

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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Wednesday, November 16, 2022

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HELD AT: COMMITTEE ROOM, CITY HALL

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

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

- Alexa Avilés
- Carmen N. De La Rosa
- Oswald Feliz
- James F. Gennaro
- Jennifer Gutiérrez
- Shekar Krishnan
- Linda Lee
- Farah N. Louis
- Julie Menin
- Mercedes Narcisse
- Lincoln Restler
- Pierina Ana Sanchez
- Lynn C. Schulman
- Sandra Ung
- Gale A. Brewer

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Emma Vadehra
Chief Operating Officer
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Seritta Scott
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Christina Foti
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Manager, Division of Early Childhood
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Lara Lai
Senior Policy Analyst and
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New York City Comptroller's Office

Andrea Ortiz
New York Immigration Coalition

Antonia Ferraro Martinelli
Member
Community Education Council
District 15 in Brooklyn

2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good afternoon and welcome to
3 the New York City Council hearing of the Committee on
4 Education. At this time can everyone please silence
5 your cell phones? If you wish to testify today,
6 please come up to the sergeant's desk and fill out a
7 witness slip. Written testimony can be emailed to
8 testimony at testimony@council.nyc.gov. Again, that
9 is testimony@counsel.nyc.gov. Thank you for your
10 cooperation. Chair, we are ready to begin.

11 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Calling the meeting to
12 order.

13 [GAVEL]

14 Good afternoon and welcome to today's oversight
15 hearing on the New York City Department of Education
16 spending of federal COVID-19 relief funds. I am Rita
17 Joseph, Chair of the Education Committee. Thank you
18 to everyone present here today and those of you who
19 are testifying remotely. In March 2020, the COVID-19
20 pandemic caused severe disruption to the everyday
21 lives of people throughout the United States, leaving
22 a severe impact on education systems across our
23 nation. This prompted the federal government to
24 enact legislation that would provide state and local
25 government with relief funds to help combat

2 devastating impacts of the pandemic, and get our
3 students back on track. New York City received a
4 total about \$26 billion in federal relief funds,
5 including nearly \$8 billion for elementary and
6 secondary education to be spent by 2025. Of the \$8
7 billion in education funding, \$7.7 billion was
8 awarded to the DOE and \$274 million was awarded to
9 CUNY. These funds may be used for a wide range of
10 spending to respond to health and safety issues, and
11 to support students academic, social, emotional, and
12 mental health needs. The largest share of more than
13 7 billion in federal stimulus funds allocated to DOE,
14 approximately \$3.15 billion was budgeted to be spent
15 in the fiscal year 2022. However, according to New
16 York City Controller, between July 2021 and March
17 2022, nearly three quarters into the school year, DOE
18 has spent less than 50%, just 1.4 billion of the
19 expected \$3 billion in fiscal year 2022. Federal
20 relief funding, most spending, almost \$856 million
21 was spent on expenses related to reopening with
22 health and safety. Meanwhile, \$221 million out of
23 \$984 million, only 22% of planned funds was spent on
24 academic and instructional support, and \$65 million

2 out of \$274 million, only 24% of the plan fund was
3 spent on taking care of the whole child.

4 With over \$7 billion in aid to get our students
5 back on track at the DOE's disposal, these numbers
6 simply aren't adding up.

7 As we recover from the pandemic, we are at a
8 critical point in time, where we must use all
9 available resources to mitigate its lingering effects
10 on our students and schools. Time is of the essence.
11 Federal education aid must be spent in a way which
12 ensures a recovery that offsets the harm done to our
13 children and better prepares them for the future of
14 academic success. Why? So why at such a critical
15 point in time, has the DOE been slow to spend federal
16 COVID-19 relief funds? According to DOE, pandemic
17 related delays, difficulties and supply chain issues
18 have all contributed to underspending and delayed
19 programming rollouts, while contracting and
20 procurement processes delayed other programs.
21 However, as the spending of these critical areas of
22 students fall significantly behind projections,
23 schools are failing to provide urgently-needed
24 additional support to students.

2 Equally concerning is whether money that is being
3 spent has actually been spent effectively. Though
4 over \$260 million has been spent to address learning
5 loss, the DOE provides no data on whether this
6 funding is truly meeting the needs of students, and
7 bringing them back up to speed after experiencing two
8 traumatic years of learning loss. Clearly greater
9 transparency is needed regarding DOE COVID-19 federal
10 relief spending. Additionally, the fact that the DOE
11 spending is meant to target schools with high
12 concentrations of need, the New York comptroller
13 found that there does not appear to be a tight
14 correlation between per-student stimulus allocations
15 and need. There also have been reports of
16 ineffective, inconsistent after-school programming in
17 the district 75 schools, which exclusively enrolled
18 students with disabilities and rank among the highest
19 levels of stimulus allocations per student.

20 Students with disabilities encounter significant
21 inequities that predates the pandemic. If we cannot
22 ensure the effectiveness of spending for these
23 students, where does that leave them now?

24 As a Chair of the Education Committee, I am also
25 deeply concerned about how the DOE will sustain many

2 long term program expansions, which rely heavily on
3 federal relief funds. During our hearing last month
4 on early childhood programs in New York City, we
5 addressed the sustainability of 3K programs once the
6 stimulus aid expires and the city reach a fiscal
7 cliff in FY 25. Unfortunately, this problem extends
8 beyond 3K alone. Several other long-term program
9 expansions include community schools, Restorative
10 Justice, mental health support, preschool special
11 education, and increasing access to athletic teams
12 are only half-funded in 2025, and the viability is in
13 jeopardy if the DOE does not secure an additional
14 \$787 million in funding by 2026.

15 At today's hearing, the committee hopes to get a
16 better understanding of why the DOE has been slow to
17 spend federal relief funds, and how it plans on
18 continuing to spend these funds to ensure that
19 students receive the most of every dollar spent. We
20 would also like to understand the DOE's plan to fund
21 program expansions beyond the fiscal cliff,
22 particularly expansions of community schools,
23 Restorative Justice programs, which we know are vital
24 to students in underserved communities.

2 I'd like to remind everyone who wishes to testify
3 in person today that they must fill out a witness
4 slip, which is located at the desk of the Sergeant at
5 Arms near the entrance to allow as many people as
6 possible to testify. Testimony will be limited to
7 three minutes per person, whether you're testifying
8 on Zoom or in person. My colleagues, you have five
9 minutes for questions. But before we begin, I'd like
10 to acknowledge my colleagues that are present:

11 Councilmember Brewer, Councilmember Schulman,
12 Councilmember De La Rosa, Councilmember Restler,
13 Councilmember Louis, Councilmember Avilés, and
14 Councilmember Gennaro.

15 Before we begin, now, without further... I'd
16 like to turn it over to the first witness panel.
17 I'll turn over to Council Committee, Nadia Jean
18 Francois to administer the oath.

19 COUNSEL: Emma Vadehra and Seritta Scott, I would
20 call on each of you individually for a response.
21 Please raise your right hand. Do you affirm to tell
22 the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth
23 before this committee and to respond honestly to
24 Councilmember questions? Emma Vadehra?

25 MS. VADEHRA: I do.

1 COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 COUNSEL: Seritta Scott?

3 MS. SCOTT: I do.

4 JOSEPH: Thank you.

5 COUNSEL: Emma Vadehra and Sarita Scott for DOE.

6 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay, I'd also like to
7 acknowledge Councilmember Lee and Councilmember Ung.
8 Ms. Sarita Scott, you may start. Oh, who's going...
9 you're going first? Okay.

10 MS. VADEHRA: I'm sorry. Thank you very much
11 though. Is this good?

12 Good afternoon, Chair Joseph and members of the
13 education committee here today. My name is Emma
14 Vadera. I'm the Chief Operating Officer for New York
15 City Public Schools for the Department of Education.
16 I'm joined here today by our Chief Financial Officer,
17 Seritta Scott, as well as many of my other colleagues
18 from the Department of Education who've worked on
19 some of our key stimulus programs who you'll also
20 hear from today.

21 First, thank you for the opportunity to discuss
22 the spending of federal COVID relief funds. Before I
23 begin, I want to express our gratitude to the city
24 Council, as well as to our state and federal partners
25 for your in their leadership and advocacy and

2 securing this critically important funding at a time
3 of great need for our city, our students, and our
4 educators.

5 I'm excited to be here today and to have joined
6 the New York City Department of Education team this
7 summer after working on educational equity issues at
8 the federal level, both in the Obama administration
9 in the Senate. I joined the DOE this July. I'm a
10 native New Yorker who's very glad to be home working
11 on these issues in the city I love. I now oversee
12 our financial and operational teams at the DOE with
13 the same lens towards equity. Our finance team is
14 led by Seritta who also just joined us, who's another
15 native New Yorker and lifelong public servant. She
16 was previously at OMB for 10 years, most recently
17 leading their education work and we're lucky to have
18 her.

19 As you all well know, the pandemic has had a
20 devastating impact on the fiscal health of our city
21 and our schools, while increasing the academic and
22 social emotional needs of our students. Prior to the
23 unprecedented COVID response investment from the
24 city, state, and federal governments that we're here
25 to talk about the city was facing a dire economic

2 situation. New York City like localities across the
3 country has been on the front lines and combating the
4 growing impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic. The
5 pandemic induced school closures and transition to
6 remote learning forced our schools and educators to
7 confront major mental health challenges, higher rates
8 of absenteeism and concerns about increasing academic
9 need. The disruptions also directly impacted our
10 educational services and posed fiscal and economic
11 uncertainties we're still confronting.

12 In my testimony, I'll provide an overview of the
13 federal relief funding, how we've been spending and
14 our spending this year in FY 23, the current status
15 of our budget and some of the fiscal headwinds we
16 will confront in the years ahead.

17 So first, as was noted by the Chair, the federal
18 government has provided substantial investments,
19 three separate funding streams for elementary and
20 secondary school relief over the course of the
21 pandemic. The first was enacted in March 2020 and
22 expired on September 30, 2022, called the
23 Coronavirus, Aid Relief and Economic Security Act or
24 CARES, that package provided approximately \$700
25 million to the DOE, but actually resulted in no new

2 net funding to us because the state decreased
3 foundation aid by the same \$700 million dollar amount
4 in FY 2021. The second federal funding stream was
5 enacted in December 2020 and will expire on September
6 30, 2023, labeled the Coronavirus Response and Relief
7 Supplemental Appropriations Act, it provided the DOE
8 with approximately \$2 billion of which approximately
9 \$1.5 billion has been spent to date. And then the
10 final federal relief legislation was enacted in March
11 2021. That one expires on September 30, 2024.

12 Called the American Rescue Plan Act, or ARPA. It's
13 providing approximately \$4.8 billion in funding of
14 which \$1.5 billion has been spent.

15 From these latter two streams, since the first
16 did not result in additional funding, the DOE spent
17 approximately \$300 million in FY 2021 and \$2.7
18 billion in FY 2022. The current financial plan
19 following yesterday's November plan update, which
20 we'll touch on, includes \$1.8 billion in spending in
21 FY 2023, of these funds \$1.7 billion in 2024 and \$250
22 million in 2025. DOES has used the stimulus funding
23 to invest in key programs this year, in the school
24 year and FY 2023, all of which were in this year's
25 adopted budget, including \$456 million for 3K

programming this year \$236 million for Summer Rising, \$464 million in school budget support, including targeted allocations for students' academic recovery, special education, recovery services and mental health services, \$227 million and academic services and supports including Mosaic curriculum, pre-K special education, arts, computer science, and Learning To Work, \$60 million and community schools expansion, as mentioned by the Chair, allowing us to support approximately 100 schools, \$132 million in devices and IT support including LTE and help desk services for families, \$29 million in the expansion of PSAL programs again, as mentioned by the Chair, \$132 million for other additional priorities, including \$49 million for school nurses to provide nursing at every DOE school, \$33 million to expand career pathways programming, \$11 million to expand bilingual education classes and support, \$11 million to expand parental engagement, translation, and interpretation services, \$10 million for new digital teaching and learning, \$9 million for Project Pivot, support and community based organizations and providing violence interruption activities, \$7

2 million to expand literacy and dyslexia, and \$2
3 million to expand Gifted And Talented.

4 The above is a statement of values for our city
5 students and families prioritizing sending hundreds
6 of millions of dollars this year directly to our
7 principals and schools, 3K and early childhood
8 providers, and school based programs. It invests in
9 both our recovery and a new vision for our schools
10 providing additional targeted support services for
11 vulnerable student populations, while transforming
12 students experiences and putting them on a path to
13 long term economic security.

14 To give a bit more detail on a couple of these
15 priorities: The Chancellor recently announced
16 Project Pivot, which empowers and equips young people
17 with tools to make positive choices for themselves,
18 uplifting pro-social development pathways working
19 with local CBOs that have been doing great work in
20 our communities for years. I know literacy is a
21 shared priority, and thanks to the investment of
22 stimulus funds, the city now has the most
23 comprehensive approach to supporting public school
24 students with dyslexia in the United States. And to
25 put more of our students on a pathway to career

2 success once they complete school, the administration
3 has expanded the career readiness and Modern Youth
4 Apprenticeship program, which will connect 3000
5 students across more than 50 schools with paid multi-
6 year apprenticeships. Unfortunately, as noted, while
7 these investments finance through early funding are
8 critical, we do not expect the federal COVID relief
9 support to continue. We will need to work together
10 over the coming years to sustain and build on these
11 efforts that are so essential for our students in
12 schools.

13 I just want to say across these investments, we
14 share your commitment to ensuring that stimulus
15 funding continues to be spent equitably, impactfully,
16 responsibly, and transparently. As both Seritta and
17 I settle into our new roles, we're eager to do our
18 work both with a focus on equity in the spirit of
19 collaboration and transparency. Transparency about
20 processes how dollars should distributed and used is
21 essential to ensuring the best possible decisions and
22 adhering to good government here. We know the
23 importance of enabling our communities, families and
24 students, as well as our elected official partners to

2 have the information they and you need, and are eager
3 for your feedback and ongoing partnership there.

4 Our budget update... So you all know a lot of
5 this but to run through it: The majority of our
6 budget remains spent on schools and services that
7 take place in schools. In the adopted budget, just
8 under half of the \$37.6 billion included directly
9 supports school instruction, programming and
10 staffing. Another 40% is associated with non-
11 controllable costs, such as legal mandates, debt
12 services, fringe benefits, and pension costs. Of the
13 remaining 13%, 11% goes to operations support,
14 facilities, transportation, food and utility, and 2%
15 goes towards central administration.

16 This year, our per-pupil spending actually
17 remains well above pre-pandemic levels, growing from
18 just under \$26,000 In FY 2019 to about \$31,000 this
19 year. The chancellor is laser focused on directing
20 as much funding to schools as possible, and in the
21 last several months in part, thanks to your
22 partnership and advocacy we have done just that.

23 Last week, we were proud to announce that we'd be
24 holding school budgets harmless for any lower-than-
25 projected enrollments in this year's mid-year budget

2 adjustment process. And I understand that money is
3 actually starting to go out to schools today. That
4 amounts to an approximately \$200 million investment
5 in school budgets. I want to thank the Council and
6 the Chair in particular for your advocacy and
7 partnership on this. This is the third straight year
8 for which stimulus dollars have been used to hold
9 schools harmless for mid-year enrollment changes.
10 This has been especially important as our communities
11 recover from the pandemic, the main purpose of
12 stimulus funding. So thank you.

13 That funding is in addition to some of the other
14 increases and flexibilities to include in to support
15 school budgets in early childhood providers this
16 summer and fall. That includes \$12 million to
17 support our newest students from asylum seeking
18 families, over \$50 million in hardship supports,
19 budget appeals for schools. Additional flexibility
20 we provided on \$100 million in school budgets to
21 allow schools to have more flexibility about how
22 those dollars were spent, and most recently --
23 announced the week before last -- the guarantee that
24 early childhood education providers who experienced
25 lower than expected enrollment in FY 22 will be paid

2 at least 75% of the value of their FY 22 contracts.
3 Again, we thank the Council for your leadership and
4 look forward to working with you on your shared
5 priorities.

