may need to head over there but, but uhm, certainly. We want this to be transparent. The Council absolutely including the Chair of the Ed Committee, we want to have input into who serves on the Committee. We want you to have insight into what's happening and look, our view and this is not — we don't want this

to be a DOE driven Committee. This is a committee that should have parents. In my view, it should have students. It should have financial experts. It should have advocates. It should have elected officials and it really should be about okay, let's look at different models and what happens when we run different models. Let's get really good independent views of how it would affect students and families and then let's make real recommendations for how this can be changed right away before next school year.

So, just, I probably should have said this in answer to a previous question, the timing on this, these recommendations really have to be done by around November. So, this is not, this is not something that you know should take, can take a year or something like that and the Chancellor has been very clear with me and with us, we've got to get this thing going. It's got to be focused on making real practical recommendations.

So, would love to follow-up and get your views and the views of all of your colleagues about that working group.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Absolutely, uhm, earlier you spoke; I want to go back a question for a minute.

Earlier you spoke about the appeals. Can you explain what the process is like? How long does it take and when does the fund hit the schools?

LINDSEY OATES: Sure, uhm, thank you for the opportunity to explain this process. So, as I mentioned, school budgets, we've asked principals to have their school budgets programmed by the end of this month. At any time, between now and the end of July, we expect that schools will start to submit appeals. They come to us on a rolling basis, and they come to us through their field offices, through their budget directors, and we typically allocate funding to schools to support staffing needs first. We will certainly do that this summer. That would allow schools to perhaps resend some of the excessing letters that have been made. And that will absolutely continue to prioritized first. We allocate funding on a rolling basis, so that will happen starting in July.

We try to make sure that the allocations to schools are done -- or the additional allocations to school are done before open market closes, which is the end of sort of the hiring season and that is I believe closing the first week of August and at that

point, we'll be you know months before the school year starts, so that schools can finalize their budgets and be ready for the first day of school.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Uhm, Council Member Sanchez.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: I'm just saying this one question because the principals tell me that in the past, maybe not now, the appeals process does not end until mid-September. Has that been true in the past and will it change if it has been?

Because that doesn't help you plan for September opening.

LINDSEY OATES: Yes, that timeline certainly doesn't. It has been my experience that the timeline is what I just mentioned. That we work hard to ensure that this is done well before the start of school. A school has the opportunity to continue to request funding if there are unexpected changes in their school, once school opens and if that is true, and that there are changing in September, we will continue to address and take appeals directly from schools if conditions happen in September.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: I'm telling you, I know you're working - I'm letting you know, three

principals told me today that in the past, it's
always been mid-September before the appeals were
concluded, so.

LINDSEY OATES: That has not been my experience,
but I appreciate the feedback.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Council Member Sanchez.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time will begin.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Sanchez, you
should have the request -- there we go, you're all
set.

COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you. Thank you so
much to the speaker and to the Chairs Rita Joseph and
Gale Brewer and thank you for accommodating me in
this hearing.

So, thank you Deputy Chancellor and thank you for
the answers but just to first piggyback on the last,
the very last question, wouldn't you agree that's
it's extremely destabilizing for schools not to know
who they are going to be hiring or to have this. I
spoke with principals today who have told me that
they always see a jump in enrollment numbers come
September. And so, you know they have to scramble
last minute, and they will certainly have to scramble
last minute this year given the teachers that are

being excessed to make ends meet and to hire.

Wouldn't you say that this is destabilizing for our students and for these schools?

DAN WEISBERG: I mean certainly again, thank you very much for the question, Council Member.

Obviously, not ideal to have to scramble to hire somebody in September. We actually want our schools to be able to hire as soon as possible. One of the reasons we felt a ton of urgency, I would just say parenthetically to get school budgets out, is because of that. Is because we want the hiring process to take place as soon as possible, so the best candidates can be recruited and selected.

So, we don't want that ideally to happen in September. One process point that I don't think has come up yet Council Member Sanchez, just to say, the enrollment projections, we do the best we can. We have central folks who have done this for a long time. They crunch the data. They don't just throw that in the principals lap.

In the Spring, Lindsey probably knows better than I do when that happens but early in the Spring, enrollment we'll work with the principal and say look, here is where we see the trends are. Here is

where we think your school is going to end up in September and very often, the principal says, hey, the last couple of years just as you said Council Member, we've had an influx of students who registered early in September, sometimes even later than that.

So, can you adjust it and there's back and forth. Now, having said that, there's still going to be cases and you know on one level, I hope there's a lot of these cases, where there are students that we don't anticipate who do show up and enroll in September.

If that is the case, we will absolutely provide funding. OMB will provide funding to make sure that those students get the services that they need. Not ideal, I would rather that happen in June but sometimes that is what happens, it happens in September.

COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you Deputy Chancellor and just for the record, that is not -- I mean, that sounds great but that does not sound like what I'm hearing from my principals. It sounds like these numbers are handed down and they don't have a

lot of say and you know, there are cultural differences between communities.

I know half of my community, well, maybe not half, but a significant proportion of folks in my community you know send their kids abroad. Send their kids back to the home island from when they're not responsive. So, in any case, just wanted to underscore that point and it's not ideal and I think we can do better.

DAN WEISBERG: Council Member, sorry to interject. Just on that point, I want to offer something, please let us -- oh sorry, go ahead. Sorry, go ahead.

COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Yeah, very limited amount of time and then you can answer however long.

DAN WEISBERG: Yes ma'am.

COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: The Chairs allow you to. So, I just want to close myself by echoing what you've already heard from so many colleagues. Our children just need more from our schools than ever, right. They've just been through so much. I visited schools in the last few weeks where you know, not only am I hearing about the challenges that our children are facing in terms of mental health and

1 coping and the loss and just how difficult everything
2 has been but their parents right. And the parents
3 like spilling that into the schools and so, many of
4 my principals and my teachers are counting on a
5 budget that was going to hold them harmless from
6 these cuts, so that they can hire you know more
7 social, emotional supports. Have more enrichment
8 programming. Have all of these things and instead,
9 they're being met with you know, you need to excess
10 teachers. You need to cut programs and I just want
11 to join all of my colleagues in saying, this is not
12 acceptable. This is not okay. We need to be there
13 for our kids. We're in the middle of a really
14 difficult recovery and we need DOE to be flexible to
15 let our schools remain whole, right?

17 Especially, I represent one of the lowest income
18 school districts, two of the lowest income school
19 districts in the city, Districts 9 and 10 and we just
20 need more. So, you can finish your thoughts, but you
21 know I just also would love to understand you know
22 previous administrations held schools harmless from
23 enrollment declines. Why the change for this
24 administration at this time?

DAN WEISBERG: Thank you Council Member. Just very quickly, if you have particular schools, feel free to contact me, that you think they are not being heard in that enrollment conversation. I'd be happy to make sure that we are talking to those principals and trying to resolve that and then, second, just to very quickly answer your question, it's just availability of diminishing availability of stimulus funds that dictates that we can't hold harmless the way schools were held harmless the last couple of years.

COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you. Thank you Chairs. Thank you, Deputy Chancellor.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Council Member Sanchez. Next, Council Member Gutierrez.

COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIERREZ: Thank you Chairs. Deputy Chancellor, I appreciate your response to Chair Joseph earlier, where you admitted that enrollment has been an issue and that the DOE has admittedly done a terrible job at solving for that.

Uhm, I do need to highlight that in gentrifying districts, in districts where Black and Brown families have been driven out of their homes in droves, this has been an issue for two decades.

District 14 in Williamsburg and Greenpoint. District 32 in Bushwick and now, the Queens side, the district 34 overlapping portion of school district 24, which I graduated from. Over populated but any of the schools that in my district are now facing under enrollment because gentrification and displacement is a very real thing. And it's not just exclusive to North Brooklyn, it's all over.

But there was no plan then. This was 20-years ago. What is the plan now? What is the actual plan? I don't have to tell you that what happens in these school buildings when they are under enrolled, the Black and Brown and immigrant families that stay, continue to be disproportionately impacted because now they are not even counted. So, what is the actual plan?

DAN WEISBERG: Yeah, and this is - I really appreciate the question and really agree 100 percent with the sentiments, this is why Chancellor Banks has been ringing the alarm bell on enrollment declines. It is because the impact of those declines as you said, Council Member Gutierrez is 100 percent correct, falls on the most underserved kids. That's what happened. When you have under enrolled schools,

they can't provide the full set of programming services, AP classes, what have you. That tends to fall on the most underserved kids. So, this is why we need to win back families.

Now, some of this, I'm going to be very honest, some of this, we at the Department of Education, New York City public schools can't control. You know, we don't control things like housing costs and so forth but there is part of it that we can control and there is a plan. And the plan, I would say the heart of the plan is, uhm, you know we have uh, you know Chancellor Banks asked each one of the 45 superintendents to reapply for their jobs. That is in part because it's a different job.

And so, the districts you mentioned, 14,32 -

COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIERREZ: 24.

DAN WEISBERG: 24. The superintendents, whether they are you know continuing in the job or they're new, they are going to be charged with doing what I talked about with Chair Joseph before. And that is, so the plan is, for them to get very close to those neighborhoods. Changing as they may be and figure out, what is the plan to provide the schools and the programs that are going to win back families.

And to some extent, if housing patterns have changed and what we have is under enrolled schools and there aren't the families that are there to fill all of the schools, figure out how to best serve all the kids. That might mean merging schools. In some cases, that might mean opening a new school to replace schools that are under enrolled. But those superintendents are going to be accountable for being very responsive to the need in those communities and first and foremost. Not last but first and foremost. Students of color, Black and Brown students. Students who have been marginalized chronically as you say over the last more than two decades in our system.

COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIERREZ: Thank you. Uhm, I just, I need to push back a little bit because I have seen first-hand in my school district, some of the solves that the principals and school communities have been scrambling to put together to do that, was utilizing this funding to hire for the first-time bilingual counselors, bilingual guidance counselors. Instituting their own versions of community school initiatives without any of the community school funding.

And, although the Council was able to restore some of those funds and I see in the budget, we're going to be able to expand it. They were not baselined; we will do the same dance again next year. So, I really need to hear buy in from the DOE that if what you're proposing is the actual solution, which is it sounds like it's a community school, that we are permanently investing in this model. It is the only way for communities like mine.

I have a couple more questions, I'll be fast. I wanted to ask about if the DOE has the disaggregated data for the use of federal funds in supporting immigrant students. Do you have, especially the newly arrived ones? We had a lot of newly arrived immigrants in my district. Well, District 32 specifically. Do you have that data of how that federal funding was used per newly arrived students?

LINDSEY OATES: We can provide that information.

COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIERREZ: Okay. My second question is, do you have a sense of how much of that recovery funding was used to support English Language Learners?

LINDSEY OATES: I don't have the exact dollar value. We can certainly provide that offline, but we

have prioritized English Language Learners and
invested in anything from libraries for schools in
home languages, as well as expansions and outreach to
communities.

COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIERREZ: Thank you and can I
just have one more question Chair.

I think she's fine. Uhm, regarding summer
learning, what percentage and this is I think every
member here is probably going to get calls if they
haven't already about how quickly these seats filled
up. Uhm, what we saw actually, you should be aware
that a lot of families that left were coming back
with the intention of enrolling their kids in summer
learning and then permanently enrolling them back for
the fall. So, that's a problem. They have nowhere
to put them. Can you share how many of those seats
were taken or are being filled, excuse me, by private
school students, Charter school students, low-income
students and temporary housing students, as well as
English Language Learners. It's open to everybody,
correct? Every single -

DAN WEISBERG: Summer Rising Council Member?

COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIERREZ: Yeah, hmm, hmm.

DAN WEISBERG: Yes, so yes, it is certainly open to everybody to enroll. I don't have that breakdown. You know, the final, final totals are still being worked out, but we can certainly give you whatever breakdown we have. Happy to provide that to you.

COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIERREZ: Thank you and my last statement, it's not so much a question, as I echo the sentiment of so many of my colleagues here and so many of the folks that are here in this room.

It's hard to continue to call yourself an advocate with the budget that we have here. It's impossible to do that and I think the DOE has an immense responsibility to make that right. A lot of us are taking a leap of faith with the DOE, with no real reason to.

In telling our constituents that there is a solve for this and what we are hearing today is that there isn't a solve for this. That this was money that they never should have had but imagine a world where schools had for the first time in history, have every single dollar that they need. And that is what we are continuing to deny our students. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Council Member. Council Member Lee.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Hi, thank you everyone.

4 Thank you Chairs and thank you so much Deputy
5 Chancellor for being here with us today and as a
6 public-school parent myself, as well as having one of
7 the most schools, public schools in my district, you
8 know this is a very important issue and I recently
9 had a meeting with the principals in my district.
10 You know we have these ongoing meetings and yes,
11 everyone's upset about the changes in the funding for
12 the next year, but I wanted to — I had four questions
13 that were focused on other issues where I think
14 perhaps maybe we can find savings or find other ways
15 but ultimately, I think the principals; at least that
16 I've spoken to are also focused on the quality of
17 education, the educational experience and a few of
18 them brought up the teacher's salary, average teacher
19 salary issue.

20 Because a lot of them have teachers that have
21 been there for ten plus years and you know, they feel
22 that uhm, you know, they're being unfairly punished
23 because of the fact that you know, they want to
24 retain teachers. They want to retain good teachers
25 and because they have higher average teachers'
salaries, they're already starting off at a worse

1 budget for their schools and so, I'm just trying to
2 figure out, like we all agree that schools should be
3 incentivized to retain experienced teachers but that
4 shouldn't come at the expense of the overall budget.
5

6 And so, I'm wondering if there's a way to help
7 schools retain experienced teachers without impacting
8 the rest of their budget. And are you open to
9 reconsidering the formula for paying the differential
10 out of the central budget, rather than the schools?
11 So, that was the first -

12 DAN WEISBERG: Again, that would be I mean, I
13 think that is really, Council Member Lee, I think
14 that's wrapped up in the Fair Student Funding Formula
15 Working Group question. That could well be one of
16 the recommendations. That would take new funding.
17 We'd have to figure out where that would come from in
18 order to kind of top up the budgets of schools that
19 tend to have more experienced teachers, but you know,
20 I totally understand that's an issue in some schools.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay, and then I think some
22 of my other colleagues hit up on this point about the
23 enrollment numbers because uhm, the rollout of the
24 admissions process for the upcoming school year, uhm,
25 you know it's been emphasized previously. The

current budget allocation for DOE is based on projected enrollment and we've been told that schools that see higher than expected enrollment in the fall, can expect to see their budgets increase as well.

However, the planning and budgeting process doesn't work that smoothly and principals need to hire staff, assign classrooms, figure out if they need more ICT teachers. Uhm, and so we've heard that the list notices for DOE were provided to principals just this week and the lists are shorter than usual with also longer waitlists regarding the schools actual capacity.

Uhm, and adopting a rolling admission process you know interferes with the plans to hire and for the principals. And so, can you commit to providing final enrollment numbers for principals? When can you sorry, commit to providing final enrollment numbers for principals so they know their actual budgets rather than projected because my understanding is that they are being asked to plan out the budget with the current enrollment numbers. Not including the waitlist. And so, can you allow principals to forecast enrollments based on their waitlist using some of the extra stimulus funds as

buffer? So, that rather than shortchanging schools over the summer, can we give principals a bit more leeway in the planning, knowing that they'll return you know - leeway in planning before the fall?

DAN WEISBERG: That's a - it's a great question and that's one of the kinds of uhm, steps that we took this year is to extend the waitlists for you know students who were applying to particular schools into mid-September. That was something we heard again and again from families, that the waitlist extended until after the beginning of the school year. Let me take that back. That's a really good point and see how we're dealing with enrollment projections based on that extended waitlist. It's an excellent point.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay, uhm, and then this has already been asked but just again for the record. Uhm, instead of compiling the teachers, is DOE, are you guys uhm, would you agree to maintain excess teachers within their schools until final enrollment and the budget allocations are made in November? Is that possible?

DAN WEISBERG: Again, the issue with that is that hiring is happening now. And so, if we were to

1
2 somehow lock in teachers and not have them apply and
3 get other jobs, then you know we're going to have
4 problems in the schools that do need to hire and
5 we're going to have problems for those teachers if it
6 turns out there isn't a spot for them.

7 Now, as Lindsey said, some of those excess
8 teachers will end up back in their schools for a
9 variety of reasons but it would be really infeasible
10 to just lock them in at this point.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay. And then my two final
12 points. One of them I won't repeat because it was
13 the same questions that Chair Brewer had asked about
14 the vaccine policy because I think principals are
15 just wondering what's going on if they can expect
16 teachers to come back because they are, you know,
17 they are still on the payroll.

18 And then just real quick about consultants for
19 the DOE. Because I know that for example, DOE
20 offered SERS, the Special Education Recovery Services
21 to Children. Uhm, and we have constituents telling
22 me that you know schools were not given information
23 or guidance on this and that there were no personnel
24 to operate the program. And so, I'm just wondering,
25 does DOE currently provide units of appropriation

that detail spending on consultants and how does that impact the budget?

LINDSEY OATES: Consultants are a very small portion of the overall Department of Education's budget. They are not singly isolated in one unit of appropriation.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay.

LINDSEY OATES: Perhaps, I may restate, spending on consultants exists across several units of appropriation. So, schools spend funding on consultants out of schools units of appropriation and then across other units of appropriation as well.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay and is there a way to separate that out or pull that out for consultants versus the actual DOE budget?

LINDSEY OATES: Yes, we could provide you with additional information on that.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Council Member. Council Member Krishnan, give me one second. I want to acknowledge Council Member Feliz, Council Member Yeger, Kalman Yeger, Council Member Stevens, Council Member Williams, and Council Member Narcisse. Go ahead Council Member.

COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Thank you so much
Speaker Adams, Chair Joseph and Chair Brewer for
today's crucial hearing. Let me ask you both, you
would agree that this issue effecting our schools is
an important issue, right?

DAN WEISBERG: By this issue, you mean?

COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: The issue of the \$215
million. The subject of our hearing today, you would
agree this is an important issue effecting our
schools, right?

DAN WEISBERG: The subject of this hearing is
definitely an important issue.

COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Okay, and you would
agree that this is an issue effecting many of our
schools throughout the city, right?

DAN WEISBERG: The school budgets effect every
school in our city.

COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: So, this is an issue
effecting, we can agree that this is an important
issue, a crucial issue, I would say effecting our
schools. It's an issue effecting many schools
throughout our city. My question to you is, where is
the Chancellor?

DAN WEISBERG: Where is the Chancellor?

3 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Where is the
4 Chancellor? Did he have a more important engagement
5 for our schools than this matter right now? Where is
6 the Chancellor of the Department of Education?

7 DAN WEISBERG: The Chancellor testified at least
8 two budget hearings -

9 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: That's not my question.

10 DAN WEISBERG: Excuse me. Excuse me if I could
11 be allowed to finish.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: No, no, I'm the one
13 asking the questions.

14 DAN WEISBERG: Yeah, and I'm the one answering
15 the questions.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: My question to you is,
17 where is the Chancellor for today's hearing?

18 DAN WEISBERG: Can I answer the question?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: I'm waiting for an
20 answer.

21 DAN WEISBERG: Well, maybe you'd allow me to
22 answer then, instead of talking over me.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: I'm asking the question
24 about today's hearing, not three months ago. Where
25 is the Chancellor of Education for today's hearing?

1 COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION JOINTLY WITH THE 115
2 COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

3 DAN WEISBERG: The Chancellor testified twice to
4 this body about the budget. The Chancellor came in
5 to a meeting Friday that was scheduled with about
6 hmm, 24-hours-notice.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Today? Where is the
8 Chancellor today?

9 DAN WEISBERG: That you were at Council Member
10 Krishnan.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: That's right. I'm
12 asking you where is the Chancellor today?

13 DAN WEISBERG: These questions today about
14 technical budget issues are better addressed by
15 myself.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Oh, I see.

17 DAN WEISBERG: And the CFO.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Technical budget
19 issues. That's an interesting phrase for \$215
20 million. And another phrase you used about scarce
21 resources. Let's talk about the scarce resources of
22 Department of Education. \$37.6 billion budget right,
23 to the Department of Education? Is that correct?

24 LINDSEY OATES: That is correct.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Okay, what is the size
of the city budget? \$100 billion give or take right?

LINDSEY OATES: I believe so, yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Okay, so the Department
of Education budget is one-third of entire New York
City's Budget, correct? Give or take.

LINDSEY OATES: I believe that math is correct
sir.

COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Okay, and the city
funding that's being increased for this Department of
Education budget is about \$700 million give or take,
right?

LINDSEY OATES: That is correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: And the hole that we're
talking about is \$215 million, right?

LINDSEY OATES: That is correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Do you know what
percentage \$215 million is of the entire Department
of Education Budget?

LINDSEY OATES: Not —

COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: I'll tell you, it's
less than one percent of the entire Department of
Education Budget. Less than one percent of the
entire Department of Education Budget is the amount
that we're talking about today. And this agency is
testifying that because of scarce resources in a

\$37.6 billion budget, you cannot find a way to fill less than one percent of this agency budget.

Now, looking at this budget, I see that the Department of Education has adjusted its headcount at DOE Central based on actual numbers over the course of the pandemic in terms of headcount. Isn't it a fact that there are other line items in this DOE budget where the Department of Education has underspent compared to last year?

LINDSEY OATES: Fiscal Year '23 has not yet begun.

COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Last year's budget compared to this year's budget, is it not a fact that there are line items in the DOE budget where this agency has underspent?

LINDSEY OATES: There are a variety of line items where there are ups and downs across the department. We are currently forecasting a slight deficit.

COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Yes or no.

LINDSEY OATES: For Fiscal Year '22.

COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Are there line items in the agency budget that have been underspent.

DAN WEISBERG: Your question is misleading.

COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: It's not a misleading question.

DAN WEISBERG: Yes, it is.

COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: It's very simple. There are — I'll answer the question. Yes, there are line items —

DAN WEISBERG: Go ahead, ask the questions and answer them. That's a good way to —

COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Let me finish. There are line items where the agency has underspent. And so, my question to you is, if you can right size the DOE headcount coming out of this pandemic, then why weren't these other line items in the DOE — Why can't those other line items in the agency budget be right sized into the rightsizing on the backs of our schools? You've right sized where there is underspending in the DOE budget. Move that extra money over to the schools. Why can't that be done in this year's budget?

DAN WEISBERG: We are projecting an overall deficit.

COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: And so, there's no capacity to move \$215 million around in a \$37.6 billion budget? That's your testimony today.

DAN WEISBERG: Where would you like to cut?

COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: That's a great question. Let me ask you this, would you be willing to provide a budget, a line by line, not just for the stimulus money, but a line-by-line budget of the Department of Education to this body? Because then I can tell you where to cut from it and so can Chair Brewer as well.

LINDSEY OATES: I believe Council Member, that was included in the Adopted Budget that you voted on.

COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: So, a line by line; not an overall number, a line by line - Do I have permission to finish Chair Joseph?

A line-by-line budget and breakdown of the Department of Education. If that exists and you're willing to provide it, would you be willing to have a third-party auditor come in and go line by line through that budget to see where there is underspending and where money could be moved.

LINDSEY OATES: That process exists on an annual basis as required by State Law.

COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: And you would be willing to subject the Department of Education to that audit process, to look at where we could move

\$215 million from within the agency in the current
budget of \$37.6 billion?

LINDSEY OATES: Again, per state law, an outside
auditor audits the Department of Education's budget
on an annual basis.

COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Hmm, hmm, would you be
willing to do it now for the \$215 million to see
where we could find it?

LINDSEY OATES: Again, that is happening annually
as required by State Law.

COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Uh, huh and have you
posed the question to that auditor of where the \$215
million could be moved from?

LINDSEY OATES: I'm not in the position to tell
auditors how to audit our budget.

COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Thank you. I'd like to
now go to the next question, which is about the
excesses.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Council Member, your time is
up.

COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Yes, can I ask one more
question Chair Joseph.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: I have to hold on to it in
my second round.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Okay, second round.
4 Thank you.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Yes, Council Member
6 Stevens.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: Good afternoon,
8 everyone. I just want to acknowledge that today is a
9 heavy day and the reason everyone is super passionate
10 because it's clear that we need to continue to be
11 fighting for our young people because not enough
12 people are. And so, with the decision from the
13 Supreme Court today and the decision from the Supreme
14 Court Yesterday. Our children need to be our first
15 priority and this Council believes in our children
16 and fighting for our children, which is why I think
17 we're all here and showing up.

18 So, I just wanted to make sure we acknowledge
19 that and acknowledge the heaviness of these last
20 couple of days. Uhm, so one of my questions and
21 bigger question is around enrollment has been
22 declining in schools for the last couple of years.
23 How have we been preparing for this? I know we keep
24 talking about the budget, but the issue is that we've
25 been losing young people to Charter schools. They've
been moving in all these things, and I think the DOE

has taken for granted that parents have other options.

