

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

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION JOINTLY WITH THE  
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

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](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov). Again, that is  
23 [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto: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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

14 Every person here today is likely aware of how  
15 the pandemic widened pre-existing opportunity and  
16 achievement gaps, hitting historically disadvantaged  
17 students hardest. A research report from last summer  
18 on the lingering effects of what it called  
19 "unfinished learning" found that at the end of the  
20 2020-2021 school year, "students in majority Black  
21 schools ended the year with six months of unfinished  
22 learning and students in low-income schools ended the  
23 year with seven months based on math proficiency.

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

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

3 This does not even account for multilingual  
4 learners. Students in temporary housing and students  
5 with disabilities. Our focus must be on equity,  
6 ensuring schools and students who have historically  
7 been underserved are prioritized. Now, I do not deny  
8 the herculean effort the New York City DOE undertook  
9 when COVID-19 first confronted us. In fact, I do  
10 applaud this work from having to immediately pivot to  
11 an all-remote learning environment. To making more  
12 than 900,000 devices available to students. And  
13 providing meals to anyone who needed them.  
14

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 issues it leaves behind in both the short and long  
2 term. The Council remains committed. We remain  
3 committed to these efforts and to partnering with our  
4 schools and communities to address these issues with  
5 the department. We must provide transparency about  
6 every federal dollar received by this city and enroll  
7 our communities and helping us solve the challenges  
8 for our schools and students.  
9

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

15 We will not stop advocating for solutions and  
16 collaborations to achieve it. We all need to be  
17 forthcoming and cleareyed about the challenges, so we  
18 can unite and commit towards closing gaps for our  
19 students who are relying on our leadership. We will  
20 not stop using the full weight of this legislative  
21 body to fight for solutions, stand up for our schools  
22 and students and compel collaborative action towards  
23 solutions. This is what our city needs and what our  
24 children deserve.  
25

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

7 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Madam Speaker.  
8 We're here today to examine the impact of DOE's 2022-  
9 2023 School Budget. We're also here to call on  
10 Chancellor Banks and Mayor Adams to address to the  
11 DOE's decisions on its school budgets for the  
12 upcoming school year. That will impact many schools  
13 when they reopen in September.

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

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

1  
2 vulnerable student populations. In fact, the  
3 pandemic has exacerbated inequities and widened  
4 already existing achievement gaps. Hitting  
5 disadvantaged students hardest including low-income  
6 students of color, English language learners,  
7 students in temporary housing and students with  
8 disabilities.

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

24       However, enrollment declines are not distributed  
25 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.

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

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

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

1  
2 the Chancellor has acknowledged that the fair student  
3 funding formula needs to change and has vowed to do  
4 so.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3 acknowledge my colleagues who have joined us this  
4 afternoon.

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

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

3 Our public schools each have individual budgets  
4 that are funded by DOE through a combination of city,  
5 state, federal and other sources. As Chair Joseph  
6 already noted, in FY23, the amount of city funds  
7 allocated to DOE, thanks to the speaker and my  
8 colleagues with \$700 million greater than the amount  
9 allocated in the previous fiscal year. Nevertheless,  
10 the Department of Education has indicated that due to  
11 federal funding losses, declined in enrollment; and  
12 we don't really have the numbers on declines to be  
13 honest with you from DOE and DOE determined formulas.  
14 School budgets are facing drastic changes and a net  
15 reduction of roughly \$250 million for Fiscal Year  
16 2023 as compared to the previous school year.

17 Some schools are receiving more money in their  
18 budgets while some have received significant declines  
19 from DOE. And I just want to say this morning, I was  
20 at a graduation. We were all at graduations. I did  
21 three this morning and the principal said she has a  
22 27 percent cut and the information says zero.  
23 There's something wrong with that. We do not have  
24 the data from DOE. Like so many others, I am deeply  
25 concerned about how this will impact individual  
schools in our city.

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

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

16 Trust me, we are not going to leave any stone  
17 unturned. The Committee's will be examining how the  
18 \$7.78 billion; as Randi Weingarten pointed out  
19 earlier at the press conference. In federal stimulus  
20 funding allocated to the Department of Education is  
21 spent and how these funds or others may be  
22 reallocated to help address the most urgent needs of  
23 individual schools. We will be examining how state  
24 funding including funds provided in connection with  
25 the campaign for Fiscal Equity Lawsuit; thank you  
Robert Jackson. Will impact DOE's need for federal

1  
2 and other funds going forward. We'll be looking to  
3 Chancellor Banks and Mayor Adams to help us identify  
4 opportunities for DOE to shift money from bloated  
5 areas of its central operation, 52 Chamber Street and  
6 to clarify how much needed changes to the Fair  
7 Student Funding formula can be achieved on the  
8 timescale that is necessary to support our students.

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

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

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

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,

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

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

24 City-funded spending on schools in Fiscal Year  
25 2023 Adopted Budget will be the highest it's ever

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4  
5 Now that the budget has been adopted, any  
6 discussion about targeting more resources towards  
7 school budgets, would mean pulling those resources  
8 from elsewhere in the approved DOE budget. It's  
9 important to remember that schools across the city  
10 right now are making plans based on their budgets for  
11 the coming year.

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

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

1  
2 for the next year. Any decision to change the way we  
3 are using or planning to use stimulus funding will  
4 impact at least some of those investments, some of  
5 that critical programming that is filling critical  
6 needs that are already allocated.

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

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

1 English. Deepening investments in the mental health  
2 of our young people and expanding student pathways in  
3 bilingual programs; all critical needs.  
4

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

13 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you, you may begin.

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

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

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

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

6 In the Fiscal Year '23 budget, approximately \$1.8  
7 billion of the \$3.9 billion in federal revenue is  
8 stimulus funding. Next slide please. The DOE's  
9 \$37.6 billion budget goes to the following places,  
10 and I like this table, it helps to I think illustrate  
11 how the Department of Education's budget is broken up  
12 by sort of general topics. And again, this is all  
13 funding, so you can see that the orange portion of  
14 this pie chart shows our school budgets. Forty-six  
15 percent or \$17.3 billion goes directly to school  
16 budgets for principals and their school leadership  
17 teams and communities to make decisions about how  
18 best to serve their communities.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

9 So, in addition to the Summer Rising program that  
10 we've talked about, \$49 million will be invested to  
11 continue to ensure that all schools have a nurse.  
12 \$33 million to expand career pathways programming.  
13 This is funding that will go to schools to ensure  
14 access to CTE programs, apprenticeship programs,  
15 really important exciting work that the Chancellor  
16 has made a north star of his administration.

17 \$11 million to expand bilingual education  
18 classrooms and supports, \$11 million to continue to  
19 expand parent engagement, to make sure that we can  
20 hire people from underserved communities and engage  
21 with those communities as well. Continuing to invest  
22 in translation and interpretation services, \$10  
23 million to support things like the announcement made  
24 yesterday for virtual schools. \$10 million or excuse  
25 me, \$9 million for CBO provided violence interruption  
programming at high needs schools. \$7 million for

1 literacy and dyslexia programming and \$2 million for  
2 our gifted and talented program.  
3

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

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

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

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

15 I really want to emphasize the point that what we  
16 rolled out a few weeks ago is an initial budget  
17 allocation. Budgets will increase from here. There  
18 are additional allocations that will go out.

19 Principals have a right to ask for additional  
20 funding, we will review those requests and that will  
21 be a process that will kick off in the next few  
22 weeks. Next slide please, thank you.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

21 SPEAKER ADAMS: And -

22 LINDSEY OATES: If I - may I?

23 SPEAKER ADAMS: Yes.

24 LINDSEY OATES: May I add? Thank you.

25 SPEAKER ADAMS: Absolutely.

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

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

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

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

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

3 with the funding that you included in the adopted  
4 budget.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

15 LINDSEY OATES: Yes.

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

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

3 LINDSEY OATES: The \$132 million that is listed,  
4 one, two, three, four lines down, is part of that  
5 \$1.7 billion. On the second slide, we're just  
6 outlining.

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

9 LINDSEY OATES: Yes, thank you.

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

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

24 Now, secondly, the \$160 million that you  
25 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

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

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

17 So, what I'm saying is, you got to find \$250  
18 million. We'd be glad to go line by line. There are  
19 some brilliant people here. We could go line by line  
20 and find that. Now, in this report. Somebody got a  
21 hold of this report, as you probably know. And it  
22 says, this is a DOE report. The DOE has more than  
23 \$1.1 billion of unused prior year accruals currently  
24 open. And basically, please cancel; this is from DOE  
25 to the principals, any encumbrances, and pre-  
encumbrances you no longer need. These are real

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

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

12 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: I know. I know.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time will begin.

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

20 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Council Member Restler.

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

1  
2 the state budget to support the Department of  
3 Education and yet, you were insisting on cuts where  
4 we can least afford them. This budget passed with  
5 the implicit understanding that we would continue  
6 working together to address this issue. To rectify  
7 these cuts to our local schools. But as we look  
8 closer at the DOE budget and what you all are  
9 imposing as the direct cuts that you are imposing on  
10 our schools; it is far worse than I had anticipated.  
11 I raised these issues through the budget hearings. I  
12 raised these issues in meetings with the Chancellor  
13 and I am absolutely livid at the extent of the cuts  
14 that we are experiencing. Do you know how many  
15 schools in New York City are experiencing cuts in the  
16 upcoming school year?

17 LINDSEY OATES: So -

18 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: How many schools?

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

23 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I really appreciate  
24 Lindsey. You are a great - it's just a simple  
25 question.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

17 Lastly, I want to ask you about the cuts in per  
18 people spending, which you all insisted even again in  
19 this presentation that we are continuing to increase  
20 but I read about in the New York post that we are now  
21 experiencing a decline in per people spending. Is  
22 that accurate?  
23

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

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

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

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

21 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: We look forward to  
22 working with you on that. I just, I have to say,  
23 when you add up these cuts across these 1182 schools,  
24 just at the schools that are losing money. We're  
25

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

12 LINDSEY OATES: Can you repeat the question  
13 Council Member.

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

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

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

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

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

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

23 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: So, could you explain why  
24 you're unable to have teachers who are at risk of  
25 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

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

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

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

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

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

25 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

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

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

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

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

11 One of the things that we did to be strategic  
12 about the use of stimulus funding is frontload the  
13 money. We wanted to make sure that in Fiscal Year  
14 '22, this fiscal year that will end next week, that  
15 we were maximizing those resources. Schools were  
16 going to be back in person full-time. There was no  
17 hybrid option. We wanted to make sure that school  
18 communities that you know were coming back for the  
19 first time, we're going to benefit from that funding  
20 now.

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

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

24 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: No, my time is very  
25 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."

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

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

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

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

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

12 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Why did it take so long?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

16 LINDSEY OATES: No.

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

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

COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: In the South Bronx?

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

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

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

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

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

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

8 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Thank you.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Council Member Sanchez.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time will begin.

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

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

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

3 being exceeded to make ends meet and to hire.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 lot of say and you know, there are cultural  
2 differences between communities.  
3

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

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

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

17 DAN WEISBERG: Yes ma'am.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3 District 14 in Williamsburg and Greenpoint. District  
4 32 in Bushwick and now, the Queens side, the district  
5 34 overlapping portion of school district 24, which I  
6 graduated from. Over populated but any of the  
7 schools that in my district are now facing under  
8 enrollment because gentrification and displacement is  
9 a very real thing. And it's not just exclusive to  
10 North Brooklyn, it's all over.

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

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

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

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

17 And so, the districts you mentioned, 14,32 -  
18 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIERREZ: 24.

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

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

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

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

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

20 LINDSEY OATES: We can provide that information.

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

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

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

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

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

24 DAN WEISBERG: Summer Rising Council Member?

25 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIERREZ: Yeah, hmm, hmm.

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

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

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

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

25 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

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

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

12 So, that was the first -

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

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

1 current budget allocation for DOE is based on  
2 projected enrollment and we've been told that schools  
3 that see higher than expected enrollment in the fall,  
4 can expect to see their budgets increase as well.  
5

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1  
2 that detail spending on consultants and how does that  
3 impact the budget?

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

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay.

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

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

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

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay, thank you.

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

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

8 DAN WEISBERG: By this issue, you mean?

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

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

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

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

20 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: So, this is an issue  
21 effecting, we can agree that this is an important  
22 issue, a crucial issue, I would say effecting our  
23 schools. It's an issue effecting many schools  
24 throughout our city. My question to you is, where is  
25 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?

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?

3 LINDSEY OATES: I believe so, yes.

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

7 LINDSEY OATES: I believe that math is correct  
8 sir.

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

13 LINDSEY OATES: That is correct.

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

16 LINDSEY OATES: That is correct.

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

20 LINDSEY OATES: Not —

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

3 \$37.6 billion budget, you cannot find a way to fill  
4 less than one percent of this agency budget.

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

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

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

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

21 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Yes or no.

22 LINDSEY OATES: For Fiscal Year '22.

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

25 DAN WEISBERG: Your question is misleading.

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

5 DAN WEISBERG: Yes, it is.

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

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

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

22 DAN WEISBERG: We are projecting an overall  
23 deficit.

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

3 DAN WEISBERG: Where would you like to cut?

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

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

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

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

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

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

3 \$215 million from within the agency in the current  
4 budget of \$37.6 billion?

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

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

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

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

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

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

21 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Council Member, your time is  
22 up.

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

25 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

3 has taken for granted that parents have other  
4 options.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

20 DAN WEISBERG: Thank you.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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,

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

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

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

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

25 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Permission granted.

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

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

10 LINDSEY OATES: \$600 million.

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

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

1  
2 positions and we're going to continue to look at  
3 efficiencies at that Tweed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

20 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Council Member  
21 Menin.

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

1  
2 that New York City receives from the federal  
3 government that's non-stimulus.

4       So, I served as the city's 2020 Census Director,  
5 so I can say first hand that not only did New York  
6 City grow by over 600,000 people in the last decade,  
7 but we as a city finish number one among all major  
8 cities across the country. And I'm mentioning that  
9 because that means that we receive a larger piece of  
10 the pie on federal funding for education. So, from  
11 2010 to 2020, we received over \$700 million a year in  
12 Title I funds. We receive per year \$1.5 billion in  
13 total in federal education funds.

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

21       LINDSEY OATES: Thank you Council Member for the  
22 question. Title I funding is designed to be  
23 supplemental. It's required by federal law to  
24 provide supplemental services and it cannot supplant  
25 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 than 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

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

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

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

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

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

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

19 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Okay, thank you.

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

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

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

1  
2 I'm sitting, it feels unnecessary, not just like it's  
3 not a good thing. It feels completely unnecessary.  
4 Given the fact that we have money in the reserves.  
5 We have money in the Rainy-Day funds and so, I'm  
6 going to re-ask the question, why is this cut going  
7 to happen when we are touting historic investments in  
8 our reserves?

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

17 COUNCIL MEMBER DE LA ROSA: Well, I will say that  
18 this is a poisoned pill in that budget that was  
19 adopted. And I will also say that one of the things  
20 that was also mentioned, is we cannot avoid reality.  
21 I want to talk to you about the reality that we  
22 cannot avoid in our district. I represent District  
23 6, School District 6 that has been historically  
24 underinvested for decades and some of the realities  
25 that we cannot avoid is that we are having 32 out of

3 41 schools being cut in this budget. That our  
4 schools - I just got a notice from my daughter's  
5 school yesterday that there's a positive COVID person  
6 in the school building.

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

13 I also want to say that in my district, we have  
14 had an enrollment issue for a very long time. The  
15 state happened to pass legislation much fought for by  
16 people in this room to adjust finally class sizes.  
17 In my district, in District 10, all of the temporary  
18 trader structures in Manhattan, are in District 10,  
19 all of them. How are we adjusting? How are we  
20 preparing to adjust these school budgets who only  
21 have a capacity issue? When we have an historic un-  
22 investment issue and when as we are preparing to  
23 receive this much needed state mandate, we are  
24 cutting these budgets by \$215 million. Which is a  
25 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.

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

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

14 So, for you know populations that need the extra  
15 supports, what is the planning that the DOE at this  
16 moment is telling these principals, besides excess  
17 teachers, for these students to be able to thrive?  
18 And the reason that it's important is because this  
19 enrollment crisis that we're in, is because of the  
20 divestment in allowing those schools to actually turn  
21 things around and have the resources to turn things  
22 around in order to attract more students. It's a  
23 self-fulfilling prophecy. No one wants to go to  
24 these schools, because they don't have the resources  
25

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

4 So, what are the – what is the plan for that  
5 issue?

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

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

23 DAN WEISBERG: I just want to make sure I  
24 understand. So, the discrepancy between the  
25

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

5 COUNCIL MEMBER DE LA ROSA: The percentage of  
6 this cut. So, for example, I'll give you an example.  
7 So, for example, in my district PS189, for the 2021-  
8 2022 school year, had 489 enrolled students. For the  
9 2022-2021 school year, 556, right? Uhm, the change  
10 is 13.6 percent, and this cut that is reflected here,  
11 which is about \$2 million is a 21 percent cut. So,  
12 what makes up those type of discrepancies?

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

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

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

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

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

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

23 SPEAKER ADAMS: So, is the explanation because  
24 the data is coming from different places and not in  
25 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  
26 little bit of different context. So, I want to know

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

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

24 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Yes, yes.