6 Last but not least, the fiscal headwinds ahead:
7 I noted previously that the stimulus funding is due
8 to expire, last of which in September 2024, and we
9 don't expect the federal government to renew those
10 investments. In addition, as the mayor and several
11 independent budget monitors like the Citizens Budget
12 Commission have noted, the city's broader out your
13 revenue picture is challenging even beyond that loss
14 of stimulus dollars.

15 The mayor has asked all agencies to plan
16 accordingly. So we want to adjust with transparency,
17 some of what you have seen in the recently released
18 November plan released yesterday afternoon, including
19 the administration's plan to meet the Department of
20 Education share of the city wide program to eliminate
21 the gap or PEG.

22 While the November plan assumes a continued
23 investment in 3K at our current funding level of \$456
24 million a year of stimulus funds, it no longer
25 assumes an expansion of 3K with stimulus funding next

2 year compared to this year. Instead, current 3K
3 funding levels will remain steady. That amounts to a
4 savings of \$284 million compared to what was
5 previously projected in stimulus funding in each of
6 fiscal years 24 and 25. That's been reallocated to
7 meet baseline needs in our budget. So that allows us
8 to meet a very large portion of the administration's
9 PEG without cuts to existing programs or services.

10 The November plan also reflects savings from
11 lower-than-expected spending the school year,
12 associated with the return of unvaccinated staff, and
13 slower hiring of central staff, and school safety
14 agents. I want to emphasize that no reductions to
15 fair student funding or additional cuts to existing
16 programs or services are included in the November
17 plan.

18 In addition to these economic headwinds, the
19 reality remains, as the Chair noted, that we're
20 facing an impending fiscal cliff when stimulus
21 funding runs out after 2024 and 2025. The FY 2024
22 budget currently includes almost \$100 million in 3K
23 services with no funding source in the baseline, as
24 well as approximately \$80 million supporting social
25 workers and mental health professionals, \$60 million

2 managed funds for community schools and tens of
3 millions for other priorities such as PSAL, arts,
4 computer science, Learn To Work, and more. On net
5 like the Chair, we estimate there's over \$700 million
6 and activities in FY 2024 That do not have a funding
7 source when stimulus expires. There also remain at
8 the DOE serious ongoing annual operational deficits
9 in our budget in areas like Carter cases and their
10 growth, facilities and transportation. These areas
11 are ongoing annual structural deficit deficits driven
12 by cost growth, growth over and above inflation, and
13 they'll need to be addressed in a fiscally
14 responsible way for this year and the years ahead.

15 While the DOE has met savings targets to date, we
16 have a lot of hard choices in front of us as the
17 stimulus funding expires. We look forward to working
18 with you in making these decisions to continue to
19 support key programs. Your partnership and our
20 collective advocacy to state and federal leaders are
21 crucial to ensuring that we're continuing to provide
22 our students, families and educators with the
23 resources they need during this recovery period and
24 the years ahead.

2 Thank you again for the opportunity for all of us
3 to come speak with you today. And we look forward to
4 answering any questions you have.

5 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. I'd also like to
6 recognize Councilmember Menin.

7 COUNSEL: Christina Foti, James Morgano, Flavia
8 Abuelo[sp?], and Lucius Young, I'm going to swear you
9 in. Do you affirm to tell the truth... Oh, please
10 raise your hand. I'm sorry. I'll call on each of
11 you individually. Do you affirm to tell the truth,
12 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth before
13 this committee and to respond honestly to
14 Councilmember questions. Flavia Abuelo?

15 MS. ABUELO[SP?]: I do.

16 COUNSEL: James Morgano?

17 MR. MORGANO: I do.

18 COUNSEL: Christina Foti?

19 MS. FOTI: I do.

20 COUNSEL: Lucius Young?

21 MR. YOUNG: I do.

22 COUNSEL: Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay? Alright. Wonderful.
24 Thank you so much. On November 7, DOE announced that
25 it would hold schools harmless for lower and

2 projected enrollments in this year's mid-year
3 adjustment process, ensuring that no schools would
4 lose money due to mid-year enrollment. Where will the
5 \$200 million in funding come from, and does the \$200
6 million include amount schools will not be required
7 to give back due to higher than projected enrollment
8 losses or simply the additional amount that schools
9 are due because of enrollment increases above
10 projection or both?

11 MS. SCOTT: Yeah. So to answer your first
12 question, we're -- sorry, is that better? -- we're
13 working with our OMB partners and reallocating
14 federal stimulus. So that will include unspent FY 22
15 dollars, repurposing FY 24 dollars, so that we can
16 address mid-year... hold harmless... mid-year
17 adjustment hold harmless, as well as deal with some
18 of the structural deficits that we have in our budget
19 that Emma mentioned in her testimony.

20 As to your second question: It's both.
21 Essentially, with the mid-year just... Essentially,
22 with the mid-year adjustment, there are students...
23 excuse me, there are schools that lost, there are
24 schools that gained, and so the schools that lost
25 they will not lose any funding, and we will hold them

2 harmless. And for those that gained, we will infuse
3 those dollars to those schools.

4 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: We're looking for a
5 breakdown. I think I asked for that. Will we be
6 able to get a breakdown of each of the schools? And
7 how much did each of the schools receive?

8 MS. SCOTT: Yes. We can most certainly share
9 that with your office.

10 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Definitely. Thank you.

11 So regarding the so-called fiscal cliff: The IBL
12 identified \$3.2 billion in our AP... our ARPA and
13 CRRSA federal funding that DOE intend to use to
14 permanently expand long-term programs. So we talked
15 about long-term programs in terms of 3K, Restorative
16 Justice, which is near and dear to our hearts here in
17 the Council, and community schools. How do we plan
18 on keeping these long-term programs funded with
19 temporary dollars?

20 MS. SCOTT: Yeah. So as Emma mentioned in her
21 testimony, we have over seven...

22 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Please speak up.

23 MS. SCOTT: Okay.

24 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Bring it closer to you.

25 MS. SCOTT: Okay.

2 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Don't be afraid.

3 MS. SCOTT: Alright. [laughs] As Emma mentioned
4 in her testimony, there's over \$700 million in
5 baseline programming that is being supported with
6 temporary federal stimulus dollars. She also
7 mentioned where, you know, the mayor has been very
8 open about the tough fiscal times that we're facing.
9 And some hard choices will likely have to be made
10 to... to make sure that all program programming is
11 sustainable. This is where we would appreciate your
12 advocacy and your partnership as we move towards
13 adopting an FY 2024 budget to ensure that those
14 priorities are funded within the budget.

15 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Last year, this Council did
16 do that. We funded Summer Rising. We funded...
17 expanded summer school... I mean community schools,
18 because we knew it was needed in... in walking around
19 and seeing the schools and how impact... this COVID
20 impacted our students tremendously. So we want to
21 make sure that we continue, and Restorative Justice
22 is very important to us. We want to see other means
23 of punishment for our city kids.

24 Does the DOE have a plan to deal with these
25 expenses? You use a lot of this money to plug in

2 holes. Do you plan to continue using some of the
3 money to continue to plug in holes throughout the
4 year?

5 MS. SCOTT: Yes. Because of the number of
6 different things that we're dealing with in terms of
7 making sure that we're providing resources to
8 schools, and also dealing with the large amount of
9 structural deficits that we have, we are using all
10 the funding that is allocated within our budget.

11 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay. We also know that DOE
12 has used federal funds to help plug in holes of the
13 budget, but New York City support services, and plan
14 to continue using that money to do so.

15 MS. SCOTT: Yes.

16 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: How much is... How much of
17 it has gone to New York School Support Services?

18 MS. SCOTT: I can get that number for you. I
19 don't have the number in front of me, but I'll make
20 sure that you get it.

21 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Please do. So... So, do
22 you plan on continuing to fund the New York School
23 Support Services beyond the school year?

24

25

2 MS. SCOTT: In this current fiscal year? Sorry,
3 just for clarity.

4 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: During the rest of the
5 school year.

6 MS. SCOTT: Yes.

7 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: From the data provided the
8 first week of March 2022, per the comptroller's
9 office: April 2022, COVID spending analysis, the DOE
10 has spent less than 50% of just \$1.4 billion of the
11 expected \$3 billion in FY 22 Federal Stimulus fund.
12 How much of the \$3 billion in FY 22 stimulus funding
13 has been spent as of today?

14 MS. SCOTT: \$2.7 billion.

15 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: What accounts for the
16 difference in spending between the first week of
17 March 2022, and nearly eight and a half months later
18 untill today?

19 MS. SCOTT: So that was just spending at a point
20 in time., DOE spends down funding paying bills
21 throughout the fiscal year. So we're just...
22 essentially just paying off the bills that we have.

23 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Can you also please update
24 us on the delay in related to hiring difficulties and
25 supply chain issues? Where our hiring issues are the

2 greatest? What is being held up? For example, um,
3 we were supposed to hire shelter-based coordinators.
4 We haven't heard about that. The Foster Care office.
5 We... I wanted... I need an update on those hiring
6 delays. Because as you can see, our shelter system
7 is at capacity, and more than ever, we will need
8 those shelter-based coordinators, especially
9 bilingual ones for our new New Yorkers, and for
10 existing students that are already in the shelter
11 system.

12 MS. SCOTT: Yes. So I will turn to my... Oh,
13 sorry. I'll turn to my colleagues.

14 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yep.

15 MS. ABUELO[SP?]: Good afternoon, Chair Joseph,
16 members of the city Council. My name is Flavia
17 Abuelo[sp?] and I'm delighted to be here. And thank
18 you for raising the important question about the
19 staffing of STH coordinators as well as the foster
20 care team.

21 And I have some good updates on that end. In
22 terms of the foster care team, we have hired eight
23 out of the nine foster care staff members that we
24 were slated to have to staff that team. So right
25 now, a lot of the work for that team is really

2 providing direct support to schools, ensuring that
3 we're looking at the data where the students... if
4 they're high school students, looking at things like
5 do they need support in terms of academic programs?
6 Are we connecting... am I really being a connector
7 between the family, the schools, the foster care
8 agency to ensure that we're leveraging their support
9 and their capacity to eliminate educational barriers?

10 So I want to publicly thank you and acknowledge
11 your advocacy in that space, and the supports that
12 you provided to make that possible.

13 In terms of the students in temporary housing
14 coordinators, as you know, we were original...
15 originally slated to have 75 of them and thanks to
16 the support of the City... City Council, we were able
17 to add an additional 25. As of the moment, we have
18 received over 260 applicants. From the 260
19 applicants, we have been able to interview over 100
20 of the candidates. And there are 70 of the
21 candidates that are at different stages of the hiring
22 process, including a cohort of 18 that are already
23 hired. And I wanted to be specific about the cohort,
24 because one of the things that we are doing is moving
25 the process expeditiously, but also looking at a

2 cohort model to onboard people because we want to
3 ensure that we are creating a thoughtful and
4 meaningful experience, so that they can transition
5 effectively to support our... our students and
6 families.

7 In fact, one of the newly hire coordinators this
8 week began, like, acclimating themselves with the
9 role... the the role hotel, the heart center, so
10 that looking at spaces where we see gaps, and where
11 we can be intentional around the support that we're
12 providing to the students and families in shelter.

13 And we'll be happy to answer any additional
14 questions or to have a followup. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Question for you. We know
16 that the young lady who was in charge of your early
17 childhood payment process had resigned. Has that
18 position been filled? And how is that working with
19 some early childhood providers? Has that vacancy
20 been filled?

21 MS. VADEHRA: I don't believe that vacancy has
22 been filled. I can check. We are staffing up our
23 Early Childhood Team and have a representative here
24 from the Portfolio Team on the Early Childhood Team
25 who can talk about it. But... yeah.

2 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: You're answering the
3 question? You're coming? Is it... Is that...

4 MS. VADEHRA: We don't have...

5 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Do you have a timeline as to
6 when that office will be staffed up?

7 MS. VADEHRA: We can look into that and get back
8 to you.

9 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Please keep me posted.

10 MS. VADEHRA: Will do.

11 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. So describe the
12 current trend in funding allocation for academic
13 recovery, how it relates to students, school district
14 which has a high concentration of students in
15 district 75?

16 MS. VADEHRA: I'm so sorry. Would you repeat the
17 question? My apologies. Just taking notes.

18 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Describe the current trend
19 and funding allocations for academic recovery
20 including how it relates to school districts with
21 high concentration of needs in district 75.

22 MS. VADEHRA: Got it. So two of our... and
23 Christina, do want to come up here and join me as
24 well? Christina is the head of our Special Education
25 Division. So, big picture in terms of the big

2 academic recovery spends we are doing: There's the
3 academic recovery SAM, which is flowing out to
4 schools across the system, which flows out to schools
5 based in large part on student need, right? So
6 students with greater needs, including students with
7 disabilities get larger allocations, students in
8 foster care, students in shelter and temporary
9 housing, students who are English language learners,
10 and students with economic need. And so that's how
11 those dollars are flowing out to schools.

12 In addition to the academic recovery SAM FY 22
13 and 23, we also have a substantial investment in
14 Special Education Recovery Services, which Christina
15 can talk through, and in Summer Rising, but on the
16 Special Ed side, I'll turn it over to you.

17 MS. FOTI: Yeah. Good afternoon Chair and
18 members of the committee. In terms of this year's
19 allocation for special education recovery, we have
20 allocated \$104 million. And we're going to be doing,
21 and we are in the process of doing many things. As
22 far as last year goes, you're... you're very familiar
23 with... with all the services that we offered. We're
24 really proud to my knowledge that we are the school
25 district that provided the largest scale recovery

2 efforts, not just because we are the biggest but
3 because we allocated \$236 million to our recovery
4 efforts last year with a distinct allocation by
5 students with IEPs to schools. So every child with
6 an IEP last year was accounted for, and there was
7 money given directly to schools to provide recovery
8 services for students based on the number of students
9 with IEPs.

10 This year, we are taking on our compensatory
11 services process. We have... Every child with an
12 IEP, during their IEP meetings this year will be
13 reviewed for whether or not they require and are in
14 need of compensatory services. To date, we've
15 already had almost 25,000 IEP meetings. And during
16 those IEP meetings, we are individually reviewing
17 student progress, using their IEP goals, and making
18 determinations as to whether or not students need
19 additional support.

20 On top of those reviews, we are expanding our
21 sensory gyms. This year with stimulus funds, we were
22 able to open 10 free sensory gyms, staffed by trained
23 DOE professionals to provide speech, occupational
24 therapy, physical therapy. It was an incredible
25 accomplishment this year, and an incredible service

2 to our families. We're going to move... We're going
3 to increase the number of those sites to 80 this
4 year, and we're in the process of opening those
5 sites. In addition, we're allocating funding for
6 assistive technology training to families
7 attending... bringing their children to those sites.
8 While in the waiting room, families will be able to
9 receive assistive technology training for students
10 with communication needs. So we've allocated money
11 for that.

12 We're also going to be providing Saturday
13 academies, teacher training and community
14 partnerships, additional support for our IEP teams
15 given all that they are doing day in and day out to
16 provide... to assess for these services. We're
17 continuing our 21 plus: So that's our initiative
18 where we are granting students who are 21 additional
19 time to remain in our system, given the impacts of
20 COVID, and supporting them as they make their plans
21 for their next steps when they leave the DOE. And we
22 are also continuing with our family support through
23 our very public, and thankfully very popular Beyond
24 Access series, which is an online virtual forum every

2 week, where we provide training to families in
3 special education topics.

4 Pardon the long-winded explanation,
5 Councilmember, but we're... we're excited about these
6 initiatives and grateful to have the funding for
7 them.

8 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. How's the
9 formula... How... What type of formula did you use,
10 and... to... to target the funding? And now that we
11 have new New Yorkers, how does the formula change to
12 include a new asylum seekers?

13 MS. FOTI: Yeah. So last year it was by student.
14 This year, we're going to do those... we're doing
15 those individual reviews, so that we can determine
16 whether any... number one, did the child make... did
17 the student make progress? Number two, did they get
18 all their services, right? And if... if a child is
19 struggling with progress, or is not getting any of
20 their services, they're going to be entitled to one
21 or a combination of the services I just described.
22 And so this year's budget is different than last in
23 the sense that we have done distinct carve-outs for
24 every one of these initiatives, including
25 compensatory services. And thus far, we feel that we

2 do have the funds we need this year to provide these
3 services. And we're really delighted to have these
4 programs in progress.