So, what have you been doing to really prepare for this and to help schools with recruitment and retaining students because I think that's a key issue that no one is talking about. We have not been doing recruitment. We're not looking into families and having them stay here. So, what are you doing around preparing principals and educators around retention and recruiting students?

DAN WEISBERG: Thank you Council Member and I appreciate you talking about the heaviness of the day and the need to advocate for our children. We agree with you 100 percent. You are absolutely correct, that this enrollment decline was exacerbated during the pandemic but started well before the pandemic and you're also -- I can't speak to what happened before January but you're also correct that the department has not done a good job of equipping our school leaders, our superintendents, our school staff, to do exactly what you're talking about. Which is to recruit families, to retain families. Ultimately, you know that's less about marketing of course. I say this in part as a parent and more about you know

the proof in the pudding, which is making sure that you are committing in authentic ways to parents that you are going to provide a consistently great education and a consistently great environment for students. That's not something I will say Council Member that is part of the curriculum at teacher prep institutions. We have some folks on the Council that have been through that or even in principal prep.

So, we are going -- part of what we're planning over this summer is training for our superintendents and then starting with our principals about that. It starts, the heart of it is community engagement. The Chancellor talks about this all the time. He was a principal for 11 years. The job is not just within the four years -- four walls of your building. The job is going out to get to know that bodega owner, who may be spending more time with your kids than you are. The job is getting to know the police captain etc.

So, that's where it starts, is making sure that our school leaders are doing really good community engagement but that's about what you're offering to families.

COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: But I also think that it's a misstep and should have been part of this conversation long before because you said, for years we've been declining in enrollment. And so, it's really unfortunate that we're waiting until like Deputy Speaker said, we are falling off the cliff to say now, let's think about enrollment. We have to get to a place where we're walking and chewing gum at the same time. And not just saying, oh well, that's something that's happening but we'll just wait.

So, that's a real mis unfortunate step that you guys are taking and needs to be rectified immediately. Another question I have is, what is the anticipated impact on CBO's that has historically supplemented school-based services when schools can't?

So, have you guys even thought about what that looks like on CBO's that work in partnership with these schools?

DAN WEISBERG: I mean, uhm, certainly I mean this is one of the things for example with Summer Rising, there is a positive case, where we're actually providing additional funding for CBO's to engage with our students over the summer, which as many of you

1 have said is really, really important programming.
2 Particularly this summer as our kids are dealing with
3 everything they are dealing with.
4

5 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: Yeah, but Summer Rising
6 is one program I'm thinking about. Are you guys
7 thinking about how this is going to impact them as
8 well? Because CBO's consistently step up and fill
9 the gaps when you guys drop the ball. So, what does
10 that look like, and have you been working with them
11 and making sure that they're part of this plan moving
12 forward?

13 DAN WEISBERG: Yes, we have been working with
14 them at the DOE level Council Member and the Mayor
15 and his office have been working with CBO's on a
16 number of levels because, and I say this as somebody
17 who ran a nonprofit before I came back to the
18 Department of Education. So, CBO's are absolutely
19 vital. When I talk about community engagement, part
20 of that is through our community-based organizations.
21 So, we're working with them on operational issues to
22 be clear because there are operational issues.
23 Making sure, I'm going to be very honest here, making
24 sure they get paid when they're supposed to get paid.
25 That's been a challenge but that's something we're

going to work on and then then on the programmatic issues as well. We definitely are giving them a seat at the table.

COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: Thank you for that but I just also want to highlight that some of the things that I'm hearing even around Summer Rising, which you just brought up, that some of the schools are actually have more Charter school students than public school students right. So, we need to really be thinking about that, how we're making sure there's equity within our programs that we have and they're serving the students who are in these schools or who are in public school and not prioritizing Charter school students. Because I'm hearing from a number of providers that that is happening and taking place this summer. So, that is something else we need to be thinking about and rectifying as well. Thank you.

DAN WEISBERG: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Council Member. Council Member, Majority Whip Brooks-Powers.

MAJORITY WHIP BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you Madam Chairs. Uhm, I just want to get into the meat of this because I share the sentiments of my colleagues that spoke before. I'm having a hard time grappling

with the loss of funding in such a time as this when we know that before the Federal Stimulus money came in, our schools were not whole. They were never 100 percent.

In a community like the 31st Council District where 21 of 32 of my schools received budget cuts. I'm curious to understand what in addition to that formula was factored into these cuts considering that schools like PS105 in Far Rockaway, the secondly deadliest zip code in COVID-19 could receive 19 percent cuts. When schools like PS52 in Springfield Gardens can receive 19 percent cuts and they receive a lot of students from our neighboring shelters. I'm having a hard time understanding that.

And let's talk about mandates. The IEP's, the IEP's require specific support. PS105 this week told me they are losing two special ed teachers. I am being told that there are schools that have to change IEP's because they are not in compliance to provide services to these students. That is problematic.

I want to understand how we find this money and so, a part of that is I would like a breakdown of the headcount of Tweeds. Every position that exists there. What percentage of the departments headcount

1 does that constitute? What is the budget for
2 staffing and operating for all non-classroom and non-
3 school roles?
4

5 Considering the loss of federal funding, has the
6 DOE looked or begun to look at reducing the headcount
7 at Tweed, so that we can right size DOE as being the
8 agency that has one of the largest budgets. Can DOE
9 describe how the pandemic's budgetary impacts
10 prompted the department to create furlough or combine
11 various positions? I also want to understand how has
12 stimulus funding effected these decisions? I
13 understand also that 3K is fully funded by the
14 stimulus money. Community schools are partially
15 funded by stimulus money. What is the DOE's plan to
16 ensure that we do not lose these critical services
17 from the DOE? How does the Department of Education
18 plan to fund it beyond that?

19 I'm also trying to understand and educate me.
20 When you say that the teachers are being excessed and
21 they go into funded vacancies, how are we saving
22 money if we're still paying for it? So, if they're
23 still getting paid, why in fact do they have to even
24 move out of these schools? And that's the education
25 piece for me that I'm interested in understanding

1 better. And as you see, I have a lot of questions
2 and I'm going to stop there because I want to get
3 answers for them.
4

5 DAN WEISBERG: Yes, Council Member and I tried to
6 take notes but please, let me know if -

7 MAJORITY WHIP BROOKS-POWERS: I will gladly.

8 DAN WEISBERG: If I missed anything. I'll just,
9 I'll try the last one first. If you have a school
10 that has lost enrollment and is funded for fewer
11 positions and therefore, they have to excess a
12 teacher, you have another school that's gotten
13 additional funding because they've added students.
14 Let's say, and the teacher moves from School A to
15 School B, that doesn't cost us additional money
16 because the funding is there.

17 If that teacher didn't move and stayed in the
18 school that has lost enrollment and was not funded
19 for that position, we would have to come up with
20 additional funding to keep that teacher in the school
21 that has lost enrollment. I don't know if that helps
22 but we have a certain number of positions, teacher
23 positions that we fund. They obviously don't stay
24 static in individual schools. Those positions will
25 you know grow or diminish in the particular schools,

but we have funding that is in the budget. I it
budgeted for FY23 for that number of teacher
positions. And as long as a teacher is in one of
those positions that is funding our budget, then it's
not going to require additional funds. I don't know
if that helps.

MAJORITY WHIP BROOKS-POWERS: No, that helps. If
you can answer the remaining questions.

DAN WEISBERG: Community schools, 3K, I mean, I
would just say, this is something that is a major
issue and I want you know; I want to make sure we
work, and I know the Chancellor wants to make sure,
we work with the Council on exactly the issue that
you have pointed out Council Member. It's really
important. We have to figure out and we're committed
to figuring out a sustainable way to fund these
critical programs, which are funded with temporary
stimulus funds. So, this is something we would love
to continue to talk about.

MAJORITY WHIP BROOKS-POWERS: Chair, if you could
grant permission for the remaining questions to be
answered, I'd appreciate it.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Permission granted.

3 DAN WEISBERG: And I'll just say on uh, Lindsey
4 should jump in in a second. Uhm, the headcount at
5 Tweed or more than just Tweed but in the central
6 offices, again that's about two percent of the
7 budget. That is something that believe me, the
8 Chancellor is looking at.

9 MAJORITY WHIP BROOKS-POWERS: What's the dollar
10 amount?

11 LINDSEY OATES: \$600 million.

12 DAN WEISBERG: Uh, about \$600, it's about \$600
13 million. Yeah, that's in the materials but you know
14 we can give you more a breakdown. We're happy to do
15 that.

16 We did cut almost 300 positions earlier this year
17 from that central headcount and you know we're always
18 looking at where we can drive resources down to the
19 school level. Again, as Lindsey said, you know this
20 includes people who are working with principals on
21 budget. People who are working with principals on
22 special education and HR. So, there's a limit. Once
23 we start cutting too much into that, it is going to
24 affect schools because they're school support. But
25 having said that, we already cut hundreds of

positions and we're going to continue to look at
efficiencies at that Tweed.

MAJORITY WHIP BROOKS-POWERS: I'm sorry Deputy
Chancellor, has the auditor recommended any cuts to
those Tweed positions that you mentioned that gets
audited each year?

LINDSEY OATES: So, under the -- the auditors have
not recommended central headcount reduction
specifically, but the Chancellor has. And the
Chancellor's strong leadership on this topic has
resulted in those hundreds of positions being
reduced. In addition to other positions, hundreds
that were reduced over the last couple of years.

MAJORITY WHIP BROOKS-POWERS: And my last
question that wasn't answered was surrounding the
IEP's.

LINDSEY OATES: So, that should not happen.
IEP's should not be changed, and that kind of issue
is exactly what we would be looking at as we look at
the budget appeals process. We want to make sure
that legal mandates are met. They should not be
reducing services on an IEP to match their budget.

In addition, IEP services that are outside of
classroom instruction, like a one-to-one para or

related services like speech PT and OT are funded outside of the Fair Student Funding formula. So, that means that they're funded in addition to, and they're funded on the mandates that are existing for the students in their building annually.

MAJORITY WHIP BROOKS-POWERS: That's not what's happening in the schools and of course we're seeing loss of services as a result. So, is there a commitment that if members reach out and give you specific schools that you will find the funding to make sure this service is actually being provided?

LINDSEY OATES: So, I would say I think on behalf of our special ed team, we'd be very interested in understanding which schools specifically see that happening and so, we can follow-up directly.

MAJORITY WHIP BROOKS-POWERS: Can we have a commitment please.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Council Member Menin.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Thank you so much. I first of all want to thank the Chairs and the Speaker for this important hearing. So, we spend a lot of time talking about the loss of federal stimulus funding but what we haven't talked about is the money

that New York City receives from the federal government that's non-stimulus.

So, I served as the city's 2020 Census Director, so I can say first hand that not only did New York City grow by over 600,000 people in the last decade, but we as a city finish number one among all major cities across the country. And I'm mentioning that because that means that we receive a larger piece of the pie on federal funding for education. So, from 2010 to 2020, we received over \$700 million a year in Title I funds. We receive per year \$1.5 billion in total in federal education funds.

Now, because of the 2020 Census, we're going to receive even more than that over the next ten years. So, my fundamental question is, why isn't the administration allocating that pot of money when we know it's going to be more each and every year for the next ten years to make up the \$215 million shortfall?

LINDSEY OATES: Thank you Council Member for the question. Title I funding is designed to be supplemental. It's required by federal law to provide supplemental services and it cannot supplant funding. And so, it cannot be used in that way.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: I understand that but
4 since you know that you are going to be receiving a
5 larger share or proportion than DOE received in the
6 past decade, you know that that's coming in, why
7 can't you make an adjustment in another part of the
8 budget to allocate \$215 million? You know you're
9 having more federal funding because of the Census, so
10 that's you know irrefutable that you're getting more
11 money.

12 So, I'm not saying use the Title I funds. What
13 I'm saying is, since you are going to be getting a
14 larger piece of the pie then we received in the last
15 decade, why not find another line item to take the
16 \$215 million from?

17 LINDSEY OATES: So again, any federal funding
18 like Title I, Title II, Title III, Title IV, is in
19 our budget. It's allocated to schools. It's in
20 addition to the Fair Student Funding Formula dollars
21 in discussion.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Yeah, I understand.
23 That's not my question. My question is, we're
24 getting more federal funds, so, we should be then
25 reallocating from another part of the budget.

3 LINDSEY OATES: So again, the federal funds
4 including stimulus dollars have to provide
5 supplemental services. We have to make sure that we
6 follow federal rules around avoiding –

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Okay, I'm going to move on
8 because I asked my question. So, I'm very concerned
9 about the enrollment data. I want to push back on
10 this idea that there's this dialogue with the
11 principals. That's certainly not what I'm hearing on
12 the ground. I spoke with one principal this morning
13 who has a school that has 450 students currently.
14 They received direction from DOE that their
15 enrollment is going to drop to 300. They have spoken
16 to every family in the school, and they have shown
17 the actual enrollment is 395. So, that's one of many
18 examples I could give. So, my fundamental question
19 is, how are you working with these principals? How
20 are you calculating the enrollment data? Are you
21 doing regular surveys to families? Is it in multiple
22 languages? Because it just seems there are wide
23 discrepancies that I am hearing from the principals.

24 DAN WEISBERG: You know, first of all, please
25 Council Member, feel free to get us information on
the individual schools you're hearing from because I

1 don't know and I'll preclude the possibility that you
2 know in some cases uh, there should be adjustments
3 and they haven't been made, so please let us know.
4 But to your larger point, you know the enrollment
5 folks are looking at demographic trends. They are
6 looking at things like applica- number of
7 applications in the case of high school and middle
8 school and kindergarten. They're looking at the
9 Census trends actually. They're not doing surveys to
10 all families, but they are going back and forth with
11 principals about what principals are seeing.
12

13 Now, again, if you have a principal who is taking
14 the initiative, which I love by the way, to pull
15 every single family in his or her building, that's
16 information we should be acting on, so I would love
17 to dig more into that.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Okay, uhm, given the
19 decrease in enrollment numbers, wouldn't this be an
20 opportunity to revisit some of the restrictive zoning
21 rules that are negatively impacting diversity?

22 So, my specific question is at high performing
23 schools, wouldn't this then be an opportunity to open
24 up seats in some of these schools to more students?
25

DAN WEISBERG: Yes, that's something absolutely that when I talk about the plans that we're going to expect superintendents to have to meet the needs of families. We have lots and lots of high demand schools all over the city, all over the city in every district that don't have enough seats to meet the demand. One of the components of the plan would be, how can you expand the seats? How can you potentially create a paired school that you know provides the same level of quality the families want and basically uses the brand of that initial school.

So, zoning as you know Council Member is a very - rezoning is a very heavily regulated process and so that, you know that's certainly on the table but that has to go through a legal process before the zone is changed.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Okay, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Council Member.
Council Member De La Rosa.

COUNCIL MEMBER DE LA ROSA: Thank you Chair.
First, I want to address a few things that I heard here today.

When talking about the cuts, the words, it's not a good thing was acknowledged by the DOE. From where

I'm sitting, it feels unnecessary, not just like it's not a good thing. It feels completely unnecessary. Given the fact that we have money in the reserves. We have money in the Rainy-Day funds and so, I'm going to re-ask the question, why is this cut going to happen when we are touting historic investments in our reserves?

DAN WEISBERG: I appreciate the question very much Council Member. You know, we at least at the Department of Education, we're dealing with the budget that was adopted. The budget we are given. I hear you about reserves and so forth. That's something we can take back to our colleagues at both City Hall and OMB. But you know, we have to operate within the budget that we are -

COUNCIL MEMBER DE LA ROSA: Well, I will say that this is a poisoned pill in that budget that was adopted. And I will also say that one of the things that was also mentioned, is we cannot avoid reality. I want to talk to you about the reality that we cannot avoid in our district. I represent District 6, School District 6 that has been historically underinvested for decades and some of the realities that we cannot avoid is that we are having 32 out of

41 schools being cut in this budget. That our schools - I just got a notice from my daughter's school yesterday that there's a positive COVID person in the school building.

So, we are continuing to get these notices about positive COVID in our schools and this money is supposed to be cushioning continuous waves of COVID that are still here. So, that cushion should remain in place until at the very least, these notices stop coming to our emails.

I also want to say that in my district, we have had an enrollment issue for a very long time. The state happened to pass legislation much fought for by people in this room to adjust finally class sizes. In my district, in District 10, all of the temporary trader structures in Manhattan, are in District 10, all of them. How are we adjusting? How are we preparing to adjust these school budgets who only have a capacity issue? When we have an historic un-investment issue and when as we are preparing to receive this much needed state mandate, we are cutting these budgets by \$215 million. Which is a fraction of our city budget at this moment.

3 DAN WEISBERG: I will try to be responsive and
4 let me know Council Member De La Rosa if I'm not
5 being responsive. Certainly, I understand in
6 District, you know District 6, you've got schools at
7 over capacity. I know that there are still you know
8 trailers and uhm, you know we work with our
9 colleagues at School Construction Authority to get
10 most of those trailers removed and permanent
11 structures, but I know that there are still some -

12 COUNCIL MEMBER DE LA ROSA: All of them in
13 Manhattan are in Northern Manhattan.

14 DAN WEISBERG: Understood.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER DE LA ROSA: What are we saying to
16 the kids in Northern Manhattan, that they are still
17 studying in trailers?

18 DAN WEISBERG: Yes. So, I would love to talk to
19 you with our friends at School Construction to talk
20 about that issue. It's a very important issue and
21 I'm aware of it and we're working on it, and we want
22 to get those removed as soon as possible.

23 Beyond that about class size, obviously, uhm, you
24 know assuming the law is enacted, you know we will
25 comply with the law. And we've got folks working on
that planning now to make sure we're ready to comply.

COUNCIL MEMBER DE LA ROSA: Well, I will just say that given the planning that's happened here, there is little faith that this will go off in the way that is needed after years of a fight to make sure that class sizes are reduced. I'm going to move on.

I want to ask about English Language Learners. Uhm, one of the things that I know that is happening in my district is that, although mandated services are being covered, there are extra things that are needed, like literacy coaches. That those decisions are now on the table, on the chopping block for many schools in the district.

So, for you know populations that need the extra supports, what is the planning that the DOE at this moment is telling these principals, besides excess teachers, for these students to be able to thrive? And the reason that it's important is because this enrollment crisis that we're in, is because of the divestment in allowing those schools to actually turn things around and have the resources to turn things around in order to attract more students. It's a self-fulfilling prophecy. No one wants to go to these schools, because they don't have the resources

to turn things around and therefore, people are not enrolling.

So, what are the — what is the plan for that issue?

DAN WEISBERG: First of all, happy to come back with our colleagues from Teaching and Learning to talk specifically about the programming for English Language Learners because I think we are doing some exciting work there and are doing everything we can as Lindsey talked about to continue investments there, but you know, I don't want to give details without having the folks who really know the work well.

COUNCIL MEMBER DE LA ROSA: One final question. I was handed a chart from one of the advocates in my community, a parent and she pointed out that the enrollment changes that she was able to get from the online information that's available in enrollment doesn't match the change in the cut. Can you account for discrepancies between the enrollment of the last two academic years and the corresponding cut?

DAN WEISBERG: I just want to make sure I understand. So, the discrepancy between the

enrollment that it shows online and the enrollment
that is projected?

COUNCIL MEMBER DE LA ROSA: The percentage of
this cut. So, for example, I'll give you an example.
So, for example, in my district PS189, for the 2021-
2022 school year, had 489 enrolled students. For the
2022-2021 school year, 556, right? Uhm, the change
is 13.6 percent, and this cut that is reflected here,
which is about \$2 million is a 21 percent cut. So,
what makes up those type of discrepancies?

LINDSEY OATES: So, I think we would be happy to
take a look at that particular example but one of
things that I think is important to remember, looking
at the year over year reductions and there is a lot
of advocates talking about this, is that the FY22
budget, the one that the school year that's ending on
Monday, represents a full year budget. It also
represents record high levels of federal stimulus
funding being in schools. And so, comparing that to
initial budgets that were just released a few weeks
ago, is not really an accurate comparison.

In addition, there was over \$100 million in one-
time pandemic related allocations to schools that
were made in Fiscal Year '22. Things to support

1
2 social distancing, to support specific deals made
3 with our labor partners, vax mandates, all sorts of
4 things that we do not plan to need in Fiscal Year
5 '23. In addition, the academic recovery supports,
6 that was a \$350 million school allocation in the
7 school year. It is planned to be reduced to \$125
8 million this year.

9 So, including those things, which we knew were
10 either one-time allocations or we had plans to
11 decline, I think is in what is calculated as a cut
12 might be a little bit misleading.

13 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Real quick,
14 Madam Speaker.

15 SPEAKER ADAMS: I'm sorry, I'm just going to
16 interject because the questions are repetitive from
17 what we've been hearing for the past three hours now,
18 and it seems like we're kind of going in circles. I
19 believe Council Member Brewer asked a question that
20 was similar and the data just not matching.

21 And uhm, if we can get a little bit more granular
22 as to why we're finding that in more than one arena,
23 more than one document, more than one space, why this
24 data is so different in different places. Why
25 information is so different in different spaces and

where and when will we get accurate information when it comes to these cuts in our schools? We're looking at explanations of equity in districts. Council Member Schulman's District is 29, mine is 28, there is no equity in the way that these cuts were delivered. So, we're looking for accurate data. We want to know where we find it and why we are fighting so much disparity in the data. In the information that's being given to us and given to the teachers.

LINDSEY OATES: The advocates report that I've seen all use different methodologies to calculate the differences in the reductions between year over year. And so, I can't speak to all of those methodologies but there's a lot of different ways to calculate it. Whether you're looking at the entire budget from Fiscal Year '22 compared to preliminary numbers or you're just looking at the Fair Student Funding allocations like the UFT did.

We are happy to provide you with additional information to make sure that we clarify this issue.

SPEAKER ADAMS: So, is the explanation because the data is coming from different places and not in one general location?

3 LINDSEY OATES: I can't speak to the advocates
4 reports.

5 SPEAKER ADAMS: Okay.

6 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Madam Speaker.
7 Uhm, Council Member Schulman.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Thank you very much. I
9 want to thank the Chairs, Rita Joseph and Gale Brewer
10 and uhm, the leadership of our Speaker Adrienne
11 Adams.

12 Our kids only get one chance at a good education
13 and the cuts by the Department of Education are
14 cutting that away. I will tell you; I have 18
15 schools in my district. We are losing \$11 million.
16 Three schools are losing over \$1 million, and I'm
17 being told, I met with the principals yesterday. I'm
18 very angry about this. I met with the principals
19 yesterday and they pretty much told me that they have
20 to do away with anything that is a program other than
21 the basics of math and reading. One school said they
22 had to get rid of their restorative justice program
23 and arts programs and music program.

24 And so, that is very unacceptable. I have a
25 question related to the enrollment piece with a
little bit of different context. So, I want to know

1 how the enrollment is determined and I'll tell you
2 why I'm asking that. Because I was told in this
3 meeting I had with my principals yesterday, that the
4 enrollment is based on a two-year projection. That
5 two-year projection included the COVID years and that
6 a lot of my schools actually have enrollment that's
7 above what has been projected for them. And they
8 made an appeal based on their current projections and
9 they were told that uhm, and they were rebuffed. So,
10 I want to know why that happened and whether you're
11 doing on based on projections that are based on the
12 COVID years or you're basing them on actual
13 enrollment.

14
15 DAN WEISBERG: I would say probably it's both
16 Council Member, projections and actual enrollment.
17 It depends upon whether you're talking about
18 elementary, middle or high school. The admission's
19 processes are different but look, we'd be happy to
20 look at all that. If you've got schools with actual
21 enrollment, actual enrollment, they have the kids
22 that were actually enrolled for September -

23 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Yes, yes.

24 DAN WEISBERG: That exceed the projection that
25 we're using for budget, please let us know right away

and we'll jump right on that. Actual enrollment should absolutely trump any sort of projection.

COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: That's good to know. I want to know how will the DOE adjust its allocations if Governor Hochul signs the bill lowering class sizes and thus requiring the DOE to have a larger number of teachers at each school?

LINDSEY OATES: So, I think we're still thinking about how we would have to adjust the budgets if Governor Hochul signs that bill. We are very concerned that this is an unfunded mandate and we're very concerned about the ability to be able to implement this.

COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: When did you know how much individual school Galaxy allocations would be significantly lower than last year?

LINDSEY OATES: Again, this was announced in February as part of the Mayor's Preliminary Budget.

COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: And also, I've been told by my principals that because of supply chain issues and all kinds of other things, that they are being told that they have to spend money by March instead of usually having to spend it by April, which is causing a real interruption in their budget.

So, I want to know, I would like an explanation.

LINDSEY OATES: So, that is an accurate, that's accurate. Uhm, and the reason why is per gap accounting rules, we have to ensure delivery of services and goods by June 30th.

I have a team that actually works with vendors, that we're calling Apple, we're calling Lenovo, we're calling CDW, and we are trying to figure out whether they can actually make these delivery timelines. As you know, worldwide supply chains have been a disaster for the last couple of years and so, we had to advance the purchasing deadlines unfortunately this year to ensure delivery of these goods and services by June 30th.

