

# **Testimony of New York City Schools Chancellor David C. Banks: FY25 Preliminary Budget Before the NYC Council on Education**

May 15, 2024

## **Introduction**

Good morning Chair Brannan, Chair Joseph and Members of the Council Committees on Finance and Education. Thank you for inviting me to testify today on the Mayor's Fiscal Year 2025 Executive Budget. I am joined by members of my leadership team.

Before discussing our FY25 budget, I'd like to touch on last Wednesday's Congressional hearing on antisemitism. This was an important moment for NYC Public Schools, our students, families, educators, and community leaders. That's who I was there to represent, to ensure that we were clear and honest about the very real challenges we have with antisemitism in our schools, but to ensure no DC politician was going to smear our city or our schools as being a hotbed of hate. I testified about what we're doing to meet the moment with the three priorities we have set forth: safety, engagement, and education. There will be progressive discipline for students and staff who engage in antisemitism, Islamophobia, transphobia, or any other forms of hate, but we know that the real solution to eliminating hate is to teach—to raise the consciousness of our young people and ensure they don't treat any group of people as the "other."

As you know, we already have Hidden Voices curricula on the AAPI and LGBTQIA+ communities and on the Global African Diaspora. Now, we are excited to begin the process of creating two new Hidden Voices curricula, highlighting individuals from both the Muslim and Jewish communities who have left an impact on our city, country, and world.

Based on the reactions I received, the vision I laid out before Congress resonated with people in Washington and all over the country. While we still have a lot of work to do, I'm proud to be leading the NYC Public Schools and look forward to continuing to partner with you on this important topic. Now, turning to our budget.

## **FY 2025 Executive Budget**

Our Fiscal Year 2025 Executive Budget totals approximately \$39.5 billion, which includes \$32.2 billion in operating resources and another \$7.3 billion for education-related pension and debt-service funds.

The Mayor continues to make significant and historic investments in education, which reflects this Administration's deeply held belief that children are the top priority. I can't overemphasize what this means to our students, educators, and families. Under the Mayor's leadership and with your partnership, we are maintaining key programs, including funding for signature initiatives

under our "Bright Starts, Bold Futures" agenda, including literacy work, career pathways programs, wellness resources, and critical initiatives in early childhood education.

### **Priorities Supported in the Executive Budget**

#### **Literacy**

Funding in the budget will enable us to continue our transformative literary initiative, NYC Reads. Grounded in the science of reading, NYC Reads ensures our educators use high-quality curricula based in the science of reading with robust professional development and coaching on the curriculum they're using.

This coming school year, we will begin Phase 2 of NYC Reads. This second phase will expand to all remaining early childhood and K-5 classrooms and will extend our work in 9th grade Algebra across the city. We will build on gains we made in Phase 1 and position our students for success in school, work, and life.

#### **Pathways**

We are also committed to ensuring each of our students graduates not just with a diploma, but with a real plan for a rewarding career and economic security, backed by paid career-connected learning experiences, early college credit, financial literacy, and career guidance. Next year, over 100 FutureReady high schools will offer all these components in career pathways in health care, technology, business, and education, with more industry focus areas on the way.

We also recently announced the opening of nine new schools this fall, including Bard High School Early College in East New York, offering students in central Brooklyn the opportunity to earn an Associate's degree for free while in high school, without having to travel far from home. This builds on the successful opening of Bard High School Early College in the Bronx, which was received tremendously well by the community. We will also be opening a Bronx STEAM Center in 2025.

Additionally, in partnership with Northwell Health and Bloomberg Philanthropies, which is donating nearly \$25 million, we are creating a first of its kind healthcare-focused high school in Queens, to open in Fall 2025. And finally, as Councilmember Carr recently shared, we are preparing to open a dedicated K-8 Gifted & Talented school in Staten Island in the coming years.

#### **Early Childhood**

Our administration is committed to ensuring our youngest learners have access to a high-quality early childhood education that is academically rigorous and also socially engaging, preparing children for success as they enter elementary school and beyond. Now funded directly by tax



levy dollars, due to the \$92 million that was included in the Executive budget that addressed the federal stimulus cliff, our budget reflects for the first time a sustainable fiscal model for 3-K.

As part of the Executive Budget, we will also launch a \$5 million outreach effort to increase awareness of 3-K and Pre-K seats for families and help them enroll in those seats. I'd like to thank the Council for continuing to advocate for our youngest learners and for being partners in this work.

We are also making investments in Pre-K special education, investing an additional \$25 million in special education classes and funding for related services, bringing the total to nearly \$950 million.

### **Other Key Investments**

As with districts around the country, New York City has been facing a substantial federal stimulus cliff for next year. I'm proud to say that with the Mayor's Executive Budget, many of these cliffs have been avoided. Specifically, the Executive Budget provides funding for over \$500 million in several critical programs that were reliant on disappearing federal funds, including: 500 social workers and psychologists; community schools; arts programming; programming for at-risk adults and older youth; PSAL; students in temporary housing coordinators; translation and interpretation services; and bilingual education.

Thanks to newly allocated city tax levy and state aid dollars, we can ensure access to these quality programs and supports next school year. City tax levy money is our largest source of revenue – for FY 25 it is projected to be at 58%, a percentage that has increased over the past 20 years and again next year. To that end, I want to recognize the Council's critical role in advocating at the city, state, and federal levels on behalf of our schools. We welcome your continued advocacy for additional resources.

### **Conclusion**

I'd like to end with some exciting news. Last week, we announced our enrollment projections for the 2024-2025 school year, and I'm eager to share that enrollment is trending upward, a departure from the steady decline in enrollment that began before 2016. We should also be proud of our students and educators that our math and ELA proficiency rates are at or above those of the rest of the state—and improving—though far more of our students come from families from low-income backgrounds.

In closing, the investments in the Mayor's Executive Budget reflect the commitment to a thriving education in this Administration. I am excited to continue our work together improving the

outcomes for the students of New York City Public Schools, giving our children the rigorous education they deserve. Thank you, and I look forward to answering your questions.

**Testimony of Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez  
The City University of New York**

**Joint Finance and Higher Education Committee Hearing  
on the  
Fiscal Year 2025 Executive Budget Proposal**

**Wednesday, May 15, 2024**

Good afternoon, Chair Brannan, Chair Dinowitz, and other members of the New York City Council committees on Finance and Higher Education, staff and guests. I am Félix Matos Rodríguez, Chancellor of The City University of New York. I am joined this afternoon by CUNY's Executive Vice Chancellor and University Provost Wendy Hensel, Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Operating Officer Hector Batista, and Senior Vice Chancellor for Budget and Finance and Chief Financial Officer Sherif Soliman.

I want to thank Speaker Adrienne Adams and the entire City Council for your steadfast commitment to CUNY, our mission, our programs and, most of all, our students. Your support and that of Governor Kathy Hochul and the State Senate and Assembly have been critical in enabling CUNY's continued, vital contributions to New York City.

Before I bring you up to date on our progress over the past year and goals and plans for the years ahead, I want to acknowledge the impact of the protests on college campuses across the country this spring, including at CUNY, and reaffirm our approach to demonstrations. Everyone in our community of 25 campuses has a constitutional right to free speech and a right to protest peacefully, in accordance with CUNY's policies. At the same time, CUNY has been, and will remain, committed to ensuring that every member of our university community is safe from violence, intimidation and harassment. CUNY takes very seriously its responsibility to protect our community in the face of an emergency situation.

Five years ago this month, I had the great honor of becoming Chancellor. Although these past five years have presented many challenges, we have also accomplished many things working together as a community and with our partners like you.

I want to start by thanking Speaker Adams and the City Council for envisioning and funding CUNY Reconnect, a program designed to engage New Yorkers who earned college credits but stopped short of getting a degree. I am thrilled to announce today that this academic year, CUNY Reconnect re-enrolled 16,319 students. Over the last two-and-a-half years, more than 33,000 New Yorkers have returned to college through CUNY Reconnect, in some cases many years after they put their education on hold. More than 10%, or 3,375 of those who returned through this initiative since 2022, have already completed a degree or are on track to do so

this spring, and the majority of them were attending part-time. The program has greatly exceeded its enrollment goals since its launch, and we look forward to working with you as the budget process progresses to ensure funding is continued.

Last June, we unveiled our strategic roadmap, called “CUNY Lifting New York,” a detailed plan for bolstering the already profound impact our university makes in the lives of our students, their families and communities, as well as on the city, the region and state. I invite you to review it if you haven’t.

We’ve had many recent successes that are already advancing our “CUNY Lifting New York” strategy, and I’d like to tell you about a few of them:

- We are advancing in our commitment to **student success** by preparing our students for careers and creating direct and sustainable pipelines to employers. Since I stepped into this role five years ago, CUNY has connected over 17,000 students to **paid internship** opportunities through new and expanded university-wide initiatives. We’ve done this with over \$34 million in support from the City, State, and private partners. Additionally, the CUNY Inclusive Economy network has equipped over 3,100 students with preparation within their departments needed to secure paid internships and full-time roles. To support this, we’ve also engaged over 1,000 employers in offering unique opportunities directly to students – including Centerbridge Partners, Bloomberg, Goldman Sachs, Mount Sinai, and Con Edison.
- We are fixing long-term flaws in our **transfer system** by ensuring that students who go from a CUNY community college to one of our senior colleges receive full credit for the first two years of classes they’ve taken within their major. This saves them significant time toward graduation and an average of about \$1,220 in tuition. And that’s money they can use for food, housing, child care and other living expenses.
- We have added 125 **fully online**, high-quality degree programs across the university to provide access to working adults and those who need flexibility in order to obtain a college degree, bringing to 288 the number of certificate and degree programs that can be completed fully online. That’s a 198% increase since 2022.
- We continue to draw increasing support for our mission from the philanthropic community. This year alone, CUNY received its **two largest gifts ever**:
  - In January, a \$75 million gift from the Simons Foundation and Simons Foundation International earmarked \$50 million to establish CUNY as a hub for computational science and \$25 million to support our participation in the state’s Empire AI project.

- And in March, The Steven & Alexandra Cohen Foundation awarded \$116 million to create the Cohen Career Collective at LaGuardia Community College – the largest award ever to a CUNY school and to any community college in the U.S. It will create a 160,000-square-foot workforce training center that will ensure economic mobility for New Yorkers while providing skilled workers for local employers.
- Both of those gifts align with a wide range of new capital projects that are modernizing CUNY's campuses and helping to advance CUNY's core educational mission. For example, in February, we unveiled a state-of-the-art \$95-million Nursing Education, Research and Practice Center at Lehman College. Lehman's center is the latest example of state-and-city-sponsored, CUNY-led investments in New York's public education and public health infrastructure. Last November, the master plan for the Science Park and Research Campus (SPARC) at Kips Bay was unveiled. When completed in 2031, SPARC Kips Bay will house modern facilities for three CUNY colleges, including Hunter's School of Nursing. CUNY's nursing programs are a key player in the expansion of health equity and representation. CUNY graduates an average of 1,800 nurses annually, representing about half of the nurses entering New York City's workforce each year.
- And we have been taking action to confront hate and be proactive in creating campus communities built on trust, understanding and inclusion. Over the past two years, we have taken many steps to combat antisemitism and all forms of bigotry. Among these, CUNY partnered with Hillel International; launched a portal for community members to report incidents of hate and discrimination and initiated a campaign to promote that students and employees have a right to request religious accommodations for any scheduled academic or employment activities that may conflict with their religious observances. We also formed an advisory council on Jewish life, built a new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Hub on our website and distributed \$1.3 million in City Council and State funding to colleges for trainings, events and activities that address religious, racial and ethnic bigotry.

### **Mayor's Executive Budget**

I could expand on our recent successes and efforts but it's important that I turn now to the challenges that jeopardize our continued progress in lifting New York.

The effects of several rounds of baselined PEGs have had a harmful impact on our community colleges – for our students, our programs, and college operations. It was welcome news to hear of the cancellation of additional PEGs in the Executive Budget, but the baselined PEGs for Fiscal Year 2024 that now total \$94.1 million, and the estimated \$95.4 million in Fiscal

Year 2025, will continue to impede CUNY's progress. To put this in perspective, the cumulative PEG of \$94.1 million is 15% of the entire City contribution to our operating budget.

We have been relentless in our efforts to mitigate the harm from these cuts and preserve our academic mission and reputation as the nation's leading urban public university. Still, the negative effects of the PEGs are now widespread and unavoidable. We appreciate that the Council prioritized in its budget response a PEG restoration of \$40 million and we look forward to working closely with you and the administration, with whom lines of communication remain open, to achieve the restoration goal in the Adopted Budget.

CUNY is an organization of people, so naturally most of our operating budget, about 85%, is dedicated to personnel costs. As a consequence of PEGs, our community colleges are down over 400 positions, or about 7% since Fiscal Year 2021.

Personnel reductions of this magnitude have impacted, and continue to impact, campus operations and student supports. Here are a few examples:

- At **Borough of Manhattan College**, 73 positions are vacant. They include faculty, academic and student support services staff, buildings and grounds professionals, and instructional and administrative support. These vacancies have a direct bearing on student retention, academic success and graduation rates – and ultimately on pathways to career success.
- At **Hostos Community College**, 77 positions have been cut. There are 10 unfilled faculty lines and vacancies in student support service areas – Financial Aid, Admissions, and Advisements – that remain unfilled. Departments ranging from IT to Custodial Services are operating with reduced or minimal staff supporting the campus community and handling IT and security issues.

Another example of the effects of the PEGs on several signature programs can be found on the funding of ACE. The Fiscal Year 24 baselined funding for our Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) remained stable, and we thank you for that support. However, our Accelerate, Complete and Engage (ACE) program, which serves 2,800 bachelor degree seeking students per year, is not fully funded. The Executive Budget included \$1 million for ACE and we are seeking \$9.5 million more to ensure the continued success of the program. This is a program that achieves a 4-year graduation rate of 60%, compared with 41% for a matched cohort of students who are not in the program. Even after accounting for ACE's \$2,500-per-student investment, the program reduces the actual cost per graduate by 13%. Because funds must be sought each year and are not baselined, it is difficult to manage vacancies and caseloads – ultimately resulting in fewer students being admitted to the program.

As these representative examples reflect, the reductions imposed by the PEGs have long-term consequences for our students and by extension the city. These effects are magnified by the fact that many students are now enrolling with significant learning delays and intense needs because of the pandemic. They require more support than ever before.

Our situation is even more challenging because CUNY's financial obligations exceed our available resources, largely due to post-pandemic enrollment declines and unfunded mandatory costs that the University has had to absorb. It has left us with a structural deficit that challenges us every day.

We take our stewardship of the money this Council provides very seriously. So let me summarize steps that we have taken, and continue to take, to address that structural deficit.

Since the pandemic, we have applied across-the-board savings targets and hiring freezes. Beginning with this current fiscal year, we are adopting a targeted approach, working closely with colleges exhibiting fiscal distress to achieve deficit reduction targets by reducing expenses and seeking opportunities to generate revenue. Our actions, combined with additional State aid, have led to the structural deficit being reduced by more than half of what it was two years ago, from \$234 million in Fiscal Year 2022 to a projected \$107 million at the end of Fiscal Year 2024, according to our latest projections as of the mid-year point of this current fiscal year. We anticipate that the projected year-end deficit will be even lower as of the third quarter as a result of additional operating aid in the enacted State Budget and actions that we have taken to navigate our fiscal challenges.

We are also implementing various system-wide shared services strategies to achieve additional savings and streamline operations. Among them are centralizing certain IT functions to benefit from economies of scale, pursuing a more effective deployment of maintenance and repair teams to campuses, and consolidating contracts to negotiate better pricing.

Our efforts are not limited to expense reductions. We are also focused on revenue strategies that can help our goal of fiscal stability. We continue to implement enrollment and retention strategies to ensure that students succeed on their educational journeys, and those efforts have led to an uptick in enrollment that helps increase revenues to the University.

Let me turn now to our facility needs. As Chair Dinowitz and members of the Higher Education Committee heard at a recent hearing, the upkeep and enhancement of CUNY's extensive facility portfolio is critical to CUNY's overall success. A PEG restoration in this budget could help ensure sufficient levels of facilities staff to perform critical maintenance, while additional capital funding will allow us to preserve the University's infrastructure and achieve a State of Good Repair.

CUNY is home to 300 buildings across New York City, encompassing 29 million square feet of classrooms, labs, theaters, athletic facilities, and more. These spaces are vital for our students and faculty, and to the communities we serve. Our community college infrastructure has an estimated replacement value of \$9.2 billion and common facilities management standards recommend a renewal budget of two percent of the replacement value, which translates into \$200 million a year to keep these facilities in a State of Good Repair. Additional capital funding would mean that we could upgrade critical systems in our facilities to help achieve our asset preservation goals. We appreciate your efforts in allocating discretionary funding for many important projects and look forward to working with you to achieve our collective goals in modernizing CUNY's infrastructure.

In conclusion, we respectfully request that you restore the PEGs to enable CUNY to regain what was lost by personnel reductions in our community colleges and invest in the programs such as ACE and CUNY Reconnect that we know will lead to upward social mobility for CUNY students. Less investment in CUNY leads to a cumulative negative impact on the City economy – fewer college graduates, a lesser credentialed workforce, lesser ability to attract businesses to the City, lower personal income and business tax bases, longer term potential for more individuals requiring City services. Real investment in CUNY will do just the opposite. We know this is a broader goal that we collectively share, and we look forward to working together with you to deliver a better future for CUNY and for New York.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify, and we look forward to your questions.





**TESTIMONY OF  
THE UNITED FEDERATION OF TEACHERS  
BEFORE THE  
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL  
COMMITTEES ON FINANCE AND EDUCATION  
REGARDING THE PROPOSED FY25 EXECUTIVE BUDGET  
May 15, 2024**

Good afternoon, I am Michael Sill, and I am the assistant secretary of the United Federation of Teachers (UFT). On behalf of our president, Michael Mulgrew, and the union's more than 190,000 members, I would like to thank Finance Committee Chair Brannan, Education Committee Chair Joseph and all the members of the City Council for holding today's public hearing on the New York City executive budget for Fiscal Year 2025. I am joined by Louis Cholden-Brown, special counsel for the union.

First, let me thank you for your advocacy on behalf of the city's educators and for your determination to fund our public schools and protect them from any unnecessary and disruptive budget cuts.

The city continues to take in additional tax revenue — as we all reasonably concluded would happen months ago, despite administration resistance — acknowledge higher state and federal funding, including \$600 million in Foundation Aid and \$311.3 million in state asylum seeker funding, and further cut inflated asylum-seeker cost projections by over \$500 million. Given these budgetary changes, coupled with rising surpluses, the administration must fully reverse the drastic cuts to agencies, completely offset the impending stimulus fiscal cliff, and unconditionally and comprehensively fund its legal obligations to our school communities.

In addition to socking away \$1.45 billion in reserves that must be used by the end of the year, the Executive Budget continues to underestimate city revenues to the tune of \$1 billion and under-account for Foundation Aid by over \$200 million.

UFT OFFICERS: Michael Mulgrew, *President* • LeRoy Bar, *Secretary* • Victoria Lee, *Treasurer* • Michael Sill, *Assistant Secretary* • Thomas Brown, *Assistant Treasurer*  
VICE PRESIDENTS: Karen Alford • MaryJo Ginese • Anne Goldman • Leo Gordon • Janella T. Hinds • Richard Mantell • Mary Vaccaro

How can we have a robust and transparent budget process if OMB is incapable of even adding up the whole figures we are receiving from the state? That is why the UFT continues to call for an end to NYC's budget soap opera and reforms to the budget process, including those in the appended submission.

New York City has the funding it needs to properly support public education, but City Hall continues to choose to play scarcity politics and force unwarranted tradeoffs. The UFT is therefore asking the City Council to once again partner with city students, parents and advocates to invest in our students by:

- Implementing the class-size law by making sure additional funding reaches the schools; ensuring schools that are currently in compliance with the new class size limits are given the funding needed to stay in compliance; and dedicating additional funding to recruiting and retaining new teachers.
- Hiring new teachers to close the current 8,100 pedagogical vacancies, which, coupled with the 2,708 pedagogical positions funded with federal stimulus funds that will be unfunded past FY24, contribute to the massive lack of compliance with special education and IEP mandates. These civil rights violations cannot stand and the cut of another 3,000 teachers from the budget over the next two years must be reversed.
- Adding critical staff, including social workers, counselors and school psychologists, who currently provide services at counselor ratios as high as 1200:1 and social worker ratios above 3000:1.
- Advancing an agenda for career and technical education.
- Expanding professional development opportunities for educators.
- Supporting newly arrived migrant students and other newcomers to our school communities.
- Retrofitting our schools for resilience and accessibility.
- Sustaining essential education programs supported by federal COVID-19 stimulus dollars that were only partially restored including community schools, 3-K, preschool special education, and mental health services.
- Strengthening the availability of child care and early childhood education by restoring the draconian cuts to 3-K and pre-K, advancing the massively delayed pilot for onsite child care for city employees and supporting the numerous pending task forces and advisory boards tackling universal care and coverage.
- Maintaining and growing UFT programs that work: Teacher Center, United Community Schools, PROSE, Positive Learning Collaborative, BRAVE, Dial-A-Teacher, and Member Assistance Program.

*Avenues for New Revenues*

In addition to being honest and transparent about its financial health, the administration must be innovative about finding new ways to enhance revenue. The city must expeditiously launch a fully staffed office of health care accountability, which could save the city \$2 billion annually, complete the requisite steps to obtain state and federal reimbursements, and secure the upwards of \$1 billion in outstanding fines and fees. The Council should recoup surplus income from the economic development corporation, institute impact fees for city infrastructure including schools, and work to eliminate the \$3+ billion in economic development tax breaks that fail to deliver benefits. The Council should further undertake a comprehensive review of the taxing authority under Tax Law §§ 1201 and 1210 and Ad. Code §§ 11-604, 11-1704, and 11-1704.1.

#### *State Fiscal Year 2025 Reforms*

It is important to start by taking a moment to describe the transformational guard rails secured by the UFT in the state's Fiscal Year 2025 budget and the Council's critical role and obligations under these enhanced mandates. In addition to our shared victory in preserving increased Foundation Aid and delivering \$600 million in additional state education funds above last year, state lawmakers heard our frustration with the mayor's unnecessary school budget cuts and the city's resistance to implementing the class size law. The budget safeguards school budgets and requires the DOE to fully fund and implement the class size law. It requires the city to document its compliance in three major areas:

- The city must give additional funds to individual schools so every school can meet the requirements of the class size law.
- The city cannot use increased state aid as a reason to lower its own investment in our schools. The additional \$600 million in state funding this year must supplement, not supplant, city funding; a prescript that the city has already violated.
- The city is prohibited from reducing its overall funding of city schools from year to year as it did last year when the FY24 budget illegally reduced the city amount by \$500 million, forcing the UFT to sue. Together the UFT, DOE and State Education Department will devise a framework to prevent shenanigans with the budget stabilization account ("roll") or the reconciliation timeline to game the amount required to be committed.

Violation of these requirements poses dire consequences for the city — agencies will be prevented from spending under a budget pending certification and eventually state school aid will be withheld. We are looking to the Council as frontline allies to make sure the administration follows the law and our students and all New Yorkers do not suffer from their evasion.

Despite the clear strictures of the state’s FY25 budget, the executive budget illegally supplants community school funding, and the DOE’s draft class size plan calls for illegally supplanting funding at individual schools. Applying recurring state funds to backfill programs, including the November 2023 \$8 million recurring Program to Eliminate the Gap, or PEG, for 170 community schools for FY25–FY28, is a clear violation of the Education Law prohibition against supplanting funds allocated by the city last year.

Section 1 of the SY24–25 draft class size plan includes language that the DOE “expects some schools to repurpose some existing funds towards class size from other uses.” Not only is this wholly unnecessary from a budgetary standpoint, but the plan will not receive the UFT’s consent and violates the requirements of Ed. Law § 2576 regarding the adequate funding of individual schools. Repurposing existing funds to reduce class sizes and then using Foundation Aid or Contract for Excellence funds to backfill current programming or staffing is a further violation of Ed. Law § 211-d.

Because of the guarantees secured in the state budget, the UFT has withdrawn the lawsuit it filed last year after the adopted FY24 budget and November plan violated the prior version of the “maintenance of effort” and “supplement not supplant” laws. However, we will not hesitate to return to court if necessary to enforce the enhanced protections and school-level class size compliance.

*DOE Budget*

While we are pleased to see the mayor and Council jointly announce the use of \$514 million in additional resources for the DOE, this amount, which largely relies on state funding the city failed to account for at the preliminary budget, falls far short of preventing irreversible pain to our school communities, most especially our youngest learners, despite the continuing availability of vast unallocated resources. The \$48 million to replace expiring federal stimulus funding for community schools is still a 13% cut to the previously budgeted figure and overall funding is \$21 million less than this Council sought in its response.

District 75 will still see a \$3million cut and pre-school special ed, which has only been baselined at 58% of the required amount, will see \$15 million in cuts. Federal law provides rights to students with disabilities that do not diminish with budgetary pressures, and the city must make the necessary investments to ensure all preschoolers with disabilities get the classes and services they need in a timely manner.

The DOE will tell you the agency budget has grown from where it was at adoption last June and where it was in the preliminary financial plan in January. What they will be less forthcoming about is that it has plummeted 2.3%, or \$800 million, from the amount currently appropriated for this fiscal year. The Executive Budget recognizes \$210 million in additional state funding but fails to account for another \$230 million reflected in the State's enacted budget. DOE claims the city has already increased city funding for the DOE by \$1.6 billion for next year, but this amount does not deliver a single additional child care seat, paraprofessional, program or meal. Instead, each has been cut to the tune of more than a combined \$700 million. The additions in incredibly important categories that the city has historically failed to account for — pupil transportation, Carter cases, school cleaning, and over \$1.1 billion in collective bargaining costs to better compensate teachers, administrators, facilities staff, lunch helpers, and the numerous others who provide a healthy, safe and welcoming learning environment — are not a reason for

slashing our students' learning and social emotional supports at a time of such resources. Indeed, since first being proposed in the January 2021 financial plan, the city amount for the DOE in FY25 has only grown \$1.1 billion overall due to six rounds of PEGs, totaling over \$2.2 billion, by this administration. This proposed budget has cut \$2.2 billion in teachers, after school, early childhood education, computer science curricula, and food, while charter school costs have exploded to the tune of an additional \$370 million.

All dollars are not equally spent, and just because the DOE has caught on to the need to provide for certain underfunded categories does not prevent the Council from questioning the vast cuts to instruction, special education and programs that the additional funding of a separate set of vital needs seemingly mask.

Charter § 100(b) requires “a written response to each of the expense budget priorities included in each community board's statement of budget priorities ... including the disposition of each such priority and a meaningful explanation of any disapprovals contained in such estimates or budget,” and yet for hundreds of priorities OMB/DOE’s response was simply “[p]lease contact the Agency directly and promptly for more information.” Sometimes these replies garnered OMB’s written support, sometimes not, only further contributing to lack of clarity about the administration’s compliance and/or priorities.

Perhaps more alarming than this simple failure to provide the required information were the few responses they did provide. Among the issues that OMB and the DOE said require “further study” are arts in the schools, moving schools to 100% accessibility, and reduced teacher-to-student ratios, while they opposed adequately cooling instructional spaces or upgrading flood prevention infrastructure.

*Class Size Reduction*

Though the Executive Budget contains no funds to lower class size, we welcome the commitment in the May 7 class size plan of \$137 million in additional funding for class size reduction. The appropriation of Contract for Excellence funds to schools also highlighted in that report is required by state law and should not be credited as a step to complying with the city's obligation to fund class sizes, as those funds could be allocated to any of the five authorized non-class size uses.

For the first time, the city is recognizing its financial responsibility to fund this work, but that dedicated Foundation Aid must supplement city funding or run afoul of state law, and more support and more investment in capital construction will be needed for school communities.

The city's obligation to fund class size reduction is not contingent on the availability of aid from other sources, and the administration's choice to not fund the class size project for two years cannot become a loophole to evade other obligations to our students and school communities.

The state budget includes unambiguous language on the city's responsibility to provide funding for class size reduction "sufficient to ensure individual schools can meet the class size compliance targets." Thus, each school must be appropriately funded for its specific pedagogical needs and the hard-to-staff lines that ensure programs continue to be delivered with the required class sizes.

The new language of Ed. Law § 2576 also requires the Department of Education to make whole those schools who diverted funding from other programming or staff to achieve the class size targets over the past two years. Remedying this inequity is a requirement for the schools who comprise the 39.6% of compliant classrooms that we currently have; they must be funded to preserve not only these class sizes but to restore the full panoply of offerings they historically provided.

Continued cuts to school budgets based on enrollment decline will only inhibit class-size reductions, and the state FY25 budget reaffirms that the DOE must proactively maintain sufficient funding at these schools to retain sufficient teachers through continued Hold Harmless funding regardless of reduced federal stimulus funding.

The Council permitting the appropriation of anything short of this is an impermissible violation of the statute that will preclude the city budget from being certified by the mayor and comptroller. The current school base allocations and fair student funding weights must be revisited as part of budget adoption to ensure these requirements are satisfied.

Last week we released an analysis demonstrating that 856 New York City Title 1 high-need schools — enrolling more than 300,000 students, at all school levels and in every borough — have the space today to meet the state’s class size limits.

These schools have space for over 207,000 additional seats in capped classrooms but will only need teachers for 31,318 students to lower class sizes and meet the state law. Along with a \$32 billion DOE budget and \$10.7 billion in NYC surplus for FY24 and FY25, this puts to bed City Hall’s false narrative, perpetuated in the May 7 report, about the decisions that schools will have to make. Claims that a lack of space or funds prevents compliance with the law to bring our class sizes into line with schools in the rest of the state are equally false.

Under Ed. Law § 2590-r, the chancellor is required upon the release of the Executive Budget to inform the principal of each school of that school's preliminary budget allocation, and the principal to propose a school-based budget and demonstrate that the school-based budget proposal is aligned with the school's comprehensive educational plan and the class size law, which the chancellor must then certify. It is the product of such process that the Council is compelled to review and evaluate for compliance with Ed. Law § 2576 under the state FY25 budget before adoption.



### *Early Childhood Education*

The UFT's #StartStrong campaign to protect 3-K and pre-K has organized more than 40,000 letters to the mayor and chancellor, demanding that they grow back the early childhood programs they have decimated by restoring the \$170 million in PEGs still unaccounted for, releasing the long-delayed Accenture report and moving the seats to identified areas of need, and relaunching the outreach teams.

With six weeks to go in this fiscal year, the DOE lacks a rollout plan for the \$1.5 million added for early childhood outreach. We cannot let these funds be squandered through inaction, and we join the Council in calling for an additional \$6.5 million in marketing and outreach funds for FY25 above the budgeted amount.

### *Capital*

As our crumbling public-school infrastructure confronts the brunt of climate change, it is time to invest in the wellbeing of our schools. Most of our school buildings need basic repairs and upgrades to address everything from antiquated heating and air-conditioning systems to deteriorating rooftops to outdated electrical grids.

The capital budget must take advantage of opportunities in the \$2 trillion Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and allocate funds to retrofit our schools for climate resiliency, combat flooding and ensure the totality of schools — from the kitchens where our colleagues in DC37 work to instructional spaces, gymnasiums and auditoriums — are properly ventilated and air-conditioned. One critical step is the passage of Int.373 by CM Nurse.

By investing in school infrastructure, we can create tens of thousands of good union jobs while making schools healthier and safer, taking on climate change, and saving \$250 million per year in energy costs that can be reinvested in our schools. An estimated \$400 million will

electrify and weatherize 500 schools by 2030, while \$1.25 billion over five years will ensure that half of our schools are accessible for all users by the end of the capital plan.

The state FY25 budget mandated that “[f]or the purpose of achieving the class size targets, as required by section 211-d of the education law, the city of New York shall increase planned spending on classroom construction by two billion dollars (\$2,000,000,000) over and above the planned capital spending detailed in the February 2024 School Construction Authority capital plan.” Yet such funding to reverse the chilling effects of the mayor’s planned cuts is glaringly missing from the Executive Budget.

Both the SCA capital plan and the capital budget must be amended to account for this funding and revise the capital plan’s current format — which does not provide proposed locations or grade level for 78% of projects. The plan’s lack of transparency violates both Education Law § 2590-o and the class size law itself: The DOE must submit an “annual capital plan for school construction and leasing to show how many classrooms will be added in each year and in which schools and districts to achieve the class size targets.”

#### *Terms and Conditions*

The Council must prevent budget shenanigans and enact meaningful terms and conditions. Rather than giving the mayor a blank check, the Council must embrace its full powers to direct budgetary spending. The Council should bar the DOE from attaching funding to the use of specific assessments in elementary schools without regard to the quantity, frequency and efficacy of the assessment or the data it provides and support the UFT in evaluating current elementary school assessment uses, policies and practices to prioritize and reduce the number of assessments being given in our elementary schools.

In the budget, the Council should also prohibit the mayor from downwardly adjusting allocations to any specific school mid-year and revise the Fair Student Funding formula to ensure

our most vulnerable students have the resources they need to succeed. The appended Terms and Conditions one-pager expands on our call for the Council to exercise policy-making control over the budget and meaningfully and substantively direct the implementation of the funded DOE programs and obligations.

### *Commitment to Equity Endeavors*

In November 2022, New Yorkers voted to implement important programmatic changes to the New York City Charter, but 18 months later, this administration continues to delay its obligations thereunder. It released citywide goals, due nearly seven months ago, only this Monday. A new Charter preamble set out “collective values” to “guide the operation of our city government and inform and shape how the city carries out the duties, obligations, and authorities, and upholds and protects the rights set out in the charter.” It “endeavored to ensure that every person who resides in New York city has the opportunity to thrive with” among many other rights, “[q]uality and culturally-relevant child and youth supports, including early childhood and prekindergarten through twelfth grade education.”

Agencies were required “to consider and be guided by the values set out in the preamble” and “examine the extent to which such values have been fulfilled through [their] policies and programs.”

The Racial Justice Commission also created a process for agency and citywide racial equity plans containing, among other important elements, “[o]verarching citywide goals and strategies to improve racial equity throughout the city government’s policymaking, operations, and workforce, including the equitable distribution of benefits, of supportive services, and of environmental burdens by neighborhood” tied to the budget process that was to begin this year. And yet both the Jan.16 deadline for the preliminary plan and the Apr. 26 deadline for the final plan came and went with no release. This week we learned that we can expect them in

November, despite the specific deadlines in the Charter being specifically chosen to facilitate community engagement, response from the Commission on Racial Equity, and review from the Council as the budget is negotiated.

What we did all receive this week was a community equity goal from the Commission on Racial Equity to “[i]ncrease and appropriately fund school districts that are suffering from racial and class segregation to provide students, and families with social-emotional, health, educational, nutritional, and social services before, during, and out of school time hours year-round.” It is against this metric that the Council must measure the DOE’s proposed spending, an analysis that would find the DOE deficient.

#### *Discretionary Funding Requests*

As President Mulgrew shared at March’s preliminary budget hearing, we are proud to say that UFT programs are among the best vehicles city government can use to ensure that the allocated funding for education makes it straight to the classroom and has a direct impact on students and educators.

This year we submitted discretionary-funding applications for six programs that we ask the City Council to support: **UFT Teacher Center, United Community Schools (UCS), Social-Emotional Supports through the Member Assistance Program (MAP) and Positive Learning Collaborative (PLC), Progressive Redesign Opportunity Schools for Excellence (PROSE), Building Respect, Acceptance and Voice through Education (BRAVE) hotline, and Dial-A-Teacher.** We invite you to review the appended UFT priorities document for more about each program.

#### *Closing Thoughts*

The enacted state budget invested in bringing transformational change to New York City public schools. It is now incumbent upon the Council to ensure that funding and mandates not

only permanently reduce class sizes for all our students but dramatically increase both academic and social-emotional support for students and accelerate progress to make our schools carbon-free and healthy.

The budget must not squander the resources we have all fought so hard to bring to our school communities. It must embrace the responsibility to provide a constitutionally sound basic education for all students and the required transparency to ensure City compliance with federal, state and local law before any vote. Any diminution will only force the Council back here over the summer lest funding be withheld. Before adopting the budget, it is incumbent that the Council ask itself:

- Who is ultimately paying for community schools? Are schools being forced to backfill programs with state dollars? Has the Council secured sufficiently granular budget codes to ensure that no additional violations of Ed. Law § 211-d have occurred and attached terms and conditions that provide reporting and protections against mid-year changes?
- Are individual schools adequately funded to comply with the class size law, including supporting those schools already meeting the targets? Do the DOE budget codes use sufficient granularity to ensure compliance?
- Did the SCA Capital Plan and capital budget add the required \$2 billion for class size compliance and include all the elements required by the Education Law?
- Is the DOE appropriately staffing to comply with its special education, IEP and class size requirements, or has it been permitted to continue its planned cuts of 3,000 additional pedagogues on top of 8,000+ vacancies?
- Have accurate numbers been used to calculate year-to-year changes in city funding for the DOE to prevent a repeat of last year's \$500 million cut?
- Has the budget reversed the \$170 million in cuts to early childhood?
- Has the budget complied with the goals of the Charter preamble or the Draft Community Equity Priorities?
- Does the budget contain the requisite information for the Council to make these determinations?

Only by answering these questions will the Council have fulfilled its duties and answered the calls of the New York City school communities. We are lucky that compliance does not pose hard choices, despite the administration's rhetoric, with sustainable revenues far exceeding those in the Executive Budget and state aid that remains unallocated, if only the Council has the will to act.

I want to thank you again for today's hearing. We look forward to our continued engagement throughout this budget process.



# 2024 CITY PRIORITIES

## WE CAN'T ALLOW THE CITY TO DEFUND OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

We are fighting a DOE budget that inexplicably cuts direct funding to public schools and seeks to undermine the new class-size limits. City Hall must stop using the increased state aid as an excuse to reduce its own investment in public schools, and the DOE must reverse its cuts.

### THE BUDGET MUST SUPPORT:

- **Class Size Reduction:** Ensure schools can remain in compliance and dedicate additional funding to recruit and retain new teachers.
- **Expanded Staffing:** Schools need more social workers, counselors, and psychologists to address the full needs of students.
- **Support for Newcomers:** Schools need integrated citywide support for newly arrived migrant students and new entrants.
- **Green and Healthy Schools:** Retrofit our schools for resilience and accessibility.
- **Educational Programs on the Chopping Block:** Sustain programs supported by federal COVID-19 stimulus dollars, including community schools, 3-K, and mental health services. NYC funded these programs before COVID-19 and must again.
- **Early Childhood Education:** Strengthen the availability of child care and early childhood education.

### THE CAPITAL PLAN MUST SUPPORT SMALLER CLASS SIZES

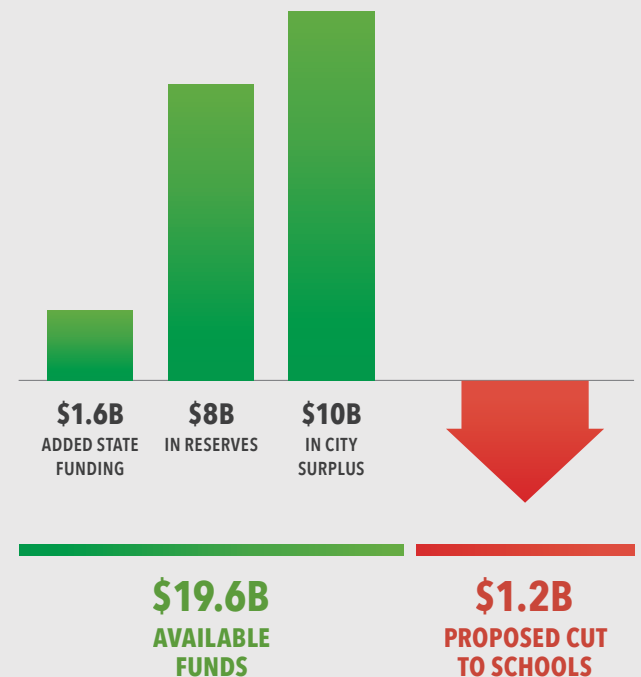
The proposed Capital Plan cuts \$2B for new school capacity, reduces the number of new classroom seats by nearly 50%, and omits proposed locations or grade levels for 78% of projects, a lack of transparency that violates the class size law. The City Council must ensure that the 2022 class-size law is implemented in a responsible, timely way and that the capital budget includes funds to build the seats we need.

### THE BUDGET PROCESS MUST BE TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE

The current process allows the mayor to unilaterally cut education funding and manipulate basic statistics about the city's funds and expenses. The UFT calls upon the City Council to enact urgent reforms to the budget process that will enhance transparency, accountability, and consensus.

## MONEY IS AVAILABLE. WHY ISN'T IT REACHING OUR SCHOOLS?

With an infusion of new education aid, plus a massive surplus and ample reserves, City Hall has a historic opportunity to support our public schools and children.



## BUDGET PRIORITIES

- ✓ Invest in Class Size Law
- ✓ Restore PreK/3K Funding
- ✓ Reverse School-Based Budget Cuts
- ✓ Fund UFT Education Programs
- ✓ Preserve Programs Funded By Federal COVID Money
- ✓ Prevent City From Supplanting State Education Dollars
- ✓ Reform City Budget Process

### UFT TEACHER CENTER

Accelerates learning and empowers students through award-winning embedded professional development tailored to each school’s unique needs.

- 170** sites across the city (55 new in 2023–24)
- 293,000** educators, principals and parents supported in 2022–23
- 125,000** hours of professional development provided in 2022–23

**WHAT WE’RE ASKING:**

- Return to the \$8.6M in funding we received from the City Council in FY23 to sustain current programming and move towards having a Teacher Center in every NYC school building

### UNITED COMMUNITY SCHOOLS (UCS)

A teacher-inspired nonprofit operating the largest community school network in NYC and transforming public schools and the communities they serve through its proven model.

- 6:1** Community School Director’s return on investment
- 8,891** families fed and household supports in 2023
- 18,408** mental health and wellness visits in 2023
- 16,390** health clinic visits coordinated in 2023

**WHAT WE’RE ASKING:**

- \$5M to sustain our current network of community schools and continue providing critical support to children and families

### SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Two proven programs—Member Assistance Program (MAP) and the Positive Learning Collaborative (PLC)—addressing the growing mental health and wellness crisis through vital support and programming for staff, students and families.

**WHAT WE’RE ASKING:**

- \$1.5M to support program maintenance and expansion

### PROGRESSIVE REDESIGN OPPORTUNITY FOR SCHOOLS (PROSE)

A collaboration between the UFT, New York City school district, and principals’ union increasing educator voice to utilize contractual and regulatory flexibilities to better serve the needs of their school communities.

**WHAT WE’RE ASKING:**

- \$150,000 to sustain and expand the program and to share best practices with schools citywide

### BRAVE ANTI-BULLYING HOTLINE

24 hours a day, 7 days a week, students, families, and educators dealing with bullying can contact our hotline for immediate help resolving these detrimental situations.

**WHAT WE’RE ASKING:**

- \$220,000 to sustain our anti-bullying programming for students and educators

### DIAL-A-TEACHER HOMEWORK HELPLINE

Fielding over 40,000 calls in 9 languages last year, our acclaimed homework helpline is expanding to help students citywide from all grades, across many disciplines and languages.

**WHAT WE’RE ASKING:**

- \$185,680 to further develop an online presence and procure digital curricula

### TEACHER’S CHOICE

This key initiative ensures teachers are reimbursed for supplies and materials they buy for their classrooms and students in need. We are grateful for the \$20M allocation in the FY25 budget.

**WHAT WE’RE ASKING:**

- Baseline the program in the FY25 budget at \$20M

### BROADWAY BRIDGES

Every NYC high schooler should see a Broadway show before they graduate, and this program provides tickets to high school students so they can experience the city’s rich cultural opportunities.

**WHAT WE’RE ASKING:**

- Support this initiative in the FY25 Budget



United Federation of Teachers  
A Union of Professionals

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:**

Vanecia Wilson | Political Director | [vwilson@uft.org](mailto:vwilson@uft.org)  
 Briget Rein, City Hall Liaison | [brein@uft.org](mailto:brein@uft.org)  
 Louis Cholden-Brown, Special Counsel | [lcholden-brown@uft.org](mailto:lcholden-brown@uft.org)  
 Christina Collins, Director of Education Policy | [ccollins@uft.org](mailto:ccollins@uft.org)

[uft.org/legislative-priorities](https://uft.org/legislative-priorities)

Michael Mulgrew, President | LeRoy Barr, Secretary  
 Victoria Lee, Treasurer | Michael Sill, Assistant Secretary  
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# THE NEW YORK STATE FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET MADE IMPORTANT CHANGES TO NEW YORK CITY EDUCATIONAL FUNDING:

- ✓ **2 billion in additional authorized debt service specifically for class size.**  
*THE SCA CAPITAL PLAN AND THE CAPITAL BUDGET EACH MUST BE AMENDED TO ACCOUNT FOR THIS FUNDING.*
- ✓ **A new process to be developed by the State Education Dept, City Hall and the UFT for calculating the minimum amount of city funding that must go to the DOE.**  
*THE COUNCIL MUST ENSURE THAT ACCURATE NUMBERS ARE USED TO CALCULATE YR-TO-YR CHANGES IN FUNDING AND PREVENT A REPEAT OF LAST YEAR'S \$500M CUT IN CITY FUNDING FOR EDUCATION.*
- ✓ **Each school must be appropriately funded in the budget to achieve the class size targets codified in 2022.**  
*THE COUNCIL MUST SECURE MORE GRANULAR BUDGET CODES TO ENSURE THAT EACH SCHOOL IS PROPERLY FUNDED BY THE BUDGET; THE DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS CANNOT BE DELEGATED TO THE CHANCELLOR POST-JUNE.*

- ✓ **Enhanced requirements to only use increased Foundation Aid to supplement not supplant City funding.**  
*THE MAYOR HAS ALREADY VIOLATED THIS PRECEPT. THE COUNCIL MUST SECURE MORE GRANULAR BUDGET CODES ENSURING NO ADDITIONAL VIOLATIONS BEFORE ADOPTIONS AND ATTACH TERMS AND CONDITIONS THAT PROVIDE REPORTING AND PROTECTIONS AGAINST MID-YEAR CHANGES.*
- ✓ **Council is mandated to appropriate funds in November if October certification of actual budget expenditures identify discrepancy.**  
*THE COUNCIL MUST ENSURE TIMELY AND THOROUGH CERTIFICATION AND IS OBLIGATED TO INITIATE OR AMEND ANY NOVEMBER MODIFICATION, NOTWITHSTANDING PRIOR CHARTER LIMITATIONS, TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE.*



If the adopted budget **fails to comply with these requirements** as determined by an independent accountant, the Mayor and Comptroller will be **barred from certifying the budget as final.**

If a new budget **isn't adopted within sixty days** the State Education Department will begin **withholding foundation aid.**

NEW YORK STATE INCREASED ITS BUDGETARY SUPPORT FOR NEW YORK CITY; **SO WHY ARE WE STILL CUTTING PROGRAMS?**



STATE EDUCATION AID INCREASED \$632 MILLION OVER LAST YEAR

EXECUTIVE BUDGET STILL DOESN'T ACCOUNT FOR OVER \$200 MILLION OF THESE FUNDS



EXEC. BUDGET HAS ALREADY SUPPLANTED CITY FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS WITH STATE DOLLARS



# THE NEW YORK STATE FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET

MADE IMPORTANT CHANGES TO NEW YORK CITY EDUCATIONAL FUNDING:

## CLASS SIZE REDUCTION IS THE LAW: COUNCIL MUST AMEND BUDGET TO COMPLY OR RISK LOSS OF STATE FUNDS

- ✓ The Council must add \$2 billion to the SCA Capital Plan and Capital Budget for Class Sizes.
- ✓ The Council must add new units of appropriation to ensure proper funding of each school for class sizes and prevent violation of Supplement Not Supplant requirements.
- ✓ The Council must enact terms and conditions that provide reporting on the uses of Foundation Aid and protect against mid-year swaps of funding sources or diminution of city resources.

## State Law is Not a Negotiation:

Don't Let the  
Mayor Dictate  
Compliance

“The Council may... alter the budget...to increase, decrease, add or omit any unit of appropriation, or add, omit or change any terms or conditions related to any or all such appropriations.” - City Charter § 254

.....

“A single unit of appropriation ... may represent the amount requested for more than one particular program, purpose, activity or institution [only] if the council has adopted... a resolution setting forth the names, and a statement of the programmatic objectives, of each program, purpose, activity or institution to be included in such a single unit of appropriation..” - City Charter § 100

### #OURKIDSNEED SMALLER CLASS SIZES

IT SHOULD BE DONE,  
IT CAN BE DONE,  
IT MUST BE DONE.



It's the law.

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• Michael Sill, *Assistant Secretary* • Thomas Brown, *Assistant Treasurer*  
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• Richard Mantell • Mary Vaccaro



# PREVENT BUDGET SHENANIGANS: Enact Meaningful Terms & Conditions

THE COUNCIL *MUST* EMBRACE ITS  
FULL POWERS TO DIRECT BUDGETARY SPENDING  
**DON'T GIVE THE MAYOR A BLANK CHECK!**

**Under the 1989 Charter, the Council's terms and conditions power is relied upon as the primary tool for the Council to exercise policy-making control over the budget** and may be used to accomplish a variety of objectives including those truly “legislative” in nature, setting standards and procedures for the expenditures of funds and implementation of funded programs and their effective use would provide the Council with the opportunity to direct, in a meaningful and substantive fashion, the implementation of the city programs contained in the budget.

- ✓ Require no later than October 31, 2024, a report on the school-by-school breakdown of certified arts teachers.
- ✓ Conduct ongoing outreach in English and the designated citywide languages in each community district regarding the availability of 3-K and childcare seats including utilizing outreach teams, social media, internet, radio, print media, or digital kiosks, and coordinating with the UFT, CSA, and CBOs.
- ✓ Revise the Fair Student Funding formula to ensure our most vulnerable students have the resources they need to succeed.
- ✓ Prohibit the Mayor from downwardly adjusting allocations to any specific school mid-year due to reduced enrollment.
- ✓ Ensure ratios of 1 school counselor to 250 students, 1 school social worker to 250 students or 50 students with intensive needs, and 1 school psychologist to 500 students, at each school.
- ✓ Ensure compliance with State minimum staffing regulations requiring certified school library media specialists in city secondary schools and no later than October 31, 2024 a report on the school-by-school breakdown of certified school library media specialists.
- ✓ Bar the DOE from conditioning funding on the use of specific assessments in elementary schools without regard for the quantity, frequency, and efficacy of the assessment or the data it provides.
- ✓ Require no later than July 31, 2024, a report on funding provided pursuant to section 211-d of the Education Law including, for each budget code in each U/A: 1) the total amount of such funding provided for such budget code in the current fiscal year and in the preceding fiscal year; and 2) the total amount of City funding provided for such budget code in the current fiscal year and in the preceding fiscal year.