5 MS. VADEHRA: Can I...

6 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. You... you
7 wanted to add on?

8 MS. VADEHRA: Well, I was just going to say, if
9 you're asking about the broader academic recovery and
10 fair-student funding, both of those do provide
11 additional funding and waits for asylum seekers who
12 qualify as students of temporary housing, and
13 sometimes in other categories as well. And so there
14 is additional funding allocated for those students in
15 that way.

16 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay, thank you. That was
17 my followup. Thank you for that.

18 As per the comptroller, the first week of March,
19 only... the DOE only spent 5% of the expected \$12
20 million in funding for the expansion of Restorative
21 Justice. This Council funded Restorative Justice.
22 Can you provide us an update on the spending to date,
23 how much of the expected \$12 million has a DOE spent
24 toward expanding Restorative Justice programs?

2 MS. VADEHRA: I don't think we have that number
3 to date for this year, but I know they're working on
4 it, and we can definitely get that to you.

5 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Do you plan to expand the
6 program? How many students do you expect to serve?

7 MS. VADEHRA: Same response: That we can get it
8 to you.

9 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: So that means you won't know
10 where and when. So let me ask another question:
11 What's the holdup with expanding the program? We
12 funded the program, this Council, and we're very
13 proud of that. We funded this program. So what's
14 the holdup in expanding Restorative Justice?

15 MS. VADEHRA: So we are funding the program using
16 stimulus dollars this year at the higher level. So
17 that funding has been allocated. I can check on what
18 the holdup is with the actual spending of funds. But
19 the funding is... is there for this year.

20 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: For example, Restorative
21 Justice Programs supported by \$15 million in FY 24
22 and \$7.3 million in FY 25. With funding running out
23 by FY 25, how is the administration ensuring that the
24 services will... Restorative Justice will continue
25 beyond 2025?

2 MS. SCOTT: Thank you for the question. So going
3 back to what we stated earlier in terms of having
4 over \$700 million worth of baseline programming in
5 the budget supported by federal stim, it definitely
6 needs to be a part of ongoing conversations about how
7 we deal with those programs.

8 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: I'd like to acknowledge
9 Councilmembers Krishnan, Sanchez and Feliz.

10 I'm going to allow my counsel... my colleague to
11 do the next set of questions. She has to leave.

12 COUNCILMEMBER SCHULMAN: Okay, the... the DOE is
13 no longer offering Special Education Recovery
14 Services at schools this school year. Instead, the
15 DOE is expanding the popular Seed Program... new
16 programs for students with sensory needs, and is
17 asking schools to provide compensatory makeup
18 services to students who need them to address their
19 unmet needs from the pandemic. Given... In late
20 October, the DOE allocated funding to schools to
21 offer compensatory makeup services to students with
22 disabilities. Last year, the DOE allocated more than
23 \$157 million to schools to offer special education
24 recovery services. However, this year, the DOE
25 allocated only \$12.4 million to schools to offer

2 compensatory... compensatory services. Students with
3 disabilities have a legal right to compensatory
4 services when they don't get the instruction services
5 they need. Given that only 40% of students with
6 disabilities received any Special Education Recovery
7 Services last year, with many starting very late and
8 in the school year and not receiving the full amount
9 needed, and the significant unmet needs of students
10 with disabilities during the pandemic, why is only
11 \$12.4 million allocated this year, and how will
12 schools ensure that students with disabilities
13 receive the makeup services they need and have a
14 right to receive?

15 MS. FOTI: Thank you. And I appreciate you
16 keeping the needs of our students with IEPs front and
17 center. With regard to our approach last year versus
18 this year: Last year's approach was: Every child
19 needs help, we need to get this to every student, and
20 an allocation went out on an individual student
21 basis. We then have been progress monitoring. So we
22 are essentially watching the progress that our
23 students with IEPs are making via their IEP goals.
24 And from there, we've trained our school
25 psychologists and our IEP teams this year to make

2 determinations about the need for compensatory
3 services. And so we've also set... sent out of
4 communication to families about any missed services,
5 and in order to receive additional services this year
6 for any family that is in need of them. That is why
7 we're... exactly why we're, to your point, expanding
8 the sensory gyms, so that they can get additional
9 services there.

10 While those are physical sensory gyms, they are
11 staffed by occupational therapists, physical
12 therapists, speech therapists that will provide those
13 additional services that were need... that were
14 missed. And as I mentioned before, we have a
15 distinct allocation that we've set aside,
16 particularly for compensatory services on top of all
17 of these initiatives that we're expanding.

18 COUNCILMEMBER SCHULMAN: Do you keep a list of
19 all of the school districts and the... and the needs
20 they have for the students with disabilities?

21 MS. FOTI: We've... we've been... Yes,
22 absolutely. I mean, we track every aspect of special
23 education service provision by district, by
24 discipline, by service category. And as I said
25 earlier, also by student progress.

2 COUNCILMEMBER SCHULMAN: So is that a list you
3 can share with the committee?

4 MS. FOTI: Yeah, they're all... The vast
5 majority of that is all public reporting obligations
6 that we've... we have set forth by the City Council,
7 and we are committed to those... to those public
8 reporting obligations.

9 COUNCILMEMBER SCHULMAN: Because... Because
10 students with disabilities have obviously a greater
11 need, and with... you know, when... when school
12 started, it was difficult for students that weren't
13 acclimated to being in school, and now those with
14 disabilities have even a higher reach. So, we want
15 to make sure that they're all taken care of. So, we
16 want to, we want that to move forward.

17 What information has gone to parents of students
18 with IEPs to inform them of how to access
19 compensatory services for their children and what to
20 do if their school says they can't provide them?

21 MS. FOTI: Yeah, we have a communication that we
22 can share that -- it has not gone out, it will be
23 going out, my team will confirm -- directly to
24 parents about how to access additional services.

2 COUNCILMEMBER SCHULMAN: And is this
3 information... This information, I'm gathering, is
4 also shared with superintendents? I met with the
5 superintendent of one of my districts this morning.
6 I want to make sure that they have all the tools and
7 the information and the services they need to help
8 people in the IEP classes, because that's really
9 important.

10 MS. FOTI: Yeah, you're absolutely right. We
11 will make sure that every superintendent has that in
12 their... their hands and are also happy to share with
13 you as well.

14 COUNCILMEMBER SCHULMAN: Last year, as some
15 schools were unable to provide Special Education
16 Recovery Services because the teachers and service
17 providers did not want to work after the school day
18 or on Saturdays. For compensatory services this
19 year, can schools use their funding to contract with
20 private providers, such as private funding tutoring
21 companies, if their staff doesn't have time during
22 the school day, to provide makeup instruction or
23 services on top of the regular caseload and doesn't
24 want don't want to work after school or on weekends?

2 MS. FOTI: Yeah, absolutely. That was a
3 definitive challenge last year. That is also why
4 we've been actively working to hire additional
5 providers, and why we have incentive programs around
6 these disciplines. We are staffing up and have been
7 staffing up. And our commitment to the increasing
8 after school and Saturday sites via the sensory gyms
9 is really evidence of our desire to meet the unfilled
10 needs that... that our students had last year, and of
11 course, address any unfilled needs from this year.

12 COUNCILMEMBER SCHULMAN: So one... just one other
13 thing. So, the superintendent I spoke to today said
14 that she had to hire... she's looking for funding for
15 a company to do this. So if you guys have funding
16 that, can I come to you separately, so we can have
17 that conversation?

18 MS. FOTI: Absolutely.

19 COUNCILMEMBER SCHULMAN: Okay. Thank you very
20 much.

21 MS. FOTI: Of course. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Councilmember Restler?

23 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: Thank you. Good
24 afternoon. Thank you for joining us today. And
25 congratulations to you both on your new positions.

2 They are not easy jobs. So you have all of our
3 empathy.

4 Firstly, I just... I'm going to focus my
5 questions primarily on the topic of 3K, which is of
6 tremendous importance to me and the members of this
7 body. And I've been gravely disappointed by the
8 updates we've been getting from the Adams
9 Administration and the Chancellor and the team at
10 DOE. Could you just again... When will 3K be
11 universal in New York City? Date certain... just
12 without the...?

13 MR. MORGANO: Thank thank you for the question,
14 Councilmember. So, right now we have -- as the
15 Chancellor mentioned earlier this month --
16 approximately 40,000 available 3K and pre-K seats.
17 15,000 of those are in 3K. And the work that we're
18 doing is making sure that we have seats available in
19 the setting type and located closely to families
20 where they need them. So we will continue to do the
21 work to shift seats as needed. So recently, on the
22 Upper East Side, for example, we had a pre-K center
23 that had two unfilled pre-K classes that we converted
24 into two 3K classes. We've worked with the

2 superintendent on Staten Island, and moved some
3 seats...

4 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: I totally appreciate that
5 there's a whole lot of effort move... to move things
6 around. And it's a complex and big city, but when
7 will 3K be universal in New York City. I just would
8 appreciate a date certain.

9 MR. MORGANO: Again, right now we have over
10 15,000 available 3K seats. So the issue is making
11 sure we have those seats as close as possible to
12 families who need them.

13 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: So are you...

14 MR. MORGANO: Yeah, open and available.

15 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: saying that 3K is...

16 MR. MORGANO: Yeah, yeah, yeah open and
17 available.

18 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: Already universal in New
19 York City?

20 MR. MORGANO: I'm saying there are 15,000
21 unfilled 3K seats.

22 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: Okay. So then... I... I
23 mean, I have a series of additional questions, but
24 considering we have providers that are closing down
25 because of DOE's failure to pay them... Considering

2 that we have providers that are having to shut down
3 because of DOE's failure to pay them on a timely
4 basis, it's hard for me to understand how you're all
5 making the argument that 3K is already
6 comprehensively meeting the needs across the city. I
7 have families in my district that are unable to
8 access 3K seats in Greenpoint. So. I'm... I'm
9 confused. Is... are you... are you saying that 3K is
10 universal, and there's no need for further expansion?

11 MR. MORGANO: Well, certainly, Councilmember if
12 you have families that are looking for 3K send them
13 to us, and we will work with them to find them a seat
14 as close as possible. There's... There's work to do
15 in continuing to make sure we have the right seats in
16 the right locations, in the right setting type. We
17 offer a mixed delivery model in 3K, so we want to
18 meet family needs where they are. I will also turn
19 to my colleagues to talk a little bit about the rapid
20 response team in terms of your question around
21 payments for providers.

22 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: It's okay. I'd like to
23 focus on the funding at hand... uh, at the issues at
24 hand.

2 In the updated November plan released yesterday,
3 my understanding is that there's \$568 million in
4 savings that you all have accounted for, by right-
5 sizing 3K. So we're, in FY 24, removing over half a
6 billion dollars in funding for 3K in FY 24. Is that
7 right?

8 MS. VADEHRA: So just to be clear, we're not
9 proposing any funding reductions for pre-K in FY
10 2024. We're proposing continuing current spending
11 levels. It continues to be our largest spend of
12 stimulus dollars in FY 2024

13 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: So half a billion dollars
14 that you're not going to be spending next year...
15 next fiscal year on early childhood education, uh,
16 you're able to meet the comprehensive needs and
17 realize universal 3K In September, despite taking a
18 half a billion dollars away?

19 MS. VADEHRA: So I'm going to turn back to James
20 in a second. But just to be clear, it's over
21 multiple years. So the reduction for next year is
22 half of... half of that. Um...

23 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: I saw \$568 million in FY
24 24, and \$284 million in cost avoidance in FY 25 and
25 26. By my accounts, those are phenomenal sums of

2 money that you're taking out of early childhood
3 education.

4 MR. MORGANO: So I'll let my colleagues speak to
5 the numbers in the finance. But my understanding is
6 we're maintaining the funding levels for 3K. We're
7 maintaining the services that we're providing and the
8 work that we're doing. The portfolio planning is
9 just to make sure we have seats in the right location
10 where families need them. So we're not...

11 MS. VADEHRA: So just...

12 MR. MORGANO: Yeah.

13 MS. VADEHRA: So just in terms of the numbers,
14 that was compared to the planning and continual
15 expansion of the program, the program that's funded
16 by short-term stimulus dollars.

17 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: Now you're decreasing the
18 expansion that had been planned, and intending for a
19 smaller number of seats for 3K in the years ahead.

20 MS. VADEHRA: Well, on the smaller number of
21 seats, I would I would turn to James, who noted, we
22 already have a number of empty seats this year...

23 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: Which to me is a
24 reflection of...

2 MS. VADEHRA: ...that we're working to
3 reallocate.

4 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: failure of DOE outreach
5 and engagement, considering there is tremendous
6 demand for this essential program throughout the
7 city. And I still don't feel like I've gotten a
8 straight answer to the very simple question that I
9 keep asking: Is when will that we have universal 3K
10 in New York City? Because there is no answer to that
11 question. Right? I mean, I keep asking, it keeps
12 not getting answered. Because there is no plan. The
13 mayor has walked back his commitment. The Chancellor
14 has walked back the commitment that has been made to
15 the people of the city of New York to implement
16 universal 3K. And if this administration is not
17 prepared to put the funding in, then I strongly
18 encourage my colleagues in the Council to step up and
19 make this the priority that it needs to be working
20 families and our youth depend on high-quality early
21 childhood education. And if you all aren't prepared
22 to make it happen, then we need to take it into our
23 own hands.

24 MR. MORGANO: Thank you guys, if I can answer
25 that: So we will continue to focus on building out

2 the birth-to-five continuum. We will maintain
3 funding levels. We have 40,000 available seats that
4 are not filled across 3K and pre-K, and we're going
5 to continue to work to make sure we're moving seats
6 into locations where they're... they're most needed.
7 And again, I mentioned the example on Staten Island,
8 where we moved seats from the north shore where there
9 was an oversaturation of seats, and so it was really
10 hard for providers because we had too many seats that
11 they... that they were competing with, and we will
12 continue to move seats where we need them. We're
13 doing a needs assessment now. And we'll continue to
14 work to make sure that families have a seat, the type
15 of seats that they need, as close as possible their
16 home or their work, whichever is their preference.
17 Thank you for the question.

18 MS. VADEHRA: The only thing I would just add,
19 and James, I would... you should jump in wherever
20 here, but the only thing I would add is that as part
21 of universal is also ensuring the expansion of
22 services for students with special needs as well.
23 Obviously, we are working to expand that as well.
24 Obviously not going as fast as we would like
25 necessarily, but we are working to do that too. And

2 I just want to say when we think about universal,
3 making sure we're centering those students who have
4 been promised these services for a long time, and
5 including them in these expansion conversations are
6 really critical.

7 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Councilmember
8 Louis?

9 COUNCILMEMBER LOUIS: I'm sitting here listening
10 to my colleague, and I'm like if you gave all of us
11 2500 seats, we would have 3K (inaudible). Anyway,
12 thank you so much for making time to meet with us
13 today.

14 My questions are going to be focused... focused
15 on effectiveness and programming. Regarding funding,
16 I'll be quick. So one of the concerns surrounding
17 the slow spending of stimulus funding was the
18 prospect that allocated funding that would have
19 eventually expired and have to be turned to the DOE.

20 So the first question is How has unspent money
21 been returned... has unspent money been returned to
22 the DOE? And if so, what's the department's plan
23 regarding those lost funds?

24 MS. SCOTT: Yep. Thank you for the question. So
25 as I stated, we are working with our OMB partners to

2 do a realignment of federal stimulus. And that will
3 include any unspent stimulus from fiscal year 22.
4 Looking into federal stimulus that's in the out
5 years, and trying our best to address all of the
6 competing priorities that we have within our budget.

7 COUNCILMEMBER LOUIS: So whatever was not spent
8 will be rolled over?

9 MS. SCOTT: Yes. And you'll see that in a future
10 plan.

11 COUNCILMEMBER LOUIS: And when will you be able
12 to follow up with the Committee on that?

13 MS. SCOTT: Um, I would say we should definitely
14 have ongoing discussions about it, but it will be in
15 a future plan, so that would be the preliminary or
16 the executive budget. I'm not... not... You know, I
17 don't have the authority to say when it will happen.
18 But we will see it in a plan.