We hope that that's something that we can move back to the more normal timeline in the future but right now, because of the supply chain issues and because of the requirements that goods have to be delivered by June 30th, that's what we had to put in place.

COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: That would make a big difference. Now, I want to just refer to page 9 in your PowerPoint. You said the budgeting method is called a Weighted Pupil Funding Model and pupil needs

are weighted. I'm being told by the schools in my district that the weights vary and there's no rhyme or reason to them, so can you explain the weighting for the pupils.

LINDSEY OATES: Yes, absolutely. The weights do vary. They vary based on the needs per weight. So, we have five different categories of weights with multiple weights within those categories and the weights are either larger or smaller depending on the cost of the service for the weight.

So, our largest weight for example is for a kindergarten ICT class. There's two teachers in that classroom and so, that's why it is the highest weight, and it goes on from there.

COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: And how does that effect the budget?

LINDSEY OATES: So, uhm, that effects the amount that a school will receive for those services.

COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: I would like to have more of an explanation of the weight and how it effects each of the schools particularly in my district, and if I can Chair, I just want to say one more thing, which is that I'm being told also that especially in elementary school, that because of

COVID, the younger students, they need more attention because they don't remember what the school experience is like as opposed to somebody who's maybe in 5th grade. And so, they need more attention, they need more teachers to help them.

And so, I want to say that for the record that this budget doesn't allow that, so thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Council Member. I want to take the time out to acknowledge Council Member Nurse, Council Member Ossé. Council Member Won, it's your turn.

COUNCIL MEMBER WON: First Deputy Chancellor we have heard over and over again that the Fair Student Funding Formula is a 15-year-old law, which DOE must abide by to justify right sizing our schools. So, despite standing firm behind our justification of abiding by the law, the DOE has failed to reform the Fair Student Funding formula since you are legally bound to implement by local law since January 2019. That was your due date and you have also failed to abide by the court order of campaign for Fiscal Equity versus state of New York to provide a sound, basic education with smaller class sizes since 2007. I want to set the record straight. This is not, when

you talk about the school class sizes cap, that is not an unfunded mandate. According to the law which passed in 2007, this is a prefunded mandate because we were given \$1.6 billion additional with foundational aid to abide by the court order, which they define as having smaller class sizes to have a sound, basic education.

So, the DOE should not be cherry picking what laws you want to hold, uphold and which ones you want to slide by. So, this makes me believe this is clearly a budgetary choice that you have made. We are being told to wait until November modifications for the \$215 million deficit or the difference or the adjustment or whatever you want to call if of the DOE budget, which two-thirds of a percent. So, the truth is, we actually don't even need a budget modification to have this restored for us. So, I don't buy that modification anymore.

And with the \$1.6 billion additional provided foundational aid that we have to abide by the court order, could you explain your logic to me to ensure that the excessive class sizes that we're going to see in our classrooms, especially for schools like mine with severe low-income students, are going to

make sure that we don't have that with teachers being
excessed as a result of this funding cut.

DAN WEISBERG: So, thank you Council Member.
I'll start and maybe Lindsey can add in. I would
respectfully push back on the idea that this is
prefunded. I'd also take issue with the figure used
around foundation aid. The increased foundation aid
and there has been an increase. We're in year two of
a hopefully a three-year projection where the state,
the CFE decision as we know applied to the state, the
state's obligations under the New York State
Constitution of course, as you say, to provide a
sound basic education.

They are finally, finally, taking steps to fully
fund but they have not by any stretch satisfied that
yet. Just as I'm sorry, just to make one point if I
could and then I'll yield my time. The only reason
we are at 100 percent of Fair Student Funding
Formula. The only reason that each school is getting
100 percent of that formula is because of the
increased foundation aid plus some stimulus that
allow us to get there. It's already in school
budgets. So, if we have to hire thousands of more
teachers, without additional funding to hire those

teachers, then that's going to require cuts elsewhere
and frankly, I'm not sure where that would come from.

COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Could you disclose the last
two fiscal cycles of the Charter school budgets? I
know that this upcoming cycle has \$3 billion.

LINDSEY OATES: I don't have the last two figures
off the top of my head. We can certainly provide
that for you.

COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Could you confirm or say
that there is an increase in Charter school budget
this year? Do you know by how much?

LINDSEY OATES: The Charter school budget was
increased this year, yeah, that is correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER WON: I am here to stand for
public schools and \$214 million from \$3 billion is
not much but I want to ask my last question on
enrollment data and forecasting. Over 120,000
students have left our public school system. This is
alarming to all of us here. What have you done to
identify the trends and the cause of drop in
enrollment and is this information public? And these
children from our neighborhoods across the grades
that have disappeared, did you provide an exit

survey? What are you doing as DOE to ensure that children are not just disappearing into thin air?

DAN WEISBERG: It's a great question. Thank you Council Member and I would say quickly that we have done some data analysis and some exit surveys, which we're happy to share all the data that we have in the trends, including what we've heard from parents. But in my view, we have not done nearly enough to talk to the parents, both who are deciding to enroll students elsewhere or leaving our schools. So, we have much more to do but we're happy to share what we have.

COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Could you give us an anecdote or a summary of what the top trends are? Because for me, when I look in my school data, which was provided to me after the vote, is that it shows me that the schools in the wealthiest parts of my district are fine. They are actually having an abundance of student enrollment. Yet, in the poorest areas, like Queens Bridge and Ravenswood houses, for those schools that serve Black and Brown students, are seeing a drop in enrollment and they have seen hundreds of students disappear. Could you help me understand what's happening?

DAN WEISBERG: Difficult to do quickly. Happy to set up a briefing with you and any other members who are interested. I will just say that we do see differences, what you're pointing out is absolutely squares with our data. We see differences by demographic, certainly in terms of in some demographics, you see more families for example, who are home schooling kids. In some demographics, you see more families moving to private schools. In some demographics, you see more families moving outside the city.

COUNCIL MEMBER WON: I know that this has already been said by the advocates, but the Fair Student Funding Formula is going to continue to disempower our most vulnerable communities and it is not okay that we have not reformed it, despite the 2019 law that we have called for reform of Fair Student Funding Formula. Because if it was done on time, we would not be sitting in these Chairs right now having this conversation. I yield my time, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Council Member. Council Member Avilés.

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Hi, can you hear me now? Great, thank you. So, I too, like many of my

colleagues and I'm a public-school parent who has spent many nights up till 3 a.m. trying to make cupcakes to fund raise for equipment that should have been in schools but was not.

It is clear that this budgeting process for the schools is supremely broken and doesn't line up with the needs and realities of schools. In particular, we see it hasn't been properly acknowledged that we are still in a pandemic. And while these cuts are related to enrollment numbers that we have seen been going down, I'm supremely curious around how equity was factored into any of these cuts. We knew these cuts were coming, as you mentioned earlier in the preliminary budget. How did you factor equity into that calculus?

DAN WEISBERG: And I would say in a couple of ways, Council Member. Thank you for the question. If you look at our presentation on you know pages 6 and 7. Some of this is through things like 3K expansion, which are focused on underserved communities. Summer Rising the same, for example. Where we are prioritizing our students who live in temporary housing. So, there's particular programming investments that we are making. Lindsey

talked about the investments we're making for English Language Learners. So, equity showed up there.

The Formula, the Fair Students Funding Formula, which again, you know we have said, we are looking forward to seeing how we can improve it. It does direct greater funding, greater funding to students with disabilities, to English Language Learners, to students in poverty, to students who are behind academically.

So, being able to fund that 100 percent, while I'm not saying that means the work is over, that does and I can tell you as a long-time veteran, the way schools used to be funded prior to FSF; if you think FSF doesn't do a good job, did a far worse job at directing the funds towards chronically underserved kids. So, there's a few ways in which we are looking at equity, but that job is definitely not finished.

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: So, many of my conversations with the principals in my district, which has been significantly impacted where we are still suffering the impacts of a pandemic in an immigrant community. Where these cuts are not just excessing teachers, they're excessing para's, they're excessing exactly the type of staff that we

need to support the crisis that we are in.

Particularly counselors and other staff members and programs to get academic recovery happening. Can we see a spreadsheet of the initial register projections that are done in December. The January appeals that are done thereafter by principals and then the final projection determinations? Because the ongoing aggressive low balling of projections is a constant problem and particularly egregious given how many students we have lost over these years.

DAN WEISBERG: Council Member, I'm happy to provide that to you. I just want to make sure getting you the right information. You're talking about around enrollment?

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Yes.

DAN WEISBERG: Okay, yes, we'd be happy to get that to you.

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Also, you mentioned that social workers and guidance counselors are funded through the federal stimulus. We know that the promises to add social workers who are only given to schools uhm, that if schools added their own through separate funding, they were not given social workers. Can you tell me what plans are being made to maintain

3 the continued staffing of social workers in schools,
4 given the needed resources and how stimulus funding
5 is being depleted?

6 LINDSEY OATES: Thank you for that question. We
7 are certainly going to be working with our city
8 partners including this body to advocate for
9 additional resources to support the mental health
10 providers in our schools, social workers, guidance
11 counselors, when stimulus funding runs out.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: I guess I'll just lastly
13 add, since I know there are many other questions
14 still. These cuts are also impacting the provision
15 of social -- of guidance counselors and social workers
16 in schools. As schools are now having, and I've
17 mentioned to my colleagues before and as you
18 mentioned in your testimony, these are cumulative
19 cuts. It is reduction in Title I, reductions in
20 other streams. It is accumulative injury to our
21 students and principals who are trying their best to
22 quite frankly extract blood from a stone and make
23 magic, which they have been doing in low-income
24 communities for years, which is wholly unnecessary.

25 Uhm, I guess with that, I yield my time.

3 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Uhm, Council
4 Member Dinowitz.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Am I out of time
6 already? Just kidding. Uhm, good afternoon. Uh, my
7 first question is about enrollment because in your
8 testimony you've said we seen a drop in enrollment.
9 But in so many of my schools, I just want to clarify
10 the language. The projected enrollment has dropped.

11 But these projects are very, very wrong, and just
12 two examples, I have one high school in my district,
13 you projected them at 56 students. They have 106
14 students they've accepted plus a wait list. Another
15 school projected a 104 and they sent out acceptance
16 letters to 143 students and this is, this is a
17 pattern. This is happening at school after school.
18 And the problem, the problem is that schools are now
19 making decisions about next year based on flawed
20 numbers that you are giving them this year.

21 And the reality is in a system where you want
22 parents to understand how great the programming is,
23 you know I go to schools, they always show off their
24 debate team. They show off their music class. They
25 show off the arts. They show off their wellness
classes, the restorative justice programs yet, when

1 they receive budgets like this, which are the first
2 things to go, it's those very programs that we know
3 get our students through the pandemic. They got so
4 many of us through the pandemic. That we actually
5 care about that the schools show off and it provides
6 a level of instability to just say that the teachers,
7 to view the teachers as lines on a spreadsheet.
8 Because that is not the reality of — that's not the
9 experiences of parents and students. These are
10 people who are part of a school community. And so,
11 and so, who are the — I'll call them mathematicians,
12 the statisticians at the DOE who are doing these
13 projections and why are they so undercounting so many
14 of our schools?
15

16 DAN WEISBERG: Thank you Council Member and look,
17 again, actual, actual enrollment as you're discussing
18 you know should trump whatever projections we have
19 and that's true by the way in the cases of the
20 schools you're talking about. It's in June but you
21 know that will happen right up until September and
22 even up to the end of October. So, please get me
23 that information. And the answer to your question,
24 these are our enrollment folks. And again, they
25 don't have crystal balls. They are looking at a

bunch of data and doing their best to project. It sounds like in these cases they got it wrong, and the positive news is, we don't have to wait till September. We don't have to wait till October. These are adjustments that Lindsey's office is making in June and July.

COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: But respectfully, it sounds like they got a lot of the schools wrong and which I appreciate you saying I'll get you the names of the schools. I appreciate that but it's not about me and the connections I have to some schools and the connections, the principal knows, me. It's about a systemic issue of schools being undercounted and making decisions that are detrimental to the future of their schools and the future of the lives of our children and I'll just tell you, for 14-years in the classroom and for over a year as an elected official, it has always felt like the DOE was so out of touch with the realities that we face as parents and educators and elected officials with those in our community that we see. People and the DOE sees lines on a spreadsheet. They see School A and School B. I am still very hopeful that that will change during this administration because the very things that you

say that we agree upon that are going to attract people to our schools, are the first things to get cut.

And dealing with how out of touch the DOE administration has been during my career as a teacher and an elected official, I am surprised, you are surprised that schools are changing IEP's based on budgets because that's the reality of school after school. And if you go to any school, any principal who is not afraid of losing their job or a teacher will tell you that they may be instructed to change students IEP's to ICT. Because according to the Fair Student Funding Formula, the school gets like \$7,000 something dollars for an ICT whereas in self-contained they may get \$5,000. Or a kid in a resource room, I think it's like \$2,000, right? So, schools financially, based on the formula that you're using are incentivized to push students either into a more or less restrictive environment than that child needs. And that is the enormous pressure that our principals are facing due to these budget cuts.

And again, is this, during this hearing, this is the first time you're hearing that schools are changing IEP's?

DAN WEISBERG: I think what Lindsey said is that shouldn't happen. That should not happen. So, listen this is - Councilman and look, I you know, I respect and honor your years in the classroom and your insight means a lot. I hear what you're saying about incentives based on funding. This is not unique to New York. This exists all over public schools, all over the country. What happens when you attempt to direct more funding obviously, but I'll just state it. When you attempt to direct more funding to the students who need that funding, like students with IEP's or English Language Learners, you're going to create those incentives.

So, this is one of the things we have look at to see how we're not creating the wrong incentives. At the same time, we're pushing the funding where it's really needed.

COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Well, look this will be the I ask Chair and thank you Chair Joseph and Brewer, is throughout my entire career and especially during the pandemic, day after day, principals and teachers just had to figure it out. We were given less and less, and we just figured it out, and very often the DOE was a stumbling block. I think now

what you're hearing is, we would like the DOE to
figure out how to fund our schools properly.

DAN WEISBERG: Thank you Council Member.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Council Member.
Council Member Williams. Sorry, Council Member
Narcisse.

COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Good afternoon. Thank
you, Chair Rita Joseph and Gale Brewer. Thank you
Chairs for giving me an opportunity to be here and
uhm, I have a lot of questions. I am a mom of four.
I'm not an educator. I am -- I can say I'm an
educator to some level but not in the classroom.

Uhm, as a mom of four, I see, and I realize that
I don't have millions of dollars to leave my
children. All I can give them is the best quality
education. And I have a few things because I've been
going to all the graduations and seeing the faces and
hoping that we can provide the best education to
those children.

Before I get to anything, I want to say, I want
to ask you a question. If the plan is to have
continue a public school or to private school?

DAN WEISBERG: Council Member, we are the New York City Public Schools and that's who we support and that's who we will continue to support.

COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: I certainly hope so because we're supposed to be the role model. We're talking about New York City. We see what happened with uhm, Wade, I mean Roe versus Wade today, but I expect us, in New York City, to be opened up to make sure that we stand on what we believe to make sure this is a land of immigrants, opportunity. Whatever the Statue of Liberty stand for, that's what we have to provide. We have to provide quality education for our children here.

I want to make sure the enrollment. What happened? Is that COVID that caused the decrease in enrollment? Do you have the data? I mean, do you keep accurate data?

DAN WEISBERG: Yes, Council Member. COVID— so the two years of the pandemic definitely accelerated the declines, but they really started several years before that. So, the declines began to happen and then got more steep. Happy to share that information with you.

COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Alright. Uh, but the Charter school is thriving by the way. I realize in here, those educators will stay in our system and have the opportunity to find jobs in other schools that saw enrollment increase right, increases? I love that but one thing I'm going to tell you I don't like because it's still going to be a problem, our kids is not — the educators will not have a chance to build with those children that they know. So, that's a problem for me and I think is a problem for most of us here.

We made an increase as City Council members under the leadership of our great Speaker Adrienne Adams, \$700 million but it's not enough. It's just a drop in the bucket. We understand that but that's a first time we make that step, historic step that we took right? Because we understand and we have our Chair, that's an educator for so many years in school that keep us in check. So, and so many parents, we want the best quality education, not only for our children but for those that come so we can count on them for later on.

So, how are our federal, I mean federal dollars are being allocated? Can it be transparent? Can we know where our money goes?

DAN WEISBERG: Yes ma'am. We have some, I don't know if you were able to take a look. We're happy to go back over it, some detail about where the federal stimulus funding went to and we're happy to give you a briefing if that would be helpful, to give you more detail.

COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: I would love that. Quality education, when we say quality education, when I'm looking at the classroom, we have 32 children per one teacher. That teacher have five classes. When I multiple because number don't lie. You have about 160 tests. If they give a quiz or exam, you have 160.

So, how the teacher going to go home and check all those children and then coming back to give positive reinforcement? It's almost impossible. So, class size matter. So, we're looking forward, if we want to keep public school in New York City to bringing the equity we're talking about all the time and especially in my district, we're talking about 46 District, which represent Canarsie, flat lands area,

in dire needs of opportunity and programs in our school building. I have to force every penny that I have. I have to go at nighttime, counting every cent to see how I can bring equity in the classroom. Because I know most parents out there don't have anything to leave their children but education.

So, I'm looking forward to seeing how we can have that class size addressed and enrollment addressed and have full transparency in the dollar that we're contributing to education for our children. So, thank you for your time and I'm looking forward for the best of New York City. Thank you.

DAN WEISBERG: Thank you very much Council Member.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Council Member. Council Member Williams.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Hello, so I have been doing a lot of tours and I have pretty much visited almost all the schools in my district, so I have a sense of what is missing, and I want to say that I understand this is a new administration and you probably inherited a lot of this mess. So, the first thing I want to ask is about schools with deficits. I have a few schools that essentially owe debt and

one school in particular, PS118, 27 percent of their funding is cut. And so, I just want to know in addition to what everyone has been saying, schools that specifically already sort of owe the DOE, how are you accounting for those schools with the additional cuts?

LINDSEY OATES: Those school are not required to pay back the deficits they owe.

COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Are you sure because I've met with principals and they all tell me that they are unable to hire different teachers, math tutors, art teachers, because their budget is restricted by previous, again, "debts" if you will to DOE.

So, we can follow up because this is a specific question but to tell a school that told me literally two months ago that they can't hire a music teacher because of a debt and then that specific school is getting cut additional 27 percent is alarming.

LINDSEY OATES: Happy to look into that specific school.

COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Okay, uhm, the next question I have is about the funding vacancies. You mentioned it a lot, but can you explain exactly what

type of positions would be available in a funding
vacancy. Like, what does that look like?

DAN WEISBERG: Yeah, so you know that could be
certainly a teacher and as we know, there can be
different types of teachers, special education
teachers, etc. And so, based on the enrollment, a
school be funded for a certain number of teaching
positions but also, you know funding that could be
used for nurses, social workers etc. School aids,
paraprofessionals, certainly and those come from
different funding streams but without getting too
complicated.

So, you will have the ability to hire for those
positions if they're vacant. So, and you know, that
happens a couple of different ways. Maybe you gain
students, so you got additional funding and in order
to accommodate those students and serve them, you
have to make additional hiring, or you have some of
your teachers or other staff who left, and so, there
are vacancies behind that and again, you have to and
post that vacancy on a central system. Get
applications, do interviews with your teachers; I'm
saying you as a principal, with your teachers, and
then make the selection.

3 And so, it could be any one of a number of
4 titles. We're talking a lot about teachers because
5 they're so critical but that's true really, it's the
6 same basic system with all of our staff.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: So, I know that
8 positions have to be posted but do you have a sense
9 or an inventory on how many vacancies will be
10 available because it is perceived that there is more
11 or will be more excess teachers than finding
12 vacancies available.

13 DAN WEISBERG: Yeah, that should definitely
14 Council Member and I understand the concern.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Hmm, hmm.

16 DAN WEISBERG: That should definitely not happen.
17 I can't give you the number of vacancies yet, because
18 this is the process Lindsey's talking about.
19 Principals right now actually as we speak and you
20 know through the end of the month, are sitting with
21 their budget people and what we call scheduling their
22 budget. Meaning, they're putting their budget into
23 the system including the vacancies. So, we don't
24 have that number yet but it's going to be I would
25 say, conservatively several times the numbers of
excess teachers.

COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Okay, and is your office directly working with principals to sort of reconcile this? Because one thing I noticed in visiting the principals, it's like they're the CEO of their own school, right? Which means, that either they have to proactively go seek the help, but I don't really see it being rolled back down. So, I'm just wondering if your office, because of these cuts are proactively working with schools to figure this out.

DAN WEISBERG: So, before Lindsey answers because yes, there are specific budget people, there are HR people who are assigned to schools and principals. And a lot of times they have longstanding relationships. We actually, that was one of the things we didn't want to touch because of those relationships but I want to say first, we don't think this is operating perfectly at all.

Like you know this is something the Chancellor has been very clear. We are looking top to bottom in every single office and the ones that are serving principals, schools, school staff, uhm, we want to make sure there are clear commitments to good service for them because it is not consistent. We have some

great people doing that work but it's not consistent and the ones who are serving family and community, same thing, clear commitments to really good service. But Lindsey can talk about the support that is there.

LINDSEY OATES: Thank you. Yeah, I couldn't have said it better. We do have teams that work very closely on a day-to-day basis with their principals. Uhm and they work throughout the month of June and throughout the summer to ensure that they are programming their budgets and making those appeals that we've discussed previously.

COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Okay, thank you Chairs, and I look forward to working with you all to figure out how to address this in my district. Thank you.

DAN WEISBERG: Same here, thank you very much Council Member.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Council Member. Council Member Feliz.

COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Thank you so much. Thank you, Speaker Adams and Chairs Joseph and Brewer, and all of my colleagues for this very important hearing. Let me start by emphasizing how disappointing and problematic these budget cuts are. I represent one of the neediest districts in the Bronx and the

1 neediest regions in my district. The neediest
2 schools are the one's receiving the biggest budget
3 cuts. Just curious, has the Department of Education
4 done an analysis on the impact that these cuts will
5 have on the quality of education provided to our
6 students?
7

8 DAN WEISBERG: I can say we've done specific
9 analysis Council Member, but you know obviously we're
10 aware that where there are enrollment declines,
11 again, there are going to have to be some hard
12 choices made.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: And to your knowledge,
14 what will be the impact of these budget cuts on the
15 issue of quality of education for our students?

16 DAN WEISBERG: I mean, it's what you and your
17 colleagues have been talking about. In schools where
18 they have seen declines and the budget is reduced,
19 they're having to you know in some cases excess
20 teachers, redeploy teachers and other staff and there
21 will be programming changes and again, this is — I'm
22 not here to tell you this is a good thing at all.
23 This is not what we want. We want to reverse that.
24 So, we're talking in future years about increasing
25 budgets and increasing enrollment.

But this is producing some hard choice across the city. Now that always happened Council Member in schools that lost enrollment. This is not a new concept. What's new is, it's happening in more schools, more deeply across the city and yes, that is very unfortunate as the Chancellor has been talking about since Day 1.

COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Yeah, so there's been a decline in student enrollment. To your knowledge and based on the many conversations you have had, what would you say are the top five factors enrollment has done? I know you mentioned a few of them including COVID. What would you say are the top five reasons?

DAN WEISBERG: Yeah, and definitely I want to answer your question, but I hope I can come back and answer it with much better data because this is what we plan to do over the next six months to a year.

COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Yeah.

DAN WEISBERG: Is do much more talking to those families. Again, the ones who decide to leave. The ones who are still here, but maybe thinking about whether they are going to enroll their kid maybe in a parochial school etc.

COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Based on what you know
now.

DAN WEISBERG: Based on what I know now, I'd say
there are several factors. So, some again, beyond
our control, some families are moving out of the city
all together. I think a lot of that is due to the
cost of living, that I know is something the Council
is very, very concerned about. Some of it has to do
with the choices that exist, particularly at the
middle and high school level and parents feeling like
they don't have certainty that their child is going
to be in a school that they have confidence in. And
so, that's an issue of scarcity that the Chancellor
has talked about. That comes up again and again.
Sometimes it is about frankly bad experiences that
students have had and parents not feeling that their
student is either physically or emotionally safe.

So, the reasons are all over. Some of them are
not school specific. Many of them are and the things
that are school specific, that's what we got to
address.

COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: So, what are we going
to do differently? It seems like the neediest
schools in the entire city you mentioned are the ones

1 saving the largest budget cuts. What are we going to
2 be doing differently, so that we could start
3 restoring that trust and we could also be providing
4 that quality education that these students deserve
5 and need?
6

7 DAN WEISBERG: You know again, I mean I think
8 that is the \$64,000 question Council Member. I think
9 that's exactly the right question. I would you know
10 love at some point to hear your answer to that and
11 you know the answers of your colleagues. What can we
12 do that's going to be most effective to restore that
13 trust? But again, I think it comes back to you have
14 to have leadership, which is selected because they
15 are invested in listening and community engagement.
16 You have to actually get out there and talk to people
17 directly and through community organizations and they
18 have to respond to that.