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

1  
2 and we'll jump right on that. Actual enrollment  
3 should absolutely trump any sort of projection.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 are weighted. I'm being told by the schools in my  
2 district that the weights vary and there's no rhyme  
3 or reason to them, so can you explain the weighting  
4 for the pupils.  
5

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

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

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

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

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

1  
2 COVID, the younger students, they need more attention  
3 because they don't remember what the school  
4 experience is like as opposed to somebody who's maybe  
5 in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. And so, they need more attention, they  
6 need more teachers to help them.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

16 They are finally, finally, taking steps to fully  
17 fund but they have not by any stretch satisfied that  
18 yet. Just as I'm sorry, just to make one point if I  
19 could and then I'll yield my time. The only reason  
20 we are at 100 percent of Fair Student Funding  
21 Formula. The only reason that each school is getting  
22 100 percent of that formula is because of the  
23 increased foundation aid plus some stimulus that  
24 allow us to get there. It's already in school  
25 budgets. So, if we have to hire thousands of more  
teachers, without additional funding to hire those

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

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

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

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

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

15 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: I am here to stand for  
16 public schools and \$214 million from \$3 billion is  
17 not much but I want to ask my last question on  
18 enrollment data and forecasting. Over 120,000  
19 students have left our public school system. This is  
20 alarming to all of us here. What have you done to  
21 identify the trends and the cause of drop in  
22 enrollment and is this information public? And these  
23 children from our neighborhoods across the grades  
24 that have disappeared, did you provide an exit  
25

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1  
2 colleagues and I'm a public-school parent who has  
3 spent many nights up till 3 a.m. trying to make  
4 cupcakes to fund raise for equipment that should have  
5 been in schools but was not.

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

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

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

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

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

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

3 need to support the crisis that we are in.

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

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

17 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Yes.

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

20 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Also, you mentioned that  
21 social workers and guidance counselors are funded  
22 through the federal stimulus. We know that the  
23 promises to add social workers who are only given to  
24 schools uhm, that if schools added their own through  
25 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

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

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

1 bunch of data and doing their best to project. It  
2 sounds like in these cases they got it wrong, and the  
3 positive news is, we don't have to wait till  
4 September. We don't have to wait till October.  
5 These are adjustments that Lindsey's office is making  
6 in June and July.  
7

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1  
2 what you're hearing is, we would like the DOE to  
3 figure out how to fund our schools properly.

4 DAN WEISBERG: Thank you Council Member.

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

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

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

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

24  
25

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

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

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

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

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

14 We made an increase as City Council members under  
15 the leadership of our great Speaker Adrienne Adams,  
16 \$700 million but it's not enough. It's just a drop  
17 in the bucket. We understand that but that's a first  
18 time we make that step, historic step that we took  
19 right? Because we understand and we have our Chair,  
20 that's an educator for so many years in school that  
21 keep us in check. So, and so many parents, we want  
22 the best quality education, not only for our children  
23 but for those that come so we can count on them for  
24 later on.  
25

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

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

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

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

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

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

15 DAN WEISBERG: Thank you very much Council  
16 Member.

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

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

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

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

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

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

22 LINDSEY OATES: Happy to look into that specific  
23 school.

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

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

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

15 So, you will have the ability to hire for those  
16 positions if they're vacant. So, and you know, that  
17 happens a couple of different ways. Maybe you gain  
18 students, so you got additional funding and in order  
19 to accommodate those students and serve them, you  
20 have to make additional hiring, or you have some of  
21 your teachers or other staff who left, and so, there  
22 are vacancies behind that and again, you have to and  
23 post that vacancy on a central system. Get  
24 applications, do interviews with your teachers; I'm  
25 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

20 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Yeah.

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

3 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Based on what you know  
4 now.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

21 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Make it brief.

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

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

5 DAN WEISBERG: Yes, I do. I think we can do  
6 much, much better -

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

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

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

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

23 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Thank you so much.

24 DAN WEISBERG: Thank you Council Member.

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

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

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

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

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

5 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay, thank you. Council  
6 Member Gale.

7 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: So, in '22 and '23 Fiscal,  
8 the City State funding increased by over \$500 million  
9 from the previous year as part of the Campaign for  
10 Fiscal Equity as you know, the lawsuit. And we know  
11 based on what Governor Hochul has stated that the  
12 city will see an additional increase in FY24. How  
13 much is DOE expecting in increased state funds in the  
14 next fiscal year? And is there any reason to expect  
15 that this increase will be significantly lower than  
16 the \$500 million and of course, the reason we're  
17 asking this is because we assume that there will be a  
18 large increase in state funding, maybe as much as  
19 \$500 million. And if we expect that Albany will  
20 provide all of these additional dollars for school  
21 budgets, why is DOE not able to provide the \$250  
22 million question to protect school budgets in Fiscal  
23 '23?

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

1 the increase in foundation aid in Fiscal Year '24.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

12 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5 DAN WEISBERG: Thank you sir.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Mercedes, real quick.

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

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

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

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

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

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

19 DAN WEISBERG: Yes ma'am.

20 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you so much to you  
21 both today. We still need the follow-up from the  
22 2023 Fiscal Response Letter, so please uhm, yeah with  
23 the waiting for the response for the Fiscal 2023  
24 Executive Budget Follow-Up Letter, which is more than  
25 two weeks late.

DAN WEISBERG: I was not aware of that but -

3 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Now you are.

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

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

8 DAN WEISBERG: Yes, thank you Chair.

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

14 Welcome to you both. RJ, you may start.

15 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: I told her to call you RJ.

16 ROBERT JACKSON: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you.

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

20 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Good afternoon.

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

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

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

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

17 income students seeing cuts as high as 25.6 percent.  
18 The Mayor's Administration is quoted on saying  
19 that the decrease is not a cut. Well, if you have  
20 all this money and now you're getting a little bit  
21 more, it's a cut and it bleeds, let me just tell you.  
22 And principals and school leadership teams are going  
23 to have to reduce what they're doing and talk about  
24 the issues and concerns. So, really, what the bottom  
25 line is, I sat through this entire hearing, and you  
know what needs to be done. Over half of the City

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

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

24 So, Chairs, let me thank you for your leadership.  
25 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,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

6 Still, you know the basic fact relevant for this  
7 hearing, as we calculated as this and this is net of  
8 the hold harmless that the DOE budget director  
9 referred to, 1166 schools are receiving cuts totaling  
10 \$469 million to their core FY23 budgets. That's an  
11 average of \$402,456 dollars or eight percent of those  
12 schools budgets and that's 77 percent of the schools  
13 in the system.

14 Question two, what do we know about the status of  
15 stimulus funding. Here we disagree less with what  
16 the administration said, as you know, they are  
17 receiving more than \$7 billion in federal pandemic  
18 aid that you can spend over five fiscal years. As  
19 far as we can tell based on the data, DOE has spent  
20 essentially \$2.3 billion of that funding, could rise  
21 to \$2.7 billion once all the accruals through June  
22 30<sup>th</sup> are calculated. But that leaves at least and  
23 then this, you know actually they gave a higher  
24 number. It leaves at least \$4.3 billion in federal  
25 stimulus funding left to spend over the next three  
fiscal years.

3 We also tried to take a look at how much of what  
4 was budgeted for this year in federal funding we  
5 think will go unspent because they budgeted a little  
6 bit over \$3 billion. As of June 20<sup>th</sup>, my office  
7 estimates that DOE has liquidated, had spent and  
8 recorded just a little over \$2 billion. Again, with  
9 those accruals, we think that number could grow to  
10 \$2.3 or \$2.4 billion but we're still talking about at  
11 least \$600 million that was budgeted to be spent in  
12 FY22 out of the stimulus dollars that will be rolled  
13 forward into future years. And again, that means  
14 that there's at least in total \$4.3 billion in  
15 Federal Stimulus Funding left to spend.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

19 Then second, I won't go too much further but you  
20 heard about the need over and over to re-evaluate the  
21 Fair Student Funding Formula, a per pupil spending  
22 model has benefits, but boy, it's got to be updated  
23 to ensure equitable funding and prevent these harsh  
24 cliffs you hit when you wind up excessing that fourth  
25 teacher and going from 23, 24, 25 kids in a classroom

1 to 30, 31, 32 kids in a classroom, even if you have  
2 five percent fewer students.  
3

4 And then it's important to remember that while  
5 enrollment has been declining, the city and state tax  
6 revenue that provides the vast majority of school  
7 funding, is not based on the number of students. So,  
8 you know we saw increases this year in tax levy.

9 It's completely unrelated to how many students are in  
10 the classroom. Reductions in enrollment could be an  
11 opportunity if we make a broad set of responsible  
12 budgeting decisions with the funding and space we  
13 already have for additional reductions in class size  
14 that we have so long desired.

15 And then finally, as you guys focused on, we just  
16 need so much additional information and greater  
17 budget transparency while individual school budgets  
18 are available. They're not aggregated or tied to the  
19 greater DOE budget, making it difficult to tie Galaxy  
20 to the full budget as a whole.

21 Uhm, you know we tried to just use the initial  
22 allocations summary by district for FY23 but if you  
23 go there right now to the DOE website, the links  
24 don't work. And then there's a whole lot of  
25 information we need for the stimulus spending. We're

3 due in August or September for an updated spending  
4 plan but we need real time, information on how that  
5 money is being spent if we're going to make exactly  
6 the question. You know, if we think, if this Council  
7 thinks, if this city thinks that reprogramming money  
8 to protect school budget cuts is a better use of that  
9 money, we'll there will be some choices about what  
10 not to spend it on, but you can't do that unless you  
11 are getting real time information on what was  
12 underspent this year and therefore is likely to  
13 underspending in next year and then a wiser way to  
14 track that money. So, many questions that not just  
15 that you have, not just that we have but that parents  
16 and teachers and principals all across the city are  
17 asking.

18 In our role as budget watch dog, we'll continue  
19 to track DOE spending all across the summer leading  
20 up to school reopening this fall. Every time we get  
21 additional information, we'll put it out on our  
22 website. We'll provide it to the Council. I  
23 appreciate your calling this hearing. Right now, is  
24 the time when principals are making those critical  
25 decisions. They can't wait till the fall to make  
26 decisions about who to excess. About whether they're

3 losing their last arts program. About whether they  
4 are going to have three fourth grades instead of  
5 four.

6 This is the moment that they're doing it.  
7 Sending schools additional money now is what's  
8 necessary to make sure they can show up for every one  
9 of our students in the fall. Thank you so much for  
10 the opportunity to participate in this important  
11 discussion.

12 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you both for your  
13 testimonies. Now, I'd like to call on Sarita  
14 Subramanian from IBO.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Sarita, just bear with us one  
16 moment.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Is Sarita Subramanian on Zoom,  
18 available and ready to testify?

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Just give us one moment  
20 please.

21 SARITA SUBRAMANIAN: Hi, can you hear me?

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You sound a little distant.  
23 No. Jan in the Chambers?

24 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: There we can hear you.

25 SARITA SUBRAMANIAN: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay.

3 SARITA SUBRAMANIAN: Good afternoon Chairs -

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 SARITA SUBRAMANIAN: Okay. Good afternoon Chair  
6 Joseph, Chair Brewer and members of the City Council.

7 My name is Sarita Subramanian, I am Assistant  
8 Director for Education in the New York City  
9 Independent Budget Office. Thank you for the  
10 opportunity to testify today. I will refer you to my  
11 written testimony as well as a budget brief published  
12 in March, for more details on the reduction in school  
13 budgets that will be phased in over the next two  
14 years and a summary of the forgiveness of budget  
15 reductions that took place over the last two school  
16 years due to the pandemic. I will focus on a few key  
17 points from my testimony.

18 First is that uhm, factoring in both the  
19 reduction and the federal relief, the net reduction  
20 in the headcount as of the preliminary budget that  
21 was released was a reduction of 14- over 1,400 vacant  
22 positions in 2023 and 2,300 vacant positions in 2024.  
23 And then 3,200 vacant positions in 2025 and beyond.

24 Theoretically the vacancy reductions would reduce  
25 schools ability to hire additional positions. In

1 reality, schools may have already committed those  
2 funds. Previously available funds for other uses.

3  
4 As we've discussed, city officials have indicated  
5 that the reduction was calculated based on the major  
6 adjustments and just wanted to summarize some of the  
7 restorations that have happened. So, for the current  
8 school year, the restoration impacted 1,200 schools  
9 that would have received budget reductions. An  
10 increase of 37 percent from the last school year and  
11 accounting for almost 80 percent of 1,500 city  
12 schools that are funded through Fair Student Funding.  
13 Enrollment of the schools funded through Fair Student  
14 Funding declined by almost 50,000 students, about six  
15 percent from last school year to this school year.

16 Please note that our population of this decline  
17 does exclude 3K, a population that grew substantially  
18 this year but whose funding is provided outside -

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

20 SARITA SUBRAMANIAN: Of the Fair Student Funding  
21 Formula process.

22 The end half of this reduction on schools budgets  
23 will depend on school's enrollment loss but also, not  
24 only school's enrollment loss but also which type of  
25 students schools lost. For example, the DOE's

3 formula provides the largest per pupils funds for  
4 students in integrated co-teaching classrooms.

5 Classrooms with two teachers that serve students with  
6 disabilities alongside peers without disabilities.

7 Based on next year's funding formula, each student in  
8 that type of classroom in grades one through twelve  
9 would bring an additional \$7,300 to their school on  
10 top of the per pupil amount dedicated to their grade  
11 level.

12 Although the Fair Student Formula was first  
13 introduced in the 2007-2008 school year, it has never  
14 been fully implemented without adjustments made to  
15 the formula to hold certain schools harmless for  
16 various reasons.

17 If the plans to no longer hold schools harmless  
18 due to pandemic enrollment losses remain, the 2024-  
19 2025 school year would be the first year in which the  
20 fair student funding formula is fully in place for  
21 all schools. However, reductions to school budgets  
22 while schools are still trying to address learning  
23 loss and other social emotional effects of the  
24 pandemic may put pressure on principals to make  
25 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,

3 the Comptroller had another. The issue is, we need  
4 more money and so, we have state money that's  
5 available perhaps. We have federal money because we  
6 don't think it's all spent and there's a rollover  
7 issue. And then of course just reallocation of some  
8 of the federal money. So, do you have any  
9 suggestions as to where that funding should come  
10 from?

11 SARITA SUBRAMANIAN: I don't have any suggestions  
12 per say but something that we are looking into and  
13 similar to what the Comptroller mentioned, in the  
14 federal funds, based on our tracker, we see that  
15 roughly \$761 million is still unspent for 2022. It's  
16 possible that that amount could decrease as we get  
17 closer to the close. Uhm, but that is one thing  
18 that, in one area that we are monitoring.

19 Also, uhm, you know we're also still trying to  
20 get a better understanding of you know particularly  
21 for the \$1.8 billion budgeted for '23. More details  
22 about the breakdown of the programs that are budgeted  
23 for that funding, is something that we're looking  
24 into.

25 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you so much. Next,  
4 we'll have a panel of students, Niyo Gumbs, Anari  
5 Coleman, Daniella Rodriguez, Brielka Rodriguez and  
6 Keneisha Buckley from Urban Youth Collaborative.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: While the students are  
8 getting up, I'd like to let everyone on Zoom know  
9 that when you are called to testify, you will receive  
10 a message that says, accept unmute and you will have  
11 to accept that to be unmuted. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Turn on your mic.

13 NIYO GUMBS: Good afternoon everyone. My name is  
14 Niyo Gumbs. My pronouns are he, him and I'm a  
15 sophomore in high school in the Bronx and a Youth  
16 Leader with Sisters and Brothers United and the Urban  
17 Youth Collaborative.

18 Today, I'm here because it feels like young  
19 people's demands continue to be ignored. The entire  
20 budget session and previous budget session, young  
21 people like myself across the city have called for  
22 more investment in our care and to divest from  
23 criminalization of Black and Brown folk. Yet year  
24 after year we continue to see a huge investment in  
25 policing in our schools and the resources and

3 positions that would actually provide social and  
4 emotional support.

5 This year has been especially disheartening after  
6 Mayor Adams proposed the budget which cut millions of  
7 dollars to our schools. It's disheartening because  
8 our own City Council Members have also voted to  
9 accept these drastic cuts knowing that young people  
10 need access to educators, counselors, social workers  
11 as our communities continue to recover from major  
12 economic crisis because of the pandemic. Many of our  
13 youth need social and emotional support after nearly  
14 two years of remote learning and our teachers need  
15 the tools necessary to support us to catch up  
16 academically.

17 Currently NYC schools have a ratio of 1-400  
18 guidance counselors to students. As a student who  
19 wants to ensure that they are getting support that  
20 they need to succeed, I can't imagine what our  
21 schools will feel like. Due to budget cuts, we'd  
22 have less access to guidance counselors. It's not  
23 fair that I have to worry about knowing that my time  
24 with my guidance counselor might be limited, yet my  
25 interactions with police will increase.

3 To add on to that as well, I've met my guidance  
4 counselor at least two times this year and none of  
5 them were to help support my education. I leave this  
6 question with you. How can we ask for \$75 million to  
7 hire restorative justice coordinators in 500 high  
8 schools, \$45 million to implement restorative justice  
9 practices. \$75 million to hire 500 new school  
10 counselors and \$75 million to hire 500 new school  
11 social workers to get us closer to the 1-150 ratio of  
12 counselors, social workers to students. We continue  
13 to be told that there is no money, yet NYC has  
14 adopted a budget with the largest NYPD budget while  
15 cutting millions from our school.

16 Why is it that it is okay for our schools to hire  
17 more school police but not more educators, counselors  
18 and social workers? NYC should be ashamed of this  
19 budget and should listen to students call for police  
20 free schools. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Next.

22 KENEISHA BUCKLEY: Hello, my name is Keneisha  
23 Buckley and I'm 17-years-old and my pronouns are she,  
24 her, hers. I'm a Youth Leader at the Urban Youth  
25 Collaborative and I'm here today testifying at this  
hearing to express my faery and disappointment at the

3 Mayor and the City Council's recently past budget.  
4 Once again, you have failed to prioritize the needs  
5 of students like me in New York City and instead,  
6 prioritize our criminalization. I have been fighting  
7 for police free schools since the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. I'm now  
8 a center in high school and I'm tired. I'm tired of  
9 being targeted by school police. I'm tired of the  
10 fear. I'm tired of having to warn all the younger  
11 Black students that we're going to be treated  
12 differently simply because of the color of our skin  
13 and I'm tired of the lack of mental health supports  
14 in our schools. And I'm also tired of seeing  
15 students like me wait weeks to see our guidance  
16 counselors.