19 COUNCILMEMBER LOUIS: I will say, the sooner the
20 better. But thank you for that.

21 Second question is, while the amount of money
22 spent on relief programs is important, so is making
23 sure that these dollars are having an impact. So I
24 wanted to know what measures has the DOE implemented
25 to track the effectiveness of the programs being

2 funded, their impact on students' academic, social,
3 and emotional recovery. Some of the programs you
4 mentioned earlier was dyslexia. You gave a whole
5 break down really quick. But if you could just let
6 us know the effectiveness of those programs thus far.

7 MS. VADEHRA: So first, I just want to say I very
8 much appreciate the question and want to note that
9 across... you know, there's a lot of different
10 programs in there. It's very hard to back out the
11 impact of a particular program in a particular school
12 when we're looking at so many different inputs at the
13 same time. We have a set of data we track across our
14 schools, which Lucius can talk to and speak to more,
15 that we're looking at academic assessment data, that
16 we're looking at social-emotional screeners, that
17 we're looking at attendance and chronic attendance,
18 right?, and all of these are part of how we look at
19 how schools are doing broadly. And that's data we're
20 regularly reviewing.

21 In terms of on specific programs where it's
22 possible, do you want to talk through dyslexia or
23 anything else?

24 MR. YOUNG: Thank you. Good afternoon, everyone.
25 With regards to the dyslexia, first of all, I want to

2 just say that we have launched the most comprehensive
3 literacy rollout for the city this fall. And I think
4 one of the things I want to say is that we've opened
5 up 160 dyslexia sites across the city, pilot sites,
6 and we also have opened up three dyslexia school
7 programs in three districts.

8 Our commitment is really to the Quality Of
9 Phonics Curriculum in K to 2, and making sure that
10 all our teachers are trained in literacy instruction,
11 and also with the reading interventions. And one of
12 the things that we want to do is to make sure that
13 these pilot sites, when we're working closely with
14 the schools, is that when we're working with them,
15 part of it is looking at their schedules and their...
16 their programming, and making sure that interventions
17 are part of this work. And one of the... the pieces
18 that were strongly emphasizing is the capacity piece
19 of really kind of supporting the teachers that are
20 doing this work.

21 The early identification is really a huge support
22 in this, where we have timely instruction, decisions
23 that are meant for kids who are identified at risk
24 with reading difficulties. And so one of the things
25 that these lessons learned are to increase the

2 opportunity for, like, the expansion of this work
3 going forward.

4 COUNCILMEMBER LOUIS: So let's talk about... a
5 little bit about a program that was very important
6 for our city: the Social Emotional Programming and
7 our schools, right? So how much funding was
8 allocated towards that? What is the effectiveness of
9 that? How is it being tracked? How much are you
10 proposing for FY 24 regarding that program?

11 Because dyslexia is... that... that's something
12 that was implemented under this administration, for
13 Social Emotional about two years.

14 [bell rings] And that's it for my questions. But
15 you can still them.

16 MS. VADEHRA: Yeah. No, no. There's a lot of
17 things that tend to be categorized as social
18 emotional learning, right? Social workers, mental
19 health supports. So I just want to make sure we're
20 giving you some numbers that align with... something.

21 MS. SCOTT: Yep. And so that would be the...
22 that was about \$86 million.

23 (BACKGROUND VOICE) Yes.

24

25

2 \$86 million. Yes. Well, that's in federal
3 stimulus funding. And that's for the... that's the
4 FY 23 allocation.

5 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: You have to talk on the mic.

6 MS. SCOTT: I'm Sorry.

7 MS. VADEHRA: I'm sorry. What that doesn't
8 include is community schools funding, right?, and
9 other pieces that also provide additional social
10 emotional supports for students, but aren't showing
11 up in that one line of social emotional supports and
12 screeners, which is the line she's just sharing.

13 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you, Councilmember
14 Louis. Just to piggyback off of Councilmember
15 Louis's question: If we funded this with stimulus
16 dollars, how do we sustain it?

17 MS. SCOTT: That is a great question. Thank you.
18 Again, going back to what I said in terms of the
19 programming that is baselined and now is currently
20 supported by federal stim, I think that is very
21 important for us to continue to have conversations
22 about how we sustain programming that we prioritize
23 within our budget. So we're looking forward to
24 having those discussions with you. Because between
25 Emma and I, we can only spend the money that is

2 allocated to us, and we would really love to work
3 with you in terms of making sure that our priority
4 programs are funded within our budget.

5 MS. VADEHRA: The only thing I would add, because
6 I completely agree with all of that, and I think
7 that's mostly the answer, but just because we just
8 mentioned community schools, right?, we do know, some
9 of these are big federal priorities and state
10 priorities as well. And so thinking about how we can
11 work together to advocate to other levels of
12 government, which are currently funding some of these
13 programs with one-time dollars, where community
14 schools are a real priority, for example, I think
15 it's also part of what we're looking to do together.

16 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Councilmember...
17 Councilmember Brewer?

18 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Thank you very much. I,
19 too, have just to start with a 3K question pre-K, and
20 the reason is the following: I know a school that
21 has an extra room. They would like to... because of
22 a huge waitlist of young people who want to be in the
23 program, because -- particularly in Harlem -- parents
24 go elsewhere fast. And so I don't understand,
25 picking up on Councilmember Restler, the issue is if

2 you have people coming into the school at a young
3 age, you're likely to keep them in the public
4 schools. Otherwise, they're going to go to
5 parochial, or charter, God help us. So when you have
6 an extra room, why wouldn't we put more money into
7 that... opportunity? Apparently, they got told no.
8 So I do think that getting children in early is your
9 biggest way to keep kids in the public school system.
10 So why in the world would we cut this program?

11 MR. MORGANO: So just to reiterate -- thank you,
12 Councilmember, for the question, and my colleagues
13 can chime in on the funding -- we are not cutting the
14 program. We're maintaining the funding levels for
15 future years, and my colleagues...

16 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: We need more

17 MR. MORGANO: We're maintaining the funding
18 levels for future years. We have thousands of
19 available seats in areas where they are oversaturated
20 with too many seats, which has created a competition
21 among programs and made it challenging for them. And
22 so we're working to make sure we have the right
23 number of seats in the right locations. We review
24 requests... To your point earlier, if you share
25 information about a school that's interested or a

2 program that's interested, we'll certainly review
3 that. But we take into account a range of factors.

4 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Okay, I'm just saying
5 that's good up high here. Down low, it doesn't
6 happen. And also with the Department of Health,
7 another issue, you have a nonprofit doing pre-K, but
8 they have an extra room (this is not you this is the
9 Department of Health, but you are one
10 administration.) and they are not allowed to put in
11 small children for some crazy reason.

12 All I'm saying is we're not doing a good job on
13 getting young kids into the public school system at
14 an early age. I just have to recognize that if you
15 talk to people in the community. I know it may be
16 budget, it may be policy, but it's not working. So
17 if you have places that it's not applicable, because
18 there aren't enough kids, I know plenty Manhattan who
19 wants to go to early childhood education.

20 So I'll leave it at that. But I promise you down
21 here, it ain't working, and I will bring it to your
22 attention.

23 Now just in terms of... I know we keep going over
24 the pre-... the special education issues because they
25 cost a lot of money and they are always challenging:

2 What are you doing about the Carter decision? Just
3 generally? How are you handling that big, huge
4 number? It's been going on for 40 years, so it's not
5 new. I've been here since 40 years. So I know. And
6 I would like to know, what are we doing to try to
7 address it? Obviously, every parent I know goes to
8 Winston Churchill, I can go... I know the whole list.
9 What are we doing to keep them in the public school
10 system?

11 MS. VADEHRA: Well, thank... thank goodness
12 you've been here for 40 years, Councilmember, because
13 you are...

14 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: But nothing changed in 40
15 years.

16 MS. VADEHRA: I understand. I think... I think
17 in fairness, a lot has changed. I think we have a
18 lot of work to do. You know that we have a lot of
19 work to do. And I think we're going to... you're
20 going to hear more about this in the upcoming weeks,
21 about how we want to take on more workarounds,
22 ensuring that the needs of our special education
23 students are met.

24 The dyslexia initiative that you just heard of is
25 a big step forward. I think, in the past, the

2 question that we got most often from families is:
3 "What do I do if my child has a reading disability?
4 What if my child's not reading on grade level? What
5 if... what is happening in a school in school for him
6 is not working?" Being able to say that we have, I
7 think, Lucius said 160 pilot programs going, and
8 three actual programs up and running is a huge
9 difference. And you know, this will Councilmember
10 Brewer that families have been crying out for help.
11 And a solution that we've had on this front... a
12 longstanding solution has only been our charter
13 schools. And so they have fulfilled the need that is
14 needed. But our students should also have a public
15 school option.

16 And so philosophically, we're absolutely aligned
17 with you on this front. The expansion of our
18 specialized programs has been also... you know, we...
19 if we... If you had talked to us, 10 years ago, we
20 weren't providing active ABA, which is a methodology
21 that many of our families seek charter schools for.

22 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: But how much do you spend
23 on charter schools? Do you have an overall number?

24 MS. SCOTT: We are spending upwards of \$800
25 million on Carter cases...

2 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: \$800 million a year?

3 MS. SCOTT: It's grow... and it's going to grow.

4 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Okay, it's a big number.

5 MS. SCOTT: Yes, it is.

6 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: [Bell rings] Okay, so my
7 time is running out. But so let's just say Carter
8 needs to be addressed, and you need a schools that
9 the young people can go to in the public school
10 system. I throw out NYU, and nobody seems to know
11 what I'm talking about. It's either Morton
12 Supermarket or the school. NYU is supposed to
13 provide the school. I don't know why nobody knows
14 about this school. But it's supposed to be for these
15 kinds of opportunities. On Mercer Street. Something
16 to think about.

17 And then just in terms of... I know, we keep
18 going through this, but in terms of the spending of
19 the... the... \$22 million was spent in FY 22 -- this
20 is for special education. Can you give us not just a
21 breakdown, but the 130 preschool special education
22 programs that were supposed to start in July 22? How
23 many contracts have been signed? What's the status
24 of the contracts moving forward? Those very special
25 individuals programs?

2 MR. MORGANO: Thank you for the question
3 Councilmember. So we have 67 providers that are
4 moving through the contracting process for the 4410
5 contract enhancement, which as you know, lengthens
6 the school day, provides additional funding support
7 for...

8 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: ...body wants.

9 MR. MORGANO: I'm sorry?

10 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: It's what everybody wants.
11 They want those contracts.

12 MR. MORGANO: Yes. So we have... we have 67
13 right now that are moving through the pipeline,
14 they'll be voted on for this November PEP, and then
15 hopefully a speedy registration at the comptroller's
16 office, and money to these providers that certainly
17 do need it.

18 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: And it's supposed to be
19 130 total? Or what's the total supposed to be? Do
20 you have a sense of what the total is supposed to be?

21 MR. MORGANO: Right now, I know that 67 are going
22 through November, and we have others...

23 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Right.

24 MR. MORGANO: ...we have a universe of other
25 programs that we're working with. I think it was

2 upwards of approximately 130. And for a variety of
3 reasons... So, you know, programs for this
4 enhancement need state approval, need to finalize a
5 budget, we have to work out obviously the contract
6 registration. So there are a couple of different
7 steps in the process. But right now we have 67 that
8 are going for November PEP. We... The panel for
9 education policy, we expect we will have more in
10 December, and continue to push forward these
11 contracts.

12 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: And you will keep the
13 committee up to date on that?

14 MR. MORGANO: Absolutely.

15 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: And the other question,
16 then I'll stop is: I know we've been through this
17 again before, but with those young people who have...
18 were supposed to get the services last year, didn't
19 get them: Just be specific as to how much of the ARP
20 funding is DOE using this year to address these
21 preschool-related services for these children, and is
22 there enough money to address their needs? I don't
23 think there is.

24 MS. VADEHRA: So I will say in terms of... in
25 terms of stimulus dollars, and this again goes...

2 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Stimulus, yes.

3 MS. VADEHRA: In terms of stimulus dollars, in FY
4 2023 for the special-ed pre-K support enhancements,
5 and we're looking at \$71 million for that. And just
6 to tie it back to some of the previous conversations,
7 this is then another substantial investment in our
8 early childhood system along with the \$456 for 3K
9 that is reliant on stimulus dollars at this... at
10 this moment in time, and that's some of where
11 these... these are some of where our most substantial
12 spends are going.

13 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: That's the Saturday
14 schools, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera? IN other
15 words, some of those programs? No? The Saturday
16 schools are separate?

17 MS. VADEHRA: That's separate. That's additional
18 funds than what Christina... what Christina talked
19 through earlier, actually. So these are just the two
20 early... early childhood programs.

21 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Okay.

22 MR. MORGANO: And if I could just very quickly
23 add for... for those programs that are going through
24 the contact... the 67, it covers over 2700 special...
25 special class education seats that are going to be

2 stabilized in the sector. And we are certainly
3 working with those providers to add additional seats
4 above and beyond the seats that they're serving, but
5 the enhancement will cover their existing seats. And
6 so we're very happy about the 67 providers moving
7 forward. Thank you.

8 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you, Councilmember
10 Brewer. I just want a quick question on the same
11 topic. I know we were supposed to hire 38 inclusion
12 specialists. So far, how many have you hired? You
13 were supposed to hire 38? How many have you hired?

14 MR. MORGANO: I think I will have to get back to
15 you on that.

16 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Get back to me on that.
17 Okay.

18 MR. MORGANO: I can share that there was a... you
19 know, portion of money that was transferred to the
20 Special Education Office to improve related services.
21 So there was a pot of money that we took that was
22 initially going to go to central staff, and we're
23 providing it to provide related services to families
24 that are in CBOs, so that they can get the related
25 services.

2 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: How do you plan on
3 implementing -- and we haven't talked about that, and
4 this is very important to the Council -- 4410? How
5 does that plan to be implemented? That's baselined
6 into our budget.

7 MR. MORGANO: Yeah, so the 4410 was what I was
8 just talking with a Councilmember Brewer about, in
9 terms of the 67 providers that are currently going
10 through the contracting process right now.

11 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Does the contracting process
12 change? Do they... have you extended their days?
13 How does that look? Can you...?

14 MR. MORGANO: Yes. So the 4410 contract
15 enhancement extends the days from a five-hour day
16 length to a six-hour-and-20-minutes day length, and
17 that brings it into parity with other pre-K and 3K
18 programming. And that also results in teachers
19 receiving additional funding.

20 And out of that 800, when I did my early... when
21 I did my hearing last month, I talked about the 800
22 students, where are we with us 800 preschoolers that
23 are still sitting at home.

24 MR. MORGANO: So right now among the 67 providers
25 that are moving through the contract process, and the

2 seats... the 2700 seats that we're stabilizing, we
3 are working to increase the number of special
4 education seats that they're serving, and we'll have
5 to circle back to provide the exact number where we
6 stand. We're right now working out through the
7 contracting process.

8 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay, remember, today is
9 November 15... 16? And school started in September.
10 So...

11 MS. VADEHRA: I just wanted to update the record.
12 But you're absolutely right that no student should be
13 waiting. That number has gone down to 281 students,
14 and 209 of those students have had an IEP meeting
15 within the past 60 days.

16 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: I'd like to recognize
17 Councilmember Gutierrez and Shekar... Councilmember
18 Shekar, the floor is yours.

19 COUNCILMEMBER KRISHNAN: Thank you so much Chair
20 Joseph. I have two questions. But before getting to
21 them, I just wanted to make a general comment of my
22 full agreement with Chair Joseph, Councilmember
23 Brewer, and Councilmember Restler about our deep
24 concern as a Council about the administration's
25 commitment to universal pre-K and early education.

2 And you're going to tell me about... that it was
3 temporary stimulus dollars, that it's right-sizing
4 all those things, but the fact of the matter is, this
5 was... this is a value, a value that was committed to
6 by the city of New York. The benefits of early
7 education, universal pre-K for children are clear.
8 The benefits of how it keeps public school students
9 in the public schools from an early age are clear.
10 And so to see all these terms being used in a way
11 that is... raises serious questions to us about the
12 administration's commitment to both protecting and
13 expanding universal pre-K.