19 So, I'm sure you could tell me Council Member and
20 maybe you'd be generous to do that for us. You know,
21 what are the top five things you're hearing from
22 families that they are not getting now that they want
23 to get from their public schools and then, within the
24 resource constraints we have, the job mainly
25

principals and superintendents but also us and the
Chancellor, is how do we provide that?

COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Yeah, has anything been
done though to restore that trust? Have any
conversations on any initiatives or plan started?

DAN WEISBERG: You know again, you're probably a
better place to answer that question, but I would say
yes, I think we have begun to create trust. Part of
that is just the fact that we've got a Chancellor who
is everywhere. Who is out there at CC's. He's out
there talking to town halls that you all have set up.
He's out there talking to elected officials. He's
out there talking to parents and what we do hear
again and again and again is they at least appreciate
that he is there. He is listening and we're trying
to follow in that same vein.

COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Chair Joseph, if I
could just ask two final brief questions?

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Make it brief.

COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Thank you so much.
Providing a quality education to every child but
especially to the neediest ones, the ones in the
neediest neighborhoods. Do you think that is

something that could be done effectively in the face
of these budget cuts?

DAN WEISBERG: Yes, I do. I think we can do
much, much better —

COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: In the face of the
budget cuts?

DAN WEISBERG: Absolutely. We have to do better.
We talked about a sound basic education, so that's
what's in the constitution. We have to do much
better than a sound basic education. We should have
a world class I think that Chair Joseph said this, a
world class education. So, yes, it's harder when you
don't have all the resources and the funding you
want. We have to be able to do it.

COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: And what factors are
the budget cuts going to have on class sizes?

DAN WEISBERG: We don't know yet. We absolutely
will share that data as soon as we have it. We don't
know yet, but you know obviously that's something
we're really going to focus on.

COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Thank you so much.

DAN WEISBERG: Thank you Council Member.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Uhm, as an
educator, I remember that they always say that data

drives our instruction and data drives my policy maker as a Council Member but today, as we sat and we listened to you, there was a lot of missing data. So, I'm hoping and praying that the New York Public School Department, Public Schools step up their game in obtaining data. Because that will also drive your decision that five years ago, we were losing so many students. Why wasn't it tracked? Why didn't we do better to retain them? That we wouldn't be having this discussion here today. We have to do better. If we promise them a sound education, we must deliver that. I just have a few questions for you.

Uhm, just for the record. Can you please tell us the total amount of Federal COVID-19 stimulus funding that the DOE has currently allocated to use in FY23, FY24 and the total for FY25? And I believe earlier you said that but to make sure that is correct. I just want to make sure for the record. The total amount of DOE Federal COVID-19 stimulus fund and unspent as of today?

LINDSEY OATES: Thank you Chair. So, the total amount of funding that the Department has received across all fiscal years is \$7.65 billion, and we've spent a little over \$3 billion of that funding. And

we can provide the stimulus breakout across the
fiscal years for you.

CHAIPRERSON JOSEPH: Okay, thank you. Council
Member Gale.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: So, in '22 and '23 Fiscal,
the City State funding increased by over \$500 million
from the previous year as part of the Campaign for
Fiscal Equity as you know, the lawsuit. And we know
based on what Governor Hochul has stated that the
city will see an additional increase in FY24. How
much is DOE expecting in increased state funds in the
next fiscal year? And is there any reason to expect
that this increase will be significantly lower than
the \$500 million and of course, the reason we're
asking this is because we assume that there will be a
large increase in state funding, maybe as much as
\$500 million. And if we expect that Albany will
provide all of these additional dollars for school
budgets, why is DOE not able to provide the \$250
million question to protect school budgets in Fiscal
'23?

LINDSEY OATES: So, thank you for the question
Chair Brewer. We do anticipate as you said, the
third and final year of the commitment to phase in

the increase in foundation aid in Fiscal Year '24.

We have as you point out, not yet received the full three-year phase in. I think in terms of what do we anticipate to see, it really depends obviously of course on what is in — whether the state holds their commitment in the Fiscal Year '24 budget and then also how our enrollment losses impact foundation aid. The Foundation Aid, which is the largest allocation to New York State Schools is also based on enrollment. And so, we are concerned that enrollment declines in New York City will ultimately impact the amount of money that we received from the state.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay, but it's my opinion that if you continue to keep cutting this year, then the enrollment might go down for the reasons adding to the Deputy Chancellors list as to why people are not going to send their school — their children here. You've got to have a teacher and you've got to have a small class. I'm not saying that the Governor's Bill is going to pass, the legislature but 3233 is too many and you're combining classrooms right now because you don't have enough teachers.

So, I wish you would think a little bit differently about this issue. Also, you're going to

be hiring 5,000 more teachers. Where is that money coming from?

LINDSEY OATES: So, people leave the system. It's attrition, there's attrition, people retire, people resign, and we have to backfill --

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: And you know for sure it's going to be 5,000?

LINDSEY OATES: No, we don't know that it's going to be 5,000.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay.

LINDSEY OATES: Those are historical numbers and I think it will be less this year, but we don't really know.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Do you have to find \$215 million? I know we talked earlier about the \$1.1 billion and all the accruals. I don't know that all of those are going to come through. You can't find some money in that \$1.1 billion, then you add in some of the state money and then you add in, I would happily find money in this federal money here. I know some of these programs and you can make them less expensive. \$215 million please.

LINDSEY OATES: I think we'd welcome your feedback about what --

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Alright, I'll be glad - I'll go line by line. Thank you very much. We are really serious about this money. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Council Member Shekar, two minutes.

COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Thank you Chair Joseph. My question was just - I think before your testimony was that there was a policy change when it came to excess teachers, where because what I'm trying to understand is why the teachers who are excessed can't be kept in the schools and the money that Chair Brewer mentioned or others have mentioned, be used to hire new teachers when there's a need for new teachers. So, it seems like that was partly a policy decision that was made, to put teachers in the ATR pool and I'm wondering why exactly that change happened and why here teachers can't be kept in their positions?

LINDSEY OATES: So, uhm, thank you for the question. I think as I have previously testified, part of required reductions in previous administrations was the elimination of the central funding associated with the absent teacher reserve. We do not have a budget to support paying these

people centrally. And so, we need to make sure that those folks go to funded positions elsewhere in the system.

DAN WEISBERG: And you're right, it was a policy change. I can tell you and you know in some past years as the Chair has talked about, there was funding and so, what that would mean is uhm, you would have like an extra teacher that wasn't budgeted for in your school who was paid for centrally. And if the world might be different if we still had that budget aligned but as Lindsey says, that was eliminated you know in some recent year.

COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: And so, what would stop the department now from reversing that policy change and for now, keeping teachers in their positions? There's clearly a need for additional funding or additional hires, sorry. But at that moment and time later in the school year when that comes up, to do it at that moment. What is stopping that reversal and policy? Because they are still being paid. Their salaries continue. Their benefits continue, so it makes no sense to me why they couldn't be kept in their positions and that policy reversed. Internal administrative policy reversed.

DAN WEISBERG: Yeah, no, no, I understand the question. I mean, literally, what's preventing it, is we would need additional funding to do what used to happen. Again, which used to be, there was a pot of money centrally and if you were in excess and you didn't get hired, it was you know, you would just get deployed to a school, maybe stay in your school and it would be paid for centrally.

Now, the way you might think about it is, you have ten teachers in excess here because of enrollment declines and then you have ten vacancies here because of enrollment increases. That's part of our budget. That's in Lindsey's budget to fund these ten positions based on the students that are in those schools. If you don't move, those ten teachers who are in excess to the ten vacancies and you just keep them there and then hire from the outside for those ten vacancies, then you got to fund ten additional positions. Which again, like in an ideal world that would be great, we just don't have the budget for that this year.

COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: No further questions. I just urge the Department to continue both of those — to consider both of those solutions as a way to

administratively and internally address this issue as
Chair Brewer mentioned, that we do need to address.

DAN WEISBERG: Thank you sir.

COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Mercedes, real quick.

COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Thank you Chair. Uhm,
you know it's difficult for a teacher to teach a
student that don't speak the language that they speak
right? So, what metrics do you use to determine
which school can have bilingual?

DAN WEISBERG: That's a great question. I mean
and I would love to come back again with our
colleagues from Teaching and Learning who oversee
those programs, but it starts with student need. So,
if you have as you do in your district Council
Member, if you have a significant number of families
that want to see bilingual programs, either because
they're speaking a language other than English at
home, and they want to make sure that their babies
are learning both languages as well and getting
instruction or because they just want their children
to pick up another language. That's when we will
provide it when the demand is there.

I will say just Council, something I'm sure you're aware of. There are constraints because we have to find the bilingual teachers and that's one of our shortage areas. We have a lot of areas of shortage for teachers. That's one of them but this is programming that we are very, very interested in expanding.

COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: From my understanding, I think you ought to cap, like you have to have a certain amount of students in the building before you can have bilingual in the building.

DAN WEISBERG: Happy to check on it. I'm not aware of that but I will check on it for sure.

COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Alright, so that's why we're talking about equity, and I know we're going to keep public school right?

DAN WEISBERG: Yes ma'am.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you so much to you both today. We still need the follow-up from the 2023 Fiscal Response Letter, so please uhm, yeah with the waiting for the response for the Fiscal 2023 Executive Budget Follow-Up Letter, which is more than two weeks late.

DAN WEISBERG: I was not aware of that but --

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Now you are.

DAN WEISBERG: But I'm going to check on that
immediately.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And now you are, and I'll be
waiting.

DAN WEISBERG: Yes, thank you Chair.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you so much to both of
you. The next panel coming up is uhm, Senator Robert
Jackson and Comptroller Brad Lander and Sarita
Subramanian from New York City Independent Budget
Office. Thank you.

Welcome to you both. RJ, you may start.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: I told her to call you RJ.

ROBERT JACKSON: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you.

ROBERT JACKSON: So, I was going to say good
morning but good afternoon.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Good afternoon.

ROBERT JACKSON: Chair Joseph and I'm happy to
say Gale Brewer, the Chair and the Council Members
that are here this afternoon, I was very happy and
listening to all of the testimony and especially
since Speaker Adams was here most of the morning and
through all of the hearing. I think that's so

important in the finality of what has to be done but
let me just thank you for having this oversight
investigative hearing and I'm not going to tell you
about my background. Most of you know. If you don't
you can just google me but directly opposed by
schools and union leadership. The city decided to
remove millions across all schools due to declining
student enrollment. It seems a perverse way of
penalizing our schools for having a healthier and
more appropriate teacher/student ratio.

We cannot incentivize keeping our schools
overcrowded in exchange for funding. The funding
formula for both Foundation Aid and Fair Student
Funding are imperfect and are by no means currently
designed to address the deep student needs of the
century. The formula is a flaw or bear minimum of
what the government needs to do to provide students
with a sound basic education. Our students deserve
more than the minimally required education and it's
our job collectively both here and up in Albany and
in the federal government to give it to them.
Especially after more than two years of being in the
pandemic and students in school communities are in
greater need every day as they face the consequences

of impairing learning during the pandemic. Increased gun violence, declining mental health due to trauma, delaying speech special needs services, continuing food and housing insecurity. Eliminating funding because of declining enrollment may sound pragmatic but in real time, it is already taking place in devastating communities. You hear people talking about it all the time. These are current budget cuts to staff and school programs. In my state senate district, Community School District 6, which is Carmen De La Rosa. District 5 and District 3 have seen depleted after school programs, fewer Summer Rising seats. People are complaining all over the place and schools with significant IEP's and low-income students seeing cuts as high as 25.6 percent.

The Mayor's Administration is quoted on saying that the decrease is not a cut. Well, if you have all this money and now you're getting a little bit more, it's a cut and it bleeds, let me just tell you. And principals and school leadership teams are going to have to reduce what they're doing and talk about the issues and concerns. So, really, what the bottom line is, I sat through this entire hearing, and you know what needs to be done. Over half of the City

Council was in these hearings today. Over half, including the speaker and the Chair of the Education and the Chair of various committees.

You are going to have to go to Mayor Adams and say, these cuts must be eliminated. No ands, if's or but's. And that's the voice of not only parents but the voice of members of the City Council of New York. That's what has to be done and I'm saying that loud and clear. So, whatever news that's going reported, Mayor Adams, come and deal with the City Council and put these cuts back in place. Our students need it, especially now during this pandemic. Nothing — no one can tell me that you cannot find \$215 million out of a \$37.6 billion budget. That's just in education and if he doesn't want to take it from there, then put some money in from somewhere else. That's what has to be done and I'm just saying that loud and clear. I'm not ashamed to say it. I'm proud to stand up and fight for the children of New York City and I will take it to Albany, fighting not only for New York City but for all of the children.

So, Chairs, let me thank you for your leadership. Don't be afraid. Stand up and fight back. The time is now. Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Senator Jackson.

4 Now, we're going to hear from our Comptroller Brad
5 Lander.

6 BRAD LANDER: Thank you Madam Chair. My
7 testimony begins good afternoon, but I know it really
8 doesn't feel like a good afternoon. I know today is
9 a grim day to be a woman or a person of color or a
10 public-school parent. So, I'm going to revise my
11 testimony still. Thank you Chair Joseph, Chair
12 Brewer and the members of the Council's Education and
13 Oversight Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to
14 testify today. Thanks also to all the parents and
15 advocates who are out here raising the alarm bell.

16 I'm going to try briefly to address four key
17 questions that I think more information is den date
18 as need than what you got from the DOE today. So,
19 one, what is actually being cut from school budgets?
20 Unfortunately, it is larger than you heard.

21 Two, what's the status of remaining federal
22 stimulus funding that could be used to fill those
23 gaps on a short-term basis. Three, how should we
24 think about the budget for the long-term in light of
25 enrollment decline and the end of stimulus funding
and the four, Chair Brewer, especially to your point,

what additional information and transparency do we need from DOE to answer those questions?

As RJ and many of you have noted throughout the day, as our city emerges from the trauma of the pandemic, our schools desperately need the resources to provide every tool to our students to help them recover and grow out of this pandemic and that means dedicated, talented, well-trained teachers, counselors, social workers, para professionals that we are fortunate to have here in New York City, as well as programming at arts and science, small class sizes, mental health resources and all the other essential supports that make our schools the engaging, nurturing, healing, learning spaces we know they can be.

So, first, what's actually being cut from school budget? So, as you did here, in the preliminary budget back in February, the administration projected there would be a net reduction of \$215 million from individual school budgets based on declining and shifting enrollment but to be more precise, you know what they said at the time was the application of Fair Student Funding Formula would otherwise result

in net reductions of \$375 million but they would
offset it with \$160 million in register relief.

One other important point, they indicated in the
preliminary budget that \$83 million of that \$215
would come out of fringe benefits and not directly
from school budget. So, if you're just looking at
what was projected in February, it looked like \$132
million cut directly to schools. But if you do your
best in the short time allowed, to analyze the school
budgets made available by DOE this month, you'll see
far greater cuts.

Calculating the net decline just in Fair Student
Funding for that core funding for schools, we now see
in school budgets a net reduction of \$372 million,
nearly three times \$132 million that they projected
back in February and that's a net number. So, it
doesn't fully reflect the cuts to individual schools.
FSF was originally imagined as a way to shift
resources between schools if one shrinks and another
grows. That's happened still to some extent but not
as much as you might think. Based on enrollment
increases, the DOE has provided Fair Student Funding
increases to 354 schools, that's about 23 percent.
But with broader enrollment declines, Fair Student

Funding has primarily become a formula that cuts resources to schools. So, many more schools, 77 percent of them by our calculations, 1166 are receiving cuts from their FY22 to FY23 budgets for a total, if you just look at those 1166 schools that are being cut of \$469 million. That's an average Fair Student Funding Formula cut of 402,456 across those schools or on average, eight percent of individual school budgets. Roughly 450 of them are getting cuts exceeding ten percent of their budgets. Dozens are seeing cuts over one million. Some as RJ said, as high as a quarter.

Obviously, that type of dramatic decrease is not something an individual school can absorb in one year without drastically impacting the essential services and supports that students receive. Like so many of you talked about today, as I've been going to graduations, I've just been asking the principals before I give out the awards. How big is your cut and what are you having to cut, and I know like all of you, what you hear back is just devastating. This morning, I was in a middle school in the Bronx where the principal said, I'm going to have to excess three teachers and I'm losing my last art teacher. She

1 said, "I used to have five. I had band, chorus,
2 drama, arts and ceramics." This is the last one for
3 that Bronx middle school.
4

5 Yesterday in Queens, a principal told me, uhm,
6 she's got a great new teacher who set up a lab
7 program that folks from around the district are
8 starting to come and see but of course newer teachers
9 are precisely the ones you have to excess. So, that
10 lab program that they have that's attracting
11 attention is going to be gone.

12 Two more notes here, first it is true as the
13 mayor indicated that City Tax Levy funding for the
14 Department of Education over all increased this year
15 by about six percent. Of course, costs rise from
16 year to year, and we saw that across all agencies.
17 Fuel costs are up substantially this year. That
18 doesn't change the fact that 1166 schools are seeing
19 on an average an eight percent cut.

20 And second, as advocates have pointed out, if you
21 look in Galaxy in total, \$1.7 billion are being cut
22 from our schools. Given limited transparency and
23 this is one of the problems, we can't really tell
24 what those cuts are. We suspect that most of that is
25 one time stimulus allocations, which schools were

told were not recurring, but you can't really tell from just looking at the individual budgets that are posted online.

Still, you know the basic fact relevant for this hearing, as we calculated as this and this is net of the hold harmless that the DOE budget director referred to, 1166 schools are receiving cuts totaling \$469 million to their core FY23 budgets. That's an average of \$402,456 dollars or eight percent of those schools budgets and that's 77 percent of the schools in the system.

Question two, what do we know about the status of stimulus funding. Here we disagree less with what the administration said, as you know, they are receiving more than \$7 billion in federal pandemic aid that you can spend over five fiscal years. As far as we can tell based on the data, DOE has spent essentially \$2.3 billion of that funding, could rise to \$2.7 billion once all the accruals through June 30th are calculated. But that leaves at least and then this, you know actually they gave a higher number. It leaves at least \$4.3 billion in federal stimulus funding left to spend over the next three fiscal years.

We also tried to take a look at how much of what was budgeted for this year in federal funding we think will go unspent because they budgeted a little bit over \$3 billion. As of June 20th, my office estimates that DOE has liquidated, had spent and recorded just a little over \$2 billion. Again, with those accruals, we think that number could grow to \$2.3 or \$2.4 billion but we're still talking about at least \$600 million that was budgeted to be spent in FY22 out of the stimulus dollars that will be rolled forward into future years. And again, that means that there's at least in total \$4.3 billion in Federal Stimulus Funding left to spend.

Now, as they said, as the First Deputy Chancellor said, those funds are budgeted for a wide range of important programs. Summer Rising, 3K expansion, academic recovery, support for students with IEP's, gifted and talented programs etc., etc.. And much of that will go to schools but you know Chair Brewer, as you made clear, this is a policy choice. The DOE is currently choosing to cut the average school budget of those 1166 schools by the average of \$402,000, while applying the remaining one-time federal stimulus funds to those other uses and I believe and

I know most of you share this and RJ just said it passionately, at this moment with our schools still reeling from the pandemic, that is the wrong choice.

So, I join you in urging the mayor to apply the rollover of stimulus dollars unspent in FY22 to hold core funding steady for schools next fall.

Offsetting the cut of \$469 million. I'm sorry, it's larger than the \$215. Would require about 20 percent of the \$2.4 billion in Federal Stimulus Funding budgeted for next year. That still leaves 80 percent to do a lot of other good things while not cutting the base budgets of our schools, which is where the teaching and learning really happens.

I'll be briefer on these last two points, how to think about budgeting for the long term in light of enrollment declines and the end of stimulus funding because this is a real challenge. We are seeing enrollment declines. Federal COVID stimulus will not continue, and we face sizable outyear budget gaps and the possibility of an economic downturn.

So, we do need to be thoughtful and responsible but the right way to do that is with a broad public conversation informed by data and values and far better to do when our individual schools are reeling

from those steep cuts. That's exactly what the stimulus funding was meant to buy us, was the ability to make good long-term decisions. Not reeling from harsh COVID budget cuts.

So, first as you heard, and Council Member Schulman really focused on this. The formula of projections, we need to see who shows up next September rather than to go with a projected set of declines. I heard the First Deputy Chancellor say, if you can show me, if you can prove to me that your enrollment for next fall is higher than our projections. But you can't prove that until next fall when the kids show up in the classroom. So, hold them harmless now and then base decisions on who shows up in the fall, rather than trend-based projections from two years of COVID enrollment.

Then second, I won't go too much further but you heard about the need over and over to re-evaluate the Fair Student Funding Formula, a per pupil spending model has benefits, but boy, it's got to be updated to ensure equitable funding and prevent these harsh cliffs you hit when you wind up excessing that fourth teacher and going from 23, 24, 25 kids in a classroom

to 30, 31, 32 kids in a classroom, even if you have five percent fewer students.

And then it's important to remember that while enrollment has been declining, the city and state tax revenue that provides the vast majority of school funding, is not based on the number of students. So, you know we saw increases this year in tax levy.

It's completely unrelated to how many students are in the classroom. Reductions in enrollment could be an opportunity if we make a broad set of responsible budgeting decisions with the funding and space we already have for additional reductions in class size that we have so long desired.

And then finally, as you guys focused on, we just need so much additional information and greater budget transparency while individual school budgets are available. They're not aggregated or tied to the greater DOE budget, making it difficult to tie Galaxy to the full budget as a whole.

Uhm, you know we tried to just use the initial allocations summary by district for FY23 but if you go there right now to the DOE website, the links don't work. And then there's a whole lot of information we need for the stimulus spending. We're

1
2 due in August or September for an updated spending
3 plan but we need real time, information on how that
4 money is being spent if we're going to make exactly
5 the question. You know, if we think, if this Council
6 thinks, if this city thinks that reprogramming money
7 to protect school budget cuts is a better use of that
8 money, we'll there will be some choices about what
9 not to spend it on, but you can't do that unless you
10 are getting real time information on what was
11 underspent this year and therefore is likely to
12 underspending in next year and then a wiser way to
13 track that money. So, many questions that not just
14 that you have, not just that we have but that parents
15 and teachers and principals all across the city are
16 asking.

17 In our role as budget watch dog, we'll continue
18 to track DOE spending all across the summer leading
19 up to school reopening this fall. Every time we get
20 additional information, we'll put it out on our
21 website. We'll provide it to the Council. I
22 appreciate your calling this hearing. Right now, is
23 the time when principals are making those critical
24 decisions. They can't wait till the fall to make
25 decisions about who to excess. About whether they're

losing their last arts program. About whether they are going to have three fourth grades instead of four.

This is the moment that they're doing it. Sending schools additional money now is what's necessary to make sure they can show up for every one of our students in the fall. Thank you so much for the opportunity to participate in this important discussion.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you both for your testimonies. Now, I'd like to call on Sarita Subramanian from IBO.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Sarita, just bear with us one moment.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Is Sarita Subramanian on Zoom, available and ready to testify?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Just give us one moment please.

SARITA SUBRAMANIAN: Hi, can you hear me?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You sound a little distant. No. Jan in the Chambers?

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: There we can hear you.

SARITA SUBRAMANIAN: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay.

SARITA SUBRAMANIAN: Good afternoon Chairs –

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

SARITA SUBRAMANIAN: Okay. Good afternoon Chair Joseph, Chair Brewer and members of the City Council. My name is Sarita Subramanian, I am Assistant Director for Education in the New York City Independent Budget Office. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I will refer you to my written testimony as well as a budget brief published in March, for more details on the reduction in school budgets that will be phased in over the next two years and a summary of the forgiveness of budget reductions that took place over the last two school years due to the pandemic. I will focus on a few key points from my testimony.

First is that uhm, factoring in both the reduction and the federal relief, the net reduction in the headcount as of the preliminary budget that was released was a reduction of 14– over 1,400 vacant positions in 2023 and 2,300 vacant positions in 2024. And then 3,200 vacant positions in 2025 and beyond.

Theoretically the vacancy reductions would reduce schools ability to hire additional positions. In

reality, schools may have already committed those funds. Previously available funds for other uses.

As we've discussed, city officials have indicated that the reduction was calculated based on the major adjustments and just wanted to summarize some of the restorations that have happened. So, for the current school year, the restoration impacted 1,200 schools that would have received budget reductions. An increase of 37 percent from the last school year and accounting for almost 80 percent of 1,500 city schools that are funded through Fair Student Funding. Enrollment of the schools funded through Fair Student Funding declined by almost 50,000 students, about six percent from last school year to this school year.

Please note that our population of this decline does exclude 3K, a population that grew substantially this year but whose funding is provided outside —

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

SARITA SUBRAMANIAN: Of the Fair Student Funding Formula process.