17 I'm especially tired that the New York City's  
18 elected leaders haven't listened to students like me  
19 but I'm here today to make you listen. Mayor Adams  
20 and the City Council, your budget is an injustice to  
21 students across the city. It is a slap in the face  
22 that your budget funds hundreds of vacant school cop  
23 positions. NYC already funds more school police than  
24 guidance counselors, social workers or restorative  
25 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 11<sup>th</sup> grade and  
24 go to school in Staten Island. I am here, infuriated  
25 because last week Mayor Adams and the City Council

3 passed an unjust budget by funding police in our  
4 schools and communities instead of our care.

5 Mayor Adams has a responsibility to make our  
6 schools better, not worse. For years, public school  
7 have been underfunded and often youth voices are  
8 ignored. My school is a community school. This is  
9 important to me because community schools provide  
10 support to students and families. However, this  
11 year, the mayor has cut off school budgets across all  
12 New York City. My school is facing over one million  
13 dollars in cuts. That is unacceptable. I've been  
14 struggling emotionally, and I felt silenced in this  
15 fight because there are not enough social, emotional  
16 and mental health resources for young people like  
17 myself. We don't have enough social workers to talk  
18 to about our problems and frustrations inside our  
19 schools.

20 While I am thankful for this budget's recent  
21 investments, like \$5 million for the mental health  
22 continuum to help students get mental health  
23 services, and the \$14 million to restore community  
24 school funding, it is not enough for all the 1.1  
25 million students in New York City.

3 It infuriates me see how each year the city turns  
4 its back on us, as they keep passing a city budget  
5 that spends more than \$400 million on police in  
6 school. That is a slap in the face to all students.  
7 One day this year, I wasn't feeling well, and I was  
8 in the bathroom with a friend. The school police  
9 accused us of smoking weed when it was not true.  
10 They threatened to arrest us and made me feel  
11 intimidated. As a woman of color, I'm often scared  
12 of how police will treat me, and this incident scared  
13 me more.

14 In New York City, Black and Latinx youth  
15 represent many of all of us, despite being only 66  
16 percent of the student population. It is time for  
17 student voices to be heard. Stop funding racist  
18 school policing and start funding our futures. With  
19 the \$101 billion budget recently passed, I know we  
20 have the money to fully fund our schools and remove  
21 police. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Next person.

23 ANARI COLEMAN: My name is Anari Coleman. My  
24 pronouns are she, her. I live in Staten Island, and  
25 I am in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, and I am a Youth Leader at  
Make the Road New York and the Urban Youth

3 Collaborative. I am here today because Mayor Adams  
4 and the City Council chose to fund hundreds of vacant  
5 school cop positions while cutting the Education  
6 Budget by millions.

7 The length are - I can't say that work, I'm  
8 sorry. Are willing to go to criminalize us Black and  
9 Brown youth never fails to amaze us but is failing  
10 1.1 million students across New York City  
11 expectations of safe and supportive schools. Schools  
12 are supposed to be welcoming. Police in schools do  
13 not make us feel safe. Just by having young people  
14 like myself go through metal detectors is a start but  
15 racist system criminalizing us. I'm tired of seeing  
16 how Black and Brown students are treated by cops  
17 inside of our schools and how our communities and in  
18 our communities. We are people too.

19 Instead of investing in more restorative justice  
20 counselors workers, we've been calling for Mayor  
21 Adams and the City Council have made millions of  
22 dollars of cuts to education that will further harm  
23 schools abilities to invest in these practices that  
24 will actually keep us safe. Our futures are being  
25 cut as our past who present are being further

3 developed. How can that be a budget New York City  
4 elected officials want to adopt?

5 We have been extremely vocal about our demands,  
6 and we need to relocate funds from policing students  
7 to actually student care. I am mad, along with many  
8 of my peers because the City Council and the Mayor  
9 keeps failing us by passing another city budget that  
10 spends more than \$400 million on police in schools.  
11 It is time for students voices to be heard with a  
12 \$101 billion budget recently passed. I know we have  
13 the money to fully fund our schools. Do not send  
14 students - no, do not send schools into this summer  
15 with uncertainty. Push Mayor Adams to fund our  
16 schools and not school police. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Next.

18 ZULEIMA DOMINGUEZ: Good afternoon, my name is  
19 Zuleima Dominguez and I'm a Leader/Organizer at Make  
20 the Road New York. I will be reading on behalf of  
21 Breilka. Uhm, their testimony, they had to run to  
22 work.

23 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: I know. Thank you.

24 ZULEIMA DOMINGUEZ: So, her testimony starts,  
25 hello, good afternoon. My name is Breilka. My  
pronouns are she, her. I live in Staten Island. I'm

3 in 10<sup>th</sup> grade and I am a Youth Leader at Make the  
4 Road New York and the Urban Youth Collaborative. It  
5 is unbelievable that New York City elected leaders  
6 never fund money to fully fund our education, but  
7 they always fund money to fully fund the NYPD. Mayor  
8 Adams and the City Council choose to pass one of the  
9 largest NYPD budgets, while cutting the education  
10 budget by millions of dollars.

11 On November 5, 2021, I walk into school with the  
12 best energy and vibe. As I was entering my school, I  
13 realized suddenly, I had to go through random  
14 scanning. That got me tense and scared because the  
15 police were there. I took all my keys, and anything  
16 metal related, then I proceed to go through the  
17 scanner. For some reason, I was pulled to the side  
18 without any explanation. I was scared.

19 A school cop padded down my legs and around my  
20 body in front of everyone. I felt a hot wave on my  
21 face and that was because of the embarrassment and  
22 anxiety. No student should go through that. No  
23 student should go through what I went through going  
24 into the place that's supposed to be safe.

25 My school is a community school. This is  
important to me because community schools provide

3 support to students and families and have access to  
4 exams, something but I wish all students across New  
5 York City will have access to. We need our city to  
6 double down on investments in education, not cut our  
7 school budgets.

8 While I'm thankful for the budget investing \$14  
9 million in community schools across the city, I am  
10 really angry that my school is losing over one  
11 million in funding this year with the recent cuts.  
12 That is the last thing students need right now.

13 New York City needs to stop spending money on  
14 police in schools. Let me be clear, NYPD's budget  
15 did not remain essentially flat. As many Council  
16 Members are saying. The budget has the largest NYPD  
17 budget ever. For years, we have been extremely vocal  
18 about reallocating funding from policing students to  
19 social, emotional and mental health support. There  
20 are more school cops across New York City schools  
21 than social workers, guidance counselors and schools  
22 nurses available for one million students.

23 Every time students of color like myself walk  
24 inside a school building, we go through metal  
25 detectors. We get treated as a problem, but we  
aren't the problem. Racist policies are the problem.

3 Police never have and never will be the solution for  
4 our problems. The school shooting in Uvalde makes  
5 clear that no function of a school police is not  
6 safety.

7 Police are unable to prevent harm, nor they  
8 increase the overall safety of the schools. Using  
9 our own fear to fund police is manipulative. Now  
10 more than ever we need everyone to stand by us. The  
11 students of New York City demand to this body to push  
12 Mayor Adams to fund the school and not school cops.

13 Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you for your  
15 testimonies. Thank you so much.

16 ZULEIMA DOMINGUEZ: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Call the next panel  
18 President Michael Mulgrew for the UFT, Greg Monte for  
19 the UFT, Renee Freeman and Chanel Quintero.

20 Good afternoon and you may begin Michael Mulgrew.  
21 Thank you.

22 MICHAEL MULGREW: Good afternoon and thank you  
23 Chair Joseph and of course our wonderful other Chair  
24 and thank you for all the work that you've done  
25 throughout for our schools and I'm by colleagues who  
will also be testifying. I think we all understand

3 that what is going on here is that the Department of  
4 Education and the Administration of the City of New  
5 York has decided to cut its schools at the very worst  
6 time you could possibly do it. We've heard all of  
7 the numbers. We've heard the Department of Ed's  
8 testimony and we can poke holes in that all day long  
9 but for us, the schools are facing something very  
10 simple. We have never had a strike adherence to a  
11 per pupil funding formula and that is what they have  
12 now done to the schools of New York City.

13 At the very time, that formula was designed many,  
14 many years ago, on the previous Mayor Michael  
15 Bloomberg who never had a great love for public  
16 education to begin with. And they're using that  
17 strict adherence to the per pupil funding in saying  
18 they are rightsizing our school system. This Mayor  
19 and this Chancellor both were very, very vocal when  
20 they came into office about the dismantling of the  
21 Department of Education and making sure that the  
22 school system for the first time fully starts to  
23 serve and support the students in the schools of New  
24 York City and in their very first budget, they went  
25 backwards into an old funding formula that does not  
allow the schools to supply the services it needs.

3 At the very time, you're asking schools to do more  
4 than ever before. And if someone does not stop them  
5 from doing this, the students of this city will be  
6 greatly hurt and face even more damage as we get away  
7 from this pandemic.

8 There is federal money. The parents, the  
9 teachers, the students of New York City advocated for  
10 federal money because we know what the pandemic and  
11 the damage it was doing. We also went to Albany, the  
12 same group and fought for all of that money. All of  
13 that money came here to New York City for our  
14 students and schools. Not to be left in a piggybank  
15 that's going to be spent for something else later on.

16 So, it really comes down to, are we, the parents,  
17 students, teachers going to stand with City Council  
18 and say, this is not going to happen. You are going  
19 to backfill those cuts and you're going to come up  
20 with a real plan, a real three-year plan about how  
21 we're going to fund that school properly and make  
22 sure our school system is doing that it needs to do,  
23 which is supporting and educating the children of New  
24 York City. Thank you very much.

25 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Next person.

3 CHANEL QUINTERO: Hi. So, on April 14<sup>th</sup> of this  
4 year, seven of my colleagues and I sat on [INAUDIBLE  
5 4:12:48] not too far from here and filled you in on  
6 what we teachers needed. In order to make sure that  
7 we were giving the children of New York City  
8 everything they needed to succeed.

9 You heard us speak of autonomy, curriculum,  
10 special education services, support staff, and  
11 support for staff members. We also spoke about  
12 staffing in general and classroom sizes. All of  
13 these things require funding in order to happen,  
14 especially after the return to learning post arduous  
15 journey that we've just endured.

16 City and state officials listened, looked us in  
17 the eye and we're mostly in agreement on solutions  
18 that we had proposed. Things that were sustainable,  
19 actionable and will have a direct positive impact on  
20 our students. None of this can be accomplished  
21 without adequate funding, let alone the cuts that you  
22 have approved.

23 This cut is going to force schools to reduce the  
24 number of teachers they have increased - have  
25 increased class sizes and remove or cut back on many  
of the things that support our students well-being

3 and enrichment. Furthermore, this gaping hole in  
4 funding is going to affect the way our students  
5 learn. We cannot and will not be able to continue to  
6 make up for lost time, close the gap or even enhance  
7 the education of our students without funding to  
8 purchase curriculum, supplies, or fully fund  
9 afterschool programs that so many of our families  
10 rely on.

11 We cannot continue to cut corners within an  
12 already broken system and expect our children to be  
13 resilient. We cannot continue to cut corners and  
14 expect our children to surpass the learning  
15 expectations set forth by the same elected officials  
16 that have no problem pulling the rug out from  
17 underneath them. To this, I offer you our  
18 personalized example of what it means to cut in our  
19 school. Even with our normal school budget and  
20 funding for academic recovery, our schools still  
21 manage not to have enough teachers to properly staff  
22 classrooms.

23 Some of us like myself, do the job of four  
24 salaried employees, just to keep the school running.  
25 With these cuts, we are now looking at playing God  
and choosing which kids can join afterschool

3 programs, which literally takes meals out of their  
4 mouths. We do not have enough money to purchase  
5 materials for a curriculum that we were mandated to  
6 select in order to instruct our children the way that  
7 they need to learn. We have to pick and choose what  
8 we can afford, not what they need. And to the  
9 Mayor's moto of get stuff done, if you're a parent or  
10 you've ever encountered a child, you cannot just get  
11 stuff done with them.

12 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Next person.

13 RENEE FREEMAN: Good afternoon. My name is Renee  
14 Freeman, and I am a Para-Professional at the Academy  
15 of Medical Technology. I would like to start by  
16 saying, I wish the mayor was here, so that I could  
17 look him in his eyes. So that I could say to him, I  
18 need you to listen, to understand what it is that I'm  
19 saying. Not listen to respond to what I'm saying.

20 See, when you listen with understanding, we can  
21 have a conversation and we can come to a resolve but  
22 when you listen just to respond, you come at us angry  
23 and not hearing what we said but you're responding to  
24 the things you did not like.

25 So, I don't want him to do that. But what I will  
say at my school. We suffered a 12 percent cut,

1 which roughly amounts to \$724,000. I am in an area  
2 in Far Rockaway where a large population of my  
3 students are low-income students. They do not have  
4 the things that many have.  
5

6 This cut can hurt tremendously. When we talk  
7 about SCL, which he said he wanted to help with, we  
8 have students who are suffering. Suicidal Ideation  
9 is real and in order to help these students, we need  
10 the guidance counselors, the social worker, the art  
11 programs, the music programs. Many times, students  
12 won't talk about their situations, but they will draw  
13 a picture. They will write a rap. They will sing  
14 about it without the funding and teachers being  
15 excessed, we cannot do it. Eric Adams made a  
16 statement when he was campaigning and said, he loves  
17 New York City schools. Well, this is how you show  
18 it? You show it by pulling the rug from up under the  
19 children. You love the children, and this is how you  
20 show it. You show it by taking the money out of the  
21 schools and causing you to have larger class sizes.  
22 If you're in a classroom with one teacher, and not  
23 with a paraprofessional, and the teacher is writing  
24 on the blackboard, due to social, emotional issues,  
25 things happen. Teachers are unable to resolve those

3 problems because they're only one person. We need  
4 our support staff, and we need Eric Adams to restore  
5 the cuts and remember, he himself had a special need  
6 when he was in school. It was a teacher that helped  
7 him, and he probably had a paraprofessional as well.

8 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Next person.

9 GREGORY MONTE: Good afternoon, my name is  
10 Gregory Monte, I'm a Special Ed social studies  
11 teacher at FTR High School in Brooklyn New York and  
12 thank you for having us this afternoon.

13 I'm here today because for the past ten years, I  
14 have proudly joined other professionals who  
15 consistently answered the call to serve our students.  
16 Our schools at this point face a turning point to  
17 emerge from the pandemic stronger than before but  
18 unfortunately, Mayor Adams is leading us down the  
19 wrong path with these budget cuts. I strongly urge  
20 the City Council to reverse Mayor Adams unnecessary  
21 budget cuts that will profoundly undermine quality  
22 public education across this city.

23 When COVID demanded the versatility of our school  
24 communities, we answered the call with our usual  
25 dedication. When the pandemic forced us to teach  
remotely, despite shortages in technology for our

3 students and the usual bureaucratic inertia, we  
4 answered the call with our usual dedication. When  
5 the pandemic forced us to teach remotely, despite  
6 shortages in technology for our students and the  
7 usual bureaucratic inertia, we answered the call  
8 again. When students needed counselors and social  
9 workers, during one of the most vulnerable periods in  
10 many of their lives, we answered the call. And when  
11 students needed paraprofessionals for educational and  
12 emotional support, we answered the call.

13 When COVID exposed glaring inequalities our  
14 students face on a daily basis, we answered that call  
15 by securing \$7 billion dollars in federal and state  
16 funding, as well as a state mandate to cut class  
17 size. Today, \$4.6 billion remains unspent.

18 You can understand our shock then when we looked  
19 up from our laser focused dedication to see Mayor  
20 Adams shortchanging our schools this September.  
21 Citywide, 303 out of 467 high schools will be cut a  
22 total of \$141 million in Fair Student Funding. In my  
23 borough of Brooklyn, 77 out of 131 high schools will  
24 have their budgets cut totaling \$43 million in Fair  
25 Student Funding.

3 Each school effected will lose an average of  
4 \$556,000 or 12 percent of Fair Student Funding.  
5 These cuts mean that teachers risk being excessed,  
6 new counselors and social workers cannot be hired.  
7 Art and music teachers can be cut, and their funding  
8 cut yet again, and class size will increase despite a  
9 New York State mandate to lower class size and  
10 despite New York City receiving the funding to make  
11 it happen.

12 At this crucial turning point, for our entire  
13 school system, we can and must reverse these cuts and  
14 I urge the City Council to answer their call. Thank  
15 you.

16 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you for your  
17 testimony. I'll call the next panel. Thank you all.

18 The next panel is Shirley Aldebol from Local 32  
19 BJ, Leonie Haimson Class Size Matter, Michael Lance  
20 Class Size Matter, Andrea Ortiz New York Immigration  
21 Coalition, Kalris Salas RJPS, Smitha Varghese from  
22 AQE. Smitha, are you here?

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, while these people are  
24 getting set up, I want to say that the next two  
25 panels will be on Zoom, and I want to let people know  
in advance so that you'll be prepared. So, the next

3 panel, we'll start with Randy Levine Advocates for  
4 Children, Eman Gad Girls for Gender Equity, Quadira  
5 Coles, Girls for Gender Equity, Lori Podvesker  
6 Include NYC.

7 The Panel after that will be Gregory Brender Day,  
8 Paulette Healy from Citywide Council on Special  
9 Education, Lucas Healy a District 75 Student  
10 Advocate, Camille Casaretti CEC15 and Cloya  
11 Huggins(SP?) the Parent Action Committee. And please  
12 remember when you are on Zoom that you will have to  
13 accept the message to be unmuted. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: You may begin, thank you.