14 And so on that note, my first question is about a
15 letter that Chair Joseph and I, along with our
16 colleagues on the committee, had sent to the DOE
17 about instructional coordinators, social workers and
18 Policy Support Specialists in early education that
19 were excessed. And the testimony provided last... at
20 our last hearing on this issue was later revealed to
21 be incorrect. There were policy... social workers,
22 structure coordinators, and policy support
23 specialists that were excessed. We followed up with
24 our letter. We have not heard a response yet from
25 DOE to our letter about what exactly has happened to

2 them. So I'd like to ask you all, since we're here,
3 when will these positions be reinstated for our pre-K
4 classes and 3K classes?

5 MS. VADEHRA: So thank you appreciate the
6 question. And just to say, I really do appreciate
7 the shared value of around zero-to-five and early
8 education and how critical it is. And I think it's
9 one we really share, not just for 3K and pre-K, but
10 also for special-ed pre-K in particular, and also for
11 zero-to-five in total. So just understand the points
12 of difference, but we really do share that priority
13 and how critical it is to get kids, especially our
14 most vulnerable kids, off on the right start.

15 To the second question, I actually don't think
16 between us we have the right folks here to respond to
17 you today. But we can commit to getting back to you
18 soon. And we'll do so and, and understand.

19 COUNCILMEMBER KRISHNAN: Thank you. But, you
20 know, that... the fact that we haven't received an
21 answer yet... the fact that these positions within
22 our early education programs have been excessed,
23 again, just is further evidence of why we are very
24 concerned about this administration's commitment to
25 early education. Because now it's in addition to

2 funding and questions about... and reductions in
3 funding for the expansion the program, it's actually
4 positions in the classroom that, are as you testified
5 to, affecting our most vulnerable students in
6 particular, when it comes to early education.

7 So we would expect to have an answer on that, and
8 frankly, expect to have those excessed positions and
9 those teachers reinstated in their classrooms.
10 Otherwise, how can we provide the support for early
11 education?

12 My... My second question is about... With the
13 stimulus dollars in the plan for relief funds,
14 there's also now an asylum seeker crisis that you all
15 know well that we're facing and a number of
16 multilingual learners coming into our schools. This
17 is something that I've been very vocal about since
18 the very beginning, about bilingual education, and
19 particularly bilingual education around multilingual
20 learners. Before... Long before the asylum seeker
21 crisis, I think every school in New York City should
22 be fully embracing bilingualism and biliteracy, and
23 supporting multilingual learners. But now we have a
24 lot of students in the classroom that don't have
25 those supports, and a number of schools in classrooms

2 across the city that are not adequately equipped for
3 bilingual education. And there are a lot of
4 challenges to obtain skilled teachers, because the
5 bilingual certification requirements are so high.
6 And so I'd like to know what, with the stimulus
7 dollars and the... for the years ahead, what is the
8 plan for the Department of Education to rapidly
9 expand and support bilingual education in our
10 schools?

11 MS. FOTI: I keep forgetting that. Thank you.
12 We're absolutely committed to providing high-quality
13 education to our multilingual learners. And you're
14 absolutely right, we need this now more than ever. A
15 few things that are happening on this front -- and
16 I'm speaking on behalf of my colleagues in the
17 Division of Multilingual Learners, so I'm going to
18 refer to my notes but -- we are... there is a five-
19 year plan to open and expand our bilingual programs.
20 And with the goal of having a large number of... a
21 significant number of programs by 24-25. And the
22 executive budget currently includes significant
23 investment to... to scale and sustain programs, and
24 our colleagues in the Division of Multilingual
25 Learners are certainly doing that with a focus on

2 programs for our older newcomers. Particularly
3 they're working with transfer schools, existing
4 transfer schools to expand and enhance programs
5 within those schools to support our newcomers. And
6 they are given... They're certainly working with
7 Project Open Arms on instructional guidance to
8 schools, instructional resources, and they're doing
9 all of this in partnership with our superintendents.

10 COUNCILMEMBER KRISHNAN: Thank you. And if the
11 Chair will permit, I'd request that we see a more
12 detailed plan from the Department of Education on
13 what the plan is for bilingual education, because
14 that's a now problem, right? I appreciate it, and
15 you will all know it too, but it is a problem that is
16 growing more dire every single day. So having a
17 detailed proposal from you all of how you'll expend
18 bilingual education in our schools will be very much
19 appreciated. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you so much. Um, I
21 just thought of something. If our preschoolers with
22 IEP sort of mandated, so that's a legal document,
23 right?, and they're not getting services, and 4410 is
24 baselined into our budget, correct? We're clear
25 right?

2 By not providing the services we are opening up
3 ourselves to even more Carter cases. So can you
4 guys... And so far we're only in, what?, November.
5 By my estimation This will bring us to at least a
6 billion dollars according to the comptroller's
7 office. Could you guys clarify that for me?

8 MS. VADEHRA: Can I just say one thing, which
9 is... because I do think it's important as we think
10 about the stimulus cliffs, the 4410 enhancements are
11 actually also being funded by stimulus dollars. So
12 it's another stimulus spend on early childhood
13 education. So I just want to add that to that to...
14 to the non-baseline stimulus conversation. And then
15 over to you on Carter.

16 MS. FOTI: Yes, Chair. It absolutely impacts the
17 Carter program. But most... most importantly, it
18 impacts the students that are not being served. And
19 our obligation, and the need is to serve every kid.
20 And when we said for all, it really... we agree it
21 does need to be for all. I can assure you that we
22 are working as quickly as we can to provide interim
23 supports to the students that are still awaiting
24 placement, and the Special Education Office has been
25 working closely with those families to devise

2 programs and services and supports while they wait...
3 while they await that placement.

4 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: According to my records
5 here, these seats are legally mandated, as of June of
6 2022. We are now in November. These parents... they
7 call us, and they call me across the city. I get
8 phone calls from parents not having seats, not having
9 transportation, to and from their programming. So
10 this is not something that's, you know, on a
11 regular... this is regular for us Councilmembers. We
12 get this all the time. The parents call us. So I
13 just think I need a breakdown as to when they're
14 getting their seats? How soon? How long? Because
15 Carter cases -- based on this I'm seeing here right
16 now? -- these are how Carter cases are going to go
17 up. And this is unacceptable for New York City kids.

18 Councilmember Gutierrez?

19 COUNCILMEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you Chair. Just
20 to uplift what my colleagues have been emphasizing
21 throughout this hearing about the urgency in 3K
22 expansion. I want to just raise a separate question
23 regarding the stimulus funds, in these instances
24 where we are seeing recently arrived families
25 enrolling in our local schools, enrolling in 3K

2 programs: Can you explain if there is a difference
3 in 3K for recently arrived students? Is there... Is
4 there more direct funding, pupil-to-pupil in those
5 instances for kids in 3K, or in those instances where
6 3K, you know, ends at 2:30, which we know is not...
7 It's not doing what it needs to do for our families.
8 I hear more and more from my families and my
9 educators how they need support for after-school for
10 the babies. And that's something that's a much
11 bigger issue that I hope to dig into at some point.
12 But is there a distinction in pupil-to-pupil spending
13 in those instances for recently arrived families.

14 MS. VADEHRA: So in some of... just to say in
15 some of the other funding streams, there are... which
16 we talked through a bit earlier, in terms of fair
17 student funding, which goes to our K-12 schools,
18 those students receive an additional weight, as
19 students in temporary housing, the asylum seekers do,
20 in terms of how we allocate our academic recovery
21 money for schools. Those students also receive an
22 additional weight as they come in the door to those
23 schools. But I will turn to James or Seritta, the
24 expert, on the 3K question.

2 MR. MORGANO: Yes, so the funding model for 3K
3 and pre-K are distinct from K through 12. So it
4 differs by the setting type of the program. So if
5 it's an elementary public school, or if it's a
6 community-based organization, we do make sure that
7 we're funding those programs to serve the students
8 they have. And we've been in touch with several
9 programs who have reached out and requested --
10 circling back to Councilmember Brewer's question
11 about adding in additional classes -- that in certain
12 areas of the city, we've seen the need to increase
13 services, increased classroom capacity to accommodate
14 families that are part of this group. So we've
15 certainly been very plugged into it and working
16 closely with our colleagues.

17 COUNCILMEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: And just for my
18 clarity, the DOE classifies recently arrived families
19 in temporary housing just under temporary...
20 temporary housing? Is it all just one umbrella
21 category for these families?

22 MS. VADEHRA: So that's a very good question, and
23 there's different categories in different cases,
24 right? So our fair student... so our... We count
25 them as students in temporary housing. They might

2 also show up in other categories as well, right? So
3 for academic recovery money, we provided additional
4 weights for students who are English language
5 learners, newcomers, long-term English language
6 learners, students with interrupted or inconsistent
7 formal education. Those are separate weights in
8 there that... that students also receive funds for,

9 COUNCILMEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: And in the instance
10 where a child meets all of those weights, how does
11 that translate in... in money for that school?

12 MS. VADEHRA: When... when students qualify for
13 multiple weights, it's additive, and so you get an
14 additional weight for each student, as my friends who
15 just participate in the Fair Student Funding Working
16 Group also note.

17 COUNCILMEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Fantastic. I have two
18 more questions.

19 Can you all share with us... So we... The Chair
20 helped coordinate a roundtable with some of the
21 schools with the... from the International High
22 School Network? Is what it's called? I learned so
23 much. Obviously, they're taking in a lot of the
24 families... a lot of the high-school aged families
25 that have just arrived. They brought up a really

2 good point about their... like the ability that they
3 have to spend per student. So if you can just very
4 quickly kind of share what that looks like, as far
5 as... not curriculum, but kind of like the like the
6 gift-card system... or the system that they can
7 utilize per student in the event... in the event of
8 emergencies of that has like a specific name, if you
9 can share what that is?

10 MS. SCOTT: Sure, I can jump in here. So we
11 recently provided schools with \$12 million to support
12 any school communities that are seeing an influx of
13 asylum-seeker students, and then... all seeking
14 students, apologies... and also, with the mid-year
15 adjustment hold harmless, the FSF dollars will flow
16 to those schools to support those students.

17 MS. VADEHRA: And so... so just to add, the...
18 the first of those is flowing to schools with high
19 numbers of incoming asylum seeker students. I think
20 the number is \$2,000 additional students per
21 student... er... \$2,000 per student...

22 COUNCILMEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Per school year?

23 MS. VADEHRA: ...for this year. Yes, for the
24 asylum seekers. That's on top of what they received
25 through the Fair Student Funding formula, which also

2 takes these things into account. So this is just an
3 additional \$2,000, which comes to the \$12 million.
4 They also each get their weight for Fair... through
5 the Fair Student Funding formula, which is how most
6 of the funding flows. The Fair Student Funding
7 formula give schools a lot of flexibility in terms of
8 how they allocate those dollars amongst their
9 students' needs, and those are decisions that a lot
10 of which are made at the school level. But the \$12
11 million, which is specifically for these students, we
12 sent out to schools via a school allocation
13 memorandum, and that has some specific uses in it
14 around ensuring language access and support,
15 providing academic and extracurricular programs and
16 creating supportive classrooms in schools. We can
17 get you the details, but those are sort of the
18 specifics around that \$12 million to support those
19 students in particular.

20 COUNCILMEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: So I just have one
21 more, Chair, a followup.

22 So I'm... I... Thank you for that. I think
23 that was really detailed. But I... So what I'm
24 hearing is, as far as... I'm hearing, it's a little
25 rigid the ways that they can spend the money

2 consistent to the unique needs that their students
3 have. And, you know, understanding good and well
4 that... that this funding can only be utilized with
5 respect to vendors that are already registered with
6 the DOE. But I'm curious to see how you all are
7 looking to evolve that list to making sure that it's
8 current, right? That we're working with vendors that
9 are meeting the need of what those students need.
10 These are folks that are coming in under a severe
11 level of trauma that we are just not accustomed to in
12 other circumstances. So I would love to see the DOE
13 take that on a little bit more... with a little more
14 sense of urgency, because that's what I'm hearing
15 from principals and from folks on the ground.

16 My last question was just related to the money in
17 the report related to the digital devices. I'm
18 really... really curious to find out if there's
19 anything that you can share, because this will be my
20 last comment about kind of where the DOE is, with the
21 amount of devices needed left to distribute to ensure
22 that every student was... was covered. And kind of
23 what the plan is forward. I know that we haven't
24 met... we haven't gotten to everybody, but just

2 curious to see what those numbers are. Thank you
3 Chair.

4 MS. VADEHRA: I don't know if we have the numbers
5 in front of us. I will say we are working quickly.
6 As soon as schools put req... the requests come in
7 through schools for when students need devices, and
8 we are working quickly including in the case of some
9 of the asylum-seeking students to make sure we're
10 then getting those devices out to schools as quickly
11 as possible as they come in. But they do flow
12 through the schools. If there's specific places your
13 hearing challenges, or at a school, let me know and
14 we can definitely try and make sure we are responding
15 quickly. And ditto on the first one by the way.
16 Melissa Ramos on our team who's leading Project Open
17 Arms is doing a lot of work with individual schools
18 around how they're adapting to support these asylum-
19 seeking students, and to the extent there's a school
20 with specific challenges with specific vendors we
21 would definitely want to hear and see if we can be
22 helpful.

23 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. I'd like to
24 acknowledge Councilmember Narcisse.

25 Councilmember Narcisse?

2 COUNCILMEMBER NARCISSE: Thank you Chair. It was
3 difficult for me to be here, but I'm here. Public
4 School, PS... PSAL right?... restarting expansion.
5 And I'm looking at their 47% of an expected \$21
6 million in funding to increase access to sports
7 programming across the city, focusing on schools with
8 greatest need. So I want to know what schools got
9 this money, and what did this look like during the
10 pandemic?

11 MS. SCOTT: So I don't have those numbers in
12 front of me, but I can most certainly get them to
13 your office.

14 COUNCILMEMBER NARCISSE: Okay. You're going to
15 do that?

16 MS. SCOTT: Yes.

17 COUNCILMEMBER NARCISSE: All right! So, um,
18 infrastructure: 7% of an expected \$70 million in
19 funding to implement accessibility improvement
20 infrastructure compliance work. What did that
21 entail?

22 MS. SCOTT: I will also have to get back to you
23 on the details of what it... the funding supported.

24 COUNCILMEMBER NARCISSE: Now, I have a problem
25 with this line here: DOE schools will be expected to

2 return unused stimulus funds to DOE, right? My whole
3 thing is: How are principals and superintendents
4 supposed to support those programs and implement them
5 and... during this pandemic? How they were supposed
6 to do that? And now they're going to have to return
7 the money?

8 MS SCOTT: Um, so just for clarity, your question
9 is about programming that's funded with federal
10 stimulus dollars? Yep. So going back to what I've
11 said today, we acknowledge that we have a huge fiscal
12 cliff in our budget due to this programming that is
13 funded by temporary dollars. And we look forward to
14 working with you all in prioritizing the needs in our
15 budget to ensure that they're funded in the baseline.

16 COUNCILMEMBER NARCISSE: Let's say for argument's
17 sake that those programs are implemented and we're
18 working in some school. So how does DOE plan to
19 sustain this after the Fed money is gone?

20 MS. SCOTT: Um, we are facing some very difficult
21 times economically, and the only thing that we can do
22 is work within the budget that we're given. But we
23 would love to have your advocacy and your support in
24 helping us... in partnering with us to make sure that
25 funding for those programs are in the baseline.

2 COUNCILMEMBER NARCISSE: Alright. All I can say
3 is we got a problem in our hands. And those kids...
4 I was in the school before I got here, and those
5 kids... the eyes are brand open for opportunities.
6 So whatever we do, when we're talking about their
7 underserved area, we have to be real about it. If we
8 want to address the inequities in our system, in our
9 city, in our state, in our country, we have to be
10 real about it and provide the support where the
11 support is needed, and our children is waiting for
12 that help. So I hope we are very serious about this.
13 \$2.2 trillion for Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic
14 Security. We're talking about CARES Act. Did any of
15 this go to DOE? And how much?

16 MS. SCOTT: The cares funding? I think Emma
17 pointed this out in her testimony, but that was \$700
18 million of that came to New York City, but the state
19 actually supplanted that funding. And so it... those
20 dollars did not come directly to us, and for allow us
21 to use it.