The end half of this reduction on schools budgets will depend on school's enrollment loss but also, not only school's enrollment loss but also which type of students schools lost. For example, the DOE's

formula provides the largest per pupils funds for
students in integrated co-teaching classrooms.

Classrooms with two teachers that serve students with
disabilities alongside peers without disabilities.

Based on next year's funding formula, each student in
that type of classroom in grades one through twelve
would bring an additional \$7,300 to their school on
top of the per pupil amount dedicated to their grade
level.

Although the Fair Student Formula was first
introduced in the 2007-2008 school year, it has never
been fully implemented without adjustments made to
the formula to hold certain schools harmless for
various reasons.

If the plans to no longer hold schools harmless
due to pandemic enrollment losses remain, the 2024-
2025 school year would be the first year in which the
fair student funding formula is fully in place for
all schools. However, reductions to school budgets
while schools are still trying to address learning
loss and other social emotional effects of the
pandemic may put pressure on principals to make
difficult decisions with fewer discretionary funds.

3 Thank you again for the opportunity to testify and
4 I'm happy to answer any questions.

5 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. There are not
6 questions. Thank you for your testimony.

7 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: I have a quick question.

8 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Oh, you have a quick
9 question, go ahead Council Brewer.

10 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: So, it seems — first of all,
11 thank you for all of your work Sarita on so many
12 levels and consultation.

13 So, there's different numbers. Obviously 215,
14 295 and the Comptroller had a larger one. And I
15 think in all cases, we need more money. So, my
16 question to you is we had the discussion about the
17 state money. We had the discussion about the unspent
18 federal money and of course reallocation of the
19 federal money. Do you have any suggestions as to
20 where that money should come from no matter what that
21 amount is?

22 SARITA SUBRAMANIAN: Yes, I'm sorry, I apologize
23 I had muted myself by accident. Can you just repeat
24 the question one last time?

25 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Sure, very quickly, there
are different amounts as to what we need 215, 295,

the Comptroller had another. The issue is, we need more money and so, we have state money that's available perhaps. We have federal money because we don't think it's all spent and there's a rollover issue. And then of course just reallocation of some of the federal money. So, do you have any suggestions as to where that funding should come from?

SARITA SUBRAMANIAN: I don't have any suggestions per say but something that we are looking into and similar to what the Comptroller mentioned, in the federal funds, based on our tracker, we see that roughly \$761 million is still unspent for 2022. It's possible that that amount could decrease as we get closer to the close. Uhm, but that is one thing that, in one area that we are monitoring.

Also, uhm, you know we're also still trying to get a better understanding of you know particularly for the \$1.8 billion budgeted for '23. More details about the breakdown of the programs that are budgeted for that funding, is something that we're looking into.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you so much. Next,
we'll have a panel of students, Niyo Gumbs, Anari
Coleman, Daniella Rodriguez, Brielka Rodriguez and
Keneisha Buckley from Urban Youth Collaborative.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: While the students are
getting up, I'd like to let everyone on Zoom know
that when you are called to testify, you will receive
a message that says, accept unmute and you will have
to accept that to be unmuted. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Turn on your mic.

NIYO GUMBS: Good afternoon everyone. My name is
Niyo Gumbs. My pronouns are he, him and I'm a
sophomore in high school in the Bronx and a Youth
Leader with Sisters and Brothers United and the Urban
Youth Collaborative.

Today, I'm here because it feels like young
people's demands continue to be ignored. The entire
budget session and previous budget session, young
people like myself across the city have called for
more investment in our care and to divest from
criminalization of Black and Brown folk. Yet year
after year we continue to see a huge investment in
policing in our schools and the resources and

positions that would actually provide social and emotional support.

This year has been especially disheartening after Mayor Adams proposed the budget which cut millions of dollars to our schools. It's disheartening because our own City Council Members have also voted to accept these drastic cuts knowing that young people need access to educators, counselors, social workers as our communities continue to recover from major economic crisis because of the pandemic. Many of our youth need social and emotional support after nearly two years of remote learning and our teachers need the tools necessary to support us to catch up academically.

Currently NYC schools have a ratio of 1-400 guidance counselors to students. As a student who wants to ensure that they are getting support that they need to succeed, I can't imagine what our schools will feel like. Due to budget cuts, we'd have less access to guidance counselors. It's not fair that I have to worry about knowing that my time with my guidance counselor might be limited, yet my interactions with police will increase.

To add on to that as well, I've met my guidance counselor at least two times this year and none of them were to help support my education. I leave this question with you. How can we ask for \$75 million to hire restorative justice coordinators in 500 high schools, \$45 million to implement restorative justice practices. \$75 million to hire 500 new school counselors and \$75 million to hire 500 new school social workers to get us closer to the 1-150 ratio of counselors, social workers to students. We continue to be told that there is no money, yet NYC has adopted a budget with the largest NYPD budget while cutting millions from our school.

Why is it that it is okay for our schools to hire more school police but not more educators, counselors and social workers? NYC should be ashamed of this budget and should listen to students call for police free schools. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Next.

KENEISHA BUCKLEY: Hello, my name is Keneisha Buckley and I'm 17-years-old and my pronouns are she, her, hers. I'm a Youth Leader at the Urban Youth Collaborative and I'm here today testifying at this hearing to express my faery and disappointment at the

Mayor and the City Council's recently past budget. Once again, you have failed to prioritize the needs of students like me in New York City and instead, prioritize our criminalization. I have been fighting for police free schools since the 8th grade. I'm now a center in high school and I'm tired. I'm tired of being targeted by school police. I'm tired of the fear. I'm tired of having to warn all the younger Black students that we're going to be treated differently simply because of the color of our skin and I'm tired of the lack of mental health supports in our schools. And I'm also tired of seeing students like me wait weeks to see our guidance counselors.

I'm especially tired that the New York City's elected leaders haven't listened to students like me but I'm here today to make you listen. Mayor Adams and the City Council, your budget is an injustice to students across the city. It is a slap in the face that your budget funds hundreds of vacant school cop positions. NYC already funds more school police than guidance counselors, social workers or restorative justice coordinators. And your budget not only continues this unjust pattern but makes it worse.

3 Your cuts to education budget will further harm
4 schools ability to invest in the staff and practices
5 and actually keep us safe.

6 It is outrageous that you cut millions of dollars
7 from the education budget while funding policing at
8 \$400 million. Shame on you for making cuts to the
9 education throughout the budget but passing the
10 largest NYPD budget in history. Shame on you for
11 portraying us as threats to our class aids and our
12 community members, and shame on you for not doing the
13 real work to create anti-racist, evidence-based
14 solutions to public safety.

15 The students of New York City demand that you
16 divest more than \$400 million for school policing in
17 the budget and invest it fully in our education and
18 the support we need. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you next.

20 DANIELLA RODRIGUEZ: Good afternoon everyone. My
21 name is Daniella and I use she; her pronouns and I am
22 a Youth Leader at Make the Road New York and the
23 Urban Youth Collaborative. I'm in the 11th grade and
24 go to school in Staten Island. I am here, infuriated
25 because last week Mayor Adams and the City Council

passed an unjust budget by funding police in our schools and communities instead of our care.

Mayor Adams has a responsibility to make our schools better, not worse. For years, public schools have been underfunded and often youth voices are ignored. My school is a community school. This is important to me because community schools provide support to students and families. However, this year, the mayor has cut off school budgets across all New York City. My school is facing over one million dollars in cuts. That is unacceptable. I've been struggling emotionally, and I felt silenced in this fight because there are not enough social, emotional and mental health resources for young people like myself. We don't have enough social workers to talk to about our problems and frustrations inside our schools.

While I am thankful for this budget's recent investments, like \$5 million for the mental health continuum to help students get mental health services, and the \$14 million to restore community school funding, it is not enough for all the 1.1 million students in New York City.

It infuriates me see how each year the city turns its back on us, as they keep passing a city budget that spends more than \$400 million on police in school. That is a slap in the face to all students. One day this year, I wasn't feeling well, and I was in the bathroom with a friend. The school police accused us of smoking weed when it was not true. They threatened to arrest us and made me feel intimidated. As a woman of color, I'm often scared of how police will treat me, and this incident scared me more.

In New York City, Black and Latinx youth represent many of all of us, despite being only 66 percent of the student population. It is time for student voices to be heard. Stop funding racist school policing and start funding our futures. With the \$101 billion budget recently passed, I know we have the money to fully fund our schools and remove police. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Next person.

ANARI COLEMAN: My name is Anari Coleman. My pronouns are she, her. I live in Staten Island, and I am in the 9th grade, and I am a Youth Leader at Make the Road New York and the Urban Youth

Collaborative. I am here today because Mayor Adams and the City Council chose to fund hundreds of vacant school cop positions while cutting the Education Budget by millions.

The length are — I can't say that work, I'm sorry. Are willing to go to criminalize us Black and Brown youth never fails to amaze us but is failing 1.1 million students across New York City expectations of safe and supportive schools. Schools are supposed to be welcoming. Police in schools do not make us feel safe. Just by having young people like myself go through metal detectors is a start but racist system criminalizing us. I'm tired of seeing how Black and Brown students are treated by cops inside of our schools and how our communities and in our communities. We are people too.

Instead of investing in more restorative justice counselors workers, we've been calling for Mayor Adams and the City Council have made millions of dollars of cuts to education that will further harm schools abilities to invest in these practices that will actually keep us safe. Our futures are being cut as our past who present are being further

developed. How can that be a budget New York City
elected officials want to adopt?

We have been extremely vocal about our demands,
and we need to relocate funds from policing students
to actually student care. I am mad, along with many
of my peers because the City Council and the Mayor
keeps failing us by passing another city budget that
spends more than \$400 million on police in schools.
It is time for students voices to be heard with a
\$101 billion budget recently passed. I know we have
the money to fully fund our schools. Do not send
students – no, do not send schools into this summer
with uncertainty. Push Mayor Adams to fund our
schools and not school police. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Next.

ZULEIMA DOMINGUEZ: Good afternoon, my name is
Zuleima Dominguez and I'm a Leader/Organizer at Make
the Road New York. I will be reading on behalf of
Breilka. Uhm, their testimony, they had to run to
work.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: I know. Thank you.

ZULEIMA DOMINGUEZ: So, her testimony starts,
hello, good afternoon. My name is Breilka. My
pronouns are she, her. I live in Staten Island. I'm

in 10th grade and I am a Youth Leader at Make the Road New York and the Urban Youth Collaborative. It is unbelievable that New York City elected leaders never fund money to fully fund our education, but they always fund money to fully fund the NYPD. Mayor Adams and the City Council choose to pass one of the largest NYPD budgets, while cutting the education budget by millions of dollars.

On November 5, 2021, I walk into school with the best energy and vibe. As I was entering my school, I realized suddenly, I had to go through random scanning. That got me tense and scared because the police were there. I took all my keys, and anything metal related, then I proceed to go through the scanner. For some reason, I was pulled to the side without any explanation. I was scared.

A school cop padded down my legs and around my body in front of everyone. I felt a hot wave on my face and that was because of the embarrassment and anxiety. No student should go through that. No student should go through what I went through going into the place that's supposed to be safe.

My school is a community school. This is important to me because community schools provide

support to students and families and have access to exams, something but I wish all students across New York City will have access to. We need our city to double down on investments in education, not cut our school budgets.

While I'm thankful for the budget investing \$14 million in community schools across the city, I am really angry that my school is losing over one million in funding this year with the recent cuts. That is the last thing students need right now.

New York City needs to stop spending money on police in schools. Let me be clear, NYPD's budget did not remain essentially flat. As many Council Members are saying. The budget has the largest NYPD budget ever. For years, we have been extremely vocal about reallocating funding from policing students to social, emotional and mental health support. There are more school cops across New York City schools than social workers, guidance counselors and schools nurses available for one million students.

Every time students of color like myself walk inside a school building, we go through metal detectors. We get treated as a problem, but we aren't the problem. Racist policies are the problem.

Police never have and never will be the solution for our problems. The school shooting in Uvalde makes clear that no function of a school police is not safety.

Police are unable to prevent harm, nor they increase the overall safety of the schools. Using our own fear to fund police is manipulative. Now more than ever we need everyone to stand by us. The students of New York City demand to this body to push Mayor Adams to fund the school and not school cops. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you for your testimonies. Thank you so much.

ZULEIMA DOMINGUEZ: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Call the next panel President Michael Mulgrew for the UFT, Greg Monte for the UFT, Renee Freeman and Chanel Quintero.

Good afternoon and you may begin Michael Mulgrew. Thank you.

MICHAEL MULGREW: Good afternoon and thank you Chair Joseph and of course our wonderful other Chair and thank you for all the work that you've done throughout for our schools and I'm by colleagues who will also be testifying. I think we all understand

1 that what is going on here is that the Department of
2 Education and the Administration of the City of New
3 York has decided to cut its schools at the very worst
4 time you could possibly do it. We've heard all of
5 the numbers. We've heard the Department of Ed's
6 testimony and we can poke holes in that all day long
7 but for us, the schools are facing something very
8 simple. We have never had a strike adherence to a
9 per pupil funding formula and that is what they have
10 now done to the schools of New York City.
11

12 At the very time, that formula was designed many,
13 many years ago, on the previous Mayor Michael
14 Bloomberg who never had a great love for public
15 education to begin with. And they're using that
16 strict adherence to the per pupil funding in saying
17 they are rightsizing our school system. This Mayor
18 and this Chancellor both were very, very vocal when
19 they came into office about the dismantling of the
20 Department of Education and making sure that the
21 school system for the first time fully starts to
22 serve and support the students in the schools of New
23 York City and in their very first budget, they went
24 backwards into an old funding formula that does not
25 allow the schools to supply the services it needs.

At the very time, you're asking schools to do more than ever before. And if someone does not stop them from doing this, the students of this city will be greatly hurt and face even more damage as we get away from this pandemic.

There is federal money. The parents, the teachers, the students of New York City advocated for federal money because we know what the pandemic and the damage it was doing. We also went to Albany, the same group and fought for all of that money. All of that money came here to New York City for our students and schools. Not to be left in a piggybank that's going to be spent for something else later on.

So, it really comes down to, are we, the parents, students, teachers going to stand with City Council and say, this is not going to happen. You are going to backfill those cuts and you're going to come up with a real plan, a real three-year plan about how we're going to fund that school properly and make sure our school system is doing that it needs to do, which is supporting and educating the children of New York City. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Next person.

CHANEL QUINTERO: Hi. So, on April 14th of this year, seven of my colleagues and I sat on [INAUDIBLE 4:12:48] not too far from here and filled you in on what we teachers needed. In order to make sure that we were giving the children of New York City everything they needed to succeed.

You heard us speak of autonomy, curriculum, special education services, support staff, and support for staff members. We also spoke about staffing in general and classroom sizes. All of these things require funding in order to happen, especially after the return to learning post arduous journey that we've just endured.

City and state officials listened, looked us in the eye and we're mostly in agreement on solutions that we had proposed. Things that were sustainable, actionable and will have a direct positive impact on our students. None of this can be accomplished without adequate funding, let alone the cuts that you have approved.

This cut is going to force schools to reduce the number of teachers they have increased – have increased class sizes and remove or cut back on many of the things that support our students well-being

and enrichment. Furthermore, this gaping hole in funding is going to affect the way our students learn. We cannot and will not be able to continue to make up for lost time, close the gap or even enhance the education of our students without funding to purchase curriculum, supplies, or fully fund afterschool programs that so many of our families rely on.

We cannot continue to cut corners within an already broken system and expect our children to be resilient. We cannot continue to cut corners and expect our children to surpass the learning expectations set forth by the same elected officials that have no problem pulling the rug out from underneath them. To this, I offer you our personalized example of what it means to cut in our school. Even with our normal school budget and funding for academic recovery, our schools still manage not to have enough teachers to properly staff classrooms.

Some of us like myself, do the job of four salaried employees, just to keep the school running. With these cuts, we are now looking at playing God and choosing which kids can join afterschool

programs, which literally takes meals out of their mouths. We do not have enough money to purchase materials for a curriculum that we were mandated to select in order to instruct our children the way that they need to learn. We have to pick and choose what we can afford, not what they need. And to the Mayor's moto of get stuff done, if you're a parent or you've ever encountered a child, you cannot just get stuff done with them.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Next person.

RENEE FREEMAN: Good afternoon. My name is Renee Freeman, and I am a Para-Professional at the Academy of Medical Technology. I would like to start by saying, I wish the mayor was here, so that I could look him in his eyes. So that I could say to him, I need you to listen, to understand what it is that I'm saying. Not listen to respond to what I'm saying.

See, when you listen with understanding, we can have a conversation and we can come to a resolve but when you listen just to respond, you come at us angry and not hearing what we said but you're responding to the things you did not like.

So, I don't want him to do that. But what I will say at my school. We suffered a 12 percent cut,

which roughly amounts to \$724,000. I am in an area in Far Rockaway where a large population of my students are low-income students. They do not have the things that many have.

This cut can hurt tremendously. When we talk about SCL, which he said he wanted to help with, we have students who are suffering. Suicidal Ideation is real and in order to help these students, we need the guidance counselors, the social worker, the art programs, the music programs. Many times, students won't talk about their situations, but they will draw a picture. They will write a rap. They will sing about it without the funding and teachers being excessed, we cannot do it. Eric Adams made a statement when he was campaigning and said, he loves New York City schools. Well, this is how you show it? You show it by pulling the rug from up under the children. You love the children, and this is how you show it. You show it by taking the money out of the schools and causing you to have larger class sizes. If you're in a classroom with one teacher, and not with a paraprofessional, and the teacher is writing on the blackboard, due to social, emotional issues, things happen. Teachers are unable to resolve those

problems because they're only one person. We need our support staff, and we need Eric Adams to restore the cuts and remember, he himself had a special need when he was in school. It was a teacher that helped him, and he probably had a paraprofessional as well.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Next person.

GREGORY MONTE: Good afternoon, my name is Gregory Monte, I'm a Special Ed social studies teacher at FTR High School in Brooklyn New York and thank you for having us this afternoon.

I'm here today because for the past ten years, I have proudly joined other professionals who consistently answered the call to serve our students. Our schools at this point face a turning point to emerge from the pandemic stronger than before but unfortunately, Mayor Adams is leading us down the wrong path with these budget cuts. I strongly urge the City Council to reverse Mayor Adams unnecessary budget cuts that will profoundly undermine quality public education across this city.

When COVID demanded the versatility of our school communities, we answered the call with our usual dedication. When the pandemic forced us to teach remotely, despite shortages in technology for our

1 students and the usual bureaucratic inertia, we
2 answered the call with our usual dedication. When
3 the pandemic forced us to teach remotely, despite
4 shortages in technology for our students and the
5 usual bureaucratic inertia, we answered the call
6 again. When students needed counselors and social
7 workers, during one of the most vulnerable periods in
8 many of their lives, we answered the call. And when
9 students needed paraprofessionals for educational and
10 emotional support, we answered the call.
11

12 When COVID exposed glaring inequalities our
13 students face on a daily basis, we answered that call
14 by securing \$7 billion dollars in federal and state
15 funding, as well as a state mandate to cut class
16 size. Today, \$4.6 billion remains unspent.

17 You can understand our shock then when we looked
18 up from our laser focused dedication to see Mayor
19 Adams shortchanging our schools this September.
20 Citywide, 303 out of 467 high schools will be cut a
21 total of \$141 million in Fair Student Funding. In my
22 borough of Brooklyn, 77 out of 131 high schools will
23 have their budgets cut totaling \$43 million in Fair
24 Student Funding.
25

Each school effected will lose an average of \$556,000 or 12 percent of Fair Student Funding. These cuts mean that teachers risk being excessed, new counselors and social workers cannot be hired. Art and music teachers can be cut, and their funding cut yet again, and class size will increase despite a New York State mandate to lower class size and despite New York City receiving the funding to make it happen.

At this crucial turning point, for our entire school system, we can and must reverse these cuts and I urge the City Council to answer their call. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you for your testimony. I'll call the next panel. Thank you all.

The next panel is Shirley Aldebol from Local 32 BJ, Leonie Haimson Class Size Matter, Michael Lance Class Size Matter, Andrea Ortiz New York Immigration Coalition, Kalris Salas RJPS, Smitha Varghese from AQE. Smitha, are you here?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, while these people are getting set up, I want to say that the next two panels will be on Zoom, and I want to let people know in advance so that you'll be prepared. So, the next

panel, we'll start with Randy Levine Advocates for
Children, Eman Gad Girls for Gender Equity, Quadira
Coles, Girls for Gender Equity, Lori Podvesker
Include NYC.

The Panel after that will be Gregory Brender Day,
Paulette Healy from Citywide Council on Special
Education, Lucas Healy a District 75 Student
Advocate, Camille Casaretti CEC15 and Cloya
Huggins(SP?) the Parent Action Committee. And please
remember when you are on Zoom that you will have to
accept the message to be unmuted. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: You may begin, thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED: My testimony is rather detailed.
I'm not going to read it, I'm just going to summarize
some of the most important points, which is, we've
known that there were going to be cuts to Fair
Student Funding since February. What we didn't know
is how large the cuts would be to overall Galaxy
budgets, and we actually did the analysis on June
12th and June 13th with the help of Michael Rance and
another assistant. We added them up individually
from the look up tool on the DOE budget and they did
equal \$1.7 billion as of June 13th. We found that 98
percent of schools were losing funding while only 29

1 out of 1,535 would gain funding. The average cut per
2 school was \$1.1 million or 13.9 percent and though
3 the DOE may add funding over time, they have actually
4 told schools that they cannot use that for staffing.
5 The federal money cannot be used for additional
6 staffing.
7

8 I really hope that the Council demands the actual
9 budget cuts from schools. They obviously have them
10 and if they don't provide them, I urge you to use
11 your subpoena power because this is the kind of
12 transparency which you have the authority to demand
13 and we as citizens do not.

14 You know, these are going to cause the largest
15 class size increases since the great recession in
16 2007 and 2008 but unlike that time, we are flush with
17 cash. The city has a reserve fund of \$8.3 billion,
18 nearly \$5 billion of non-spent federal COVID relief
19 and expected surplus next year of more than \$1
20 billion, \$1.3 billion extra from foundation aid and
21 Chair Brewer mentioned that we got this leaked budget
22 document from the DOE showing that there was unspent
23 \$1.1 billion in funds that have been allocated to
24 schools in Fiscal Year 2020 and 2021. That the DOE
25 was asking schools to cancel because they couldn't be

rolled over because they can be used for other purposes.

The Comptroller's Office has confirmed to me that that's in addition to the nearly \$5 billion in unspent federal funds. These monies that are sitting right now in the DOE's budget. Michael, you want to go on?

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you.

MICHAEL LANCE: Great, thank you so much. Thank you and good afternoon everyone. The mayor seems to be defending this budget by saying that he is still fully funding Fair Student Funding. What has not been sufficiently discussed is that the Fair Student Funding Formula has never been either fair or sufficient. And this is especially now given the critical situation our schools are in after two and a half years of COVID.

According to a survey sent to principals by the Fair Student Funding Taskforce in 2019, nearly 80 percent of the principals identified large class sizes as a consequence of that formula. Some principals have even said that the formula, when fully funded, is aligned to class sizes of 28 or more. Many parents, teachers and principals this

year, for the first time, students are provided with the smaller classes and the individual attention that they needed to succeed.

And this is because the DOE released schools from handcuffs of the SFF formula. That together with the enrollment decline has provided schools with the unique opportunity to provide the small classes that many administrators and teachers had known for years would offer New York City children, better opportunities to learn and better opportunities for teachers to get to know each student well enough to support their academic growth.

Now the Class Size Matters undertook an online survey and conducted individual interviews with parents, teachers and principals about the conditions in their schools this past year and many responded that despite the controversies of mask wearing, omicron and all the other disruptions, this year it has been exceptionally meaningful because class sizes were small enough in many schools to provide students with the individual support and attention that they had long needed.

So, we urge the Council to do everything that you can to ensure that these budget cuts are restored,

especially after two plus years of the pandemic,
smaller class sizes are more critical than ever
before to give the in-person support that New York
City's require. Students need to make closer
connections with their teachers and peers and those
connections can only exist in smaller classes. Thank
you.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you, next. Smitha.

SMITHA VARGHESE: Uhm, hello.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: You can bring it in front of
you.

SMITHA VARGHESE: Is that good? Is that good?
Hi, my name is Smitha, I'm the New York City Campaign
Coordinator for the Alliance for Quality Education.
As a result of our advocacy, the Campaign for Fiscal
Equity was one and as a result of the litigation, the
Fair Student Funding Formula was developed. You
heard today, you know the Fair Student Funding
Formula, it was a good start, but we knew it wasn't
perfect and everyone talked about how it's not
perfect today. And I just want to say, this is not
likely — this is not new information, and it actually
feels like a slap in the face to the advocacy groups
like AQE and other equity groups who are in the you

know, a part of the initial taskforce. We developed these recommendations. None of this is new information.

And so, you know, instead we are told recently by the Chancellor that we're going to get yet another unfunded DOE taskforce even though we explicitly asked for an independent funded commission. And you know, this is something that we tried bringing to the Council, to the education leaders attention for months now and we just heard crickets until the final hour. This hearing is after the budget was voted. We are talking about the formula after the budget is voted, so forgive me but it feels, a lot of this feels very performative.