15 UNIDENTIFIED: My testimony is rather detailed.  
16 I'm not going to read it, I'm just going to summarize  
17 some of the most important points, which is, we've  
18 known that there were going to be cuts to Fair  
19 Student Funding since February. What we didn't know  
20 is how large the cuts would be to overall Galaxy  
21 budgets, and we actually did the analysis on June  
22 12<sup>th</sup> and June 13<sup>th</sup> with the help of Michael Rance and  
23 another assistant. We added them up individually  
24 from the look up tool on the DOE budget and they did  
25 equal \$1.7 billion as of June 13<sup>th</sup>. We found that 98  
percent of schools were losing funding while only 29

3 out of 1,535 would gain funding. The average cut per  
4 school was \$1.1 million or 13.9 percent and though  
5 the DOE may add funding over time, they have actually  
6 told schools that they cannot use that for staffing.  
7 The federal money cannot be used for additional  
8 staffing.

9 I really hope that the Council demands the actual  
10 budget cuts from schools. They obviously have them  
11 and if they don't provide them, I urge you to use  
12 your subpoena power because this is the kind of  
13 transparency which you have the authority to demand  
14 and we as citizens do not.

15 You know, these are going to cause the largest  
16 class size increases since the great recession in  
17 2007 and 2008 but unlike that time, we are flush with  
18 cash. The city has a reserve fund of \$8.3 billion,  
19 nearly \$5 billion of non-spent federal COVID relief  
20 and expected surplus next year of more than \$1  
21 billion, \$1.3 billion extra from foundation aid and  
22 Chair Brewer mentioned that we got this leaked budget  
23 document from the DOE showing that there was unspent  
24 \$1.1 billion in funds that have been allocated to  
25 schools in Fiscal Year 2020 and 2021. That the DOE  
was asking schools to cancel because they couldn't be

3 rolled over because they can be used for other  
4 purposes.

5 The Comptroller's Office has confirmed to me that  
6 that's in addition to the nearly \$5 billion in  
7 unspent federal funds. These monies that are sitting  
8 right now in the DOE's budget. Michael, you want to  
9 go on?

10 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you.

11 MICHAEL LANCE: Great, thank you so much. Thank  
12 you and good afternoon everyone. The mayor seems to  
13 be defending this budget by saying that he is still  
14 fully funding Fair Student Funding. What has not  
15 been sufficiently discussed is that the Fair Student  
16 Funding Formula has never been either fair or  
17 sufficient. And this is especially now given the  
18 critical situation our schools are in after two and a  
19 half years of COVID.

20 According to a survey sent to principals by the  
21 Fair Student Funding Taskforce in 2019, nearly 80  
22 percent of the principals identified large class  
23 sizes as a consequence of that formula. Some  
24 principals have even said that the formula, when  
25 fully funded, is aligned to class sizes of 28 or  
more. Many parents, teachers and principals this

3 year, for the first time, students are provided with  
4 the smaller classes and the individual attention that  
5 they needed to succeed.

6 And this is because the DOE released schools from  
7 handcuffs of the SFF formula. That together with the  
8 enrollment decline has provided schools with the  
9 unique opportunity to provide the small classes that  
10 many administrators and teachers had known for years  
11 would offer New York City children, better  
12 opportunities to learn and better opportunities for  
13 teachers to get to know each student well enough to  
14 support their academic growth.

15 Now the Class Size Matters undertook an online  
16 survey and conducted individual interviews with  
17 parents, teachers and principals about the conditions  
18 in their schools this past year and many responded  
19 that despite the controversies of mask wearing,  
20 omicron and all the other disruptions, this year it  
21 has been exceptionally meaningful because class sizes  
22 were small enough in many schools to provide students  
23 with the individual support and attention that they  
24 had long needed.

25 So, we urge the Council to do everything that you  
can to ensure that these budget cuts are restored,

3 especially after two plus years of the pandemic,  
4 smaller class sizes are more critical than ever  
5 before to give the in-person support that New York  
6 City's require. Students need to make closer  
7 connections with their teachers and peers and those  
8 connections can only exist in smaller classes. Thank  
9 you.

10 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you, next. Smitha.

11 SMITHA VARGHESE: Uhm, hello.

12 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: You can bring it in front of  
13 you.

14 SMITHA VARGHESE: Is that good? Is that good?

15 Hi, my name is Smitha, I'm the New York City Campaign  
16 Coordinator for the Alliance for Quality Education.  
17 As a result of our advocacy, the Campaign for Fiscal  
18 Equity was one and as a result of the litigation, the  
19 Fair Student Funding Formula was developed. You  
20 heard today, you know the Fair Student Funding  
21 Formula, it was a good start, but we knew it wasn't  
22 perfect and everyone talked about how it's not  
23 perfect today. And I just want to say, this is not  
24 likely - this is not new information, and it actually  
25 feels like a slap in the face to the advocacy groups  
like AQE and other equity groups who are in the you

3 know, a part of the initial taskforce. We developed  
4 these recommendations. None of this is new  
5 information.

6 And so, you know, instead we are told recently by  
7 the Chancellor that we're going to get yet another  
8 unfunded DOE taskforce even though we explicitly  
9 asked for an independent funded commission. And you  
10 know, this is something that we tried bringing to the  
11 Council, to the education leaders attention for  
12 months now and we just heard crickets until the final  
13 hour. This hearing is after the budget was voted.  
14 We are talking about the formula after the budget is  
15 voted, so forgive me but it feels, a lot of this  
16 feels very performative.

17 Uhm, to add insult to injury, in order to further  
18 reduce costs, this administration has reduced the  
19 base allocation funding per student, which will  
20 amount - it will amount to a regressive cut, as we've  
21 heard. So, you know, we have the money and I want to  
22 say, you know, we clearly have the money. People  
23 have said today that we have the money and even  
24 without the federal dollars, this Council, so many of  
25 you endorsed our platform for police free schools for  
ending segregationist policies like gifted and

1 talented, yet this budget is directing almost half a  
2 billion dollars to school police.  
3

4 We are instead of eliminating and phasing out  
5 gifted and talented, we are expanding on gifted and  
6 talented. And I just want to say, Chair Joseph, you  
7 know just for the future, we hope that there will be  
8 transparency and engagement for stakeholders. Many  
9 advocates – this wasn't a transparent process.

10 Gale Brewer, you know, Council Member you went on  
11 the record saying this is out of all of your years,  
12 decades and decades of being in office, this is the  
13 most transparent budget process you have ever  
14 experienced. Respectfully, that's the most  
15 ridiculous thing I've ever heard. This has not been  
16 transparent. Advocates have been shut out, iced out  
17 of this whole process, told by budget negotiation  
18 members that we can't stand with you, sorry. And  
19 then at the final hour, we are being called to stand  
20 with you. That's not how you work with advocates.  
21 Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: You are done? Okay, next.

23 ANDREA ORTIZ: Thank you. I'm Andrea Ortiz from  
24 the New York Immigration Coalition, the Steering  
25 Committee Member of a Citywide Coalition known as New

3 York for Racially Just Public Schools. We are here  
4 to demand that you stop the cuts to public school  
5 funding because all students deserve caring,  
6 culturally responsive and healing schools. City  
7 officials must restore \$1.7 billion in cuts. It's  
8 the only way that we will be able to provide the  
9 holistic services, programs and resources all  
10 students need and deserve in the midst of the  
11 pandemic.

12 The Council must pass a new or amend the budget  
13 resolution before the 30<sup>th</sup> to restore all cuts.  
14 Let's face it, the public-school cuts are unnecessary  
15 and cruel and will disproportionately affect  
16 historically underserved schools and communities.  
17 Cutting school budgets while simultaneously  
18 increasing police budgets, suggest that policing  
19 Black and Brown bodies is more a priority than  
20 investing in children. There's no excuse. We can  
21 use the \$4 billion left in unspent federal funds. We  
22 have a state funding increase of \$475 million and we  
23 know that the city's not struggling because they  
24 brought in billions of dollars in additional tax  
25 revenue – uh, in added tax revenues.

3 So, it's disingenuous to blame the catastrophic  
4 cuts on federal funds drawing up or a general lack of  
5 school aid funding or even have this hearing now and  
6 the transparency now after the vote. A child's  
7 wellbeing is a prerequisite to learning but we know  
8 that even before the pandemic, most public schools  
9 weren't fully equipped to help immigrants, students  
10 facing trauma or economic hardship because far too  
11 many of the schools have never been fully funded.  
12 And for decades, AQE, parents, students, educators  
13 and advocates like us, have fought to secure  
14 additional state funds. So, we know we have a unique  
15 opportunity to fully fund our schools now. Yet this  
16 year's budget negotiations lack transparency and were  
17 unnecessarily rushed and ended in catastrophic cuts,  
18 but the city can fix it. We - even with the help of  
19 the federal funding, I know we can restore the \$1.7  
20 billion in cuts with the available state aid or  
21 available city revenues. There's really no excuse.  
22 Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you, next.

24 KAHRIS SALAS RAMIREZ: Good afternoon. My name  
25 is Dr. Kahris Salas Ramirez. I am part of many of  
these coalitions but more importantly, I'm going to

3 share with you my experience on the panel for  
4 educational policy as the Manhattan Borough  
5 Presidents PEP Appointee. We did take some time to  
6 have some of these conversations with the Department  
7 of Education, however, this particular administration  
8 did not have their mayoral appointees in January.  
9 Therefore, our schedule in terms of having these  
10 conversations was pushed over for a month.

11 Once we started having conversations about Fair  
12 Student Funding and raised the concerns that were  
13 lifted by the taskforce two years ago, the Department  
14 of Education still didn't have the opportunity to  
15 educate the mayoral appointees on how problematic the  
16 Fair Student Funding Formula was. Therefore, we have  
17 another meeting where the vote does not pass for Fair  
18 Student Funding Formula.

19 We end up getting the Department of Education to  
20 agree to a work group. Some of us wanted a funded  
21 commission but we at least got them to agree to a  
22 work group that would have an expert financial  
23 analysis on what Fair Student Funding can look like  
24 and how we can change these variables in order to  
25 fully fund our schools but more importantly, focus on  
our most marginalized students. What they're not

3 telling you is that students in specialized high  
4 schools and students in audition schools get a far  
5 greater wait in their funding than our Black and  
6 Brown students, then our immigrant students, then our  
7 English Language Learners that our students with  
8 disabilities and our students with IEP's and  
9 therefore, we want to correct that.

10 Yesterday, four of us voted no on the estimated  
11 budget. It was performative because we did not have  
12 the opportunity to engage our communities in these  
13 conversations in order to have an appropriate budget  
14 and work collectively with City Council to fully fund  
15 our schools. Now is the time for you guys to step up  
16 for us and make sure that our schools are fully  
17 funded. Thank you.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, my understanding is  
19 that Shirley Aldebol from Local 32BJ, is on Zoom, so  
20 we're going to call on Shirley to speak next on Zoom.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Remember to accept the unmute  
23 message when it comes.

24 SHIRLEY ALDEBOL: Okay, thank you so much. My  
25 name is Shirley Aldebol and I'm representing the  
Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council, not DC37.

3 Uhm, we must address the systemic root causes,  
4 such as economic disparity, racial equality,  
5 education inequities. Until we solve these problems,  
6 somethings will remain the same or get worse. Some  
7 people are okay with this, but CPAC is not. We need  
8 to start valuing education and investing in our  
9 children like we should be. Without education, we  
10 don't have the careers, the professionals, White  
11 Collars, Blue Collars etc.. The way we conduct  
12 business must change.

13 How about letting central carry the salaries of  
14 the New York City DOE employees, so schools don't  
15 worry about paying their teachers. The funds they  
16 have to spend is directly on students. Teachers will  
17 not be excessed because there's not enough salary in  
18 the school budget for them to stay. The budget in  
19 smaller class sizes go hand and hand and all through  
20 the first six months, we kept saying that education  
21 budgets will not touch our schools but here we are.  
22 Thank you for having this hearing. We have not seen  
23 a fully potential - the full potential of fully  
24 funded New York City public schools.

25 \$4 billion was given by State Legistor to help  
fund smaller class sizes. How are we spending that

3 money? Who are we serving? The one percent? The  
4 ten percent? Are we here for all New Yorkers and  
5 when it comes to education and New York City public  
6 students and their families, should we decenter a  
7 focus? Mayor Adams appears to listen to New Yorkers  
8 who are influential, and this usually translate to  
9 those who have money. With money comes power.

10 But I have something to say, knowledge is  
11 supposed to be power, and our students deserve  
12 knowledge. We all deserve knowledge. This is how we  
13 empower. We want our students to have high quality  
14 education. We want elected officials to not forget  
15 about educating -

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

17 SHIRLEY ALDEBOL: Can I finish please?

18 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yes, please finish.

19 SHIRLEY ALDEBOL: We are the fabric of this city.  
20 Our children are the future and vitality and  
21 prosperity of the great city. We should be investing  
22 more and not less on the items that we have the  
23 greatest impact on our children's education. History  
24 will be a reflection on how we treat and care for our  
25 citizens. When it comes to high quality education  
that is equitable and provide for its students, all

3 the services, resources and opportunities that they  
4 deserve and need. What will history say about us?  
5 The more things change, the more things stay the  
6 same. Normally, intelligent and practical  
7 individuals take what works and improve on it, expand  
8 on that. Not do a 180, turn us around and lead us  
9 back to ground zero.

10 People might not want to hear this, but Charles  
11 Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*, was trying to move  
12 from there but we're heading back to the great  
13 disparity again. The has and has not. When someone  
14 can't breath and it reaches to the point that they're  
15 turning blue, the consistent misrepresenting of data  
16 and facts, lack of transparency on how money is  
17 spent. Most of the money for education is not  
18 reaching our schools, our children and their  
19 families, it will turn to desperation. Do anything  
20 to ensure that they can't breathe to stop breathing.  
21 We are at a focal point here. Do we really want this  
22 to happen? Do we want the pressure cooker to  
23 explode? The time to talk has passed and the time  
24 for action is now. Put the money where your mouth  
25 is. It is time to put people in place who will  
listen and not placate, is few words that we want to

3 hear. Hold each other accountable for the greater  
4 good. Elected individuals that align with our  
5 children and education and for New York City.

6 As educators, we need to stop making the same  
7 mistakes and expect different results. Why would  
8 families return to public schools with all these  
9 budget cuts besides the high cost of living. If you  
10 weren't on the PEP, please listen to the recording.  
11 Listen to your fellow New Yorkers, New York  
12 constituents. Again, Chancellor Parent Advisory,  
13 thank you for the opportunity to speak. Thank you  
14 for your service to the city.

15 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we're going to stay on  
17 Zoom now for a while. The next panel will be Randy  
18 Levine, then Eman Gad, Quadira Coles, Kaveri Sengupta  
19 and Lori Podvesker and up after that will be Gregory  
20 Brender, Camille Casaretti, Cloya Huggins, Paulette  
21 Healy and Lucas Healy. Going to Randy.

22 RANDY LEVINE: Thank you for the opportunity to  
23 testify. My name is Randy Levine and I'm Policy  
24 Director at Advocates for Children of New York. When  
25 we testified before the City Council at the  
Preliminary and Executive Budget hearings, we made

3 clear that the city should reject the mayor's  
4 proposed cuts to education and to make key  
5 investments to better support the students we serve.  
6 While we are pleased that the adopted budget includes  
7 funding for several important education investments,  
8 such as the mental health continuum, immigrant family  
9 communication, shelter-based community coordinators  
10 and early childhood education for children who are  
11 undocumented, we are deeply concerned that the budget  
12 continues to cut school budgets.

13 Taking into account register relief, more than  
14 400 schools serving a total of \$185,000 students are  
15 seeing cuts of over ten percent to their Fair Student  
16 Funding allocation. At 189 of those schools, more  
17 than 85 percent of students are eligible for free or  
18 reduced-price lunch. We regularly hear from  
19 families, including families of students with  
20 disabilities and English Language Learners whose  
21 children are not getting the instruction they have a  
22 legal right to receive, much less the support they  
23 need to thrive.

24 In fact, according to DOE data, as of November  
25 2021, more than 31,000 students with disabilities  
were not fully receiving their mandated special

1 education instruction, so we were very concerned  
2 about the impact of school budget cuts on all  
3 students and especially the students with the  
4 greatest needs.  
5

6 These cuts come at a time when the city is  
7 grappling with the unprecedented educational  
8 disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. But  
9 also, at a time when the DOE has received \$7 billion  
10 in federal COVID-19 stimulus relief funding. While  
11 much of the funding was allocated to important  
12 programs and services, such as make up special  
13 education services and school social workers,  
14 hundreds of millions of dollars were originally  
15 allocated to fraud categories, such as programmatic  
16 support and operational support.

17 Today's hearing still left us with many questions  
18 and the Council should examine where every dollar is  
19 going and identify how much funding is still  
20 available to prevent schools from having to make  
21 cuts. The city should also reexamine the Fair  
22 Student Funding Formula that is -

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

24 RANDY LEVINE: That is driving these cuts. As a  
25 member of the city's Fair Student Funding Taskforce

3 under the previous administration, I know there are  
4 major questions about the equity and adequacy of this  
5 formula that need to be examined and addressed. We  
6 join our partners in calling for a funded independent  
7 commission that can access ways to allocate school  
8 funding equitably and ensure schools have the  
9 resources they need to serve all students. Thank  
10 you.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Randy. Next, we'll  
12 go to Eman Gad, Girls for Gender Equity.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

14 EMAN GAD: Hi, good afternoon all, Chair Joseph  
15 and Brewer, and members and staff of the Committee on  
16 Education and Oversight and Investigations. My name  
17 is Eman Gad, I am a Policy Fellow at Girls for Gender  
18 Equity, and I am giving testimony on behalf of  
19 Quadira Coles, our Deputy Director of Policy.

20 I want you all to image a fully resourced school  
21 of classrooms full of well-trained staff, supplies,  
22 technology and support that is available to help  
23 teachers inside and out of the classroom. A fully  
24 funded school with programs and activities that will  
25 provide students with skills and experiences that  
will benefit them in their adulthood. A school

3 culture free of heavy-handed policing, surveillance  
4 and policies that push out students and instead,  
5 prioritizes supporting students immediate needs and  
6 well-being through restorative counseling and  
7 mentorship, in order to help them navigate their  
8 school experiences and learn.