22 CHAIRPERSON NARCISSE: All right, Chair, thank
23 you. I'm going to leave it as that. But all I have
24 to say, let's be fair to the city of New York,

2 specially underserved areas and address the
3 inequities in our educational system. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you, Councilmember
5 Narcisse. Councilmember Lee?

6 COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Hello. Thank you so much,
7 Chair. And going back to the social emotional, I had
8 a couple questions. If you could just remind me
9 also: But what is the current ratio for, you know,
10 per student for each, you know, social worker or
11 mental health professional in the schools? Is it...
12 Is it... Is it one social worker for every 250
13 students? Is that wrong? Because I had just heard
14 that, and I wasn't sure if I was correct or incorrect
15 in that.

16 MS. SCOTT: I will have to get back to you on
17 that.

18 COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. And if you could also
19 let me know, in terms of that ratio, if it changed
20 during COVID, or for it's the same as pre-COVID? And
21 I guess the reason why -- just following that same
22 rationale -- the reason why I'm asking that question
23 is because I was just wondering, based on that ratio,
24 where we're at in terms of filling the slots? I've
25 got to be true, because I'm the Chair of the Mental

2 Health, Disabilities, and Addiction Committee. So
3 this is like an area of interest for me particular...
4 in particular, because this is such a huge issue
5 we're seeing in our students. And so I just wanted
6 to see what percentage we're at roughly, in terms of
7 filling those slots in the schools right now... in
8 the public schools?

9 MS VADEHRA: We can definitely get back to you
10 with that number. I will say, just to get back to
11 the theme of this hearing: It is another place where
12 we've put \$60-something million dollars in stimulus
13 funds into social work. And so another place where
14 we're facing a cliff in the years ahead, but we'll
15 get back to you with the ratio numbers.

16 COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yeah, and the \$60 million in
17 stimulus funding: How much of that... So I guess
18 then the question is: How much have the total budget
19 was non-stimulus funding, number one? And then how
20 do we work towards baselining? Because I know that
21 in the past... because I come from the nonprofit
22 sector, and whenever there were issues that came up,
23 it would start off as stimulus and then we would work
24 towards baselining. And so I'm just curious to hear

2 your thoughts, or suggestions, or any ideas or ways
3 that we can push together to help baseline that.

4 MS. SCOTT: Sure. So we have the federal
5 stimulus... temporary stimulus dollars. So we
6 definitely want to again, keep working with you to
7 make sure that those priorities are reflected in the
8 budget. I feel like I would be remiss with Mark
9 Trager if I don't say that. Previously, there were
10 baseline CTL dollars for social workers in schools.
11 So there is some level of baseline funding that is
12 sustainable in a budget, and it is us working
13 together on what's in the budget that's being
14 supported by federal stimulus dollars. So we'd love
15 to hear what you have, and we can definitely connect
16 on it.

17 COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yeah, because it... just my
18 thought processes, I'd love to overestimate and say,
19 "Okay, if every school in the city had the proper
20 proportion of mental health professionals to
21 students, what is that dollar number? And then how
22 do we work towards getting that? Okay, they don't."
23 So if we can get that number, that'd be great to
24 start off, and then work towards that.

2 And just on the D75 front: One thing I will say
3 is that I know this doesn't necessarily have to do
4 with dollars, but you know, just talking about how
5 the transportation really does impact a lot of the
6 parents and the families, because I actually am
7 taking a D75 intern... high school intern, and they
8 were supposed to start this week and they haven't
9 been able to come in yet because the transportation
10 is an issue. And you know, it's really impacting
11 their ability to... to work... to intern, their
12 experiences. And I just wanted to emphasize that one
13 point, which has nothing to do with the budget
14 really. Well, it has something to do with it, but
15 yeah, yeah. (background voices) Oh, yes. Oh, yeah,
16 that's on my calendar. That's what my schedule too.
17 Thank you so much.

18 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: ...back I was answering.
19 Thank you Councilmember Narcisse and Councilmember
20 Lee. Thank you so much for your questions.

21 We're going to circle right back to students with
22 disabilities. I know earlier, we no longer provide
23 the Special Education Recovery Services at the
24 schools. Instead, DOE is expanding a popular seed
25 program. So in late October, you allocated funds

2 soon to offer compensatory makeup service for
3 students with disabilities. DOE allocated more than
4 \$157 million to schools to offer Special Education
5 Recovery Services. However, this year, the DOE only
6 allocated \$12.4 million to schools to offer this
7 program. Students with disability have the legal
8 right to have compensated services when they don't
9 get the instruction services they need. So, given
10 that only 40% of students with disabilities received
11 any Educational Recovery Services last year, what's
12 the significant unmet students with disabilities
13 during the pandemic? Why is it only \$12.4 million
14 that was allocated this year? And how will schools
15 ensure that students with disabilities receive the
16 makeup services they need, and have the right to
17 receive?

18 MS. FOTI: Chair we're happy to send you a
19 breakdown, because those numbers are very different
20 than what I have in front of me, and that is very...
21 not my understanding.

22 What we what we have allocated is \$104 million
23 this year for Special Education Recovery Services. A
24 portion of that is for... exactly for compensatory
25 services. And the rest of it is for additional

2 special education services in the form... Yes, the
3 seed expansion is one part of that. We're doing
4 Saturday academies... And just for the record Chair,
5 I need to correct something: In our Seed Program, it
6 is occupational therapy and physical therapy. Our
7 Saturday Academy will also have speech. So earlier I
8 said speech, and I apologize, and I want to correct
9 that for the record. Our Saturday academies will
10 also be providing additional instructional services
11 and supports for students who need them. We're also
12 doing teacher training, as well as support for our
13 psychologists. I mentioned earlier, we're expanding
14 our 21-Plus program eligibility. We're doing work
15 with our special education teacher services, support
16 services, and we're doing continued work on our
17 Beyond Access Series for families. So that number
18 that I have is \$104 million and I'm happy to send
19 you... and we're happy to follow up with a breakdown.

20 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Well, thank you. So how
21 does... parents are informed on these programs? How
22 are they notified? Students that have been need
23 language access, how is that also provided for them?

24 MS. FOTI: Yeah, earlier I also... and I
25 appreciate the opportunity to follow up. I mentioned

2 a letter that is going to go out for families, that
3 is going to go out in the next week or so, and that
4 is going to be translated into languages, all of the
5 DOE's supported languages. And that's going to
6 notify parents directly of the availability of these
7 services.

8 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Lastly, I know my colleagues
9 will retire. They didn't want to work. How do
10 you... How did we fill in that gap when we couldn't
11 find teachers to staff these programs?

12 MS. FOTI: Yes, certainly, I'll let my colleagues
13 fill in on anything on teacher recruitment as well.
14 But I can tell you from the special education
15 perspective, from our related service providers, we
16 have actively been hiring both school-aged and
17 preschool additional providers. And that's why we're
18 sticking with... that provide the additional
19 provision of services via the compensatory services,
20 and the Saturday Academies. All of this remains a
21 big lift, but it is what our kids deserve, and it's
22 what our kids... we're going to continue to do and
23 push for, for our children.

24 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: So with the launching of the
25 Saturday programs across the city, to make up for

2 related services, right? When will those sites be up
3 and running? How will the families find out about
4 them? Will transportation be available? And how
5 many children do you... Do you anticipate that
6 will... that will serve?

7 MS. FOTI: We are going to have 10 sites up and
8 running by December 10th. In terms of attendance, I
9 will provide you regular updates. That... that
10 notice to families is... I'm happy to provide
11 regular updates. That notice to families is going to
12 be going out in the next week or so. So we will
13 definitely be actively engaging our family
14 communities, getting back who's... taking into
15 account who is interested, and then planning for
16 staffing based on those responses from families. But
17 it's just like our the provision of our services last
18 year. It's going to be something that we track and
19 monitor throughout and get as many families as we can
20 there.

21 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: How about in terms of
22 transportation, which is very spotty for our New York
23 City kids? How does that... How do you plan on
24 addressing that?

2 MS. FOTI: It's going to be very similar to the
3 strategy that was used last year. So it'll be
4 reimbursable transportation. And I know that we're
5 going to talk a lot more about that next week.

6 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And in this in this COVID-19
7 federal funding, can you give me a breakdown on how
8 you funded our EML students during this pandemic with
9 the federal dollars?

10 MS. FOTI: Chair, I apologize. I do not have
11 those figures on me. I don't know if my colleagues
12 do, but I'm sure... no? They will follow up with
13 you.

14 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: One question is: How do
15 you... OMB is always a scary agency, but...
16 [laughter] I worked in city government, I know
17 people are scared of OMB. But how do you... How does
18 OMB play a role in monitoring this stimulus spending?
19 How do you relate to OMB, et cetera, et cetera?
20 Because even though they are scary agency, they are,
21 you know, supposed to be paying attention to these
22 issues.

23 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Serrita came from that scary
24 agency.

25 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: I know.

2 MS. SCOTT: It is... it is just as scary as
3 people think it is. So no... Thank you for the
4 question.

5 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: I used to be scared of
6 them too, but no longer.

7 MS. SCOTT: So we regularly check in with OMB in
8 terms of the federal stimulus dollars, and they
9 basically oversee the entire... you know, all of DOE
10 spending, including federal stimulus dollars.

11 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: But you submit weekly
12 reports? Monthly reports? And what's in those
13 reports? How detailed do you get?

14 MS. SCOTT: Sure. It's not... Well, the check-
15 ins that we have are not reports. It's just sort of
16 finance teams talking to one another about the
17 different categories and spending within those
18 categories. As you know, the plans get updated
19 during the cycle, and those... we have close
20 conversations with them about that as well.

21 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Because I think there is a
22 Local Law 76 that requires you to do that. So mostly
23 in terms of the pandemic money, which is I think what
24 we're talking about, expiring in fiscal year 2025 or,

2 I guess it will be FY 26. But is... does that adhere
3 to?

4 MS. SCOTT: Um, yes. And I think you're
5 referring to just public reporting or SED
6 requirements that we have in terms of the stimulus
7 funding. So what we do is in order to be in
8 compliance, we update... we send updates every six
9 months as it pertains to the school safety plan. And
10 as well as you know, sending up claims. I think the
11 last couple of times we sent up any information to
12 the state was in March and in June.

13 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Okay. And those are the
14 detailed reports that comply with the law is what
15 you're saying.

16 MS. SCOTT: Correct.

17 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. In the shelter
18 base... I want to go back a little bit for my
19 students in alternative housing. In the 100 DOE base
20 coordinators, we understand that you already hired
21 some of them now. We gave the process we talked
22 about. In addition to shelter-based coordinators,
23 and the DOE using \$33 million in the ARP for funding
24 of additional initiatives, are the any of these

2 initiatives up and running? Which ones? And can you
3 tell us the status?

4 MS. ABUELO[SP?]: Yes. I'm happy to add in terms
5 of where we are with initiative. So some of them
6 include mentoring support, so ensuring that we our
7 connecting our students... our students in shelter
8 with mentors. Also, there's funding for work that we
9 already have up and running, which is specifically
10 connecting to looking at chronic absenteeism within
11 this population, because we noticed that a lot of our
12 students who are shelter babies are also not coming
13 to school as regularly as they... as they should. So
14 that's another example of a program that we have up
15 and running. In the borough of Brooklyn, we already
16 have a lot of our enrichment academic programs that
17 are happening both after schools and Saturday.

18 So for many of these spaces, some have initiated
19 and for some of them, we're continuing to develop
20 programs that are informed by the feedback that we're
21 getting from principals and from superintendents, so
22 that every district and every school support really
23 is aligned to the needs that we see, right?, because
24 while there's commonality amongst some of the
25 academic programs and supports that are needed across

2 the board, they're not unique to each borough or to
3 each school.

4 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. And also, same
5 question for our foster care students: What type of
6 initiatives you have up and running for them? And
7 what kind of outreach are you doing? And to support
8 them while they go through this journey... this
9 educational journey in our system.

10 MS. ABUELO[SP?]: Thank you for asking that. And
11 as I shared earlier, we have staffed eight out of the
12 nine, and we're looking to do a similar approach.
13 But a little different. As you know well about this
14 population, the foster care numbers for DOE are much
15 more spread out and smaller. So in some instances,
16 we may only have one or two foster care students in
17 one school community. So it's really looking at a
18 more borough or district approach. Because we know
19 in some instances, in one school, there might only be
20 one child, but part of the... the work there is
21 really leveraging that person who's the connector,
22 the coordinator who's the connector now between the
23 agency, the school, and the family that didn't exist,
24 to ensure that we are connecting with that child, and
25 that we're also are working with them to ensure that

2 within their academic plan, they know and have access
3 to the support that already exists on the ground. So
4 ensuring that we're demystifying who they are,
5 knowing individually what the needs of the students
6 are, and that the supports get to that right student
7 at the right time. But definitely an area that we
8 continue to build and be informed by... by principals
9 and by school communities and what they share with
10 our team.

11 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. And you are also
12 working in collaboration with the agencies that...
13 that monitors and handles these children?

14 MS. ABUELO[SP?]: Absolutely. And, I think that
15 has been one of the game-changing factors of being
16 able to hire these coordinators in this office,
17 because now instead of them like trying to figure
18 out, "who do I call?" Now they have names, they have
19 phone numbers, and they have people that they know
20 that are there, dedicated to support those students.
21 So it's a lot more easier to just look at supports
22 across the agency and to eliminate barriers to ensure
23 that they're getting to our kids.

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And that's an area that's
3 near and dear to my heart, along with Councilmember
4 Brewer.

5 MS. ABUELO[SP?]: I understand, and I appreciate
6 it, and I think is our responsibility to ensure that
7 our vulnerable students have the supports that they
8 need, especially in a post-pandemic era, when we know
9 that our babies have been affected.

10 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Absolutely. Thank you.

11 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: I have a quick question.
12 And you may not know this, but of the young people
13 coming to the schools who are asylum seekers, do you
14 know how many are unaccompanied minors? Is that
15 something that you track? Because obviously I guess,
16 in my world have been had foster care as the Chair
17 does, there's unaccompanied minors, then there's the
18 foster care, but you may not be in foster care, but
19 you are sort of in foster care, because you're
20 unaccompanied. So do you have any sense of what that
21 category looks like?

22 MS. ABUELO[SP?]: I don't have any... I don't
23 have a full sense of what it looks like for that
24 specific. I know that the way that we're tracking
25 the new newly-arrived student is by looking at the

2 students who were enrolled since July, and that's
3 approximately about 8000 of them. And we see the
4 greatest influx in the borough of Queens and the
5 borough of the Bronx. But that's a number that I'll
6 be happy to look further to figure it out if there's
7 particular ways that working with our partners from
8 DHS and others, he can actually, like, hone in on
9 what you're flagging, because...

10 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: There are quite a few of
11 them, only because I'm getting called for legal
12 assistance for three. So there are quite a few. I
13 don't know if they're being tracked, but FYI, and...

14 MS. ABUELO[SP?]: I'll be happy to further
15 connect with you on your staff so that we can ensure
16 that they have the support that they need.

17 COUNCILMEMBER JOSEPH: That was going to be one
18 of my questions. We did get that a lot as well on
19 unaccompanied minors coming into our system. So we
20 got to make sure that we track them down and provide
21 the support that they need. I know it's usually the
22 office of migration who supports those types of
23 students.

24 MS. ABUELO[SP?]: Absolutely.

2 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: All right. I thank you for
3 your testimony. Knowing that you will hear from me
4 always, email, calls, to make sure that I'm
5 advocating for my students, my New York City
6 students, all of them.

7 Thank you so much for your testimony.

8 MS. VADEHRA: Thank you for your leadership on
9 advocating for the... in terms of advocating for
10 those students, and you can't always tell, but we do
11 appreciate your calls and emails, and they're often
12 good nudges for us. So thank you seriously.

13 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Calling the next panel,
14 Glenys Rivera (I hope I'm saying your name right),
15 Sarita Subramanian, and Randi Levine.

16 Good afternoon. Thank you. Thank you. Glenys?
17 Am I saying your name right. Glenys Rivera? Okay.
18 You may start.

19 MS. RIVERA: Thank you. Good afternoon,
20 education committee Chairwoman Rita Joseph and
21 distinguished members of the committee. I am Glennis
22 Rivera, second vice president of local 372, Board of
23 Education employee District Council 37 AFSCME, on
24 behalf of approximately 24,000 members, Local 372
25 represents under the leadership of President Shaun D.