Uhm, to add insult to injury, in order to further reduce costs, this administration has reduced the base allocation funding per student, which will amount -- it will amount to a regressive cut, as we've heard. So, you know, we have the money and I want to say, you know, we clearly have the money. People have said today that we have the money and even without the federal dollars, this Council, so many of you endorsed our platform for police free schools for ending segregationist policies like gifted and

talented, yet this budget is directing almost half a billion dollars to school police.

We are instead of eliminating and phasing out gifted and talented, we are expanding on gifted and talented. And I just want to say, Chair Joseph, you know just for the future, we hope that there will be transparency and engagement for stakeholders. Many advocates — this wasn't a transparent process.

Gale Brewer, you know, Council Member you went on the record saying this is out of all of your years, decades and decades of being in office, this is the most transparent budget process you have ever experienced. Respectfully, that's the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard. This has not been transparent. Advocates have been shut out, iced out of this whole process, told by budget negotiation members that we can't stand with you, sorry. And then at the final hour, we are being called to stand with you. That's not how you work with advocates. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: You are done? Okay, next.

ANDREA ORTIZ: Thank you. I'm Andrea Ortiz from the New York Immigration Coalition, the Steering Committee Member of a Citywide Coalition known as New

York for Racially Just Public Schools. We are here to demand that you stop the cuts to public school funding because all students deserve caring, culturally responsive and healing schools. City officials must restore \$1.7 billion in cuts. It's the only way that we will be able to provide the holistic services, programs and resources all students need and deserve in the midst of the pandemic.

The Council must pass a new or amend the budget resolution before the 30th to restore all cuts. Let's face it, the public-school cuts are unnecessary and cruel and will disproportionately affect historically underserved schools and communities. Cutting school budgets while simultaneously increasing police budgets, suggest that policing Black and Brown bodies is more a priority than investing in children. There's no excuse. We can use the \$4 billion left in unspent federal funds. We have a state funding increase of \$475 million and we know that the city's not struggling because they brought in billions of dollars in additional tax revenue — uh, in added tax revenues.

So, it's disingenuous to blame the catastrophic cuts on federal funds drawing up or a general lack of school aid funding or even have this hearing now and the transparency now after the vote. A child's wellbeing is a prerequisite to learning but we know that even before the pandemic, most public schools weren't fully equipped to help immigrants, students facing trauma or economic hardship because far too many of the schools have never been fully funded. And for decades, AQE, parents, students, educators and advocates like us, have fought to secure additional state funds. So, we know we have a unique opportunity to fully fund our schools now. Yet this year's budget negotiations lack transparency and were unnecessarily rushed and ended in catastrophic cuts, but the city can fix it. We — even with the help of the federal funding, I know we can restore the \$1.7 billion in cuts with the available state aid or available city revenues. There's really no excuse. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you, next.

KAHRIS SALAS RAMIREZ: Good afternoon. My name is Dr. Kahris Salas Ramirez. I am part of many of these coalitions but more importantly, I'm going to

share with you my experience on the panel for educational policy as the Manhattan Borough Presidents PEP Appointee. We did take some time to have some of these conversations with the Department of Education, however, this particular administration did not have their mayoral appointees in January. Therefore, our schedule in terms of having these conversations was pushed over for a month.

Once we started having conversations about Fair Student Funding and raised the concerns that were lifted by the taskforce two years ago, the Department of Education still didn't have the opportunity to educate the mayoral appointees on how problematic the Fair Student Funding Formula was. Therefore, we have another meeting where the vote does not pass for Fair Student Funding Formula.

We end up getting the Department of Education to agree to a work group. Some of us wanted a funded commission but we at least got them to agree to a work group that would have an expert financial analysis on what Fair Student Funding can look like and how we can change these variables in order to fully fund our schools but more importantly, focus on our most marginalized students. What they're not

telling you is that students in specialized high schools and students in audition schools get a far greater wait in their funding than our Black and Brown students, then our immigrant students, then our English Language Learners that our students with disabilities and our students with IEP's and therefore, we want to correct that.

Yesterday, four of us voted no on the estimated budget. It was performative because we did not have the opportunity to engage our communities in these conversations in order to have an appropriate budget and work collectively with City Council to fully fund our schools. Now is the time for you guys to step up for us and make sure that our schools are fully funded. Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, my understanding is that Shirley Aldebol from Local 32BJ, is on Zoom, so we're going to call on Shirley to speak next on Zoom.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Remember to accept the unmute message when it comes.

SHIRLEY ALDEBOL: Okay, thank you so much. My name is Shirley Aldebol and I'm representing the Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council, not DC37.

Uhm, we must address the systemic root causes, such as economic disparity, racial equality, education inequities. Until we solve these problems, somethings will remain the same or get worse. Some people are okay with this, but CPAC is not. We need to start valuing education and investing in our children like we should be. Without education, we don't have the careers, the professionals, White Collars, Blue Collars etc.. The way we conduct business must change.

How about letting central carry the salaries of the New York City DOE employees, so schools don't worry about paying their teachers. The funds they have to spend is directly on students. Teachers will not be excessed because there's not enough salary in the school budget for them to stay. The budget in smaller class sizes go hand and hand and all through the first six months, we kept saying that education budgets will not touch our schools but here we are. Thank you for having this hearing. We have not seen a fully potential – the full potential of fully funded New York City public schools.

\$4 billion was given by State Legistor to help fund smaller class sizes. How are we spending that

money? Who are we serving? The one percent? The ten percent? Are we here for all New Yorkers and when it comes to education and New York City public students and their families, should we decenter a focus? Mayor Adams appears to listen to New Yorkers who are influential, and this usually translate to those who have money. With money comes power.

But I have something to say, knowledge is supposed to be power, and our students deserve knowledge. We all deserve knowledge. This is how we empower. We want our students to have high quality education. We want elected officials to not forget about educating –

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

SHIRLEY ALDEBOL: Can I finish please?

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yes, please finish.

SHIRLEY ALDEBOL: We are the fabric of this city. Our children are the future and vitality and prosperity of the great city. We should be investing more and not less on the items that we have the greatest impact on our children's education. History will be a reflection on how we treat and care for our citizens. When it comes to high quality education that is equitable and provide for its students, all

the services, resources and opportunities that they deserve and need. What will history say about us? The more things change, the more things stay the same. Normally, intelligent and practical individuals take what works and improve on it, expand on that. Not do a 180, turn us around and lead us back to ground zero.

People might not want to hear this, but Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*, was trying to move from there but we're heading back to the great disparity again. The has and has not. When someone can't breathe and it reaches to the point that they're turning blue, the consistent misrepresenting of data and facts, lack of transparency on how money is spent. Most of the money for education is not reaching our schools, our children and their families, it will turn to desperation. Do anything to ensure that they can't breathe to stop breathing. We are at a focal point here. Do we really want this to happen? Do we want the pressure cooker to explode? The time to talk has passed and the time for action is now. Put the money where your mouth is. It is time to put people in place who will listen and not placate, is few words that we want to

hear. Hold each other accountable for the greater good. Elected individuals that align with our children and education and for New York City.

As educators, we need to stop making the same mistakes and expect different results. Why would families return to public schools with all these budget cuts besides the high cost of living. If you weren't on the PEP, please listen to the recording. Listen to your fellow New Yorkers, New York constituents. Again, Chancellor Parent Advisory, thank you for the opportunity to speak. Thank you for your service to the city.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we're going to stay on Zoom now for a while. The next panel will be Randy Levine, then Eman Gad, Quadira Coles, Kaveri Sengupta and Lori Podvesker and up after that will be Gregory Brender, Camille Casaretti, Cloya Huggins, Paulette Healy and Lucas Healy. Going to Randy.

RANDY LEVINE: Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Randy Levine and I'm Policy Director at Advocates for Children of New York. When we testified before the City Council at the Preliminary and Executive Budget hearings, we made

clear that the city should reject the mayor's proposed cuts to education and to make key investments to better support the students we serve. While we are pleased that the adopted budget includes funding for several important education investments, such as the mental health continuum, immigrant family communication, shelter-based community coordinators and early childhood education for children who are undocumented, we are deeply concerned that the budget continues to cut school budgets.

Taking into account register relief, more than 400 schools serving a total of \$185,000 students are seeing cuts of over ten percent to their Fair Student Funding allocation. At 189 of those schools, more than 85 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. We regularly hear from families, including families of students with disabilities and English Language Learners whose children are not getting the instruction they have a legal right to receive, much less the support they need to thrive.

In fact, according to DOE data, as of November 2021, more than 31,000 students with disabilities were not fully receiving their mandated special

education instruction, so we were very concerned about the impact of school budget cuts on all students and especially the students with the greatest needs.

These cuts come at a time when the city is grappling with the unprecedented educational disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. But also, at a time when the DOE has received \$7 billion in federal COVID-19 stimulus relief funding. While much of the funding was allocated to important programs and services, such as make up special education services and school social workers, hundreds of millions of dollars were originally allocated to fraud categories, such as programmatic support and operational support.

Today's hearing still left us with many questions and the Council should examine where every dollar is going and identify how much funding is still available to prevent schools from having to make cuts. The city should also reexamine the Fair Student Funding Formula that is -

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

RANDY LEVINE: That is driving these cuts. As a member of the city's Fair Student Funding Taskforce

under the previous administration, I know there are major questions about the equity and adequacy of this formula that need to be examined and addressed. We join our partners in calling for a funded independent commission that can access ways to allocate school funding equitably and ensure schools have the resources they need to serve all students. Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Randy. Next, we'll go to Eman Gad, Girls for Gender Equity.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

EMAN GAD: Hi, good afternoon all, Chair Joseph and Brewer, and members and staff of the Committee on Education and Oversight and Investigations. My name is Eman Gad, I am a Policy Fellow at Girls for Gender Equity, and I am giving testimony on behalf of Quadira Coles, our Deputy Director of Policy.

I want you all to image a fully resourced school of classrooms full of well-trained staff, supplies, technology and support that is available to help teachers inside and out of the classroom. A fully funded school with programs and activities that will provide students with skills and experiences that will benefit them in their adulthood. A school

1 culture free of heavy-handed policing, surveillance
2 and policies that push out students and instead,
3 prioritizes supporting students immediate needs and
4 well-being through restorative counseling and
5 mentorship, in order to help them navigate their
6 school experiences and learn.
7

8 These are all things students deserve but the
9 Fiscal Year 2023 school budget as it currently stands
10 would not provide them these opportunities. At the
11 top of this budget season, we have asked the city to
12 prioritize healing centered and police free schools
13 and invest in students education through restorative
14 services, programs and support for school staff by
15 way of a substantial education budget. This will
16 force schools across the city to cut important
17 programs and lose staff at a time when the needs of
18 young people have actually increased.

19 Any amount of budget cuts to education has a
20 tremendous impact on Black, Brown, queer and disabled
21 students who already face barriers to learning. It
22 is unforgivable that at a time where students are
23 still picking up the pieces from lost instruction
24 time and structure during the pandemic, the city does
25 not see value in investing in their future.

Let's be clear, New York City schools have never received the full funding they deserve and need. Yet officials claim to be concerned about the students educational outcomes. Instead of common-sense allocations to things that will support students who have fallen behind academically, addressing mental health and emotion concerns, giving students a space and opportunity to be creative and busy or support teachers and staff who need to make a living during an economic crisis, the city has instead decided that increasing the school policing budget, not replenishing vacant positions and moving funds away —

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

EMAN GAD: I finish please? It is more important than helping students recover from the pandemic in holistic and meaningful way. The impact of these budget cuts are dangerous to our students future and the lack of transparency makes it hard for our youth to believe in the city's ability to take care of them.

We strongly urge the decision makers here to reallocate the proposed cuts back into the school budget, plus invest more funding to one, hire 2,000 New Yorkers in schools. Two, invest \$75 million to

hire restorative justice coordinators in 500 schools and \$45 million to implement restorative justice practices. Three, direct \$360 million in new funding to grow school climate supports and four, baseline \$5 million to sustain the mental health continuum initiative. And finally, move money away from youth policing period. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Quadira please.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Is Quadira Coles in the Zoom. Okay then we'll move on to Kaveri Sengupta, the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

KAVERI SENGUPTA: Good afternoon. My name is Kaveri Sengupta, and I am the Senior Policy Coordinator for Education at the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Alongside the New Yorkers for Racial Just Public Schools Coalition, CACF believes that all students including AAPI students deserve caring, culture responsive healing and fully funded schools that inspire them, center their humanity and provide them

with an abundance of supportive and nurturing resources. Yet this budget does not move New York City public schools toward realizing this vision. It is not sufficient to meet students' needs and was passed despite this fact. Even while the city received the revenue necessary to ensure schools did not face unnecessary cuts, cuts that are especially unconscionable, as our students in school communities are still recovering from the impacts of COVID and need sustained investment.

The city ultimately passed a budget that directed that funding elsewhere. As always, these decisions that further entrench our system into operating under a model of scarcity disproportionately harm our most marginalized students. AAPI students comprise 16.6 percent of the New York City student population attend over 95 percent of our public schools, make up almost one in four English Language Learners and over 15,000 have an IEP.

A share of AAPI students in New York City public schools has grown during the pandemic. These students and families need more investment, not less. While we appreciate the investments made and some key priorities including community schools, language

access for the limited English proficient families and the mental health continuum, these pieces are not comprehensive or holistic wins, especially given the skill the cuts our schools are facing.

We're also disappointed by the justification provided around losses in enrollment, as the city is not proactively invested in culturally responsive and language accessible approaches to improving access to our schools. Enrollment losses are not simply related to hesitancy or necessarily easily rectifiable by winning families back. They're rooted in the real challenges for families such as those with children with disabilities or older English Language Learners to access and receive proper services in the public schools.

The city including the Mayor, City Council and the DOE must tackle systemic access issues holistically but continue investment in our schools –

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

KAVERI SENGUPTA: Rather than removing it. Can I finish? Although we agree that the Fair Student Funding Formula is flawed and must be updated as soon as possible to better reflect the weights that will meet the needs of our students, we also believe that

3 during the budget process, City Council had a
4 responsibility to ensure that enough funding was
5 available to sustain each school in the city budget.

6 Thus, we call on the City Council to do all it
7 can to restore these cuts. Thank you.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next, we have
9 Lori Podvesker, and the next Zoom panel is Gregory
10 Brender, Camille Casaretti, Cloya Huggins and then in
11 person we'll have Paulette Healy and Lucas Healy.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Lori, if you're in the chat,
14 if not, we will move on to Gregory Brender. Moving
15 on to Gregory Brender.

16 GREGORY BRENDER: Good afternoon. Thank you so
17 much for the opportunity to testify. My name is
18 Gregory Brender and I'm here on behalf of the Daycare
19 Council of New York. We are the membership
20 organization and early childhood providers of New
21 York City and I wanted to just talk a bit today about
22 some of the ways the budget impacts early childhood
23 and some of the continuing needs.

24 First, I want to start with thanking the City
25 Council for some of the key investments, including a
\$10 million investment to support child care for

undocumented children. A \$46 million investment to support increases toward salary parity for the Early Childhood staff and a \$6 million investment to support a COLA for the Human Services Workforce, which will hopefully include the Early Childhood Workforce.

We urge the Council and the Administration to go further because early childhood centers are still struggling to keep their doors open and to ensure that children and families have access to high quality education.

We urge the city to take the following steps: First, to suspend the pay for enrollment system whereby providers are docked when there are fluctuations in enrollment. Given the changes of the pandemic, enrollment has continued to fluctuate while costs have remained steady, and the communication increase leading to a Fiscal issue facing many providers.

Second, to complete the unfinished work of salary parity, we are grateful that the Council and Administration did put some funding into the FY23 budget for salary parity, in particularly want to ensure that future salaries include longevity

increases, as well as address those staff members including directors and support staff who were not part of the original 2019 agreement to the move towards salary parity and finally, we urge the city to allow community-based providers to use community based enrollment to enroll families into the programs that they already have a connection with.

Many families already have a strong connection with community-based organizations and are afraid to use the city's centralized enrollment system. Thank you so much for this hearing and for the opportunity to testify and we look forward to working with you on these issues.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Gregory. Next, we're going to call on Camille Casaretti. Camille followed by Cloya Huggins.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, if Camille is not there, we'll go to Cloya Huggins.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

CLOYA HUGGINS: Hi, good afternoon. My name is Cloya Huggins, I'm part of the Parent Action Committee and a proud parent of eight children and I'm here to speak about the impact, the cut, the

budget cut will have on my children and other children of my community. It was a great honor to be here, so I can give my voice as a parent.

We have benefit greatly from all of the initiatives that you guys have put together to help us but we as parents also need more help. We also need more help, so we can be better prepared to help our children in this day and age. We need also more funding's for the schools, so the children can be more diverse and have more technology, more books and everything that they need.

It's not just about having the police. We are grateful for the staff. We are grateful but we need more help from my community and I'm so thankful to be here to give a voice on behalf of parents. Give a voice on behalf of children, young, teenagers and everyone. I'm so thankful that if you could more consider us and with more help and thank you so much and have a blessed month for this time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Cloya. Now, we're going to move to in-person, Paulette Healy and Lucas Healy. I'm going to ask in-person witnesses to please pull the mic up close to you so we can hear you.

Okay, so Lucas, you're going first.

LUCAS HEALY: Hello Council Members. My name is Lucas Healy and I'm a D75 student. I have autism and I will be starting high school in a D75 inclusion programs where I'll be learning alongside general education students for units with D75 special education supports.

For the first time in four years, I will be able to attend a school in my own neighborhood. When I started school in kindergarten, I was non-verbal. Meaning, I had a lot to say but I do not have the skills to have my thoughts heard.

I am here today to testify in front of City Council because of my teacher and my various therapists. What the DOE is doing right now, cutting — is cutting positions in our schools is a disservice to students like me. If my leg was broken, would you take my crutches away? If I was starving, would you lock my food away? That would be ridiculous.

Then don't disable students further by taking away our teachers. I don't care where the blame falls. All I know, the results of these cuts our schools are losing programs, service teachers.

Students like me, our potential will never be
unlocked without them. Thank you.

PAULETTE HEALY: As Lucas had said, I am his
mother. My name is Paulette Healy, I'm a returning
member of the citywide counsel on special education
and a member of parents for responsive, equitable,
safe schools, press NYC.

Before I start, I just wanted to give a quick
thank you to Council Member Nurse, Cabán, Richardson
Jordan, Ossé and my dear friend Council Member Avilés
for knowing how unjust the proposed city budget was
and voted no.

We learned today that out of our 1,600 schools,
1,120 have experienced cuts and that was information
shared by Council Member Restler, not by the DOE.
So, for that, I am grateful to you Chair Joseph for
providing a platform in order for us to get that
information. Let's make no mistake, the DOE is
paying a shell game with our tax money. The First
Deputy Chancellor showed immense disrespect to this
Council today and the Chancellor shucked his
responsibility to this abysmal budget cuts, back on
you, the City Council by saying at last night's PEP,
that the vote on the estimated operation budget was

procedural and that it was already decided by you.

And these cuts, no matter how the chancellor and mayor tried to rebrand or manipulate it are cuts. They harm, they hurt and it's our children who will be suffering for it.

Council Member Brewer, please use your authority as Oversight Committee Chair to investigate how the \$277 million for Summer Rising was divided because principals are struggling to staff the academic portion of the program on top of trying to spin dolly how to run their schools based off of these wrong projections that the budgets are based on.

Lastly, thank you Mark Treyger for being the only DOE rep to still be here to hear public comment because you value the voices of the parents and the teachers and the staff and the administrators that are effected immensely by these cuts. And, just as an example of these cuts, I live in District 20 with my son. We are, as a district, we have 47 schools. We are experiencing \$29 million in losses because of these cuts.

I have one school that is being shut by 30 percent. They are losing 30 percent of their budget and they serve 766 members in their school. 97

percent of them living under the poverty line. They are losing 16 teachers right now. So, we need to reverse these cuts immediately and restore what is equitable to our schools. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I'd like to go back to the Zoom, I'm told Camille Casaretti is there. Camille.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

CAMILLE CASARETTI: Hi everyone. Thank you so much. Good afternoon Chair Joseph and Chair Brewer and Committee Members. My name is Camille Casaretti. I am President of District 15 Community Education Council in Brooklyn where we represent over 35,000 students and their families and grades 3K-12th grade. We are known as a district who worked collaboratively and put students first in our decision making and are greatly concerned that the mayor and the people leading the Department of Education are not doing what's best for children. Our children in schools need to be prioritized, returning to prepandemic levels of funding is not the answer.

I'm begging you, please prioritize education and give our children what they need. The unused funds are sitting there, reduced Fair Student Funding, no

plans for the almost \$5 million in Federal COVID Relief. None of this makes any sense. Our district received a spreadsheet that was inaccurate and did not reflect what was actually happening in our schools. Student headcounts for next year were grossly underestimated and we know this is true because our principals to a very thorough job with registered productions. One of our schools has 47 incoming students already registered and was only given a budget for 30 of those children.

Our district had cut down the deficit almost in half and we are still being forced to excess staff. Our schools are putting in appeals that are being denied and which is a time consuming and frustrating and unnecessary process. It's creating an atmosphere of distrust and confusion. We are losing arts programs, cluster teachers, science teachers in our elementary schools and through a language program, stem labs and science lab programs are being destroyed with these cuts.

Everything that makes this school special is going to be gone and professional development –

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

CAMILLE CASARETTI: Funding is being cut.

Classes are being forced to be at contractual capacity and using a formula that is completely ineffective. We have a school that needs three PSL teachers and that is the only way that they can meet their students mandated needs, but they are being told by our borough office that this school should only have one PSL teacher based on the number of students that they have.

So, there is no acknowledgement that the ELL students have different services. Some of them have pullout questions, only good surveys and [INAUDIBLE 5:01:37] determines what the levels of need are for these students, but the schools are being told is that they have to have their teachers based on just the number of ELL students that they have, which doesn't make any sense. It does not allow for the school to actually meet the mandated services.

This counseling is being cut. We have an enormous amount of students living in temporary housing, which the only way this new budget plans that they are going to get services that they need, is for them to have an IEP and of course, we don't want our schools giving children IEP's that do not

1 need IEPs. So, this is the environment that these
2 budget cuts are creating. We're going to be losing
3 our daytime academic intervention services. The
4 reading coaches that we have and math coaches that we
5 have are going to be cut and we have children that
6 are in some cases a year behind and really struggling
7 to keep up. We need all of these supports.

8 So, uhm, I also have a lot of concerns about IEP
9 services being reduced because if the register count
10 is so low, that means that our principals -

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Ma'am, can you please wrap
12 up? Please wrap up Camille.

13 CAMILLE CASARETTI: Excuse me?

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Please wrap up, you're over
15 time.

16 CAMILLE CASARETTI: Oh yes, certainly. You know,
17 I'm just very worried about IEP mandates being met
18 because the principals can't budget appropriately
19 based on what they're given and the register counts
20 that are inaccurate. So, uhm, I just want to say
21 thank you so much for holding this hearing and we
22 really hope that City Council is going to be able to
23 help make significant changes with your support. So,
24 thank you so much. I really appreciate it.
25

3 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. The next panel,
4 Chauncy Young, Herman Younger, Elton Dodson, Natasha
5 Capers. Thank you for your testimony.

6 CHAUNCY YOUNG: Okay, first, Chair Joseph,
7 Council Members, thank you for holding this hearing.
8 I'm going to really throw out my speech. I was
9 reviewing the speech that we gave in March in the
10 first hearing and certainly wish that we had held
11 this hearing again prior to the vote. I want to just
12 say, in the nearly 20 years that I've been advocating
13 for educational justice, this is one of the most
14 difficult periods that I think we have ever
15 experienced and just in terms of transparency and
16 uhm, Gale, you were my Council Member when I first
17 moved to the city, and you were the biggest advocate
18 for education. Every school in your district. You
19 knew, you supported, and we always felt like you had
20 our back. This situation with this Mayor and this
21 Chancellor, I know they are not transparent with
22 Council. It didn't feel like Council was transparent
23 with us as advocates and parents in this process uhm,
24 you know I applaud you know Council Member Restler
25 and Council Member Krishnan and all the Council
Members that took the strong stance to vote no. I

wish some of those words from our Council Members would have been here before the vote and I understand the system, how it works. Our speaker and have funding when you stand out and put your district on the line, but I just want to say that this has been a tragic situation for New York City schools and it's not too late for Council and the Mayor to sit down and work out something for the best of New York City schools and New York City's families. Thank you.

HERMAN YOUNGER: Good afternoon Chair Joseph and members of the Committee. My name is Herman Younger, and I am a Community Organizer with New Settlements Parent Action Committee serving the Bronx. I want to start off by thanking the few Council Members who remain here with us today to hear from the public. Chair Joseph, I recall fondly in a meeting with Dignity in Schools that you were an educator as recently as December of last year. I now reflect on that fact with the implications of what \$215 million in budget cuts will do to public education.