9 These are all things students deserve but the  
10 Fiscal Year 2023 school budget as it currently stands  
11 would not provide them these opportunities. At the  
12 top of this budget season, we have asked the city to  
13 prioritize healing centered and police free schools  
14 and invest in students education through restorative  
15 services, programs and support for school staff by  
16 way of a substantial education budget. This will  
17 force schools across the city to cut important  
18 programs and lose staff at a time when the needs of  
19 young people have actually increased.

20 Any amount of budget cuts to education has a  
21 tremendous impact on Black, Brown, queer and disabled  
22 students who already face barriers to learning. It  
23 is unforgivable that at a time where students are  
24 still picking up the pieces from lost instruction  
25 time and structure during the pandemic, the city does  
not see value in investing in their future.

3 Let's be clear, New York City schools have never  
4 received the full funding they deserve and need. Yet  
5 officials claim to be concerned about the students  
6 educational outcomes. Instead of common-sense  
7 allocations to things that will support students who  
8 have fallen behind academically, addressing mental  
9 health and emotion concerns, giving students a space  
10 and opportunity to be creative and busy or support  
11 teachers and staff who need to make a living during  
12 an economic crisis, the city has instead decided that  
13 increasing the school policing budget, not  
14 replenishing vacant positions and moving funds away -

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

16 EMAN GAD: I finish please? It is more  
17 important than helping students recover from the  
18 pandemic in holistic and meaningful way. The impact  
19 of these budget cuts are dangerous to our students  
20 future and the lack of transparency makes it hard for  
21 our youth to believe in the city's ability to take  
22 care of them.

23 We strongly urge the decision makers here to  
24 reallocate the proposed cuts back into the school  
25 budget, plus invest more funding to one, hire 2,000  
New Yorkers in schools. Two, invest \$75 million to

3 hire restorative justice coordinators in 500 schools  
4 and \$45 million to implement restorative justice  
5 practices. Three, direct \$360 million in new funding  
6 to grow school climate supports and four, baseline \$5  
7 million to sustain the mental health continuum  
8 initiative. And finally, move money away from youth  
9 policing period. Thank you for the opportunity to  
10 testify.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Quadira please.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Is Quadira Coles in the Zoom.  
14 Okay then we'll move on to Kaveri Sengupta, the  
15 Coalition for Asian American Children and Families.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

17 KAVERI SENGUPTA: Good afternoon. My name is  
18 Kaveri Sengupta, and I am the Senior Policy  
19 Coordinator for Education at the Coalition for Asian  
20 American Children and Families. Thank you for the  
21 opportunity to testify.

22 Alongside the New Yorkers for Racial Just Public  
23 Schools Coalition, CACF believes that all students  
24 including AAPI students deserve caring, culture  
25 responsive healing and fully funded schools that  
inspire them, center their humanity and provide them

3 with an abundance of supportive and nurturing  
4 resources. Yet this budget does not move New York  
5 City public schools toward realizing this vision. It  
6 is not sufficient to meet students' needs and was  
7 passed despite this fact. Even while the city  
8 received the revenue necessary to ensure schools did  
9 not face unnecessary cuts, cuts that are especially  
10 unconscionable, as our students in school communities  
11 are still recovering from the impacts of COVID and  
12 need sustained investment.

13 The city ultimately passed a budget that directed  
14 that funding elsewhere. As always, these decisions  
15 that further entrench our system into operating under  
16 a model of scarcity disproportionately harm our most  
17 marginalized students. AAPI students comprise 16.6  
18 percent of the New York City student population  
19 attend over 95 percent of our public schools, make up  
20 almost one in four English Language Learners and over  
21 15,000 have an IEP.

22 A share of AAPI students in New York City public  
23 schools has grown during the pandemic. These  
24 students and families need more investment, not less.  
25 While we appreciate the investments made and some key  
priorities including community schools, language

1 access for the limited English proficient families  
2 and the mental health continuum, these pieces are not  
3 comprehensive or holistic wins, especially given the  
4 skill the cuts our schools are facing.  
5

6 We're also disappointed by the justification  
7 provided around losses in enrollment, as the city is  
8 not proactively invested in culturally responsive and  
9 language accessible approaches to improving access to  
10 our schools. Enrollment losses are not simply  
11 related to hesitancy or necessarily easily  
12 rectifiable by winning families back. They're rooted  
13 in the real challenges for families such as those  
14 with children with disabilities or older English  
15 Language Learners to access and receive proper  
16 services in the public schools.

17 The city including the Mayor, City Council and  
18 the DOE must tackle systemic access issues  
19 holistically but continue investment in our schools –

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

21 KAVERI SENGUPTA: Rather than removing it. Can I  
22 finish? Although we agree that the Fair Student  
23 Funding Formula is flawed and must be updated as soon  
24 as possible to better reflect the weights that will  
25 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

3 undocumented children. A \$46 million investment to  
4 support increases toward salary parity for the Early  
5 Childhood staff and a \$6 million investment to  
6 support a COLA for the Human Services Workforce,  
7 which will hopefully include the Early Childhood  
8 Workforce.

9 We urge the Council and the Administration to go  
10 further because early childhood centers are still  
11 struggling to keep their doors open and to ensure  
12 that children and families have access to high  
13 quality education.

14 We urge the city to take the following steps:  
15 First, to suspend the pay for enrollment system  
16 whereby providers are docked when there are  
17 fluctuations in enrollment. Given the changes of the  
18 pandemic, enrollment has continued to fluctuate while  
19 costs have remained steady, and the communication  
20 increase leading to a Fiscal issue facing many  
21 providers.

22 Second, to complete the unfinished work of salary  
23 parity, we are grateful that the Council and  
24 Administration did put some funding into the FY23  
25 budget for salary parity, in particularly want to  
ensure that future salaries include longevity

3 increases, as well as address those staff members  
4 including directors and support staff who were not  
5 part of the original 2019 agreement to the move  
6 towards salary parity and finally, we urge the city  
7 to allow community-based providers to use community  
8 based enrollment to enroll families into the programs  
9 that they already have a connection with.

10 Many families already have a strong connection  
11 with community-based organizations and are afraid to  
12 use the city's centralized enrollment system. Thank  
13 you so much for this hearing and for the opportunity  
14 to testify and we look forward to working with you on  
15 these issues.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Gregory. Next,  
17 we're going to call on Camille Casaretti. Camille  
18 followed by Cloya Huggins.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, if Camille is not there,  
21 we'll go to Cloya Huggins.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

23 CLOYA HUGGINS: Hi, good afternoon. My name is  
24 Cloya Huggins, I'm part of the Parent Action  
25 Committee and a proud parent of eight children and  
I'm here to speak about the impact, the cut, the

3 budget cut will have on my children and other  
4 children of my community. It was a great honor to be  
5 here, so I can give my voice as a parent.

6 We have benefit greatly from all of the  
7 initiatives that you guys have put together to help  
8 us but we as parents also need more help. We also  
9 need more help, so we can be better prepared to help  
10 our children in this day and age. We need also more  
11 funding's for the schools, so the children can be  
12 more diverse and have more technology, more books and  
13 everything that they need.

14 It's not just about having the police. We are  
15 grateful for the staff. We are grateful but we need  
16 more help from my community and I'm so thankful to be  
17 here to give a voice on behalf of parents. Give a  
18 voice on behalf of children, young, teenagers and  
19 everyone. I'm so thankful that if you could more  
20 consider us and with more help and thank you so much  
21 and have a blessed month for this time.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Cloya. Now, we're  
23 going to move to in-person, Paulette Healy and Lucas  
24 Healy. I'm going to ask in-person witnesses to  
25 please pull the mic up close to you so we can hear  
you.

3 Okay, so Lucas, you're going first.

4 LUCAS HEALY: Hello Council Members. My name is  
5 Lucas Healy and I'm a D75 student. I have autism and  
6 I will be starting high school in a D75 inclusion  
7 programs where I'll be learning alongside general  
8 education students for units with D75 special  
9 education supports.

10 For the first time in four years, I will be able  
11 to attend a school in my own neighborhood. When I  
12 started school in kindergarten, I was non-verbal.  
13 Meaning, I had a lot to say but I do not have the  
14 skills to have my thoughts heard.

15 I am here today to testify in front of City  
16 Council because of my teacher and my various  
17 therapists. What the DOE is doing right now, cutting  
18 - is cutting positions in our schools is a disservice  
19 to students like me. If my leg was broken, would you  
20 take my crutches away? If I was starving, would you  
21 lock my food away? That would be ridiculous.

22 Then don't disable students further by taking  
23 away our teachers. I don't care where the blame  
24 falls. All I know, the results of these cuts our  
25 schools are losing programs, service teachers.

1  
2 Students like me, our potential will never be  
3 unlocked without them. Thank you.

4 PAULETTE HEALY: As Lucas had said, I am his  
5 mother. My name is Paulette Healy, I'm a returning  
6 member of the citywide counsel on special education  
7 and a member of parents for responsive, equitable,  
8 safe schools, press NYC.

9 Before I start, I just wanted to give a quick  
10 thank you to Council Member Nurse, Cabán, Richardson  
11 Jordan, Ossé and my dear friend Council Member Avilés  
12 for knowing how unjust the proposed city budget was  
13 and voted no.

14 We learned today that out of our 1,600 schools,  
15 1,120 have experienced cuts and that was information  
16 shared by Council Member Restler, not by the DOE.  
17 So, for that, I am grateful to you Chair Joseph for  
18 providing a platform in order for us to get that  
19 information. Let's make no mistake, the DOE is  
20 paying a shell game with our tax money. The First  
21 Deputy Chancellor showed immense disrespect to this  
22 Council today and the Chancellor shucked his  
23 responsibility to this abysmal budget cuts, back on  
24 you, the City Council by saying at last night's PEP,  
25 that the vote on the estimated operation budget was

3 procedural and that it was already decided by you.

4 And these cuts, no matter how the chancellor and

5 mayor tried to rebrand or manipulate it are cuts.

6 They harm, they hurt and it's our children who will

7 be suffering for it.

8 Council Member Brewer, please use your authority

9 as Oversight Committee Chair to investigate how the

10 \$277 million for Summer Rising was divided because

11 principals are struggling to staff the academic

12 portion of the program on top of trying to spin dolly

13 how to run their schools based off of these wrong

14 projections that the budgets are based on.

15 Lastly, thank you Mark Treyger for being the only

16 DOE rep to still be here to hear public comment

17 because you value the voices of the parents and the

18 teachers and the staff and the administrators that

19 are effected immensely by these cuts. And, just as

20 an example of these cuts, I live in District 20 with

21 my son. We are, as a district, we have 47 schools.

22 We are experiencing \$29 million in losses because of

23 these cuts.

24 I have one school that is being shut by 30

25 percent. They are losing 30 percent of their budget

and they serve 766 members in their school. 97

3 percent of them living under the poverty line. They  
4 are losing 16 teachers right now. So, we need to  
5 reverse these cuts immediately and restore what is  
6 equitable to our schools. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I'd like to go back to the  
9 Zoom, I'm told Camille Casaretti is there. Camille.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

11 CAMILLE CASARETTI: Hi everyone. Thank you so  
12 much. Good afternoon Chair Joseph and Chair Brewer  
13 and Committee Members. My name is Camille Casaretti.  
14 I am President of District 15 Community Education  
15 Council in Brooklyn where we represent over 35,000  
16 students and their families and grades 3K-12<sup>th</sup> grade.  
17 We are known as a district who worked collaboratively  
18 and put students first in our decision making and are  
19 greatly concerned that the mayor and the people  
20 leading the Department of Education are not doing  
21 what's best for children. Our children in schools  
22 need to be prioritized, returning to prepandemic  
23 levels of funding is not the answer.

24 I'm begging you, please prioritize education and  
25 give our children what they need. The unused funds  
are sitting there, reduced Fair Student Funding, no

3 plans for the almost \$5 million in Federal COVID  
4 Relief. None of this makes any sense. Our district  
5 received a spreadsheet that was inaccurate and did  
6 not reflect what was actually happening in our  
7 schools. Student headcounts for next year were  
8 grossly underestimated and we know this is true  
9 because our principals to a very thorough job with  
10 registered productions. One of our schools has 47  
11 incoming students already registered and was only  
12 given a budget for 30 of those children.

13 Our district had cut down the deficit almost in  
14 half and we are still being forced to excess staff.  
15 Our schools are putting in appeals that are being  
16 denied and which is a time consuming and frustrating  
17 and unnecessary process. It's creating an atmosphere  
18 of distrust and confusion. We are losing arts  
19 programs, cluster teachers, science teachers in our  
20 elementary schools and through a language program,  
21 stem labs and science lab programs are being  
22 destroyed with these cuts.

23 Everything that makes this school special is  
24 going to be gone and professional development –

25 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

3 need IEPs. So, this is the environment that these  
4 budget cuts are creating. We're going to be losing  
5 our daytime academic intervention services. The  
6 reading coaches that we have and math coaches that we  
7 have are going to be cut and we have children that  
8 are in some cases a year behind and really struggling  
9 to keep up. We need all of these supports.

10 So, uhm, I also have a lot of concerns about IEP  
11 services being reduced because if the register count  
12 is so low, that means that our principals -

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Ma'am, can you please wrap  
14 up? Please wrap up Camille.

15 CAMILLE CASARETTI: Excuse me?

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Please wrap up, you're over  
17 time.

18 CAMILLE CASARETTI: Oh yes, certainly. You know,  
19 I'm just very worried about IEP mandates being met  
20 because the principals can't budget appropriately  
21 based on what they're given and the register counts  
22 that are inaccurate. So, uhm, I just want to say  
23 thank you so much for holding this hearing and we  
24 really hope that City Council is going to be able to  
25 help make significant changes with your support. So,  
thank you so much. I really appreciate it.

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

3 wish some of those words from our Council Members  
4 would have been here before the vote and I understand  
5 the system, how it works. Our speaker and have  
6 funding when you stand out and put your district on  
7 the line, but I just want to say that this has been a  
8 tragic situation for New York City schools and it's  
9 not too late for Council and the Mayor to sit down  
10 and work out something for the best of New York City  
11 schools and New York City's families. Thank you.

12 HERMAN YOUNGER: Good afternoon Chair Joseph and  
13 members of the Committee. My name is Herman Younger,  
14 and I am a Community Organizer with New Settlements  
15 Parent Action Committee serving the Bronx. I want to  
16 start off by thanking the few Council Members who  
17 remain here with us today to hear from the public.  
18 Chair Joseph, I recall fondly in a meeting with  
19 Dignity in Schools that you were an educator as  
20 recently as December of last year. I now reflect on  
21 that fact with the implications of what \$215 million  
22 in budget cuts will do to public education.

23 If you were an educator today, what could that do  
24 to you? For the countless other Black and Brown  
25 educators, for the countless Black and Brown students  
in need of quality, public education. The hypocrisy

3 of Mayor Adams and Chancellor Banks is astounding.  
4 They would like to celebrate the recently unveiled  
5 Black studies curriculum while proposing to reduce  
6 the quality of education for Black and Brown lives  
7 that pave the way toward excellence.

8 Yet, while this budget cuts almost one billion  
9 from the DOE, the \$400 million school cop budget, a  
10 force that is run by the NYPD but is funded by the  
11 DOE, was protected from any cuts and in fact,  
12 received an additional \$13 million. The priorities  
13 of Eric Adams and David Banks are clear. To defund  
14 our public schools while filling them with police  
15 officers that target, harm and arrest Black, Brown,  
16 and disabled students, further perpetuating the  
17 school to prison pipeline and school to deportation  
18 pipeline.

19 Now, let's get real. Under the Mayor, Council,  
20 Government model, the Council serves as a check  
21 against the mayor. Therefore, I'm going to  
22 respectfully ask that this City Council not scapegoat  
23 the DOE or the Mayor on this issue when it is in the  
24 power of the Council to amend this budget. Shame on  
25 this disgraceful administration and shame on any  
Council Member who does not vote to amend the

1 catastrophic budget cuts to public education.

2 History has its eyes on you. Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Next person.

4 ELTON DODSON: Good evening. My name is Elton  
5 Dodson, I am the Executive Director of the Mural  
6 Justice Project, a dad to three kids that are in DOE  
7 or graduated from it. Also, on the SLT at PS295. I  
8 want to thank you for this hearing and for the  
9 difficult work that you are all doing. I feel like  
10 right now this is a little bit like buying a car,  
11 driving off the lot and then returning and asking for  
12 a different price but that's where we find ourselves  
13 today.

14 I'm going to deviate from the comments that you  
15 have in front of you a bit in light of the PEP  
16 meeting, the PEP meeting last night. I want to go  
17 over 2590G which is the New York law that governs the  
18 PEP's and the CEC's submissions of their total  
19 estimated budget. This process has been - has not  
20 been followed for years. This is a process that has  
21 created a situation in which none of you were  
22 properly equipped to vote on that meeting that was  
23 called at the last minute for the budget and why were  
24 you improperly equipped? Because the Chancellor, and  
25

3 I'm not putting all of this on Chancellor Banks or on  
4 Mayor Adams because this has happened long before  
5 them. The Chancellor, as he's always done, made an  
6 emergency declaration to suspend the 2590 process.  
7 Now, what is the 2590 process? We should all know  
8 this. It's a process that requires essentially  
9 grassroots, community-based budget planning for our  
10 schools. Something that we have not followed at all.

11 The CEC's in each district, along with their  
12 community superintendents should be assessing their  
13 principals, accessing their teachers and staff and  
14 their students and asking, what do you need? That  
15 information along with the similar assessment made by  
16 the PEP is submitted to the Chancellor who then  
17 submits it to the mayor, ahead of the budget process,  
18 in which all of you voted on last Monday.

19 That was voted on last night by the PEP. The  
20 last time I checked last night was after you had  
21 adopted the budget. Explain to me how we are not in  
22 violation of state law under 2590, which is sub queue  
23 of that budgetary process when you never received  
24 that estimated budget from the PEP or the CEC's. You  
25 couldn't have, it was just passed last night under  
what Chancellor Banks referred to as a procedural

3 vote. There are no procedural votes when they're  
4 talking about the future of our children. Thank you.