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## WE MUST ENACT URGENT REFORMS TO THE BUDGET PROCESS THAT WILL ENHANCE TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND CONSENSUS

While OMB increased its two-year tax projection by about \$3 billion and its four-year estimates by about \$7 billion since their last forecast, the Council's own revenue projections didn't fare much better. Over the same less than three month period, the Council increased its own tax revenue forecasts by nearly \$5 billion over the next two fiscal years and by almost \$11 billion over the next four fiscal years.

### It's time to retire the budget scare tactics employed by every administration

- ✓ Hold consensus economic and revenue forecasting conferences with outside experts including from the public sector unions, throughout the year and before the release of each financial plan
- ✓ Require the Mayor to use revised tax revenue and spending projections for each financial plan, rather than rely on months-old data as he did this fall
- ✓ Synchronize the projections released by municipal monitors so that they don't lag behind the Mayor's by as much as 6 weeks
- ✓ Bolster existing Charter provisions requiring the Mayor to consider alternative revenue estimates submitted by outside entities
- ✓ Institute recurring PEG monitoring meetings between OMB, budget monitors, and public sector unions

### Shore up the protections promised by the 1989 Charter

- ✓ Prevent abuse of the impoundment power whose existing language prohibits policy impoundments
- ✓ Expand use of Budget Function Analysis to cover all agencies and link it to budget administration to combat circumvention of U/A requirements
- ✓ Transition to Outcome Budgeting, where instead of basing a budget on the previous year's spending and adjusting allocations up or down, the budget is organized around the City's priority outcomes and resources are allocated for those services that will achieve the desired outcomes

**Let's end the political shenanigans  
in the New York City Budget Process**

JANUARY 22, 2024

# DAILY NEWS

## We must end the city's annual budget soap opera

*By Michael Mulgrew*

You can't blame New Yorkers for feeling whipsawed. In the last several months the Adams administration has declared a fiscal emergency and dramatic cuts to essential services, then congratulated itself for restoring some – but not all – of those planned reductions....Unfortunately, these kinds of theatrics are easy to stage under the city's current budget process. ....

The first act in this telenovela is always the same. As the city is putting together a new budget, it routinely lowballs expected revenue and overestimates planned spending...In Act Two, as revenue arrives the administration has to figure out what to do with the money it claimed it wouldn't have. Rather than pay for services this year, the budgeteers use

these funds to pay bills that aren't due for a year or more ... In Act Three, as it negotiates the budget with the City Council, the administration grudgingly admits that the projected gap has been closed by unanticipated revenues, supplemented by the heroic measures it has undertaken to cut costs and generate savings. Before June 30 the Council passes the new budget with some small additions it has negotiated. The yawning gap has been transformed into a substantial surplus ... and the curtain comes down on that year's budget drama.

This is not just a harmless sideshow. It misleads the public, creates distrust, and forces advocates to focus their energies on maintaining current levels of service, bypassing real debates on budget priorities....

The central problem is that the current budget process – developed after the city's fiscal crisis of the 1970s – allows the mayor to set the terms of the debate. The administration unilaterally determines the spending of billions, while local groups and their representatives struggle over the use of millions of dollars.

After nearly 50 years, New York's budget process badly needs an update to make it more democratic and more responsive to the needs of groups and communities. The mayor recently announced that he has created a panel of outside experts to help guide his administration on budget issues. Their first recommendation should be to ring down the curtain on this annual budget melodrama and insist that the city make honest projections of future revenues and spending.



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TESTIMONY ON BEHALF OF LOCAL 372 | NYC BOARD OF EDUCATION EMPLOYEES  
DISTRICT COUNCIL 37 | AFSCME  
TO THE EXECUTIVE BUDGET HEARING ON EDUCATION  
MAY 15, 2024  
2:30 PM

Education Committee Chairwoman Rita Joseph, and distinguished members of the City Council, I am Donald Nesbit, Executive Vice President of Local 372 - NYC Board of Education Employees, District Council 37 | AFSCME. I am here today to provide testimony on the Mayor's proposed budget for education on behalf of the approximately 24,000 members we represent, including the 8,000 School Lunch Workers under the leadership of our President, Shaun D. Francois I. **Local 372 respectfully requests \$10 million for the hiring of an additional 1,000 School Lunch Workers, \$7 million for the cuts in implementing the collective bargaining increases for breakfast and after school lunch programs, \$3 million for the establishment of the SchoolFood Nutrition Committees program, and for the DOE and the SCA to comprehensively evaluate the school system's outstanding kitchen ventilation needs throughout all five boroughs. We also respectfully request the additional funding necessary for a remediation plan pursuant to that evaluation.**

Local 372 School Lunch Workers perform essential support services to help the nearly one million public school children of New York City to be learning-ready. We unload, prepare, and serve food each day, including the summer. Not only is school lunch critical to a student's health and well-being, especially for low-income students; it also ensures that students have the nutrition they need throughout the day to learn.

We would like to thank the City for its restoration of \$25 million towards school food programs and the restoration of some popular school food items back on the menu. Now that the City has restored funding towards the school lunch program, it is important that there is sufficient

kitchen staff to service the newly restored menu. Local 372 respectfully requests that the City **hire an additional 1,000 School Lunch Workers and establish the SchoolFood Nutrition Committees program.**

These hires would bring the total number of School Lunch Workers in service up to 9,000. This will help reduce the strain on the current workforce while still continuing to fulfill the breakfast and lunch initiatives set by the previous and current administrations, including implementing more cooking from scratch, and continuing to feed the children of New York City. In addition, this would allow the City to work quickly in replacing our members who are retiring and leaving their jobs. During the pandemic, School Lunch Workers were praised as heroes, who served tens of millions of meals to students, their families, and members of the community in need, risking their lives and health to make sure they were fed. These workers are doing this vital work while they are dealing with staff shortages. Hiring an additional 1,000 School Lunch Workers ensures that our heroes are not burned out and continue to serve quality school lunch food to our children and the communities they serve.

According to Kate Mackenzie, Executive Director of the Mayor's Office of Food Policy, school food consumption has increased 9% this year alone, a total of 66 thousand more meals each day. With children consuming more food, School Lunch workers need more hands on deck to meet the demand. The Department of Education's Office of SchoolFood even acknowledges that there is a staffing shortage through their hiring of additional cafeteria workers. However, with the inadequate staffing levels, it makes it extremely difficult for School Lunch Workers meet these requirements within work hours. These workers have to come to work earlier and stay later without extra compensation to simply make sure food is ready to feed a million children across 1,600 schools when that bell rings.

School Lunch Workers must also be able to accomodate dietary restrictions, including medical or religious restrictions. With there being several enhanced school food programs to accomodate such restrictions, School Lunch Workers must follow multiple sets of strict guidelines to ensure our school children are eating safely. Additionally, we must also service the “Breakfast in the Classroom” program and prepare for lunch. Local 372 is extremely supportive of these programs, as well as universal lunch – every child deserves to come to class with a full stomach. However, in order for the school food programs to be successful and efficient, we need an additional 1,000 School Lunch Workers to alleviate the strain we are already experiencing.

In the past, there was a federal program that coincided with schools, including New York City, which helped create the SchoolFood Nutrition Committees. The committees provided nutrition based education to SchoolFood staff, students, parents, and the school adminitration. It also provided a space where students were able to voice their opinions on the food they were consuming and provide recommendations on new menu items to be added. By allowing students to voice their opinions and menu recommendations, it allowed for the menu options to be added and have the menus reflect the communities these schools districts are in. Additionally, implementing these menu recommendations would increase student consumption at an even higher percentage, resulting in decreasing the number of children going hungry. **Local 372 requests that the City fund a restoration of the SchoolFood Nutrition Committees.**

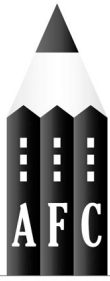
Another struggle faced by our school lunch employees, which also has a direct impact on sanitation and hygiene in the school cafeterias and kitchens, is the inadequate air conditioning or ventilation. Updating the non-existent and inadequate cooling and air exchange systems in public schools kitchens has been a persistent struggle faced by School Lunch Workers for decades. The vast majority of schools built from the 1930s through the 1990s lack the proper design and operation for acceptable indoor air circulation. Due to the age and condition of these buildings,



many lack the necessary electrical capabilities to simply install cool units in kitchen spaces. Many of these kitchens Local 372 workers are in every day have little to no cooling or ventilation and can reach over 130 degrees! Proper air conditioning would filter out heat, fumes, and airborne pestilence.

A 2017 report titled “Too Hot to Learn,” detailed the significant lack of air conditioning in schools. Former Mayor Bill de Blasio and other City officials rallied their support to install air conditioning in teaching spaces. That same energy and leadership is needed to support the health and safety of thousands of School Lunch Workers. We thank former Council Members Treyger, Kallos, and current member Yeger for recognizing this fact and introducing Resolution 1145-2019, calling on the Department to install air conditioning or cooling systems in New York City public school kitchens. **Local 372 requests that the City fund a comprehensive DOE/SCA evaluation of the school system’s outstanding kitchen ventilation needs throughout all five boroughs, and we request more funding be allocated towards a remediation plan pursuant to that evaluation.**

In closing, Local 372 extends its gratitude to the City Council for your support to our members. We hope you support our request for \$20 million to support School Lunch staffing, revamping the SchoolFood Nutrition Committees program, and additional resources to remediate their working conditions. On behalf of Local 372, NYC Board of Education, District Council 37 | AFSCME, I thank you for this opportunity to testify. I will answer any questions you may have.



# Advocates for Children of New York

Protecting every child's right to learn

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## Testimony to be delivered to the New York City Council Committee on Education and Committee on Finance

### Re: FY 2025 Executive Budget - Education

May 15, 2024

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Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you. My name is Randi Levine, and I am the Policy Director at Advocates for Children of New York. For more than 50 years, Advocates for Children has worked to ensure a high-quality education for New York students who face barriers to academic success, focusing on students from low-income backgrounds. Every year, we help thousands of families navigate the school system.

We appreciate that the Mayor's Executive Budget includes around \$600 million for critical education programs that were at risk of drastic cuts or elimination due to the expiration of federal COVID-19 stimulus funds. These initiatives benefit hundreds of thousands of students every year, and their loss would have been devastating.

Yet, a number of important education programs, included as priorities in the City Council's response to the preliminary budget, remain on the budget chopping block.

With respect to early childhood education, we urge you to ensure the final budget rejects the \$170 million proposed cut to **3-K and Pre-K**. Furthermore, the final budget must include sufficient funding to meet the City's legal obligation to provide **preschool special education classes and services** to all children who need them.

These services are not optional but, currently, hundreds of children are waiting for a seat in a preschool special education class and thousands of preschoolers with disabilities are waiting for their legally mandated services.

For K-12 education, we urge you to ensure that funding is restored for:

- **Restorative justice practices** to reduce the use of suspensions, address students' underlying needs, and keep them in school (\$12M in expiring federal stimulus funding).



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- **Mental Health Continuum**, a cross-agency partnership to help students with significant mental health needs access expedited mental healthcare; the Mayor highlighted this model in a press release last month a week before its funding was left out of the budget (\$5M in expiring one-year city funding).
- **Immigrant family communications and outreach** to help immigrant families get needed school-related information through strategies such as conducting language access campaigns, calling and texting families, and collaborating with immigrant-facing community-based organizations (\$4M in expiring one-year city funding).
- **Community schools** to provide wrap-around support to students (\$14M in expiring one-year city funding).
- **Student Success Centers** to help students prepare for college (\$3.3M in expiring federal stimulus funding).

While the funding for these programs is set to expire in June, the needs are not going away.

The City must also address the longstanding inaccessibility of school buildings by allocating an additional \$450 million—for a total investment of \$1.25 billion—for school accessibility projects in the 2025–2029 Capital Plan. As of the start of the 2023–24 school year, only 31% of schools are fully accessible to students, teachers, parents, and community members with disabilities.

Our written testimony has more information about each of these priorities.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you and for the work you have already done to help ensure the continuation of important education programs funded with soon-to-expire federal stimulus funds. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.



ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN OF NEW YORK

# City Education Budget Priorities for FY 2025

## **The Fiscal Year 2025 budget must save education programs that are providing critical support to some of New York City's most marginalized students and families.**

We are pleased that the Mayor's Executive Budget includes around \$600 million for critical education programs, services, and staff positions that were at risk of drastic cuts or elimination due to the expiration of federal COVID-19 stimulus funds, including 3-K and preschool special education, 100 shelter-based community coordinators, 500 school social workers and psychologists, more than 100 community schools, Learning to Work programs, bilingual supports, translation and interpretation services, and programs to support students with dyslexia. These initiatives benefit hundreds of thousands of New York City students every year, and their loss would have been devastating for both individual young people and school communities.

While we acknowledge and appreciate the funding committed in the Executive Budget, there is more work to do: **several vital programs—the Mental Health Continuum, restorative justice, Promise NYC, immigrant family communications, and Student Success Centers—were left out of the Mayor's budget and remain on the chopping block due to expiring funds; the investments in 3-K and community schools do not represent a full restoration of current funding levels; and the investments in preschool special education are not sufficient to meet the need.** We are glad that the City Council response to the preliminary budget included the need to restore funding for each of these programs. Elected leaders must protect funding for public education and ensure the City does not take steps that would violate the civil rights of students with disabilities and other high-needs populations. While funding is on the chopping block, the needs are not going away.

At the same time, **the City must also address the longstanding inaccessibility of school buildings by allocating an additional \$450 million—for a total investment of \$1.25 billion—for school accessibility projects in the 2025–2029 Capital Plan.** As of the start of the 2023–24 school year, only 31% of schools are fully accessible to students, teachers, parents, and community members with disabilities.

These priorities are described in more detail below.

### **FY 2025 EXPENSE BUDGET PRIORITIES**

- [3-K and Pre-K](#)
- [Preschool special education](#)
- [Promise NYC](#)
- [Immigrant family communication & outreach](#)
- [The Mental Health Continuum](#)
- [Restorative justice practices](#)
- [Community schools](#)
- [Student Success Centers](#)

### **FY 2025–2029 CAPITAL BUDGET PRIORITY**

[Improve school accessibility](#)



# FY 2025 Expense Budget Priorities

## 3-K AND PRE-K

3-K and Pre-K attract families into the public system at the very start of their children's education and provide high-quality early learning opportunities to children who otherwise would not have access—helping prepare them for success in kindergarten and beyond. The number of children participating in 3-K doubled from 17,500 in 2019–20 to 35,700 in 2022–23 thanks to the investment of federal funds. While the Executive Budget includes \$92M in one-year funding to make up for the loss of federal dollars, as well as an additional \$3.5M for outreach, **a funding gap of \$170M remains due to proposed city budget cuts to 3-K and Pre-K.**

## PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION

Even as NYC has expanded 3-K and Pre-K, hundreds of 3- and 4-year-olds with disabilities are still denied their rights to preschool special education programs. The City has used \$96M in soon-to-expire federal stimulus funds to support preschoolers with disabilities including by offering a “contract enhancement” to preschool special education programs run by community-based organizations, many of which had been closing classes due to financial challenges; hiring preschool related service providers; and adding Committee on Preschool Special Education staff who are needed to help address delays in evaluating and serving children. The FY 2025 Executive Budget includes \$83M toward continuing these efforts going forward. However, even with this year's \$96M federal investment, thousands of preschoolers with disabilities are currently waiting for their legally mandated services and more than 600 children are waiting for a seat in a preschool special education class—in violation of both their legal rights and the Mayor's December 2022 promise to address the longstanding shortage of seats. While the Executive Budget adds \$25M in one-year funding for preschool special education classes in district schools, **this allocation is not sufficient to meet the need.** Federal law provides rights to students with disabilities that do not diminish with budgetary pressures, and the City must make the necessary investments to ensure all preschoolers with disabilities get the classes and services they need in a timely manner.

## PROMISE NYC

No child should be turned away from an early learning program because of their immigration status, and in January 2023, the City launched Promise NYC to increase access to subsidized childcare for children who would otherwise be ineligible for existing programs due to federal restrictions. More than 600 children are now enrolled in childcare programs thanks to Promise NYC, which is supported by \$16M in expiring one-year Administration for Children's Services (ACS) funding. The number of children who stand to benefit from Promise NYC has only grown larger since the program was first announced; access to early care and education will help prepare immigrant children for success in elementary school and beyond, while also enabling their parents to work and connect with resources. The Executive Budget does not include funding to continue this program beyond June. **We support the recommendation made by the City Council in its response to the preliminary budget to sustain this program and increase funding from \$16M to \$25M.**

## MULTI-FACETED IMMIGRANT FAMILY COMMUNICATION & OUTREACH

This initiative strengthens New York City Public Schools (NYCPS)'s communication with immigrant families—many of whom would otherwise be left without important information—by using local ethnic media to share school-related updates, sending paper notices to families' homes, reaching families via phone calls and text messages, and collaborating with immigrant-facing community-based organizations to create and launch information campaigns. It is critical for this initiative to continue, especially given the recent increase in the number of newly arrived immigrant families in New York City, but **it is supported by \$4M in one-year city funding that was left out of the Executive Budget.**

## THE MENTAL HEALTH CONTINUUM

The Mental Health Continuum is a cross-agency partnership (NYCPS, Health + Hospitals, Department of Health & Mental Hygiene) to help students with significant mental health needs access expedited mental healthcare. This innovative model, which was highlighted in the [Mayor's Mental Health Plan](#) and the [City Council's Mental Health Roadmap](#), supports students at more than 50 high-needs schools through school partnerships with H+H mental health clinics, dedicated staff to provide students with timely access to mental health services, a NYC Well hotline to advise school staff, mobile response teams to respond to students in crisis, and training for school staff in Collaborative Problem Solving to build their capacity to address student behavior. Recognizing the youth mental health crisis, the [Mayor announced](#) in April that the City would open 16 school-based mental health clinics as part of the Mental Health Continuum. Yet, **the \$5M in one-year city funding for this initiative (NYCPS: \$787K, H+H: \$3.74M, DOHMH: \$472K) is expiring in June and was left out of the Executive Budget.**

## RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PRACTICES

One-time federal funding represents the bulk of the City's investment in restorative justice practices, which enable schools to use alternatives to exclusionary discipline that keep students in the classroom while helping them build and repair relationships. NYCPS is currently using \$12M in expiring federal dollars for restorative practices. All students deserve schools where they feel safe and supported, but without sufficient resources and appropriate alternatives for addressing behavior and helping students navigate conflict, schools will continue to resort to suspensions—which do not make schools safer; disproportionately impact students of color, students with disabilities, and youth who are homeless or in the foster system; and have been linked with lower educational attainment and higher odds of future contact with the juvenile or criminal legal system. **Continued funding for this initiative (\$12M) was left out of the Executive Budget.**

## COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Community schools provide students and their families with wrap-around supports and services, such as after-school programming, adult education classes, and medical, dental, and mental healthcare. This initiative, which expanded from 266 to more than 400 schools thanks to expiring federal and city funds, has proven effective at lowering chronic absenteeism and increasing on-time high school graduation rates. **While the Executive Budget includes a \$56M restoration for community schools, there is still a \$14M gap due to one-year city funding that expires in June.**

## STUDENT SUCCESS CENTERS

NYCPS used \$3.3M in expiring federal stimulus funding to support Student Success Centers in 34 high schools, where trained youth leaders build a culture of college-going in their schools and help their peers with the college admissions process. **Continued funding for this initiative (\$3.3M) was left out of the Mayor's budget.**



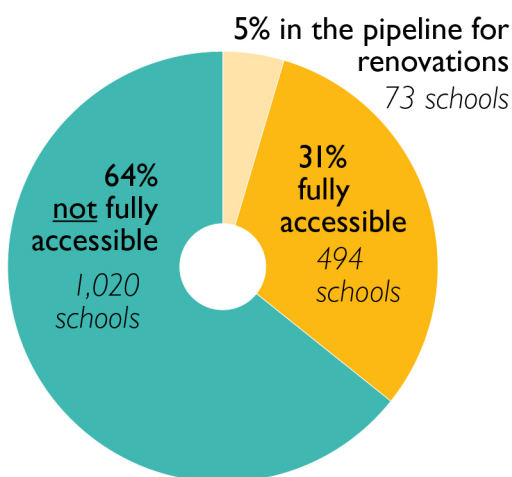
ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN OF NEW YORK

# Capital Budget Priority for FY 2025–2029

## IMPROVE SCHOOL ACCESSIBILITY

More than 30 years after the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibited discrimination on the basis of disability, physical barriers to full inclusion remain widespread in New York City's schools—and as a result, New Yorkers with disabilities continue to be excluded from buildings that are central to public life. In fact, **as of the start of the 2023–24 school year, only 31% of schools are fully accessible to students, teachers, parents, and community members with disabilities.**

For the child who cannot attend their neighborhood school because every entrance sits atop a flight of stairs, the parent or grandparent who has to miss every concert and school play because the auditorium cannot accommodate their wheelchair, or the school social worker whose employment opportunities are constrained by the lack of accessible bathrooms, the ADA still exists in name only.



➤ Go to <https://bit.ly/AccessibilityMap> to see the state of school accessibility in your district.

Five years ago, the situation was much worse—fewer than one in five schools was fully accessible as of the start of the 2018–19 school year—and New York City invested a historic \$750 million in the 2020–2024 Capital Plan to improve school accessibility. While this funding has enabled significant progress, there is much work left to do: NYC Public Schools itself estimated that it would take \$1 billion in each of the next four five-year plans to reach “maximum practical accessibility” by 2045.

At a minimum, the City must make the investments necessary to keep pace with the work done over the past five years. The proposed 2025–2029 Capital Plan includes \$800 million for school accessibility projects, **an amount that would represent a decreased commitment to improving school accessibility once inflation is taken into account.** This sum represents less than 5% of all proposed capital spending for NYC Public Schools for the next five years.

**The City should allocate an additional \$450 million—for a total investment of \$1.25 billion—for school accessibility projects in the 2025–2029 Capital Plan, with the goal of making at least 50% of buildings that serve as the primary location for a school fully accessible by 2030.**





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**Testimony Submitted by Steven Morales, NY Policy Director of All Our Kin  
for the FY25 Executive Budget Hearing  
New York City Council Committee on Education  
May 15, 2024**

Honorable Chairs Brannan and Joseph and Members of the Committee,

My name is Steven Morales and I'm the New York Policy Director at All Our Kin. All Our Kin is a nonprofit organization that trains, supports, and sustains family child care educators who operate licensed child care programs in their homes. We work with roughly 300 family child care educators in New York City with the capacity to care for over 4,000 children.

In our testimony on the preliminary budget, we called for the city to **commit to investing in early care and education for children from birth through age five in this year's City Budget and beyond.**

While the Executive Budget replaces some expiring federal funds, unfortunately, it still falls short. The City Council and the Mayor must put this City back on track to have free, universal Pre-K and 3K for all children. And that is only a first step. We also need to go further by making sure that every family with a child, no matter the age, has access to the child care they need. And we need to make sure that our early childhood educators, including home-based family child care programs, earn thriving wages with benefits so they can afford to keep doing what they love.

We are calling on the Council to move us forward toward these ambitious goals in this budget and beyond.

We have included our full NYC Legislative Agenda and budget asks below, but what I want to highlight here is that family child care educators, who serve 80,000 children across the city, are still earning \$10.61 per hour on average. That includes those who are paid by the DOE or by ACS for either contracted or voucher-based care.

In this budget, the Department of Education, as well as ACS, must offer equal pay for equal work in the child care field and that means paying family child care rates that are comparable to our public schools. Our city's long-term stability requires investing in our children, our families, and our educators. We hope the final budget will make that commitment.





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Our specific budget asks for FY25 are as follows:

- 1. Fully fund all of the city’s existing early childhood programs, including the citywide expansion of 3K.**
- 2. Give parents access to the full range of options they need, including family child care.** Licensed home-based child care programs have been systematically limited or entirely excluded from offering 3-K and Pre-K. This limitation hurts families by restricting their access to the flexibility, cultural responsiveness, and relationships-based environment that family child care programs offer. It also prevents providers from accessing this critical revenue stream. The City Council should address this inequity by requiring NYC Public Schools to fully include family child care providers in all of its available programs and to ensure that families receive information about all of the child care options in their community. This will help ensure the child care supply is able to offer the full range of options that families demand.
- 3. Ensure all early childhood educators, including family child care providers, receive pay and benefits that are comparable to NYC Public School teachers.** Whether in a community based center, a home-based family child care program, or a NYC Public Schools classroom, all early childhood educators are doing the crucial work of caring for and educating our youngest children. Yet our city continues to pay some educators more than others simply based on the setting they work in. We urge the City Council to correct this injustice by embracing equal pay for equal work and paying the family child care workforce equitable wages and benefits – both through City contracts and child care vouchers.

Early childhood education must be a priority for our city and family child care plays an essential role in our early care and education system. Rather than cutting these crucial programs, it is time for the city to double down on its investment in early childhood education, including 3K, for the long term health and sustainability of our families, children, and educators.

We also ask that you consider All Our Kin’s full [Legislative Agenda for Family Child Care in New York City](#):

**Family child care is an essential piece of New York City’s early care and education system.** Family child care — paid child care that takes place in the home of a licensed provider — is one



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of the most common child care arrangements in New York City. There are roughly 6,000 family child care programs in New York City, which account for nearly 37 percent of licensed child care capacity for children from birth to age five. Thirty-eight percent of children under five in subsidized care in New York City are in family child care programs.

**Family child care needs policy champions in New York City.** Despite their critical role supporting our city's children, families, communities, and economy, family child care programs have been systematically under-resourced and undervalued in policy and practice. Family child care educators are trained professional educators and business owners who ensure that children and families have the foundation they need to succeed, yet they are among the bottom three percent of earners in the workforce. At the same time, too many parents struggle to afford child care as they navigate the increasingly high cost of living in this city. It is up to policymakers to make sure our children, families, and child care educators can continue to make New York City their home.

**All Our Kin envisions a New York City where all families have access to high-quality child care in the setting of their choice.** Children should have the opportunity to spend their days in nurturing, educational environments, and family child care educators must be well-compensated and supported for the important work they do.

**All Our Kin urges the New York City Council to take the following actions to sustain the family child care workforce, make it easier for families to access care and promote high-quality learning.**

1. **Ensure family child care professionals, including primary educators and assistants, earn enough to support and sustain their families.** Family child care programs are closing their doors because educators, including those paid by the Administration for Children's Services, Human Resources Administration and Department of Education, are not adequately compensated for the professional early care and education they provide to our city's youngest children. After paying their child care business expenses, the average family child care educator in New York City earns only \$10.61 per hour. Increasing compensation for family child care is the most important step our city can take to turn the tide on closures and maintain and expand child care access for families.

**City Council leaders should:** invest city dollars in permanent wage supplement grants to all regulated family child care programs; ensure equitable distribution of existing city investments in early childhood education; and advocate to state policymakers to increase



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New York State's Child Care Assistance Program payment rates to meet the true cost of care.

2. **Invest in comprehensive healthcare and retirement benefits for all family child care educators and assistants.** As small businesses, family child care educators and their staff often lack access to the affordable and comprehensive health insurance and retirement plans they need for their physical and financial well-being. Ensuring access to benefits is also a key to retaining educators in the field for the long-term. Washington D.C., Washington State, and California have shown it is possible for cities and states to invest in these essential resources for educators.

**City Council leaders should** offer family child care educators comprehensive health insurance and retirement savings plans to help them stay in the field while caring for themselves and their own families.

3. **Reimagine and reinvest in staffed family child care networks to ensure educators have access to high-quality training and resources.** Staffed family child care networks are a research-based way to support quality, sustainability, and community among family child care educators. New York City's existing family child care networks hold the potential to give educators what they need to thrive, but insufficient funding and a complex web of requirements have forced networks and educators to spend more time on compliance than on the quality activities that we know work.

**City Council leaders should** engage family child care educators, parents, and network leaders to reimagine what family child care networks offer educators in NYC so that everyone has access to the training, coaching, and support they need. The Council must also ensure family child care networks are adequately funded to hire the staff they need to effectively implement all of their essential functions.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Steven Morales  
[steven@allourkin.org](mailto:steven@allourkin.org)



50 Broadway, 29th Floor  
New York, NY 10004  
[www.alignny.org](http://www.alignny.org)

**Testimony for Committee on Education  
Executive Budget Hearing for Fiscal Year 2025**

**May 15, 2024**

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*Executive Director  
Community Voices  
Heard*

Jose Lopez  
*Co-Executive Director,  
Make the Road NY*

Thank you to the Education Committee chair Council Member Rita Joseph for the opportunity to submit testimony today.

My name is Faiza Azam and I am the Climate and Labor Organizer for ALIGN: The Alliance for a Greater New York. We bring together labor, climate, and community for a more just and sustainable New York. Along with the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance (NYC-EJA), we co-coordinate the Climate Works for All Coalition—a group of labor, community, student, parent, faith, and environmental justice organizations demanding a Just Transition for workers and Environmental Justice communities. We focus on campaigns that move New York City towards an equitable economy, a healthy climate, and promotes justice for low income Black and Brown communities across New York City.

I am a graduate of the New York City Public Schools system. I attended a public high school in South Brooklyn which was severely damaged during Hurricane Sandy nearly 12 years ago and is still not properly upgraded to withstand the next natural disaster. My younger siblings are current students or incoming students of a public middle school in South Brooklyn, and their school was also destroyed by Hurricane Sandy. To this day, each time there is a storm, the school floods up to 4 feet. This is not normal.

Students, teachers, and faculty are among those first impacted when a climate disaster strikes, and the growing impact of climate change will make matters worse. Our coalition is dedicated to ensuring that New York City prioritizes decarbonization in citywide municipal buildings, especially public school buildings. NYC school students, teachers, and faculty deserve a safe and healthy workplace and learning environment.

Investing in decarbonization for NYC Public Schools will save the City millions in climate disaster repairs and make us a national leader in the transition to a clean energy economy. Under the Leading the Charge initiative, Mayor Adams has committed \$4 billion to electrify 100 public schools by 2030; to date, he has only allocated \$1.7 billion thus far. With more than 1300 buildings in the City, this is not enough. Our schools need investments to match the depth and scale of the climate crisis and priority should be given to schools in environmental justice communities. We must

be proactive and invest in climate resilience that will save the City billions in the long-term.

As a coalition, we strongly urge the City to invest \$600M in this budget session for deep retrofits beginning with the upgrading and electrification in schools with the most need for disaster preparedness and climate resilient infrastructure. Not only will this create a healthier learning environment for students and improve the health of surrounding communities and existing workers, but it will also create more good paying, family-sustaining union careers. Additionally, increasing the funds for this fiscal year will put New York on a path to electrify and upgrade 500 school buildings by 2030 and become a net zero emissions school district by 2040. This is our coalition's vision for Green, Healthy Schools.

We see people from various backgrounds, ages and careers mobilizing for investments into Green, Healthy Schools. We are asking for an investment in the New York City workforce, students, and families that will result in savings in climate damage repairs, create green jobs and long lasting careers and a healthier, safer, and more resilient New York.

Thank you for your time

Sincerely,

Faiza Azam

**Testimony of the Alliance for Quality Education  
at the joint NYC Council Hearing on Education  
Wednesday May 15th 2024**

Dear Speaker Adams, Council Finance Chair Brannan, Education Committee Chair Joseph and council staff,

My name is Smitha Milich. I am the Senior Campaign Strategist for NYC with the Alliance for Quality Education (AQE). We work statewide to make sure that equity, educational and racial justice prevail through funding our schools and implementing programs that meet students' needs. We have worked tirelessly to have full funding to operate with all the resources possible. At the core of our work is the fact that Black and brown students must be prioritized to reverse the effects of decades long, intentional and chronic underfunding.

An integral part of our work on equity is elevating the voices of parents and ensuring meaningful engagement in the education process, including school governance. This is why we have testified alongside parents during the State Education Departments hearings echoing calls for a clear and planned phase-out of Mayoral Control.

As steering members of The People's Plan, we support a #PeoplesBudget and restorations to schools and childcare, key resources that New Yorkers and their children rely on. The Mayor's cuts to public education and early care and learning are completely unnecessary and should be reversed.

Specifically, the following key education programs that are at risk of being rolled back or eliminated must be included in the final budget (\$103.3M) (find out more about the programs below [here](#)):

- Restorative justice practices (\$12M)
- Mental Health Continuum (\$5M)
- Community Schools (\$14M)
- Immigrant Family Communication & Outreach (\$4M)
- Student Success Centers (\$3.3M)
- School Nurses (\$65M)

Separately, the following early care and learning programs and funding must be included in the final budget (\$361M):

- Advertising and outreach for childcare programs (\$10M)
- Promise NYC (\$25M) which allows children without immigration status to access the child care assistance program that pays for them to attend a child care.
- Restoration of proposed cuts to 3K and pre-K (\$170M)
- Extended day seats (\$60M)
- Restorations to special education preschool by (\$96M)

Additionally, the city must hold school budgets harmless for enrollment decline.

Finally, the Council must pass terms and conditions that:

- Increase transparency around class size laws by adding new units of appropriations to ensure proper funding of each school for class sizes and prevent violation of state “supplement not supplant” requirements
- Increase transparency by enacting terms and conditions that report on uses of foundation aid
- End mid-year cuts to schools through terms and conditions

It is our hope that the Mayor and Council can accomplish a people’s budget through negotiations. BUT if not, we need Council to use its full budget powers of amending the budget and passing terms and conditions to make sure education and childcare are restored and funded in any budget that passes.

Thank you.



## Testimony of the American Heart Association

### Before the New York City Council Committee on Finance and the Committee on Education

May 15, 2024

Greg Mihailovich, Community Advocacy Director  
American Heart Association, New York City

Thank you, Chair Brannan, Chair Joseph, and the members of the New York City Council Committees on Finance and on Education. On behalf of the volunteers of the American Heart Association, we are grateful for the opportunity to present testimony related to a key educational initiative that make will a lifesaving difference for the communities of our city – CPR in Schools.

Each year, more than 350,000 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests (OHCA) occur in the United States. Most (73%) occur in the home. **9 out of 10 people who suffer an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest die.** Cardiac arrest is an electrical malfunction in the heart that causes an irregular heartbeat (arrhythmia) and disrupts the flow of blood to the brain, lungs, and other organs, and is a leading cause of death. When a person has a cardiac arrest, survival depends on immediately receiving cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) from someone nearby. **CPR, especially if performed immediately, can double, or triple a person's chance of survival.** Unfortunately, bystanders only perform CPR 40% of the time.<sup>i</sup> Women who suffer an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest receive bystander CPR less often than men.<sup>ii</sup> Black and Hispanic victims of out-of-hospital cardiac arrests are less likely to receive bystander CPR, as compared with White patients.<sup>iii</sup> We need to do better.

Teaching students Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and how to use an automated external defibrillator (AED) can save thousands of lives by creating a generation of people that are prepared to act in an emergency and putting more qualified lifesavers in our communities. In 2003, the International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation recommended that CPR training be incorporated into the standard school curriculum.<sup>iv</sup> The long-term thinking of that recommendation is that children trained in CPR contribute significantly to the number of adults trained in CPR in the community. Increasing the number of people trained to perform CPR increases the likelihood that a victim of an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest promptly receives CPR. Studies show that any previous training in CPR was a strong predictor of whether bystanders acted to provide CPR to the victim.<sup>v</sup>



Since 2015, New York State requires that all students in senior high schools be provided instruction in hands only cardiopulmonary resuscitation and the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED),<sup>vi</sup> although the requirement was waived for graduates in the 2019–20 school year due to COVID-19 concerns.<sup>vii</sup> In talking with health and physical education educators, we have learned that many schools lack the resources to train their students properly, and some schools still aren't even aware of the CPR requirement. If we want our students to be able to act if someone nearby suffers a cardiac arrest, we need to make sure our high schools are training their students properly and have the materials and equipment needed for effective CPR training.

**We ask the NYC Council to dedicate at least \$500,000 in the next budget to ensure NYC high school students receive proper CPR and AED training as part of their CPR in Schools graduation requirement.**

Thank you for everything you have done and will do to protect the lives of the people of New York City. The American Heart Association is a reliable and trusted source of information based in credible science, and we will continue to be your partner in ensuring the health and well-being of all New Yorkers.

<sup>i</sup> Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics—2023 Update: A Report From the American Heart Association

Connie W. Tsao, MD, MPH, FAHA, Chair, Aaron W. Aday, MD, MSc, FAHA, Zaid I. Almarzooq, MBBS, MPH, Cheryl A.M. Anderson, PhD, MPH, FAHA, Pankaj Arora, MD, FAHA, Christy L. Avery, PhD, MPH, FAHA, Carissa M. Baker-Smith, MD, MPH, FAHA, Andrea Z. Beaton, MD, MS, FAHA, Amelia K. Boehme, PhD, MSPH, Alfred E. Buxton, MD, Yvonne Commodore-Mensah, PhD, MHS, RN, FAHA, Mitchell S.V. Elkind, MD, MS, FAHA, Kelly R. Evenson, PhD, MS, FAHA, Chete Eze-Nliam, MD, MPH, Setri Fugar, MD, Giuliano Generoso, MD, PhD, Debra G. Heard, PhD, Swapnil Hiremath, MD, MPH, FAHA, Jennifer E. Ho, MD, FAHA, Rizwan Kalani, MD, Dhruv S. Kazi, MD, MSc, MS, FAHA, Darae Ko, MD, MSc, Deborah A. Levine, MD, MPH, Junxiu Liu, PhD, Jun Ma, MD, PhD, FAHA, Jared W. Magnani, MD, MS, FAHA, Erin D. Michos, MD, MHS, FAHA, Michael E. Mussolino, PhD, FAHA, Sankar D. Navaneethan, MD, MS, MPH, Nisha I. Parikh, MD, MPH, Remy Poudel, MS, MPH, CPH, Mary Rezk-Hanna, PhD, FAHA, Gregory A. Roth, MD, MPH, FAHA, Nilay S. Shah, MD, MPH, Marie-Pierre St-Onge, PhD, FAHA, Evan L. Thacker, PhD, Salim S. Virani, MD, PhD, FAHA, Jenifer H. Voeks, PhD, FAHA, Nae-Yuh Wang, PhD, MS, FAHA, Nathan D. Wong, PhD, MPH, FAHA, Sally S. Wong, PhD, RD, CDN, FAHA, Kristine Yaffe, MD, Seth S. Martin, MD, MHS, FAHA, Vice Chair, on behalf of the American Heart Association Council on Epidemiology and Prevention Statistics Committee and Stroke Statistics Subcommittee

<sup>ii</sup> Perman, S. M., Shelton, S., Rice, J. D., Knoepke, C., Rappaport, K., Adelgais, K. M., Matlock, D. D., Havranek, E., & Daugherty, S. L. (2020). Abstract 139: Understanding why differences in the provision of bystander CPR exist for women versus men: Does the sex of the rescuer matter? *Circulation*, 142(Suppl\_4). [https://doi.org/10.1161/circ.142.suppl\\_4.139](https://doi.org/10.1161/circ.142.suppl_4.139)

<sup>iii</sup> Garcia, R. A., Spertus, J. A., Girotra, S., McNally, B. F., Breathett, K., Del Rios, M., Kennedy, K. F., Nallamothu, B. K., Sasson, C., & Chan, P. S. (2022). Abstract 22: Racial and ethnic differences in bystander cardiopulmonary resuscitation for witnessed out-of-hospital cardiac arrest. *Circulation: Cardiovascular Quality and Outcomes*, 15(Suppl\_1). [https://doi.org/10.1161/circoutcomes.15.suppl\\_1.22](https://doi.org/10.1161/circoutcomes.15.suppl_1.22)

<sup>iv</sup> Chamberlain DA, Hazinski MF. Education in resuscitation: an ILCOR symposium: Utstein Abbey: Stavanger, Norway: June 22–24, 2001. *Circulation*. 2003; 108:2575–2594

<sup>v</sup> Swor R, Khan I, Domeier R, Honeycutt L, Chu K, Compton S. CPR training and CPR performance: do CPR-trained bystanders perform CPR? *Acad Emerg Med*. 2006; 13:596–601

<sup>vi</sup> New York State Education Department. 2022. 100.2 General School Requirements. [online] Available at: <<http://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/1002-general-school-requirements#InstructionCertainSubjects>> [Accessed 20 March 2022].

<sup>vii</sup> New York State Education Department. 2022. Section 100.2(c)(11) of Commissioner's Regulations Hands Only CPR requirement exemption for graduating seniors due to the COVID-19 Crisis. [online] Available at: <<http://www.nysed.gov/memo/curriculum-instruction/section-1002c11-commissioners-regulations-hands-only-cpr-requirement>> [Accessed 20 March 2022].



[www.arisecoalition.org](http://www.arisecoalition.org)

**Testimony of The ARISE Coalition for New York City Council  
Committee on Education and Committee on Finance**

**Re: Fiscal Year 2025 Executive Budget - Education**

**May 15, 2024**

Thank you for the chance to speak with you today about the Capital Plan for Fiscal Years 2025-2029. My name is Maggie Moroff and I am the Coordinator of the ARISE Coalition – a group of over 120 member organizations and individual parents and professionals who have been working together since 2008 to address system-wide concerns affecting the City’s more than 200,000 students with disabilities. We aim to bring about improvements to the daily experiences of youth with disabilities and the families that support them and to the long-term outcomes for all youth receiving special education services in New York City. I also work as the Senior Special Education Policy Coordinator at Advocates for Children of New York. Today, I’m here representing the ARISE members.

The vast majority of New York City public school buildings have historically been inaccessible to students, staff, family members and community stakeholders with physical accessibility needs. That has meant that students with accessibility needs have far too frequently been excluded from the schools their siblings and friends attend and have had to travel sometimes rather significant distances every day for school. Parents and other family members with physical disabilities have had trouble joining events like PTA meetings, school performances, and community meetings and have been unable to visit their students’ classes for family days and parent-teacher conferences. That’s all been true even though the Americans with Disabilities Act was enacted more than 30 years ago. Three decades is a long time to wait for change.

Ahead of the development of the 2020-2024 Capital Plan, when only 18% - less than one out of five - school buildings in NYC were fully accessible, members of the community advocated to bring about improvements in this arena. With the help of the City Council, the 2020-24 Capital Plan included \$750 million to make more schools accessible. With those funds, the City was able to move to 31% (nearly 1/3) full accessibility in public school buildings. That’s progress we should be excited about, but it still leaves around two-thirds of school buildings less than fully accessible.

Now, the members of ARISE are calling for \$1.25 billion in the 2025-2029 Capital Plan to improve school accessibility—an increase of \$450 million from the current proposal of \$800 million. When inflation is considered, the current proposal actually represents less of a commitment than that of the 2020-24 plan. Our ultimate goal is, of course, 100% school accessibility, but we recognize that will take time and ongoing commitment. An investment of \$1.25 billion over these next five years could and should bring our schools to at least 50% full accessibility. We appreciate that the City Council's response to the preliminary budget included the need to increase funding beyond the proposed \$800 million to make more schools accessible.

We urge you to ensure that the final budget includes \$1.25 billion over five years to improve school accessibility.

Thank you.



**New York City Council Fiscal Year 2025  
Preliminary Budget Hearings Committee  
May 15, 2024**

**Committee on Finance  
(jointly with the Committee on Education and Committee on Higher Education)**

Good afternoon, my name is Christine Serdjenian Yearwood and I am an Education Justice Task Force Member and the NY Field Organizer for the Armenian-American Action Network. Thank you very much to Chair Rita Joseph and Chair Eric Dinowitz for holding this hearing and providing the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Armenian-American Action Network is a community advocacy & research organization fighting anti-Armenian racism in the United States, teaching Armenian-American history, and forwarding civil, immigrant and refugee rights for all communities. Armenian-American Action Network is a proud member of the 18% and Growing Campaign, a critical and diverse city-wide campaign uniting over 90 AANHPI-led and serving organizations across New York City to fight for a fair and equitable budget that protects the needs of our most vulnerable community members. We advocate in solidarity as a collective to hold New York City accountable in providing necessary resources to serve and empower the diverse needs of all AANHPI New Yorkers and other communities of color. As members of this coalition, we understand that all community members stand to be negatively impacted by the impending education budget cuts.

We are witnessing firsthand the detrimental effects of continued budget cuts on essential educational programming. More than 700 Million dollars in COVID-19 funding has been used by the city to fund essential services for students and schools. As federal stimulus funding comes to an end, we must ensure New York schools continue to receive money they need to ensure we support our students.

Currently, there is a false narrative being shared by the administration that budget cuts have been restored and that education is receiving appropriate funding. However, there are programs that are at risk of being *completely* cut on June 30th. This includes

- Restorative justice programs,
- Immigrant family communication and outreach programs,
- Student success centers,
- and the mental health continuum.

Additionally, there are still several critical programs funded with temporary federal dollars that were not *fully* restored including:

- School social workers (cut by \$3M),
- Translation and interpretation services (cut by \$1M),
- and Libraries (cut by \$58M).

Many of the programs that lost significant funding were only partially restored for FY25 but not beyond that. This includes Summer Rising, Learning to Work, 3K, SEED, and Arts programming. These programs are necessary to truly create a more inclusive, safe, healthy, and sustainable society for our diverse diaspora. As a former public school teacher, current public school parent to three young children, and leader with AAAN, I want my children to grow up in a place that not only values their identity and sees their experiences reflected back to them in all aspects of social life, including education and language access, but actively advances a commitment to equity and inclusion through tangible steps like the ones we are asking for today.

As the budget process moves forward, we call on the Mayor and Council to fully close the Federal stimulus funding gap and ensure the continuation of important programs that support students and school communities.

I implore the council to fight for a budget where schools are fully funded.

Sincerely,

Christine Serdjenian Yearwood

*Education Justice Task Force Member & NY Field Organizer, Armenian-American Action Network*

# ARTHUR MILLER FOUNDATION

FOR THEATER EDUCATION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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CINDY TOLAN

NIK WALKER

## Written Testimony for New York City Council Education Committee Hearing May 15, 2024

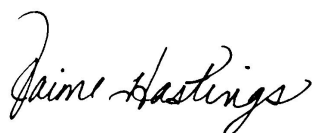
I serve as the Executive Director of the Arthur Miller Foundation, an independent, grassroots non-profit organization honoring the legacy of the American playwright, Arthur Miller, and his New York City public school education, by increasing equitable access to quality theater education for New York City public school students.

A recent study of our AMF Theater Education Programs found that in-school theater education provides students with creative outlets and safe spaces that help protect them psychologically during times of heightened stress. Theater education is an antidote to isolation and fosters literacy, classroom attendance and engagement, self-awareness, and collaboration skills, to name just a few of its proven effects.

The Arthur Miller Foundation currently supports 99 full-time theater teachers in NYC Public Schools, accounting for **50% of current full-time public school theater teachers in New York City. These teachers reach 49,500 students in all 5 boroughs of NYC.** Over the course of 3 years, theater teachers receive dedicated support to build sustainable in-school theater programs through mentorship, cultural partner residencies, classroom materials, Broadway tickets for students, and ongoing professional development. Not only are we supporting in-school theater education programs and certified theater teachers, but we're investing in the NYC cultural economy through partnerships with 8 organizations and their teaching artists.

The most recent arts in schools report showed that only 12% of NYC Public Schools schools have a full-time, certified theater teacher, a number that has decreased over the past two years. I am writing to request that any budget cuts we face do not affect theater teachers (approximately 200 of them) who are already severely underrepresented throughout NYC, when compared to other subject areas and arts disciplines. We need your help for arts education to have an equitable seat at the table. Please consider reinstating the funding for critical arts education programs supported through expiring federal stimulus funds for the 2024-2025 school year.

In order to do our part to continue providing support for our theater teachers and students in NYC Public Schools, we must ensure the Arts Office and arts education infrastructure are not lost and that NYC Public Schools is able to continue hiring certified arts teachers. We cannot lose the progress that's been made to this point when we still have such a long way to go. Please help us ensure that theater education is prioritized and considered a right — not a privilege. Thank you for your time.



Jaime Hastings  
Executive Director



# Arts in Education **NYC** ROUNDTABLE

*Testimony to the New York City Council Committee on Education & Committee on Finance*

*Hon. Rita Joseph, Chair*

*Hon. Justin Brannan, Chair*

*Hearing: Executive Budget Hearing*

*Wednesday, May 15, 2024*

Thank you to Chair Joseph, Chair Brannan, fellow Committee Members and Council staff, for your passion, leadership, and support of arts education in New York City.

My name is Kimberly Olsen, and I am the Executive Director of the NYC Arts in Education Roundtable. **I'm testifying as part of the It Starts with the Arts coalition — calling on our city to prioritize funding for arts education in NYC schools and communities in the FY25 budget.**

We are grateful for the City Council's support for arts education in the budget response and most recently with the \$41M restoration of expiring federal stimulus funding. Opportunities like this mean:

Improving academic outcomes

Preparing students to enter the workforce

Increasing parent involvement and student attendance

Giving students space to develop empathy and critical thinking skills

It all starts with the arts.

Yet, in NYC, arts education is historically underfunded, inconsistent, and inequitable. One third of NYC middle school students are meeting learning requirements in the arts. Instructional hours in the arts vary greatly at the elementary school level. And for the first time since at least 2016, there were NYC High School graduates who did NOT meet the state arts learning requirements.

Most concerning, we learned at the last hearing that currently 307 schools do not have an arts teacher. In 2014, NYC released its State of the Arts report, providing a first-ever school-by-school breakdown of the state of arts education in NYC public schools. In that report, we learned 306 schools did not have a certified arts teacher. 10 years later the number of schools without arts teachers remains the same. Our young people deserve better.

Back in 2014, that lack of access fell disproportionately on the City's lower income neighborhoods, especially the South Bronx and Central Brooklyn. Unfortunately, we don't know which schools are impacted now unless transparency and policy is introduced.

A bright spot is that over 600 arts and cultural organizations partnered with NYC schools last year (the most ever). It should be no surprise that this spike in service coincided with a \$45M add-on in funds to the Department of Cultural Affairs and increase in the Support for Arts Instruction Initiative. Yet, in this interconnected ecosystem, this year we are seeing first-hand how cuts to the Department of Cultural Affairs deeply harm cultural organization's ability to provide resources and partner with schools.