If you were an educator today, what could that do to you? For the countless other Black and Brown educators, for the countless Black and Brown students in need of quality, public education. The hypocrisy

of Mayor Adams and Chancellor Banks is astounding.
They would like to celebrate the recently unveiled
Black studies curriculum while proposing to reduce
the quality of education for Black and Brown lives
that pave the way toward excellence.

Yet, while this budget cuts almost one billion
from the DOE, the \$400 million school cop budget, a
force that is run by the NYPD but is funded by the
DOE, was protected from any cuts and in fact,
received an additional \$13 million. The priorities
of Eric Adams and David Banks are clear. To defund
our public schools while filling them with police
officers that target, harm and arrest Black, Brown,
and disabled students, further perpetuating the
school to prison pipeline and school to deportation
pipeline.

Now, let's get real. Under the Mayor, Council,
Government model, the Council serves as a check
against the mayor. Therefore, I'm going to
respectfully ask that this City Council not scapegoat
the DOE or the Mayor on this issue when it is in the
power of the Council to amend this budget. Shame on
this disgraceful administration and shame on any
Council Member who does not vote to amend the

catastrophic budget cuts to public education.

History has its eyes on you. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Next person.

ELTON DODSON: Good evening. My name is Elton Dodson, I am the Executive Director of the Mural Justice Project, a dad to three kids that are in DOE or graduated from it. Also, on the SLT at PS295. I want to thank you for this hearing and for the difficult work that you are all doing. I feel like right now this is a little bit like buying a car, driving off the lot and then returning and asking for a different price but that's where we find ourselves today.

I'm going to deviate from the comments that you have in front of you a bit in light of the PEP meeting, the PEP meeting last night. I want to go over 2590G which is the New York law that governs the PEP's and the CEC's submissions of their total estimated budget. This process has been -- has not been followed for years. This is a process that has created a situation in which none of you were properly equipped to vote on that meeting that was called at the last minute for the budget and why were you improperly equipped? Because the Chancellor, and

I'm not putting all of this on Chancellor Banks or on Mayor Adams because this has happened long before them. The Chancellor, as he's always done, made an emergency declaration to suspend the 2590 process. Now, what is the 2590 process? We should all know this. It's a process that requires essentially grassroots, community-based budget planning for our schools. Something that we have not followed at all.

The CEC's in each district, along with their community superintendents should be assessing their principals, accessing their teachers and staff and their students and asking, what do you need? That information along with the similar assessment made by the PEP is submitted to the Chancellor who then submits it to the mayor, ahead of the budget process, in which all of you voted on last Monday.

That was voted on last night by the PEP. The last time I checked last night was after you had adopted the budget. Explain to me how we are not in violation of state law under 2590, which is sub queue of that budgetary process when you never received that estimated budget from the PEP or the CEC's. You couldn't have, it was just passed last night under what Chancellor Banks referred to as a procedural

vote. There are no procedural votes when they're talking about the future of our children. Thank you.

NATASHA CAPERS: I am Natasha Capers, mother of two public schools students, one of which graduated high school just a few days ago. A parent who fought for the campaign for Fiscal Equity for a decade, a founding member of New Yorkers for Racially Just Public Schools and the proud Director of New York City Coalition for Educational Justice. This is my 11th or 12th budget fight, and this is CJ's 16th. We as parents and organizers are not new to this budget fight or process, we are true to it.

This is Mayor Banks budget. Sorry, this is Mayor Adams budget, and the DOE has slashed their budget because their boss Mayor Adams has instructed them to do so. So, CAJ is calling for the City Council to pass a new or amended budget resolution before the 30th to restore all the cuts. To do what is right for children, even when the DOE can't or won't. I got into organizing because my children who are now 18 and 16 years old, who were in the first grade and PreK. A school that I had attended as a child was on a closure list. I learned about the deep disinvestment, not just in their school but there are

all Black and Brown schools across the city. I got involved, helped to save our school and helped to make it a thriving community school. Seeing these budget cuts that are now coming to schools is heartbreaking in ways that are beyond words. The lessons that I, CJ and millions of families learned during the Bloomberg privatization and still stand true today.

Budget cuts never improves outcomes for students. Budget cuts never build caring, culturally responsive schools with highly qualified educators. Budget cuts like these are one of the many ways that White Supremacy and systemic racism continue to show up in public education.

For months, advocacy at organizing groups like CEJ and RFJPS have been ringing the bell about these cuts. The effects on children, educators, schools, and we need the Council to not just listen to us but to work with us to fully fund and create the schools that deserve our children.

The same groups who rang the bell during the Bloomberg era are the ones sounding the alarm right now, but our work effort, words, tears, have all fallen on deaf ears. We have seen this in the past

and a very similar privatization mayor. We saw this during Bloomberg. The argument of lower enrollment is a recycled one. It is a lie. It is a lie, and it is one from Bloomberg but with a new name. The old name was school utilization, and it was used to co-locate and close schools to open Charters. Low enrollment is the new argument and if we are not careful, it will be the cause of the new on slot of closures in Black and Brown in low-income schools across our city.

Just know this, that if you are confused by the DOE and City Hall's numbers, that is by design, and it is a tool of White Supremacy and systemic racism.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you so much for your testimony. Thank you. The next panel is Anna-Maria Thomas, Jenna Weinberg, Bliss Brayard, and Lupe Hernandez. Good afternoon, you may proceed. Thank you.

ANNA-MARIA THOMAS: Good evening to all of our Education Committee members and this investigative hearing. I want to thank you for having this. I'm a 77-year-old elder, 39 years working in the New York City Department of Education retired educator and you've heard that much of what you're seeing today is

not knew. I have watched this since 2001. The New York City public schools budget in 2001 when Bloomberg became Mayor of New York City was \$28 billion. What happened to this money and why is there a continued effort to defund our New York City public schools? The continuous defunding of our New York public schools created public schools which lost important supportive services, such as school nurses, and doctors who gave students dental and hearing examinations.

School psychologists and social workers, guidance counselors, our prized school aids, librarians and school libraries, science laboratories, and the removal of subjects such as music, art, phonics, where you learn to read, grammar where you learn to write and penmanship where you can sign your name on a check. None of this is being taught in our schools today and taken out of the curriculum.

The new so-called mathematics has all parents in a quandary because they cannot help their child with their homework. I implore the Education Committee to realize our children need all these services restored along with the inclusion of computers issued to students starting in grades three. The digital world

is taking over every aspect of communications. This continued defunding of our New York Public Schools is a grave injustice to our children. All our students deserve the best education from this greatest state in our nation, New York State. Thank you for this opportunity to present.

Oh, and I did not — did I say my name? Dr. Anna-Maria Thomas. I am a Lobbyist for the children.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Next person.

LUPE HERNANDEZ: Hello, my name is Lupe Hernandez. I am actually one of the Borough President Appointees. Thank you Gale for the community Education Council for District 2.

As a parent, I am disappointed and alarmed by the cuts to the DOE that were approved in this 2023 budget. There have been various figures cited ranging from \$215 million to \$1.7 billion worth of cuts to the DOE. And while I'm troubled that so many elected officials seem unable to say with certainty the exact dollar amount they already voted to strip from public education.

Vaguely pointing to supposed federal funding that offsets the cuts, what I am certain of is that these cuts have a very real consequence at all of our

schools, and they are being felt in a real, in real time. Principals across the city have received their budgets and have already had to make painful decisions to cut vital programs like arts education, sports programs, field trips, restorative justice, and even worse, to let go of staff including teachers, guidance counselors, nurses, social workers, all of the people that have kept our children safe in a time of so much grief, loss and uncertainty.

Our most vulnerable students will be impacted the most. These students were barely getting the support that they are federally mandated to receive. Our children deserve so much more as do the school staff who have literally put their lives on the line to care for our children during this prolonged COVID crisis.

These cuts, the largest passed in many years, will devastate our schools. Undo any progress that has been made in the past year to improve the mental health and wellness of our students and their academic success. And it just plunged the entire system into chaos. Just as we are collectively beginning to find our footing after three uniquely

challenging school years, the rug is being pulled out from under us and under our children. We are being told that this is simply because enrollment is down. Yet, many principals throughout the city say that the projected enrollment numbers were grossly under represented and far from the reality of the true students enrolled and that will remain in their school throughout the fall.

We are being told not to worry and that something will be worked out before next school year. Why were their enrollment projections so low to begin with? The funds that are restored later in the school year, do not help the schools retain the staff that they need to support all of their children and they need those funds now. We need to know exactly how our schools will be fully funded and how and when their budgets will be restored.

Staff changes have already been made. How will that be fixed before September and when the reality of these cuts become more widely understood, no doubt that will lead to parents deciding to pull their kids out of the public schools. Deepening this supposed crisis in enrollment decline and leading the more budget cuts under the Fair Student Funding Formula.

Which we knew that formula was inadequate to begin with. And those weights need more funding. Students with disabilities need more weights added. It's not fair that students in specialized high schools and screened middle schools are getting more funding, yet our most vulnerable students are not.

Students in temporary housing don't get any additional weights. This budget as is, is detrimental to the ones that need the support more than ever. Please go back, amend this.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: We're working on it. I have a question for you, does the CEC — have you gotten data? Have you gotten for either from the Superintendent or DOE or because you have a pretty sophisticated group of CEC members from every school? I mean, I'm just wondering if you've been collecting that?

LUPE HERNANDEZ: Yes, we received the Galaxy spreadsheet. I've gotten more information from parent advocates than I have from the DOE.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: So, the information you have is not from the DOE, the data? It's from the advocates?

LUPE HERNANDEZ: It's from the Galaxy and it does match with the principals that I've spoken to, which is disproportionately, it is very different than what the projected enrollment is showing. I know even my son's principal has said, "we know we're going to have -- the DOE is going to owe our school money" The problem with that is, my son's autistic. He needed a para when they didn't include that in the June budget, he didn't get that para till February.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Right.

LUPE HERNANDEZ: By then it's too late. These kids need the support come first day of school, September 8th, we need these -- the para's need to be there for the kids, the social workers.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: I know, I'm just focused on data.

LUPE HERNANDEZ: Yep.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay, so you haven't -- nobody has given you school by school data from DOE except through the Galaxy?

LUPE HERNANDEZ: Through the Galaxy.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you.

LUPE HERNANDEZ: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yes, go ahead. Thank you.

Good afternoon.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Good afternoon.

JENNA WEINBERG: I almost didn't make it but five and a half hours later, I am here because my middle school students asked me to come. And they asked me to come here today to be their voice to tell you a few things.

Amelia says, "Do not cut our afterschool programs. They are the spaces where we get to be our happiest selves." Allie says, "These experiences help me step out of my comfort zone." Jonan says, "Art is such an important part of our lives. It brings together a group of people who might otherwise not know each other to build an amazing community." Soshia says, "I would not be who I am today without theater."

This week, instead of focusing on end of the year pizza parties, field days and graduations, our students and alumni recorded video testimonials, made art work pleading with the DOE, wrote letters to the mayor and organized a walk out in defense of the teachers and programs that have shaped them.

My name is Jenna Weinberg, and I am a Theater Teacher and I'm a Save 39 in Kensington. I'm a

Brooklyn Native and I am a proud product of the New York City public school system. This year, our students overcame so much. To finally experience their first standing ovation in a packed auditorium or to take home a championship with their basketball, volleyball and soccer teams, after the two years of isolation during COVID.

If these budget cuts happen, our students will be robbed again of these formative experiences. Late-stage funding for sports is useless if our coach George leaves our school in an effort to save a colleagues job. There can't be a musical even if a grant shows up in February if our school has already let go of our music or our theater teacher.

For many students, these experiences are what actually motivate them to come to school. To push through their academic hurdles and to overcome personal obstacles and they foster a true sense of belonging because our kids have a place to shine and be celebrated for who they are, and they do not take it for granted.

It is absolutely worth fighting for. Even if everything stays the same and nothing changes and the tide does not turn, it is my job as an educator and a

role model to stand up for the world we want to see
instead of just accepting the world as it is.

I'm here today modeling that for my students. I
know my community is watching and we're asking the
Mayor and the City Council to take action to align
yourselves in solidarity with students and families
and teachers and stop this budget from moving forward
as is. Please, listen to the public who has all
spoken up so beautifully and articulately today and
to the educators who have been showing up every day.
Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you so much.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: May I just make one -- we're
looking at suggestions and I heard from the DOE that
\$3 billion is being spent for our Charter schools. I
don't pay taxes for Charter schools, and I don't
think anyone in this city pays for Charter schools,
which do not have the same regulations as the public
schools do. They are not public schools, and our tax
dollars should not be going to Charter schools.
Maybe we can use that \$3 billion for the cuts that we
are having in our public schools. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you so much. Thank
you.

1 COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION JOINTLY WITH THE 285
2 COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you all.

4 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Alright, the next panels will
6 all be on Zoom and I'm going to call the next panel
7 from Teachers Unite. We have Bella Week, Lara Gibbs,
8 Charlotte Pope, Madeline Borelli and then we also
9 have a Marissa Manzanares.

10 And the panel after that, so you can get ready is
11 Marilyn Mendoza from Make the Road New York, Mark
12 Gonsalves from PS199 PTA, Greg Mihailovich from the
13 American Heart Association, Emily Helstrom, the PTA
14 President of PS343 and Nicole Giaco. So, remember
15 people on Zoom to accept the unmute message when it
16 is sent to you. We'll begin with Bella Week.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay if Bella Week is not
19 available, we'll go to Lara Gibbs.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Not present. Charlotte Pope.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Madeline Borelli.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

25 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Marissa Manzanares.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we'll move to the next
panel. Marilyn Mendoza.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, Mark Gonsalves.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

MARK GONSALVES: Hi, good afternoon. Thank you
Chair Joseph, my Council Member Chair Brewer, thank
you so much. My name is Mark Gonsalves, I'm a parent
of two students with disabilities. I'm also PS199's
PTA President and a CEC3 member living in District 6.

We heard the data today. It's not \$215 million
in cuts to the DOE. It's \$1.7 billion to the schools
in the Galaxy system. That's why we're here today.
\$215 million should have been able to be absorbed
with all the one-time spending that happened with
federal funds in FY22. Instead, DOE decided to go
after our students. The DOE made actual cuts to all
students with adjustments to the Fair Student Funding
Formula. We've heard the trauma from school leaders
as they are facing these DOE mandates and not getting
the support from the DOE.

I'll give you an example, PS199M, we had budget
cut of two and a quarter million dollars in Galaxy or
30 percent when we factor out grants compared to

FY22. District 3 had cuts totaling more than \$33 million or about 19 percent. District 6 for Council Member Brewer had \$30 million in cuts. We heard from Mayor Adams though, these cuts were just due to enrollment declines but that's not what the data showed. When you look line item by line item in Galaxy, we saw differences.

For example, PS199, the parent coordinator position was cut by 12 percent. We have to have a parent coordinator, that's the law. So, we got to take money out of the classroom to fully fund the parent coordinator and that did not just happen at 199, it happened all over. So, where did this money go? That's what we need you as Council Members to find out. Why are we bloating the bureaucracy in the DOE? With superintendent staffs going from five on average to 40 or 50. Why are superintendents --

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

MARK GONSALVES: Budgets going from under \$100,000 to in the millions of dollars. Why are we wasting money outside of the classroom and not funding our students?

We need the Council to rectify these wrongs. You have the power to stop these cuts. That's why we

trusted you and that's why we elected you. I thank
you for your time and your support.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Mark. I'm told
that Marilyn Mendoza from Make the Road is in the
Zoom. Marilyn.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

MARILYN MENDOZA: Hi, good afternoon Chairs
Joseph and Brewer, members of the respective
committees. My name is Marilyn Mendoza, and I am the
Education Justice Organizer at Make the Road New
York. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on
the impact, the adopted FY2023 DOE budget will have
on youth and immigrants in working class communities
of color.

Make the Road New York is a nonprofit community-
based membership organization with over 25,000 low-
income members dedicated to building the power of
immigrants and working-class communities. To achieve
dignity and justice through organizing, policy,
innovation and transformative education and survival
services. Our education justice project fights to
improve public schools for students and their
families. As the Education Justice Organizer, I work
with parents every day to tackle the problem of

overcrowded schools. Secure the resources our students need and ensure our parents and students have a larger say in their education, regardless of any language barriers.

In the past week, I have received emails, messages and phone calls from dozens of parents asking, what can be done to reverse the decision by Mayor Adams to cut \$250 million from DOE's budget. Parents whose children attend schools like PS14 in Corona Queens are facing cuts in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. They know that these cuts are not just numbers on a balance sheet. These cuts will result in increased class sizes and cuts to arts programming and other vital services and supports our communities have fought for and won.

They know this because for decades, their schools have born the brunt of systemic underfunding, which has already resulted in classrooms bursting at the seams, making it difficult for students to get the instructional time they need.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You can finish your statement.

MARILYN MENDOZA: Uh, thank you. How can we cut the DOE budget at this moment on the heels of this pandemic that has wreaked havoc on our communities? All the while, our schools have uhm, more police officers than guidance counselors and billions of dollars are in unspent federal relief remains untapped. We need our city to double down on investments and education, not cut our schools budgets.

I'd also like to add that a lot of our parents who are Spanish speaking, joined the livestream and they were disappointed that there was no interpretation services offered for the livestream. There can't be any transparency or counsel, or DOE cannot claim that it is being -- that it's including parents voices, if you don't include non-English speakers in decision making. Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Marilyn. The next panel is Greg Mihailovich from the American Heart Association followed by Emily Helstrom PTA President of PS343 and Nicole Giaco. The following panel is Michael Athy(SP?), Milyn Weon Navatny, Robin Bowers, Jennifer Dorty and ENG Witman. Greg Mihailovich you're up.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, if Greg is not here,
then we'll go to Emily Helstrom. Emily.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And apparently Emily is not
here, so we'll go to Nicole Giaco. Nicole.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

NICOLE GIACO: Hi, my name is Nicole Giaco, I
have two children, one in elementary school and one
in high school. Uh, everyone that I have heard
because I've had to come on and off of the hearing
has been so knowledgeable and spoke so eloquently and
I'll be brief because I think a lot of what I already
had to say has been said. For me the highlights have
been the fact that my son goes to a school in Murray
Hill, an elementary school that has a family shelter
in it's own. So, we do have a population of students
in temporary housing.

In addition, we have a lot of students who are
children of families that work at the United Nations.
Both of those populations of students come and go all
year long. When I - my daughter first went to the
school, which was ten years ago she started, the
school was overcrowded. We had the Fair Student

Funding Formula. It didn't work then. It was overcrowded, so you would think that oh, we would have so much money. It didn't work then. We had to — the PTA at the time had money to hire teaching assistants because the class sizes were too large. We had to supplement. So, professional development, we still had to do all of these things in order to get whatever services the school needed to provide to those students.

And now, we are in a different situation, where there is low enrollment at the school now. It has declined over the last couple years. I doubt it's going to decline as much as it is projected to decline by September. We already got one new student this month. So, this formula still doesn't work for us. So, I know that there has already been taskforces and opinions given to —

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

NICOLE GIACO: The City Council and everyone else about the Fair Student Funding Formula. Please, please do something about this. Please look at this now. Please restore these funds.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony Nicole. Next, we will call on Michael Athy followed

by Milyn Weon Navatny, Robin Bowers, Jennifer Dorty
and ENG Witman. Michael.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

MICHAEL ATHY: Thank you Chairpersons Joseph and
Brewer for providing this opportunity. My name is
Athy, I retired in February after 18-years at the
DOE. Five as a teacher at Hillcrest High School, one
distinguished grad named Banks and 13-years as
Principal at Bayside High School with two
distinguished grads, both named Adams.

Current Principals cannot testify as they are
under a DOE gag order and fear retribution. I have
submitted written testimony, which details areas of
budgeting that require immediate attention. I would
correct some of what you heard from Mr. Weisberg and
Ms. Oates but that would take a lot more than two
minutes.

I will agree with the First Deputy that the DOE
has to get a lot better at listening. God knows I've
tried. We do not need another taskforce, working
group, or other effort to analyze and restructure how
the DOE funds schools. Such efforts have been
undertaken in the past and have uniformly led to
nothing. Either the results are tabled or become

stale, or the proposed to form such a group is made
disingenuously as a diversion. As this happened in
May 2022 and was repeated again last night and again
today. The DOE must be compelled to administer its
FSF as intended and to correct some specific
budgeting practices. That's it.

Speaker Adams is correct; the current situation
is due to DOE decisions. It is vital to understand
that the misapplication of FSF and its effects were
and remain due to decisions by the DOE budget office
and are not attributable to any external forces,
including the Council. The DOE left to its own
devices will enact only the minimal cosmetic
adjustments possible in order to return to business
as usual.

The underspending FSF are valid, equitable and
worth retaining. They empower families choices of
schools. Here are highlights. Despite what you've
heard, projections are a one-way conversation from
Tweed to the Principal, with Tweed exercising power
without knowledge. This is the source of many of
this years complaints. There is no policy for year
end surpluses or [INAUDIBLE 5:42:58]. They should be
consistent.

Costs for teachers on a citywide average, are used to calculate funding but much higher individual building averages are used to debit schools. That -

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

MICHAEL ATHY: Student centered approach to appointments of the DOE budget is needed with funds needed at the school level designated first and remaining funds allocated to central. The info shared by Ms. Oates regarding non-school expenses, needs closer examination. Despite what you've just heard, not all schools are funded at 100 percent Fair Student Funding. The remains of three class funding system, which indicates favoritism and must be replaced by funding based on the demographics and weights systemwide.

The [INAUDIBLE 5:43:39] awarding of portfolio funding is also brought to light when we see millions of dollars going to schools that do not need qualifications. The DOE should be compelled to finally publish criteria it uses to determine portfolio funded projects to incentivize these funding sources to other schools to meet such high-level criteria.

3 In summary, again I express my thanks to the
4 Chairpersons for creating this opportunity to express
5 concerns. Thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony
7 Michael. I'm going to ask people for their patience.
8 We have a lot of people signed up who are not in the
9 Zoom, and we still have to call everyone's name just
10 in case. Next up would be Milyn Weon Navatny
11 followed by Robin Bowers, Jennifer Dorty and ENG
12 Witman. Milyn.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Seeing no one, we'll go Robin
15 Bowers.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We'll move on to Jennifer
18 Dorty.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And Eeon Witman.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay then we'll move on the
23 next panel. I'll announce the next two panels. I
24 have Farah Despania(SP?), Carina Rayhal(SP?), Leanna
25 Willowby, Mark Angle and Rachael Paguaga.

The following panel after that is Ulia Sniderman,
Carrie Farly, Christine Ramirez, Korina Garcia, and
Stephen Lampert. Calling now on Farah Despania.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we'll go to Carina
Rayhal.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: How about Leanna Willowby?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Mark Angle.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And Rachael Paguaga.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we'll move to the next
panel, which is Ulia Sniderman(SP?), Carrie
Farly(SP?), Christine Ramirez, Korina Garcia(SP?),
Stephen Lampert. The one after that will be Ion
Atalia Carpenska(SP), Diana Baros(SP?), Jessica
Luc(SP?), Meagan Scott and Michelle Si(SP?). So,
we're going with Ulia Sniderman.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, how about Carrie Farly?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Christina Ramirez.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Korina Garcia.

CHRISTINE RAMIREZ: Hello.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Oh, is that Christine?

CHRISTINE RAMIREZ: Yes, this is Christine.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay Christine, go ahead.

CHRISTINE RAMIREZ: Hello Council. My name is Christine Ramirez, I am a parent leader with the Parent Action Committee. I am a parent association President at PS 35 in District 9 in the Bronx, as well as also being a part of the Student Leadership Team. I went to John F Kennedy High School; it was a school that felt unsafe and unwelcome by its many metal detectors and policing in the school.

The students ran wild not obeying to the police and their orders. The police were there to protect our school but instead they just stood around only moving to their convenience. Metal detectors never served their purpose which is why many students still bring weapons in our schools. The over policing was a stress to my mother as she felt like she was taking me to a prison every single morning. Just the long

road down made me feel sad about the future that I had.

This is why I felt like a prisoner to the school system rather than a student with a deep willingness to learn. This affected my self-esteem as a person, and I started to withdraw from any school activity. I felt like I wasn't a baby anymore. I felt like I didn't need to be told what to do. All I wanted was guidance from the very school that was teaching me and from the police who were there to protect me.

I now have two American children, one eight-year-old and a ten-year-old, in District 9 in the Bronx and I have to one day bear witness that my children are going through the same unjust system I had to endure in my school.

I can't see this policing in my kids' school as a solution rather than a problem. What I would like to see in the budget is better trained social workers and guidance counselors and I do not want people who would rather —

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

CHRISTINE RAMIREZ: Write an ACS report — Can I finish?

3 ACS report instead of really listening and
4 helping these kids. I also want training for school
5 principals and staff, but I don't want police in our
6 schools. So, please, our kids need our voice and
7 support for a better future. This budget needs to
8 change, and the cuts need to stop. We need better
9 health for our kids. Cutting schools budgets is not
10 going to cut it. The schools need help as you can
11 see, the school I represent is PS35 in the Bronx in
12 District 9, which needs a new gym and a cafeteria.