2 Francois I, thank you for this opportunity to testify
3 in regards to the Department of Education's DOE
4 utilization of COVID-19 relief funds.

5 School districts in New York State received a
6 total of \$14 billion from the Coronavirus Aid Relief
7 and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The Coronavirus
8 Response Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act
9 (CRRSA), and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA),
10 although New York City received \$7.66 billion in
11 education funding, with \$6.9 billion coming in the
12 second and third rounds of funding.

13 According to the comptroller, Brad Lander, the
14 DOE had \$4.4 billion remaining in unspent COVID-19
15 stimulus, and that must be spent by fiscal year 2025.
16 As of today, thousands of local 372 staff who perform
17 essential support services for students and
18 communities throughout the pandemic have received no
19 compensation from the COVID-19 relief funds to
20 compensate them with retroactive hazard pay. These
21 men and women answered the call at personal risk of
22 exposure to COVID-19 and its subsequent strains.
23 Because of their selflessness and dedication to the
24 children and communities they serve, and now they are
25 forgotten.

2 When the school system was closed at the height
3 of the pandemic, many of the 19 school lunch workers
4 and 2600 school crossing guards remained on the job.
5 School crossing guards protected pedestrians
6 throughout the city, and the school lunch workers fed
7 over a million meals to students and community
8 members in need. It is an understatement to say
9 these workers went above and beyond their regular job
10 duties and put their health on the line to help this
11 great city. Once the schools reopen midway through
12 the pandemic, all of Local 372 members came willing
13 to work to contribute to the one ground efforts to
14 restore new normalcy throughout the public schools.

15 School aides engage students throughout the day,
16 greeting the children in the morning engaging in
17 numerous activities to support the educational
18 development, and helping them to get to their buses
19 at the end of the day. Our community titles,
20 including parent coordinator, school neighborhood
21 workers, and paraprofessionals resumed working with
22 parents to navigate the DOE and work with the
23 Department of Homeless Services to ensure that
24 children arrive at the school safely.

2 After months and months of homeschooling, and
3 adjust to hybrid schedules and Substance Abuse
4 Prevention and Intervention Specialists (SAPIS)
5 worked with the students to address compounding
6 issues of a new mental health crisis that isolation
7 and insecurity placed on the students and family.

8 Many Local 372 members came to work whether sick,
9 traumatized, or having lost a loved one. Hazard pay
10 won't restore anything, but these workers deserve
11 appropriate compensation and acknowledgement of their
12 service and sacrifice to our students and
13 communities.

14 In addition to the lack of hazard pay, I want to
15 highlight that our students are facing a more
16 significant mental health crisis than ever caused by
17 COVID-19 pandemic and shutdowns. It is critical to
18 monitor children's mental health, promote and coping
19 resilience skills, and expand access to services to
20 support their overall mental health. The SAPIS
21 program has been and continues to be the best
22 equipped to shoulder this responsibility. The DOE
23 should therefore allocate COVID-19 relief resources
24 to increase the availability of SAPIS in our public
25 schools. Since 1971, SAPIS has provided essential

2 emotional strategies and services to help youth
3 remain learning ready. SAPIS are already trained and
4 ready to respond to COVID-19 mental health crisis and
5 have always been proactive in providing students and
6 their families with the tools to navigate myriad
7 societal, personal, and peer pressure that derail
8 healthy academic, social and individual development.
9 SAPIS are also responsible for monitoring behavior
10 and offering resources and services to support when
11 they struggle to improve. SAPIS are more versatile
12 and cost effective than social workers, who must be
13 trained to provide the same broad range of one-on-one
14 and group based services and promoting. It is
15 estimated that SAPIS can directly reach approximately
16 500 at-risk students.

17 More than ever, in this current environment of
18 violence on the streets and in schools, New York City
19 cannot afford to neglect this important work as the
20 number of SAPIS positions. A concerted effort must
21 be made to restore SAPIS numbers to their peak
22 unemployment levels. You have the power and the
23 authority to ensure our children's needs are met so
24 that they can fully reach their potential. Without
25 SAPIS, students in crisis are robbed of opportunities

2 and skills to adapt to a problem. The city must do
3 more, which is why the DOE should invest COVID-19
4 relief resources into SAPIS.

5 Again, thank you for the opportunity to appear on
6 behalf of Local 372, Board of Education, and its
7 membership to discuss the importance of both hazard
8 pay for our essential workers and investing in SAPIS
9 positions as they relate to unspent COVID-19
10 resources available to the DOE.

11 At this time. I welcome any questions.

12 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Sarita?

13 MS. SUBRAMANIAN: Good afternoon, Chair Joseph
14 and Councilmember Brewer. My name is Sarita
15 Subramanian, and I'm the Assistant Director for
16 Education at the New York City Independent Budget
17 Office. Thank you for the opportunity to testify at
18 this oversight hearing. In my testimony today I will
19 provide an update on how much federal COVID aid the
20 DOE has spent in 2021 and 2022 fiscal years, and what
21 funds remain for 2023 through 2025.

22 I will also provide details on IBO's estimate of
23 how much funding the city may require to continue
24 programs that have been paid with the COVID relief
25 that are expected to remain past the expiration of

2 funds. Lastly, I will discuss the need for increased
3 transparency around the budgeting of the federal
4 COVID aid.

5 Total federal COVID relief currently allocated to
6 DOE is almost \$7.7 billion. The majority -- almost
7 \$7 billion -- is aid that is restricted specifically
8 for educational uses from CRRSA and ARPA. In
9 addition, the city has allocated \$607 million to the
10 DOE from its \$5.9 billion in unrestricted State and
11 Local Fiscal Relief Funds, also from ARPA... ARPA
12 SLFRF. Finally, ARPA also authorized spending to
13 enhance remote technology... learning technology
14 through the emergency connectivity fund, for which
15 DOE received \$125 million in 2022.

16 A total of \$3.5 billion was spent on education
17 across all sources of federal relief and 2021 and
18 2022. As reported in IBO's federal COVID relief
19 spending dashboard. The DOE spent about \$2.9 billion
20 from restricted education aid (85% of funds spent)
21 \$400 million from ARPA SLFRF, and \$125 million in ECF
22 funding. Overall, the city has spent 68% of its
23 total CRRSA allocation and 21 and 22, which under
24 federal rules must be used by September 2023, and
25 about 31% of its total ARPA education funds which are

2 available for an additional year. The largest
3 programmatic use of federal education aid (\$724
4 million) has been to cover the entire budget for the
5 New York City School Support Services, the nonprofit
6 that manages the hiring of custodial support staff in
7 schools. Another \$388 million has been used to fund
8 the expansion of the city's 3K program to all 32
9 districts across the city, although not yet
10 universal. The city has also spent \$1.1 billion in
11 two large budget codes, ARPA for schools, and CRRSA
12 for schools. This spending covers many different
13 programs, but because all the spending comes out of
14 these broad codes, there's currently no way to
15 identify which programs are funded, an issue I will
16 address in a moment.

17 Notably, ARPA specifies that at least 20% of
18 restricted education funds (a total of \$960 million)
19 must be spent to address learning loss through the
20 implementation of evidence-based interventions such
21 as after school or summer programming. ARPA's
22 learning loss spending requirement also directs
23 districts to ensure that these interventions serve
24 students' academic, social and emotional needs, and
25 address the disproportionate impact of the pandemic

2 on student subgroups, such as students experiencing
3 homelessness. Through the end of fiscal year 22,
4 \$526 million has been identified as spending for
5 learning loss, including funds to pay for Academic
6 recovery, additional school-based social workers and
7 other mental health staff, Summer Rising, special
8 education services, and early literacy support.

9 As IBO testified last week, as of the end of
10 fiscal year 22, DOE had claimed \$2.9 billion of its
11 \$6.9 billion allocation from education-restricted
12 funding sources. Of the unspent funds restricted for
13 education use, \$3.7 billion has been budgeted for 23
14 through 25, as of the adopted 23 budget, leaving
15 about \$280 million in unbudgeted funds that must be
16 used by DOE. The city released the November update
17 of its financial plan yesterday afternoon. However,
18 this testimony does not yet reflect those revisions,
19 as details of the update are not yet available. As
20 of this week, \$1.6 billion has already been spent in
21 23.

22 The DOE has allocated over \$800 million in
23 federal COVID aid from 2021 through 2024 to restore
24 planned reductions in school budgets, to fully fund
25 schools based on the city's fair student funding

2 allocations, and to maintain school budgets despite
3 enrollment declines. The latter accounts for \$400
4 million, \$200 million of which was just announced
5 last week for this school year. Please note that the
6 \$200 million reallocation has not yet been reflected
7 in the November plan.

8 As of the adopted budget, IBO estimated \$1.1
9 billion could be required in 2026, and each year
10 thereafter to fund programs that are intended to
11 continue past the expiration of relief funds. Of the
12 \$1.1 billion, \$393 million was projected for the
13 continued 3K expansion to universal access. The
14 administration has indicated it may not continue this
15 expansion as planned, and has reduced the 3K budget
16 in its recently released November plan. We do not
17 yet have the full plan details to determine how the
18 federal relief was impacted.

19 Excluding 3K, based on prior plans, about \$800
20 million would be required annually for Summer Rising,
21 expanding preschool special education programs,
22 providing additional social workers and other mental
23 health staff, expanding career pathways and
24 opportunities for apprenticeships for high schoolers,

2 and maintaining community schools, among many other
3 programs.

4 I would like to end with a recommendation for
5 increased transparency around the budgeting and
6 spending of these federal stimulus funds,
7 specifically for DOE to use discreet budget codes for
8 more if not all of the initiatives funded through
9 these federal relief programs. Having dedicated
10 stimulus budget codes has been helpful to closely
11 track the COVID aid. Several initiatives already
12 have their own budget codes making it easy to analyze
13 spending. For example 3K expansion, special
14 education pre-K funding, funding for district 75
15 programs, and New York City schools support services
16 all have their own dedicated budget codes, and often
17 one per revenue source, ARPA versus CRRSA. However,
18 other budget codes contain many initiatives under
19 generic titles that make tracking programmatic
20 spending impossible, including actual expenditures
21 for 21 and 22, and budgeted amounts for 23 through
22 25, \$2.4 billion has been allocated for either ARPA
23 for schools or CRRSA for schools. This is a large
24 amount: About 34% of total education, federal COVID
25 relief aid, and lacking a breakdown of those funds

2 within the contours of the city budget makes it
3 impossible to track what initiatives receive funding.

4 Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I'm
5 happy to answer any questions. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you.

7 MS. LEVINE: Good afternoon, and thank you for
8 holding this hearing. Thank you for the opportunity
9 to testify. My name is Randi Levine. I'm Policy
10 Director of Advocates for Children of New York. Over
11 the course of the pandemic Advocates for Children
12 heard from hundreds of families whose students were
13 not getting the educational support they needed. We
14 heard from families whose children had to wait months
15 for an iPad, who did not have sufficient connectivity
16 for their iPads to work, or didn't have a quiet space
17 for remote learning, whose assignments were provided
18 only in English, or whose special education services
19 simply didn't translate over a screen. These groups
20 of students were often overlooked and underserved
21 before the pandemic, and the inequities have only
22 grown worse. Following this unprecedented disruption
23 to public education. We are grateful that the DOE
24 received more than \$7 billion in federal COVID-19

2 relief funding. Every dollar is needed and it's
3 important to ensure every dollar is used wisely.

4 While the DOE is investing in some very important
5 initiatives, we are worried about delays and
6 spending. The clock is ticking with limited time for
7 the DOE to use this funding, and with students
8 waiting for the support they need. To give just a
9 few examples, the DOE committed to using ARPA funding
10 to hire 75 shelter-based community coordinators, and
11 the Council negotiated city funding for an additional
12 25 coordinators to help students in shelter get to
13 school every day and get needed educational support.
14 But two months into the school year and with an
15 influx of students entering shelters, only 18 of the
16 100 coordinators have started working, and that
17 happened just this week.

18 The DOE committed to preschool special education
19 enhancement contracts with a goal of helping
20 preschool special education programs run by CBOs to
21 recruit and retain teachers, and to add 800 seats to
22 address the shortage of preschool special education
23 classes that has led to children with autism and
24 other significant disabilities sitting at home in
25 violation of their legal rights. While 130 sites

2 applied for the contract enhancement last year with
3 an anticipated start date of July 2022, no contracts
4 have yet been signed. And also to answer a question
5 that you asked the DOE earlier: The DOE has hired
6 only four preschool inclusion specialists for the
7 entire city. The DOE has a legal obligation to
8 provide students with disabilities with compensatory
9 services to make up for what they missed and address
10 their lack of meaningful progress during COVID-19.
11 However, last year, as publicly reported a maximum of
12 only 40% of school-age students with IEPs at district
13 schools received any Special Education Recovery
14 Services, and many students who ultimately received
15 services went most of the year without them and
16 received only very limited services. While the DOE
17 allocated \$157 million to schools last year to
18 provide recovery services, the DOE allocated only \$12
19 million to schools this year to provide compensatory
20 services. That's the specific amount in the school
21 allocation memo that went out to schools specifically
22 for compensatory services. And the school allocation
23 memo didn't go to schools until late October.

24 So we are very concerned that students have not
25 been receiving the makeup services that they need and

2 have a right to receive, that there has not yet been
3 direct communication to families about the
4 availability of these services, and that there's no
5 plan for transportation for services taking place
6 outside of the regular school day.

7 There's more information in our written testimony
8 about some of the concerns we have, including around
9 the need for increased transparency, as my colleague
10 from the IBO just noted.

11 I want to end though by noting that it is
12 critical to focus on the sustainability of the
13 important initiatives and supports that are being
14 launched by the DOE that will continue to be needed
15 when the COVID-19 relief funding expires. The DOE is
16 investing COVID-19 relief funding in the expansion of
17 3K, in hundreds of social workers, psychologists and
18 nurses, restorative practices, supports for students
19 who are homeless, preschool special education
20 programs and supports, the expansion of community
21 schools, literacy initiatives, bilingual programs,
22 career pathways programs, and other initiatives that
23 will be needed in the long term. It is important for
24 city, state, and federal elected officials to begin
25 figuring out a plan now to sustain long-overdue

2 initiatives that are critical to meeting the needs of
3 students.

4 Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I'm
5 happy to answer any questions you may have.

6 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you so much. This is
7 very detailed. And as you recall those are the same
8 questions along the lines that I asked around pre
9 special education 4410, shelter based coordinators...
10 These are the questions I was asking. A lot of data
11 has to come back, and they need to start figuring it
12 out before 2025. Thank you so much for your
13 testimonies.

14 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: I've listened to the...
15 the wonderful testimony and relied on the three of
16 you, whether it's the unions, or advocates, or IBO
17 over the last few months. I can't thank you enough.
18 I guess my question is: Do you see them spending
19 this money and who's doing the oversight of it?
20 Because it does seem to me that we don't... even if
21 we get some information, it's very hard to get the
22 granular, so maybe the... the information that's
23 supposed to come... these are the laws will help.
24 But do you have some sense of who's doing the
25 oversight? Who's doing any kind of evaluation of any

2 of these programs that are working with the federal
3 money? Does anybody have any sense of that? Randi
4 always knows everything.

5 MS. SUBRAMANIAN: Well, we certainly do track the
6 spending, as I mentioned, on our dashboard. We also
7 have been trying to basically tie the initial plans
8 as announced back in 2021 with what we see in the
9 budget, and it... there isn't a direct crosswalk
10 right now. So that... that was what I was referring
11 to in terms of the programmatic initiatives. Some we
12 are able to track, like I mentioned, but some we have
13 to rely on asking DOE for that specific information.
14 And so that's, you know, it would be great to have
15 that information publicly available.

16 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Because the Chair asked so
17 articulately about the 800 students who are home and
18 they... they said some percentage -- I can't remember
19 100-and-something -- were getting services. But
20 that's the kind of thing that... Who's paying
21 attention to that? Because that's a huge number of
22 young people who are not getting services. That's
23 the kind of question, I guess, I'm trying to ask.