Arts Teachers and Cultural Organizations are essential partners in the delivery of arts instruction. But they can't do that without sustainable funding — otherwise we stand to only widen the access gap for years to come.

New York City must ensure that our schools offer all students the rigor, encouragement, and inspiration they need to learn and thrive in today's classroom. To lay the groundwork for universal access to arts education, the City must:

- **Hire certified arts teachers in every school (\$38M):** Ensure that all schools have at least one certified arts teacher, by bolstering the pipeline of certified arts teachers via supplemental certification program and filling arts staffing gaps (closing the equity gap for at least 307 schools).
- **Require DOE arts funding be spent on the arts (\$15M):** Boost the per student arts allocation to \$100 from \$80.47, and require that money be spent on arts education.
- **Baseline the \$41M arts funding restoration:** Ensure arts education programs on the chopping block due to continue for years to come, including arts initiatives, programming to support student social-emotional wellbeing and academic recovery through the arts, and Summer Rising.
- **Restore and Enhance “Support for Arts Instruction” initiative funding:** Build on city's down payment and boost allocation from \$4M to \$6M.
- **Improve data transparency** by compelling NYC Public Schools to provide a school-by-school breakdown of the state of arts education in public schools via a Legislative Services Request, T&C, and/or Oversight Hearing.
- **Restore and Baseline Funding for the Department of Cultural Affairs:** Reverse November (\$20M) and preliminary budget cuts to DCLA (\$15.5M) and restore/baseline one-time addition of \$45M to Cultural Institutions Group and all cultural organizations across the city.

Our city's young people represent the future of our city. Please prioritize investment in arts education because that future starts with the arts.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Kimberly Olsen  
Executive Director  
NYC Arts in Education Roundtable  
[kolsen@nycaieroundtable.org](mailto:kolsen@nycaieroundtable.org)  
516-205-7639





Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC  
40 Rector Street, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10004

**Written Testimony Submitted to the Education Committee of the New  
York City Council**

**May 15, 2024**

**Jordan Card  
Chief of Staff  
Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City**



Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC  
40 Rector Street, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10004

Thank you to the Education Committee Chair, Council Member Joseph, and as well as to all the Education Committee Members. My name is Jordan Card, and I am the Chief of Staff at Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City (BBBS of NYC). As the nation's first and New York City's largest youth mentoring organization, BBBS of NYC stands with and advocates for all students across the five boroughs who deserve access to mentorship as crucial social-emotional support for their educational experiences.

The vision of BBBS of NYC is to ignite the biggest potential in our City's youth, and we achieve this by building and supporting mentoring relationships. We have seen firsthand the significant impact that a mentor can have in a young person's life and that mentorship can place a child on a trajectory towards personal and academic success. 98% of the Littles we served in FY23 were promoted to the next grade and 100% of high school seniors graduated from high school (compared to the NYC Department of Education's 2023 high school graduation rate of 86%). 95% of our high school seniors graduated with a plan to attend college the following fall.

BBBS of NYC has also committed to supporting our Littles as they transition into college through our College & Career Success Program, and we have gradually increased the number of college students we support from 61 students (FY19) to 315 students (FY24). Based on collected Spring 2023 transcript data, 81% of our active first and second-year College & Career Success students were on track to complete college within five years with an average program GPA of nearly 2.95. This college mentorship is especially crucial as most of our College & Career Success Program students are first-generation college students (i.e., first in their family to attend college), and the six-year graduation rate for first-generation college students in the US is just 11% (compared to the six-year graduation rate for all college students in the US of 55%).



Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC  
40 Rector Street, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10004

Mentors may come in the form of a teacher, a guidance counselor, or a coach on a school team. Whether a student participates in our program or not, there is no denying that mentorship is key to success in the classroom and in life, and this would not have been possible without the generous support of the City Council and our stakeholders. It is critical that New York City youth continue to receive resources that further academic development. It is imperative that the New York City Council fully funds our organization and all other programs that provide these essential educational and academic-adjacent services to the youth in our City. With strong and sustained investment in these resources, we can ensure that our students are set up for academic success, igniting more potential across the city.

May 15, 2024

New York City Council

Re: Testimony for New York City Budget Hearing on Elementary and Secondary Education

Dear Finance Chair, Justin Brannan and Chair, Rita Joseph, Education Committee,

It's my pleasure to submit testimony on behalf of BioBus. BioBus began in 2008 with a mission to help K-12 and college students discover, explore, and pursue science. We focus on students excluded from the scientific community due to factors such as race, gender, economic status, and physical access. Through this work, we envision a world where all people have the opportunity to reach their full scientific potential.

Since I started BioBus here in New York in 2008, **almost 283,500 students in New York City** have jumped aboard BioBus mobile labs. Students use research-grade microscopes to explore science, fueled by their natural curiosity, alongside our community scientists. Young scientists follow our pathway from school to after school and summer programs and onto paid research internships. After BioBus, students are ready to join and diversify the rapidly growing STEM workforce in New York. BioBus alumni are currently working at Pfizer and Volastra, a leader in Harlem's burgeoning biotech landscape, and in research labs at Columbia and Mount Sinai. With your partnership, BioBus can bring opportunities like this to students across New York City.

Through high level, hands-on science education for K-12 and college students, BioBus brings our students into the scientific community that they have often been excluded from and prepares students for life-changing academic and career opportunities. These students, often from low-income or other disadvantaged backgrounds, employ the power of science to solve real-world issues facing their communities and frequently graduate into high-paying STEM careers. Recent teacher feedback continues to demonstrate the unique value BioBus offers to students and schools.

With your support and \$1.3M in operating support from New York State over the last three years, from a budget line and member items, BioBus has grown from an annual budget of \$3M serving 20,000 students to an annual budget over \$4M and serving over 30,000 students! New York is ready for more, and we are ready to deliver. **With your help, BioBus will grow towards reaching every student in New York City.** Those students will become the next generation of great thinkers and leaders - they are already using science to fight climate change and food insecurity, identify disease before it spreads to humans, and study degenerative eye diseases and addiction. **I respectfully request that you support BioBus' \$500,000 request to fund city-wide programs.** This funding will directly support 5,000 young scientists across New York



City. These students will join BioBus' Science Pathway, become tomorrow's scientists, leaders, and critical thinkers, and fill the high-quality jobs in the city's growing biotech and life sciences industries.

In addition to the students BioBus serves in your districts and our request for your support, we are also proud of our additional partnerships and many volunteers. BioBus receives essential support from private investments and dozens of volunteers. We partner with research institutions and universities to connect students to scientific education and career opportunities, creating belonging among our students in academic science and biotech settings. Our partnerships also allow BioBus to advocate for our students and alumni as they take the next steps on their scientific education and career paths, and bring students from public schools into the same room as the scientists doing research in their neighborhoods. These relationships show students that they have a place in the exciting scientific world around them.

The need for proven science programs like BioBus is dramatic. NYC's biotech and life sciences industries continue to grow, offer high-paying jobs, and look towards our young people to fill those jobs. Together, BioBus, our students, and our school partners foster engagement at school and excitement for science that has community-wide impact.

BioBus' research-grade laboratory experiences led by masters- and Ph.D.-level scientists give students of all races, ethnicities, and genders, including those underrepresented in STEM careers, the opportunity to start their scientific path and excel. BioBus community scientists empower students to investigate problems close to home, such as testing the toxicity levels in neighborhood community gardens, researching the impact of microplastics on the ecosystems of the Hudson River, and studying the effects of noise pollution on an ecosystem's ability to flourish. Our students bring their family, their friends, and their neighbors along and create a constant, constructive dialogue with their community as it merges with the scientific community.

BioBus is an innovative program founded in NYC in 2008, starting with a 1970s public transit bus converted into a research-grade science lab on wheels. Now with two mobile labs, BioBus visits a different school every day and currently offers customized programs with microscopes in school courtyards, auditoriums, community gardens and other open spaces or online. We also recently purchased two new all-electric buses for our next Mobile Labs. These new, electric Mobile Labs will allow us to double our programs over the next 5 years, while minimizing the environmental impact. Community scientists lead classes in ecology, anatomy, adaptation, evolution, and cell biology, all using science relevant to students and their immediate surroundings. Using microscopes, students gain an immediate sense of how science relates to their lives. BioBus offers curriculum for all ages and student levels.

At brick-and-mortar BioBase community labs, onsite at schools, and in community centers, BioBus offers in-depth after school, weekend, and summer programs for students in upper elementary school and above. BioBus scientists lead students in project-based scientific exploration. High school and college students can be paid Junior Scientist interns, mentoring

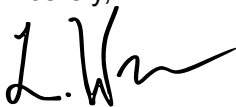
younger students and gaining in-depth research science experience, an uncommon experience before Ph.D. programs.

Funds requested now will ensure BioBus can keep up with increasing costs across personnel and non-personnel expenses; provide the necessary increased staffing and resources for customized, safe, in-person programs; and expand so more New York City students have the chance to pursue a STEM career. Specifically, this funding will support personnel costs for BioBus's community scientists and program operations staff, lab supplies, lab maintenance, and travel to schools. The heart of BioBus is a team of highly committed, innovative, and experienced scientists who work tirelessly with NYC students as they prepare to lead a more diverse scientific community that will deliver for all New Yorkers.

BioBus aims to reach 45,000 students in the coming 2024-2025 school year. New York City support of \$500,000 funding will directly enable 5,000 NYC students to discover, explore, and pursue science. Support for BioBus will expand and continue science education programs and further education, equity, and opportunity.

Thank you for your continued support of BioBus and for your consideration of this request. I look forward to discussing how we can inspire the next generation of scientists from New York City.

Sincerely,



Latasha Wright  
Chief Scientific Officer  
(646) 875-8103  
[latasha@biobus.org](mailto:latasha@biobus.org)



Council Members at BioBus Pi Day  
Mobile Lab Program at City Hall



A Mobile Lab program at a DOE School

## **Aqida Rama**

Good Afternoon; first, I want to thank Chair Joseph, Chair Brannan, and the rest of the council for allowing this conversation. My name is Aqida Rama, a senior at Brooklyn Technical High School. I'm a youth advocate at the Asian American Student Advocacy Project's Language Access campaign. ASAP is CACF's youth leadership program.

Our Language Access campaign is dedicated to ensuring that every student, including immigrant students, feels proud of their identity and fully sees themselves in the school setting. As someone who was once an ESL student, I want to point out that the challenges we face are beyond translation needs.

Last year, we conducted a survey across various NYC high schools, gathering insights from AAPI ELL students speaking 14 different languages. We discovered that the struggles of AAPI ELL students extend far beyond academic challenges; they face issues of cultural assimilation, exclusion, and insecurity about their identities, and they are judged by how fast they learn English or how well they speak English.

One prominent struggle was the pressure to assimilate, where students felt compelled to abandon their heritage and language to fit in. This goes beyond academic hurdles and directly impacts their sense of belonging. One student shared, "Due to the fact that I was an ELL student, I had to put in more effort than my peers." ; another student expressed, "I don't have many friends...The constant fear of making a mistake or pronouncing a wrong word keeps me silent." This quote sheds light on the social isolation experienced by many AAPI ELL students, stemming from a deep-seated fear of judgment and rejection, highlighting the need for addressing cultural challenges in addition to language barriers. Students also shared that their teachers and counselors would often emphasize how important it is to pass the NYSESLAT test





as passing it is the most important thing for them. We need schools to actively foster an environment where all students, including ELL students, feel genuinely welcomed and supported to be themselves and thrive.

We firmly believe that simply providing translation resources is not enough. Similarly, translating the materials for immigrant families is not enough. The City must urgently invest in how these materials are shared with families. Hiring bilingual staff is not effective if we don't have disaggregated data on what languages students are speaking and what languages are spoken by staff to see what languages are not being served yet. Finally, the city must invest in increasing culturally responsive staff, integrating cultural elements into the curriculum, and promoting cultural empathy and sensitivity among all students. Our ultimate goal is to create a school environment where every student, including English Language Learners, feels proud of their identity and are fully included in the school setting.



**Jakoub Chen**

Good Afternoon; first, I want to thank Chair Joseph, Chair Brannan, and the rest of the council for allowing this conversation. My name is Jakoub Chen, a sophomore at Curtis High School in Staten Island. I'm a youth advocate at the Asian American Student Advocacy Project's Anti-Bullying and Harassment campaign.

The Anti-Bullying and Harassment campaign team aims to identify safety-related challenges faced by AAPI students in NYC public high schools and to advocate for a school environment where all youth feel safe and supported.

Through our survey, we found that many students, especially AAPI students, experienced race-based harassment so often in school yet are not reporting the incident to adults in their schools. Many students expressed that the reason why they are not sharing their experiences and reporting them is because they don't think their schools would be able to address the issues meaningfully and properly.

AAPI students face numerous amounts of bullying and harassment in schools. Due to the Model Minority Myth; AAPI students are seen as weak and quiet. When I started middle school, I was trying to settle into a new environment, my fellow peers made fun of me for being quiet and not saying a word to them. Others completely ignored me, thinking I was too reserved. And I was in the same situation when I started high school last year. Small incidents like these have left a big impact on me. I started to question whether I belonged in that space. I have no doubt that teachers and staff observed these situations too, but I am not sure if they knew what to do, or did they just thought it was normal. When we sent out a survey to AAPI high school students across the city, we heard stories of students being made of their accents and the food they eat. They



were questioned about their identity, and they were asked if they were terrorists. Are these normal too? But our schools are not addressing any of these issues.

We all deserve to feel seen, heard, respected, and valued in our schools. However, when we found out that the FY 25 budget did not invest in restorative justice programs, we felt lost and abandoned. How can our schools not cultivate an inclusive culture and environment for all students and not invest in programs that emphasize empathy and community?

We ask the city to prioritize students' safety and well-being. Safety isn't punishing and policing students for doing something wrong; it means the presence of student wellness. We also believe that every school in NYC must incorporate a Restorative Justice program to not only resolve bullying and harassment but also allow opportunities to learn, heal, and grow as a community.

Thank you.

**Julie Wu**

Good Afternoon. First, I want to thank Chair Joseph, Chair Brannan, and the rest of the council for allowing this conversation. My name is Julie Wu. I'm a senior at Midwood High School and a youth advocate at the Asian American Student Advocacy Project's mental health campaign. ASAP is CACF's youth leadership program.

In my team, we have identified that one of the big reasons why AAPI students do not reach out for mental health support is because they were raised around the belief that showing your emotions and talking about how you feel is a sign of weakness. I resonate with this as I have my own struggles being an Asian American. There were often times when mental health support seemed more like a luxury than a necessity. But that is not okay.

In my school there are only TWO social workers responsible for all 4000 students that attend. Many of us don't even know who they are or which room they are in. How can we say that is accessible and responsible care for mental health support?

I want to talk to school social workers who are culturally responsive and who see me for me. I want to be seen as an individual. We all deserve to be seen in our own ways, not as a foreigner who doesn't belong here, not as well-behaved students who don't need help, and especially not as scapegoats.

We need to offer spaces where students can openly talk about their feelings. I know there is the NYC Teenspace, where high schoolers can connect to virtual therapy. However, I am not using these services because I want to connect with a real person; I want to be able to have an ACTUAL conversation. I want to build relationships and connections with someone in my school building, not someone I can't even see.



Chair Joseph, I am grateful to be able to share another conversation with you since our last meeting at Staten Island town hall, this month was difficult for me. Deciding where to go for college was hard, and I wanted someone to hear me out. Sometimes it just felt so loud, when everyone was trying to tell me what was best for me. I didn't need someone to help me make a decision; I just needed someone to listen. Along with making such a big decision in my life; it was also coupled with family expectations, pressure from peers and others, figuring out what I wanted to do, and my own expectations. I know I am not the only one who needs a space to be heard.

The FY 25 executive budget seems to maintain the current number of school social workers and maybe hire a little more. However, I think we can all agree that the current ratio of school social workers to students is too high and irrational. So why is it not reflected in the budget that the City needs to invest more? We believe that every student deserves to feel seen, heard, supported, and valued in our schools, but this budget really does not allow us to thrive. We ask the Council and the City to PRIORITIZE the needs of our students and families to ensure that we have the adequate resources we need to be successful.

**Kyle Lin**

Good afternoon. My name is Kyle Lin, and I am a senior at James Madison High School and a youth leader at the Asian American Student Advocacy Project (ASAP). ASAP is CACF's youth leadership program.

Thank you, Chair Joseph and the rest of the council, for having this conversation. Chair Joseph, last year during the budget hearing, you asked me what makes me feel safe and supported in school. I said it means everyone, including myself, should be comfortable being who they are, have someone to talk to when needed, and that no one is being devalued. While I am grateful to be here a year later, but unfortunately, feeling safe and supported in schools still isn't a reality for many of us.

Being a part of the mental health campaign team at ASAP, I've researched and delved into the critical needs of social workers, especially within the AAPI community. Oftentimes, we are perpetuated by stereotypes such as the Model Minority Myth. We tend to be seen as a group of individuals who don't need support. My ethnicity should not determine my needs for social support and my mental wellness.

Social Workers embody the progression of student wellness within our school systems. Not only do we want to feel academically well, but we want to feel mentally confident as well. The FY 25 executive budget restores the funding for the 450 school social workers, but that is not enough. The ratio of school social workers to students is still way too high. My school has two social workers, with 3600 students; when I want to talk to them, I have to ask myself, "Do I deserve that time to talk?" No one should be asking themselves this question. We need to stop undermining the importance of taking care of ourselves and our mental health.



Lastly, I want to point out that the City must address our mental health needs holistically from different aspects. Bilingual programs, outreach for immigrant students and families, restorative justice programs, and many other educational programs are all essential in our school system. No issue is a single-layer issue; they are all interconnected. When immigrant students are being left out in the school communities, who are they going to turn to when there is a lack of social workers already and sometimes even with a language barrier? When AAPI students are being made fun of in school, called names, or treated with negative stereotypes, and there are no restorative programs or staff in our school, who is going to address the mental health state of the school community?

We ask the city to fully and holistically invest in our school communities. We all deserve to be welcomed, heard, supported, and valued in our school communities, and the City must invest to make that a reality for all students in New York City.

**CAMBA**  
**Testimony Before the New York City Council**  
**FY25 Executive Budget Hearing**  
**Committee on Education**  
**May 15, 2024**  
**Valerie Barton-Richardson**

Council Member Joseph and Members of the Committee, my name is Valerie Barton-Richardson, and I am the new President and CEO of CAMBA, Inc. Thank you for holding today's hearing and affording us the opportunity to testify. CAMBA is one of New York City's largest and most trusted community-based organizations, unique among peer agencies in scale, quality, and responsiveness. Founded in 1977, the agency has grown in direct response to the needs of the Brooklyn community and beyond. Today, CAMBA provides services to 73,000 individuals and families annually through an integrated set of six program areas: Economic Development, Education and Youth Development, Family Support, Health, Housing, and Legal Services.

For 16 years, CAMBA's Learning to Work (LTW) programs have helped re-engage students who are overage and under-credited to graduate high school. Currently, CAMBA's LTW Programs are offered at ten Transfer High Schools and two Young Adult Borough Centers (YABCs). Transfer High Schools are small, full-time high schools designed to motivate students who have fallen behind in credits, while YABCs offer evening academic programs for high school students who cannot attend during the day.

The LTW model supports every student in a Transfer School or YABC as they work towards their high school diploma and the development of a post-secondary plan. Community-based organizations (CBOs) like CAMBA are embedded in the fabric of these schools through LTW contracts with the Department of Education (DOE). We provide academic and socioemotional support, career and college exploration, skills development, internships, and much more. Across this portfolio, we serve over 2,600 youth, employing close to 100 dedicated professionals. Through our comprehensive continuum of care, CAMBA provides students with the tools and resources they need to achieve their full potential, annually helping over 700 students who were at great risk of never graduating earn their high school diplomas.

Today, I would like to address the Committee regarding the importance of developing education and youth services budgets that will ensure a brighter future for all of New York City's children and families. First and foremost, we are pleased that Mayor Adams' Fiscal Year 2025 Executive Budget commits more than [\\$600 million](#) to sustain many initiatives such as the LTW program. We also thank the administration for the restoration of \$31 million for educational programming, which is a significant step towards supporting our city's youth. However, it is critical that the City baseline LTW's full \$42.1 million budget through sustainable funding sources. This will

ensure the longevity and stability of the program, allowing it to continue providing essential services to our most vulnerable students.

Our Learning to Work Programs serve the most disadvantaged students in the City who are now more at risk than ever before. Even in normal times, these young people have a tenuous connection to the school system. Many of them struggle with challenges such as mental illness, substance use disorders, or involvement with the criminal justice system. CAMBA and other providers offer these students a lifeline of academic and supportive services that empower them to complete high school successfully and move on to post-secondary education and gainful employment.

As a Learning to Work services provider, CAMBA is pleased to see that there were no cuts to the Learning to Work Program for FY25. However, we must continue to push this administration and City government in the right direction. The City must continue to invest in programs like Learning to Work, which provide needed wrap-around services within a highly effective work-based learning model, and not penalize programs by reducing funding in the educational budget due to low enrollment numbers. Low enrollment in high-needs communities is a symptom of larger systemic issues and budget cuts will only further hurt the communities we aim to help.

Additionally, while the administration is considering creating a Request for Proposals (RFP) for next year, we urge the City to provide clarity on what this will look like. Clear guidelines and a transparent process will be essential to ensure that organizations like CAMBA can continue to effectively serve our communities without disruption.

Thank you for allowing us to testify. I hope that our testimony on these important issues regarding programs like Learning to Work proves helpful to you as you work to craft an education budget that will provide for the health, welfare, and well-being of all of New York City's students.





Good evening. Thank you Chairs Brannan, Joseph, and members of the Finance and Education Committees for holding this hearing and allowing us to testify. My name is Micah Dicker and I am an Outreach Worker and Communications Specialist at CIANA, the Center for the Integration and Advancement of New Americans, a community-based organization located in Astoria, Queens, and a member of the New York Immigration Coalition and its Education Collaborative. Through my work, I am regularly exposed to the needs of newly-arrived migrant youth and the support they are lacking.

We ask that the City **invest \$800,000 to increase the number of high schools prepared to teach and support recently-arrived asylum seeker and immigrant youth** through flexible classes, internship opportunities, and mental health services.

ELL transfer schools, such as Lower East Preparatory High School, one of the original ELL schools, offer the education that all newly-arrived youth need: intensive English as a New Language classes, flexible class schedules, internships, and learn-to-work programs that enable students to work without prematurely ending their education.

Prior to the current influx of asylum seekers, CIANA hosted interns from Lower East Prep, who not only supported CIANA through their service, but also supported their fellow immigrant community members, and began building their own careers and futures. These particular interns had English proficiency and had the time and social-emotional ability to complete the semester at CIANA. However, it is unclear if the same can be said for newly-arrived youth, most of whom lack English proficiency, have very little money, do not have stable housing, and have endured enormous trauma.

Many newly-arrived youth might benefit greatly from the same services that schools like Lower East Prep offer; not only connections with jobs and internships, but language assistance and mental health support. But schools like these are often at capacity, leaving many youth without a plan on how to continue their education.

Recent data shows that ELLs have the highest dropout rate of all students, 17% compared to their non-ELL peers at 5.4%. I have met newly-arrived teenagers who contemplate giving up on school entirely due to inconsistent support and difficulty navigating the system. Investing in ELL transfer schools will reverse these discouraging numbers and trends.

With the right support, ELLs are 30% more likely to graduate high school. We join the NYIC in urging the City Council to invest:



- \$300,000 for new English Language Learner programs at six ELL transfer high schools, and
- \$500,000 towards comprehensive educator development at ten high schools to build their capacity in supporting older newcomer ELLs.

**Immigrant students deserve good schools. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.**



**New York City Council**  
**City Executive Budget Hearing - Education Committee**  
**Submitted Testimony prepared by Dante Bravo, Senior Policy Analyst**

**Wednesday, May 15th, 2024**

Thank you to Education Chair Councilmember Rita Joseph, Finance Chair Justin Brannan, the Education Committee, the Finance committee, and the larger New York City Council for the opportunity to present testimony to you on education in the 2024-25 Executive Budget. My name is Dante Bravo, Senior Policy Analyst at Children's Aid.

For 170 years, Children's Aid has been committed to ensuring that there are no boundaries to the aspirations of young people, and no limits to their potential. We are leading a comprehensive counterattack on the obstacles that threaten kids' achievements in school and in life. We have constructed a continuum of services, positioned every step of the way throughout childhood that builds well-being and prepares young people to succeed at every level of education and every milestone of life. Today our nearly 2,000 full and part time staff members empower 50,000 children, youth and their families through our citywide child welfare and family services. These services are available at our network of 40 locations, including early childhood education centers, public schools, community centers and community health clinics in four New York City neighborhoods – Harlem, Washington Heights, the South Bronx, and the north shore of Staten Island.

In the education space, Children's Aid is a member of the Campaign for Children, the New York State Network for Youth Success, the New York State Community Schools Network, the Empire State Campaign for Child Care, and the New York City Coalition for Community School Excellence, and as a member of these networks and alliances we are in support of their policy agendas. Together, we are on a mission to connect children with what they need to learn, grow, and lead successful, independent lives.

### **Community Schools**

For over 25 years, Children's Aid has operated community schools in partnership with the New York City Public Schools (NYCPS). We believe the community schools strategy effectively builds on students' strengths and removes the barriers to learning that can get in the way of youth success – academically, socially, and emotionally—and we believe this strategy is needed now more than ever. Community schools act as community hubs that offer holistic, integrated services that organize the school around student success and the needs and assets of the whole child. At our community schools, we work with the school community to coordinate and integrate expanded learning programs, comprehensive health services (physical, behavioral health, dental, and vision), and family engagement strategies into the fabric of the school.



Currently, Children's Aid partners with 20 community schools in New York City. Children's Aid community schools provide programs and services across four domains: academic, social-emotional, health and wellness, and family and home. These programs and services include afterschool programming, targeted academic interventions, attendance support, school-based health clinics with medical, dental, and vision services, behavioral health services and counseling, parent workshops, family events, and many others. Children's Aid as the lead partner coordinates the programs and school strategy at the school level; advocates for the students' and school's needs; brings in additional resources, programs, and services; conducts needs assessments and supports data-driven decision making; and has a full-time presence in the school. Children's Aid provides every one of our schools with a full-time Community School Director to coordinate with school leadership and ensure resources, programming, and services are integrated, both during the school day and during expanded learning time.

16 out of our 20 community schools saw improvements in chronic absence last year, despite the current high rates of chronic absenteeism across the city, state, and nation. All of our K-8 community schools increased the percentage of youth who have achieved math proficiency on the New York State Math exam. Over 93% of students at our high schools who applied to college were accepted, and 100% of Spring 2023 graduates at our high schools completed a post-secondary plan.

In the 2022-2023 school year, we screened over 1,600 youth with the DESSA mini screener across our Youth Development programs, including our community schools. From 1,229 paired screeners, 87% of youth were in the Typical or Strength category by the Spring. 56% of youth in the Need for Instruction category in the Fall, increased to Typical or Strength by the Spring. Between July 2022 and June 2023, across our 6 community schools where we operate School-Based Health Centers, we provided 400 young people with 4,101 visits in behavioral health services, and 735 young people with 1,968 dental services, on top of basic first aid and medical care. We were also able to assist 21 young people with reproductive health visits. In the 2022-2023 school year, we provided the communities we serve with 11,039 food boxes, 119,148 meals, and 53,209 snacks across our food and nutrition programs embedded in our schools and community services.

Children's Aid, as a community school partner, has provided invaluable support to our schools as the lingering effects of the pandemic and ensuing economic crisis have caused a crisis in youth behavioral health and interrupted learning. These concurrent conditions have exacerbated existing racial and socioeconomic inequity in the communities with whom we work. [We know that the interrupted learning of the pandemic has impacted all young people; we also know that low-income and students of color were the most impacted.](#) Our community schools in our target neighborhoods help to level the playing field so that we can address and help to mitigate these conditions and address racial and economic inequities.

The partnerships core to the community schools strategy are sorely needed right now; schools cannot do this work alone. This strategy empowers schools and communities to create and offer a network of resources and opportunities that youth and families can turn to when experiencing the relentless challenges that have permeated this crisis. The community schools strategy is designed to help address a



multitude of these challenges – it is not only a mental health strategy, an attendance strategy, an academic strategy, or an equity strategy for education – it is all of those things and more, providing much needed support on everything from food insecurity to interrupted learning, to the grief that comes with losing a loved one.

In January 2023, Fordham Institute released the [largest study of community schools yet](#) and found that community schools in NYC are having a significant positive impact on academic success (in reading and math) and attendance. This is in addition to the 2020 [RAND study](#) that showed other positive impacts, from improved school climate and culture to a reduction in disciplinary incidents, as well as other national research bolstering the positive impact of the community schools strategy.

We thank this administration for baselining \$48 million to the Community Schools initiative, effectively providing the funding to sustain the initiative after the expiration of federal stimulus dollars. At the same time, Community Schools still stand to lose one-time funding that is critical for many schools across the city.

### **Recommendations for Community Schools**

In 2021, 52 NYC community schools saw major reductions to their budgets because of a change in Office of Community Schools (OCS) funding formula. After advocacy, temporary one-year amendments funded these schools in last year's Adopted Budget. Children's Aid's Charles Drew Campus is one of the impacted schools, providing critical services since 2014, including but not limited to: afterschool Beacon programming; ESL and GED classes for parents; a food pantry; a school-based health clinic offering physicals, immunizations, counseling, and resource coordination; and more. The funding in question totals to \$9.16 million across these 52 schools and will need to be included in the Adopted Budget again this year to ensure continuity of services.

In addition, the City Council created an initiative in 2021 to fund Community Schools in 10 zip codes most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. These funds total to \$5 million, which will expire if this initiative is not renewed for Fiscal Year 2025. **Community Schools need \$14 million in total to continue their current capacity within the New York City Public School system. Therefore, Children's Aid calls on this administration to fund these schools in the Fiscal Year 2025 (also known as FY'25) Adopted Budget and baseline these funds so that providers across the City can continue to do this transformative work.**

Finally, Children's Aid's ability to remain fiscally solvent and operate on a daily basis is consistently undermined by procurement, contracting, background check policies, RFPs, and funding decisions at the city and state levels. These systemic challenges constrain our ability to focus on programs and service delivery.

Delays on the City's payment on their contractual obligations stress non-profits' financial sustainability and jeopardize the quality of services by diverting funds away from programs to costly stop gaps to keep financially afloat. For some organizations that means diverting program funds to pay interest on lines of credit. This inadvertently means that nonprofits play the role of banks, lending money to the City while



still providing essential services to communities across NYC. We call on the City to reform NYCPS's procurement process to address the lengthy contract registration process, delays in payment, and inconvenient bridge loan process.

### **Early Childhood Education**

Children's Aid provides early childhood education programs for 710 infants, toddlers and preschoolers across a total of 9 sites. Five of our sites are co-located in NYCPS public schools. Our early childhood team responds to and supports the various needs of children and their families both onsite and in the home. Our programs support parents before birth to ensure that children receive the services they need to start life on the right track. Our early childhood programs enhance cognitive and reasoning ability, foster language and literacy skills (inclusive of dual language and multi-language learners), build self-esteem, and facilitate healthy social emotional development.

At a time when early childhood education providers that contract with NYCPS continue to suffer severe financial hardships due to delayed payments for FY '22, FY '23, and FY'24 the Executive FY 25 Budget moves New York City away from the path to Universal Child Care, citing a lack of utilization of seats across New York City. \$170 million in cuts to the system will lose 9,000-15,000 pre-K seats. It also eliminates \$20 million in funding for Promise NYC, which provides child care access to undocumented families.

We acknowledge and thank this administration for the investment of \$51 million in Early Childhood programming. Unfortunately, the FY 25 executive budget does not stabilize or strengthen the early childhood education system, especially as it maintains \$170 million in programs to eliminate the gap (PEG). The City must prioritize providing a truly aligned, comprehensive holistic birth to five early childhood education continuum for families and it must be adequately funded and supported.

### **Recommendations for Early Childhood Education:**

Immediate action and operational reforms are needed to achieve fiscal stability in FY' 25:

- Process all back payments immediately, bringing all center based providers to no less than 75% of their full contract value for FY '22, FY '23 and FY '24.
- Increase FY' 25 advance payments to 75% of full contract value to address emerging and serious payment delays for the current fiscal year.
- Extend provider's ability to batch and submit multiple months of invoices and maintain DOE rapid response teams charged with assisting providers.
- Release an RFP for the expansion of 3-K for All supporting NEW extended day year round seat capacity start in July and services to start in September;
- Separate the system supporting enrollment data collection from the system responsible for invoicing & payments and migrate DOE invoicing and payments out of the Pre-K system and into Passport by Fiscal Year 2025. In many ways, this task is only possible with the restoration of the \$170 million cut.

Meet Child and Family Needs by Keeping the Promise of 3-K for All in FY'25:

117 W 124th Street, New York, NY 10027  
[ChildrensAidNYC.org](http://ChildrensAidNYC.org)



- Commit to fund current 3-K program levels and restore the timeline for the 3-K expansion.
- Convert existing 3-K school day / school year seats, to extended day, year round seats and ensure 3-K expansion efforts prioritize creating new capacity for extended day, year round seats.
- Invest more resources in linguistically and culturally appropriate on the ground and multi-media marketing, community engagement and enrollment efforts for 3-K and early childhood education programs.
  - While the \$5 million that this administration has invested is a great start, our communities need much more to fully maximize open slots in their neighborhoods.
- Reform enrollment procedures so that community based organizations have the option of directly enrolling children whose families apply for 3-K, Pre-K or child care.

Invest in the early childhood workforce in FY'25:

- Fund a new labor contract that advances childhood education parity between center and school based services, ensuring staff left out of the first phase of parity (early childhood directors, support staff in community based organizations and preschool special education teachers and support staff) are included, that longevity factored into salary increases, and that a minimum wage floor of \$25 is established for all support staff.
- Ensure home-based family child care providers benefit from the increased market rate (reimbursement has increased to 80 percent from 65 percent).

Put New York City on a solid path to Universal Child Care:

- Prioritize meeting the full day, year round needs of children and families across all settings to ensure a birth to five continuum of care – supporting both center based and family child care network contracts that ensure extended day, year round care is offered
- Ensure children with developmental delays and disabilities can receive mandated developmental and special education support and related services in center-based birth to five programs and that preschool special education capacity meets demand.
- Build upon the successes of UPK and new 3K marketing and community engagement efforts to continuously improve the take up of services across age ranges and modalities (family child care and center based care)

### **Bussing for Students in Foster Care**

We know firsthand the importance of reliable school transportation for students in foster care. Federal and state law require the City to provide transportation to students in foster care so they can stay in their original school when they come into foster care or change foster homes, except in the limited situations where it is in the students' best interest to transfer schools.

While many students in foster care do currently receive busing, NYCPS does not guarantee bus service or another comparable mode of transportation to all of these students. As a result, students who cannot travel to school on their own have been forced to transfer schools, or even transfer foster homes, if they



cannot be added to an existing bus route. While NYCPS says it will reimburse agencies and foster parents for transportation costs if no bus route is available, they will not reimburse costs for a chaperone (if age appropriate) if the foster parent or agency staff cannot accompany the student to and from school every single day, and agencies have experienced extensive delays getting reimbursed for costs that are allowed.

At a minimum, NYCPS must ensure that every student in foster care can get to school. The City must provide bus service or other door-to-door transportation to the number of students in foster care who need it to maintain school stability.

### **Conclusion**

As an agency committed to eradicating poverty in the neighborhoods that we serve, we will do all that we can to advocate, protect, and increase funding for the most under-resourced youth and families in NYC.

Children's Aid sincerely thanks the Education Committee and the New York City Council for their continued support of children, youth, families, and communities in New York City, and we look forward to continuing to partner. Thank you again for the opportunity to submit testimony on this very important issue. Please feel free to contact me at [dbravo@childrensaidnyc.org](mailto:dbravo@childrensaidnyc.org) with any questions regarding this testimony.



## **Testimony for the Fiscal Year 2025 Executive Higher Education Budget**

May 15, 2024

To Whom it Concerns:

My name is Molly Senack, and I am testifying today on behalf of the Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York (CIDNY) as their Education and Employment Community Organizer. This testimony is supported by Sharon McLennon Wier, Ph.D., MEd., CRC, LMHC, Executive Director of CIDNY.

True accessibility on college campuses is crucial for students with disabilities. According to the US Census 2022 American Community Survey, 21% of undergraduate students and 11% of graduate students reported having a disability during the 2019-2020 school year. Yet only 8% of students, or about a quarter of students who privately reported having a disability, registered as having a disability with their institutions. This discrepancy is consistent with a 2022 report from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), which found that only 37% of students who acknowledged having a disability registered with their institution.

If the majority of students with disabilities on college campuses are choosing not to report, there has to be a reason. The National Center for College Students with Disabilities has found that the most significant barriers to access and participation on college campuses include fear of discrimination or feeling unwelcome, challenges navigating necessary campus procedures, being unaware of resources and services the student might qualify for, faculty being unaware of resources and services they might qualify for (or the faculty being aware of these supports, but being unresponsive or uncooperative in providing them), and receiving inadequate accommodations from the school. That same 2022 NCES report found that of the 37% of students with disabilities who reported their disability to their school, almost 40% did not receive accommodations when they asked for them.

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), students with disabilities are entitled to an accessible college campus, but it is important to acknowledge how broad the definition of "accessible" is. Accessibility must exist in all forms (accommodations can be physical, technological, sensory, etc.), in all spaces, and at all stages of the college experience, from application through graduation.

In recent years, New York State has made a significant effort to improve financial accessibility for students enrolled in the City University of New York (CUNY) system. The Accelerated Study in Associate Program (ASAP) provides textbook fees, transportation stipends, free tutoring, and tuition funds. The program has successfully improved graduation rates to 53%, versus 25% of a statistically matched group for the third of CUNY students who are enrolled in the program.

However, despite the progress in this particular area of accessibility, many CUNY campuses fall short of what the ADA stipulates: classrooms, libraries, students housing, dining facilities, and

offices are not always physically accessible. Signs, including on bathrooms and classrooms are not always available in large print or Braille. There are shortages in assistive technology (e.g. screen readers). Students with learning, mental, or developmental disabilities who are entitled to accommodations within the classroom must often depend on professors who do not know how to offer aid.

As the Council considers the Executive Budget, we ask that a greater investment be made in ensuring all of CUNY's campuses are in compliance with the ADA, and are truly accessible for students with disabilities.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Molly Senack (She/Her)  
Education and Employment Community Organizer  
Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York  
Email: [msenack@cidny.org](mailto:msenack@cidny.org) Phone: (917)-415-3154

**Testimony of Alice Bufkin, Juan Diaz, Caitlyn Passaretti, and Jenny Veloz**  
**Citizens' Committee for Children of New York**

**Submitted to the New York City Council FY'2025 Executive Budget Oversight Hearing on**  
**Education**  
**May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

Since 1944, the Citizens' Committee for Children of New York has served as an independent, multi-issue child advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring every New York child is healthy, housed, educated, and safe. CCC does not accept or receive public resources, provide direct services, or represent a sector or workforce; our priority is improving outcomes for children and families through civic engagement, research, and advocacy. We document the facts, engage, and mobilize New Yorkers, and advocate for solutions to ensure the wellbeing of New York's children, families, and communities.

We would like to thank Chair Joseph, Chair Brannan, and all the members of the New York City Council Education and Finance Committees for holding today's important Executive Budget Hearing. The following testimony includes the budget recommendations to ensure an equitable education for all students across New York City.

**Restore Funding to Early Childhood Education**

The FY25 Preliminary Budget proposed historically devastating cuts to the Early Care and Education system. We are pleased that the Executive Budget restores \$92 million in one-year funding for Pre-K and 3-K to replace expiring federal COVID-19 relief funding. However, the budget still includes a devastating cut of \$170 million in city levy funds to Early Care and Education. Fully restoring the \$170 million in city tax-levy funding to early care and education would protect the path to 3-K expansion and protect Pre-K capacity for 9,000 to 15,000 children.

These cuts are occurring at a time when families can least afford these cuts. 80 percent of all family households are unable to find affordable care, and in some communities, they are spending up to 63 percent of their income on child care, preschool or afterschool care alone. The city has seen \$23 billion in lost economic activity resulting from lack of access to child care, and households earning less than \$65,000 a year are leaving New York City because they can't afford to live here.<sup>1</sup>

Notably, these reductions come budget reductions that occurred over the past year and a half beginning with the November 2022 financial plan.<sup>1</sup> In restoring the \$170 million that is currently at stake now, and addressing the operational barriers outlined below, we can better meet families' needs, fill seats, and continue the work towards universal access.

We know from extensive engagement with and surveying of NYC families and communities that the demand for affordable childcare is enormous across the city, and that open seats are a reflection of barriers

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<sup>1</sup> Beginning with the November 2022 financial plan, OMB has reduced the 3-K budget. In total, reductions to the pre-K and 3-K budget have amounted to \$283 million in 2024, and \$399 million in 2025. Therefore, we support the long-term goal of reclaiming those funds to support system stability and operational changes. Accessed: <https://ibo.nyc.ny.us/iboreports/driftng-from-the-plan-changes-to-early-childhood-budgets-february-2024.pdf>

in access rather than lack of demand. CCC, in partnership with child and family service provider organizations, undertook a multi-pronged, mixed method, community-based approach to understand the systemic challenges that result in open seats in contracted ECE programs and develop solutions to the barriers families face accessing care.

Based on a citywide survey and focus groups with parents and providers, it is evident these seats remained unfilled due to bureaucratic barriers to entry, lack of knowledge of existing programs, and options not matching families' needs and work schedules. Our report, [The Youngest New Yorkers](#), demonstrates the families face in accessing available seats, including:

- A lack of seats for children age three and younger
- A growing share of seats is limited to school-day, school-year programs that do not fit many working families' needs for extended day, year-round programs.
- Centralizing the enrollment process within DOE was intended to facilitate access, but instead has prevented contracted ECE providers from enrolling families on site
- Parents and caregivers of young children face barriers applying for subsidized child care programs or enrolling in universal programs.
- Families require child care arrangements and other supports the current ECE system does not fully meet, such as: transportation aid; care locations close to home or work; care during nontraditional working hours, including overnight or on weekends; and other needs related to their children's health and safety or special needs.
- Inadequate community-rooted outreach through credible messengers to families about ECE options

Parents need more affordable child care options, not fewer, and cuts to the ECE system will have a devastating impact on families throughout the city. Rather than cutting ECE services, the City must instead address the barriers preventing families from accessing available care and work towards achieving universal child care access. **Cuts to the ECE system are deeply inequitable and unconscionable, and we urge the City Council and the Administration to resolve this crisis by fully restoring the \$170 million cut from the system.**

In addition to urging restoration of funding, CCC, in partnership with the Campaign for Children (C4C), have identified the following priorities that are designed to ensure that the city addresses the funding and operational issues that are leading to further inequities and barriers to care.

### **Support the ECE Workforce**

- **Fund** new labor contracts that advances salary parity between community-based centers and their school-based educators and service staff colleagues – ensuring staff left out of the first phase of parity (early childhood directors, support staff in community-based organizations and preschool special education teachers) are included, that longevity is factored into salary increases, and that a minimum wage floor of \$25 is established for all support staff.
- **Ensure** home-based family child care providers benefit from the increased market rate (reimbursement has increased from 65% to 80%).

### **Improve Access for Families**

- **Reform** enrollment procedures so that community-based organizations have the option of directly enrolling children whose families apply for 3-K, Pre-K or child care.
- **Support** a robust linguistically and culturally appropriate multi-media community engagement and enrollment effort to fill open, budgeted seats, including by funding early childhood education marketing and outreach at \$10 million.
- **Fund** Promise NYC at \$25 million to continue serving undocumented families in search of care.

### **Shore up Fiscal and System Stability**

- **Continue** to convert school-day, school-year seats to full-day, year-round ECE seats to increase options for families.
- **Permanently extend** service providers' ability to batch and submit multiple months of invoices at once and maintain DOE's rapid response teams charged with assisting providers with invoicing.
- **Continue** to complete back payments on FY' 22 and '23, commence public reporting on actual payments against planned budget expenditures, and ensure all center-based providers receive no less than 75 percent of their full contract value.
- **Increase** FY'24 advance payments to 75 percent of full contract value to address emerging payment delays for the current fiscal year

These operational system changes and investments are necessary to stabilize, improve, and revitalize the early care and education system in NYC.

### **Enhance Funding for Special Education and Child Care for Immigrant Families**

As New York City experiences an increase in the number of migrant arrivals, it has never been more important to support the ability of immigrant families to secure safe and affordable child care. **We therefore urge the City to invest \$25 million for Promise NYC to continue providing child care services to undocumented families.**

**Additionally, the City must address the \$13 million funding gap for preschool special education.**

The restoration and baselining of \$83 million in the Executive Budget was a significant step towards the continued provision of preschool special education services. However, the program must be fully restored, particularly because students were being denied their legally required services even prior to budget cuts. This funding is critical to address the significant shortage of legally required preschool special education classes, help programs recruit and retain certified special education teachers, and add service providers and staff to help with the development of service plans.

### **Education access for students in temporary housing**

Housing insecurity for students has dramatically increased in recent years. For the eighth consecutive years, over 100,000 students have experienced homelessness in New York City. During the 2022–23 school year, 119,320 New York City students experienced homelessness, a 14 percent increase compared to the 2021–22 school year. Of those students, over 40,000 (34%) spent time living in City shelters.

Students who are homeless face severe obstacles to educational success. For example, in the 2021–22 school year, of those students living in shelter: 72 percent were chronically absent, and only 63 percent graduated in four years, compared to 85 percent of permanently housed students.<sup>ii</sup>

We are grateful that the Executive Budget restores and baselines \$17 million to support 100 Community Coordinators at citywide shelters. These positions are essential for students' success as they need the support of advocates to coordinate their needs with shelter and public school officials. However, there remain essential steps our city can take to further support students experiencing housing insecurity:

- **Reverse the 60-day shelter stay limit for families with children.** Migrant students are being forced to exit temporary shelter after a limited time and oftentimes sleep on the streets. Community-based organizations have reported that many migrant children are missing school due to the 60-day shelter stay rule.
- **Fund and effectively implement CityFHEPS expansion,** which would remove administrative and eligibility barriers and expedite access to housing support for students who are experiencing homelessness.

### **Support the Behavioral Health Needs of Students**

Schools play an essential role in meeting the behavioral health needs of children, yet New York City's approach to addressing the social-emotional needs of students in schools has often been fragmented and insufficient. Far too many students experiencing an emotional crisis are still sent to emergency rooms, subjected to police intervention, or punished with disciplinary practices such as suspension. Schools need the resources and training necessary to support the mental health of all students, rather than relying on punitive and traumatizing responses to student behavior.

We are grateful for the City Council's staunch advocacy with the Administration to ensure critical Education programs are not lost as a result of expiring federal COVID relief funding. Many of the restorations we saw in the Executive Budget will directly impact the mental and emotional health of students, including the \$74 million for school social workers and psychologists and the \$54 million for Community Schools.

However, several vital mental health programs were also left behind. Chief among these is the Mental Health Continuum, an innovative model that integrates a range of direct services, including expedited mental healthcare, a NYC Well hotline to advise school staff, mobile response teams to respond to students in crisis, training for school staff in Collaborative Problem Solving, and culturally-responsive family engagement to students with significant mental health challenges. This cross-agency partnership (NYCPS, Health + Hospitals, Department of Health & Mental Hygiene) supports students at 50 high needs schools. City leaders must not only extend funding for this program, but also permanently baseline funding to give it the security necessary for long-term hiring, planning, and expansion. **We urge city leaders to baseline \$5 million for the mental health continuum to fully implement and sustain the program.**

We were also deeply disappointed that restorative justice funding was not restored. Restorative practices address the root causes of behavior, hold students accountable while keeping them in school learning, build and heal relationships, and teach positive behaviors. They also correlate with improved academic outcomes, school climate, and staff-student relationships. **We urge city leaders to protect the \$12 million in expiring COVID-19 relief funding for restorative justice practices in schools.**

We are grateful that the Executive Budget restores \$54 million in expiring federal funds for Community Schools. However, the Budget still includes a \$14M gap due to expiring one-year city funding. Community schools provide students and families with wrap-around supports and services, including mental healthcare and the types of material and social supports that prevent the emergence of heightened behavioral health needs. This initiative, which expanded from 266 to more than 400 schools thanks to expiring federal and city funds, has proven effective at lowering chronic absenteeism and increasing on-time high school graduation rates. **We demand a full restoration for community schools, as they serve as pivotal resources in their communities and provide holistic supports for students.**

**Finally, we urge city leaders to invest \$3.75 million to expand school-based mental health clinic services.** It is critical that the City invest now to bolster 50 existing school-based mental health clinics (SMHCs). Each SMHC should receive \$75,000 in annual operating support to maintain and expand on-site mental health services for children. SMHCs provide on-site mental health services to children during the school day, including psychiatry, medication management, family peer support, youth advocacy, and counseling. SMHC staff work closely with school staff to identify children in need and coordinate services. SMHCs work to engage the whole family and can serve family members at their community location. SMHCs provide crisis mental health services, ensuring children receive a compassionate response when they are in need and reducing the use of suspensions, detentions & punitive measures. Currently, most funding comes from Medicaid, which does not adequately cover the range of services provided. A \$3.75 million investment would provide the additional resources these clinics need to fully cover the costs of overseeing these services. Ultimately, we recommend a long-term goal in the future of expanding funding to all SMHCs in the city.

### **Transportation Access for Students in Foster Care**

While both federal and state law require the City to provide transportation to students in foster care so they can remain in their original schools, the DOE currently does not guarantee any form of transportation to these students. This is causing deeply harmful disruptions for students in foster care, including forcing them to transfer schools or foster homes to access an education.