5 NATASHA CAPERS: I am Natasha Capers, mother of  
6 two public schools students, one of which graduated  
7 high school just a few days ago. A parent who fought  
8 for the campaign for Fiscal Equity for a decade, a  
9 founding member of New Yorkers for Racially Just  
10 Public Schools and the proud Director of New York  
11 City Coalition for Educational Justice. This is my  
12 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> budget fight, and this is CJ's 16<sup>th</sup>. We  
13 as parents and organizers are not new to this budget  
14 fight or process, we are true to it.

15 This is Mayor Banks budget. Sorry, this is Mayor  
16 Adams budget, and the DOE has slashed their budget  
17 because their boss Mayor Adams has instructed them to  
18 do so. So, CAJ is calling for the City Council to  
19 pass a new or amended budget resolution before the  
20 30<sup>th</sup> to restore all the cuts. To do what is right  
21 for children, even when the DOE can't or won't. I  
22 got into organizing because my children who are now  
23 18 and 16 years old, who were in the first grade and  
24 PreK. A school that I had attended as a child was on  
25 a closure list. I learned about the deep  
disinvestment, not just in their school but there are

1  
2 all Black and Brown schools across the city. I got  
3 involved, helped to save our school and helped to  
4 make it a thriving community school. Seeing these  
5 budget cuts that are now coming to schools is  
6 heartbreaking in ways that are beyond words. The  
7 lessons that I, CJ and millions of families learned  
8 during the Bloomberg privatization and still stand  
9 true today.

10 Budget cuts never improves outcomes for students.  
11 Budget cuts never build caring, culturally responsive  
12 schools with highly qualified educators. Budget cuts  
13 like these are one of the many ways that White  
14 Supremacy and systemic racism continue to show up in  
15 public education.

16 For months, advocacy at organizing groups like  
17 CEJ and RFJPS have been ringing the bell about these  
18 cuts. The effects on children, educators, schools,  
19 and we need the Council to not just listen to us but  
20 to work with us to fully fund and create the schools  
21 that deserve our children.

22 The same groups who rang the bell during the  
23 Bloomberg era are the ones sounding the alarm right  
24 now, but our work effort, words, tears, have all  
25 fallen on deaf ears. We have seen this in the past

1  
2 and a very similar privatization mayor. We saw this  
3 during Bloomberg. The argument of lower enrollment  
4 is a recycled one. It is a lie. It is a lie, and it  
5 is one from Bloomberg but with a new name. The old  
6 name was school utilization, and it was used to co-  
7 locate and close schools to open Charters. Low  
8 enrollment is the new argument and if we are not  
9 careful, it will be the cause of the new on slot of  
10 closures in Black and Brown in low-income schools  
11 across our city.

12 Just know this, that if you are confused by the  
13 DOE and City Hall's numbers, that is by design, and  
14 it is a tool of White Supremacy and systemic racism.

15 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you so much for your  
16 testimony. Thank you. The next panel is Anna-Maria  
17 Thomas, Jenna Weinberg, Bliss Brayard, and Lupe  
18 Hernandez. Good afternoon, you may proceed. Thank  
19 you.

20 ANNA-MARIA THOMAS: Good evening to all of our  
21 Education Committee members and this investigative  
22 hearing. I want to thank you for having this. I'm a  
23 77-year-old elder, 39 years working in the New York  
24 City Department of Education retired educator and  
25 you've heard that much of what you're seeing today is

3 not knew. I have watched this since 2001. The New  
4 York City public schools budget in 2001 when  
5 Bloomberg became Mayor of New York City was \$28  
6 billion. What happened to this money and why is  
7 there a continued effort to defund our New York City  
8 public schools? The continuous defunding of our New  
9 York public schools created public schools which lost  
10 important supportive services, such as school nurses,  
11 and doctors who gave students dental and hearing  
12 examinations.

13 School psychologists and social workers, guidance  
14 counselors, our prized school aids, librarians and  
15 school libraries, science laboratories, and the  
16 removal of subjects such as music, art, phonics,  
17 where you learn to read, grammar where you learn to  
18 write and penmanship where you can sign your name on  
19 a check. None of this is being taught in our schools  
20 today and taken out of the curriculum.

21 The new so-called mathematics has all parents in  
22 a quandary because they cannot help their child with  
23 their homework. I implore the Education Committee to  
24 realize our children need all these services restored  
25 along with the inclusion of computers issued to  
students starting in grades three. The digital world

3 is taking over every aspect of communications. This  
4 continued defunding of our New York Public Schools is  
5 a grave injustice to our children. All our students  
6 deserve the best education from this greatest state  
7 in our nation, New York State. Thank you for this  
8 opportunity to present.

9 Oh, and I did not – did I say my name? Dr. Anna-  
10 Maria Thomas. I am a Lobbyist for the children.

11 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Next person.

12 LUPE HERNANDEZ: Hello, my name is Lupe  
13 Hernandez. I am actually one of the Borough  
14 President Appointees. Thank you Gale for the  
15 community Education Council for District 2.

16 As a parent, I am disappointed and alarmed by the  
17 cuts to the DOE that were approved in this 2023  
18 budget. There have been various figures cited  
19 ranging from \$215 million to \$1.7 billion worth of  
20 cuts to the DOE. And while I'm troubled that so many  
21 elected officials seem unable to say with certainty  
22 the exact dollar amount they already voted to strip  
23 from public education.

24 Vaguely pointing to supposed federal funding that  
25 offsets the cuts, what I am certain of is that these  
cuts have a very real consequence at all of our

1 schools, and they are being felt in a real, in real  
2 time. Principals across the city have received their  
3 budgets and have already had to make painful  
4 decisions to cut vital programs like arts education,  
5 sports programs, field trips, restorative justice,  
6 and even worse, to let go of staff including  
7 teachers, guidance counselors, nurses, social  
8 workers, all of the people that have kept our  
9 children safe in a time of so much grief, loss and  
10 uncertainty.  
11

12 Our most vulnerable students will be impacted the  
13 most. These students were barely getting the support  
14 that they are federally mandated to receive. Our  
15 children deserve so much more as do the school staff  
16 who have literally put their lives on the line to  
17 care for our children during this prolonged COVID  
18 crisis.

19 These cuts, the largest passed in many years,  
20 will devastate our schools. Undo any progress that  
21 has been made in the past year to improve the mental  
22 health and wellness of our students and their  
23 academic success. And it just plunged the entire  
24 system into chaos. Just as we are collectively  
25 beginning to find our footing after three uniquely

3 challenging school years, the rug is being pulled out  
4 from under us and under our children. We are being  
5 told that this is simply because enrollment is down.  
6 Yet, many principals throughout the city say that the  
7 projected enrollment numbers were grossly under  
8 represented and far from the reality of the true  
9 students enrolled and that will remain in their  
10 school throughout the fall.

11 We are being told not to worry and that something  
12 will be worked out before next school year. Why were  
13 their enrollment projections so low to begin with?  
14 The funds that are restored later in the school year,  
15 do not help the schools retain the staff that they  
16 need to support all of their children and they need  
17 those funds now. We need to know exactly how our  
18 schools will be fully funded and how and when their  
19 budgets will be restored.

20 Staff changes have already been made. How will  
21 that be fixed before September and when the reality  
22 of these cuts become more widely understood, no doubt  
23 that will lead to parents deciding to pull their kids  
24 out of the public schools. Deepening this supposed  
25 crisis in enrollment decline and leading the more  
budget cuts under the Fair Student Funding Formula.

3 Which we knew that formula was inadequate to begin  
4 with. And those weights need more funding. Students  
5 with disabilities need more weights added. It's not  
6 fair that students in specialized high schools and  
7 screened middle schools are getting more funding, yet  
8 our most vulnerable students are not.

9 Students in temporary housing don't get any  
10 additional weights. This budget as is, is  
11 detrimental to the ones that need the support more  
12 than ever. Please go back, amend this.

13 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: We're working on it. I have  
14 a question for you, does the CEC - have you gotten  
15 data? Have you gotten for either from the  
16 Superintendent or DOE or because you have a pretty  
17 sophisticated group of CEC members from every school?  
18 I mean, I'm just wondering if you've been collecting  
19 that?

20 LUPE HERNANDEZ: Yes, we received the Galaxy  
21 spreadsheet. I've gotten more information from  
22 parent advocates than I have from the DOE.

23 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: So, the information you have  
24 is not from the DOE, the data? It's from the  
25 advocates?

3 LUPE HERNANDEZ: It's from the Galaxy and it does  
4 match with the principals that I've spoken to, which  
5 is disproportionately, it is very different than what  
6 the projected enrollment is showing. I know even my  
7 son's principal has said, "we know we're going to  
8 have - the DOE is going to owe our school money" The  
9 problem with that is, my son's autistic. He needed a  
10 para when they didn't include that in the June  
11 budget, he didn't get that para till February.

12 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Right.

13 LUPE HERNANDEZ: By then it's too late. These  
14 kids need the support come first day of school,  
15 September 8<sup>th</sup>, we need these - the para's need to be  
16 there for the kids, the social workers.

17 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: I know, I'm just focused on  
18 data.

19 LUPE HERNANDEZ: Yep.

20 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay, so you haven't -  
21 nobody has given you school by school data from DOE  
22 except through the Galaxy?

23 LUPE HERNANDEZ: Through the Galaxy.

24 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you.

25 LUPE HERNANDEZ: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yes, go ahead. Thank you.

3 Good afternoon.

4 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Good afternoon.

5 JENNA WEINBERG: I almost didn't make it but five  
6 and a half hours later, I am here because my middle  
7 school students asked me to come. And they asked me  
8 to come here today to be their voice to tell you a  
9 few things.

10 Amelia says, "Do not cut our afterschool  
11 programs. They are the spaces where we get to be our  
12 happiest selves." "Allie says, "These experiences  
13 help me step out of my comfort zone." Jonan says,  
14 "Art is such an important part of our lives. It  
15 brings together a group of people who might otherwise  
16 not know each other to build an amazing community."  
17 Soshia says, "I would not be who I am today without  
18 theater."

19 This week, instead of focusing on end of the year  
20 pizza parties, field days and graduations, our  
21 students and alumni recorded video testimonials, made  
22 art work pleading with the DOE, wrote letters to the  
23 mayor and organized a walk out in defense of the  
24 teachers and programs that have shaped them.

25 My name is Jenna Weinberg, and I am a Theater  
Teacher and I'm a Save 39 in Kensington. I'm a

3 Brooklyn Native and I am a proud product of the New  
4 York City public school system. This year, our  
5 students overcame so much. To finally experience  
6 their first standing ovation in a packed auditorium  
7 or to take home a championship with their basketball,  
8 volleyball and soccer teams, after the two years of  
9 isolation during COVID.

10 If these budget cuts happen, our students will be  
11 robbed again of these formative experiences. Late-  
12 stage funding for sports is useless if our coach  
13 George leaves our school in an effort to save a  
14 colleague's job. There can't be a musical even if a  
15 grant shows up in February if our school has already  
16 let go of our music or our theater teacher.

17 For many students, these experiences are what  
18 actually motivate them to come to school. To push  
19 through their academic hurdles and to overcome  
20 personal obstacles and they foster a true sense of  
21 belonging because our kids have a place to shine and  
22 be celebrated for who they are, and they do not take  
23 it for granted.

24 It is absolutely worth fighting for. Even if  
25 everything stays the same and nothing changes and the  
tide does not turn, it is my job as an educator and a

3 role model to stand up for the world we want to see  
4 instead of just accepting the world as it is.

5 I'm here today modeling that for my students. I  
6 know my community is watching and we're asking the  
7 Mayor and the City Council to take action to align  
8 yourselves in solidarity with students and families  
9 and teachers and stop this budget from moving forward  
10 as is. Please, listen to the public who has all  
11 spoken up so beautifully and articulately today and  
12 to the educators who have been showing up every day.  
13 Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you so much.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: May I just make one - we're  
16 looking at suggestions and I heard from the DOE that  
17 \$3 billion is being spent for our Charter schools. I  
18 don't pay taxes for Charter schools, and I don't  
19 think anyone in this city pays for Charter schools,  
20 which do not have the same regulations as the public  
21 schools do. They are not public schools, and our tax  
22 dollars should not be going to Charter schools.  
23 Maybe we can use that \$3 billion for the cuts that we  
24 are having in our public schools. Thank you.

25 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you so much. Thank  
you.

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.

3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we'll move to the next  
4 panel. Marilyn Mendoza.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, Mark Gonsalves.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

8 MARK GONSALVES: Hi, good afternoon. Thank you  
9 Chair Joseph, my Council Member Chair Brewer, thank  
10 you so much. My name is Mark Gonsalves, I'm a parent  
11 of two students with disabilities. I'm also PS199's  
12 PTA President and a CEC3 member living in District 6.

13 We heard the data today. It's not \$215 million  
14 in cuts to the DOE. It's \$1.7 billion to the schools  
15 in the Galaxy system. That's why we're here today.  
16 \$215 million should have been able to be absorbed  
17 with all the one-time spending that happened with  
18 federal funds in FY22. Instead, DOE decided to go  
19 after our students. The DOE made actual cuts to all  
20 students with adjustments to the Fair Student Funding  
21 Formula. We've heard the trauma from school leaders  
22 as they are facing these DOE mandates and not getting  
23 the support from the DOE.

24 I'll give you an example, PS199M, we had budget  
25 cut of two and a quarter million dollars in Galaxy or  
30 percent when we factor out grants compared to

3 FY22. District 3 had cuts totaling more than \$33  
4 million or about 19 percent. District 6 for Council  
5 Member Brewer had \$30 million in cuts. We heard from  
6 Mayor Adams though, these cuts were just due to  
7 enrollment declines but that's not what the data  
8 showed. When you look line item by line item in  
9 Galaxy, we saw differences.

10 For example, PS199, the parent coordinator  
11 position was cut by 12 percent. We have to have a  
12 parent coordinator, that's the law. So, we got to  
13 take money out of the classroom to fully fund the  
14 parent coordinator and that did not just happen at  
15 199, it happened all over. So, where did this money  
16 go? That's what we need you as Council Members to  
17 find out. Why are we bloating the bureaucracy in the  
18 DOE? With superintendent staffs going from five on  
19 average to 40 or 50. Why are superintendents -

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

21 MARK GONSALVES: Budgets going from under  
22 \$100,000 to in the millions of dollars. Why are we  
23 wasting money outside of the classroom and not  
24 funding our students?

25 We need the Council to rectify these wrongs. You  
have the power to stop these cuts. That's why we

3 trusted you and that's why we elected you. I thank  
4 you for your time and your support.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Mark. I'm told  
6 that Marilyn Mendoza from Make the Road is in the  
7 Zoom. Marilyn.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

9 MARILYN MENDOZA: Hi, good afternoon Chairs  
10 Joseph and Brewer, members of the respective  
11 committees. My name is Marilyn Mendoza, and I am the  
12 Education Justice Organizer at Make the Road New  
13 York. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on  
14 the impact, the adopted FY2023 DOE budget will have  
15 on youth and immigrants in working class communities  
16 of color.

17 Make the Road New York is a nonprofit community-  
18 based membership organization with over 25,000 low-  
19 income members dedicated to building the power of  
20 immigrants and working-class communities. To achieve  
21 dignity and justice through organizing, policy,  
22 innovation and transformative education and survival  
23 services. Our education justice project fights to  
24 improve public schools for students and their  
25 families. As the Education Justice Organizer, I work  
with parents every day to tackle the problem of

3 overcrowded schools. Secure the resources our  
4 students need and ensure our parents and students  
5 have a larger say in their education, regardless of  
6 any language barriers.

7 In the past week, I have received emails,  
8 messages and phone calls from dozens of parents  
9 asking, what can be done to reverse the decision by  
10 Mayor Adams to cut \$250 million from DOE's budget.  
11 Parents whose children attend schools like PS14 in  
12 Corona Queens are facing cuts in the hundreds of  
13 thousands of dollars. They know that these cuts are  
14 not just numbers on a balance sheet. These cuts will  
15 result in increased class sizes and cuts to arts  
16 programming and other vital services and supports our  
17 communities have fought for and won.

18 They know this because for decades, their schools  
19 have born the brunt of systemic underfunding, which  
20 has already resulted in classrooms bursting at the  
21 seams, making it difficult for students to get the  
22 instructional time they need.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You can finish your  
25 statement.

3 MARILYN MENDOZA: Uh, thank you. How can we cut  
4 the DOE budget at this moment on the heels of this  
5 pandemic that has wreaked havoc on our communities?  
6 All the while, our schools have uhm, more police  
7 officers than guidance counselors and billions of  
8 dollars are in unspent federal relief remains  
9 untapped. We need our city to double down on  
10 investments and education, not cut our schools  
11 budgets.

12 I'd also like to add that a lot of our parents  
13 who are Spanish speaking, joined the livestream and  
14 they were disappointed that there was no  
15 interpretation services offered for the livestream.  
16 There can't be any transparency or counsel, or DOE  
17 cannot claim that it is being - that it's including  
18 parents voices, if you don't include non-English  
19 speakers in decision making. Thank you.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Marilyn. The next  
21 panel is Greg Mihailovich from the American Heart  
22 Association followed by Emily Helstrom PTA President  
23 of PS343 and Nicole Giaco. The following panel is  
24 Michael Athy(SP?), Milyn Weon Navatny, Robin Bowers,  
25 Jennifer Dorty and ENG Witman. Greg Mihailovich  
you're up.

3 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, if Greg is not here,  
5 then we'll go to Emily Helstrom. Emily.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And apparently Emily is not  
8 here, so we'll go to Nicole Giaco. Nicole.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

10 NICOLE GIACO: Hi, my name is Nicole Giaco, I  
11 have two children, one in elementary school and one  
12 in high school. Uh, everyone that I have heard  
13 because I've had to come on and off of the hearing  
14 has been so knowledgeable and spoke so eloquently and  
15 I'll be brief because I think a lot of what I already  
16 had to say has been said. For me the highlights have  
17 been the fact that my son goes to a school in Murray  
18 Hill, an elementary school that has a family shelter  
19 in it's own. So, we do have a population of students  
20 in temporary housing.