24 MS. LEVINE: Yeah, that's a great question.
25 Advocates for Children is certainly doing our best to

2 monitor the rollout of the important initiatives that
3 are very much needed for the students we serve. I'll
4 say quickly, as far as the spending itself, how much
5 funding is actually going out the door? While we're
6 monitoring the programmatic components of it, we're
7 really reliant on the DOE, the controller's office,
8 the IBO, and the City Council to get that
9 information. And so we're grateful that you're
10 holding this hearing today, and think that we need to
11 keep harping on that.

12 As far as the specific question with respect to
13 preschoolers with disabilities, we are certainly
14 asking the Department of Education a lot of
15 questions, and advocating and advocating to ensure
16 that they open the classes they need this year, just
17 to flag for both of you, since I know you've been
18 following this issue closely. The number of seats
19 needed is going to increase over the course of the
20 year, because when children start 3K, or pre-K, or
21 childcare, often, that's the first time that they're
22 identified as needing an evaluation. And then it
23 takes time to get the evaluation, and then to get the
24 IEP meeting, and the recommendation. So for that
25 reason, we see additional students needing the class

2 placement over the course of the year. And then also
3 there are children who transition from early
4 intervention for zero to three-year-olds with
5 developmental delays and disabilities to preschool
6 special education in January. And so our eye is
7 really looking at this point in January and the
8 spring, because we do not want to end up in the same
9 situation where there are 800 children with
10 disabilities waiting for seats in their legally-
11 mandated classes. We want to ensure that there are
12 zero children waiting.

13 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. I agree that
15 that's what we're looking at. We'll keep our eyes on
16 the money. We'll keep on eyes... eyes on the
17 students... how many students, and I told them if
18 they're looking to rollback on Carter cases, this
19 sure isn't the way to go about it. So thank you so
20 much for your testimony. IBO, thank you so much as
21 well. Local 372... Right. Thank you.

22 Now we're moving to witnesses on the Zoom.

23 COUNSEL: Our next panel will be Lara Lai, New
24 York City Comptroller's office. Andrea Ortiz, New
25 York Immigration Coalition, Smitha Varghese, Alliance

2 for Quality Education, and Antonia Ferraro
3 Martinelli. And we'll start with Lara Lai.

4 MS. LAI: Good afternoon Chair Joseph and members
5 of the city Council Education Committee. My name is
6 Lara Lai, and I am the Senior Policy Analyst and
7 Strategic Organizer for Education in the New York
8 City Comptroller's Office. Thank you for the
9 opportunity to testify before you today on behalf of
10 New York City Comptroller, Brad Lander. I want to
11 note that I have a lot of information to share. So
12 if I run short on time, please refer to our written
13 testimony for more details.

14 Three months ago, the comptroller testified
15 before this committee supporting resolution 283-2022.
16 Today I would like to share the comptroller office's
17 analysis of the latest available stimulus
18 information. As of the close of fiscal year 22, DOE
19 had spent a total of \$2.97 billion out of the \$7
20 billion in dedicated education federal stimulus funds
21 allocated, \$265 million in fiscal year 21, \$2.71
22 billion in fiscal year 22. DOE had budgeted to spend
23 \$3.018 billion in fiscal year 22, meaning that there
24 were approximately \$310 million in unspent fiscal

2 year 22 funds. This left a total of \$3.99 billion to
3 spend in fiscal years 23, 24, and 25.

4 As of the June adopted plan, the city had
5 budgeted \$1.8 billion in 23, \$1.4 billion in fiscal
6 year 24, and \$530 million in fiscal year 25.

7 Yesterday as part of the November modification,
8 the city adjusted their plan for spending these grant
9 funds by shifting \$284 million from fiscal year 25 to
10 24, swapping out those funds for city dollars to fund
11 more of 3K in fiscal year 24. This shift, in
12 combination with rolling back the de Blasio
13 administration's commitment to universal 3K (what the
14 Adams administration calls 3K right-sizing) means
15 that the city's 3K program is funded at a lower
16 level, with less of a drop-off in fiscal year 26.

17 As discussed earlier in this hearing, the city
18 did not roll over the \$310 million in unspent funds
19 from fiscal year 22 As part of this mod, nor did they
20 otherwise adjust the out year amounts. Therefore the
21 budget for the stimulus funds as of yesterday is now
22 \$1.8 billion in fiscal year 23, \$1.7 billion in 24,
23 \$246 million in fiscal year 25. Of the \$1.8 billion
24 budgeted for fiscal year 23, the city has spending
25 commitments of \$836 million, leaving \$964 million

2 uncommitted. The \$200 million to hold individual
3 schools harmless will reportedly come out of fiscal
4 year 24 funding pulled forward. However, the city
5 did not make that adjustment in the November
6 modification either.

7 Unfortunately beyond total spending, the
8 comptroller's office cannot discern how stimulus
9 funding is spent on specific initiatives by DOE on an
10 ongoing basis, given (A) the small number of units of
11 appropriation and budget codes utilized by DOE
12 highlighted also by IBO, the lack of correlation
13 between those codes and either individual school
14 allocation memorandum, and/or stimulus-funded
15 programmatic initiatives outlined by DOE and (C) the
16 fact that DOE has not provided a detailed accounting
17 of spending thus far. I have some examples based on
18 the amounts that you can see that have been allocated
19 to schools and specific SAMs, and you can refer to
20 our testimony... our written testimony for that.

21 The comptroller urges a more transparent
22 accounting from DOE to provide updates on stimulus
23 spending on the priorities laid out by the
24 administration. This funding represents a one-time
25 opportunity for investment in our schools, and we

2 must ensure these funds are spent equitably, timely,
3 and effectively.

4 With regard to effectiveness and uplifting
5 Councilmember Louis's concerns, the comptroller's
6 office reiterates its previous requests that DOE
7 provide the outcomes and metrics by which stimulus
8 funded programs are being measured. It is important
9 that beyond monitoring spending, we look at whether
10 these programs are effective in achieving the
11 outcomes for which they are intended, are students
12 with disabilities progressing beyond any pandemic
13 related losses they may have experienced? How many
14 mental health workers and professionals have been
15 hired? While information is critical not only for
16 looking backward, it is also critical for looking
17 forward, as we evaluate whether or not to continue
18 programs such as Summer Rising, new mental health
19 initiatives, the new dyslexia programs, and other
20 initiatives after the stimulus funding expires.

21 Finally, as Advocates for Children noted in their
22 testimony, in light of the sunseting of stimulus
23 funding in fiscal year 25, and given sizeable out-
24 year budget gaps even before the possibility of an
25 economic downturn, new state legislation mandating

2 class-size reductions, obligations to better meet the
3 needs of students with IEPs, and the desire to
4 continue valuable programs that have been launched or
5 expanded with stimulus funds, it is important for the
6 city to begin a longer term conversation about how to
7 fund and meet our educational goals. If we hope to
8 meet any of those goals beyond the expiration of
9 federal stimulus funds in fiscal year 25, it is not
10 too soon to begin that conversation about where to
11 find those resources. Thank you.

12 COUNSEL: Andrea Ortiz? Andrea Ortiz with the
13 New York...

14 MS. ORTIZ: Oh, hello, can you hear me?

15 All right. Thank you. Good afternoon, and thank
16 you. I'm Andrea Ortiz from the New York Immigration
17 Coalition. Despite having 4 billion and unspent
18 federal funding available for academic recovery, the
19 budget was passed with \$469 million in cuts to public
20 schools at a time when schools are still in crisis
21 mode from the pandemic, and students desperately need
22 culturally responsive and healing schools. The
23 increase in asylum seeker enrollment in underfunded
24 schools has widened the gap in funding and further
25 demonstrated that federal dollars are being saved at

2 the expense of immigrant youth and families.

3 Comptroller Lander's November analysis showed that

4 83% of the schools currently serving asylum-seeking

5 youth across the city had their budgets cut by the

6 DOE. Even with the \$12 million in the city... that

7 the city is providing to support the 8000 newcomers,

8 schools will receive pennies on the dollar per

9 student, the funding will come with hiring

10 limitations, and the schools are unlikely to see that

11 funding until January. And the most recent numbers

12 show that enrollment declines were vastly smaller

13 than projected, relegating newly arrived students to

14 schools already operating with underfunded budgets.

15 In addition, the city has not fully invested in the

16 proven models of English language learner transfer

17 schools, or the \$4 million for Linking Immigrant

18 Families with Early Childhood Education Project known

19 as LIFE. Older newcomer immigrant youth, ages 16 to

20 21, have little time to learn English and fulfill

21 graduation requirements before they age out.

22 Therefore, they have struggled for too long to

23 enrolled in a public school system and up until last

24 year, transfer schools in the outer boroughs that

25 specialize in supporting youth at risk of dropping

2 out and helping older, unaccredited students succeed,
3 have not been accessible to immigrant youth. This
4 year the DOE expanded access to six transfer programs
5 for ELS in the outer boroughs, but has yet to fully
6 fund the type of robust programming that EL transfer
7 schools in Manhattan have, and that the new programs
8 will need to help our most vulnerable immigrant
9 students succeed, including our students with gaps in
10 their education. Our life project through our CBO
11 partners, MASA, LLC Family Services, and Fifth Avenue
12 Committee, has successfully helped over 500 limited
13 English proficient immigrant families enrolled in
14 pre-K and 3K by providing outreach, counseling, and
15 referral services to eligible families. Without
16 programs that directly address the unique challenges
17 immigrants and newcomers face, partial additions to
18 school budgets will not be sufficient to ensure our
19 immigrant students receive the education they
20 deserve. The city must immediately restore the \$469
21 million to fully equip our schools so that they were
22 well prepared to support our youth, invest \$4 million
23 to assess LAP student enrollment through the LIFE
24 Project, and fully equip transfer schools for ELs in
25 the outer boroughs. Instead of creating budget

2 scarcity, we need to be investing and proving
3 approaches that support these newcomer youth and
4 ensure that they can access everything that all of
5 the other students can. Thank you for the
6 opportunity to testify.

7 COUNSEL: Thank you so much for your testimony.
8 We will now hear from Smitha Varghese with the
9 Alliance for Quality Education.

10 MS. VARGHESE: Good afternoon. My name is Smitha
11 Varghese. I'm with the Alliance for Quality
12 education. This Council unfortunately is working
13 under an administration who is clearly striving for
14 austerity for our education system. After cutting
15 schools by at least \$469 million in the summer, this
16 administration is pursuing even more cuts through the
17 program to eliminate the gap which will cut access to
18 early education services and 3K in the following
19 years, backtracking the city's promise of universal
20 3K to all New York families. The New York City DOE
21 can't afford to eliminate vacancies. Without full
22 staffing the agency will continue to fall short on
23 meeting expectations of students, families, and
24 vendors. New York City is currently behind in
25 millions of dollars' worth of payments to childcare

2 providers even forcing some facilities to close down.
3 For months childcare providers have complained that
4 the city was compounding the pandemic stress and
5 strain on the industry by not paying them on time or
6 at all for publicly funded pre-Kindergarten and 3K
7 programs. Although last week, the city responded by
8 pledging to deploy a rapid response team to child
9 care centers, at this time how could this
10 administration justify further cutting the DOE which
11 is in charge of administering these payments and
12 services?

13 Cutting resources to the Office of Equity and
14 Access as well as the Office of Multilingual Learners
15 within the DOE will impact our schools and our
16 commitment to racial equity. Slashing these funds
17 will hurt the delivery of services to black, brown,
18 and multilingual students as cited by Andrea, our
19 partner at the New York Immigration Coalition.

20 We need the Council to push back against
21 austerity and point to the \$4 billion of unspent
22 stimulus funds meant to go towards alleviating, not
23 starving our education system. And I want to remind
24 the Education Committee that cuts and fiscal
25 austerity is not necessary. It is a choice. As

2 Laura from the comptroller's office mentioned in her
3 earlier testimony, the city still has \$310 million
4 and unspent funds from fiscal year 22, which can and
5 should be rolled over for this purpose. Budgets are
6 moral documents and this Council to continue fighting
7 for strategic investments in childcare and K through
8 12 education. Schools we all know are still
9 recovering from the pandemic. Students need more
10 academic and social and emotional supports and we
11 need the Council to be fighting to keep the deal We
12 hold and keep its promise to universal 3K.

13 COUNSEL: Thank you so much for your testimony.
14 Next we'll hear from Antonia Ferraro Martinelli.

15 MS. FERRARO MARTINELLI: Hi, can you hear me?

16 COUNSEL: Yes.

17 MS. FERRARO MARTINELLI: Okay. Good afternoon,
18 Chair Joseph, and City Councilmembers. Thank you so
19 much for this opportunity to speak to you this
20 afternoon. My name is Antonia Ferraro Martinelli,
21 and I'm a member of the Community Education Council
22 of District 15 in Brooklyn. And I'm here today urged
23 city Councilmembers and the NYC DOE to formally
24 request an extension of the deadline to utilize
25 federal COVID-19 relief funds. These funds, as you

2 have all discussed, expire in September of 2023 and
3 2024. And the DOE has \$4.4 billion unused funds.
4 COVID is not over. As we speak, I have COVID. My
5 child had COVID last week, and we have new immune
6 evasive variants that are becoming dominant just as
7 the holiday season is about to get started.

8 But most importantly, we have lingering impacts
9 of COVID. And in this testimony, I will detail a few
10 areas where federal funds could be targeted to make
11 the most educational impact in the communities that I
12 represent. Three of them are: After school, support
13 for students temporary housing and asylum seekers,
14 and missed learning in math.

15 One way an extension of COVID relief funds could
16 ameliorate the impact of COVID is through after-
17 school programs which support students academically
18 socially, emotionally, and support their families
19 financially. I liaise with PS 94 and Sunset Park,
20 which used to provide after school programming to all
21 1000 of their students. Now they can only provide
22 after-school to 320. And many of our schools expect
23 their parent-led volunteer bodies to pick up the
24 slack by fundraising and managing private after
25 school programs. According to labor statistics,

2 women have left the labor force and many have not
3 returned. There are 800,000 fewer women working
4 since February of 2020. And federal relief funds
5 must be extended to support elementary after-school
6 programs so that these mothers could get back to
7 work. We also need to extend funding to support
8 students in temporary housing and the unanticipated
9 influx of asylum seekers. At PS 124 in Park Slope,
10 they're struggling to serve both of these
11 populations. The school is now 55% students residing
12 in temporary housing. There's a tremendous need for
13 Spanish speaking staff, social workers, teachers,
14 aides, and paraprofessionals. The typical caseload
15 for a social worker could be 20 or 30 students, but
16 at ps1 24 a social worker can expect a caseload of
17 over 100 students. I am told, by the way, that there
18 are shelter families that are keeping their three and
19 four year olds at home because there are insufficient
20 seats at the local 3K and 4k centers. Their after-
21 school is over-enrolled and chronically understaffed.
22 There are only 110 spots in the after school program.
23 And some students have transitional difficulties
24 necessitating a high staff-to-student ratio. Schools
25 like this can expect a benefit from the \$12 million

2 recently announced to support schools experiencing an
3 influx of students in temporary housing, but I
4 anticipate that this will be a long-term need. It's
5 imperative that federal funds continue to be
6 available beyond 2024 and directed towards schools
7 and programs that support children who have
8 experienced severe trauma and displacement.

9 And finally, federal relief funds are intended in
10 part to address missed learning. We have seen the
11 recent drop in the NAEP scores for math amongst
12 fourth and eighth graders. I'm hearing at MS 447
13 that the principal worries about her eighth graders
14 not being prepared for high school. The pandemic has
15 left students with significant gaps in their math
16 knowledge. And we need to have access to these COVID
17 relief funds to... to get our future engineers back
18 on track.

19 So I thank you so much please request an
20 extension of federal COVID relief funds so that New
21 York City students can reap the full benefit of the
22 \$4 billion in unused federal COVID relief funds to
23 set to expire in two years. And I thank you so much
24 for listening to my testimony. I hope I didn't go
25 over too far.

2 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you so much for your
3 testimony, Antonia.

4 COUNSEL: If there's anyone else logged on or
5 signed up to testify, please use the raise hand
6 feature to be called on. Right so that is it for our
7 online panel.

8 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you for all those that
9 participated. Now this hearing is adjourned.

10 [GAVEL]

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1 COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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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 11/22/2022