Being in foster care is disruptive enough for a young person; the DOE must do everything in its power to ensure that students in foster care are supported and, at the bare minimum, can get to school. During the 2019-20 school year, one in five NYC students had to change schools upon their initial placement in foster care. This disruption of students' lives and education is unacceptable and unjust. **We ask the City Council to ensure that the budget includes \$5 million for the DOE to provide bus service or other door-to-door transportation to the relatively small number of students in foster care who need it to maintain school stability.**



### **Food and Nutrition Funding in Schools**

Through creative menu development and service advancement, continuous expansion of cafeteria enhancement to all middle and high schools, and the expansion of availability of halal and kosher meals, New York City has taken major steps in its commitment on improving school nutrition programs and decreasing child hunger. However, the \$60 million cut to the Department of Education's Office of Food and Nutrition Services (OFNS) threatens the progress made over the years to ensure healthier, more nutritious school meals. These cuts have resulted in the removal of popular food items from school menus. While many of these items have been restored (thanks to public outcry from parents and students), healthy school meals will continue to be in jeopardy unless full funding to OFNS to support school meal operations across the five boroughs is included FY25 Executive Budget. **We urge City leaders to restore the \$60 million in FY Executive Budget to the Department of Education's Office of Food and Nutrition Services.**

We also call for the continued investment of cafeteria enhancement experience (CEE). These redesigned cafeterias feature more of a food-court style and student friendly seating. Redesigning cafeterias is very cost effective (costing approximately \$600,000 per cafeteria) and can be completed in three days. CEE has had a tremendous impact in school meal involvement among students, increasing lunch participation by 35% among high school students, increasing the number of fruits and vegetables served, and ensuring that school meals continue to be the healthiest for students across all income levels.<sup>iii</sup> **We therefore urge city leaders to invest an additional \$150 million in the Chancellor's Capital budget for funding for the continued redesign of middle and high school cafeterias**

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony, and for your continued commitment to ensuring and equitable education for all New York City students.

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<sup>i</sup> CCC Brief: From Birth to Age 12. The (Un)Affordability of Child Care and Out-of-School Care in New York City. October 2023.

<sup>ii</sup> Advocates for Children, "Don't Cut Support for Students in Shelter." 2024

<sup>iii</sup> Community Food Advocates (2023). Retrieved from:  
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/6357e834d5a72513b671e7c9/t/6538693aa155c90627618b96/1698195771124/Cafeteria+Redesign-Oct2023.pdf>



Thank you Chair. My name is Mark Gonsalves, I'm co-president of the Citywide Council on Special Education. I am speaking on behalf of our Council Members.

The Mayor talks about Getting stuff done but based on the Executive Budget, he doesn't know how to get things done and needs you, the City Council members to educate him.

The Mayor promised that every special education student eligible for Preschool would have a seat. For another year he has failed to get it done and continues to break Federal law. We heard today that we need at least \$50M to maintain the current levels and provide seats to the more than 700 students that are not receiving Federally mandated classes and services as required by Federal law.

Thank you for discussing pay parity for Special Education Preschool teachers. Let's keep in mind that those same students that go to an approved Special Education Elementary, Middle or High school have teachers that don't have pay parity. There is a need to continue to expand pay parity for the 853 school teachers as well.

The Mayor promised that he would screen all students for Dyslexia but he has continued to fail to get stuff done.

The Mayor promised big changes for Dyslexia programs and promised to have Dyslexia schools in every borough, but again, the Mayor has failed to get stuff done.

The Mayor has cut back Summer Rising for this year. Students with Extended School Year on their IEPs in middle school will now only have classes 4 days a week instead of 5. IBO estimates that we need \$80M in funding to continue Summer Rising.

The Mayor's DOE has recently leased a school that doesn't comply with ADA law and has a rating of 1 on the accessibility rating of 1 to 10 and is planning on moving students on the Autism Spectrum NEST program into a building with fire escapes in the classrooms endangering the students and putting our kids in harm's way.

The Mayor's PEG cut funding for District 75. The students who need it the most are getting cut. The Mayor again has failed to get stuff done.

The Mayor is also planning on cutting about 3,000 teachers over the next two years with his expected staffing levels, putting our city at risk for not complying with the class size law and once again the mayor has failed to get stuff done.

The Mayor is all talk, but when it comes to really getting stuff done, the only thing he's done is talk and then fail. The Mayor has flunked and now it's time for you, the City Council, to educate the Mayor and support our students and families.



Class Size Matters  
124 Waverly Pl., New York, NY 10011  
Phone: 917-435-9329  
[info@classsizematters.org](mailto:info@classsizematters.org)  
[www.classsizematters.org](http://www.classsizematters.org)

## Testimony before the City Council on the Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 2025 and the proposed Capital Plan for Fiscal Years 2024-2028

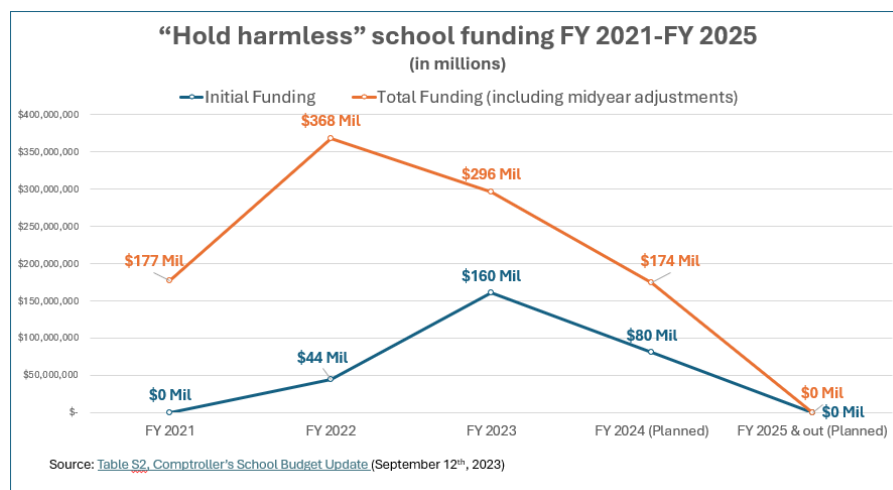
May 15, 2024

Thank you Chair Joseph, Chair Brannan, and the other members of the Education and Finance Committees for holding these important hearings today. My name is Leonie Haimson, and I am the Executive Director of Class Size Matters, and I am here with my Research Director, Michael Rance.

We have many concerns about the Executive Budget as it calls for an end to holding school budgets harmless next year, leading to cuts in their Fair Student Funding allocations based on their projected enrollment decline. While overall, DOE predicts enrollment will increase, a preliminary analysis suggests that the enrollment of 757 schools are projected to decline by 1% or more.

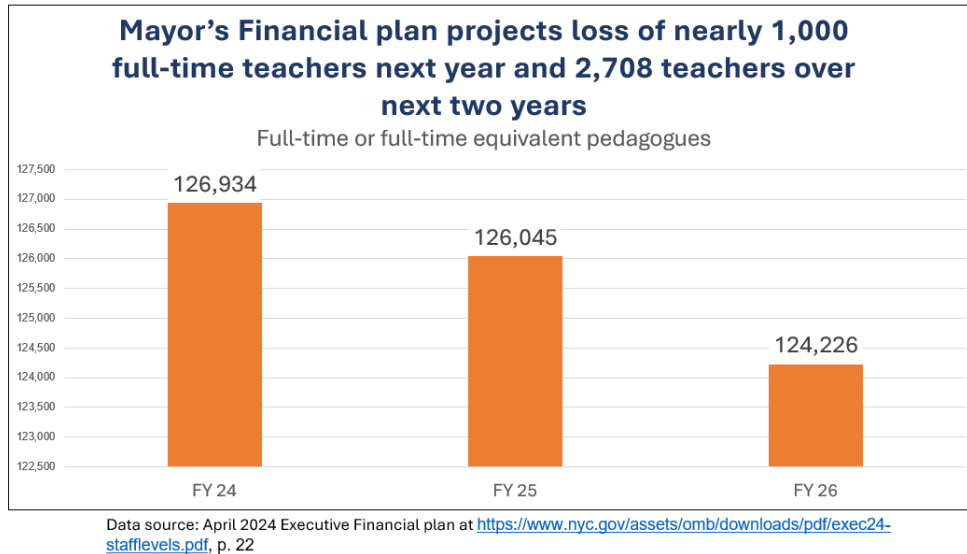
This year, DOE used \$160 million of federal stimulus fund to “hold harmless” school budgets, which funded approximately 1,778 pedagogical positions last year, according to IBO – although class sizes increased anyway at most schools.

We all remember how in the prior year, schools were initially cut by \$488 million, and while they were provided with more funding mid-year, that was too late for many of them to keep all their teachers on staff or hire additional ones, which led to increasing class sizes and the loss of critical programs at many schools.<sup>1</sup> After the city budget was approved by the Council, there was an uproar and many Council Members said they regretted their vote. We fear this will happen once again if school budgets are not held harmless and these cuts are made. Our estimate is that 765 schools are projected to see enrollment declines compared to their Oct. 31, 2023 figures.



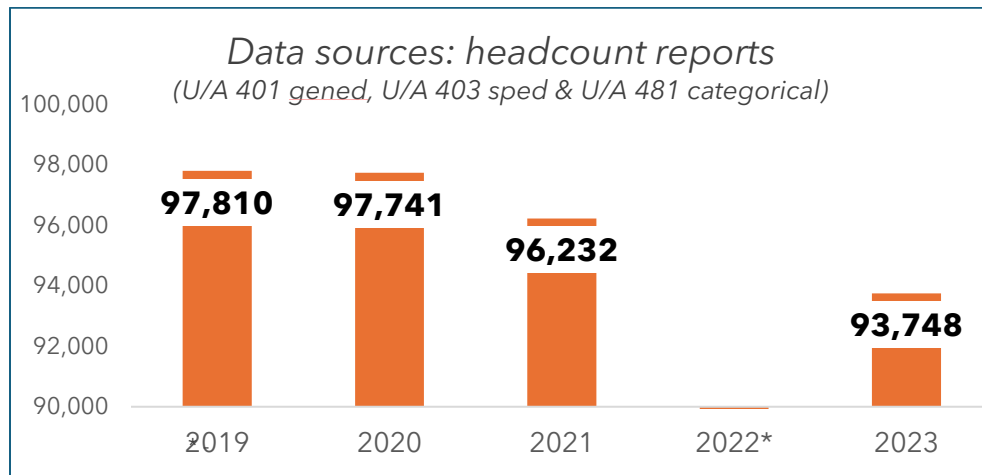
<sup>1</sup> Data from <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/wp-content/uploads/documents/School-Budget-Spotlight-0923.pdf>

Moreover, the Executive Budget contains about \$100 million in cuts via school hiring freezes and vacancies reductions, and projects a contraction of the teaching force by nearly 1,000 educators next year, and a total of nearly 3,000 over the next two years.<sup>2</sup> This would not only further undermine the quality of education but also likely prevent DOE from complying with the state class size law, which requires 40% of schools to meet the new caps next year.



The class size law calls for the phase-in over five years of smaller classes of no more than 20 students per class in grades K-3, no more than 23 students per class in grades 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>, and no more than 25 students per class in high school, except for physical education and physical education and performing groups such as orchestra and band, which must be capped at forty students per class.

Our analysis of DOE headcount reports, posted on the Council website, reveals that DOE already eliminated over 4,000 full-time K12 teachers between FY 2019-FY 2023.



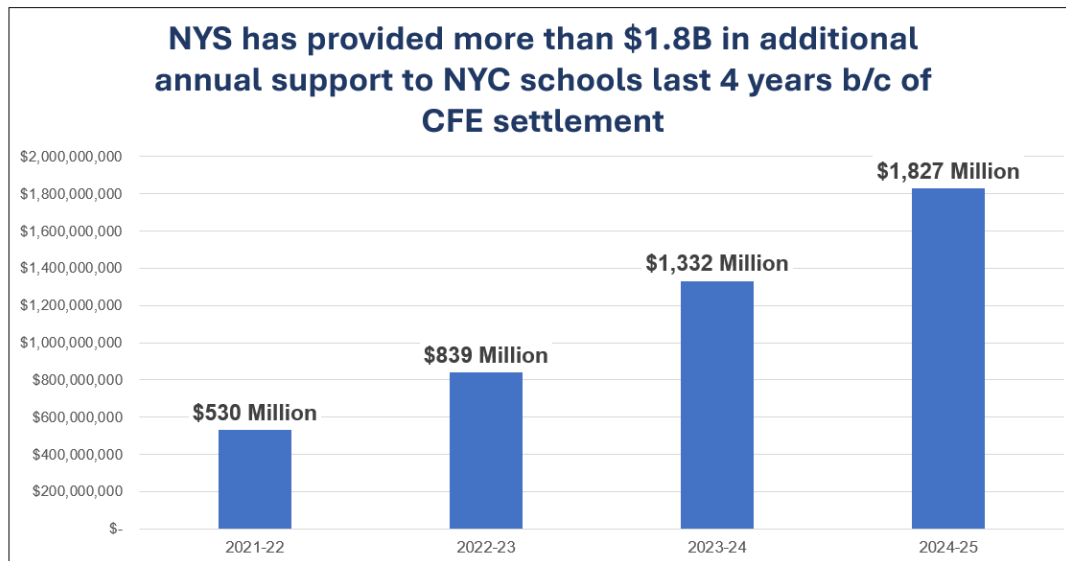
Sadly, class sizes have increased in most schools for the last two years in a row, and likely will continue to increase next year if this budget is adopted. In fact, compliance with the law will require significant changes in DOE budgeting policies and planning.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/peg4-24.pdf>, pp. 16-17 ; April 2024 Executive Financial plan at <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/exec24-stafflevels.pdf>, p. 22

## **Need to hold school budgets harmless and allocate \$304 million for staffing to lower class size**

We urge the City Council to allocate \$304 million to provide funding for 3,000 more teachers – one fourth of the 10,000 to 12,000 additional teachers that DOE says will be necessary over the next four years to comply with the class size law. The longer the DOE waits to hire additional teachers, the more difficult it will be to increase the hiring of high-quality educators with the proper certification.

The city can clearly afford this, given that we are now receiving \$1.8 billion in additional state Foundation funding, with nearly \$500 million more this year, as a result of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity settlement. Class size was a central issue in the case, causing the state’s highest court to say that NYC students were denied their right under the state constitution because of overly large classes. In addition, the city surplus for FY 2025 is expected to total \$3.3 billion, to add to the current rainy-day fund of \$1.96 billion and general reserve of \$1.2 billion.<sup>3</sup>



We also urge the Council to demand a commitment that DOE will hold school budgets harmless next year, as school budget cuts could devastate schools and undo much of the benefit of the additional hiring cited above. The DOE should also promise that they will refrain from enacting any hiring freezes or vacancy reductions, which would counteract efforts to provide the increased staffing necessary.

## **Need to expand the school capital plan and require more specificity**

The following provision is in the state budget, which was finalized on April 20, 2024:

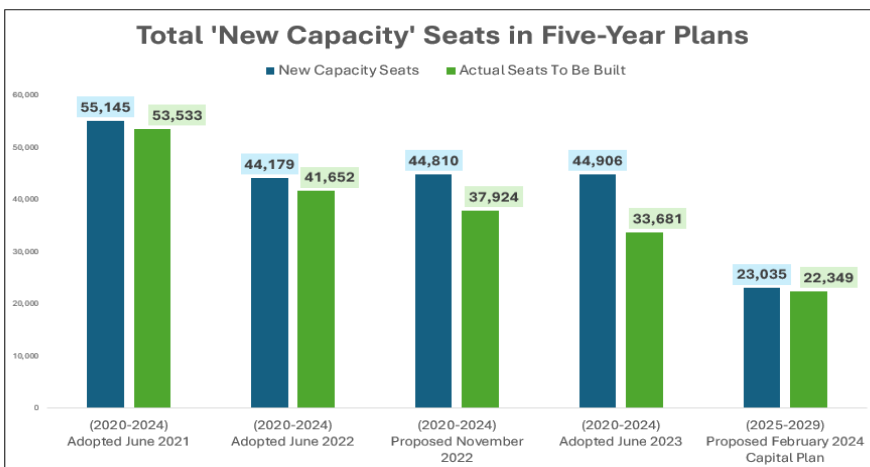
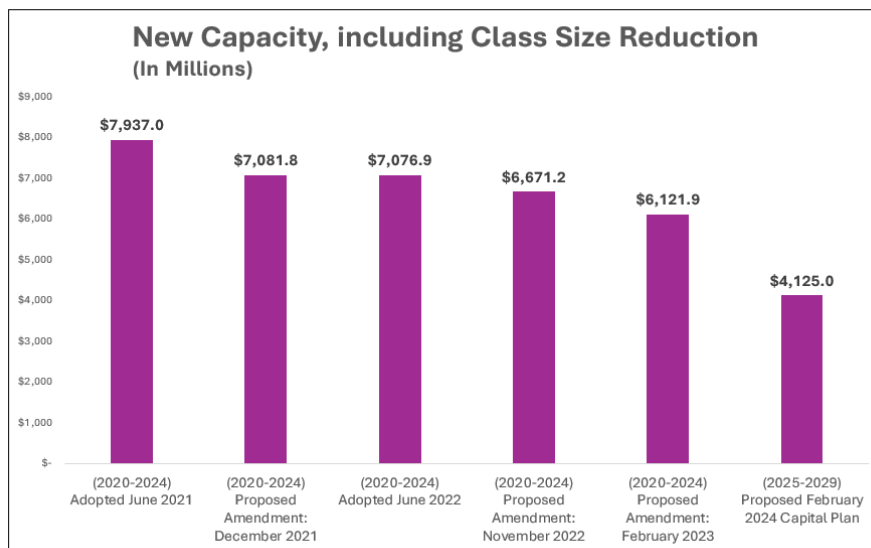
*“For the purpose of achieving the class size targets, as required by section 211-d of the education law, the city of New York shall increase planned spending on classroom construction by two billion dollars (\$2,000,000,000) over and above the planned capital spending as detailed in the February 2024 School Construction Authority capital plan. This act shall take effect immediately and shall be deemed to have been in full force and effect on and after April 1, 2024.”<sup>4</sup>*

<sup>3</sup> IBO on city FY 25 surplus <https://ibo.nyc.ny.us/iboreports/giving-some-back-leaving-others-out-ibos-analysis-of-the-administrations-second-consecutive-program-to-eliminate-the-gap-this-fiscal-year-february-2024.pdf>; Office of Management and Budget on rainy day and general reserve fund at <https://www.nyc.gov/site/omb/reserves.page>

<sup>4</sup> [https://nyassembly.gov/leg/?default\\_fld=&leg\\_video=&bn=S08306&term=2023&Summary=Y&Text=Y](https://nyassembly.gov/leg/?default_fld=&leg_video=&bn=S08306&term=2023&Summary=Y&Text=Y)

This expansion of the capital plan is badly needed, as the SCA has cut funding for the number of new school seats planned by over \$2.5 billion and the number of new seats by half, since the class size law was passed.<sup>5</sup>

And yet we have seen no change in the school capital plan posted on the SCA website, and the plan as released by the Mayor as part of the executive budget on April 22 includes no additional funding.<sup>6</sup> Instead, the city announced that they would sign two big contracts to build more jails, costing at least \$6.8 billion – much more than the \$4.1B in the proposed five-year plan for new schools.<sup>7</sup> The Queens jail will cost at least \$3.9 billion, far more than the DOE plans to spend on building any new schools in that borough, while the Bronx jail will cost at least \$2.9 billion—with not a single dollar specified in the capital plan for any new schools in the Bronx.



According to an earlier Council briefing paper and the testimony of SCA President Nina Kubota at the preliminary budget hearings, she claimed that 85,000 new seats would be needed to reach compliance with

<sup>5</sup> When the Chancellor and Deputy Chancellor was asked about these radical cuts to the capital plan at a meeting on Nov. 10, 2023, they said that this was a decision made not by them but by the NYC Office of Management and Budget. See: <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/883381018>

<sup>6</sup> See p. 38 on <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/cb4-24.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.nydailynews.com/2024/05/07/new-jails-in-bronx-queens-on-track-to-open-four-years-after-deadline-to-close-rikers-island/>

the class size law, at a cost of \$22 billion to \$25 billion.<sup>8</sup> Yet even with \$2 billion added to the February five-year plan, that still would total only \$6.1 billion.

In any case, we do not understand her estimate, as the cost per seat in the proposed five-year capital plan for 2025-2029 is approximately \$179,000.<sup>9</sup> When multiplied by 85,000, that equals \$15.2 billion, or \$7-\$10 billion less than the amount she claimed.

The SCA estimate was also made presumably without taking any of cost-free steps the Class Size Working Group proposed, including adjusting enrollment between nearby schools and/or moving some 3K and PreK classes into now-empty seats in Community Based Organizations and Early Childhood Centers. Shifting some of these classes from overcrowded schools to nearby CBOs and ECCs could free up as many as 1,400 elementary school classrooms, while offering important extended day and extended year childcare services to more working parents.<sup>10</sup>

In any case, the \$2 billion required in the state budget deal should be included in any capital budget the Council approves, as well as a thorough accounting of how many additional seats will be created, in what districts, subdistricts, and grade levels.

Right now, the capital plan fails to provide this information for 77% of the seats funded. Instead, the SCA asserts that new capacity projects will only be listed in the plan “*following the identification of a suitable site and the commencement of the school facility’s design process.*”<sup>11</sup>

This unprecedented lack of transparency not only leaves the public and elected officials entirely out of the potential siting of schools and their input ignored as to where new schools are needed, it also appears to violate two state laws. EDN § 2590-o requires the Chancellor to annually prepare an “*educational facilities master plan...including a list of prioritized projects to the extent ascertainable and [to] list each proposed new educational facility and set forth a justification, including demographic data, documenting the long term need therefor.*”<sup>12</sup>

It also appears to violate the class size law, now Chapter 556 of the Laws of 2022, which requires that the DOE produce an annual class size plan that includes “*the annual capital plan for school construction and leasing to show how many classrooms will be added in each year and in which schools and districts to achieve the class size targets.*”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> See <https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/View.ashx?M=F&ID=12758494&GUID=0CF82049-2A0B-42E9-BFF9-D5A2A4E65031>

<sup>9</sup> SCA proposed Five-Year Capital plan for FY 2025- FY 2029, Feb. 2024

[https://dnnhh5cc1.blob.core.windows.net/portals/0/Capital\\_Plan/Capital\\_plans/02012024\\_25\\_29\\_CapitalPlan.pdf?sv=2017-04-17&sr=b&si=DNNFileManagerPolicy&sig=ExyJ25yWw4Gt5zwwG%2F%2F9rdA14929cO%2Ba%2FMb0vAWq7Gw%3D](https://dnnhh5cc1.blob.core.windows.net/portals/0/Capital_Plan/Capital_plans/02012024_25_29_CapitalPlan.pdf?sv=2017-04-17&sr=b&si=DNNFileManagerPolicy&sig=ExyJ25yWw4Gt5zwwG%2F%2F9rdA14929cO%2Ba%2FMb0vAWq7Gw%3D)

<sup>10</sup> Class Size Working Group report, Dec. 2023,

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gSiFUcuLOjJ49PLCMptkroFjXBHow2b\\_/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gSiFUcuLOjJ49PLCMptkroFjXBHow2b_/view)

<sup>11</sup> NYC School Construction Authority, FY 2025-2029 Proposed Five-Year Capital Plan, February 2024

[https://dnnhh5cc1.blob.core.windows.net/portals/0/Capital\\_Plan/Capital\\_plans/02012024\\_25\\_29\\_CapitalPlan.pdf?sv=2017-04-17&sr=b&si=DNNFileManagerPolicy&sig=ExyJ25yWw4Gt5zwwG%2F%2F9rdA14929cO%2Ba%2FMb0vAWq7Gw%3D](https://dnnhh5cc1.blob.core.windows.net/portals/0/Capital_Plan/Capital_plans/02012024_25_29_CapitalPlan.pdf?sv=2017-04-17&sr=b&si=DNNFileManagerPolicy&sig=ExyJ25yWw4Gt5zwwG%2F%2F9rdA14929cO%2Ba%2FMb0vAWq7Gw%3D), p. 16

<sup>12</sup> <https://codes.findlaw.com/ny/education-law/edn-sect-2590-o/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/EDN/211-D> this refusal to divulge where new schools are planned

appears contrary to the promises in an Memorandum of Understanding with the Council, signed by Mayor, Speaker and Chancellor on November 10, 2004, renewed annually which “Requires the annual amendment to the capital plan to include siting and/or location of each project (by building or school district, as appropriate), cost estimates, start dates and completion dates for each project. The 2022 version of the MOU is posted at

<https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5691569&GUID=DF0D66A7-2A38-470D-9CEA-4D084DBEE5EC&Options=&Search=>

Finally, the lack of specificity violates Local Law 167, passed by the Council in 2018, requiring DOE to provide the number of seats needed by community school district, subdistrict, and grade level, while including the data and methodology used for these projections.<sup>14</sup>

We urge the Council to take heed and refuse to approve any capital plan that has not expanded the amount to be spent on new capacity by at least \$2 billion, and also require that it specifically identify where new seats will be built to alleviate overcrowding and allow schools to lower class sizes to the levels required by the class size law. Thank you again for holding these hearings today.

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<sup>14</sup> <https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/View.ashx?M=F&ID=6714467&GUID=ED9C486B-ACA7-4D5B-8D56-F2EA0A950976>

[REDACTED]

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**From:** leoniehaimson@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 16, 2024 1:12 PM  
**To:** District40  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] thank you, testimony and follow up points  
**Attachments:** CSM testimony on exec budget & capital plan 5.15.24 final final.pdf

[REDACTED]

Dear Chair Joseph and all:

Thank you as always for the informative meeting today and for the hearing yesterday. I thought I'd share my testimony that I was unable to deliver yesterday (attached) and make some follow-up points about issues that came up during the meeting.

1. According to AQE, there were far larger amounts proposed for childcare/early ed in the Senate and Assembly one-house budgets that were NOT included the Governor's exec budget. It would be unusual for the Legislative leaders to refuse to include in the final budget what they'd already proposed. Here is [the fact sheet](#) AQE earlier prepared with side by side comparisons – there is a lot of detail here, but look at the amounts under PreK, child care , and expanding access and support for the child care workforce to compare the proposed amounts.
2. The spreadsheet that Liz asked about, comparing DOE enrollment projections by school for next year compared to their Oct. 31, 2023 [enrollment is here](#). Below is a summary of the analysis by my research director Michael Rance, who is copied. If you find any mistakes in it or think it may be wrong for other reasons, please let us know. The numbers are much lower in total than what DOE has projected overall for enrollment, but they do not include 3K, PreK, D75 or D79 students, which are not funded through FSF.

Enrollment Decline of 1% or Greater?	Count of Schools	Sum of K-12 Enrollment (23-24)	Sum of Projected Enrollment (24-25)
Yes -Enrollment Decline of 1% or Greater	765	385,729	368,787
No - Enrollment Decline of 1% or Greater	758	396,189	408,800
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1523</b>	<b>781,918</b>	<b>777,587</b>

Finally, as to the \$2B that is required to be added to the capital plan, here is the language in the [state budget](#), also quoted in my testimony:

*“For the purpose of achieving the class size targets, as required by section 211-d of the education law, the city of New York shall increase planned spending on classroom construction by two billion dollars (\$2,000,000,000) over and above the planned capital spending as detailed in the*



*February 2024 School Construction Authority capital plan. This act shall take effect immediately and shall be deemed to have been in full force and effect on and after April 1, 2024.”*

My interpretation of this language is that the Council cannot and should not legally approve any capital plan that does not include this additional amount.

If you folks have a different interpretation, please let us know, as well as if you alerted to any update to the plan.

Thanks again,

Leonie Haimson  
Executive Director  
Class Size Matters  
124 Waverly Pl.  
New York, NY 10011

[leonie@classsizematters.org](mailto:leonie@classsizematters.org)<mailto:leonie@classsizematters.org>

<http://www.classsizematters.org/>

Follow on twitter @leoniehaimson

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Host of "[Talk out of School](#)" WBAI radio show and podcast



**NYC Council Committee on Education Joint Hearing with the Committee on Finance  
FY 25 Executive Budget Hearing  
Wednesday, May 15, 2024**

**Testimony Submitted by the Committee for Hispanic Children & Families (CHCF)**

Thank you, Speaker Adams, Chairs Joseph and Brannan, and the Committees on Education and Finance, for the opportunity to submit testimony on the FY 25 Executive Budget. The Committee for Hispanic Children & Families, better known by its acronym, CHCF, is a non-profit organization with a 42-year history of combining education, capacity-building, and advocacy to strengthen the support system and continuum of learning for children and youth from birth through school-age. CHCF continues to deliver our services through a holistic approach, supporting high quality, culturally responsive and sustaining early learning and school-aged education, and addressing the comprehensive needs of families and the wider communities we serve across NYC.

**Overview of Our Services**

CHCF's Early Care and Education team supports childcare and early learning programs, and family access to childcare (birth through school-age) in our work as a Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) Agency<sup>1</sup> and as a Family Child Care Network under NYCPS Division of Early Childhood Education. CHCF additionally engages providers in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), supporting the nutrition of children through their childcare program. Our Youth Development team delivers after-school programming in partnership with three schools in the Bronx, as well as career and college readiness programming to high school juniors and seniors at three schools in Manhattan and the Bronx. Above and beyond the academic supports we offer in our school-based programs, we support mental health and social emotional development, student interest and career exploration, and connection to additional resources and opportunities beyond the school walls. Our Social Services team oversees direct supports and services at one of the hotel-based shelters for asylum seekers in Long Island City, ensuring culturally and linguistically responsive and trauma informed support to newly arrived families navigating complex city systems. Finally, our Community Empowerment Department enhances our general delivery of comprehensive supports in direct program spaces, expanding the reach of our contracted agency services and supports beyond these physical spaces into the surrounding communities, addressing several issues including housing, immigration, food access, healthcare access, and more.

**School-Based Programming & Educational Equity**

During a school year, CHCF provides after school programming at three different schools in the Bronx, with a capacity to reach 550 students, and by extension their families: 250 students at PS 59 (about 55% of the K-5 school population); 140 elementary students and 100 middle school students at PS/MS 279 (roughly 33% of the school population); and 60 students at PS 226 (18% of the K-5 population). During

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<sup>1</sup> NYC Child Care Resource & Referral Consortium. <https://nycrr.org/>





the summer of 2023, we continued to extend our services at PS/MS 279 to deliver Summer Rising programming for over 200 students (137 elementary students and 65 middle school students).

CHCF joins our allies in the Emergency Coalition to Save Education Programming in sharing our appreciation for the partial restoration of funds towards critical education programming by the administration. With the roughly \$600M in restored funds included in the FY 25 Executive Budget, many programs will be able to continue, including school social workers and psychologists, coordinators working in homeless shelters, Learning to Work, and bilingual supports. We know that the programs at risk with the end of one-time federal funding were never considered a limited time need. While some programs were saved, in some instances temporarily, there are still other essential programs that were left out of the restoration or only partially restored to the current funding levels. Without full restoration, many programs are still at risk of reduced services or total elimination as soon as July.

Summer Rising continues to meet a longstanding need for families, offering safe spaces for students to remain engaged in academics and enrichment activities during summer months. Even before the pandemic, families struggled to find and afford summer programming and with the launch of Summer Rising, we felt the relief and impact among the families and students we serve. Over the most recent summer, we experienced growing waitlists in response to the reduction in available slots, and the expressed frustration of families who felt the loss of access to this support as the city pulled back its investments.

While we appreciate the mayor's restoration of \$80M in NYCPS funding towards Summer Rising for FY 25, there remains the matter of the DYCD Summer Rising PEGs. **We call on the city to fully restore Summer Rising in the budget, in both the NYCPS and DYCD budgets, to sustain programming at its previous levels, and for Council leaders to continue moving the city towards universal out of school time programming, for both after school and summer programs.**

CHCF continues to be an advocate for the highly impactful Community School model,<sup>2</sup> as a member of the Coalition for Community Schools Excellence. Until June 30th of 2021, CHCF had worked for 6 years as the partnering CBO at the Bronx High School of Business on the Taft Campus, delivering culturally and linguistically responsive, holistic services to the student population and their families. During that time working with BHSB, we saw amazing gains with our students, with significant improvements in attendance, college and career readiness, and graduation rates.<sup>3</sup> A cost-cutting decision to consolidate services on multi-school campuses to one CBO with a smaller contract award amount, made it difficult for small- or mid-sized non-profits, like CHCF, to compete with larger non-profits with more fiscal capacity to carry the funding shortfall.

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<sup>2</sup> Johnston, W., Engberg, J., Oppen, I.M., Sontag-Padilla, L., & Xenakis, L. (Jan 2020). Illustrating the Promise of Community Schools: An Assessment of the Impact of the New York City Community Schools Initiative. Rand. Retrieved from: [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR3245.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR3245.html)

<sup>3</sup> CHCF Youth Development FY 2021 (November 2021). The Committee for Hispanic Children & Families. [Youth Development FY 2021.pdf](#)





None the less, we maintain our commitment to the Community Schools model as a means of strengthening relationships between schools, CBOs, and community partners to strengthen the delivery of services and resources to communities. The mayor's restoration of \$56M funds the 113 community schools funded with expiring federal funds (DOE: \$48M) and restores the PEG (\$8M). It does not include funding for community schools funded with one-year expiring city funds; and while we hear confirmation from city leadership about the value of this school model and the belief that the model should grow,<sup>4</sup> **there remains a funding gap of \$14M threatening the stability of 62 community schools citywide, including \$5 million to support community schools in the zip codes most impacted by covid-19. The city must restore the full amount to maintain all 421 community schools and continue to keep an eye towards further growing this model citywide.**

Even with the end of our community schools' contract, CHCF has continued its Opening Doors to the Future program for high school aged students. ODF recognizes the importance of connecting youth to professional experiences, guiding and supporting students nearing their graduation in exploring their interests and future pathways. CHCF therefore is an ardent supporter of all programming geared towards student college and career readiness and equitably connecting students to opportunities. **While we were happy to see the restoration for Learning to Work, Student Success Centers – a program model that trains youth leaders to build a culture of college-going in their schools and to help their peers with the college admissions process – were not included in the restorations. We call on the city to restore the \$3.3M to maintain this important programming.**

CHCF services focus on the existing and growing needs of immigrant children and their families. The restoration included \$10M baselined for bilingual programming, and a baselined restoration of \$6M for translation and interpretation; **it did not include the \$4M restoration for Immigrant Family Communication & Outreach.** It is essential that the city restore these funds to ensure that families facing language and city system barriers have equitable access to important information pertaining to their children's education and access to resources.

CHCF also remains engaged in statewide advocacy efforts to ensure every student is safe and supported in school, with focus on vulnerable and disproportionately targeted youth. Beyond our advocacy on redirecting antiquated zero-tolerance practices and focused investments in policing students from a statewide regulatory lens, we continue to urge the city to remain dedicated in its investments in restorative practices and equitable access to support staff in schools. **This includes \$12M for restorative justice, \$5M for the Mental Health Continuum initiative to help students at 50 high-needs schools access expedited mental healthcare, and \$65M to enable every school building to have a nurse.**

We appreciate the City Council's advocacy to fund each of these programs in response to the preliminary budget and continue to call for the final budget to include full funding to sustain these vital

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<sup>4</sup> Mayor Adams Makes Education and Youth Development Related Announcement (January 2024). NYC Mayor's Office. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=20R7DSgG1bo>





school-age supports and services. We additionally wish to draw attention to those programs that were only given one year city funding and call on the city to baseline all programs in the final budget.<sup>5</sup>

### Early Care and Learning Programming

CHCF holds a Family Child Care Network under NYCPS DECE, supporting 40 affiliated providers – most of whom speak Spanish as their primary language – to deliver high-quality, culturally and linguistically responsive programming to 180 children. Knowing how important ECE programming is for the healthy development of NYC’s children, particularly those who are from communities that have been historically under-resourced; and for the stability of parents trying to navigate work and family needs, we were alarmed to see the administration’s shifts away from growing access to these essential programs.

While the administration’s one-year restoration of \$92M covered the Federal Funding Gap, there remains an additional NYCPS funding gap of \$170M PEG for 3K and Pre-K. We know that there continues to be unused School Day/Year seats in specific districts but will continue to push back on intentions of cutting unused seats. The issue is not a lack of need, it is a matter of reallocating those seats to the communities with the highest demand. Further, the overwhelming reason that families in the low-income communities that we serve do not take advantage of the school day/year program is because they require extended day/year care for their children. CHCF’s FCC Network, for one, always has 100% enrollment and a wait list for our EDY seats, and under enrollment in our SDY seats. Our concern, which was confirmed in what we were hearing from the Deputy Chancellor, is that any cuts that go through will come from underutilized SDY slots, and we expect that this will have a disproportionate impact on low-income communities, particularly in Brooklyn and the Bronx, where families need extended day/year care. **Rather than pull city funds from this critical programming investment, the city must continue to move unused seats to those districts with high demand and to repurpose the unused funds for school day/year 3K and PreK to expand access to Extended Day/Year learning and care.**

**Additionally, even with the administration’s restorations to Pre School Special Education, there remains a funding gap of \$13M. Without the full restoration we will see a perpetuation of the city’s inability to meet the legally required need, given the ongoing shortage of seats in preschool special education classes.**

**Further, there must be more intentionality in outreach to families to inform them of all options they have available to them to ensure the comprehensive care that they require, including potentially piecing together SDY with a voucher for the EDY portion of care (afterschool and summer).** These efforts to support families to receive the comprehensive care that they need necessitates coordinated support across agencies (NYCPS, ACS, HRA), which continues to be an issue. It remains essential that city agencies are transparently reporting their staffing needs to ensure effective outreach, accurate and complete education about all child care options that a family has available to them, support in

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<sup>5</sup> Restore Education Programs in the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget (2024). Emergency Coalition to Save Education Programs. Retrieved from: [https://advocatesforchildren.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/ecsep\\_budget\\_ask.pdf](https://advocatesforchildren.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/ecsep_budget_ask.pdf)





navigating the application and eligibility process, and assurance that families are making an informed choice for child care placement that best reflects their family's culture and needs.

**We join the ECSEP in calling on a full restoration of 3K and PreK funding, with an additional \$170M and that the funding be made baselined while better efforts are made to ensure the seats available reflect the needs of the communities. We further request that the city fully restore PreK Special Education funding so that we might move closer to meeting our legal obligations of delivering services to families who have a right to them. We finally call on city leaders to be particularly attentive to funding and staffing practices in NYCPS, ACS, and HRA that are needlessly delaying access to childcare for families.**

On a final note, we wish to uplift a concerning trend of inequitable support across the NYC childcare sector. As we noted in our testimony to the Committee on Children & Youth and the Committee on Finance on the Executive Budget, there are longstanding practices in the city and state that result in underfunding and under resourcing in very specific parts of the sector – namely, the residential based, family childcare programs. While there is a clear disparity in access to support to ensure equitable resources for all ECE programs serving NYC children between contracted and independent programs, we are additionally concerned about shifts in NYCPS DECE investments and practices to support the unique needs of contracted FCC programs. Of note, there seems to be an ongoing divestment in central supports of city contracted FCCs and Networks; particularly reflected in the reorganization of the FCCN supports and removal of DECE staff who are knowledgeable of/have experience in the FCC sector. We continue to call on the City Council to remain vigilant about distribution of funding to ensure all programs serving NYC's children are being equitably supported and resourced. This is the point where educational inequity begins.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony; and if there are any questions about our work or what is presented in our testimony, please reach out to Danielle Demeuse, Director of Policy, at: [ddemeuse@chcfinc.org](mailto:ddemeuse@chcfinc.org) or 212-206-1090 ext. 359.



75 Broad Street, Suite 620 | New York, NY 10004 | (212) 206-1090 | [info@chcfinc.org](mailto:info@chcfinc.org)



**Testimony of Aarmeen Khan, Youth Food Advocates  
Community Food Advocates**

**Testimony before the New York City Council  
Joint Meeting of the Committee on Finance and Committee on Education  
Executive Budget Hearing  
Hearing on Wednesday, May 15, 2023**

Good Afternoon Chair Brannan and Chair Joseph and City Council members. My name is Aarmeen Khan, and I am a junior at The Brooklyn Latin School. I have been a Youth Advocate for school lunch for the past two years. Today, I came here to support the proposed \$150 million for cafeteria redesigns in the Chancellor's 5-Year Capital plan and this Council's response to the Fiscal 2025 Preliminary Budget. While I may be the sole representative of my school here, I assure you, that I carry with me the unwavering support of my entire campus' student body, comprised of over 800 students.

Accessing school food is difficult for many students due to limited options and scheduling issues. At Brooklyn Latin, since the enhanced cafeteria update, more students have come in and out of the cafeteria to get lunch. I remember walking into the cafeteria when it reopened and my friends were shocked by the changes. As of an entire year after the update, the cafeteria has been seeing a consistent increase in students taking and eating lunch. The atmosphere at lunch has become more enjoyable and positive, making the students feel like they have a space to relax and belong in.

With your support for these changes, students like me could feel affirmed and valued, and know that we are the focus of why we are all here today. We appreciate your support in helping bring this big change. The Chancellor's Capital plan and this Council's support and investment in cafeteria redesigns represent more than just a financial allocation—it symbolizes a commitment to the well-being and success of every student. You affirm our value as students and prioritize our needs at the forefront of decision-making. Your continued support is indispensable in realizing our vision for a school environment that fosters growth, inclusivity, and opportunity for all.

As we stand on the cusp of transformative change, we express our deepest gratitude for your consideration of this vital issue. We hope you will continue championing our cause and allocating resources toward initiatives that empower and uplift students across our city. Together, we can create a future where every student thrives.

Thank you for your time.

Aarmeen Khan



**Testimony of Crystal Alcock, Youth Food Advocates  
Community Food Advocates**

**Testimony before the New York City Council  
Joint Meeting of the Committee on Finance and Committee on Education  
Executive Budget Hearing  
Hearing on Wednesday, May 15, 2023**

Good Afternoon Chair Brannan, Chair Joseph, and City Council members. My name is Crystal Alcock. I am a sophomore at the Bronx High School of Science and a Youth Food Advocate. I come before you today, to support the \$150 million for enhanced cafeterias included in Chancellor Banks' Five-Year Proposed Capital Plan and the City Council's response to the Fiscal 2025 Preliminary Budget.

Like most students in the New York City public schools, I don't have the most positive relationship with school food. In fact, for the majority of my 11 years as a student in this system, I often refused to eat school lunch. I would go without eating due to the stigma associated with school food, the school menu not having options I liked, and the unwelcoming environment of the cafeteria. This would of course negatively impact my concentration and attitude in school. However, since my school received the serving line part of the Cafeteria Enhancement, my relationship with school food has significantly improved.

Because of this initiative, I can choose the school lunch options that I enjoy and I eat school lunch frequently. I no longer have to stand on the lunch line for more than half the period, giving me more time to destress from school and spend time with my friends. As a student-athlete balancing other extracurriculars after school, this makes all the difference and sustains me until I get home. The Cafeteria Enhancement has made a positive difference in my life and for thousands of other students' lives as well. I've seen people who refused to eat school lunch at all, eagerly join the lunch line with a smile on their face because of this experience.

Chair Brannan, Chair Joseph, and City Council members the \$150 million for enhanced cafeterias in the Capital Plan and the City Council's response to the preliminary budget is an absolute necessity. With your support, all of New York City's middle and high school students, including students who come from low-income homes and are struggling to get by, and student-athletes like me who were put off by the cafeteria before, will have access to nutritious meals of their choice and an engaging cafeteria that will help them get through the day.

Thank you for your continued support and for paving the way for a better tomorrow for the current and future generations of students.

Crystal Alcock





**Testimony of Liz Accles, Executive Director  
Community Food Advocates**

**Testimony before the New York City Council  
Committee on Education | Committee on Finance  
Executive Budget Hearing  
Hearing on Wednesday, May 15, 2024**

Good afternoon Chair Brannan, Chair Joseph, and members of the Committees. My name is Liz Accles, and I am the Executive Director of Community Food Advocates (CFA). On behalf of Community Food Advocates and the Lunch 4 Learning coalition, I am pleased to testify on the Fiscal Year 2025 Executive Budget and Five-Year Capital Plan.

I am testifying today to thank you for your support for full expansion of the NYC Public Schools (NYCPS) Office of Food & Nutrition Services' (OFNS) Cafeteria Enhancement Experience (CEE), or "cafeteria redesign," to all middle and high school cafeterias. We are thrilled to see the Lunch 4 Learning FY2025 capital budget priority was included in the in the Chancellor's Proposed Five-Year Capital Plan, and to see it included in City Council's Response to the Preliminary Budget. We know this is a priority for the Council and we ask for your continued support this capital budget initiative.

I am also testifying today to show our appreciation for your inclusion of School Food Restoration – calling for an additional \$60 million for the program - in City Council's Response to the Preliminary Budget, and we ask that OFNS is *fully funded* in the FY2025 Budget. The substantial increase in school meal participation as a result of CEE expansion and other cutting-edge initiatives initiated by OFNS must be maintained. This will continue to ensure the NYC school food service reaches its full potential—including offering a variety of popular menu items and progress with the innovative menu developments we have seen over the past several years.

Community Food Advocates (CFA) leads Lunch 4 Learning, a broad, diverse coalition-based group that, in partnership with the City Council, successfully advocated for Universal Free Meals in all New York City public schools in 2017. As a coalition, we advocate for policies, initiatives, and innovations that enhance the school food experience and welcome students to participate.

**Committing an additional \$150 million in the Five-Year Capital Plan will enhance all remaining middle and high school cafeterias**

Over the past two budget sessions, in partnership with the Chancellor and the Council we secured \$100 million bringing the total commitment for a total of \$125 million towards expanding the cafeteria redesign initiative to reach approximately half of NYCPS middle and high schools. The full \$150 million in the Chancellor's Proposed Five-Year Capital Plan would reach the Lunch 4 Learning Coalition's goal to roll out this model to the remaining 250 middle and high school cafeterias.

The NYCPS's OFNS cafeteria redesign is a highly impactful, cost-effective initiative that completely transforms the cafeteria environment. The food court-style serving line, gives students more variety of options on a daily basis. The seating area becomes a more welcoming environment for students, with diner-style booths, round tables, and high-top seating arrangements. (Please see the attached one-pager and cafeteria redesign look book for additional information, including photos and analysis, of the enhanced cafeterias.) The redesigned cafeterias accommodate older students' need for autonomy, speed-of-service, and a more welcoming dining experience.

The success of the CEE initiative is apparent in the approximately 200 school cafeterias—serving around 240,000 students—that have been transformed so far. Our analysis shows a substantial and sustained impact on school meal participation. For example, Edward R. Murrow High School was one of the first cafeterias to be redesigned, in February 2017. In November 2016, the lunch participation was 20%. The participation doubled, and three years later in November 2019, the participation was still 39%. This impact on school meal participation is especially powerful because overall participation declines abruptly during middle school and is even lower among high school students.

By the end of this school year, approximately half of the cafeterias that serve middle and high school students will have an enhanced cafeteria. In the 2022-2023 school year, OFNS completed nearly 120 cafeteria enhancements, demonstrating that they are positioned to fully scale the CEE initiative once funded. To ensure this is an equitable initiative, we propose that NYCPS adopt a Master Plan to roll out redesign of high school and middle school cafeterias. The one-time capital cost of redesigning a cafeteria is approximately \$600,000. This master plan should be equitably distributed across School Districts, phased-in by priority: high need/low participation rate; high need regardless of participation rate; and low participation rate/mixed income.

We ask for your support to ensure this proposed amount is secured to fully scale this important initiative.

**Full funding of OFNS in in the FY2025 Executive Budget is necessary continue to ensure the NYC school food service reaches its full potential**

We appreciate that the Administration heard the pleas to bring back menu items that were cut in February after a November 2023 budget modification and plans to restore many student favorites to the menu. Every day, nearly one million meals are served, and students and their families rely on school breakfast and lunch. We know that a variety of appealing menu items ensures students participate in the program.

Citywide, there has been a 9% increase in participation since last year. This is important, in part, because the City receives federal and state reimbursement for each meal served, and more so because it means students are getting the nutrition they need to learn and thrive in the classroom and beyond. The NYC school meals menu and the success of the food service program must not be threatened by City budget cuts. Over the past several years, the incredible strides OFNS has made with the school meals menu—expanding halal and kosher, plant-based options, and culturally relevant meals, and the innovations such as CEE, have collectively and directly led to this increase in participation. In fact, the variety of menu items on a daily basis has contributed to the successful implementation of CEE.

Ensuring meals are free for all NYC students was foundational to destigmatizing the school meals program towards and encouraging more students to participate. The City must continue to invest in the policies and initiatives that strengthen the program. We hope the Council will continue to be champions for the CEE initiative and school meals. Thank you.

Liz Accles, Executive Director

Community Food Advocates

Lunch 4 Learning Coalition

115 Broadway

New York, NY 10006



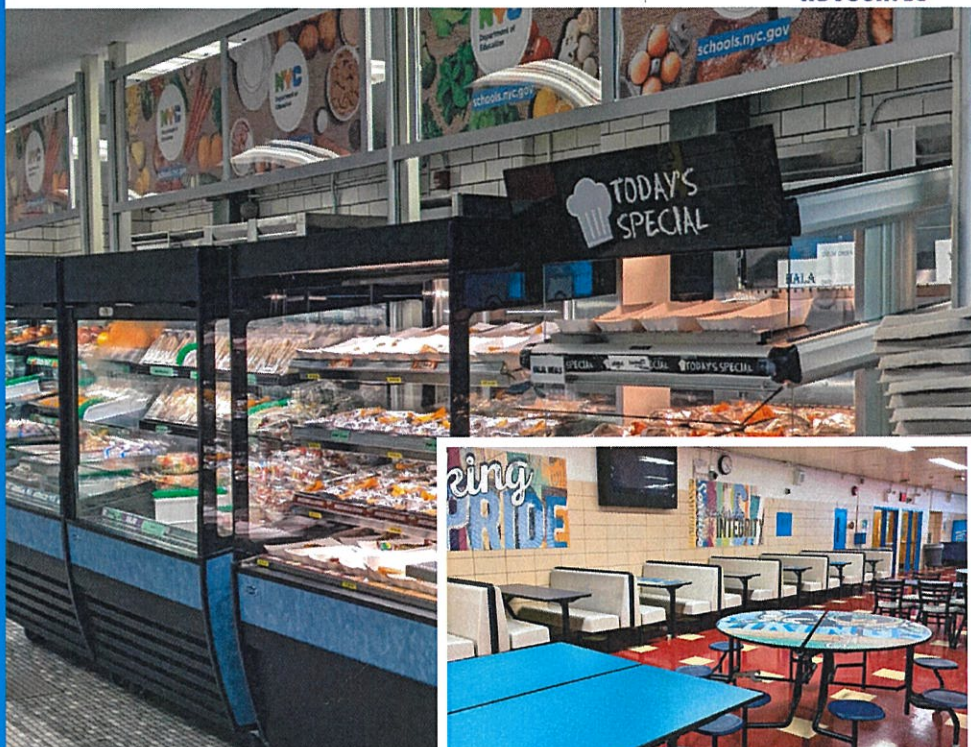
# CAFETERIA REDESIGN

## EQUITY ACROSS NYC SCHOOLS

The NYC DOE Office of Food and Nutrition Services' *Cafeteria Enhancement Experience* features food-court style serving lines and student-friendly seating.