13 Why isn't there help happening for my school and
14 other schools alike? Now, the city wants to cut
15 everything good for our kids that helps them learn
16 and thrive as one day they will become leaders of
17 this city and nation and now the city wants to add
18 more to the budget like these. This is an outrage as
19 a parent and a person. We need better help for these
20 kids.

21 How is the city trying to hire police if the
22 schools aren't right either? It's backwards and
23 rhetoric. So, what now? Are we going to leave all
24 the work to the police, to the schools to protect our
25 kids to helping protect our kids? So, please stop
these cuts and start implementing real programs and

help for these schools, children and their families that suffer greatly with these decisions that the city has made. Please, let's not leave a child behind because of our failures to look at the bigger picture. Stop the cuts. Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Christine. I'm told that Carrie Farley is in the Zoom, so Carrie and I will slow down to give you time. Thank you.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Carrie, I see you in the Zoom. You need to accept the unmute request. Okay, we'll have to come back to you.

So, next, we'll call on Corina Garcia. Is Corina there?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Looks like she's not there, so we'll go to Stephen Lampert, Stephen.

STEPHEN LAMPERT: Hi, is this coming through okay? Great, uhm, good evening. My name is Stephen Lampert, I'm a parent of a kindergartener at PS 87 in the upper West Side and tonight, I've prepared a written statement that I'd like to share with all today.

My son's name is James, he's five-years-old, and today was his last day of kindergarten. James' K-104 teachers are Robyn and Susie, and, because James is in a mixed classroom of kids with different needs, James' has four additional teachers, for a class of twenty children.

And just today, James' class released their butterflies in the PS 87 schoolyard, and it was everything kindergarten should be for a kid like James. Just a little over a year ago, we moved here from Michigan, and we chose our apartment without ever seeing it because of the school. Because every child's parent we talked to, told us what an amazing school PS 87 was and after just one year in PS 87, I can assure you, that this school is much more than that. James' school is the heart of our neighborhood. It's what makes this place our corner of the city, it what makes it home.

But with this budget, James' school, the heart of our neighborhood, our home really, is under attack. With this budget, James' school, the place where he feels safe and loved and special and free to just be a kid is slated to lose a little over \$900,000. Now, in this city, \$900,000 may not sound like a lot of

money. In a place where investment bankers get bonuses that are bigger than that and you can't get a one-bedroom in Manhattan for \$900,000. You know, maybe it isn't, but for my son, my little five-year-old, it's a lot. Because that \$900,000 means that five teachers at PS 87 are going to lose their jobs and three of them are first grade teachers.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Please continue.

STEPHEN LAMPERT: Thank you. It means that his class size is going to increase from 20 kids right now to about 32. And I want to let that number 32 sink in for a second because I want to explain to you what it really means in real terms for my son.

That number 32 means that when he's scared, he's probably not going to get a hug. When he's struggling, he probably won't get what he needs and when he really is proud and wants encouragement, he's probably not going to get it and that's because his teachers, his kind, loving, brilliant teachers, are just going to be too stretched thin to give him what he needs and deserves. And that's what that number 32 really means to James. And I'm not going to lecture you about class sizes and statistics or

reference you know what a common must say because you know, that's their job.

My job, my first job and the only job I have that really matters is to take care of my son. To give him the love and support he needs to grow and thrive and be a child.

But I've kind of realized something, especially over the last couple of years with COVID. I can't do this job by myself. None of us can. Like we need each other. We need our schools. So, I'm begging you, please release the unallocated federal stimulus money. Fix budgets before the end of June and put in place the resources to ensure this doesn't happen again. Because we parents, we can't do this on our own. We need our schools and my little guy James he really needs his school too. So, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you Steve. I'm Gale Brewer, I've known PS 87 for about I don't know about 30-years. It's a great school and we're certainly going to work. I spoke to your principal today, so I have all the data for PS 87. Thank you very much for your leadership.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We're going to try once again with Carrie Farley. Give her a moment

to accept the unmute and I want to let you know the next panel will be Iya Natalia Carpenska(SP?), Diana Barrows, Jessica Luck, Meagan Scott and Michele Si. Carrie Farley, are you there? Can you accept the unmute?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we'll move on to the next panel. Iya Natalia Carpenska(SP?).

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, seeing none, Diana Barrows.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, Jessica Luck.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: How about Meagan Scott?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

MEAGAN SCOTT: Hi, good evening, can you hear me?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, we can hear you Meagan.

MEAGAN SCOTT: Okay, thank you so much. The duties of the day took me away from where I was originally sitting, so forgive me while I get my statement up on my phone.

Thank you for your patience and thank you as well to – thank you to the Speaker, to Chair Joseph and

Council Members for convening this hearing. Thank you to the educators here today and especially the amazing and inspiring students who spoke.

I came here for the same reason I attended the PEP meeting last night and the same reason I had planned to be at the rally this afternoon to express my outrage at how the educators, families and children in the New York City Department of Education are being treated. At the PEP meeting last night, Chancellor Banks interjected to tell us, the public, that we don't understand "there are no DOE budget cuts, rather it is right sizing in order to wean schools off of money they received during the pandemic.

Chancellor Banks and Mayor Adams, neither of them are here, but nonetheless, I would like to assure you that we do understand. We understand that you do not value the public school system. You do not value the work of DOE educators, related service providers, DC37 staff, and administrators. Most of all, you do not value public school children of the City of New York.

As the parent of two public elementary school students, one of whom is a special education student

with autism, I can tell you, your message is received loud and clear. This administration stands for the continued and criminal underfunding of public schools and the push towards privatization and the rise of Charter schools.

Here is what I would like you to understand. Parents of students with disabilities are tired of fighting for crumbs even under the "generous budget" of the last two years. This year, my autistic child went for over six months without occupational therapy because her school was short of providers. Here is the conundrum we face as parents. Do we make a stink?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

MEAGAN SCOTT: Have an uproar. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: You may continue.

MEAGAN SCOTT: Thank you for that. Here's the conundrum we face as parents. Do we make a stink at the school level to get our child on the existing provider schedules knowing that would mean another student equally deserving would go without? My child finally was put on the schedule, but she still owed makeup services which were not able to be provided during the special education recovery after school as

they become more available, nor is it clear that they will really be provided this summer.

Here is the meat of what I would like to say and what the current budget will mean for my autistic child's school, which is "lucky" to be losing all \$600,000. No staff for academic intervention services, reduced school aids hours, loss of a technology teacher or librarian and loss of a cluster teacher who provides support to us autistic students during recess, lunch, and specials which are particularly stressful times for many students with autism.

I'll skip to put a face on what losing an anti-cluster teacher would mean to those inside the nest program might not be understood outside of it. It is a crucial position and one that specifically effects my own child and our family.

Uhm, I don't think it's possible for me to share my screen, but if I could I would share a picture of Ms. Lacada(SP?) who is the cluster teacher who has been with my child for four years at this point. She - I nominated her, and she was accepted as Teacher Appreciation Week for UFT on our website and social media. I nominated her because she has changed the

life of my child and my entire family. I don't think you understand unless you have loved and parented someone with autism or another disability. How much it means to have a school with staff who care about and connect with your child.

Teachers, school aids, and related service providers are not fungible, replaceable cogs in a machine. They are individuals who know their school populations and have formed important bonds with all the children they work with. For all children, not just those with autism. Those bonds are what keep them coming back to school, feeling safe in school and belonging to a community.

The last thing, truly last thing I want the City Council and Mayor Adams to understand, New York City parents and families will not forget how you treat our children. We will remember and we will vote accordingly. Those with the power to do so fix this. Stand up for the children of the city. Thank you for your time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Meagan. Next up, we have Michelle Si, followed by the next panel Bella Sarugo(SP?), Daniel Robertson, Lauren Clavin and Katherine D. Zangotita. So, Michele, you're up.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we'll move on to the
next panel. Bella Sarugo, your up next.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

BELLA SARUGO: Did I mute myself? Okay, there we
go. Hi, is it uh - I can't see on my screen if the
DOE members are still present. Are they?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: There's a representative here
from the Department of Education.

BELLA SARUGO: And who might that be? I can't
see it on my screen, and I'd like to know who's
present when I say something.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: It's Mark Treyger.

BELLA SARUGO: So, the other DOE representatives
decided to leave, and I think that's shameful, and I
think their behavior is shameful and I think it's
shameful that they try to uhm, a dear themselves by
saying that they are parents earlier today. Because
I'm sure they are not parents of kids that are in New
York public school system and if they can sleep at
night, in this disgusting draconian budget that is in
a word inhumane. And they don't deserve their jobs
and I hope this Committee really isn't just doing

this for political effect and that they will really
press to restore our budgets.

In fact, I was starting to advocate for my school
to have a bigger budget. My son goes to middle
school in District 2, and it's been very troubled.
It's a zoned school, which means that it's
unscreened. There is a staffed range of needs and
socioeconomic students and racial diversity, and that
school has been underfunded and understaffed anyway
and it wasn't until it came into the news that there
was violence there and problems that they were able
to get an extra counselor this year. Someone whose
been wonderful for this school. That counselor's
been cut.

Another social worker has been cut. 13 staff
members all together -

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

BELLA SARUGO: And it is not okay. The school
cannot function this way. This school serves a
diverse community and they have lost \$3 million. 43
percent of their budget. I've been hearing much
lower numbers and I really hope this Committee
understands that you are destroying families and
children's lives by not advocating for them and

changing this decision about this budget. There is money available. This has been obvious throughout these hearings. Thank you for hearing us.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony Bella. The next person is Daniel Robertson.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we'll move on to Lauren Clavin. Lauren, you're up.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

LAUREN CLAVIN: Good evening. I appreciate knowing that Mark Treyger is in the room. I can't see who if any Council Members are still there. Mark, I wish you still sat in that Council.

My name is Lauren, I am a parent in Queens and an organizer for Equity and Justice in our Schools and I want to explain what's it's been like as an education advocate during this uniquely opaque budget cycle. Advocates have known for months, for months, that this budget was a disaster. We've tried to let our Council Members know that during the budget negotiation process, mostly being ignored.

My own Council Member refused to meet with any of the parent leaders that tried. I'm going to be generous and not name names today.

I've personally sat in meetings with several Council Members during this negotiation process and I've heard you promise to stand up for our youth and yet, with the exception of Council Members Ossé, Barron, Nurse, Avilés, Richardson-Jordan and Cabán, every single one of you voted to defund our public schools.

That was a choice, and you need to take responsibility for that. Our hearts were collectively broken when we saw the photos of all of these smiling and celebrating passing this disaster of a budget, two weeks early. Apparently, it seems before you had sufficient information to make an information decision. We've rallied on the steps of Tweed. We've called our Council Members and last night, we attended the PEP where we had to listen to the Chancellor admit that these cuts were bad. That the Fair Student Funding Formula needs reform, but ultimately, he denied responsibility and passed the blame onto the City Council.

Today, we sat in this hearing for hours listening to the Council say no, uhm, it's really the DOE who is responsible for this mess.

So, I just want to tell you as a parent, and parents by the way are voters, we don't care who you claim is at fault here and frankly, it's not a great look for all of you to keep passing the buck or to say you -

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

LAUREN CLAVIN: Didn't know that these cuts were happening. So, to those in the Council who say they're genuinely surprised by these cuts and are actually telling the truth, well, welcome to the Department of Education under Mayoral control. I wish you would have listened to us. I wish you would have shown some of this outrage and energy during the negotiation process. I hope you're listening today. I hope that you listened to the students that spent their precious afternoon here with you today sharing their heartbreak and their rage. And I want you do know that it's not too late to reject this budget. You submitted incomplete work, but you have time to revise it and turn it in before our children and school staff suffer needlessly. Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Lauren. Next, we have Katherine D Zangotita followed by, we were supposed to have an in-person panel after that, and I

know they are not here, but I will call their names
in case they are on the Zoom. Betsy Tam Green,
Dermot Myris(SP?) and then we'll go back to Zoom.
Ron Brit, Shirley and I know already testified. Cody
Linguist and Tanitra [INAUDIBLE 6:08:40].

So, I'm going to ask again, Katherine D.
Zangotita.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, I see nothing, so I
will again call Betsy Tam Green.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we'll move to Dermot
Myris(SP?).

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we'll go to Ron Brit.
Ron.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

RON BRIT: Good afternoon. I am a public-school
parent of four ages 7-17. I'm an active PTA member,
active Title I member, active SLT member. I'm a
resident in South East Queens in School District 29,
which is a predominantly Black student population and
I'm a Southeast Queens public school graduate myself.

My two oldest kids, high schoolers, go to school in Queens North, D26, Cardoso in Bayside and one just graduated. I just want to lead off by talking directly to City Council members for the ones who remain and just you know say that you know there comes a time when we have to take a position that's not safe, not political, not popular but we have to do what our conscious tells us is right. And so, I implore you, our City Council Members to do the right thing and hold the DOE accountable to properly fund our school budgets and not leave it as it is, which strips millions in funding away from our public schools and our children when they obviously need it most.

Only a small handful of you voted not to pass the budget, citing the massive DOE cuts. You may have been swayed or persuaded at that time that the cuts were solely due to enrollment declines, but you know, as know that is severely flawed and many schools have already requested adjustments to DOE's central register projection, which many principals say are wrong and low.

I'm in School District 29 in Southeast Queens where I live and pardon me. And the School District

is represented — uh, at least my District is represented by four Council Members, Selvena Brooks Powers, Natasha Williams, Lee and Gennaro or have schools — District 29 schools in their City Council District, particularly Councilwoman Brooks-Powers having the bulk.

Some of the local public schools near me and near my home, they're devastated with significant and drastic cuts.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

RON BRIT: Many of my neighborhood schools — I'm wrapping up, are facing budget cuts not only compared to 2022 but compared to prepandemic 2019, which was before the schools were even fully funded where Fair Student Funding and their budgets are even lower than that.

Uhm, I'll leave you with one final thing. That the time is right to always do what is right. It's a quote from MLK. And lastly, for everyone that is still listening, please go vote. You know look up these candidates. Look up the politician stance on their voting record on educational matters and see if they align with yours and your families. And if they do align and work hard to get them — keep them in

office or get them in office and if they don't align,
then vote them out.

So, once again, please go cast your ballots to
people that will do the right thing for our children
and not agree with the massive cuts to our public-
school budget. Thank you so much for this time, I
really appreciate it.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Ron. I see Shirley
Aldebol on the list but Shirley, you already
testified so I'm going to skip over you. Next, we
have Cody Lindquist followed by Tanitra Partivie(SP?)
and then the next panel will be -- well, Mark
Gonsalves, you're listed again, but you've already
testified, so we're going to skip you. Tanisha
Grant, Maria Vialobos(SP?) and Sharee Gibson. So,
Cody Linguist, are you there? I don't see you in the
Zoom, so I'll call Tanitra Partivie, Tanitra.

Again, I don't see you in the Zoom. So, we'll go
to the next panel. Tanisha Grant, Parents Supporting
Parents New York. Not seeing you, so I'll go to
Maria Vialobos. Okay, I believe Maria is not in the
Zoom, but Sheree Gibson I believe is in the Zoom.
Sharee?

SHEREE GIBSON: Yes, I'm here.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

SHEREE GIBSON: Good evening Chair Joseph, Chair
Brewer and remaining members of the City Council. My
name is Sheree Gibson, I'm a Queens Parent Leader
currently representing Title I parents and families
at the school citywide and state levels.

In these roles last fall, I resoundingly heard
from building leaders across the city and the state,
how resourced their schools were. How many had never
experienced having so much funding before or not
being in a deficit at that start of the year. How
relieved they were to not have to stress about how to
make their budgets cover all their needs. Having the
funding they needed to bring children who were
lagging or behind on level.

Having the funding they needed to support the
healing of children traumatized by the impact of
COVID. Not easily, I thought they'd enjoyed this
resourced feeling for two more years. Little did
know, our new Mayor and Chancellor would ignore the
moment and prioritize a rainy-day cushion in the NYPD
over our children.

As an advocate member of the 2019 Fair Student
Funding Taskforce, our unpublished report and what

we've been advocating for since then is a change to an outdated, convoluted, opaque formula that did not equitably fund schools or address the needs of some of our most vulnerable student population.

Just two months ago, the advocates and the work we did, were being dismissed once again. As we ask the PEP, the Chancellor and you Chair Joseph to stop allowing the formula to be used as a scapegoat reason why we cannot fully fund our schools fairly and equitably.

Now, after you voted to approve the mayor's budget, which always had school budget cuts in it, you hear from principals, teachers, school staff, parents and the students themselves, that these cuts are real, deep, harmful, human and very, very unnecessary. The mayor campaigned on and started his new —

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

SHEREE GIBSON: Administration promising to reduce the bloat by streamlining the DOE and ensuring voters no cut would touch schools.

I think you've heard enough that schools are being touched mightily hard. We understand the reality of lower enrollments but there are so many

avenues not explored that could mitigate impact or even solve for this. Many Council Members suggested several today. I have been trying to understand why my Council Members and you Council Members voted for this budget. Being such staunch advocates for public education and our children.

Based on what I've heard, you wanted to trust what the Mayor and the DOE was telling you about enrollment numbers and the need for this cut. I will be confused annoyed for you. As all the briefings, reports, breakdowns and data they offer today, is what you should have had before your vote. Maybe the outcome would be different.

So, I ask you now to take action by resolving that DOE should reinstate the cut funds and make adjustments to the budget. We have time. When it's about our case, we always make time. I ask again on behalf of the advocates of the Fair Student Funding Taskforce for the City Council to commit to launching and funding a staff independent commission to review the Fair Student Funding Formula and make specific recommendations for equitably funding our schools. I ask that you hold DOE to working on solutions to declining enrollment numbers besides cuts. Hold them

accountable for putting resources behind marketing of schools, their successful programs and public education. Parent leaders like me have been telling them that for a long time now and even offered to help them develop the strategy. How families experience New York City DOE as a system is key to improving the system.

Help build back our trust by not letting these cuts stand. Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Sheree for your testimony. I'm going to read the names on the next two Zoom panels, and I apologize in advance if I butcher your name. Jazelle Hurn(SP?), Tason Assad(SP?) Tracy Grey(SP?), Melissa Elaine Sanchez(SP?). The panel after that, Ellen McCue, Lupe Hernandez I believe testified in person, Samuel Avery Pool, Kelan Madden and Bliss Brayard. We'll start with Jazelle Hurn if she is here.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we'll move on to Tason Assad.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: How about Tracy Grey?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And then we have Melissa
4 Elaine Sanchez.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, no one on that panel
7 seems to be here. We appreciate your patience as we
8 go through this list. Next up, I'm going to read the
9 next two panels. We have Ellen McCue, Lupe
10 Hernandez, Samuel Avery Pool, Kelan Madden, Bliss
11 Brayard.

12 The panel after that is Melanie Floum(SP?),
13 Milifar Miah(SP?), Jason Green? Stacey Kuceno and
14 Ashley Barrios Rasheed(SP?), Jazelle, Jazelle Hurn.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, how about Tason Assad?
17 Okay, we'll move on to Tracy Grey. Melissa Elaine
18 Sanchez. Okay, we'll move to the next panel. Ellen
19 McCue, you are not in the Zoom. Lupe Hernandez, you
20 testified earlier in person. So, how about Samuel
21 Avery Pool?

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, I believe Kelan Madden,
24 if I'm messing up your name, I apologize Madan,
25 you're up next.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

KELAN MADAN: Hello, I'm a parent of two children at a Title I public school in District 22 in Brooklyn. My oldest daughter is a special education student going into fourth grade and my youngest is starting PreK. My daughters Title I school is losing \$1.5 million, about 15 percent of its budget. Eleven new teachers will have to be excessed. The progress they have made in shaping our school community will be lost. Our school celebrated dual language program, which the DOE is happy to point to as an example of language access and the culturally, responsive and sustaining education is being striped of resources.

Struggling low-income families in our community will be scrambling to fund school supplies that were once provided by the DOE, and it is clear that schools in our district are being pressured to ration special education services. I shouldn't have to worry that when I fight for the services my child needs I might be taking away needed services from one of her classmates.

Family shouldn't be out here fighting over the crumbs that you left us. If you thought public schools like the hunger games before next year is

going to be even worse. The pandemic through our city's institutions into crisis and show us both how crucial sustained support and developmental education is and how inadequate our city's support for public schools has been.

To pretend that reducing schools budgets to the various austerity levels is appropriate or necessary due to declining enrollment is hypocritical and disingenuous. To claim that slashing school budgets now is cushioning us because future budgets will be worse is absurd, especially when billions of dollars of federal funding remain unspent and unaccounted for.

Far from a corrective responding to under enrollment, the current budget and funding formula are calculated to undermine NYC public schools. This is an attack on public schools. As schools struggle to meet students and family's needs, more students will flee NYC public schools for Charter schools.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

KELAN MADDEN: As the students who do not have alternatives will suffer, I'm disappointed with the City Council voted to approve the mayor's budget, knowing the budget will result in these cuts to

school funding. Thank you to the one Council Member who is here and no one else.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Mr. Madden, could you please say your name for the record for us? And actually, there are three Council Members here.

KELAN MADDEN: Oh, well, thank you to those three and no one else. Kelan Madden.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Mr. Madden. Next, we have Bliss Brayard followed by the last two panels Melanie Floum(SP?), Milifar Miah(SP?), Jason Green, Stacey Kuceno, Ashley Baros Rasheed(SP?). And then Cloya Huggins already testified. So, Melissa Keaton and we'll try again with Carrie Farley. Is Bliss Brayard available?

Okay, not seeing Bliss. Honestly, please bear with us, we're not seeing these people in the Zoom, but we do have to call them for the record. Melanie Floum. Okay, Milifar Miah. How about Jason Green? Stacey Kuceno. Ashley Baros Rasheed. Okay, the last two I have Melissa Keaton, if you're there, please unmute and Carrie Farley, you're the last person we have listed and we see you in the Zoom. Are you able to unmute at this time to testify? Carrie Farley.

Okay, I don't know if she is not at her computer, but Carrie is not accepting the unmute request.

So, I am going to just ask if we have inadvertently missed anyone on the Zoom who wishes to testify, please use the raise hand function, which is at the bottom of the Zoom page. If you use that raise hand function, we will call on you.

Okay, Melissa Keaton? Melissa Keaton, are you there? Are you able to unmute? I'm being told that Melissa Keaton is here in the Zoom.

MELISSA KEATON: Yes, can you hear me?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, we hear you, go ahead.

MELISSA KEATON: My daughter wanted to go first. Go ahead.

MELANIE: Hello, my name is Melanie and I'm nine-years-old. Today, I want to talk about the budget. When I found out a remote option is only for 9th graders, I felt left out. The schools are losing programs and teachers. I'm worried about going to school in person. I haven't been in school since 2020. Kids need help with their problems, so they need social workers and therapy. My school called ACS on my parents because I was doing work at home.

I didn't feel happy when they were coming to my house. My parents were doing what was best to keep me safe.

I have to take two trains to get to school and that's a lot. Thank you everybody.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you repeat your name, or can you Melissa repeat her name on the record for us?

MELANIE: My name is Melanie, and I am nine-years-old and I'm in the fourth grade.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

MELANIE: You're welcome.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Melissa, did you want to testify?

MELISSA KEATON: Yes. Uhm, so schools are already struggling, and they will lose even more money. Although we don't have access to the data or the students leaving New York City schools, clearly less money and larger classes will therefore decrease resources and staff or most certainly effect the parents making the decisions to leave the public schools this fall.

Children are our future leaders and caregivers, and we should be doing everything to invest in them.

As Council Member Schulman said, our children only get one chance at a good education. Our children have suffered unimaginable trauma that very few people have been through. They are scared, afraid, and traumatized.

It was fine for my daughter to be at home for a year and a half and I work with her as practically an assistant teacher. Then suddenly the DOE you know said, everyone back in the building and as a CFO, Oates said, they frontloaded and maximized without a hybrid option. And so, support for students or families, especially for those who are grieving or providing.

Many members, Council Members today, asked about the decline in enrollment and were these families reached out to? And I can attest that as one of those family members who has not returned to the school building, as a family member who has lost a family — well, I lost my dad to COVID. We are still hesitant to return to the school. And with these budget cuts, what can we expect when we send our daughter back into these school buildings? Larger class sizes, lack of support, resources, it's just too much. It's too much.

3 And I thank you all for still being here.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 MELISSA KEATON: And advocating. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you so much for your
7 testimony.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Again, if we have
9 inadvertently missed anyone who wants to testify on
10 this Zoom, please use the Zoom raise hand function
11 now. Seeing none, that concludes the Zoom testimony.
12 Chair Joseph, turn to you.

13 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Thank you
14 colleagues for sticking it up with me. Council
15 Member Shekar, Council Member Brewer. Thank you for
16 all those who testified today, and we take it all
17 into heart, so thank you. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you Treyger.

19 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Mark. [GAVEL]
20 The hearing is adjourned.
21
22
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24
25

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 August 29, 2022