21 In addition, we have a lot of students who are  
22 children of families that work at the United Nations.  
23 Both of those populations of students come and go all  
24 year long. When I - my daughter first went to the  
25 school, which was ten years ago she started, the  
school was overcrowded. We had the Fair Student

1 Funding Formula. It didn't work then. It was  
2 overcrowded, so you would think that oh, we would  
3 have so much money. It didn't work then. We had to  
4 - the PTA at the time had money to hire teaching  
5 assistants because the class sizes were too large.  
6 We had to supplement. So, professional development,  
7 we still had to do all of these things in order to  
8 get whatever services the school needed to provide to  
9 those students.  
10

11 And now, we are in a different situation, where  
12 there is low enrollment at the school now. It has  
13 declined over the last couple years. I doubt it's  
14 going to decline as much as it is projected to  
15 decline by September. We already got one new student  
16 this month. So, this formula still doesn't work for  
17 us. So, I know that there has already been  
18 taskforces and opinions given to -

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

20 NICOLE GIACO: The City Council and everyone else  
21 about the Fair Student Funding Formula. Please,  
22 please do something about this. Please look at this  
23 now. Please restore these funds.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony  
25 Nicole. Next, we will call on Michael Athy followed

3 by Milyn Weon Navatny, Robin Bowers, Jennifer Dorty  
4 and ENG Witman. Michael.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

6 MICHAEL ATHY: Thank you Chairpersons Joseph and  
7 Brewer for providing this opportunity. My name is  
8 Athy, I retired in February after 18-years at the  
9 DOE. Five as a teacher at Hillcrest High School, one  
10 distinguished grad named Banks and 13-years as  
11 Principal at Bayside High School with two  
12 distinguished grads, both named Adams.

13 Current Principals cannot testify as they are  
14 under a DOE gag order and fear retribution. I have  
15 submitted written testimony, which details areas of  
16 budgeting that require immediate attention. I would  
17 correct some of what you heard from Mr. Weisberg and  
18 Ms. Oates but that would take a lot more than two  
19 minutes.

20 I will agree with the First Deputy that the DOE  
21 has to get a lot better at listening. God knows I've  
22 tried. We do not need another taskforce, working  
23 group, or other effort to analyze and restructure how  
24 the DOE funds schools. Such efforts have been  
25 undertaken in the past and have uniformly led to  
nothing. Either the results are tabled or become

3 stale, or the proposed to form such a group is made  
4 disingenuously as a diversion. As this happened in  
5 May 2022 and was repeated again last night and again  
6 today. The DOE must be compelled to administer its  
7 FSF as intended and to correct some specific  
8 budgeting practices. That's it.

9 Speaker Adams is correct; the current situation  
10 is due to DOE decisions. It is vital to understand  
11 that the misapplication of FSF and its effects were  
12 and remain due to decisions by the DOE budget office  
13 and are not attributable to any external forces,  
14 including the Council. The DOE left to its own  
15 devices will enact only the minimal cosmetic  
16 adjustments possible in order to return to business  
17 as usual.

18 The underspending FSF are valid, equitable and  
19 worth retaining. They empower families choices of  
20 schools. Here are highlights. Despite what you've  
21 heard, projections are a one-way conversation from  
22 Tweed to the Principal, with Tweed exercising power  
23 without knowledge. This is the source of many of  
24 this years complaints. There is no policy for year  
25 end surpluses or [INAUDIBLE 5:42:58]. They should be  
consistent.

2 Costs for teachers on a citywide average, are  
3 used to calculate funding but much higher individual  
4 building averages are used to debit schools. That -

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

6 MICHAEL ATHY: Student centered approach to  
7 appointments of the DOE budget is needed with funds  
8 needed at the school level designated first and  
9 remaining funds allocated to central. The info  
10 shared by Ms. Oates regarding non-school expenses,  
11 needs closer examination. Despite what you've just  
12 heard, not all schools are funded at 100 percent Fair  
13 Student Funding. The remains of three class funding  
14 system, which indicates favoritism and must be  
15 replaced by funding based on the demographics and  
16 weights systemwide.

17 The [INAUDIBLE 5:43:39] awarding of portfolio  
18 funding is also brought to light when we see millions  
19 of dollars going to schools that do not need  
20 qualifications. The DOE should be compelled to  
21 finally publish criteria it uses to determine  
22 portfolio funded projects to incentivize these  
23 funding sources to other schools to meet such high-  
24 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.

3 The following panel after that is Ulia Sniderman,  
4 Carrie Farly, Christine Ramirez, Korina Garcia, and  
5 Stephen Lampert. Calling now on Farah Despania.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we'll go to Carina  
8 Rayhal.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: How about Leanna Willowby?

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Mark Angle.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And Rachael Paguaga.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we'll move to the next  
17 panel, which is Ulia Sniderman(SP?), Carrie  
18 Farly(SP?), Christine Ramirez, Korina Garcia(SP?),  
19 Stephen Lampert. The one after that will be Ion  
20 Atalia Carpenska(SP), Diana Baros(SP?), Jessica  
21 Luc(SP?), Meagan Scott and Michelle Si(SP?). So,  
22 we're going with Ulia Sniderman.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, how about Carrie Farly?

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Christina Ramirez.

3 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Korina Garcia.

5 CHRISTINE RAMIREZ: Hello.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Oh, is that Christine?

7 CHRISTINE RAMIREZ: Yes, this is Christine.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay Christine, go ahead.

10 CHRISTINE RAMIREZ: Hello Council. My name is  
11 Christine Ramirez, I am a parent leader with the  
12 Parent Action Committee. I am a parent association  
13 President at PS 35 in District 9 in the Bronx, as  
14 well as also being a part of the Student Leadership  
15 Team. I went to John F Kennedy High School; it was a  
16 school that felt unsafe and unwelcome by its many  
17 metal detectors and policing in the school.

18 The students ran wild not obeying to the police  
19 and their orders. The police were there to protect  
20 our school but instead they just stood around only  
21 moving to their convenience. Metal detectors never  
22 served their purpose which is why many students still  
23 bring weapons in our schools. The over policing was  
24 a stress to my mother as she felt like she was taking  
25 me to a prison every single morning. Just the long

1 road down made me feel sad about the future that I  
2 had.

3  
4 This is why I felt like a prisoner to the school  
5 system rather than a student with a deep willingness  
6 to learn. This affected my self-esteem as a person,  
7 and I started to withdraw from any school activity.  
8 I felt like I wasn't a baby anymore. I felt like I  
9 didn't need to be told what to do. All I wanted was  
10 guidance from the very school that was teaching me  
11 and from the police who were there to protect me.

12 I now have two American children, one eight-year-  
13 old and a ten-year-old, in District 9 in the Bronx  
14 and I have to one day bear witness that my children  
15 are going through the same unjust system I had to  
16 endure in my school.

17 I can't see this policing in my kids' school as a  
18 solution rather than a problem. What I would like to  
19 see in the budget is better trained social workers  
20 and guidance counselors and I do not want people who  
21 would rather -

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

23 CHRISTINE RAMIREZ: Write an ACS report - Can I  
24 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

2 help for these schools, children and their families  
3 that suffer greatly with these decisions that the  
4 city has made. Please, let's not leave a child  
5 behind because of our failures to look at the bigger  
6 picture. Stop the cuts. Thank you.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Christine. I'm  
8 told that Carrie Farley is in the Zoom, so Carrie and  
9 I will slow down to give you time. Thank you.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Carrie, I see you in the  
12 Zoom. You need to accept the unmute request. Okay,  
13 we'll have to come back to you.

14 So, next, we'll call on Corina Garcia. Is Corina  
15 there?

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Looks like she's not there,  
18 so we'll go to Stephen Lampert, Stephen.

19 STEPHEN LAMPERT: Hi, is this coming through  
20 okay? Great, uhm, good evening. My name is Stephen  
21 Lampert, I'm a parent of a kindergartener at PS 87  
22 in the upper West Side and tonight, I've prepared a  
23 written statement that I'd like to share with all  
24 today.  
25

3 My son's name is James, he's five-years-old, and  
4 today was his last day of kindergarten. James' K-104  
5 teachers are Robyn and Susie, and, because James is  
6 in a mixed classroom of kids with different needs,  
7 James' has four additional teachers, for a class of  
8 twenty children.

9 And just today, James' class released their  
10 butterflies in the PS 87 schoolyard, and it was  
11 everything kindergarten should be for a kid like  
12 James. Just a little over a year ago, we moved here  
13 from Michigan, and we chose our apartment without  
14 ever seeing it because of the school. Because every  
15 child's parent we talked to, told us what an amazing  
16 school PS 87 was and after just one year in PS 87, I  
17 can assure you, that this school is much more than  
18 that. James' school is the heart of our  
19 neighborhood. It's what makes this place our corner  
20 of the city, it what makes it home.

21 But with this budget, James' school, the heart of  
22 our neighborhood, our home really, is under attack.  
23 With this budget, James' school, the place where he  
24 feels safe and loved and special and free to just be  
25 a kid is slated to lose a little over \$900,000. Now,  
in this city, \$900,000 may not sound like a lot of

3 money. In a place where investment bankers get  
4 bonuses that are bigger than that and you can't get a  
5 one-bedroom in Manhattan for \$900,000. You know,  
6 maybe it isn't, but for my son, my little five-year-  
7 old, it's a lot. Because that \$900,000 means that  
8 five teachers at PS 87 are going to lose their jobs  
9 and three of them are first grade teachers.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

11 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Please continue.

12 STEPHEN LAMPERT: Thank you. It means that his  
13 class size is going to increase from 20 kids right  
14 now to about 32. And I want to let that number 32  
15 sink in for a second because I want to explain to you  
16 what it really means in real terms for my son.

17 That number 32 means that when he's scared, he's  
18 probably not going to get a hug. When he's  
19 struggling, he probably won't get what he needs and  
20 when he really is proud and wants encouragement, he's  
21 probably not going to get it and that's because his  
22 teachers, his kind, loving, brilliant teachers, are  
23 just going to be too stretched thin to give him what  
24 he needs and deserves. And that's what that number  
25 32 really means to James. And I'm not going to  
lecture you about class sizes and statistics or

3 reference you know what a common must say because you  
4 know, that's their job.

5 My job, my first job and the only job I have that  
6 really matters is to take care of my son. To give  
7 him the love and support he needs to grow and thrive  
8 and be a child.

9 But I've kind of realized something, especially  
10 over the last couple of years with COVID. I can't do  
11 this job by myself. None of us can. Like we need  
12 each other. We need our schools. So, I'm begging  
13 you, please release the unallocated federal stimulus  
14 money. Fix budgets before the end of June and put in  
15 place the resources to ensure this doesn't happen  
16 again. Because we parents, we can't do this on our  
17 own. We need our schools and my little guy James he  
18 really needs his school too. So, thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you Steve. I'm Gale  
20 Brewer, I've known PS 87 for about I don't know about  
21 30-years. It's a great school and we're certainly  
22 going to work. I spoke to your principal today, so I  
23 have all the data for PS 87. Thank you very much for  
24 your leadership.

25 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We're going to  
try once again with Carrie Farley. Give her a moment

3 to accept the unmute and I want to let you know the  
4 next panel will be Iya Natalia Carpenska(SP?), Diana  
5 Barrows, Jessica Luck, Meagan Scott and Michele Si.  
6 Carrie Farley, are you there? Can you accept the  
7 unmute?

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we'll move on to the  
10 next panel. Iya Natalia Carpenska(SP?).

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, seeing none, Diana  
13 Barrows.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, Jessica Luck.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: How about Meagan Scott?

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

19 MEAGAN SCOTT: Hi, good evening, can you hear me?

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, we can hear you Meagan.

21 MEAGAN SCOTT: Okay, thank you so much. The  
22 duties of the day took me away from where I was  
23 originally sitting, so forgive me while I get my  
24 statement up on my phone.

25 Thank you for your patience and thank you as well  
to - thank you to the Speaker, to Chair Joseph and

3 Council Members for convening this hearing. Thank  
4 you to the educators here today and especially the  
5 amazing and inspiring students who spoke.

6 I came here for the same reason I attended the  
7 PEP meeting last night and the same reason I had  
8 planned to be at the rally this afternoon to express  
9 my outrage at how the educators, families and  
10 children in the New York City Department of Education  
11 are being treated. At the PEP meeting last night,  
12 Chancellor Banks interjected to tell us, the public,  
13 that we don't understand "there are no DOE budget  
14 cuts, rather it is right sizing in order to wean  
15 schools off of money they received during the  
16 pandemic.

17 Chancellor Banks and Mayor Adams, neither of them  
18 are here, but nonetheless, I would like to assure you  
19 that we do understand. We understand that you do not  
20 value the public school system. You do not value the  
21 work of DOE educators, related service providers,  
22 DC37 staff, and administrators. Most of all, you do  
23 not value public school children of the City of New  
24 York.

25 As the parent of two public elementary school  
students, one of whom is a special education student

3 with autism, I can tell you, your message is received  
4 loud and clear. This administration stands for the  
5 continued and criminal underfunding of public schools  
6 and the push towards privatization and the rise of  
7 Charter schools.

8 Here is what I would like you to understand.  
9 Parents of students with disabilities are tired of  
10 fighting for crumbs even under the "generous budget"  
11 of the last two years. This year, my autistic child  
12 went for over six months without occupational therapy  
13 because her school was short of providers. Here is  
14 the conundrum we face as parents. Do we make a  
15 stink?

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

17 MEAGAN SCOTT: Have an uproar. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: You may continue.

19 MEAGAN SCOTT: Thank you for that. Here's the  
20 conundrum we face as parents. Do we make a stink at  
21 the school level to get our child on the existing  
22 provider schedules knowing that would mean another  
23 student equally deserving would go without? My child  
24 finally was put on the schedule, but she still owed  
25 makeup services which were not able to be provided  
during the special education recovery after school as

3 they become more available, nor is it clear that they  
4 will really be provided this summer.

5 Here is the meat of what I would like to say and  
6 what the current budget will mean for my autistic  
7 child's school, which is "lucky" to be losing all  
8 \$600,000. No staff for academic intervention  
9 services, reduced school aids hours, loss of a  
10 technology teacher or librarian and loss of a cluster  
11 teacher who provides support to us autistic students  
12 during recess, lunch, and specials which are  
13 particularly stressful times for many students with  
14 autism.

15 I'll skip to put a face on what losing an anti-  
16 cluster teacher would mean to those inside the nest  
17 program might not be understood outside of it. It is  
18 a crucial position and one that specifically effects  
19 my own child and our family.

20 Uhm, I don't think it's possible for me to share  
21 my screen, but if I could I would share a picture of  
22 Ms. Lacada(SP?) who is the cluster teacher who has  
23 been with my child for four years at this point. She  
24 - I nominated her, and she was accepted as Teacher  
25 Appreciation Week for UFT on our website and social  
media. I nominated her because she has changed the

3 life of my child and my entire family. I don't think  
4 you understand unless you have loved and parented  
5 someone with autism or another disability. How much  
6 it means to have a school with staff who care about  
7 and connect with your child.

8 Teachers, school aids, and related service  
9 providers are not fungible, replaceable cogs in a  
10 machine. They are individuals who know their school  
11 populations and have formed important bonds with all  
12 the children they work with. For all children, not  
13 just those with autism. Those bonds are what keep  
14 them coming back to school, feeling safe in school  
15 and belonging to a community.

16 The last thing, truly last thing I want the City  
17 Council and Mayor Adams to understand, New York City  
18 parents and families will not forget how you treat  
19 our children. We will remember and we will vote  
20 accordingly. Those with the power to do so fix this.  
21 Stand up for the children of the city. Thank you for  
22 your time.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Meagan. Next up,  
24 we have Michelle Si, followed by the next panel Bella  
25 Sarugo(SP?), Daniel Robertson, Lauren Clavin and  
Katherine D. Zangotita. So, Michele, you're up.

3 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we'll move on to the  
5 next panel. Bella Sarugo, your up next.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

7 BELLA SARUGO: Did I mute myself? Okay, there we  
8 go. Hi, is it uh - I can't see on my screen if the  
9 DOE members are still present. Are they?

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: There's a representative here  
11 from the Department of Education.

12 BELLA SARUGO: And who might that be? I can't  
13 see it on my screen, and I'd like to know who's  
14 present when I say something.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: It's Mark Treyger.

16 BELLA SARUGO: So, the other DOE representatives  
17 decided to leave, and I think that's shameful, and I  
18 think their behavior is shameful and I think it's  
19 shameful that they try to uhm, a dear themselves by  
20 saying that they are parents earlier today. Because  
21 I'm sure they are not parents of kids that are in New  
22 York public school system and if they can sleep at  
23 night, in this disgusting draconian budget that is in  
24 a word inhumane. And they don't deserve their jobs  
25 and I hope this Committee really isn't just doing

1 this for political effect and that they will really  
2 press to restore our budgets.  
3

4 In fact, I was starting to advocate for my school  
5 to have a bigger budget. My son goes to middle  
6 school in District 2, and it's been very troubled.  
7 It's a zoned school, which means that it's  
8 unscreened. There is a staffed range of needs and  
9 socioeconomic students and racial diversity, and that  
10 school has been underfunded and understaffed anyway  
11 and it wasn't until it came into the news that there  
12 was violence there and problems that they were able  
13 to get an extra counselor this year. Someone whose  
14 been wonderful for this school. That counselor's  
15 been cut.