Full funding for cafeteria redesign ensures equity for every middle and high school student in NYC.

Attachment 1  
Executive Budget Hearing  
Education - 5/15/24



### MORE STUDENTS EAT IN STUDENT-CENTERED CAFETERIAS

35% increase in lunch participation among high school students



### THE REDESIGN IS COST-EFFECTIVE AND QUICK

Estimated at \$600k per cafeteria and completed in three days.



### MORE FRUITS & VEGGIES ARE SERVED

3-5x more bananas, peppers, tomatoes, apples, carrots, spinach, and broccoli; and 30x more lettuce.



### EQUITY FOR ALL

School meals are the healthiest meals children eat, across all income levels.

**NEARLY HALF OF ALL CAFETERIAS SERVING MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED OR FUNDED**



~235 completed or funded  
~250 cafeterias remain



“All around me I could hear students exclaiming about how different and new the cafeteria felt to them..”

**AARMEEN**

Youth Food Advocates Intern

“What I've seen overnight, literally, is the whole stigma of school food shift because of the mere presentation of the food.”

**PRINCIPAL RASHAD MEADE**

Eagle Academy for Young Men  
Daily News, March 27, 2022

The Lunch 4 Learning coalition, led by Community Food Advocates, has secured \$125 million in capital funds for the initiative. The 162 currently updated cafeterias serve over 210,000 students.

**NOW is the time for NYC to**

**Commit \$150 million in the Chancellor's 5-Year Capital Plan to complete the transformation of the school food experience for all middle and high school students.**





**Testimony of Umida Ibragimova, Youth Food Advocates  
Community Food Advocates**

**Testimony before the New York City Council  
Joint Meeting of the Committee on Finance and Committee on Education  
Executive Budget Hearing  
Hearing on Wednesday, May 15, 2023**

Good afternoon Chair Brannan, Chair Joseph, and distinguished members of the City Council. My name is Umida, and I am a student at FDR High School. Today, I stand before you not only as a representative of my school but as a young advocate passionate about modernizing our school environments and integrating sustainability into every facet of our education system.

The proposed \$150 million investment for cafeteria enhancements, as outlined in the Chancellor's 5-Year Capital Plan and supported by this Council in response to the Fiscal 2025 Preliminary Budget, is a groundbreaking step towards modernizing the facilities that play a critical role in our daily school life. This commitment is crucial for schools like mine, where the cafeteria not only serves as a place for meals but also as a community hub for interaction and engagement among students.

Since the implementation of cafeteria upgrades in some schools, we have observed a significant improvement in student participation during lunch. These enhancements have transformed our cafeterias into welcoming and efficient spaces, encouraging more students to utilize the facilities and, importantly, to enjoy healthier school meals. The ripple effects are evident: better nutrition leads to better student engagement and academic performance.

The \$150 million allocation requested to complete cafeteria enhancements in all NYC middle and high schools will modernize these spaces. We ask that you begin to also look ahead with us to ensure our cafeterias are sustainable. This approach will improve the functionality of these spaces and instill a lifelong respect and responsibility for our environment among students.

Together, let's build a future where every student not only thrives but also respects and protects the world we all share. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Umida Ibragimova

## Request for Enhanced Support and Funding for Community Initiatives

Good Day, City Council Members,

My name is Esther Lelievre, co-founder of Cultivated Community Foundation and a proud parent of a DOE student. Our organization has actively participated in providing cannabis and vape education within your community and DOE schools. Our educational approach emphasizes fact-based learning, cultural awareness, and data-driven insights.

We have collaborated with several of your offices, offering support and training to a diverse group, including students, parents, faith-based leaders, seniors, veterans, and various city and state agencies. These partnerships have included the NYCHA Smoke-Free Division, ACS/CPS Infant Safety, community boards, Cannabis NYC, and the Family Enrichment Center in Far Rockaway, with CUNY Public Health and the DOE SAPIS division as our agency partners.

Our outreach efforts have reached over 40,000 New Yorkers, highlighting a significant gap in education on these topics. I am writing to discuss potential strategies to redirect and expand support and funding for our community initiatives. Our observations have identified complex situations that require multifaceted solutions:

1. **Department of Health Support:** We recommend agency training and inspections for convenience/smoke shops, which often blur the lines with food sales, confusing them with legal dispensaries or traditional bodegas.
2. **Social Media Education:** As social media's influence is ever-present, we aim to introduce educational programs that promote safety and balance for both students and parents.
3. **School-Based Food Growth Programs:** Addressing mental health issues linked to food deserts, we propose investing in accessible and affordable food growth programs in schools, especially in areas where economic barriers prevent families from accessing benefits like SNAP.
4. **Comprehensive Agency Training:** Many agencies lack current knowledge of laws and available community resources, including free after-school programs. Training across all agencies is essential.
5. **Support for Medical Cannabis Users:** There is a need for increased medical provider participation and support for patients using medical cannabis, particularly among parents in the D75 community, who face bias and a lack of resources.
6. **Development of Safe Social Spaces for Children:** With federal COVID funds depleted, restoring programs in culture, financial literacy, career exploration, and the arts is crucial for building children's social skills.
7. **Enhanced Funding for SAPIS:** Our recent community engagement highlighted the urgent need to address substance abuse among youth, particularly concerning edibles and vaping. Our discussions with DOE officials, including Chancellor Banks, underscore the need for increased SAPIS funding to support schools and implement a Peer Leadership Program.

Hello Esteem Elected Officials,

Cultivated Community Foundation (CCF) is committed to fostering informed, healthy, and empowered communities through targeted educational initiatives. In response to the evolving landscape of cannabis legalization and its implications on youth and families, CCF has developed a comprehensive Cannabis Education Pilot Program. This initiative aims to educate 9th to 12th graders, along with their parents, on the responsible use of cannabis, legal aspects, health risks, and safe practices.

### **Funding Request Overview**

CCF is seeking financial support from the City Council to ensure the successful rollout and implementation of this vital program. We are requesting:

- \$200,000 from City Council

Total Requested: **\$200,000**

These funds will be directly allocated to schools within the districts selected for the pilot program. This direct funding model ensures that resources are efficiently distributed and utilized for maximum impact on the target populations.

### **Program Goals and Objectives**

The Cannabis Education Pilot Program aims to:

1. Equip students and parents with factual, research-based knowledge on cannabis.
2. Address early teen consumption and the potential health risks associated with vaping and cannabis use. With a main focus communities disproportionately impact the war on drugs.
3. Engage parents in understanding NYS cannabis laws and foster open dialogues about cannabis with their children.
4. Offer alternatives and preventive strategies to mitigate early cannabis use among teens.





## Utilization of Funds

The allocated funds will be used to: Develop and distribute educational materials.

- Facilitate workshops and information sessions within schools.
- Purchase necessary equipment and resources for effective program delivery.

## Deliverables and Reporting

Upon completion of the pilot program, CCF commits to providing:

- Photos and Videos: Visual documentation showcasing the program's implementation and engagement activities.
- Data Reports: Comprehensive data analysis on program reach, impact, and participant feedback.
- Success Stories: Highlight reels and testimonials from participants and educators, illustrating the program's influence and outcomes.

These deliverables will be shared with our esteemed funding partners, offering a transparent and detailed account of the program's achievements and its impact on the community.

## Conclusion

The support from the Senate, State Assembly, and City Council is crucial for the successful execution of the Cannabis Education Pilot Program. Through this initiative, CCF aims to address critical needs within our communities, fostering a safer, more informed environment for our youth and their families. We are eager to embark on this journey with your esteemed support, making a tangible difference in the lives of the participants and the broader community.

We thank you for considering our request and look forward to the possibility of working together toward a healthier, informed, and empowered future.





## Cultivated Community Foundation Inc. Cannabis Education Pilot Program Proposal

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### Mission Statement

The Cultivated Community Foundation (CCF) is dedicated to supporting communities through meaningful, goal-oriented social action. Our commitment is to enact change, educate, and empower individuals to contribute positively to their communities. In alignment with this mission, we are excited to introduce a pilot program focused on cannabis education for students and their families.

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### Program Overview

The CCF Cannabis Education Pilot Program is designed to address the pressing issue of early teen consumption of cannabis and vaping, providing education and resources to 9th to 12th graders, and their parents. This initiative seeks to inform and engage the community through comprehensive education sessions, leveraging CDC research on teen smoking and the intricacies of NYS cannabis laws to foster a deeper understanding of the subject. In mental support mental & wellness options.

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### Pilot Program Goals

1. **Educate Early Teens:** Introduce 9th to 12th graders to factual, research-based information on cannabis use and vaping, focusing on health implications and legal considerations.
2. **Engage Parents:** Provide parents with the tools and knowledge needed to engage in meaningful conversations with their teens about cannabis and vaping, including understanding NYS cannabis laws and how to address alternatives to teen smoking.





3. **Community Engagement:** Foster community involvement through workshops and sessions that encourage open dialogue and education on cannabis use and prevention strategies.
  4. **Promote Healthy Alternatives:** Highlight and discuss healthier lifestyle choices and alternatives to cannabis use and vaping among teens.
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### Program Schedule and Compensation

The program is scheduled to run during health classes or after school from 2:50 PM to 5:00 PM. This schedule is designed to maximize participation without disrupting the regular academic curriculum. Compensation for educators and facilitators involved in the program will be set at a range of \$25 - 30 per hour.

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### Participating Schools and Events of the BETA Program July 2022- June 2023

- City Polytechnic High School (9-12th grade), Brooklyn, NY
- PTA EPIC High School, South Ozone Park
- CEC 29 Cannabis Parent Engagement Workshop
- Workshop meeting with OCM (Office of Cannabis Management) with Southeast Queens CEC 27, 28, 29
- 12th Graders, Pathway College Preparatory Hollis, NY
- DREAM Charter Parent Workshop, Harlem, NY
- Ms. Abby Halloween Parade, Bronx, NY
- Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition - **Community Cannabis Town Hall**

These schools and events have been selected for their diverse student populations and active community engagement, providing a robust foundation for the pilot program's success.

### Expanded Program Goals

1. **D75 Student Engagement:** Explore medical patient programs tailored for D75 students, integrating technology and cannabis education to support their specific needs.





2. **Career and Educational Pathways:** Provide insights into tech-driven cannabis programs, college opportunities, and job prospects for individuals transitioning from generational dealing to legal cannabis markets.
3. **Workforce Development:** Collaborate with the Department of Labor's CEED division to introduce workforce programs, highlighting pathways into the burgeoning cannabis industry.
4. **Mental Wellness and Social Media:** Incorporate training sessions on mental wellness and responsible social media use, addressing the impact of cannabis-related content

#### Agency Partnerships and Collaborations

- **NYC Child Injury Prevention (2023):** Partnership with the NYC Administration for Children Services to address the cannabis landscape in New York State, focusing on challenges and solutions for ACS, CPS, and Family Enrichment Center directors.
- **NYCHA Smoke Division Workshop:** Educational workshops outlining cannabis basics, NYCHA rules, and the medical program. Proposals for community workshops and staff training are underway to enhance understanding and compliance.
- **Cuny Public Health:** Educational workshops outlining cannabis basics, NYCHA rules, and the medical program. Community Board/ Faith Workshops with Community Board 10 in Harlem, NY

#### Corporate/Nonprofit Partnerships

- **AYR Wellness Head of Corporate Responsibility Division with Khari Edwards:** A strategic collaboration aimed at extending our outreach initiatives across New York State, focusing on educational and resource distribution.
- **The Bronx Foundation/Dutchie Community Partnership:** With the Bronx Showroom Dispensary, this partnership enhances educational support and resources, reinforcing our commitment to informed community engagement.
- **New York State Cannabis Connect:** A partnership dedicated to statewide workforce development, featuring the Catch a Contact career summit to facilitate employment opportunities within the cannabis sector.





### Program Schedule, Compensation, and Financial Overview

- The program will run during health classes or after school, from 2:50 PM to 5:00 PM, at a compensation rate of \$25- \$30 per hour.
  - A revised budget request of **\$300,000** in discretionary funds will support the expanded program, including school payments and quarterly parent engagement sessions across the five boroughs.
  - Initial funding of \$30,000 from a private sector investor covers the July 2022 - June 2023 period, ensuring a solid foundation for the pilot phase. This funding has covered program development, education, and outreach that has reached 40,000 New York State residents.
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### Participating Schools and Events

- **Additional Exploration:** Requests from schools/students for medical patient programs for D75 students, tech cannabis programs, and college/job opportunities, mental health & wellness workshops
  - **Included Schools and Events:** City Polytechnic High School, PTA EPIC High School, various CEC workshops, DREAM Charter Parent Workshop, and the Ms. Abby Halloween Parade, among others, highlighting the diverse reach of this program. Attached data deck and video of work within communities.
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### Primary Fiscal Sponsor Option: The National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network, Inc.

Our primary fiscal sponsor option, The National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network, Inc., represents a pivotal alliance in addressing the nuanced intersection of cannabis use and HIV/AIDS. This partnership leverages the Network's extensive experience in health advocacy, support, and education, aligning perfectly with our program's aim to educate on the impacts of cannabis among vulnerable populations.





- **Partnership with CUNY Public Health:** In collaboration with The National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network, Inc., our partnership with CUNY Public Health is poised to play a crucial role in the program's success. CUNY Public Health will continue in partnership to assist with evaluation, surveying, and providing health literacy support, ensuring our educational efforts are informed, effective, and grounded in the latest research. This collaboration is especially significant considering the complex relationship between cannabis use and HIV/AIDS patient care, an area where both partners have previously demonstrated commitment through community workshops.

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#### **Secondary Fiscal Sponsor Option: Living Creative Lee Inc.**

Living Creative Lee Inc., our secondary fiscal sponsor, is a nonprofit organization deeply rooted in community health and empowerment, operating within the DOE food program in Brooklyn, NY. This partnership not only supports our mission from a financial and operational standpoint but also enriches the program's content through its connection to culinary arts and career development.

- **Cannabis in Cooking Certification Program:** Our co-founder, Esther Lelievre, serves as an advisory board member for the Kingsborough/New York City College of Technology Cooking Cannabis Certification Program. This association underscores CCF's commitment to building career paths in the burgeoning cannabis industry, emphasizing the importance of early education and skill development for students. By integrating this perspective into our pilot program, we aim to open new avenues for career exploration and professional growth in cannabis-related fields.

The strategic selection of The National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network, Inc. and Living Creative Lee Inc. as fiscal sponsors, coupled with our partnerships with CUNY Public Health and the Kingsborough/New York City College of Technology, represents a multifaceted approach to cannabis education. This collaborative framework not only amplifies our capacity to deliver targeted, impactful programming but also aligns with CCF's overarching mission to support community wellbeing through education, advocacy, and social action. Together, we are poised to make a significant impact on the communities we serve, providing them with the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to navigate the complexities of cannabis use and its broader social and health implications.





## Conclusion

Cannabis rollout has had its issues, but the expanded CCF Cannabis Education Pilot Program represents an innovative step forward in addressing the multifaceted aspects of cannabis consumption, education, and legal transition within the community. We aim to foster a well-informed, health-conscious, and empowered community through targeted education, meaningful engagement, and strategic partnerships. We welcome educators, parents, community members, and partners to join us in this pivotal initiative, building a foundation of knowledge and support for our youth and the broader community. CCF has a fiscal sponsor until we receive our 501(c)3 tax-exempt status.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

The block contains two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature is 'Leo' followed by a stylized flourish. The second signature is 'Esther Lelievre' written in a cursive script.

Leonardo Jimenez & Esther Lelievre

Founders of Cultivated Community Foundation (CCF)

ADMIN@CCFNYS.ORG





## Testimony to City Council Committee on Education Budget Hearing

*Submitted to the City Council Committee on Education on May 15, 2024*

*Prepared by Candace Thompson-Zachery, Co-Executive Director of Dance/NYC*

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Thank you for your consideration of this testimony, submitted on behalf of Dance/NYC ([Dance.NYC](https://www.dance-nyc.org)), a service organization that reaches over 6,000 individual dance artists, 1,700 dance entities, and the many for-profit dance businesses based in the metropolitan New York City area. Its areas of service are of special benefit to BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and Peoples of Color), immigrant, disabled, low-income, and small-budget dance workers. Through its action-oriented research and advocacy, Dance/NYC seeks to represent and advance the interests of the dance field. It embeds the values of justice, equity, and inclusion into all aspects of its operations and frames the following requests through the lens of those values.

Dance/NYC joins our fellow advocates to support the **It Starts with the Arts** coalition — calling on our city to prioritize funding for arts and dance education in NYC schools.

### We specifically request the following:

- **Hire certified arts teachers (\$38M):** Ensure that all schools have at least one certified arts teacher, by bolstering the pipeline of certified arts teachers via a supplemental certification program (\$4M) and filling arts staffing gaps — **closing the equity gap for more than 315 schools.**
- **Baseline \$41M to continue arts education programs** including arts initiatives, programming to support student social-emotional wellbeing and academic recovery through the arts, and Summer Rising.



- **Continue and increase “Support for Arts Instruction” initiative funding:** Build on city’s down payment and boost allocation from \$4M to \$6M.
- **Require DOE arts funding be spent on the arts (\$15M):** Boost the per student arts allocation from \$80.47 to \$100, and require that money be spent on arts education.
- **Improve arts education data transparency** by compelling NYC Public Schools to provide a school-by-school breakdown of the state of arts education in public schools via a Legislative Services Request, T&C, and/or Oversight Hearing.

## Why Art and Dance Education Matters

**Arts education is a foundation for success in school and life and should be an essential part of every child’s education.** Arts education not only improves academic performance of students, but also supports their social and emotional well-being, while fostering creativity and critical thinking. Dance therapy, in particular, is used to promote emotional, cognitive, and physical integration, and has been found to be especially beneficial for people with chronic diseases. Additionally, dance offers opportunities for inclusion in the K-12 setting. According to the National Dance Education Organization, dance allows immigrant and non-English speaking students to express themselves non-verbally and to incorporate aspects of self not supported in the new culture and language. Similarly, dance offers new opportunities for cognitive growth and inclusion for special education students<sup>1</sup>. **Arts education is key to producing future generations of cultural leaders, artists, and passionate supporters with keen knowledge and appreciation of the arts**, which is why we understand the importance of incorporating arts and dance into the public school curriculum.

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<sup>1</sup> National Dance Education Organization. *Evidence: A Report on the Impact of Dance in the K-12 Setting* (2013). <https://www.ndeo.org/Portals/NDEO/Images/Evidence/NDEO%20Evidence%20Brochure%20-%20Stand%20up%20for%20Dance.pdf?ver=uPJq2x6XsQ5h6m4CmDeclg%3d%3d>





Arts education should be available to all students. Unfortunately, only 33% of eighth-grade students met NYS learning requirements for arts education last school year, and between 2020 and 2023, NYC public schools lost 14.8% full-time certified arts teachers. Dance education declines as students progress through different levels of schooling: only 76% of public elementary, 44% of middle schools, and 21% of high schools offer dance education<sup>2</sup>. Additionally, dance educators represent just 12.5% of full-time and 7.2% of part-time certified arts teachers in NYC public schools<sup>3</sup>.

### **Hiring More Certified Teachers Will Close the Equity Gap in Public Schools**

Despite core arts instruction mandates, arts education in New York City's public schools has become inequitable and underfunded<sup>4</sup>. In 2022, NYC public schools saw the [highest attrition rates in a decade](#), with the total pool of teachers reducing by 2,000<sup>5</sup>. Additionally, between the 2019-2020 and 2022-2023 school years, public schools across the five boroughs lost 425 full-time certified arts teachers ([a nearly 15% decrease](#)) — leaving thousands more students without a dedicated arts teacher. This compares to a 3.2% decrease in the total number of full-time NYC public school teachers. Retention rates are also low across NYC. Between 2021 and 2022, 8% of city teachers left the public education system, and studies show that teachers of color are more likely to leave the profession than their white counterparts.

Furthermore, 19% of school districts in the DOE do not already have certified art

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<sup>2</sup> Arts in Schools Report 2022-2023 p. 27 ←

[https://saintrafileprod01.blob.core.windows.net/prd-intra/docs/default-source/reports/office\\_of\\_the\\_arts\\_2023\\_annual\\_report\\_text\\_r7\\_web.pdf](https://saintrafileprod01.blob.core.windows.net/prd-intra/docs/default-source/reports/office_of_the_arts_2023_annual_report_text_r7_web.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Arts in Schools Report 2022-2023 p. 31 ←

[https://saintrafileprod01.blob.core.windows.net/prd-intra/docs/default-source/reports/office\\_of\\_the\\_arts\\_2023\\_annual\\_report\\_text\\_r7\\_web.pdf](https://saintrafileprod01.blob.core.windows.net/prd-intra/docs/default-source/reports/office_of_the_arts_2023_annual_report_text_r7_web.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> American for the Arts. *State of the Arts: A Plan to Boost Arts Education in New York City Schools* (2014).

<https://www.americanforthearts.org/by-program/reports-and-data/legislation-policy/naappd/state-of-the-arts-a-plan-to-boost-arts-education-in-new-york-city-schools>

<sup>5</sup> Elevate K-12. *How to Address the Teacher Shortage in New York City* (2024).

<https://www.elevatek12.com/blog/elevate-in-action/nyc-teacher-shortage/>



teachers, including 25% of elementary schools (roughly 175 schools)<sup>6</sup>. **It is important to hire more certified arts teachers (\$38M) and ensure that all public schools have at least one certified teacher. This can be achieved by hiring certified dance, music, theater, and visual arts teachers from the CUNY pipeline or continuing the successful supplementary certification pilot for existing elementary Common Branch cluster teachers to earn their arts content certification.** Bridging the current gap in certified arts teachers is a matter of educational equity, and there is still considerable progress needed to ensure that all students have equal opportunities to engage in arts education.

### **Baselining \$41M in Arts and Culture Funding Can Save Arts Education**

Earlier this year, public schools across the city feared the expiration of federal relief funding, including the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund which provides \$4.8B in direct funding to New York City's Department Of Education. Over \$180M in stimulus funding over the past 3 years has supported vital arts programming to support academic recovery, student engagement during Summer Rising, and positive Social Emotional Learning.

### **We request that \$41M be baselined in order to continue arts education programs.**

These include arts initiatives, social-emotional wellness programming, academic recovery programs, and the Summer Rising program, which provides academic and enrichment opportunities over the course of the day to K-8 students free of charge.

In FY24, the DOE is spending \$41M of federal stimulus money on arts education – \$25M goes directly to support schools and \$16M supports programs that were previously supported by tax levied dollars. **Although the anticipated expiring funds have been restored, we strongly encourage a minimum baseline of \$41M moving forward.**

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<sup>6</sup> Arts in Education Roundtable. *It Starts with the Arts*. <https://nycaieroundtable.org/advocacy/it-starts-with-the-arts/>



## **Supporting Existing Arts Funding Initiatives Can Also Revitalize Arts Education**

The new FY24 \$4 million Citywide initiative added to the budget, “Support for Arts Instruction,” demonstrates a commitment from the City Council to finding a path to ensure that all New York City schools can provide every student with a rich, diverse arts education experience. In its inaugural FY23 year of \$3 million, this initiative impacted 19,787 students<sup>7</sup>. We look forward to working with the City Council, Mayor Adams’ Administration, and the Department of Education to create this equity-rooted initiative that extends participation in arts education, especially in schools with limited access to arts instruction. **We specifically ask to build on the city’s down payment to meet city-wide demand for increased arts learning from \$4M to \$6M in FY25.**

## **Ensuring that Schools Spend Funding on Arts Education Is a Must**

**In New York City, there are no specific allocations or regulations requiring funding for arts education in schools.** In 2007, Mayor Mike Bloomberg overturned a 1997 initiative that designated funding for arts programs based on student enrollment. This change allowed school principals to allocate previously earmarked arts funding at their discretion. **Consequently, that year alone, the percentage of schools without a certified art teacher increased from 20% to 30%, and expenditure on art supplies plummeted by 63%<sup>8</sup>.**

**Last year, the DOE recommended allocating \$80.47 per student for arts funding, but these recommendations remain advisory.** Although New York State mandates a certain number of hours dedicated to arts education in schools, it does not specify

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<sup>7</sup> Arts in Education Roundtable. *It Starts with the Arts*. <https://nycaieroundtable.org/advocacy/it-starts-with-the-arts/>

<sup>8</sup> HyperAllergic. *As NYC Slashes School Budgets, Art Teachers Are Feeling the Squeeze* (2022). <https://hyperallergic.com/744466/nyc-slashes-school-budgets-art-teachers-are-feeling-the-squeeze/>



funding. NYC schools' compliance is tracked in the annual Art in Schools Report, which examines dance, music, theater, and visual arts in K-12 public schools.

While nearly all NYC public high schools offer at least one arts discipline, the percentage declines significantly to 63% for two disciplines, 25% for three, and only 5% for all four. The percentages are higher for middle and elementary schools<sup>9</sup>. **It is imperative not only to raise the per student arts allocation from \$80.47 to \$100 but also to mandate that the Department of Education (DOE) ensures this funding is exclusively dedicated to arts education.**

### **Improving Data Transparency Will Create an Ecosystem of Accountability**

**The FY25 Budget should include a Term & Condition to require the DOE to provide a school-by-school report on compliance with State education standards, certified arts instructors, arts instructional hours, and the actual number of classes offered by type.** The report should explicitly identify the number of students who are not enrolled in an arts class. This will provide a clear picture of the current state of arts education in schools. It would also allow legislators and city administrators to identify areas of improvement and determine the most effective way to allocate resources. Finally, it would give parents and other stakeholders an opportunity to provide input and advocate for their children's education. **The DOE's annual Arts in Schools Report does not present an accurate picture of arts education in schools, and the DOE has not issued this annual report on arts education since December 2021.**

Our City must reinvest in its fair share of arts education to more equitably reflect the value of the arts and culture sector in the city's economy and in our quality of life.

**As outlined above, we join our colleagues in asking the city to:**

- **Hire certified arts teachers (\$38M):** Ensure that all schools have at least one certified arts teacher, by bolstering the pipeline of certified arts teachers via a

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<sup>9</sup> HyperAllergic. *As NYC Slashes School Budgets, Art Teachers Are Feeling the Squeeze* (2022). <https://hyperallergic.com/744466/nyc-slashes-school-budgets-art-teachers-are-feeling-the-squeeze/>



supplemental certification program (\$4M) and filling arts staffing gaps  
– **closing the equity gap for more than 315 schools.**

- **Baseline \$41M to continue arts education programs** including arts initiatives, programming to support student social-emotional wellbeing and academic recovery through the arts, and Summer Rising.
- **Continue and increase “Support for Arts Instruction” initiative funding:** Build on city’s down payment and boost allocation from \$4M to \$6M.
- **Require DOE arts funding be spent on the arts (\$15M):** Boost the per student arts allocation from \$80.47 to \$100, and require that money be spent on arts education.
- **Improve arts education data transparency** by compelling NYC Public Schools to provide a school-by-school breakdown of the state of arts education in public schools via a Legislative Services Request, T&C, and/or Oversight Hearing.

Arts education programs are a foundational component to a well-rounded education, starting from early childhood through high school. Let’s prioritize our children’s future and support programs that empower them to be tomorrow’s leaders.

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**Testimony of Day Care Council of New York  
Before the New York City Council Committee on Education  
Honorable Rita Joseph, Chair  
On Early Childhood Education of the NYC FY 2025 Budget**

Prepared by Gregory Brender, Chief Policy and Innovation Officer  
and Shelby Lohr, Policy Analyst at the Day Care Council of New York

**March 18th, 2024**

Thank you, Councilmember Joseph and members of the Committee on Education for the opportunity to testify. The Day Care Council of New York (DCCNY) is the membership organization of early childhood provider organizations in New York City. DCCNY supports its member organizations and New York City's early childhood field at large through policy research and advocacy, labor relations and mediation, professional development and training for early childhood educators, directors, and staff, and referral services for parents looking to find child care. DCCNY member organizations provide early care and education at over 200 sites in neighborhoods across all five boroughs.

Most DCCNY member organizations work with contracts with the New York City Public Schools. DCCNY member organizations also provide early childhood education through privately-funded programs and the Federal Office of Head Start. DCCNY member organizations operate in all five boroughs and employ over 4,000 New Yorkers, most of whom are black and brown women. DCCNY is proud to be a member of the Emergency Coalition to Save Education Programs and Campaign for Children, and our recommendations are aligned with those coalitions.

DCCNY is excited to work with the City Council and other policymakers to achieve a budget that invests in the early childhood workforce and puts New York City closer to the promise that all children have access to high-quality early childhood education. In September of 2023, DCCNY and the City Council Black, Latino and Asian Caucus co-

released a report: “[The Enduring Value of the Early Childhood Workforce](#),”<sup>1</sup> which showed the steps the City must take to achieve salary parity for the teachers, directors and staff in community based early childhood education programs. We continue to stand by those recommendations.

## **Early Childhood Education and the FY 2025 Budget**

The FY 2025 Budget is a perilous moment for New York City’s early childhood system. It includes the most drastic cuts to early childhood education in the City’s history and it fails to take action on the workforce crisis impacting early childhood education. Without major changes, this budget will leave many New York City families with access to child care and contribute to an exodus of working families out of New York City.

### **Cuts to Early Childhood Education**

In the announcement of his Executive Budget, Mayor Adams repeated that every child who wants a seat in an early childhood education program will get one. We acknowledge and appreciate the \$92 million restoration of sunseting Federal funds for 3-K expansion and \$56 million in Preschool Special Education funding. However, these restorations exist within a larger context of immense scale-backs of Pre-K For All programs, including a three-year succession of \$170 million PEGS to Pre-K and 3-K programs, which are slated to take effect in the upcoming fiscal year.

Without further investments in the child care system, the City will not be able to fulfill the Mayor’s crucial promise. Notably, while Mayor Adams baselined a number of critical education programs, he implemented single-year funding in his proposed \$92 million for Pre-K restoration. One year of funding—particularly in the context of continued \$170 million cuts year after year—places early care and education providers in a precarious financial position. Families need stable early childhood education programs, and this one-year investment falls short of the needs of providers and families alike.

The City must act NOW to make the investments and reform its current 3-K system so that all children in New York City have the opportunity to access early childhood education, not only a select few.

DCCNY urges the City to immediately enact the following recommendations:

- Commit to fund current 3-K program levels and restoring the timeline for the 3-K expansion.
- Implement the conversion of 3-K school day / school year seats, to extended

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<sup>1</sup> New York City Council Black, Latino and Asian Caucus and the Day Care Council of New York. *The Enduring Value of the Early Childhood Workforce: Why New York City Must Complete the Path to Parity for the Community-Based Child Care Workforce* September 2023 <https://www.dccnyinc.org/our-work/public-policy/publications/>

- day, year round seats which the City Council funded in its FY 2024 budget;
- Invest a robust level of resources in linguistically and culturally appropriate on the ground and multimedia marketing, community engagement and enrollment efforts for 3-K.
- Reform enrollment procedures so that community based organizations have the option of directly enrolling children whose families apply for 3-K, Pre-K or child care.

## **PAY PARITY**

As the representative of New York City's early care and education provider organizations, DCCNY works with the City and our partners in organized labor to come to a labor agreement that reflects the skills and hard work of the teachers, staff and directors who work every day to make high-quality education available to the youngest New Yorkers.

The early childhood workforce is drastically underpaid and the gap between their salaries and those of their counterparts in public schools remains stark. In our report with the City Council Black, Latino and Asian Caucus, we found that directors at CBOs lose more than \$2.2 million over the course of a 25-year career by remaining at a CBO. Further, certified teachers lose out on \$1.7 million over a 25-year career, and assistant teachers sacrifice over \$235,000 across a 25-year career.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time, many of the teachers, staff, and directors in community-based organizations work for longer hours and a greater number of days than their counterparts in public schools.

In the FY 2025, Budget, the City must act to ensure that these essential but underappreciated workers receive salary and benefits on par with their counterparts in public schools.

DCCNY urges the City to fund a new labor contract that advances childhood education parity between center and school based services by including:

1. Baseline salary increases for the workforce with a \$25/hour base hourly wage for support staff
2. Restoration of longevity differentials
3. Per diems for Extended Day/Extended Year Programs

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<sup>2</sup> New York City Council Black, Latino and Asian Caucus and the Day Care Council of New York. *The Enduring Value of the Early Childhood Workforce: Why New York City Must Complete the PArth to PArity for the Community-Based Child Care Workforce* September 2023 <https://www.dccnyinc.org/our-work/public-policy/publications/>



Thank you for the opportunity testify. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to Gregory Brender [gbrender@dccnyinc.org](mailto:gbrender@dccnyinc.org) or Shelby Lohr [slohr@dccnyinc.org](mailto:slohr@dccnyinc.org).



**The New York City Council Committees on Education and Finance  
Honorable Chair Rita Joseph  
Honorable Chair Justin Brannan**

**City Council Executive Budget Hearing on Education  
May 15, 2024**

**The City Must Expand and Protect Restorative Justice and School-Based  
Mental Health  
Testimony of the Dignity in Schools Campaign - NY**

Good afternoon and thank you Chair Joseph and Chair Brannan and members of the New York City Council Committees on Education and Finance. I represent the Dignity in School Campaign NY, a New York City coalition of over 20 community-based organizations, students, parents, educators, and advocates working to advance restorative justice and mental health supports in public schools and to foster a preventative culture of safety based on care, mutual respect, and problem-solving. I am here also representing the Emergency Coalition to Save Education Programs. **The Dignity in Schools Campaign calls on New York City to expand restorative justice by \$75 million dollars and protect and baseline the mental health continuum (\$5 million), restorative justice (\$22 million), and other critical education programs currently under threat of being cut.** This is possible by reallocating \$90 million saved by freezing hiring on school policing positions, not allowing the city to fill for attrition, and cutting funding for the vacant school cop positions.

NYC's elected officials must reject the Mayor's plan to drastically cut funding for restorative justice and school-based mental health supports, and other critical programs currently funded with expiring federal dollars and one-time city dollars. Our elected leaders must help us restore and expand the types of developmental and socio-emotional supports our youth need.

Students, parents, educators, and community organizers understand that the Mayor's Executive budget includes critical education programs financed with expiring federal relief stimulus dollars because communities have fought against Mayor Adam's proposed austerity. The collective power our communities and City Council are bringing into these negotiations saved 500 social workers and psychologists, more than 100 community schools, bilingual supports, 3K, and more.

But Mayor Adams' proposed cuts are an unnecessarily engineered crisis, as demonstrated by the Council's forecast, which includes \$6B in new revenues and underspending and allows for the full restoration of all critical education programs. While our insistence on restoring and even



expanding these programs has forced the Mayor's hand, we can't back down now if we are going to prevent the loss of other critical supports that students and families need.

**We call on NYC's elected officials to:**

1. Expand school-based restorative justice and social-emotional supports, including investing \$75 million in hiring school-based Restorative Justice Coordinators in 500 schools. **We can fund this expansion simply by not hiring any new School Safety Agents due to attrition and eliminating all new classes.**
2. Protect critical programs currently funded with \$1 billion in federal COVID relief dollars, including **protecting and base-lining the \$22 million for restorative justice included in the City Council's budget response and \$5 million for the Mental Health Continuum.**
3. Move money away from school policing, including ceasing all NYPD recruitment, hiring and training of school police and stopping funding for surveillance technology. Simply by not hiring any more school police, NYC could save up to \$90M in one fiscal year.

Our City has the resources to support young people, their schools, and communities. We must shift funding towards the resources and restorative practices that support youth to learn and grow in schools, and away from the police presence and culture that directly disrupts learning and violates the dignity and safety of students. Funding for restorative practices and staff will provide opportunities for young people to develop lifelong skills to resolve disagreements, practice empathy, and take accountability for their actions. This will make schools safer for everyone, reduce the role of police, and create thousands of accessible, positive school-based jobs for New Yorkers.

We're calling on City Council Members to negotiate a budget that moves money away from policing young people and towards the resources that make schools safer for all students. We can have just and safe schools, but only if Council Members use their power to shift funding and power to school communities, not the NYPD.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Submitted by:  
Andrea Ortiz  
Membership and Campaign Director  
Dignity in Schools Campaign - NY



**SASKIA TRAILL**

**PRESIDENT & CEO EXPANDED SCHOOLS**

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE NYC COUNCIL**

**COMMITTEE ON FINANCE & THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**FISCAL YEAR 2025 EXECUTIVE BUDGET HEARING: MAY 15, 2024**

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My name is Saskia Trill and I am the President/CEO of ExpandedED Schools. Thank you to Speaker Adams, Chair Joseph, Chair Brannan, and the Committee on Finance, as well as the Committee on Education, for the opportunity to testify here today. It's a pleasure to work collaboratively with you all to create effective strategies to bolster the efficacy of our educational infrastructure across the City in a way that is equitable and culturally responsive.

First and foremost, I want to congratulate the council, this committee, and Chair Joseph for their collaboration with the Emergency Coalition to Save Education Programs (ECSEP)<sup>1</sup>. That collaboration scored a significant win for students and families across New York City and families are now in position to maintain a suite of services that we know are key ingredients when it comes to helping them thrive. ExpandedED Schools is proud to be a member of ECSEP and looks forward to continuing to work in partnership with the council to bridge the rest of the COVID relief fiscal chasm that still exists.

One of the remaining elements of that chasm is what I am here today to talk about. That is the high-impact tutoring work that ExpandedED Schools has been supporting citywide for the last two school years. ExpandedED facilitates an innovative instructional strategy in partnership with New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) and direct service tutoring providers<sup>2</sup>. As New York City youth (and youth across the country) emerged from the sudden shift to remote learning necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, data emerged that highlighted substantial delays in the mastery of particular math and literacy concepts<sup>3</sup>. In response to this data, research emerged out of Brown University's Annenberg Institute that offered an answer: a unique and intentional approach to instructional support that combines highly-trained staff, small group/individualized attention, high quality instructional materials, and frequent repetition that researchers coined High Impact Tutoring (HIT)<sup>4</sup>.

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<https://advocatesforchildren.org/articles/eric-adams-commits-500-million-to-partially-avert-fiscal-cliff-for-nyc-schools/#:~:text=Chalkbeat%20%E2%80%93%20Mayor%20Eric%20Adams%20is,year%2C%20he%20announced%20on%20Friday.>

<sup>2</sup> <https://gothamist.com/news/new-tutoring-initiative-will-combat-pandemic-learning-loss-at-nyc-schools>

<sup>3</sup> <https://cepr.harvard.edu/files/cepr/files/5-4.pdf?m=1651690491>

<sup>4</sup> [https://annenberg.brown.edu/sites/default/files/EdResearch\\_for\\_Recovery\\_Design\\_Principles\\_1.pdf](https://annenberg.brown.edu/sites/default/files/EdResearch_for_Recovery_Design_Principles_1.pdf)





Researchers at the Annenberg Institute found that HIT - defined as tutoring that happens “more than three days per week for a minimum of 90 minutes per week” with no more than 4 students at a time per tutor - is one of the few school-based intervention models that yields large positive impacts on student achievement in literacy and math. To their credit, our municipal partners were forward thinking. The City engaged in a robust planning process to develop the right implementation model of HIT for New York City schools and were intentional about ensuring that students who have the least access to high-quality tutoring with quality implementation were the ones prioritized to receive it.

To implement the plan, NYCPS committed \$15M in ESSER funds, alongside a consortium of philanthropic entities that committed private funds.<sup>5</sup> Both the consortium of private funders and NYCPS leaned on ExpandedED’s experience as an intermediary to develop a HIT model for NYC schools.

Ultimately, what that collective energy has produced over the last two school years has been a HIT model that provides intensive, individualized academic support to students in K-2 Literacy and 6-8 Math to facilitate content mastery. The target population for ExpandedED’s HIT initiative are students who are just below grade level. Tutoring in our initiative can be delivered in various modalities including virtual and hybrid sessions.

A key standard of our HIT initiative is the implementation of high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) during tutoring sessions. We define HQIM as strong, engaging resources and approaches for teaching and learning that:

- Align to NY State Next Generation Learning Standards and are informed by formative assessments.
- Incorporate effective lesson structure and pacing.
- Support student advancement towards independent reading and/or problem solving.
- Differentiate instruction for diverse learners including (but not limited to): students with disabilities, multilingual/English language learners, and racially & ethnically diverse students.
- Respond to students’ cultures and affirm their identities.
- Align to evidence-based best practices in the relevant content area that are field tested.
- Integrate higher-order and critical thinking skills, along with other competencies that are easily transferable to authentic world tasks.

In our role as an intermediary, ExpandedED develops a list of tutoring providers from which school leaders make selections. When we vet providers, we evaluate the systems and structures in place to ensure the tutoring program is grounded in HQIM and that the provider's approach is aligned with the NYCPS HIT standards, as well as the school curriculum. When evaluating the curriculum used in tutoring programs we look for the following program characteristics:

- Curricular resources that encourage and support high leverage practices such as conceptual understanding, repetition, read-aloud, informed guesses/estimation. When appropriate, any online curricular resources track accuracy and not just completion.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://heckscherfoundation.org/grantee/expanded-schools/>



- Curricular resources are aligned to standards and lessons have clear daily objectives.
- When necessary, curricular resources are adapted or adjusted to ensure alignment between classroom learning and tutoring sessions.

Lastly, the HIT team at ExpandedED includes a group of program managers that are in consistent contact with school leaders and tutoring providers to help troubleshoot any issues that may arise, support with relationship management between those partners, and conduct regular site visits to ensure that programs are being implemented with fidelity.

The results of the first two years of implementation have been strong. School leaders, ExpandedED program managers and NYCPS track real-time enrollment and attendance data, implementation measures, and academic outcome information connected to academic progress assessments already conducted by schools. To date:

- **7,147 students across 80 schools in 10 community school districts have received tutoring overall - 3,845 in this school year (2023-2024)**
  - **99% of students identify as students of color, and the cohort has significantly higher percentages of students in temporary housing, students with disabilities and multilingual learners than city averages.**
- **Meaningful growth has been seen across grade levels in middle school math, with 51% of 8th graders doubling their expected growth ahead of a very important transition to high school**
- **In K-2 literacy, 56% of students met or exceeded typical growth as measured by progress assessments**

**ExpandedED Schools is seeking the council's support in advocating for \$5M to be included in NYCPS's budget for FY25 so schools and school leaders can continue implementation of this effective model.** The \$10M investment by NYCPS from ESSER showed the positive impact of implementing HIT broadly in New York City, but NYCPS has informed us that there are no additional ESSER funds for the 2024-25 school year. We respectfully request your support in securing \$5M in central public funds for this important initiative in FY25.

Thank you again to Speaker Adams, Chair Brannan, Chair Joseph and the rest of your respective committees for holding this hearing and for all the work that you do for children and families across the City. I look forward to continuing to be a partner to you when it comes to being of service to young people and their communities.





Testimony for the New York City Council  
Education Budget Hearing  
Re: Education Budget  
May 15, 2024

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. My name is Debra Freeman, and I am testifying on behalf of Four Freedoms Democratic Club (FFDC), a Democratic Club based in Manhattan's Upper East Side and Roosevelt Island, as Co-Chair of FFDC's Education Working Group.

As a member of the Emergency Coalition to Save Education Programs, FFDC supports increased funding for New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) and sustaining vital education programs, including programs funded with expiring COVID-19 federal stimulus funds. Schools need increased funding and continuation of programs providing critical support to help students fully recover from the pandemic and prepare for success.

We are pleased that the Mayor's Executive Budget includes around \$600 million for sustaining critical education programs that were on the chopping block due to expiration of stimulus funding, including: arts programming, social workers and psychologists, shelter-based coordinators, bilingual supports, translation services, and literacy and dyslexia programs.

However, we are concerned that several essential education programs remain at risk of elimination or cuts as soon as July due to expiring federal or city funds or budget cuts since they were left out of the budget or not restored to current funding levels. Critical programs excluded from the budget and on the chopping block due to expiring funds include: the Mental Health Continuum which supports mental health in high needs schools, school nurses, Student Success Centers which prepare students for college, restorative justice which provides alternatives to exclusionary discipline, and immigrant family communications. Examples of programs at risk of cuts due to failure to restore current funding levels include: 3-K and community schools. The final budget must include funding to sustain these critical programs supporting student needs.

In addition, some vital education programs supported by stimulus funding received only one-year funding in the Executive Budget. These programs include: arts programming, 3-K, Learning to Work, and Summer Rising. Funding for these programs should be baselined.

At the same time, the City must also close the equity gap in access to arts education and ensure that every school has at least one certified arts teacher by including an investment of \$38 million covering this. We appreciate the City Council calling for this funding in its response to the preliminary budget. This investment should be included in the final budget.

We urge City Council leadership to do everything possible to provide sufficient funding to meet public school needs and ensure continuation of critical education programs. Please prioritize funding for public education in the final budget since NYC students are the future of our city.



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Mary Vascellaro

Scott Warren

**Testimony of Christina Karahisarlidis  
Mid-Atlantic Program Manager, Generation Citizen**

**May 15th, 2024**

**New York City Council**

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of Generation Citizen (“GC”) at the New York City Council Committee on Education, Jointly with the Committee on Higher Education and the Committee on Finance. My name is Christina Karahisarlidis and I am a Program Manager at Generation Citizen. Via our “Action Civics” curriculum, middle and high school students apply social studies learning to the real world by studying and advocating on an issue of importance in their communities. Before joining Generation Citizen, I was a teacher in the New York City DOE for seven years and it’s an honor to be here today alongside dedicated educators, hardworking changemakers, and inspiring students.

Thank you to Chair Joseph, Chair Brannan, Chair Dinowitz, and members of the City Council for holding space for us to testify today and for fighting for a stronger budget for New York City DOE schools. Maintaining the current level of education funding is crucial to preserving critical services to our pre-kindergarten to 12th grade students, especially as we combat learning loss, work to improve the mental health of our young people, and ensure our students are properly prepared for the world they are going to enter when they leave the NYC DOE.

Generation Citizen is thankful for the Council’s \$500,000 investment this year in our programming and youth civics education through the *Civics Education in New York City Schools Initiative*. The City Council has generously funded this initiative for Generation Citizen since 2017, originally meant to support our programming in 125 classrooms. Since then, our footprint in New York City has doubled. In this 2023-24 school year, we are serving approximately 250 classrooms and 6,250 students across New York City in all five boroughs. To ensure that we can continue and maintain our growth, Generation Citizen seeks an increase of \$100,000 for a grant of \$600,000 in FY25 to support this significant and continued expansion of programming across the City.

In my previous role as a high school English teacher in Title I schools in the New York City DOE, I saw firsthand the detrimental effect that decreasing school budgets has on our students. My students’ emotional and learning needs were not always met because there was not always enough staff at hand. If we see more budget cuts, that could mean that even more students may not be able to meet with a school counselor, students with disabilities and English language acquisition needs may not receive the services they need, and our immigrant population may not receive a school placement in a proper time frame. We need to ensure that our schools, where our youth spends much of their time, are properly funded and taken care of.

Today, we are thrilled to present the work of one of our partners, Global Learning Collaborative in Council Member Brewer's District. Social Studies teacher, Martin Gloster, and 11th graders, Sanjida Alam, Xavier Alcantara, Sury Gitte, and Nellise Teruel will share issues and concerns that emerged from their implementation of Generation Citizen's Action Civics curriculum this year in relation to the proposed budget cuts.

Since working at Generation Citizen, it has been a privilege seeing our young people advocate for themselves and each other through their Action Civics projects, on issues such as this. Across the City, Generation Citizen students have advocated on a range of issues, including school-based campaigns like ensuring advocating for healthy school lunch options and adding more bathroom stalls in their schools. Others focused on community concerns like addressing the high cost of living, the lack of affordable housing in New York City, the need to close illegal smoke shops, combatting subway surfing, and addressing racism and discrimination in their schools.

Generation Citizen is a 13 year-old national, nonpartisan nonprofit dedicated to engaging youth in our democracy by bringing civics education into the classroom through Action Civics. Action Civics is a "student-centered, project-based approach to civics education that develops the individual skills, knowledge, and dispositions necessary for 21st century democratic practice" ([National Action Civics Collaborative](#)). It is different from normative, knowledge-based civic education in the same way that taking any "hands-on," project-based, or experiential course differs from reading a textbook. Students learn about democratic structures and processes by directly engaging with them, as well as with each other, to address one or more issues they care about, which are impacting their community.

Generation Citizen is incredibly thankful for the City Council's renewed funding despite a myriad of challenges and budgetary concerns in the last few years. Generation Citizen hopes to continue partnering with the Council and the Department of Youth and Community Development to continue bringing high quality civics education to our City schools. Thank you for considering this testimony. I can be reached at [ckarahisarlidis@generationcitizen.org](mailto:ckarahisarlidis@generationcitizen.org) with any questions or comments.



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**Testimonies of 9th Graders and Educator from Global Learning Collaborative  
May 15, 2024**

**New York City Council Committee on Higher Education, Jointly with the Committee on  
Finance**

**Testimony of Martin Gloster, Social Studies Teacher:**

Good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to testify at today's hearing. My name is Martin Gloster and I am a social studies teacher at The Global Learning Collaborative on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. I teach AP Government & Politics, Participation in Government, and Civics in Action, as well as run the Student Government Association. As a veteran public school teacher committed to the education and well-being of my students, I sit before you today to advocate against the proposed budget cuts facing the NYC Dept. of Education, particularly concerning mental health related services.

This year, my students and I have been working with Generation Citizen on implementing action civics projects in my classes. For these projects, my students have been tasked with discussing issues that impact us within our community, and they built consensus around one topic to address collectively. All of my classes selected mental health issues in some capacity, which is a testament to the severity of the mental health crisis the vast majority of students are facing, and the need for more funding to alleviate these issues, certainly not less funding.

The students before you today targeted the teenage mental health crisis by focusing on the impact of social media and settled on an action project advocating for the passage of the Stop Addictive Feeds Exploitation for Kids Act. Also known as the SAFE for Kids Act. My students chose this goal because they all are immensely negatively impacted by how social media companies rig their apps to keep kids addicted to their devices at all hours of the day. As I am sure you know, this is a hot topic issue now in our society, and it is not an exaggeration to say that social media companies are purposefully choosing profits over the mental well-being of their primary consumers.

As a teacher in the classroom day-to-day, I see just how devastating social media & cell phone addiction has become. The news reports of students escalating rates of anxiety and depression are no exaggeration at all and do not at all do justice to just how devastating this addiction has become. Therefore, my students are currently reaching out to NYS Senators who are debating the Safe for Kids Act and imploring them to vote for its passage, as well as engaging in other meaningful aspects of action civics centered around this issue, that includes testifying before you today.





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I am able to do projects like this because of the tremendous help from organizations like Generation Citizen. With the generosity of City Council's funding, my school community is able to see the firsthand benefits of cultivating and empowering the voices of our students. If the City Council is able to continue funding Generation Citizen, more of our students can drastically benefit from their Action Civics curriculum.

The effects of these proposed budget cuts will be devastating because this will lead to significantly less students being exposed to impactful civic education. By impactful I mean, not learning from textbooks published in the 1970s, but rather, by being exposed to a hands-on curriculum that teaches you how to ensure that your voice is heard and the steps to take to do so.

If we cut programs that truly help our students, we as a school system will be failing our mission of cultivating well-rounded and civically-minded students because pardon the cliché, they truly are the leaders of tomorrow. Additionally, it is critical that we are able to continue to fund the mental health counselors that my school employed post-Covid. These people are critical to countering the effects of social media and the impact of these cuts on mental health services can not be understated. The majority of students at my school already face significant challenges outside of the classroom, and school may be the only place that they actually receive any mental health support. Thus in closing, I implore you not to cut the budget because that means cutting a vital lifeline for our most vulnerable students.

Thank you all for your time,  
Martin Gloster



### **Testimony of Sanjida Alam, 11th Grade Student**

Good Afternoon. My name is Sanjida Alam, and I am honored to testify at today's hearing. I am currently a junior at The Global Learning Collaborative High School, where I had the privilege of participating in a semester-long Action Civics project through Generation Citizen earlier this school year. During this project, my classmates and I engaged in meaningful discussions about issues impacting our community. The number one issue that kept coming up in our discussions was issues pertaining to the teenage mental health crisis. We ultimately decided to specifically focus on the topic of social media's impact on teenage mental health and set a goal to advocate for the passage of the Stop Addictive Feeds Exploitation (SAFE) for Kids Act in the NYS Senate.

As a 17 year old student, I've experienced firsthand how mental health struggles can negatively impact one's academic performance and overall well-being. The COVID-19 pandemic and the escalating cell phone addiction epidemic has highlighted the importance of mental health support in schools. For example, students have experienced a significant decline in their mental health due to various factors such as the loss of loved ones during Covid and emotional isolation, which led them to depend on their phones. The increased screen time has resulted in my classmates becoming more depressed and anxious because they simply can't get off of social media and their phones. Social media plays a crucial role in impacting teenage mental health because the constant exposure to unrealistic images and viewing the lives of others allows us to compare ourselves to others, which undermines our self-esteem. Thus, contributing to feelings of anxiety and depression among teenagers.

Therefore, it is imperative that mental health services in the DOE are not cut by the City Council in the budget because they are crucial for helping teenagers navigate the challenges we face in both our academic and personal lives. Whether it's managing stress and anxiety or coping with depression and trauma, these services offer a lifeline for students in need of assistance. I, as a representative of students at my school, firmly believe that access to mental health resources is vital for saving lives and reducing the risk of chronic illnesses associated with depression, stress, anxiety, and also substance abuse, which is glorified on social media in today's culture, among teenagers.

Furthermore, I implore the New York City Council to take concrete action to not only continue to fund school-based mental health services, but to increase funding towards mental health services and focus on implementing policies that regulate harmful online content and allocate resources to support mental health services in schools can reduce the negative impact of social media on teenagers' mental well-being. For starters, helping us get the Stop Addictive Feeds Exploitation (SAFE) for Kids Act passed in the NYS Senate will be a great help.



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In conclusion, addressing social media's impact on teen mental health requires a comprehensive approach. By recognizing these challenges and implementing targeted interventions, schools and policymakers can support teens in navigating social media while preserving their mental well-being. However, schools need the money to do this!

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue, and I look forward to seeing meaningful progress toward improving mental health services in our schools.



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### **Testimony of Xavier Alcantara, 11th Grade Student: May 15th, 2024**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify at today's hearing. My name is Xavier Alcantara, and I am currently in 11th grade at The Global Learning Collaborative. Throughout this semester, my classmates and I have been engaged in an Action Civics project through Generation Citizen. For our project, we delved into issues affecting our community and ultimately decided to address the importance of mental health services in schools and the need for increased funding of these services. Thus, our goal is to advocate for increased funding and support for mental health resources in New York City Department of Education (DOE) schools. On behalf of the 500 students who attend my public school, I believe that maintaining adequate funding for these services is crucial because every student deserves access to the support they need to thrive emotionally and academically.

I am testifying today because mental health services are vital for me and my classmates. The challenges of navigating adolescence, compounded by the stressors of academic pressure and societal expectations, can take a toll on our mental well-being. Having access to trained professionals who can provide support and guidance is essential for fostering a healthy school environment.

Furthermore, the impact of COVID-19 has heightened the need for mental health resources in schools. Many students, myself included, have experienced increased anxiety, isolation, and uncertainty during this time. While schools have made efforts to support students, there is still a need for additional resources and staffing to address the growing demand for mental health services.

The proposed budget cuts not only affect current students but also future generations. As an older sibling of my brother, who is in the 2nd grade, and my sister in the 10th grade, I am deeply concerned, not only about myself, but also about the well-being of younger students who rely on these services. It is imperative that we prioritize their mental health and provide them with the support they need to succeed academically and personally.

Thus, I urge the New York City Council to consider the voices of students and allocate resources to support the mental health needs of all students. Understanding how to manage our social-emotional well-being is essential for future success. By investing in mental health services in our schools, we are not only supporting students in the classroom but also equipping them with valuable life skills that will serve them beyond their academic years. By prioritizing mental health, we can create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment for every student.

Thank you for considering my testimony and for your commitment to improving schools and prioritizing the budget for all students in New York City.



145 West 84th St, New York, NY 10024  
(212) 877-1103

### **Testimony of Sury Gitte, 11th Grade Student: May 15th, 2024**

Good afternoon. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify at today's hearing. My name is Sury Gitte and I am currently in the 11th grade at The Global Learning Collaborative where I have also been participating in a semester-long Action Civics project through Generation Citizen. I'm testifying today because mental health matters and I don't think funding for mental health services in our schools should be cut.

Mental health has impacted our education for so long because we are the "Covid and Zoom" generation, and there sadly has been no real solution to the increasing depression and anxiety rates among teenagers. Someone who may be struggling may not even know who to turn to or confide in, or if there's even anyone at all. No one deserves to feel negatively in their school environment, but to feel like there's no one at school who could help you or just listen to your problems is even worse. There is a lack of trusted adults we have in school that we feel comfortable with turning to. So in turn, cutting the little staff that we do have would heavily impact our school community in a negative way.

In school, there could always be more people who actually care, not just staff who just repeatedly ask you the same question of "and how did that make you feel?" Someone who genuinely wants to help our community and better it. As students, our ability to handle our social-emotional well-being is important to our success later on in life. Without knowing how to handle our social-emotional well-being the pressures of life could make us crack.

It can lead to us not knowing how to deal with challenging situations in life or how to come out of it. That's why it is important to not only educate students on mental health but to have people who are there for their mental health. Because having emotional support pushes you and your brain to want to conquer anything that life throws your way. For example, how would anyone be able to perform well in any career if they're facing feelings or depression or anxiety? They can't because of the mental toll it takes on you and your mind.

Additionally, in our school community, crimes committed by teens have been rising and ever growing in the last years since Covid. To think if there was just someone who could steer a teen in the right direction of not choosing violence and instead helping them with any issues they might be having, that crime rate would be a lot lower.

My project relates to this hearing because it focuses on not cutting the budget on mental health services and it emphasizes our need in our school communities for these services. I'm hoping that the New York City council shows that they care about our communities and our futures. I'm hoping that they increase the budget for mental health services in our schools because we are facing a mental health crisis amongst students. And as current students of New York City we are the future of this city. Thank you for your time.



### **Testimony of Nellise Teruel, 11th Grade Student: May 15th, 2024**

Good afternoon esteemed members of the NYC council. My name is Nellise Teruel and I am currently a student attending the Global Learning Collaborative. Today, I stand before you to advocate against budget cuts that could jeopardize students like myself.

As a student in an NYC DOE school, one that comes from the foster care system, mental health services are a crucial resource for all students. With the stress and pressures of school, family, and life in general, having access to mental health programs and providers is essential to our mental and emotional well-being. These services not only help us cope with hard challenges, but also help us build resiliency.

Do I feel that there are enough staff members to support me and my classmates, emotionally, outside of the classroom? Simple answer is NO! Our staff tries their best to accommodate everyone's needs inside and outside of the classroom but it will never be enough, especially in classes where teachers have to deal with 30 something students each day. Further, the impact of COVID-19 has been immense on our emotional wellbeing as many of us have experienced increased anxiety, depression and feelings of isolation. Now, if the city were to cut these staff members even more, it would be devastating for students like myself, students with anxiety, depression and other disorders. We rely on these professionals for guidance, support, and a listening ear. Without them many of us will struggle to navigate our emotional and mental health.

Looking into the future, I have a younger sister, Chloe, who will be impacted by these budget cuts. It is essential to advocate against these cuts to ensure that future generations can thrive in an educational system that caters to their mental health and their academic needs. These are things that they will not only need to graduate but also to navigate their adult lives when the time comes. Without these programs and extracurricular activities how do we know where they will end up?

In the past week alone, there have been four tragic incidents of teen stabbings in our city. These senseless acts of violence have shaken our community to the core and are a stark reminder of the challenges our youth face everyday. As a student, I cannot help but feel deeply concerned about the safety and well being of my peers. It is imperative to recognize that decreased budgeting for schools not only leaves students vulnerable to partaking in these acts of violence but also makes them more susceptible to becoming victims themselves. When essential programs and resources, such as mental health services, support staff and extracurricular activities are lacking, students are left without the necessary tools to address their emotional struggles and conflicts effectively. This creates a breeding ground for frustration, anger and ultimately violence. We must prioritize the wellbeing of our students by ensuring adequate funding that can prevent such tragic incidents from occurring in the future.





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Thank you for the opportunity to advocate not only for myself but for my sisters generation and many generations to come.

# **High School for Health Professions and Human Services**

*345 E 15th St, New York, NY 10003*

*(212) 780-9175*



High School For Health Professions  
& Human Services

## **Testimonies of 11th Grade Students and Educator from High School for Health Professions and Human Services (HPHS)**

**May 15, 2024**

**New York City Council Committee on Education, Jointly with the Committee on Finance and the Committee on Higher Education**

### **Testimony of Jeremy Kaplan, Social Studies Teacher and Assistant Principal:**

Thank you for this opportunity! My name is Jeremy Kaplan. I am an Asst. Principal at High School for Health Professions and Human Services and this year I teach 9th grade Global History. I have been in the DOE since 1994!

I have four daughters. Each one of them is or has recently been in therapy. This mental health support has been extremely beneficial to them. Students in the public school system also deserve this type of support.

The children are not alright. Covid and social media are a 1-2 punch to our young people's well-being. It used to be that teachers complained that kids talk too much. Now, students don't talk enough! Covid led to isolation and trauma, and now young people escape into the trap of social media, a seeming safe-haven that has been shown to increase anxiety and depression, particularly in teenage girls.

This is not the time to cut money from the public school system. We need many things, one of which is more social workers. We have one full-time social worker for 1700 students. Her salary comes out of the NYCPS budget, so a budget cut would threaten her position. She has created a Wellness Center for the first time at our school. She sees about 50 students per week. The kids really need her. She has referred about six students to outside psychiatric evaluation due to suicidal ideation. She told me that the Wellness Center is in "high demand" as part of preventative care for our students. I have one student, whose father died of Covid, who uses the Wellness Center regularly.

Please, restore money to the budget so we can keep our social worker and get even more! Sometimes the DOE switches the funding from central to the school, so that it is technically not a budget cut. But in reality, it is. Beware of these dirty tricks, please!

Thank you for funding Generation Citizen. We are partnering with GC in the 9th grade to engage in action civics. As 9th graders, our students will earn points toward the NY State Seal of Civic Readiness and they will begin to build the knowledge and skills they need. They have interviewed a staff person at the Mayor's Office of Wellness as well as members of organizations that advocate for the homeless. Please make sure Generation Citizen gets the funding they need to expand their support to NYC schools!

# High School for Health Professions and Human Services

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## Testimony of Samantha Jimenez, 9th Grade Student:

Thank you for letting me have this opportunity to testify at today's hearing. My name is Samantha Jimenez and I'm a freshman at the High School for Health Professions and Human Services. I've always enjoyed going to Health Professions; the courses they offer such as Medical Assisting, Future Ready and Science Research are some of the many things that just made Health Professions stand out. Health Professions is one of the many high schools where students expand their knowledge and life changing opportunities. Regardless, every school has the chance to set their students up for success. High schools couldn't maintain these opportunities if it weren't for the DOE budget.

Through my freshman year of high school, I've been offered many learning opportunities. In the beginning of the school year, I never thought I would be involved in any programs whatsoever. I thought I would remain simple minded and not learn much this school year. However, the offers I've received changed me, making me more of an activist for human rights, expanding my knowledge and just making me a more active New York citizen. The education New York provides for students like myself is what sets up future graduates for success. Opening doors to ivy leagues, career fields and other life changing chances is what makes New York a special city.

I wouldn't be the person I am today without these opportunities, which is why I am testifying at today's hearing. I believe there are younger students who have the potential to follow my steps; if it weren't for this budget cut, they will have the same support (if not, more) to be set up for success. Teens are more prone to find out what they want to be when they grow up when they have the available support. The DOE funding not only supports our education but the opportunities given to us to follow our dreams and explore career paths. This budget will not only take those opportunities away from myself and other students; but it will also lead them to a different path, potentially crushing their future goals.

However this budget isn't only affecting students, it's now affecting the limit and lesson plans teachers provide. Schools are already on a tight budget when it comes to hiring teachers for ESL classes, IEP classes and certain lesson plans. Teachers have claimed that "stretching teachers and budgets to their limit never results in better teaching", this can make them feel stressed out, no DOE staff member should be able to experience that. As a society, we need to understand that people need to be able to read well, work with numbers, and process historical facts and current events if society is going to function. This major budget cut isn't allowing that to happen.

The New York City Council needs to hear about this impact since, I strongly believe that if someone works hard enough and has the support they need to keep going, they can get to where they want to be in life. Without the funding of the DOE, teachers won't be able to do their job comfortably; New York students like myself won't be able to get the education we deserve, affecting our life long goals. Our education will get limited, jobs will be impacted. Students won't know the next steps after college and even high school. This budget can potentially put future graduates at risk of their education and career pathways. The budget Eric Adam's cut is

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only showing how students' education is the least of his priority. Without this budget cut, it won't only help students' future, it will also help the DOE staff that help maintain this system function. This budget cut puts student's futures at risk.

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## Testimony of Samuel Munguia, 9th Grade Student:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify at today's hearing. My name is Samuel Munguia, a current freshman at the High School for Health Professions and Human Services. In my second semester, me and my class have been working on an Actions Civics project through Generation Citizen.

This project focuses on homelessness, specifically homeless people who struggle with their mental health or struggle with addiction. Maintaining a school budget is important to maintain this project and our goal because our project researches the potential alternatives for homelessness. There is a clear correlation between homelessness and mental illness, as many struggle to keep their mental health and their lives without a home.

I am testifying today because funding cannot be cut for schools or mental health providers. There should be an *increase* in funding towards these services, especially schools, as they often act as a secondary home for many students. Mental health and illness is not just prevalent within the homeless, but low income areas all throughout NYC. Many people in low income areas will be negatively impacted by a cut in funding for schools. With already little support to students as they struggle with their mental health, a cut to these staff members would almost ensure a decrease in staff members who are here to support students in schools. It is important to keep schools with great funding. It provides economic stability for not only the school, but good standing for the staff and students.

Thank you for listening to my testimony, and I hope eyes were opened through my perspective.



**Girls for Gender Equity Testimony before the New York City Council  
Committee on Finance, Jointly with the Committee on Education and the  
Committee on Higher Education  
Executive Budget Hearing**

**Written by: Eman Gad  
May 15, 2024**

Dear Chair Brannan, Chair Joseph, Chair Dinowitz and Members of the Committee on Finance, the Committee on Education and the Committee on Higher Education,

My name is Eman Gad, and I am the Policy Coordinator at Girls for Gender Equity (GGE). GGE is a Brooklyn-based organization, which works intergenerationally, through a Black feminist lens, to center the leadership of Black girls and gender-expansive young people of color in reshaping culture and policy to achieve gender and racial justice. GGE challenges structural forces, including racism, sexism, gender-based violence, transphobia, homophobia, and economic inequity, which constrict the freedom, full expression, and rights of transgender and cisgender girls and young women of color, and gender non-conforming youth of color. We do this work through direct service, advocacy, and narrative shift.

**GGE offers this testimony today because the funding we receive is imperative to the development and growth of Black girls and gender**



**expansive youth of color across the city, especially those who identify as survivors of gender-based violence. That is why we are requesting continued support from City Council this** upcoming Fiscal Year 2025 so that GGE may continue to address the needs of young people across all five boroughs and expand its reach during this critical post-pandemic period. Specifically, our organization urges Council to allocate:

1. **\$250,000 towards the Young Women’s Initiative 2.0 (YWI 2.0)** to develop young women leaders,
2. **\$200,000 towards the Domestic Violence and Empowerment Initiative (DoVE)** to support young survivors,
3. **\$100,000 towards the Sports Training and Role Models for Success (STARS) Initiative** to promote the physical, mental, social and emotional well-being of youth ages 12–24, and
4. **\$250,000 to restore our work to promote Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI).**

Through these requested appropriations, City Council would reaffirm its commitment to Black girls and gender-expansive youth of color by supporting our life-saving programs.

## **I. BACKGROUND**

Young people are incredibly sensitive to their environment and greatly impacted by their experiences. Adverse childhood experiences, such as exposure to violence, significantly influence brain development and can create lifelong vulnerability to mental health disorders.<sup>1</sup> BIPOC and gender-expansive youth are constantly searching for safe spaces in this city that is

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<sup>1</sup> The Center for High Impact Philanthropy - University of Pennsylvania. (n.d). *Focus on young people*. [https://www.impact.upenn.edu/health-in-mind/our-framework/focus-on-young-people/#:~:text=One%20in%20five%20children%20and,bullying%2C%20and%20family%20problems\).](https://www.impact.upenn.edu/health-in-mind/our-framework/focus-on-young-people/#:~:text=One%20in%20five%20children%20and,bullying%2C%20and%20family%20problems).)

still overcoming the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as many racial, gender and sexual inequities. Black youth who have experienced racism are more likely to develop depression, and the adultification of Black girls adults often causes those with mental health issues to be viewed as trouble-makers by the adults in their lives. In schools, this results in Black girls being disproportionately disciplined, with a rate of being six times more likely than their white counterparts to face suspension.<sup>2</sup> **Considering the forces that are up against our young people, GGE stands as a safe haven for Black girls and gender expansive youth of color.** In order for GGE to continue to make an impact on the lives of young people, the following programs need continued support from The New York City Council.

## **II. REQUEST FOR FY25 FUNDING**

### **A. Young Women's Initiative 2.0 (YWI 2.0)**

**Girls for Gender Equity is seeking an increased investment of \$250,000 to lead YWI 2.0 and support the growth of its three direct service programs, advocacy, policy, and culture change initiatives.** Through YWI, GGE seeks to engage with partner organizations, coordinate program strategies, and liaison directly with NYC Council members, and other community stakeholders to ensure that the Young Women's Leadership Development Initiative is impactful and sustained.

A YWI program GGE sponsors is the **Young Women's Advisory Council (YWAC)** Initiative, which encourages youth to become agents of change within their NYC communities and ensures that the voices of young women and LGBTQ/TGNC/NB youth of color matter in city government. YWAC supports

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<sup>2</sup> National Black Women's Justice Institute. (2021, June 7). *The Case for Focusing on Black Girls' Mental Health*. <https://www.nbwji.org/post/the-case-for-focusing-on-black-girls-mental-health#:~:text=Black%20girls%20are%20six%20times,school%2C%20than%20any%20other%20group>.

leadership development training and programming around culture, gender, race, health, wellness, and social activism through advocacy and civic engagement. When young people participate in decision-making processes, it enhances their problem-solving, negotiation, and communication abilities, and helps them build healthy relationships. Empowering BIPOC youth also enables them to effectively confront instances of abuse, injustice, and discrimination.<sup>3</sup> **YWI 2.0 is an integral part of the development of our young people because increasing youths independence and autonomy and investing in them as leaders uplifts them.**

## **B. Domestic Violence and Empowerment Initiative (DoVE)**

Another GGE program is our **Domestic Violence and Empowerment Initiative (DoVE) in which we seek increased funding of \$200,000.** For over 21 years, GGE's DoVE involvement has focused on ending sexual violence through our core direct service programs, policy campaigns, public outreach, and education. GGE helps to weave safety nets and disrupt pipelines that would inflict additional state sanctioned trauma on those who have already been hurt by violence and abuse with activities that keep young people safe, especially Black Girls and gender-expansive youth of color. Our programs engage and support young people in accessing tools and models to effect change in their communities, to imagine new possibilities for their lives, and experience joy. GGE's commitment ensures that the voices of girls, young women, and gender-expansive youth of color are respected and their solutions enacted.

GGE is seeking an increase in funding for our work under DOVE to expand our survivor-centered work; provide increased workshops and counseling for

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<sup>3</sup> Generation Unlimited. (2020). *Young People's Participation and Civic Engagement*. <https://www.generationunlimited.org/media/3021/fileAction%20Guide%205:%20Young%20people's%20participation%20and%20civic%20engagement.pdf>

direct service participants; hire additional trauma informed staff; develop healing justice modalities and promote citywide policies to reduce gender-based violence. GGE will share our key learnings with the community and government officials via increased trainings, youth-centered workshops, social media, and research about trends surrounding young people experiencing domestic violence (DV), intimate partner violence (IPV) and sexual assault within the larger context of raising awareness about gender-based violence. GGE believes that public education and awareness support prevention, bolsters safety, and decreases survivorship isolation, while providing links to care and services.

### **C. Sports Training and Role Models for Success (STARS) Initiative**

Additionally, GGE requests restored funding in the amount of \$100,000 for the **Sports Training and Role Models for Success (STARS) Initiative**. Our partnership with the STARS Initiative stems from our roots of providing safe spaces for sports training to young girls, as well as from our continued commitment to healthy living, wellness, active lifestyles, social and emotional learning, and restorative and healing justice for youth ages 12-24 and their communities. Our activism against all forms of gender- and racial-based violence allows youth to be active participants in designing their own futures. GGE will collaborate with initiative partners in designing and implementing key STARS sponsored citywide events like Town Halls, Self-Care Days, and legislative breakfasts.

### **D. Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI)**

To continue our **Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) work**, GGE calls upon **Council Members to restore our funding of \$250,000**. Black girls are more likely to be incarcerated than their white peers due to racial biases as well as

the hyperfocus and criminalization of their bodies.<sup>4</sup> Youth in juvenile detention are also at a higher risk for depression, and research suggests that Black girls, specifically, are especially vulnerable to depression and other mental health issues.<sup>5</sup> GGE actively works to end carceral systems targeting young people, especially Black girls and gender-expansive youth. Renewed funding will support our Police Free Schools and decriminalization initiatives, and our advocacy on behalf of alternative frameworks that consider the unique experiences of cis and transgender girls, gender nonconforming/nonbinary youth, and LGBTQIA+ youth.

GGE notably works on Police Free Schools and abolitionist policies for femme-identified and gender-expansive young people who are systems-impacted. Since students can enter the carceral system with minor infractions, suspension, or expulsion from school, we uplift school climate reform by promoting the end to suspensions and expulsions; helping prevent sexualized and racial violence; increasing social workers, counselors and school nurses; practicing restorative and healing justice; instituting mandatory comprehensive sexuality education; implementing inclusive dress code policy; and teaching a culturally relevant curriculum.

### **III. CONCLUSION**

Through our partnership with the City Council, Girls for Gender Equity worked intergenerationally, through a Black feminist lens, to center the leadership of Black girls and gender-expansive young people of color across New York City for over twenty years. GGE is uniquely positioned to serve BIPOC and gender-expansive youth through our expertise in youth-led advocacy, direct

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<sup>4</sup> National Black Women's Justice Institute. (2021, June 7). The Case for Focusing on Black Girls' Mental Health. <https://www.nbwji.org/post/the-case-for-focusing-on-black-girls-mental-health#:~:text=Black%20girls%20are%20six%20times,school%2C%20than%20any%20other%20group>.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

programming, and healing justice work. However, we cannot do this without continued support from City Council Members inFY25. For this reason, we urge City Council to consider our modest funding requests, so that we may further our joint mission to empower and develop young people from marginalized backgrounds across all five boroughs. The requested funds will enable GGE to lead transformational initiatives, contribute to progressive policy changes, and create safer, more inclusive spaces for the youth it serves.



Send to: [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov)

Testimony of Good Shepherd Services  
Before the New York City Council Committee on Finance jointly with Education

Submitted by  
Marie Alcis Education Advocate at Good Shepherd Services

May 15, 2024

**Thank you, Chair Joseph, Chair Brannan and the Finance Committee jointly with the Education Committee, for the opportunity to testify on Mayor Adams Executive Budget as it relates to Department of Education**

My Name is Marie Alcis, and I am an Education Advocate at Good Shepherd Services.

Good Shepherd Services is a provider of residential Foster Care, Family Treatment Foster Care, Prevention, Close to Home, Fair Futures and the Family Enrichment Center model and Partners with many DOE schools in various communities.

I am also a former foster youth and immigrant into this country, who had the privilege to access education programs that allowed me to be successful and led me to where I am today.

Albert Einstein once said: "Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid."

This quote is a direct insight into what will happen to our children if these programs are excluded from the budget. Educational programming tailored to young people's varied and specific needs should be widely accessible. Out of 400,000 children in foster care, nearly 270,000 of these foster children are school-aged. Foster youth are more likely than their peers to experience a host of barriers that lead to troubling outcomes; including but not limited to low academic achievement, high dropout rates, and higher rates of mental health disorders.

Now more than ever we need to have a more holistic understanding of what it takes for children to be successful. It is these programs such as Student Success Centers, Restorative Justice and Mental Health Continuum that are tailored to these academic and behavioral needs that will enable our children to prosper and thrive.

I am speaking today to fight for these programs. This young age which the programs are tailored to is a critical junction point where development and certain milestones can be assessed and reworked. Our brains at this age have the incredible ability to create

new pathways and change the trajectory of success. A school can and should be a community to raise up our children. It was for me, and I work in this field to do the same for others, so they can grow up to be young individuals who create their own sense of purpose and pride.

We are doing a disservice to our future generations and our children by excluding these programs out of the budget. The less resources for individuals with mental barriers, special education needs, and trauma, the less we can protect from the negative outcomes that are likely to occur.

As an employee in the foster care field, our duty is to recognize what can be done, but without the funding and access to programs to provide to our young people, we are at a loss.

Thank you for the opportunity.



**Testimony to be delivered to the New York City Council  
Committee on Education and Committee on Finance**

**Re: FY 2025 Executive Budget - Education**

May 15, 2024

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Nickesha Francis, and I'm the Policy and Advocacy Manager at Good Shepherd Services. I'm here today representing the Emergency Coalition to Save Education Programs, which has come together to advocate to sustain essential education programs that are on the chopping block due to expiring funds and proposed cuts.

We appreciate that the Executive Budget includes around \$600M to continue many education initiatives, including school social workers and psychologists, shelter-based coordinators, Learning to Work, bilingual supports, and more—though some programs received only a one-year reprieve and should be baselined in the final budget.

Yet, other essential programs were left out of the budget or did not see a full restoration and are at risk of being rolled back or eliminated this July. Despite the investments in the Executive Budget:

- There is still a proposed cut of **\$170M** to **3-K and Pre-K**, which would impact thousands of children.
- The investments in **preschool special education** do not represent a full restoration and are insufficient to meet the need, given the ongoing shortage of legally required preschool special education classes and services. There is still a **\$13M gap**.
- Due to expiring one-year city funds, there is still a **\$14M** gap for community schools, which provide wrap-around support to students and families.
- There is no funding to replace the **\$12M** in expiring federal funds currently supporting **restorative justice practices**, which have allowed more schools to use alternatives to exclusionary discipline.
- There is no funding to sustain the **\$5M** for **Mental Health Continuum**, which is helping students at 50 high-needs schools access expedited mental healthcare.
- There is no funding to continue the **\$4M** for **immigrant family communication and outreach program**, which helps immigrant families get key information about the school system.



- There is no funding to sustain **Student Success Centers**, where trained youth leaders build a culture of college-going in their schools, and which are supported by **\$3.3M** in expiring federal funds.
- There is no funding to replace the **\$65M** in expiring federal funds that are currently enabling every school building to have a **nurse**.

We appreciate that the City Council called for funding for each of these programs in its response to the preliminary budget. We look forward to working with you to ensure the final budget includes funding to sustain these vital supports and services.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

**New York City Council Oversight Hearing, Committees on Education and  
Finance re Fiscal Year 2025 Executive Budget**

May 15, 2024

We thank the New York City Council's Committees on Education and Finance for holding this important oversight hearing on the City's FY2025 Preliminary Budget. My name is Lori Podvesker, and I am the Director of Policy at INCLUDEnyc. For over 40 years, INCLUDEnyc (formerly known as Resources for Children with Special Needs) has helped hundreds of thousands of NYC families navigate the complex special education service and support systems.

We commend Mayor Adams for including nearly \$600 million in this Executive Budget to continue programs and initiatives that the City used temporary COVID-19 relief funds to pay for, such as school social workers and psychologists providing mental health support, expansion of free preschool for 3-year-olds, new coordinators working in homeless shelters, support for students at risk of dropping out, and bilingual education programs.

Yet, we are troubled by the City's need to fully fund mandatory programs for students with disabilities, such as the \$13 million gap for preschool special education. This means there will continue to be a shortage of seats in legally required preschool special education classes, and too many disabled 3-5-year-olds will continue to be denied access to education, services, and support. We are also concerned about other necessary programs and initiatives that should have been included in this budget, including restorative justice, the Mental Health Continuum, and expanding outreach and communication with immigrant families.

In addition, we appreciate the financial commitment and progress the City has made with school accessibility in the last five years. However, considering that two-thirds of New York City schools are still not fully accessible to all students, family members, and educators, the City needs to allocate an additional \$450 million in the 2025-2029 Capital Plan. Increasing the total amount of funds dedicated to school accessibility projects over the next five years will be \$1.25 billion.

Thank you for taking the time today to consider this important matter. We look forward to partnering with you to improve equity and access for all young people with disabilities in New York City.

Sincerely,  
Lori Podvesker  
Director of Disability and Education Policy



**New York City Council  
Education & Finance Committees  
Budget Hearing  
Honorable Rita Joseph, Chair  
Honorable Justin Brannan, Chair**

**May 15, 2024**

**Testimony of InsideSchools**

Good evening and thank you Chairs Brannan, Joseph and members of the Finance and Education Committees for the opportunity to speak today on the City's FY2025 Executive Budget. My name is Natasha Quiroga and I am the Director of Education Policy and InsideSchools at The New School's Center for New York City Affairs. For twenty years, [InsideSchools](#) has served as a vital resource for millions of families throughout their children's public school education by serving as the one-stop-shop where New York City families can better understand New York City public schools. InsideSchools provides families with resources and support to make informed decisions and advocate for their children's education. Since last summer, InsideSchools has been helping over 600 newly arrived migrant families navigate the NYC public school system through workshops in shelters and office hours at community-based organizations.

The City Council must ensure that the DOE has sufficient funding to support our most vulnerable students. Many families lack information about the structure and processes of NYC public schools, hindering their ability to make informed enrollment decisions, access resources, and advocate for their children's educational needs. We have witnessed the impact of the DOE's resource limitations on all students, from the youngest learners to older youth, who struggle to enroll and find appropriate educational placement.

InsideSchools has been accompanying West African 17-21 year olds to Family Welcome Centers to help them enroll and have called schools on their behalf. None of the students was given the option to enroll in an English Language Learner (ELL) transfer school. They were told that transfer schools were full this school year and summer. Without further assessment, most were referred to the Pathways to Graduation program because they were 18 years old or older, even though many had completed a year or more of high school. Despite their interest in attending a traditional or transfer school, these students were told to enroll in a Pathways to Graduation program instead. After being turned away by yet another school, one 17 year old said, "I am very discouraged. I want to learn, but the schools don't want me."

Students who are told to enroll in a Pathways to Graduation program also face challenges when they discover these programs are also full. We took a group of students to a Bronx Referral Center, where they were all placed on a wait list of over 200 names for an ESL class. Since the students speak French or African languages and GED classes are only available in English or Spanish, they were told to first take ESL classes to learn English. After two months of waiting and not being in school, they were finally able to register for a District 79 ESL program.

These long waitlists are another deterrent for older ELL newcomer youth looking to enroll in school. Many have already lost valuable instruction time and need to enroll in school before they turn 21. Transfer schools specialize in helping under-credited students at risk of dropping out by offering tailored instruction and comprehensive support, including additional language assistance, flexible classes, internship opportunities, and mental health services. English learners have the highest dropout rate of any subgroup in NYC at 17% as compared to their non-ELL counterparts at 5.4%. Enrolling in a traditional high school puts these students at risk of dropping out, as the school may not have the best supports for multilingual students or newly arrived migrant students. Without our advocacy, these older youth would accept whatever option is presented to them at the Family Welcome Center. InsideSchools has successfully pushed back and reached out to International Schools directly to secure school placements. Our team has also been persistent in finding Pathways to Graduation placements for those who prefer it. However, it should not be this difficult. Families should be able to navigate the system on their own.

Immigrant families struggle to navigate programs for both older youth and the youngest learners because the processes are not user-friendly and there is insufficient outreach. Almost a third of children whose parents attended InsideSchools shelter workshops are aged three or younger. Most families had no idea that 3K existed and many didn't know that children born in 2021 needed to apply for a 3K spot. Even if they knew about 3K, they were often lost on how to enroll and find 3K options. We are currently helping families living in shelters to accept 3K and pre-K offers as several missed the application deadline or were placed on waitlists. Even if 3K seats are not further cut next year, it won't help if families are unaware of the program, how to apply for a seat, how to use MySchools to accept an offer or get onto a waitlist. When parents call the MySchools helpline, they have to listen to nearly two minutes of an English message before hearing prompts only for Spanish or Mandarin. Advocates and the City Council estimated that \$10 million is needed for early childhood education outreach, but the budget presented by the Mayor only includes \$3.5 million. This significant shortfall will not address the challenges our most vulnerable families face in accessing early childhood education programs.

We urge the City Council to ensure there is sufficient funding in the budget for the City and the Department of Education to fund:

- New English Language Learner programs at six transfer high schools to ensure that they have the resources they need to effectively serve ELLs;
- Professional development for schools and educators by experts in educating older newcomer ELLs to ten high schools to build their capacity to serve immigrant youth;
- Fully restored funding to 3K and pre-K programs;
- Increased outreach for early childhood education;
- Increased and effective outreach and enrollment to families, especially to limited English proficient and digitally disconnected families thru funding organizations with the expertise to support these efforts.

DOE must build capacity to ensure families can easily enroll in school and meet their educational and language needs throughout their 3K-12 experience. We continue to meet families whose children are not enrolled in school despite living in shelters for weeks. It is essential that the DOE create and maintain accessible pathways for students to access a high-quality education. All students, including immigrant students, deserve good schools! Thank you for the opportunity to share these experiences with you and for your support of children, youth, and families in New York City.

Submitted by:  
Natasha Quiroga  
Director of Education Policy & InsideSchools  
Center for New York City Affairs  
The New School

Contact: [quirogan@newschool.edu](mailto:quirogan@newschool.edu)



Committee on Education  
TOPIC: Budget Hearing  
Wednesday, March 15, 2024

Testimony by  
Adonis Favorite  
Student at Liberation Diploma Plus High School

I remember when I didn't have the motivation to do anything school related anymore. Kept messing up, not choosing the choices I made wisely, Just not having the drive to do anything productive anymore. One day I was just tired of the way I was living.

Everyday went past and I was doing nothing at all. I moved to Coney Island and right across the street was Liberation Diploma Plus. Walking into the school every day after being registered it felt like home. The work is not as hard as you make it if you call for assistance.

Any situation that I'm in, personal or school wise, I know that I'm in good care when I'm with Liberation. The Liberation staff has taken its time to get to know me and I feel respected. This has helped me mature to be able to go on with life and not let certain things get the best of me. My LTW advocate counselor, Mr. Chris, was very impactful when I first came to Liberation. He motivated me every day to get all of the credits that I missed in my other school. I started off last year with 0 credits and I'm halfway through with graduation. The other counselors, Mr. Manny and Mr. Mike are also role models for me and I handle my feelings differently when it comes to certain situations. The LTW

internship has played a huge part in my consistency in coming to school and helped me professionally for when I leave high school. I've never seen a school that can do what Liberation has done.

Liberation is known as a place for students to gain another chance especially when other schools wouldn't. We have potential and Ms. Leong seen something in us that we haven't seen in ourselves.

With even more of your support and the staff doing what they do for us we can be better than before.



Committee on Education  
TOPIC: Budget Hearing  
Wednesday, March 15, 2024

Testimony by  
Daniella Galardo  
Student at Liberation Diploma Plus High School

My second home and my safe space, Liberation Diploma Plus has been one of the best things that's happened to me recently. With all the things that I struggle with on a daily basis, school has not been a main priority to me ever. Of course, when you don't feel like something is a priority, you don't want to make it a priority, so that led to me not succeeding in my old school and being at risk for getting held back again. That entire situation led me here, and now that I have been here for a couple months I see how much the environment at the school has impacted my learning as well as my mental health. JCCA even has a therapist that comes every Tuesday. At Liberation they have a family dynamic so every day you walk in the school and every day you leave the school you're always reminded that you are loved. If by nobody else, you are loved by Liberation. One of the best parts of being at Liberation is the focus on mental health over many other things, academic education and learning are super important, but those cannot be achieved if someone is not in the right headspace to receive the information that is given to them. Principal Leong and the LTW staff understand this and have been determined for years deal with things like this. Everyone who ends up at Liberation has had their fair share of obstacles they've had to face in their own that lead us here. Me personally, I was bullied so much that I had so much anxiety walking into the school building and refused to go almost all of the



time but now every time I walk in the building, I see smiling faces and get told good morning and asked how I am. They even noticed something as simple as a haircut, which changed my entire day. There is no Plan C, this was our Plan B, the last thing we have to lead good successful adult lives. This is the height of our adolescents, if we don't learn the things now we might not learn it. Its super important that you have taken the time to listen to us because we are the people that are affected by these cuts and you make the decisions.



Committee on Education  
TOPIC: Budget Hearing  
Wednesday, March 15, 2024

Testimony by  
Fadi Nadaf  
Student at Liberation Diploma Plus High School

Liberation Diploma Plus places a strong emphasis on personalized education. This approach ensures that each student receives the attention and support they need, which is particularly beneficial for those who have struggled in traditional school settings. By focusing on individual learning styles and needs, Liberation Diploma Plus helps students to thrive academically and personally. The school fosters a supportive and nurturing environment that encourages students to engage and participate actively in their education. This supportive atmosphere helps build students' confidence and motivates them to achieve their goals. The staff at Liberation Diploma Plus are typically highly dedicated and committed to their students' success. They often go above and beyond to ensure that students receive the guidance and support they need, both academically and personally. Liberation Diploma Plus has a strong focus on helping students not only to graduate but also to prepare for life after high school. This can include college preparation, career counseling, and other support services that ensure students are ready for the next step in their journey. Many students at this school achieve positive outcomes, including higher graduation rates and successful transitions to college or careers. These outcomes are a testament to the school's effective approach to education. Overall, Liberation

Diploma Plus stands out because of its comprehensive, student-centered approach that addresses the diverse needs of its students, preparing them not just academically but for all aspects of life.



Committee on Education  
TOPIC: Budget Hearing  
Wednesday, March 15, 2024

Testimony by  
Jayden Worthy  
Student at Liberation Diploma Plus High School

Hello, I'm Jayden. I am a senior that attends Liberation. Liberation helped me by helping me get back on track and change my character for the better. While attending I met good, no great staff who have helped me with personal and academic situations. Lots of times we need someone to talk to. Being in a supportive environment puts us in a better place. This comfort is so important because when kids are angry they can make bad decisions that only gets you into two places. When I was going through my issues I knew coming to school would be a safe environment instead of hiding in my own feelings. There is a constant reassurance of love and most kids our age needs opportunities to our themselves in better positions. The staff spoils us in the ways that they can. They communicate with respect not only to us but our parents too. They see the potential that students don't see in themselves. The LTW program at Liberation are more than staff, we are all family. Also, while attending Liberation they have provided me with opportunities to get back on track with school but also put me in an internship to earn money. I feel that this is important for the program because it gives kids something to do and not make bad decisions at this expected teenage age. Being in the internship, we have something to look forward to so we know we can't mess up. I think it's a good opportunity for kids to try to learn something about themselves and try new things to expand their capabilities. Liberation is a place to

put kids back on the right track. Without the funding there would be more dropouts or kids that give up or even worse. All to say we need places like this to help the youth find better throughout their situations.



Committee on Education

TOPIC: Budget Hearing

Wednesday, March 15, 2024

Testimony by

Lisa deCastillo

Director of Secondary and Post-Secondary Initiatives

JCCA

Good afternoon Chair Joseph and members of the Education Committee. My name is Lisa deCastillo, Director of Secondary and Post-Secondary Initiatives at JCCA.

First, I want to thank you on behalf of JCCA, Liberation Diploma Plus High School, and most important, all the students- for providing funding of Learning to Work Programs in the City's budget for next year. We are deeply appreciative of your advocacy and hard work to baseline this funding and keep LTW Programs running citywide. However, the funding is not enough, and I would like to explain the ways we support students, ask for a greater investment of the City's educational and vocational programs for our young people.



### **A. Learning to Work Program**

JCCA's LTW Program has dedicated staff that works every day to build relationships with students who need the most support. Our Advocate Counselors assist in crisis mediation, coaching, and counseling. Many come visit their Advocate Counselor every morning before school starts- knowing that a supportive conversation can put them in the right mindset to take on the day. Students have expressed that without the work of their Advocate Counselors and other support staff, they would not continue high school. The work of the LTW staff if woven throughout the Liberation community. The students that we serve are in tremendous need of support, whether it is educationally, emotionally, financially, and it is very difficult for the building to maintain these systems of support without the LTW staff's addition.

JCCA has been instrumental in expanding the services that Liberation provides. We have worked hard to increase the resources for the food pantry. We have funded the washer and dryer to be fixed to allow students to come to school with clean clothes. We have opened a mental health clinic in the school. We have been able to bring more post-secondary options, paying for security and OSHA credentials. We have assisted students in moving in to college campuses, and we have also been able to offer up to \$40,000 over a five (5) year period towards college, vocational and living expenses to any Liberation student that is accepted into JCCA's Scholarship Program. All of these services have been brought to Liberation through outside funding sources. These are just some of the needs that the LTW budget does not account for. While intern stipends and salaries are very valuable, it is these wraparound services that provide concrete resources and options that allow our children to be more successful in adulthood.

Over the past year and a half, many of these resources have been limited due to circumstances beyond our control, as the national economy has suffered, donations and funding streams have

lessened. It is imperative, now more than ever, that our students remain hopeful and engaged in their secondary planning. The LTW program and transfer schools are a beacon of light for what many students consider a last chance at graduating high school. We cannot stop now; we must increase the funding for this program to show our youth that we believe in their possibilities. Now we would like to allow some time for the students themselves to tell you what Liberation means for them. Thank you.



Committee on Education  
TOPIC: Budget Hearing  
Wednesday, March 15, 2024

Testimony by  
Saad Ali  
Student at Liberation Diploma Plus High School

My name is Saad Ali. I am a senior at Liberation Diploma Plus High School. I will be graduating in June. I will explain all of the things that the school has given me and how they have helped me. When I came from my country of Pakistan I was really nervous of what I would do here. The school really helped me. I wanted to get a job and they helped me get my first job. My parents were very happy that I was able to start working. I was able to apply for college and will be going to Kingsborough in the fall for Information Technology. I am also hoping to get a scholarship from JCCA, the company that works with Liberation. There are many ways that they helped me. They have helped me see different things by going on trips. My favorite one was when we went to visit University of Maryland Eastern Shore. The university was very nice. They had a carnival for the students and visitors. We stayed at a hotel and had different activities like bowling, which was my favorite part. It was my first time and I had so much fun. I have made many new friends here. The staff is very nice to all of the students. They speak to all of us nicely and appreciate us. My brother goes to a traditional high school. He says that the staff is not able to pay attention to all the students like they do in my school. I am very happy that I came to this school and I am excited to continue my goals.

**JCRC-NY Testimony: NYC Council Joint Education & Finance Committee Hearing, May 15, 2024**

On behalf of the JCRC of New York, I am here to thank Chancellor David Banks and the NYC Public School senior leadership for their efforts to “Meet the Moment” following the increase in antisemitic incidents and other forms of hate in our K-12 schools, following October 7<sup>th</sup>.

City Council has previously allocated significant funding toward creating curricula to uplift the voices of underrepresented communities in our city, such as the AAPI community, the Black/African Diaspora, and the African-American community. These materials serve to promote diversity, inclusion, anti-bias education, and celebration of various identities and experiences.

Our city’s Jewish community’s presence in New York City dates back to 1654, and is diverse in its belief systems, cultures, nationalities, languages, and practices. Jews are an integral part of this city, and we too deserve to be seen, valued, and understood within our public education system. We commend Chancellor Banks for his recent public commitment to creating a “Jewish Americans” series within the Hidden Voices curriculum in response to increased incidents of hate toward Jews. We hope the City Council will be supportive of this initiative.

The Jewish Americans curriculum must highlight Jewish diversity, and must examine contemporary Jewish life, traditions, and practice. Lastly, it must address antisemitism's roots, manifestations, and impacts, including, but not limited to, quality Holocaust education.

We believe that it must be developed with significant input and consultation from leading Jewish community organizations and Jewish members of the Chancellor’s Interfaith Advisory Committee. We recommend that a committee of Jewish community stakeholders be formed to create the curriculum along with subject matter experts. The committee will also provide oversight and accountability to ensure its effective use in the classroom. Groups such as the Institute for Curriculum Services and Project Witness are available to provide high quality materials that include primary sources on the Jewish experience and the Holocaust, and they are already being used within public school classrooms!

Lastly, we commend City Council for including funding for a dedicated Title VI Coordinator for NYC Public Schools in its budget response. This first-of-its-kind role for a K-12 public school system will help strengthen the intake, investigation, and resolution of claims of discrimination based on race, color, or national origin under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Incidents of hate, whether they are antisemitism, Islamophobia, xenophobia, or others, must be investigated and purged from our education system.

JCRC stands ready to assist in making NYC schools more inclusive for all students. An investment in Jewish identity education and safety for all students will benefit not only Jewish youth, but the entire school community.

May 15, 2024

The Honorable Justin Brannan  
Committee on Finance  
250 Broadway, Suite 1825  
New York, New York 10007

The Honorable Rita Joseph  
Committee on Education  
250 Broadway, Suite 1752  
New York, New York 10007

**RE: Mayor's Financial Plan – UPK Program Funding Cuts**

Dear Chair Brannan and Chair Joseph:

KinderCare Learning Companies, operating 19 centers and nine before/after school programs, serving over 2,000 children, and employing over 550 people across New York, seven of which operate within New York City (NYC), strongly opposes the city's proposed funding cuts to preschool for three and four-year-olds.

Since its implementation, the NYC Universal Preschool Program (UPK) has expanded opportunities for nearly 90,000 families – providing enriching early learning environments for children and allowing more families to participate in the workforce. The program has been transformational for the families it serves, and the proposed cuts undermine the city's trailblazing efforts around PreK and will add significant burden on NYC families. As designed, the program significantly lowers the cost of early childhood education (ECE) for eligible families, provides options for working parents' unique schedules, and offers families with options for high-quality care programs throughout the city.

KinderCare is proud to operate city-funded UPK programs in three of our seven locations with 130 dedicated slots and the capacity to support additional slots in other centers. The impending funding cuts will cause significant disruption to working families, children, and ECE professionals. Without maintained funding and opportunity, ECE providers cannot continue to serve these eligible families.

Even without the impending budget cuts, there have been challenges to participating in and serving families through the UPK program. These issues include provider reimbursement payment processes, the complexity of navigating licensing and regulatory approvals, and prolonged approved clearances of qualified teachers to support classrooms. The city should identify efficiencies in cost spending instead of cutting critical services. For example, efficiencies could be achieved by allowing for the portability of background checks and not using valuable city resources to screen a teacher who has moved from one classroom to another or has relocated to a center a few blocks away, as presented in Int. 497. As presented in Int. 501, additional efficiencies could be achieved through transparency and utilization of resources between various departments to avoid duplicative background checks and clearances. These are just a few ways to streamline costs and processes and save the city money.



The communities we serve depend on affordable, high-quality ECE programming. We have seen firsthand the disruptions that delayed and closed classrooms have caused to families and children due to inefficiencies. These impacts are evident even before the proposed systemwide budget cut, which will disrupt the lives of thousands of families. The effect will be immediate: parents who cannot find affordable, quality ECE programming will drop out of the workforce all together, having ripple effects on NYC's broader economy. This reality will disproportionately impact women, and primarily women and families of color who make up most of the ECE workforce and participate in the UPK program.

We seek the City Council's support in opposing the proposed \$120 million funding cut to the city's essential universal preschool program. Our youngest children, families, and employers all depend on this program and the success of our youngest learners.

Sincerely,



Rylie Shewbridge  
Government Relations Representative  
KinderCare Learning Companies





**May 15, 2024**

**Nourish NYC's Children: Fight Hunger & Build Health Equity Through Food & Nutrition Support for a Brighter Future**

Dear City Council Member,

I trust this message finds you well. As advocates for food education and equitable access to healthy meals, we are thrilled to support the Food Ed Coalition in endorsing key policy initiatives aimed at strengthening communities throughout New York City.