16 Another social worker has been cut. 13 staff  
17 members all together -

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

19 BELLA SARUGO: And it is not okay. The school  
20 cannot function this way. This school serves a  
21 diverse community and they have lost \$3 million. 43  
22 percent of their budget. I've been hearing much  
23 lower numbers and I really hope this Committee  
24 understands that you are destroying families and  
25 children's lives by not advocating for them and

3 changing this decision about this budget. There is  
4 money available. This has been obvious throughout  
5 these hearings. Thank you for hearing us.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony  
7 Bella. The next person is Daniel Robertson.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we'll move on to Lauren  
10 Clavin. Lauren, you're up.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

12 LAUREN CLAVIN: Good evening. I appreciate  
13 knowing that Mark Treyger is in the room. I can't  
14 see who if any Council Members are still there.  
15 Mark, I wish you still sat in that Council.

16 My name is Lauren, I am a parent in Queens and an  
17 organizer for Equity and Justice in our Schools and I  
18 want to explain what's it's been like as an education  
19 advocate during this uniquely opaque budget cycle.  
20 Advocates have known for months, for months, that  
21 this budget was a disaster. We've tried to let our  
22 Council Members know that during the budget  
23 negotiation process, mostly being ignored.

24 My own Council Member refused to meet with any of  
25 the parent leaders that tried. I'm going to be  
generous and not name names today.

3 I've personally sat in meetings with several  
4 Council Members during this negotiation process and  
5 I've heard you promise to stand up for our youth and  
6 yet, with the exception of Council Members Ossé,  
7 Barron, Nurse, Avilés, Richardson-Jordan and Cabán,  
8 every single one of you voted to defund our public  
9 schools.

10 That was a choice, and you need to take  
11 responsibility for that. Our hearts were  
12 collectively broken when we saw the photos of all of  
13 these smiling and celebrating passing this disaster  
14 of a budget, two weeks early. Apparently, it seems  
15 before you had sufficient information to make an  
16 information decision. We've rallied on the steps of  
17 Tweed. We've called our Council Members and last  
18 night, we attended the PEP where we had to listen to  
19 the Chancellor admit that these cuts were bad. That  
20 the Fair Student Funding Formula needs reform, but  
21 ultimately, he denied responsibility and passed the  
22 blame onto the City Council.

23 Today, we sat in this hearing for hours listening  
24 to the Council say no, uhm, it's really the DOE who  
25 is responsible for this mess.

3 So, I just want to tell you as a parent, and  
4 parents by the way are voters, we don't care who you  
5 claim is at fault here and frankly, it's not a great  
6 look for all of you to keep passing the buck or to  
7 say you -

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

9 LAUREN CLAVIN: Didn't know that these cuts were  
10 happening. So, to those in the Council who say  
11 they're genuinely surprised by these cuts and are  
12 actually telling the truth, well, welcome to the  
13 Department of Education under Mayoral control. I  
14 wish you would have listened to us. I wish you would  
15 have shown some of this outrage and energy during the  
16 negotiation process. I hope you're listening today.  
17 I hope that you listened to the students that spent  
18 their precious afternoon here with you today sharing  
19 their heartbreak and their rage. And I want you do  
20 know that it's not too late to reject this budget.  
21 You submitted incomplete work, but you have time to  
22 revise it and turn it in before our children and  
23 school staff suffer needlessly. Thank you.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Lauren. Next, we  
25 have Katherine D Zangotita followed by, we were  
supposed to have an in-person panel after that, and I

2 know they are not here, but I will call their names  
3 in case they are on the Zoom. Betsy Tam Green,  
4 Dermot Myris (SP?) and then we'll go back to Zoom.  
5 Ron Brit, Shirley and I know already testified. Cody  
6 Linguist and Tanitra [INAUDIBLE 6:08:40].

7 So, I'm going to ask again, Katherine D.  
8 Zangotita.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, I see nothing, so I  
11 will again call Betsy Tam Green.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we'll move to Dermot  
14 Myris (SP?).

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we'll go to Ron Brit.  
17 Ron.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

19 RON BRIT: Good afternoon. I am a public-school  
20 parent of four ages 7-17. I'm an active PTA member,  
21 active Title I member, active SLT member. I'm a  
22 resident in South East Queens in School District 29,  
23 which is a predominantly Black student population and  
24 I'm a Southeast Queens public school graduate myself.

3 My two oldest kids, high schoolers, go to school  
4 in Queens North, D26, Cardoso in Bayside and one just  
5 graduated. I just want to lead off by talking  
6 directly to City Council members for the ones who  
7 remain and just you know say that you know there  
8 comes a time when we have to take a position that's  
9 not safe, not political, not popular but we have to  
10 do what our conscious tells us is right. And so, I  
11 implore you, our City Council Members to do the right  
12 thing and hold the DOE accountable to properly fund  
13 our school budgets and not leave it as it is, which  
14 strips millions in funding away from our public  
15 schools and our children when they obviously need it  
16 most.

17 Only a small handful of you voted not to pass the  
18 budget, citing the massive DOE cuts. You may have  
19 been swayed or persuaded at that time that the cuts  
20 were solely due to enrollment declines, but you know,  
21 as know that is severely flawed and many schools have  
22 already requested adjustments to DOE's central  
23 register projection, which many principals say are  
24 wrong and low.

25 I'm in School District 29 in Southeast Queens  
where I live and pardon me. And the School District

3 is represented – uh, at least my District is  
4 represented by four Council Members, Selvena Brooks  
5 Powers, Natasha Williams, Lee and Gennaro or have  
6 schools – District 29 schools in their City Council  
7 District, particularly Councilwoman Brooks-Powers  
8 having the bulk.

9 Some of the local public schools near me and near  
10 my home, they're devastated with significant and  
11 drastic cuts.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

13 RON BRIT: Many of my neighborhood schools – I'm  
14 wrapping up, are facing budget cuts not only compared  
15 to 2022 but compared to prepandemic 2019, which was  
16 before the schools were even fully funded where Fair  
17 Student Funding and their budgets are even lower than  
18 that.

19 Uhm, I'll leave you with one final thing. That  
20 the time is right to always do what is right. It's a  
21 quote from MLK. And lastly, for everyone that is  
22 still listening, please go vote. You know look up  
23 these candidates. Look up the politician stance on  
24 their voting record on educational matters and see if  
25 they align with yours and your families. And if they  
do align and work hard to get them – keep them in

3 office or get them in office and if they don't align,  
4 then vote them out.

5 So, once again, please go cast your ballots to  
6 people that will do the right thing for our children  
7 and not agree with the massive cuts to our public-  
8 school budget. Thank you so much for this time, I  
9 really appreciate it.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Ron. I see Shirley  
11 Aldebol on the list but Shirley, you already  
12 testified so I'm going to skip over you. Next, we  
13 have Cody Lindquist followed by Tanitra Partivie(SP?)  
14 and then the next panel will be - well, Mark  
15 Gonsalves, you're listed again, but you've already  
16 testified, so we're going to skip you. Tanisha  
17 Grant, Maria Vialobos(SP?) and Sharee Gibson. So,  
18 Cody Linguist, are you there? I don't see you in the  
19 Zoom, so I'll call Tanitra Partivie, Tanitra.

20 Again, I don't see you in the Zoom. So, we'll go  
21 to the next panel. Tanisha Grant, Parents Supporting  
22 Parents New York. Not seeing you, so I'll go to  
23 Maria Vialobos. Okay, I believe Maria is not in the  
24 Zoom, but Sheree Gibson I believe is in the Zoom.  
25 Sharee?

SHEREE GIBSON: Yes, I'm here.

3 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

4 SHEREE GIBSON: Good evening Chair Joseph, Chair  
5 Brewer and remaining members of the City Council. My  
6 name is Sheree Gibson, I'm a Queens Parent Leader  
7 currently representing Title I parents and families  
8 at the school citywide and state levels.

9 In these roles last fall, I resoundingly heard  
10 from building leaders across the city and the state,  
11 how resourced their schools were. How many had never  
12 experienced having so much funding before or not  
13 being in a deficit at that start of the year. How  
14 relieved they were to not have to stress about how to  
15 make their budgets cover all their needs. Having the  
16 funding they needed to bring children who were  
17 lagging or behind on level.

18 Having the funding they needed to support the  
19 healing of children traumatized by the impact of  
20 COVID. Not easily, I thought they'd enjoyed this  
21 resourced feeling for two more years. Little did  
22 know, our new Mayor and Chancellor would ignore the  
23 moment and prioritize a rainy-day cushion in the NYPD  
24 over our children.

25 As an advocate member of the 2019 Fair Student  
Funding Taskforce, our unpublished report and what

3 we've been advocating for since then is a change to  
4 an outdated, convoluted, opaque formula that did not  
5 equitably fund schools or address the needs of some  
6 of our most vulnerable student population.

7 Just two months ago, the advocates and the work  
8 we did, were being dismissed once again. As we ask  
9 the PEP, the Chancellor and you Chair Joseph to stop  
10 allowing the formula to be used as a scapegoat reason  
11 why we cannot fully fund our schools fairly and  
12 equitably.

13 Now, after you voted to approve the mayor's  
14 budget, which always had school budget cuts in it,  
15 you hear from principals, teachers, school staff,  
16 parents and the students themselves, that these cuts  
17 are real, deep, harmful, human and very, very  
18 unnecessary. The mayor campaigned on and started his  
19 new -

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

21 SHEREE GIBSON: Administration promising to  
22 reduce the bloat by streamlining the DOE and ensuring  
23 voters no cut would touch schools.

24 I think you've heard enough that schools are  
25 being touched mightily hard. We understand the  
reality of lower enrollments but there are so many

3 avenues not explored that could mitigate impact or  
4 even solve for this. Many Council Members suggested  
5 several today. I have been trying to understand why  
6 my Council Members and you Council Members voted for  
7 this budget. Being such staunch advocates for public  
8 education and our children.

9 Based on what I've heard, you wanted to trust  
10 what the Mayor and the DOE was telling you about  
11 enrollment numbers and the need for this cut. I will  
12 be confused annoyed for you. As all the briefings,  
13 reports, breakdowns and data they offer today, is  
14 what you should have had before your vote. Maybe the  
15 outcome would be different.

16 So, I ask you now to take action by resolving  
17 that DOE should reinstate the cut funds and make  
18 adjustments to the budget. We have time. When it's  
19 about our case, we always make time. I ask again on  
20 behalf of the advocates of the Fair Student Funding  
21 Taskforce for the City Council to commit to launching  
22 and funding a staff independent commission to review  
23 the Fair Student Funding Formula and make specific  
24 recommendations for equitably funding our schools. I  
25 ask that you hold DOE to working on solutions to  
declining enrollment numbers besides cuts. Hold them

3 accountable for putting resources behind marketing of  
4 schools, their successful programs and public  
5 education. Parent leaders like me have been telling  
6 them that for a long time now and even offered to  
7 help them develop the strategy. How families  
8 experience New York City DOE as a system is key to  
9 improving the system.

10 Help build back our trust by not letting these  
11 cuts stand. Thank you.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Sheree for your  
13 testimony. I'm going to read the names on the next  
14 two Zoom panels, and I apologize in advance if I  
15 butcher your name. Jazelle Hurn(SP?), Tason  
16 Assad(SP?) Tracy Grey(SP?), Melissa Elaine  
17 Sanchez(SP?). The panel after that, Ellen McCue,  
18 Lupe Hernandez I believe testified in person, Samuel  
19 Avery Pool, Kelan Madden and Bliss Brayard. We'll  
20 start with Jazelle Hurn if she is here.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we'll move on to Tason  
23 Assad.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

25 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.

3 KELAN MADAN: Hello, I'm a parent of two children  
4 at a Title I public school in District 22 in  
5 Brooklyn. My oldest daughter is a special education  
6 student going into fourth grade and my youngest is  
7 starting PreK. My daughters Title I school is losing  
8 \$1.5 million, about 15 percent of its budget. Eleven  
9 new teachers will have to be excessed. The progress  
10 they have made in shaping our school community will  
11 be lost. Our school celebrated dual language  
12 program, which the DOE is happy to point to as an  
13 example of language access and the culturally,  
14 responsive and sustaining education is being striped  
15 of resources.

16 Struggling low-income families in our community  
17 will be scrambling to fund school supplies that were  
18 once provided by the DOE, and it is clear that  
19 schools in our district are being pressured to ration  
20 special education services. I shouldn't have to  
21 worry that when I fight for the services my child  
22 needs I might be taking away needed services from one  
23 of her classmates.

24 Family shouldn't be out here fighting over the  
25 crumbs that you left us. If you thought public  
schools like the hunger games before next year is

3 going to be even worse. The pandemic through our  
4 city's institutions into crisis and show us both how  
5 crucial sustained support and developmental education  
6 is and how inadequate our city's support for public  
7 schools has been.

8 To pretend that reducing schools budgets to the  
9 various austerity levels is appropriate or necessary  
10 due to declining enrollment is hypocritical and  
11 disingenuous. To claim that slashing school budgets  
12 now is cushioning us because future budgets will be  
13 worse is absurd, especially when billions of dollars  
14 of federal funding remain unspent and unaccounted  
15 for.

16 Far from a corrective responding to under  
17 enrollment, the current budget and funding formula  
18 are calculated to undermine NYC public schools. This  
19 is an attack on public schools. As schools struggle  
20 to meet students and family's needs, more students  
21 will flee NYC public schools for Charter schools.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

23 KELAN MADDEN: As the students who do not have  
24 alternatives will suffer, I'm disappointed with the  
25 City Council voted to approve the mayor's budget,  
knowing the budget will result in these cuts to

2 school funding. Thank you to the one Council Member  
3 who is here and no one else.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Mr. Madden, could you please  
5 say your name for the record for us? And actually,  
6 there are three Council Members here.

7 KELAN MADDEN: Oh, well, thank you to those three  
8 and no one else. Kelan Madden.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Mr. Madden. Next,  
10 we have Bliss Brayard followed by the last two panels  
11 Melanie Floum(SP?), Milifar Miah(SP?), Jason Green,  
12 Stacey Kuceno, Ashley Baros Rasheed(SP?). And then  
13 Cloya Huggins already testified. So, Melissa Keaton  
14 and we'll try again with Carrie Farley. Is Bliss  
15 Brayard available?

16 Okay, not seeing Bliss. Honestly, please bear  
17 with us, we're not seeing these people in the Zoom,  
18 but we do have to call them for the record. Melanie  
19 Floum. Okay, Milifar Miah. How about Jason Green?  
20 Stacey Kuceno. Ashley Baros Rasheed. Okay, the last  
21 two I have Melissa Keaton, if you're there, please  
22 unmute and Carrie Farley, you're the last person we  
23 have listed and we see you in the Zoom. Are you able  
24 to unmute at this time to testify? Carrie Farley.

2 Okay, I don't know if she is not at her computer,  
3 but Carrie is not accepting the unmute request.

4 So, I am going to just ask if we have  
5 inadvertently missed anyone on the Zoom who wishes to  
6 testify, please use the raise hand function, which is  
7 at the bottom of the Zoom page. If you use that  
8 raise hand function, we will call on you.

9 Okay, Melissa Keaton? Melissa Keaton, are you  
10 there? Are you able to unmute? I'm being told that  
11 Melissa Keaton is here in the Zoom.

12 MELISSA KEATON: Yes, can you hear me?

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, we hear you, go ahead.

15 MELISSA KEATON: My daughter wanted to go first.  
16 Go ahead.

17 MELANIE: Hello, my name is Melanie and I'm nine-  
18 years-old. Today, I want to talk about the budget.  
19 When I found out a remote option is only for 9<sup>th</sup>  
20 graders, I felt left out. The schools are losing  
21 programs and teachers. I'm worried about going to  
22 school in person. I haven't been in school since  
23 2020. Kids need help with their problems, so they  
24 need social workers and therapy. My school called  
25 ACS on my parents because I was doing work at home.

3 I didn't feel happy when they were coming to my  
4 house. My parents were doing what was best to keep  
5 me safe.

6 I have to take two trains to get to school and  
7 that's a lot. Thank you everybody.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you repeat your name,  
9 or can you Melissa repeat her name on the record for  
10 us?

11 MELANIE: My name is Melanie, and I am nine-  
12 years-old and I'm in the fourth grade.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

14 MELANIE: You're welcome.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Melissa, did you want to  
16 testify?

17 MELISSA KEATON: Yes. Uhm, so schools are  
18 already struggling, and they will lose even more  
19 money. Although we don't have access to the data or  
20 the students leaving New York City schools, clearly  
21 less money and larger classes will therefore decrease  
22 resources and staff or most certainly effect the  
23 parents making the decisions to leave the public  
24 schools this fall.

25 Children are our future leaders and caregivers,  
and we should be doing everything to invest in them.

3 As Council Member Schulman said, our children only  
4 get one chance at a good education. Our children  
5 have suffered unimaginable trauma that very few  
6 people have been through. They are scared, afraid,  
7 and traumatized.

8 It was fine for my daughter to be at home for a  
9 year and a half and I work with her as practically an  
10 assistant teacher. Then suddenly the DOE you know  
11 said, everyone back in the building and as a CFO,  
12 Oates said, they frontloaded and maximized without a  
13 hybrid option. And so, support for students or  
14 families, especially for those who are grieving or  
15 providing.

16 Many members, Council Members today, asked about  
17 the decline in enrollment and were these families  
18 reached out to? And I can attest that as one of  
19 those family members who has not returned to the  
20 school building, as a family member who has lost a  
21 family – well, I lost my dad to COVID. We are still  
22 hesitant to return to the school. And with these  
23 budget cuts, what can we expect when we send our  
24 daughter back into these school buildings? Larger  
25 class sizes, lack of support, resources, it's just  
too much. It's too much.

2 And I thank you all for still being here.

3 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

4 MELISSA KEATON: And advocating. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you so much for your  
6 testimony.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Again, if we have  
8 inadvertently missed anyone who wants to testify on  
9 this Zoom, please use the Zoom raise hand function  
10 now. Seeing none, that concludes the Zoom testimony.  
11 Chair Joseph, turn to you.

12 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Thank you  
13 colleagues for sticking it up with me. Council  
14 Member Shekar, Council Member Brewer. Thank you for  
15 all those who testified today, and we take it all  
16 into heart, so thank you. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you Treyger.

18 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Mark. [GAVEL]  
19 The hearing is adjourned.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date August 29, 2022