Our organization firmly believes in the importance of the following policy priorities, and we are proud to add our name in support of these critical initiatives:

**Expense Budget**

Adequate Funding for School Meals (\$64.5 million in FY25):

- We support the call for sufficient funding to restore and provide NYC public school children with a variety of wholesome, fresh, minimally processed foods. This includes a selection of fruits and vegetables, as well as maintaining adequate funding for school food managers and staffing.

Renew Funding for Food and Nutrition Education in NYC Pilot (\$2 million in FY25):

- We endorse the renewal of funding for Food and Nutrition education, extending it to more schools, especially those in high economic need areas. This education is crucial for the health and wellness of all NYC students, positively impacting academic performance, educational behavior, and cognitive skills.

**Discretionary Budget**

Renew Food Ed Hub Funding (\$375,000 in FY25):

- We strongly advocate for the renewal of funding for the Food Ed Hub to continue its crucial work in supporting schools and educators in providing food and nutrition education. This includes facilitating coordination, collaboration, inclusiveness, and equity in food education and access and providing independent research on key issues related to school meals.

**Capital Funding**

Expand the Cafeteria Enhancement Experience (CEE) Initiative to All Middle and High Schools (\$150 million over 5 years):

- We fully support the commitment of funding to the 5-year Capital Plan to expand the Cafeteria Enhancement Experience (CEE) initiative to all middle and high schools. This initiative modernizes the cafeteria environment, positively impacting school meal participation and students' social and emotional well-being.

The undersigned proudly endorse these initiatives and stand alongside the Food Ed Coalition in urging decision-makers to prioritize the health and well-being of NYC's students.

Thank you for spearheading this important advocacy effort. We look forward to a healthier, more equitable future for all New Yorkers.

Sincerely,

Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education & Policy  
 Apiary in the Sky, LLC  
 Black Girls Eat  
 Brighter Bites  
 Brooklyn Botanic Garden  
 Brooklyn Urban Garden Charter School (BUGS)  
 Chilis on Wheels  
 Citizens' Committee for Children of New York  
 City Growers  
 Community Food Advocates  
 Concerned citizen  
 East New York Farms  
 Edible Schoolyard NYC  
 EH Exchange  
 FamilyCook Productions  
 FAN4Kids (Fitness and Nutrition for Kids)  
 Food Bank For New York City  
 Garden Train  
 Green Beetz  
 Harlem Grown  
 Horace Mann school  
 iEat Green, LLC  
 Independent Nutrition Educator and Public School Parent  
 Kipp Infinity Elementary  
 Leave It Better Foundation Inc  
 New Roots Institute  
 NYU GPH PHN Dept  
 Oshima Good Food  
 Randall's Island Park Alliance  
 Season Health  
 SNACC Inc.  
 Teens for Food Justice

The Beecher's Foundation  
The MAZI Project  
The Sylvia Center  
Urban Health Plan  
W!se (Working in Support of Education)  
Wellness in the Schools  
West Harlem Group Assistance Inc.  
Siobhan Keys  
Hector Garcia  
Emery Leonardo  
Leila Lau  
Miriami Entin-Bell  
Hector Estevez  
Charles De San Pedro Jr  
Aarmeen Khan



**Written Testimony Submission from Legal Services NYC  
Executive Budget Hearing, Committee on Education, May 15, 2024**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony for the oversight Education Budget hearing for Fiscal Year 2025.

LSNYC's Citywide Education Advocacy Project seeks \$500,000 in Council Funding through a new initiative for Fiscal Year 2025 to expand and deepen our holistic model of representation. We will use this funding to expand representation of students with disabilities and those who have experienced trauma. We will also use this funding to expand our advocacy work focused on addressing the school to prison pipeline; promoting social, emotional and mental health supports in schools; addressing bullying; deepening our community partnerships; and fostering the development of Healing-Centered Schools. A solid education is critical to preparing students for a good future including secondary education and/or good paying careers, and ending cycles of generational poverty.

Racism, segregation, and the inequity in educational funding and supports have long made it difficult for low-income New Yorkers to access a quality education in our City. The COVID-19 pandemic has both clarified and exacerbated that challenge. Low-income students, students of color, students in immigrant households, students in temporary housing, and students with disabilities have lagged further behind academically since the COVID pandemic began, and now require even more support and advocacy to make up for these additional losses.

Our model of legal representation is a holistic one. When we take a case, we look at the interlocking issues that impact a student's education. We know that our clients and their families struggle with many issues arising from poverty, such as rising rents exceeding income, substandard housing, eviction, immigration concerns, ACS involvement, predatory consumer practices, and discrimination. To address these impediments, we connect our clients to other areas of civil legal representation provided by LSNYC, such as eviction prevention, family law, immigration, benefits assistance, as well as to community-based resources. Another aspect of our holistic approach is to offer wrap-around representation, we are engaged on the school-based level, speaking with school staff and administrators, attending IEP meetings, responding to EMS removals, representing students in suspension matters and attending "MDR" (Manifestation Determination Review) meetings related to disciplinary actions. We also help families search for appropriate schools for their children.

Our activities in the 5 boroughs fall in five categories of advocacy:

1. Advancing Equity By Protecting The Rights Of Students Most At Risk:

2. Protecting Students' Disciplinary Rights
3. Developing Healing Centered School
4. Challenging Charter School Policies In Discipline and Special Education:
5. Community Education and Outreach

Our Education Advocacy Project is made up of a small but experienced and committed team of attorneys and advocates. We expand and leverage our experience through involvement in a variety of initiatives aimed at addressing systemic issues our client community is facing. Social work support is another aspect of our holistic model of advocacy. Where we have capacity to, we connect our clients with social workers to team with us to provide support to students and their families so that we can advance the legal aspects of their educational case. We provide education and know your rights trainings to community partners, legislators and their constituents, school connected organizations, and parent groups, and we offer testimony at City Council and State legislative hearings. We also are involved in or provide leadership to, initiatives such as the LSNYC-organized and led Education Law Task Force, a citywide group of education non-profits and advocacy groups, and the Campaign for Effective Behavioral Supports for Students ("CEBSS"), a group of advocacy, social service, and community-based organizations which advocates for school-based behavioral support systems and policies, such as trauma-informed and healing-centered practices.. We are involved also in community partnerships across the City, with organizations such as Vibrant Emotional Health, and the Bronx Anti-Bullying Coalition. We are supported in doing this work by the relationships we build with local service providers in the boroughs in which we are located. The wrap-around service and community-based holistic representation model that is the hallmark of LSNYC educational advocacy constitutes a strong benefit to constituents.

With City Council funding, we can continue this work and expand the number of children and parents who can receive legal advice and advocacy. With additional resources our impact would be magnified and deepened, as we serve families using our holistic model; link them to community-based services, advocate for them with the Department of Education, and take steps to impact the system overall.

As an example of our work in the last year, we wanted to share a client situation that we addressed. CR is a NYC public school fourth grader diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, depression, and anxiety. Her attendance flagged during the transition back to in-person schooling because she felt that she could not connect with her peers and was often bullied. CR's family reached out to her school for assistance, but the school strongly suggested that CR be homeschooled. Although CR's mother had no interest in homeschooling and doubted her ability to provide her daughter with an appropriate education, she listened to the school's request. While CR was homeschooled, she became more and more afraid of interacting with her peers. When CR's mother suggested she try to return to school at the end of the 2022-23 school year, CR refused, explaining she was afraid of her peers and the school building itself. CR's family reached out to LSNYC for assistance with CR's school refusal. LSNYC connected CR with counseling services and helped her find a new placement at a community school, despite the DOE's initial transfer

denial. At CR's IEP meeting, LSNYC successfully advocated for CR to be in a smaller classroom with more one-on-one support for her and regular group counseling to develop relationships with her peers. With the aid of LSNYC, her social worker, and her new school placement, CR and her family developed a plan for her return to school little by little.

LSNYC is also committed to addressing the **racial** disproportionality in student discipline in NYC public schools. In our efforts to disrupt the schools to prison pipeline, our advocates represent students facing excessive and exclusionary disciplinary action. In a majority of our cases, we are able to reduce the period of suspension, thereby limiting the time a student is removed from the classroom. Since in-person learning resumed in September 2021, LSNYC has seen an increased volume of discipline cases. We also lead a discipline subcommittee of our citywide Education Law Task Force that engages with the systemic issues students face in the disciplinary process.

A significant focus of our work has been addressing the social-emotional needs of our clients, a priority which we know the Council embraces. We have played a key role in the ongoing dialogue on this issue (<https://www.legalservicesnyc.org/what-we-do/practice-areas-and-projects/access-to-education/community-roadmap-to-healing-centered-schools>). Healing Centered Schools is a crucial universalist approach to meeting the mental and behavioral health needs of students, and increasing student resiliency. Schools need to be more "trauma informed" or "trauma sensitive;" but more importantly they need to be places which foster healing. The healing centered school approach requires the entire school community to create safe, stable nurturing relationships not only to help students cope with ongoing trauma, but to ensure that trauma-related behavioral challenges receive compassionate, not punitive, responses. Our staff is leading the effort to ensure NYC public schools can appropriately and effectively educate students impacted by trauma. We play a key leadership role in the Healing-Centered Schools Working Group, a group of parents, students, educators, advocates, and mental health providers working to bring healing-centered educational practices to our schools.

With the \$500,000 we are requesting from the Council for FY 2025 (FY25 City Council Application--Education Advocacy #166172), we will be able to reach more students with disabilities, as well as support and nurture more of our community education and healing centered schools' efforts with the additional availability of staff for this work. We look forward to expanding our outreach and advocacy and to delivering the services our children's need to catch-up and succeed in this most challenging of environments.





## Testimony from Literacy in Community (LINC)



### New York City Council FY25 Executive Budget Hearing Committee on Finance and Committee on Education

**Research consistently shows that quality early childhood programming generates benefits that last a lifetime** - including better health outcomes, economic self sufficiency, increased civic engagement, and improved academic achievement. Yet most children's involvement with our education system begins with 3K, at the earliest. Far too often children living in poverty, children of color, and new arrivals miss out on the experiences that prepare them for formal instruction. They start school already behind and many never catch up. That opportunity gap becomes an achievement gap.

This makes the work of the Council's only early literacy initiative - **City's First Readers** - vital and necessary. City's First Readers involves 17 partners working collaboratively and collectively providing an array of early education programming in every NYC Council District. Together, City's First Readers is an effective, economical force for supporting families as their children begin the adventure of reading.

I am Emmanuel Novy, representing Literacy in Community (LINC). LINC is both a **CFR** partner and the facilitating organization for this collaboration. LINC serves families with children from birth through age 5. We connect families with each other and surround children with literacy-rich environments inside and outside the home. Our 2-Gen programs foster a mutually reinforcing system that reaches the same child multiple times with effective pre-reading literacy support. Our approach is validated by research that centers on the impact of community and family engagement, reaching both the parent and the child, and incorporates the science of reading.

LINC's **Community Literacy Model** consists of multiple programs delivered in a culturally responsive and family friendly environment and conceived as a pipeline of engagement. Single-session events introduce families to LINC through a range of activities, from engaging read-alouds to monthly themed reading celebrations, featuring diverse local children's authors. Multi-session workshops enhance LINC's transformative impact, sharing data-driven practices for promoting healthy literacy development at home and in the community. Here caregivers build skills to best support their children at key developmental stages (0-1, 2-3, and 4-5). The most engaged participants continue on to our Very Involved Parents workshops, which train them to become literacy advocates. Graduates are equipped to deliver community reading programs,

recruit new families, spread LINC's mission, and promote positive reading habits with other families.

LINC maintains Literacy Zones, mini libraries in high-traffic locations throughout our neighborhoods of focus. Literacy Zones can be found in pharmacies, stores, restaurants, and other community spaces; families can pick up free books to start a home library, information about other resources, and connect with LINC staff.

Generally, a citywide initiative means each organization continues to offer programs reflecting their respective expertise, but there is little collaboration. CFR is distinguished by an unusual degree of cooperation between initiative partners. The initiative fosters coordination of services between partners, cross promotes programs, and builds the capacity of each partner organization to be even stronger in their mission driven work and impact. This approach results in greater program coordination and awareness of the need for and benefits of early literacy programming. Together, we enhance the engagement of families. As facilitating partner City's First Readers, LINC coordinates:

- Quarterly Meetings and Committees such as: Strategy, Evaluation, Culturally-responsive Bulk Book Selection
- An Early Literacy Public Awareness and Advocacy Campaigns with bus shelter ads, social media, and Months of early literacy action
- An independent, third party impact evaluation and assessment of our programming
- Partner program collaborations, coordination, and communication between partners
- Professional development opportunities

The City Council can acknowledge the severity of the literacy crisis and their commitment to addressing it by supporting City's First Readers generously. Here the City Council has an opportunity to serve the children and families who would most benefit from programming that the Mayor has targeted for FY25 elimination. We know that time does not stand still and kids can't wait.

We understand the risk of asking for enhanced funding in times of budgetary austerity. We also feel we have the responsibility to articulate the increased needs that CFR can meet through an enhancement, especially given the programmatic reduction to 3K citywide, the constant reorganization of the DOE's Early Childhood division, and despite its well publicized launch, the lack of impact from the [Mayor's Office for Child Care and Early Childhood Education](#).

**We urge the City Council to continue the lead on early education that it established in creating City's First Readers ten years ago.**

Fully funding CFR will

- allow organizations to adapt programming, and increase capacity or resources to better support newly arrived refugees and immigrants. Partners need resources to make additional translation possible, make more materials in languages other than English accessible, create new partnerships with human services organizations (shelters),

schedule programs/office hours during untraditional times, and modify the words we use in order to recognize that these families are in transition. The city Department of Education has already noted the impact of these new arrivals on the public school system, increasing funding where enrollment has grown.

- CFR needs comparable funding to serve children too young for school. The city would be wise to recognize the valuable preparation that organizations providing pre-literacy programming can offer, programming that can ease the entry into our schools for both institution and students. This makes both humanistic and financial sense. Prevention beats intervention.

An enhancement will support partners' capacity to leverage technology, improving program implementation, evaluation, and outreach.

- For instance, increased funding can allow us to Incorporate RSS feed technology to support partners in making programs' calendars accessible through the CFR website. This technology will aggregate all partners programming in one centralized place. Currently, only the three library partners are able to utilize this feature because they use it for their own websites. Other partners programming calendars' must be manually posted, making it unsustainable to maintain regularly. Using RSS technology to update the CFR website will make more opportunities and programming available for families to engage and connect with. RSS technology will expose families to more organizations and additional programs.

Enhanced funding will support increased availability to distribute books and print materials in multiple languages. This may seem contradictory next to a request for technology resources but print materials are highly valued by families. Booklets, coloring books, and age-appropriate books themselves allow for and encourage children to explore and engage independently with reading, even if that just means turning pages, looking at pictures or chewing on a board book, whereas virtual programming requires adult participation. Both are essential to create the positive pre-reading experiences that CFR seeks to foster. Print materials are what build home libraries. And they remain essential to successful outreach in our communities. COVID, the pandemic and inflation have drastically increased printing and shipping costs.

Finally increased funding will prioritize funding for newer CFR partners to begin to establish parity with longstanding partners, without reducing the range and impact of those programs.

Early literacy is a sound social investment; literacy is the foundation for all learning. In short, learning to read starts at birth. **Multiple studies over many years have demonstrated a very favorable return on investment (ROI) in early childhood support. Nobel prize winning economist James Heckman “finds 13% ROI for comprehensive, high-quality, birth-to-five early education.** This research analyzes a wide variety of life outcomes, such as health, crime, income, IQ, schooling, and the increase in a mother's income after returning to work due to childcare....data was collected on the participants throughout childhood and well into adulthood, allowing for an in-depth analysis of long-term effects in multiple dimensions of human development. This new ROI, representing high-quality, comprehensive programs from birth to

five, is substantially higher than the 7-10% return previously established for preschool programs serving 3- to 4-year-olds.” (cited <https://heckmanequation.org/contact/>).

On behalf of LINC, on behalf of all seventeen CFR partner organizations, and most especially on behalf of the families and children who are served by our programs, I urge you to fully fund your own initiative.

In community,  
**Emmanuel Novy**  
*Chief of Strategic Initiatives*



5030 Broadway, Suite 641  
New York, NY 10034  
212-620-5462 ext. 167  
[enovy@lincnyc.org](mailto:enovy@lincnyc.org)



**Testimony of Liz Accles, Executive Director  
Community Food Advocates**

**Testimony before the New York City Council  
Committee on Education | Committee on Finance  
Executive Budget Hearing**

Hearing on Wednesday, May 15, 2024

Good afternoon Chair Brannan, Chair Joseph, and members of the Committees. My name is Liz Accles, and I am the Executive Director of Community Food Advocates (CFA). On behalf of Community Food Advocates and the Lunch 4 Learning coalition, I am pleased to testify on the Fiscal Year 2025 Executive Budget and Five-Year Capital Plan.

I am testifying today to thank you for your support for full expansion of the NYC Public Schools (NYCPS) Office of Food & Nutrition Services' (OFNS) Cafeteria Enhancement Experience (CEE), or “cafeteria redesign,” to all middle and high school cafeterias. We are thrilled to see the Lunch 4 Learning FY2025 capital budget priority was included in the in the Chancellor’s Proposed Five-Year Capital Plan, and to see it included in City Council’s Response to the Preliminary Budget. We know this is a priority for the Council and we ask for your continued support this capital budget initiative.

I am also testifying today to show our appreciation for your inclusion of School Food Restoration – calling for an additional \$60 million for the program - in City Council’s Response to the Preliminary Budget, and we ask that OFNS is *fully funded* in the FY2025 Budget. The substantial increase in school meal participation as a result of CEE expansion and other cutting-edge initiatives initiated by OFNS must be maintained. This will continue to ensure the NYC school food service reaches its full potential—including offering a variety of popular menu items and progress with the innovative menu developments we have seen over the past several years.

Community Food Advocates (CFA) leads Lunch 4 Learning, a broad, diverse coalition-based group that, in partnership with the City Council, successfully advocated for Universal Free Meals in all New York City public schools in 2017. As a coalition, we advocate for policies, initiatives, and innovations that enhance the school food experience and welcome students to participate.

## **Committing an additional \$150 million in the Five-Year Capital Plan will enhance all remaining middle and high school cafeterias**

Over the past two budget sessions, in partnership with the Chancellor and the Council we secured \$100 million bringing the total commitment for a total of \$125 million towards expanding the cafeteria redesign initiative to reach approximately half of NYCPS middle and high schools. The full \$150 million in the Chancellor's Proposed Five-Year Capital Plan would reach the Lunch 4 Learning Coalition's goal to roll out this model to the remaining 250 middle and high school cafeterias.

The NYCPS's OFNS cafeteria redesign is a highly impactful, cost-effective initiative that completely transforms the cafeteria environment. The food court-style serving line, gives students more variety of options on a daily basis. The seating area becomes a more welcoming environment for students, with diner-style booths, round tables, and high-top seating arrangements. (Please see the attached one-pager and cafeteria redesign look book for additional information, including photos and analysis, of the enhanced cafeterias.) The redesigned cafeterias accommodate older students' need for autonomy, speed-of-service, and a more welcoming dining experience.

The success of the CEE initiative is apparent in the approximately 200 school cafeterias—serving around 240,000 students—that have been transformed so far. Our analysis shows a substantial and sustained impact on school meal participation. For example, Edward R. Murrow High School was one of the first cafeterias to be redesigned, in February 2017. In November 2016, the lunch participation was 20%. The participation doubled, and three years later in November 2019, the participation was still 39%. This impact on school meal participation is especially powerful because overall participation declines abruptly during middle school and is even lower among high school students.

By the end of this school year, approximately half of the cafeterias that serve middle and high school students will have an enhanced cafeteria. In the 2022-2023 school year, OFNS completed nearly 120 cafeteria enhancements, demonstrating that they are positioned to fully scale the CEE initiative once funded. To ensure this is an equitable initiative, we propose that NYCPS adopt a Master Plan to roll out redesign of high school and middle school cafeterias. The one-time capital cost of redesigning a cafeteria is approximately \$600,000. This master plan should be equitably distributed across School Districts, phased-in by priority: high need/low participation rate; high need regardless of participation rate; and low participation rate/mixed income.



We ask for your support to ensure this proposed amount is secured to fully scale this important initiative.

**Full funding of OFNS in in the FY2025 Executive Budget is necessary continue to ensure the NYC school food service reaches its full potential**

We appreciate that the Administration heard the pleas to bring back menu items that were cut in February after a November 2023 budget modification and plans to restore many student favorites to the menu. Every day, nearly one million meals are served, and students and their families rely on school breakfast and lunch. We know that a variety of appealing menu items ensures students participate in the program.

Citywide, there has been a 9% increase in participation since last year. This is important, in part, because the City receives federal and state reimbursement for each meal served, and more so because it means students are getting the nutrition they need to learn and thrive in the classroom and beyond. The NYC school meals menu and the success of the food service program must not be threatened by City budget cuts. Over the past several years, the incredible strides OFNS has made with the school meals menu—expanding halal and kosher, plant-based options, and culturally relevant meals, and the innovations such as CEE, have collectively and directly led to this increase in participation. In fact, the variety of menu items on a daily basis has contributed to the successful implementation of CEE.

Ensuring meals are free for all NYC students was foundational to destigmatizing the school meals program towards and encouraging more students to participate. The City must continue to invest in the policies and initiatives that strengthen the program. We hope the Council will continue to be champions for the CEE initiative and school meals. Thank you.

Liz Accles, Executive Director

Community Food Advocates

Lunch 4 Learning Coalition

115 Broadway

New York, NY 10006

# CAFETERIA REDESIGN

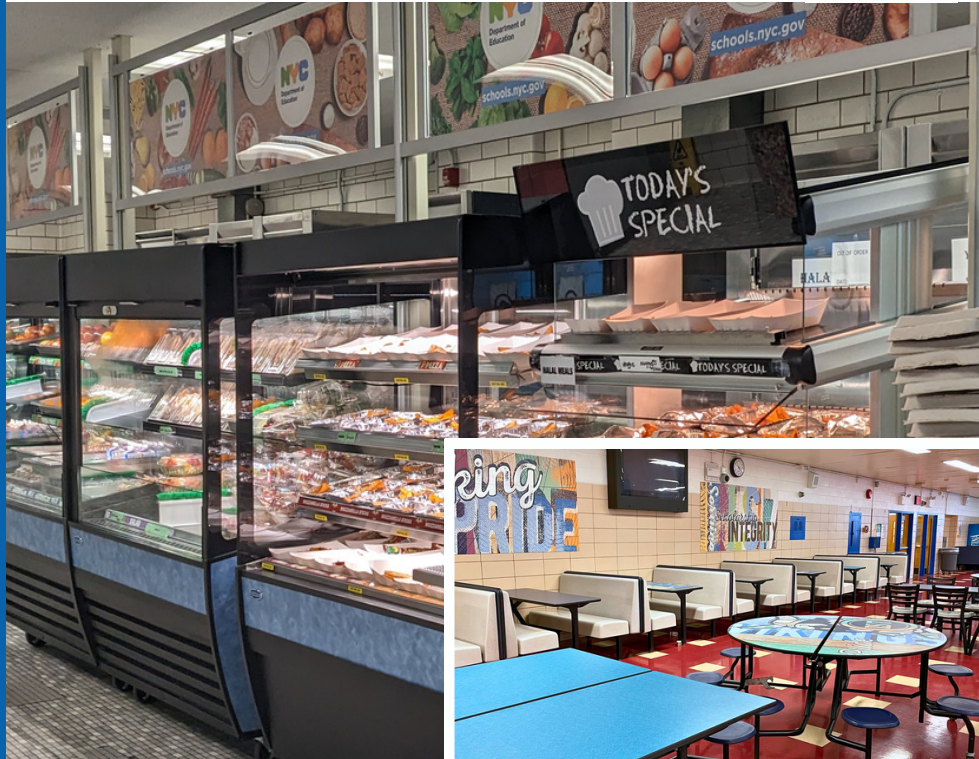
Attachment 1  
Executive Budget Hearing  
Education - 5/15/24



## EQUITY ACROSS NYC SCHOOLS

The NYC DOE Office of Food and Nutrition Services' *Cafeteria Enhancement Experience* features food-court style serving lines and student-friendly seating.

Full funding for cafeteria redesign ensures equity for every middle and high school student in NYC.



### MORE STUDENTS EAT IN STUDENT-CENTERED CAFETERIAS

35% increase in lunch participation among high school students



### THE REDESIGN IS COST-EFFECTIVE AND QUICK

Estimated at \$600k per cafeteria and completed in three days.



### MORE FRUITS & VEGGIES ARE SERVED

3-5x more bananas, peppers, tomatoes, apples, carrots, spinach, and broccoli; and 30x more lettuce.



### EQUITY FOR ALL

School meals are the healthiest meals children eat, across all income levels.

**NEARLY HALF OF ALL CAFETERIAS SERVING MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED OR FUNDED**



~235 completed or funded  
~250 cafeterias remain



“All around me I could hear students exclaiming about how different and new the cafeteria felt to them..”

**AARMEEN**

Youth Food Advocates Intern

“What I've seen overnight, literally, is the whole stigma of school food shift because of the mere presentation of the food.”

**PRINCIPAL RASHAD MEADE**

Eagle Academy for Young Men  
Daily News, March 27, 2022

The Lunch 4 Learning coalition, led by Community Food Advocates, has secured \$125 million in capital funds for the initiative. The 162 currently updated cafeterias serve over 210,000 students.

**NOW is the time for NYC to**

**Commit \$150 million in the Chancellor's 5-Year Capital Plan to complete the transformation of the school food experience for all middle and high school students.**

# CAFETERIA ENHANCEMENT EXPERIENCE

An initiative of the NYC DOE Office of Food and Nutrition Services

Attachment 2  
Executive Budget Hearing  
Education - 5/15/24

**October 2023**

*Prepared by*



**YOUTH FOOD  
ADVOCATES**

# High Impact

## EQUITABLE

Citywide investment ensures all middle and high school cafeterias are updated.

## NUTRITIOUS

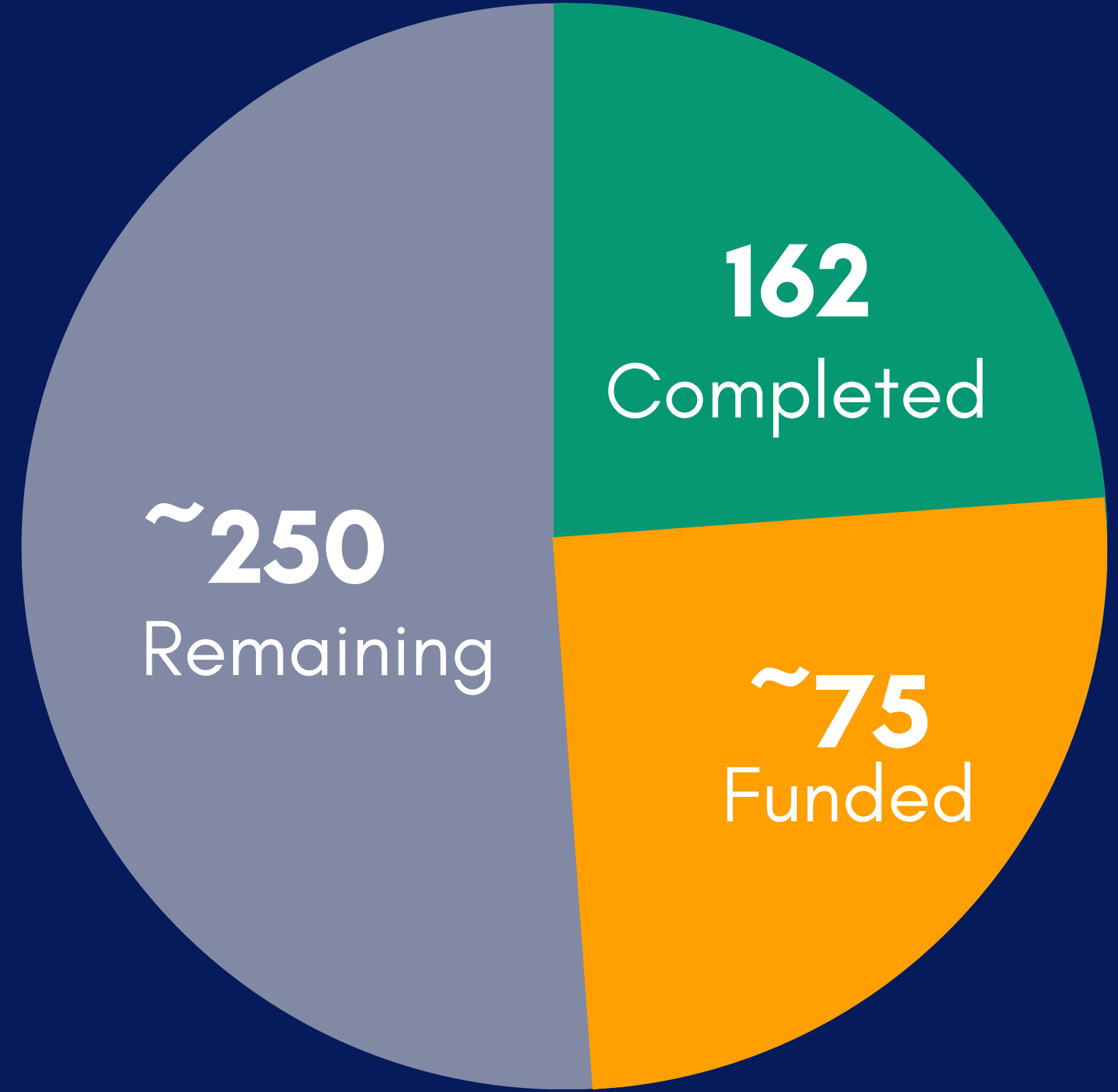
School meals meet, or exceed, USDA and NYC nutrition standards.

## MODERN

Welcoming cafeterias shift perception away from institutional food.

# About half of cafeterias have been completed or funded

of the approximate 500 cafeterias serving middle and high schools





# The 162 completed school cafeterias

serve more than **210,000**  
students



[Click on map icon for interactive map](#)

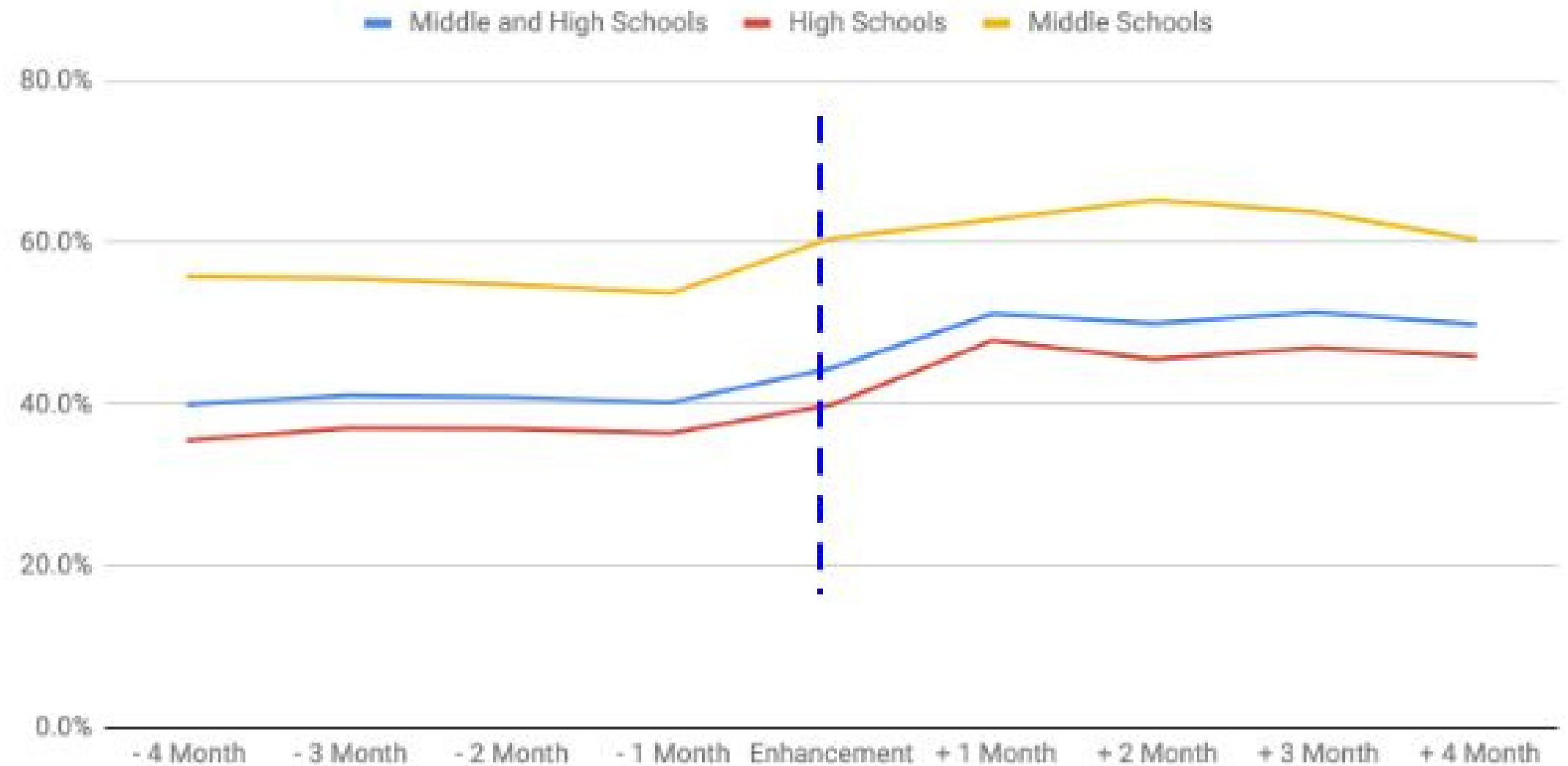


# Immediate impact

increase in participation  
after cafeteria enhancement



School Lunch Participation Among Schools with Cafeteria Enhancement

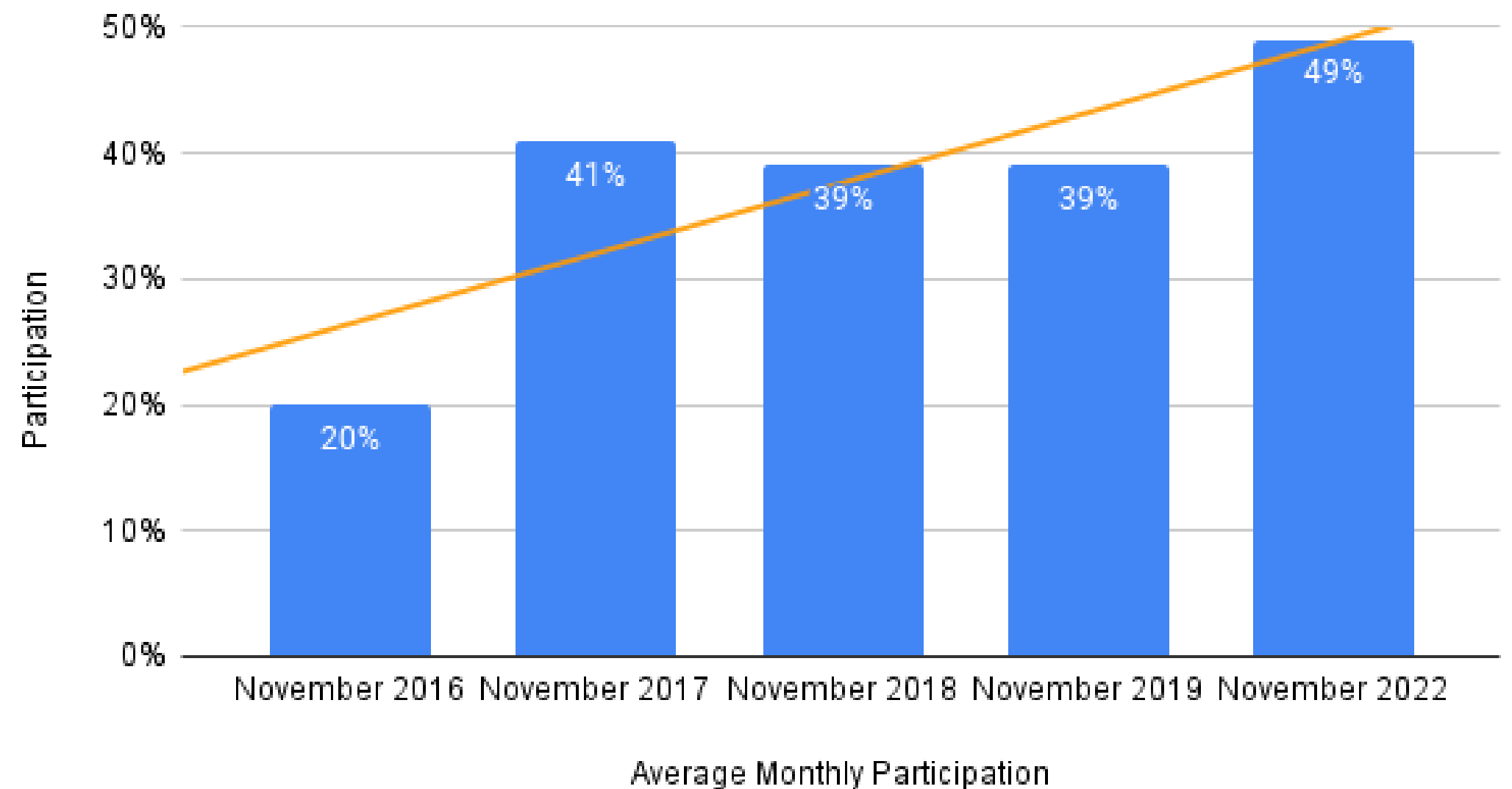


# Sustained participation

for years after enhancement

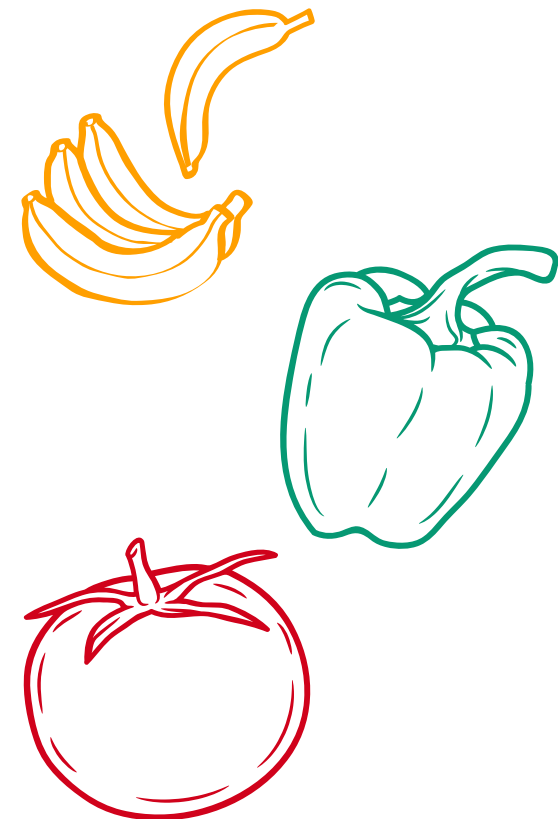


Edward R Murrow HS (Installation in February 2017)



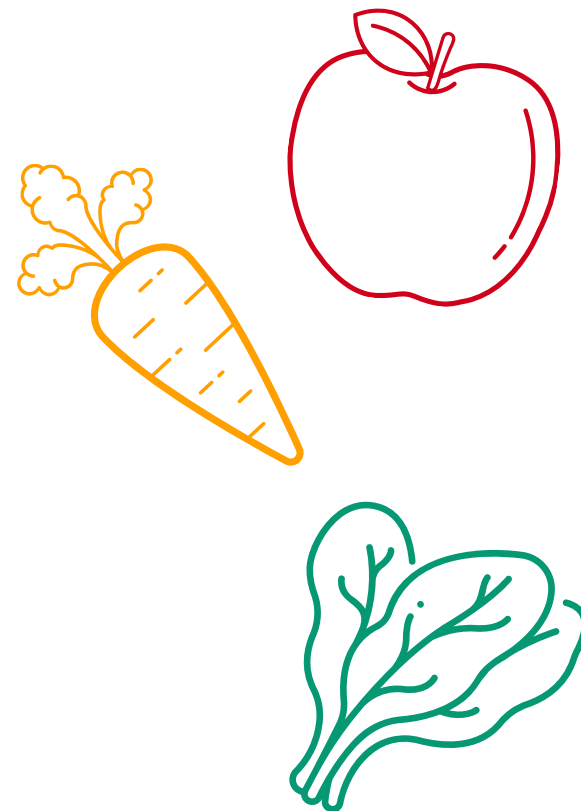
**3x more**

bananas, peppers, tomatoes



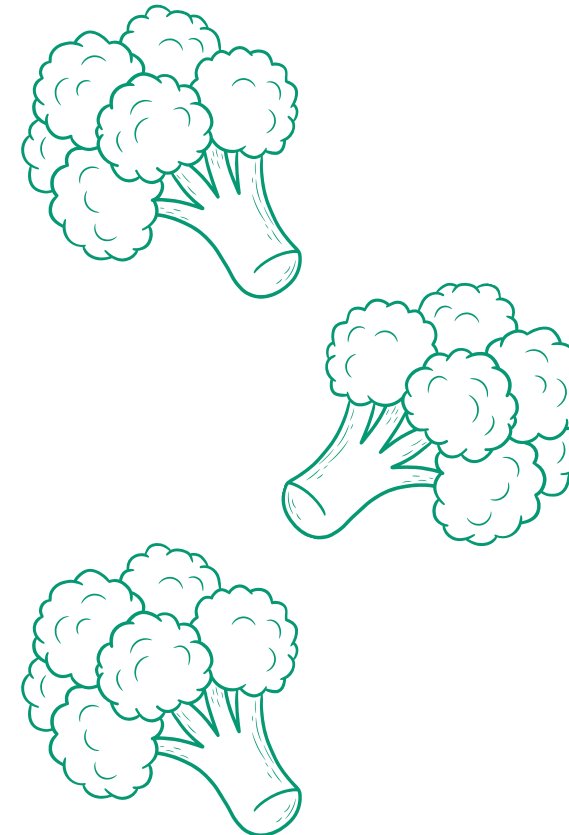
**4x more**

apples, carrots, spinach



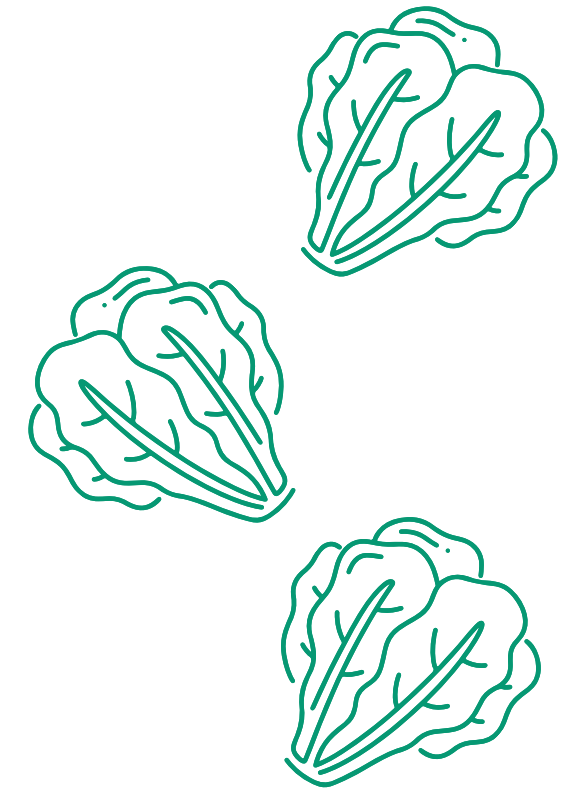
**5x more**

broccoli



**30x more**

lettuce



**Enhanced cafeterias serve more  
fruits & vegetables**

Compared with similar schools without redesign

**FASTER  
SERVICE**



# Enhanced Serving Line







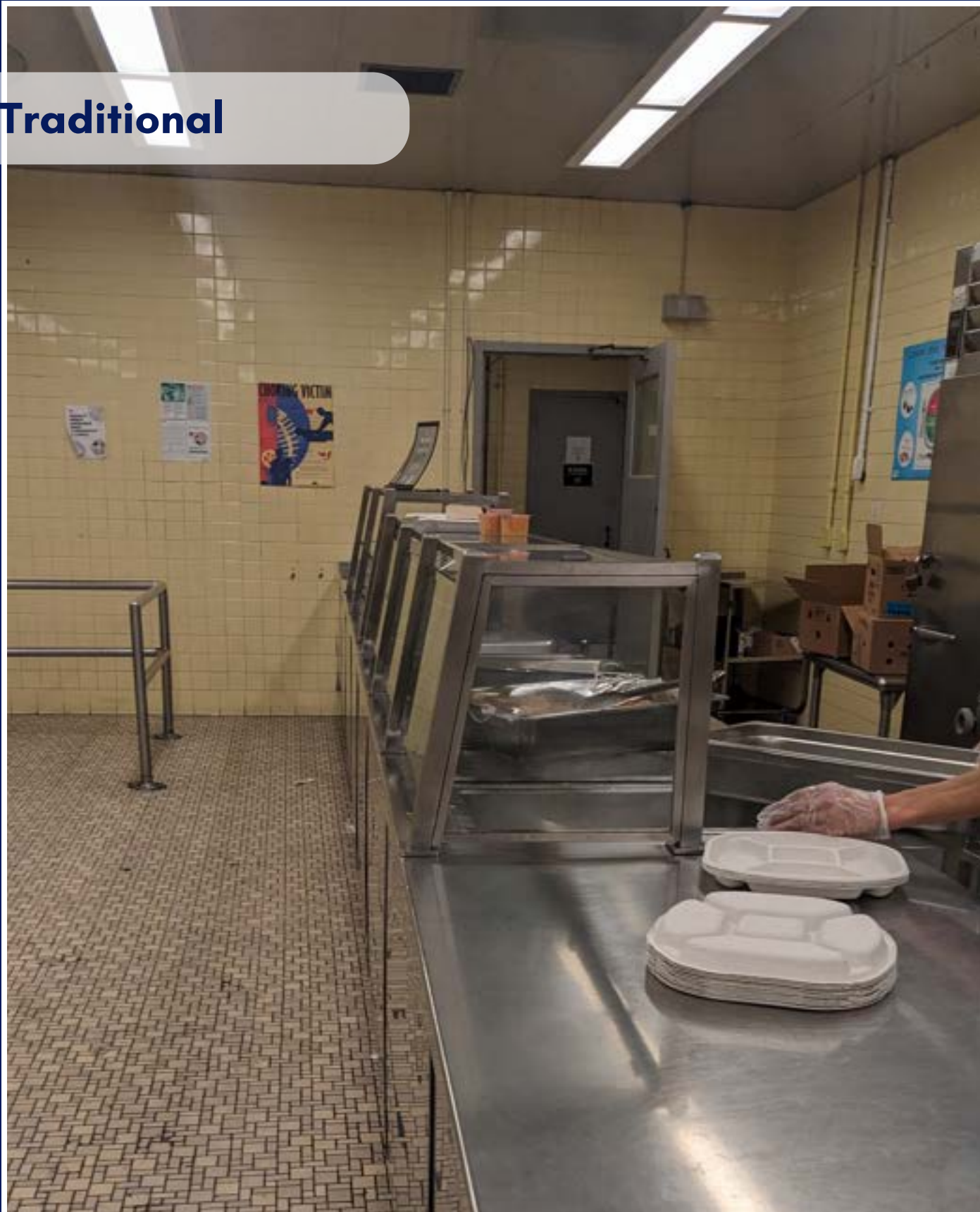
**Traditional**



**Enhanced**



Traditional



Enhanced

**MORE DAILY  
OPTIONS**







## Hot Daily Special





## Cold Options





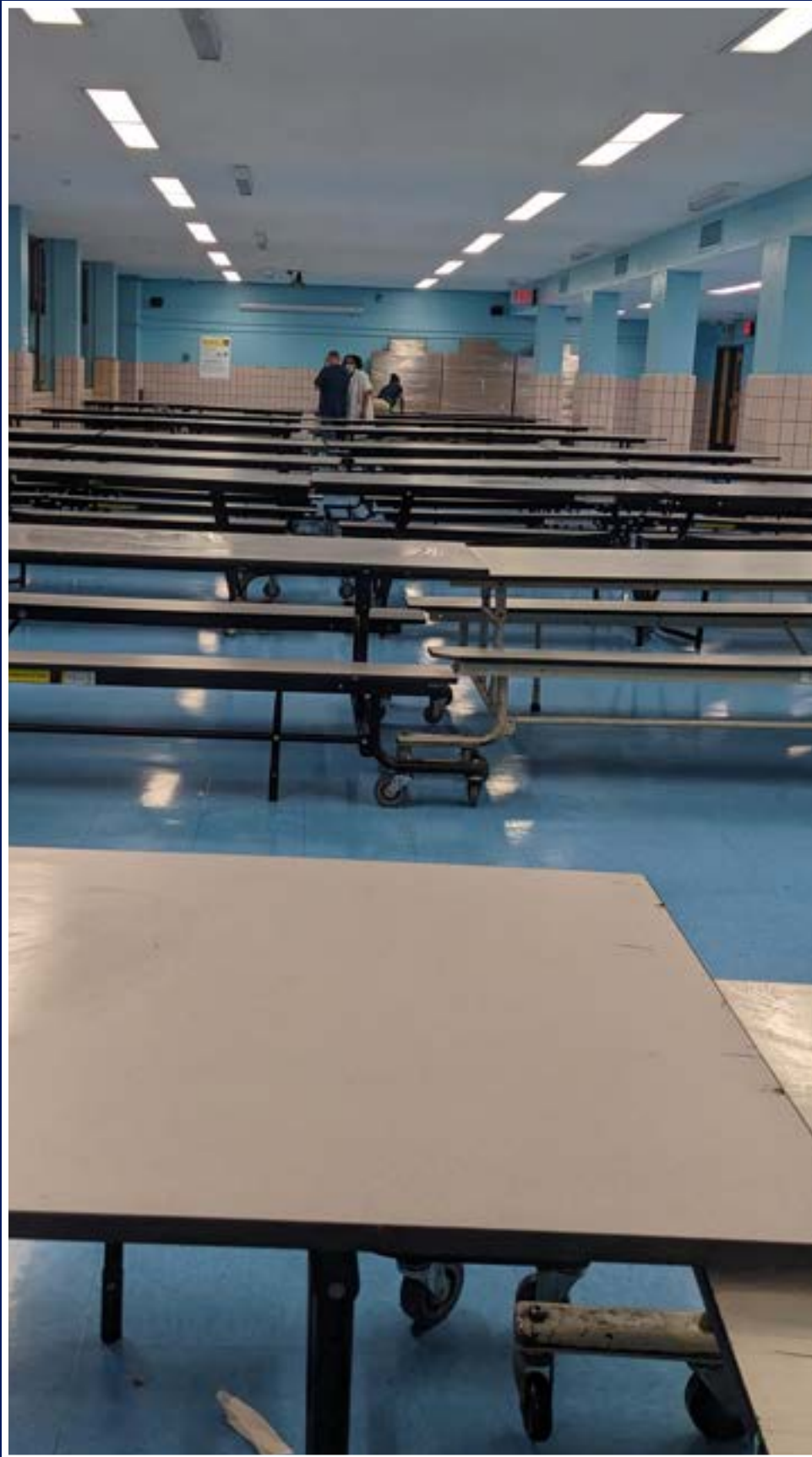
## Hot Options





**STUDENT  
CENTERED**

Before







**Booths & tables**



School pride







Charging ports







**YOUTH  
VOICES**



Faith  
Brooklyn Technical High School

“The next step for school food justice is to bring more modern and up to date cafeterias to all NYC students.”



Aarmeen  
The Brooklyn Latin School

“I remember walking into the cafeteria when it reopened and my friends were so shocked with the changes. All around me I could hear students exclaiming about how different and new the cafeteria felt to them.”



Joshua  
Flushing High School

“I have noticed that my school lunch participation is much higher and students have much more dietary options. I have heard a lot of positive feedback from students across the school about the enhanced cafeteria and school lunch, and many students that used to skip lunch have begun to eat lunch daily.”

# COMMUNITY VOICES



“What I’ve seen overnight,  
literally, the whole stigma of  
school food shift because of the  
mere presentation of the food.”

Principal Meade  
Eagle Academy for Young Men

“The cafeteria enhancement communicates to students and families that they are important, welcomed, and that their social-emotional wellness and health are viewed by the school as a vital lever to success.”

Principal Hesham  
M.S. 301 Paul L. Dunbar

“The Cafeteria Enhancement Experience transforms the student dining experience, turning cafeterias into gathering places for our students, and I'm grateful even more of our students will have the chance to enjoy these spaces in the coming year.”

Chancellor Banks



## Contact

Abbie Watts

Director of School Food Advocacy

[awatts@foodadvocates.org](mailto:awatts@foodadvocates.org)



[www.foodadvocates.org](http://www.foodadvocates.org)



[newyorkedge.org](http://newyorkedge.org)

# NYC Council FY 25 Executive Budget Hearing Public Session:

Finance Committee –

Hon. Justin Brannan, Chair

&

Children & Youth Services Committee –

Hon. Althea Stevens, Chair

Education Committee –

Hon. Rita Joseph, Chair

Health Committee –

Hon. Lynn Schulman, Chair

*Submitted by Rachael Gazdick, CEO*



On behalf of the Board and Staff of **New York Edge (NYE)**, I thank you for the Council's longstanding support of our mission of bridging the opportunity gap among students in underinvested communities by providing programs designed to improve academic performance, health and wellness, self-confidence, and leadership skills for success in life. And as our name implies, we strive to provide every student in our programs with the **EDGE** that they need to succeed in the classroom and in life.

New York Edge was created 32 years ago at the suggestion of the New York City Council to provide free wrap-around summer camps for youngsters attending summer school. At that time such camps, which provided sports and arts activities as well as academic help, did not exist. With the Council as its partner, New York Edge was at the forefront of the movement to provide free summer camp programming to our city's youth.

**From these beginnings, we have grown into the largest provider of after-school and summer programming in New York City, serving almost 30,000 youth at 133 schools throughout the five boroughs.** Our Education Team, comprised of educators with expertise in curriculum, professional coaching, and program development with a focus on leadership, integrated technologies, literacy and STEAM, take learning beyond the traditional classroom walls. **Core components of New York Edge programming include:**

- **STEM Education**
- **Social Emotional Learning and Leadership**
- **Visual & Performing Arts**
- **Sports, Health & Wellness**
- **Academics and College & Career Readiness**
- **Summer Programs**

New York Edge has been identified by Mosaic by ACT as the largest after-school provider in the nation offering SEL supports. We are also one of the city's largest providers of college access

programs across all educational levels AND have been a leading Community Schools partner for over a decade.

**Our free summer programs will begin in early July, providing over 10,000 young New Yorkers with a summer camp experience on par with the best private pay camps in the city, improving health and wellness, developing social skills, and preventing summer learning loss.**

We are dedicated to improving both physical and nutrition literacy among New York Edge participants through the implementation of a wide variety of sports, wellness and fitness programs. Our programs encourage children to play more, have fun and adopt healthy eating habits.

**With the city's finances in much better shape than expected in January, we ask that the Council continue to support our mission by increasing our funding in the FY 25 Budget.**

We are seeking **1.2M** under the Council's ***After-School Enrichment*** Initiative, an increase of approximately \$200,000 over our FY 24 allocation. **This would be our first enhancement in 16 years.**

New York Edge school-based programs run before or after the school day, year-round (including Saturdays, over the summer, and holiday periods). Council citywide funding under the ***After School Enrichment Initiative*** enables us to enrich and expand our programming throughout the city and has allowed us to develop and implement unique and engaging programs such as:

- ***FORMATIVE*** – our nationally recognized student led podcast and winner of the prestigious Anthem Community Voice Award in the Education, Art, and Culture - Podcast or Audio category. *Formative* connects middle school students with diverse leaders and role models for conversations on important topics including childhood, personal growth and careers. The podcase empowers students to develop their skills in research, public speaking and interviewing.

- **Book Publishing Program** – New York Edge students across the city, in collaboration with award-winning children’s book author Jesse Byrd and a roster of professional illustrators, write and publish their own stories, gaining joy and insight into the creating writing process and strengthening literacy skills along the way. Their finished works are then sold at *Barnes & Noble* and on *Amazon*. **This year, our student authors participated in a book launch and signing at The Strand in Manhattan.**
- **Heart for Art** – an arts education program powered by the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam and DHL Express. Designed to inspire children in communities with limited access to cultural education with the art and life story of Vincent Van Gogh, this program engaged 20 teachers across five NYC schools when it was launched in spring 2022. As of September 2022, the program has expanded to 10 NYC school with more on the horizon. Through this innovative arts education program, students have, through the study of Van Gogh’s life and work, received inspiration for their own creative pursuits.
- **Read Across New York Edge** – our new exciting literacy initiative launched this year. During the first week in March, over 50 acclaimed children’s book authors represented by Random House, Hachette, Disney and more visited schools across the city to read and share their love of storytelling with New York Edge students. As part of the Read Across New York Edge curriculum, students will spend time reading and engaging in creating projects centered around the themes of participating authors books.

In addition, we are seeking **\$250,000** under the Council’s ***Social & Emotional Supports for Students*** Initiative. **Not only is SEL is integrated into every element of our programming but we have been recognized by Mosaic by ACT as the largest after-school provider in the nation offering SEL supports.**

Funding under the ***Social & Emotional Supports for Students*** Initiative will enable us to support our current SEL programming providing high quality, evidence-based social and emotional learning assessments, curriculum and resources to all of our partner schools, the students we serve and their families.

All of us at New York Edge is are proud to serve New York City's K-12 students of all ages, races, ethnicities and socioeconomic backgrounds. Our offerings are culturally relevant programs, tailored to students' needs and interests, and rooted in social-emotional learning. Our model for aiding social emotional learning includes robust academic and personal wellness support, and trauma-informed strategies. We blend the critical elements that support an appreciation of cultural diversity with the core SEL competencies of self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills, social awareness, social capital and decision-making into all academic curriculum and extracurricular activities.

New York Edge, its students, and families are extraordinarily grateful for the past 32 years of support from the New York City Council. Through its partnership and support, the Council is helping young New Yorkers discover their interests, their passions, and their joys, building pathways to careers and trades that will provide financial security throughout their lives – and in the process creating connections to each other, to teachers, mentors, and their communities.

**TOGETHER, we are guiding students so that they grow up healthy, happy and empowered. TOGETHER, we are creating the next generation of active and productive community members and problem solvers. TOGETHER, we are creating New York City's next generation of doctors, mechanics, chefs, writers, engineers, entrepreneurs and SO MUCH MORE.**

**The time has come, however, where increased funding is VITALLY needed.** Unlike contracts with DYCD and other agencies, Council discretionary contracts are not eligible for COLA increases. This is making it increasingly difficult for New York Edge to attract and maintain quality staff and to continue to offer the wide array of STEM, SEL, Visual & Performing Arts, Sports, Health & Wellness and College & Career Readiness programs that we are known for.

We are now looking to you to meet the needs of the next generation of young people by supporting our FY 25 citywide funding requests. **These funds will enable us to keep providing youth throughout the city with the EDGE they need to succeed!**





**Testimony of Alia Soomro, Deputy Director for New York City Policy  
New York League of Conservation Voters  
City Council Committee on Education  
Jointly with the Committee on Finance  
FY25 Executive Budget Hearing  
May 15, 2024**

My name is Alia Soomro and I am the Deputy Director for New York City Policy at the New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV). NYLCV is a statewide environmental advocacy organization representing over 30,000 members in New York City. Thank you, Chair Joseph, as well as members of the Committee on Education for the opportunity to comment.

NYLCV's annual New York City top priorities include decarbonizing our transportation and building sectors. This is especially important to New York City's school buses and public school buildings, both of which are overwhelmingly fueled by fossil fuels, not only contributing to climate change but to harmful public health impacts such as asthma. For FY25, NYLCV urges the City to prioritize the implementation of the City's electric school bus law and sustainably retrofitting NYC public schools.

**Implementing the NYC Zero Emission School Bus Law**

According to [the Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice](#), more than 11,000 NYC school buses transport 150,000 students to school each day. These buses run on diesel fuel, generating greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that contribute to climate change. Electrifying school buses is important not only to help combat climate change, but to combat toxic air pollution, a longstanding environmental justice (EJ) issue. Many school bus depots are located in EJ areas, and the exhaust from these buses harms schoolchildren. New York City students that take the school bus, many of whom are children with disabilities, face dangerous diesel exhaust exposure, which can lead to serious health implications such as asthma, which is one of the [major causes of chronic absenteeism in NYC public schools](#).

Together with our partners on the New York City Clean School Bus Coalition and Council Members, NYLCV fought for the passage of [Local Law 120 of 2021](#), mandating an all electric school bus (ESB) fleet by 2035 to cut harmful pollutants, improve public health and air quality, and fight climate change.

NYLCV applauds the City for continuing to be [awarded](#) federal and state electric school bus-related grants. While the City has been awarded a few hundred ESBs as of March 2024, few are on the road due to issues ranging from supply chain issues to a lack of citywide charging infrastructure. NYLCV urges the City, specifically DOE, to take the lead and fully

commit to the timely implementation of Local Law 120 of 2021, including funding for staffing to conduct outreach and education for school bus vendors. The City must work with school bus vendors and utility companies to plan, develop, and fund school bus charging infrastructure throughout the City, especially at school bus depots located in disadvantaged communities, and ESB workforce development programs since bus fleet personnel will require training for driving, properly maintaining EVs, and optimizing charging for electric bus routes, energy needs, and intra-day energy price fluctuations. As stated in the Adams' Administration's [PlaNYC: Getting Sustainability Done](#) and [PowerUp NYC](#), DOE should incorporate electrification requirements in 2025 contract renegotiation with school bus fleet vendors; implement lessons learned from vehicle-to-grid pilots; and launch a training program for ESB operations and maintenance and provide ongoing support. NYLCV appreciates that the City has committed to expanding ESB workforce development opportunities, as stated in the recently-published [Green Economy Action Plan](#), and we hope the City will follow through by devoting funding to the development of these programs.

Additionally, the City must continue taking advantage of grant opportunities at the federal and state level. For instance, in early March, [Governor Hochul announced](#) funding available for electric school bus charging infrastructure under the historic \$4.2 billion Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act and through the New York School Bus Incentive Program. With the first status report of Local Law 120 due this summer, we urge the City to make progress in getting more ESBs on the road and investing in workforce development programs.

#### Retrofitting NYC Schools

The vast majority of NYC's GHG emissions come from our buildings. Making matters worse, many of the City's public schools are in older buildings that still run on fossil fuels, contributing to air pollution and poor indoor air quality. As highlighted in our [2024 NYC Policy Agenda](#), the City must continue implementing Local Law 97, which requires that City-owned buildings reduce emissions by 40 percent by 2025 and 50 percent by 2030, as well as the City's school electrification effort, [Leading the Charge](#), a \$4 billion plan to begin retrofitting 100 schools to all-electric heating and build only electricity-powered new school buildings by 2030. This includes green technology such as solar panels, thermal energy networks, and upgrading current building systems to be more energy efficient to make our schools cleaner and reduce emissions. NYLCV appreciates the School Construction Authority's Fiscal 2025-2029 Capital Plan included \$2.2 billion for Healthy Schools, which includes funding for the electrification of school facilities and physical education, health and nutrition projects, but we urge the City to ensure this program receives adequate funding in the out years. Moreover, as the Administration stated in [PowerUp NYC](#), the City should consider school retrofit projects as an educational and job training opportunity for students. For instance, placing solar infrastructure on schools provides a unique opportunity to teach students about clean energy and climate change and develop training pathways to well-paying green jobs.

In addition to sustainably retrofitting NYC schools to reduce emissions and improve air quality, the City must retrofit them holistically and take climate resiliency and adaptation into account.

According to [data that the City's Comptroller's Office shared with City Limits](#), over a quarter of the city's public school buildings, 28 percent, are currently at risk of extreme stormwater flooding. Indeed, according to the Comptroller's Office, "by 2050, there will be 77 public schools facing a dual threat: at risk of being hit by 'high' intensity stormwater events—defined in the analysis as 3.5 inches of rain per hour—while also located on a floodplain that is vulnerable to coastal flooding."

NYLCV hopes the City will continue to prioritize the Leading the Charge initiative over the next few years, ensure funding is allocated in a timely manner, and go even further with the amount of schools that go fully electric. The City must continue taking advantage of grant opportunities at the federal and state level, such as [NYSERDA's \\$100 million Environmental Bond Act funding for the Clean Green Schools Initiative](#), which will help public schools that traditionally lack resources to invest in infrastructure improvements become healthier, more productive learning environments, such as reducing school energy loads, decarbonizing their building portfolio, improving indoor air quality (IAQ) and providing clean energy educational opportunities.

With the climate crisis regularly reminding us that it is here and not some future threat, NYLCV urges the City to fully commit to electrifying our City's school buses and invest in retrofitting our public schools.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.



**PIE's Testimony to New York City Council's**  
**Committee on Finance and**  
**Committee on Education and Higher Education**  
**May 15, 2024**

Good afternoon. My name is Jaclyn Okin Barney, and I speak today as the coordinator of Parents for Inclusive Education (known as "PIE"). PIE is a parent-led advocacy group of educational reformers that works to ensure that all students with disabilities in the NYC public schools have access to meaningful inclusive educational and community opportunities. PIE has been in existence for more than twenty years with members throughout the five boroughs. We are the only New York City group dedicated solely to advocating for the inclusion of students with disabilities.

We work in various ways to achieve our agenda, including collaborating with the Department of Education on different projects. Over the past several years, we have been working with Department of Education administrators and other special education groups to advocate for students with physical disabilities to have equal opportunities in attending schools across our City by increasing the number of ADA accessible school buildings available to students. We applaud the efforts the DOE and City officials have taken in the last Capital Plan regarding this issue, however much more needs to be done and more money needs to be allocated in this regard.

We all agree that all students in our City deserve an equal education. But this is not the case for students with physical disabilities. Their choice of schools in this City, is not equal because many schools (high schools, middle and elementary schools) are not fully accessible and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act so that students with physical disabilities can access them. Although exact data is hard to obtain, it appears as if only thirty-four percent of schools are considered by the Department of Education ("DOE") as fully accessible.

There is another portion of schools (19.8%) deemed "partially accessible" by the DOE, but the extent of their accessibility varies greatly. Some partially accessible schools may be, in essence, fully accessible, while other partially accessible schools may be missing key accessibility components that make it difficult, if not impossible, for students with physical disabilities to attend and fully participate. For instance, partially accessible schools can have inaccessible auditoriums, cafeterias, science labs, or certain classrooms.

I am here today to implore you to continue to fight to make our public schools accessible for all students as you consider the proposed 5-Year Capital Plan for 2024-2029. The Mayor's initial proposal would allocate \$800 million for school accessibility projects. However, when inflation is accounted for, this amount is a decrease from the amount allocated in the previous Capital Plan. Further, it would allow for too low a rate of renovation. In order to achieve at least 50% accessibility in our City's schools, not an end goal but a significant step in the right direction, parents and advocates are asking that the 5-Year Capital Plan that is adopted allocates an additional \$450 million (to the current proposed \$800 million) for a total of \$1.25 billion for school accessibility projects.

The City's goal must be to enable students with physical disabilities to have just as many options as all other students in the City. All NYC students deserve an equal opportunity to reach their full potential.

Thank you for considering our testimony today.

Jaclyn Okin Barney Esq.  
Coordinator  
Parents for Inclusive Education  
347-559-5098  
[jaclyn@jaclynokinbarney.com](mailto:jaclyn@jaclynokinbarney.com)  
[www.parentsforinclusiveeducation.com](http://www.parentsforinclusiveeducation.com)





**New York City Council Fiscal Year 2025  
Preliminary Budget Hearings Committee  
May 15, 2024**

**Committee on Finance (jointly with the Committee on Education and Committee on Higher Education)**

Good afternoon, my name is **Adella Lin-Kravitz** and I am **President at Project Ready Inc.**  
*Thank you very much to Chair Rita Joseph and Chair Eric Dinowitz for holding this hearing and providing the opportunity to testify.*

As a leader in the AANHPI community, we understand that all community members stand to be negatively impacted by the impending education budget cuts.

*The mission of Project Ready is to promote advocacy, education, training, and community inclusion to support individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities and their families in the Asian American Community.*

*We serve youth, especially those around the transition age. The focus of our organization is Advocacy, Education, Transition and Community Inclusion. We help overcome language barriers by providing language access support.*

We are witnessing firsthand the detrimental effects of continued budget cuts on essential educational programming. More than 700 Million dollars in COVID 19 funding has been used by the city to fund essential services for students and schools. As federal stimulus funding comes to an end, we must ensure New York schools continue to receive money they need to ensure we support our students.

Currently, there is a false narrative being shared by the administration that budget cuts have been restored and that education is receiving appropriate funding. However, there are programs that are at risk of being COMPLETELY cut on June 30th. This includes

- restorative justice programs,
- immigrant family communication and outreach programs,
- student success centers,

- and mental health continuum.

Additionally, there are still several critical programs funded with temporary federal dollars that were not fully restored including:

- School social workers (cut by \$3M)
- Translation and interpretation services (cut by \$1M)
- Learning to Work (cut by \$2M)
- Community Schools (cut by \$14M)
- Libraries (cut by \$58M)

Many of the programs that lost significant funding were only partially restored for FY25 but not beyond that. This includes Summer Rising, Learning to Work, 3K, SEED, and Arts programming.

A high percentage of the population we serve have limited English proficiency and need translation and interpretation services. Cuts in this area are doing them a disservice. The youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities we help also need transitioning training, so cuts in learning to work also would negatively impact them. These are just some ~~examples~~examples.

Formatted: Highlight

As the budget process moves forward, we call on the Mayor and Council to fully close the Federal stimulus funding gap and ensure the continuation of important programs that support students and school communities.

I implore the council to fight for a budget where schools are fully funded.



*w/ evidence*

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**Testimony regarding Budget Hearing - Education (T2024-1894)**

**Joint Hearing New York City Council Committees for Education, Higher Education, and Finance**

**5.15.2024**

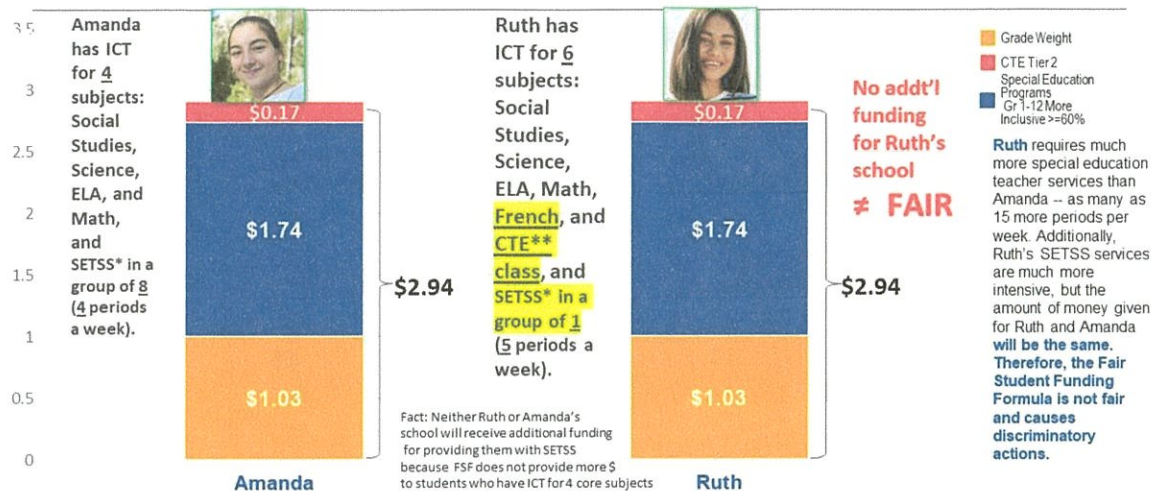
Dear Chair Joseph, Chair Dinowitz, and Chair Brannan, and members of the Committees of Education, Higher Education, and Finance of the New York City Council.

My name is Jennifer Choi, I'm a special education advocate and the founder of a 1,500-member group called NYC Parents of Teens with Disabilities.

I'm here to ask you to remember that when we talk about education budgets we want to make sure that no one forgets the **billion dollar payments** for impartial hearings costs for Carter cases, compensatory services, lawyer fees, etc. In short, we believe that the Fair Student Funding Formula (FSF) is to blame.

At the last budget hearing, I presented a graphic which shows that a school will not be given more funding despite one child, Ruth needing over 50% more special education teacher human resources over another, Amanda. Since then, I have received email confirmation from a top level Special Education official confirming that based on the Fair Student Funding Formula, indeed Ruth's school would only get the same funding as Amanda's. Given that, how could anyone expect Ruth's school to give Ruth the IEP she deserves without tremendous pain and sacrifice? It's likely the school wouldn't do that so how could anyone expect Ruth's parents not to file a due process complaint if they could afford it? That is the chicken and egg of special education discrimination in New York City.

## How the FSF Formula is Not Fair to Students w. IEPs



\*SETSS= Special Education Teacher Support Services \*\*CTE=Career Technical Education (Amounts based on if per capita were \$1)

Here is a true story:

After getting that email. I sent [testimony](#) and the [new evidence](#) to the Panel for Educational Policy and asked them to vote NO on approving the Fair Student Funding Formula. It was still approved but they introduced me to an educational policy official. From him I learned that the CORE Checklist Appeals process and the "Appeals Process" to get special education money to hire more teachers faster is a separate process.

What's the CORE Checklist? The CORE Checklist is an appeals process where principals ask the district for money because the FSF is not enough to pay for IEP mandated teacher services. If that's the case, why do principals have to:

- Provide names of multiple students and their IEP dates, grades, ID #s
- List their unscheduled funds, list funds beyond "allowabled thresholds," funds in "set aside"**

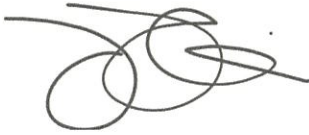
Moreover, I found from another source today that this other "Appeals Process" that is supposed to be faster and separate from the CORE Checklist can only be considered if the very complex and time-consuming and discriminatory CORE Checklist was approved. The evidence is included in my testimony.

**At the end of the day, the message is this: Teachers don't come in pieces but the Fair Student Funding Formula treats them like they do. And this whole issue is commonly known as "breakage" in DOE circles and we parents know that. How can we feel included when educating our kids sounds so inconvenient and undeserving.**



Please we need change and we need it now. Please help us.

Thank you,



Jennifer Choi, Managing Member and Advocate

Special Support Services, LLC

[jenn@specialsupportservices.com](mailto:jenn@specialsupportservices.com)

<https://specialsupportservices.com/>

- Link to NYC Public Schools' Introduction to CORE: <https://bit.ly/3KfEaW1>
- Link to NYC Public Schools' **CORE Checklist**: <https://bit.ly/3UPqy9P>
- Evidence of Top Level NYCPS Special Education Official saying what the Fair Student Funding does and doesn't pay for is here with some emails from principals saying we don't do this special ed or that special ed is here: **The Chicken and The Egg**: <https://bit.ly/4agXtZx>
- Evidence of the district poorly answering questions about how schools can get more money faster when they need more money to hire special education teachers to fulfill an IEP mandate. **The Appeals Convo**: <https://bit.ly/AppealsandCORE>



4/13/24, 9:20 AM

Special Support Services Mail - [REDACTED]



jenn choi <jenn@specialsupportservices.com>

Re: [REDACTED]

jenn choi <jenn@specialsupportservices.com>  
To: [REDACTED]@schools.nyc.gov>

Fri, Apr 12, 2024 at 10:11 AM

Thank you very much!

Best,  
Jenn

On Fri, Apr 12, 2024 at 9:28 AM [REDACTED]@schools.nyc.gov> wrote:  
That's right - see bold highlight below.

In this page and the next, a top-ranking NYC Public Schools special education administrator validate the claims made by the advocate writing this email trying to describe how schools are not provided with more funds even when students require more services and more intensive services which then require more teachers. This is due to the Fair Student Funding formula. It's just not fair.

From: jenn choi <jenn@specialsupportservices.com>  
Sent: Friday, April 12, 2024 9:14 AM  
To: [REDACTED]@schools.nyc.gov>  
Subject: Re: [REDACTED]

Wow, thank you so much. Just a couple of follow ups- for the sake of clarity.  
**in red**

On Fri, Apr 12, 2024 at 9:03 AM [REDACTED]@schools.nyc.gov> wrote:  
Jenn,

Fair Student Funding (FSF) is the main source of money for most schools. FSF covers instructional needs and is allocated to each school based on the number and need-level attributes of students at the school. All money allocated through FSF can be used at the principals' discretion. The dollars are not tagged to particular positions so that schools, rather than central administration, determine whether they need more or less core administrative staff, teachers, or other services.

***In the scenarios below, both students receive "high intensity, more inclusive" formerly known as "full time ICT" funding, which is meant to cover an IEP program between 60%-100% of a pupil's instructional day (technically 57.5% - 100%, with the 4/7 period ICT policy), for any combination of SETSS, SC, and ICT (where periods of ICT > periods of SC). Essentially, we are funding students for the maximum programming within the category, which is why the two students receive equivalent weights.***

It is important to note FSF dollars allocated based on the needs of individual students or groups of students with IEPs are not intended to be the sole source of funding to cover special education programs for those students. Principals should utilize the entirety of their budget, including FSF, to cover their needs, placing a priority on covering mandated programs and services first.

Regarding your specific questions:

Would it be correct to say that if the per capita was \$1, then both students would be funded at \$2.91 (\$1.00 Grade Weight + \$1.74 Special Education Programs Gr 1-12 More Inclusive >=60% + \$0.17 CTE Tier 2)

Using the \$1 per capita conversion from the presentation, both students' grade weight (All pupils 9-12 = 1.03), CTE weight (Tier 2= 0.17), and Special Education Programs weight (1-12 More Inclusive >-60% = 1.74) would yield a \$2.94 each in FSF for their school.

4/13/24, 9:20 AM

Special Support Services Mail - [REDACTED]

Would it be correct to say that even though Ruth requires ICT for two more subject classes that would meet probably 10 periods per week than Amanda, Ruth's funding would still be the same?

**Yes. The IEP recommendations of both students would yield a \$2.94 each in FSF for their school.**

Would it be correct to say that even though Ruth requires SETSS individually, she would still be funded the same as Amanda whose SETSS is in a group of up to 8?

**Yes. The IEP recommendations of both students would yield a \$2.94 each in FSF for their school.**

Would it be correct to say that even though Ruth has more periods of SETSS than Amanda, they would be funded in equal amounts?

**Each FSF special education program weight covers a range of periods of service as a percentage of a student's instructional program. Two students' IEPs may recommend services for different amounts of time and still yield the same amount of FSF. For example, in a hypothetical, typical high school, a recommendation of just four periods per week of SETSS would yield the same amount of FSF as seven periods of SETSS because they both fall into the low intensity ( $\leq 20\%$ ) category. Eight periods of ICT would yield the same amount of FSF as 20 periods of special class because they both fall into the moderate intensity (21-59%) category.**

**So this is a Yes?**

Would it be correct to say that even though both students have SETSS along with their ICT services, their schools would not receive additional funding?

**There is not a special education programs weight beyond the  $\geq 60\%$ .**

**So this is a Yes?**

Hope this is helpful,

[REDACTED]

---

**From:** jenn choi <jenn@specialsupportservices.com>

**Sent:** Friday, April 12, 2024 7:47 AM

**To:** [REDACTED]@schools.nyc.gov>

**Subject:** Re: [REDACTED]

Hi [REDACTED]

Happy Friday.

The PEP mtg is in 3 business days. It really looks like a simple question to me.

Not answering when a simple answer is perceived is an answer too. Could our community have an answer this morning before noon? I am the founder of a group of parents of teens with disabilities in NYC and there are 1400+ members in that group.

Jenn Choi

The next 5 pages are actual responses from NYC public schools principals and assistant principals to parents who are asking about a school's experience in providing special education services. This is something that many parents do as part of the admissions process that happens in NYC every year. The information needed is not available anywhere on a school's website or the high school directory.

Despite, the city's promise on their website, "Every DOE middle school and high school welcomes and serves students with disabilities according to their IEPs." based on these responses below, it is clear that this claim is untrue and unenforced.



5.15.2024, Wednesday, Day of City Council Education Budget Hearing

Dear members of the City Council:

I have been in communication with Noah K. Means-Simonsen, Associate Director of Education Policy, Family and Community Engagement & External Affairs because when I sent testimony and evidence to the Panel for Educational Policy, they directed me to him.

I had been hearing about an "appeals process" and even a "turbo appeals round," and had read the CORE Checklist which is very long and complex. All three are supposed to help schools get more money when it is needed to help schools fund special education services.

The email is below. Nothing is redacted because everyone included is a public official or works for NYC Public Schools. What is important to note here is this.

**I asked to be given appeals process information - something to look at:** There was no transparent and therefore useful answer given. He did say "Appeals process" and CORE checklist is separate.

**I asked about the turbo appeals process- something to look at:** There was no transparent and therefore useful answer given.

The last answer to the last question is so ridiculous. It deserves little comment.

THEREFORE- only one thing remains clear- all we know is that there is a [CORE Checklist](#) that is phenomenally difficult to fill out. And if you look below, retrieved in the Superintendents Hub at NYC Public Schools, there is an "Appeals" process that can be done only if the CORE process was approved. To families of students with disabilities, the outrageous complexity alone presents as a violation to our children's education civil rights. How can a school risk mandating services to a child when paying for them will require such a complex and time-consuming procedure that has no guarantees? It is an "appeal."

- If you would like to understand this extremely complex way schools are forced to ask for more special education money for their students to receive their mandated services. Watch this <https://bit.ly/corechecklistvideo>
- Link to NYC Public Schools' Introduction to CORE Checklist: <https://bit.ly/3KfEaW1>
- Link to NYC Public Schools' CORE Checklist <https://bit.ly/3UPqy9P>

Thank you.

Jennifer Choi, Special Education Advocate

## Superintendents Hub

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### SPECIAL EDUCATION

## Support Schools with the CORE to Ensure Full Provision of Special Education Programs

The [Checklist for Organizing Resources \(CORE\)](#) is designed to help school leaders and the School Implementation Team (SIT) analyze their overall instructional and programming needs, evaluate current resources (e.g., budget, staff, space), and make strategic decisions about how to deploy resources to fully implement students' Individualized Education Program (IEP) recommendations.

District administrators of special education (ASEs), working with budget directors and human resources directors, should support schools to fully implement students' IEPs and to consider completing the [Checklist for Organizing Resources \(CORE\)](#) to appeal for additional funding or to request a new school offer for a student, when they are unable to do so immediately. Before initiating this process, ASEs should email [CORE@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:CORE@schools.nyc.gov) to consult on completion of a CORE.

**Appeals** related specifically to special education staffing (e.g. special education teachers or classroom paraprofessionals) and school transfers on the basis of a student's IEP recommendation will only be considered after a CORE has been submitted to and approved by the Central Special Education Office (SEO).

For more information, review the [Introduction to the Checklist for Organizing Resources \(CORE\) Process](#). For questions, email [CORE@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:CORE@schools.nyc.gov).





jenn choi &lt;jenn@specialsupportservices.com&gt;

## Fair Student Funding Formula Is Not Fair for Students w. Disabilities with Evidence

Means-simonsen Noah &lt;NMeanssimonsen@schools.nyc.gov&gt;

Tue, May 14, 2024 at 4:44 PM

To: jenn choi &lt;jenn@specialsupportservices.com&gt;

Cc: Heather Dailey &lt;heather.m.dailey@gmail.com&gt;, Mark Gonsalves &lt;mjgons@mac.com&gt;, Panel for Educational Policy &lt;Panel@schools.nyc.gov&gt;, Whitney Toussaint &lt;wtoussaint.cec@gmail.com&gt;, Andie &lt;ACorso6@schools.nyc.gov&gt;, Schmitt Peter &lt;PSchmitt@schools.nyc.gov&gt;, Georgia Giannikouris Brandeis &lt;GGIANNIKOURIS@schools.nyc.gov&gt;

Hey Jenn,

While I appreciate our chance to communicate on this, I am not the best contact to give you the timely and accurate information you need on this topic, and would highly recommend that you reach out directly to the Special Education Office, namely, Director of Family Engagement, Shah Powell Scott, as they are able to more clearly and accurately explain how these processes work. They are able to directly support schools to ensure students receive the services they are entitled to. There should not be a school that denies a service based on funding. If this is the case anywhere, please let the Special Education Office know ([specialeducation@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:specialeducation@schools.nyc.gov)).

You said "NYCPS teams implemented a whole new process around expediting appeals for schools identified with special education breakages issues" You had mentioned the appeals process when we spoke as well. Can you confirm that the following attached NYCPS documents for principals: "Introduction to the Checklist for Organizing Resources (CORE) Process" and "Checklist for Organizing (CORE) School Year 2023-2024" is what you mean by the "appeals process"?

**Answer:** The Checklist for Organizing Resources (CORE) is a process established in the 2012-13 school year to support the rollout of the Shared Path to Success (special education reform) and continues to be utilized by schools to submit special education appeals during the school year. The CORE exists outside the regular budget appeals process that schools may submit when scheduling their initial allocations—this way, with the CORE, we [NYCPS] can continue addressing schools' shifting special education needs throughout the school year.

The new appeals process I referred to is separate from the CORE and allows for expedited appeals to address schools with breakage, commencing immediately following the initial allocation release.

In the past few weeks, the phrase "**turbo appeals round**" has been mentioned quite often. Can you share where that process is documented and explained? How is that process made known and described to administrators, teachers, and/or guardians? I can assure you that parents are now expecting to see this and will only surmise the worst when it is not produced quickly. Your last email was written with such kindness and warmth. I have a feeling you really understand our community and you know how important this is to us.

**Answer:** Every year, NYCPS works to ensure that schools have all of the funds necessary to cover mandated services. Where schools' initial budget allocations fall short of covering all mandates, there is a process for appealing to obtain the necessary funds. "Turbo Round" was a term used to describe the prioritization process utilized last year ahead of the 23-24 school year. In this process the budget office along with other central offices identified schools with a verified gap between (a) the cost of their mandated needs for the upcoming school year and (b) their initial funding.

You said, "The FSF Working Group (2023-2024) we spoke about had a great recommendation surrounding the 'breakage' issue." Can you tell me if there was an FSF group for this school year? I didn't know that. If you are referring to the previous one, I just reread their report and they did not address the "breakage" issue within their 5 recommendations.



**Answer:** Each year relevant NYCPS central offices convene to review the budget appeals process, determine whether adjustments need to be made based on current conditions, and to review potential schools to prioritize for review. This year will be no different in that regard. NYCPS is in the process of determining appeals priorities currently.

Thank you,

Noah K. Means-Simonsen  
Associate Director of Education Policy  
Family and Community Engagement & External Affairs

New York City Department of Education  
52 Chambers Street | New York, NY 10007  
Office: (212) 374-5002

[nmeanssimonsen@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:nmeanssimonsen@schools.nyc.gov)

[Connect](#) with us on [schools.nyc.gov](#)  
Follow us on [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#)



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**From:** jenn choi <[jenn@specialsupportservices.com](mailto:jenn@specialsupportservices.com)>

**Sent:** Monday, May 13, 2024 5:31 PM

**To:** Means-simonsen Noah <[NMeanssimonsen@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:NMeanssimonsen@schools.nyc.gov)>

**Cc:** Heather Dailey <[heather.m.dailey@gmail.com](mailto:heather.m.dailey@gmail.com)>; Mark Gonsalves <[mjgons@mac.com](mailto:mjgons@mac.com)>; Panel for Educational Policy <[Panel@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:Panel@schools.nyc.gov)>; Whitney Toussaint <[wtoussaint.cec@gmail.com](mailto:wtoussaint.cec@gmail.com)>

**Subject:** Re: Fair Student Funding Formula Is Not Fair for Students w. Disabilities with Evidence

Dear Noah,

I am following up on this email. The City Council hearing is on Wednesday. It would be great to report that the district representative introduced to me (and my group of parents) by the Panel for Educational Policy was able to answer this seemingly simple question. If he was not, I would like to report that he told me why when I share my thoughts on the CORE checklist. To be sure, that testimony will be registered.

Have a great evening.

Best,  
Jenn Choi

On Wed, May 8, 2024 at 8:09 AM jenn choi <[jenn@specialsupportservices.com](mailto:jenn@specialsupportservices.com)> wrote:

Dear Noah,  
Thank you for your reply.

First, thank you for offering to keep the lines of communication open.

I have some good news: Three elected community advocates shared that they wished to stay apprised of our communications so I am cc'ing them here. I hope you don't mind. I will also cc the PEP email since it was they that introduced us and perhaps they will want to remain apprised of our communication. They can let me know if they wish to be taken offline.

The three community advocates are:

**Whitney Touissant**, whom you already know, President, CEC 30 and IEP Representative

**Mark Gonsalves**, Co-President, Citywide Council Special Education

**Heather Dailey**, First Vice President, Citywide Council Special Education

If you prefer that they remain outside of our communication then please just write back to me directly but know that what you tell me I do share with them as well as my group, NYC Parents of Teens with Disabilities (1500+ members).



For now, I just have a few follow up questions that I hope you can confirm. This way, when parents of my group testify at the City Council hearing, they will have accurate information and will not report absence of replies to simple questions or testify to inaccurate details due to lack of answers. I hope to have your collaboration.

#### Questions/Requests:

1. You said "NYCPS teams implemented a whole new process around expediting appeals for schools identified with special education breakages issues" You had mentioned the appeals process when we spoke as well. Can you confirm that the following attached NYCPS documents for principals: "Introduction to the Checklist for Organizing Resources (CORE) Process" and "Checklist for Organizing (COrE) School Year 2023-2024" is what you mean by the "appeals process"? If not, please send the documents that describe this process and where they are located.
2. In the past few weeks, the phrase "**turbo appeals round**" has been mentioned quite often. Can you share where that process is documented and explained? How is that process made known and described to administrators, teachers, and/or guardians? I can assure you that parents are now expecting to see this and will only surmise the worst when it is not produced quickly. Your last email was written with such kindness and warmth. I have a feeling you really understand our community and you know how important this is to us. **I trust you can get this to us ASAP.**
3. You said, "The FSF Working Group (2023-2024) we spoke about had a great recommendation surrounding the "breakage" issue." Can you tell me if there was an FSF group for this school year? I didn't know that. If you are referring to the previous one, I just reread their report and they did not address the "breakage" issue within their 5 recommendations. At a later time, please feel free to clarify this but for now, **if you can just answer #1 for now**, that would be greatly appreciated. I have a feeling you can confirm that one right away.

Best,  
Jenn Choi

Jennifer Choi  
Advocate  
<http://specialsupportservices.com>

**Advocacy Impacting 2024 & Beyond: The Special Education Open House Campaign**  
Check us out on [Twitter](#)

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On Fri, May 3, 2024 at 5:16 PM Means-simonsen Noah <[NMeanssimonsen@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:NMeanssimonsen@schools.nyc.gov)> wrote:

Ms. Choi,

I just sat down with this email and unpacked it, as well as checked out a few of the video testimonies you provided. Thank you for sending these over and taking time out of your day to speak with me. You're certainly a deep reserve of resources and evidently passionate about special education



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a topic NYCPS is consistently self-examining and further working on. No conversation regarding education across the city is complete without mentioning and including the voices of special education. I know this is a topic near and dear to Ms. Foti's heart and something she is driven by as exemplified in the work coming from that office. Please always let me know when I can be of service and appreciate your dedication to this invaluable need for our students in NYCPS.

I want to reiterate that all of our students (including those with IEPs) should certainly never be denied a free, equitable, and appropriate education that maximizes their success and provides them with the love and support they deserve. There's an army of people working to ensure our students receive these services and opportunities; yourself included! We always want to hear feedback and input from parents, advocates, and leaders across the city; the notes I took from our conversation the other day really highlight this input and your email even further points us in this direction.

The FSF Working Group (2023-2024) we spoke about had a great recommendation surrounding the "breakage" issue you flagged and this an incredibly insights. Therefore, NYCPS teams implemented a whole new process around expediting appeals for schools identified with special education breakages issues

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that is continually being refined, especially after we spoke the other day. We are always looking to make sure schools have the budget and funding needs, particularly when budgets are insufficient to fund mandated programs. We are absorbing the feedback and always looking to maximize the resources we receive and then focus them in areas that are most needed! After some deep diving into school districts across the US, I want to note that the FSF is one of the most equitable formulas for school budgets in the country and one that is in a perpetual state of improvement! My mom used to tell my brothers and I that, 'the day you stop working on yourself is the day you kick the bucket.' And I think that's pretty true for a person or even an agency

---

we're always looking to get better, to be better, and to grow. I appreciate you being part of that growth 😊

Please let's stay connected to discuss this work and always reach out to me if I can ever be of service!

---

**From:** jenn choi <[jenn@specialsupportservices.com](mailto:jenn@specialsupportservices.com)>

**Sent:** Friday, May 3, 2024 9:15 AM

**To:** Means-simonsen Noah <[NMeanssimonsen@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:NMeanssimonsen@schools.nyc.gov)>

**Subject:** Re: Fair Student Funding Formula Is Not Fair for Students w. Disabilities with Evidence

You don't often get email from [jenn@specialsupportservices.com](mailto:jenn@specialsupportservices.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Noah,

Thank you for calling me the other day.

I also wanted to mention that you may also want to speak to Georgia Brandeis at the Special Education Office who has actual school administration experience in providing services to students in spite of the FSF formula. She now works as a special advisor to Christina Foti. She is aware of the discriminatory messages that are shared by schools. It is important to note that these discriminatory messages are at all levels, including elementary schools. Georgia would be most familiar with the high school level.

I think Georgia is aware of the amount of evidence that is out there in terms of how much the FSF formula has caused schools to discriminate when communicating to parents. It would be impossible to tell schools to change their messaging because they literally can not afford to do what the parents are asking them. This is going to keep happening, again, and again. It is the cause of many due process complaints.

It sounds like you really want to help. My experience has always been to complain very loudly with people who are stakeholders and that is most helpful to the people inside who really want to help.



Here are the City Council testimonies that I referred to (the testimonies will give you an idea of the kind of evidence that parents have collected and can collect in the coming years)

- 2024 budget hearing <https://bit.ly/3Pp1G5x> (my chart is off by three cents here and has since been corrected)
- video testimony of the above. <https://bit.ly/3vi7OpE>
- 2023 budget hearing <https://bit.ly/3Th5yGu>
- video testimony of the above <https://bit.ly/NOFAPEBCFSF>
- 2023 admissions testimony "self-serve discrimination" <https://bit.ly/41GLnWA>
- video testimony of the above- <https://bit.ly/HS-Admissions-Testimony-Video>

Best,

Jenn Choi

Jennifer Choi

Advocate

<http://specialsupportservices.com>

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On Wed, May 1, 2024 at 1:32 PM jenn choi <[jenn@specialsupportservices.com](mailto:jenn@specialsupportservices.com)> wrote:

Moving everyone else to BCC

Thank you for your phone call. I am in a class.

I hope we can speak between 2 and 5 PM today. [REDACTED]

I would love some good news. I am speaking to the public at a hybrid webinar for Epicenter NYC tomorrow as well so I can start sharing good news there too!

Best, Jenn Choi

On Wed, May 1, 2024 at 1:02 PM Means-simonsen Noah <[NMeanssimonsen@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:NMeanssimonsen@schools.nyc.gov)> wrote:

Ms. Choi,

I apologize for my delay; I have been out with personal matters. I believe in referencing being in touch it was in regard to Whitney Toussaint and a simple mix up. She had reached out independently around the same time—and spoke at the April 17 PEP Meeting

—  
to a similar topic.

Since the email I have been working with DC Vadehra and CFO Scott on this specifically as it addresses both legal and fiscal regulations governing NYCPS. DC Vadehra ensured she would have an answer to me by the close of day as I bumped this concern to her attention again for definite answers.

I will call right now as well.

---

**From:** jenn choi <[jenn@specialsupportservices.com](mailto:jenn@specialsupportservices.com)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, May 1, 2024 12:45 PM

**To:** Panel for Educational Policy <[Panel@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:Panel@schools.nyc.gov)>

**Cc:** Bogad Aaron <[ABogad@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:ABogad@schools.nyc.gov)>; Ong Alan <[A Ong3@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:A Ong3@schools.nyc.gov)>; Ho Alice <[AHo2791@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:AHo2791@schools.nyc.gov)>; Fair Amy <[AFair3@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:AFair3@schools.nyc.gov)>; Garcia Anita



<AGarcia141@schools.nyc.gov>; Giordano Anthony <AGiordano16@schools.nyc.gov>; @{{First=Green; Last=Angela; Email=agreen419@gmail.com}} <agreen419@gmail.com>; Zakry Ephraim <EZakry@schools.nyc.gov>; Ward Gladys <GWard7@schools.nyc.gov>; @{{First=Faulkner; Last=Gregory; Email=gregfaulkner1@gmail.com}} <gregfaulkner1@gmail.com>; Lee Jessamyn <JLee235@schools.nyc.gov>; Salas-ramirez Kaliris <KSalasramirez@schools.nyc.gov>; Chan Lilly <LChan85@schools.nyc.gov>; Sapp Maisha <MSapp@schools.nyc.gov>; Dienstag Marjorie <MDienstag@schools.nyc.gov>; @{{First=Hasan; Last=Naveed; Email=naveed@cs.columbia.edu}} <naveed@cs.columbia.edu>; Sade-arnold Phoebe <PSadearnold@schools.nyc.gov>; Aubin Shirley <SAubin@schools.nyc.gov>; Azad Tazin <TAzad4@schools.nyc.gov>; Sheppard Thomas C. <TSheppard5@schools.nyc.gov>; Means-simonsen Noah <NMeanssimonsen@schools.nyc.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Fair Student Funding Formula Is Not Fair for Students w. Disabilities with Evidence

You don't often get email from [jenn@specialsupportservices.com](mailto:jenn@specialsupportservices.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Panel for Educational Policy,  
 Thank you for your response on April 18th.

I wanted to let you know that while you shared that you knew that Mr. MeansSimonsen had been in touch with me already but it's important to state that I have never heard from Mr. Means Simonsen then and I still have not. Perhaps you are mistaking me with someone else? Thank you for sharing his phone number. I just left a voicemail message at [REDACTED].

**I do hope to hear from him before the NY City Council Education Budget Hearing on May 15th.** It would be great to hear the city's response to the evidence I shared in the email with you. The evidence makes it crystal clear that schools will never receive additional funding to provide special education instructional services to students with IEPs needing it to access career technical education classes, world language classes or more intensive special education instruction when needed. There is no funding mechanism except for some sort of an appeal. Why should there ever have to be an "appeal" as if there already exists a denial? That is discrimination from the start.

Best wishes,  
 Jenn Choi

On Thu, Apr 18, 2024 at 6:46 PM Panel for Educational Policy <[Panel@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:Panel@schools.nyc.gov)> wrote:

Hello Jennifer,

Thank you for reaching out, I wanted to follow-up on this after connecting with the appropriate individuals. I know you spoke with Noah Means-Simonsen, the Associate Director of Education Policy, who is also cc'd on this email and is able to provide deeper engagement ([nmeanssimonsen@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:nmeanssimonsen@schools.nyc.gov) or [REDACTED]) and I know he has connect with Whitney Toussaint regarding some of these issues as well. He is always available to speak and in the office. He is rarely not on the phone with people or responding to emails.

He will be in touch shortly to follow up as well.

Sincerely,

**From:** jenn choi <[jenn@specialsupportservices.com](mailto:jenn@specialsupportservices.com)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, April 16, 2024 9:22 AM

**To:** Bogad Aaron <[ABogad@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:ABogad@schools.nyc.gov)>; Ong Alan <[A Ong3@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:A Ong3@schools.nyc.gov)>; Ho Alice <[AHo2791@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:AHo2791@schools.nyc.gov)>; Fair Amy <[AFair3@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:AFair3@schools.nyc.gov)>; Garcia Anita <[AGarcia141@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:AGarcia141@schools.nyc.gov)>; Giordano Anthony <[AGiordano16@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:AGiordano16@schools.nyc.gov)>; @{{First=Green;

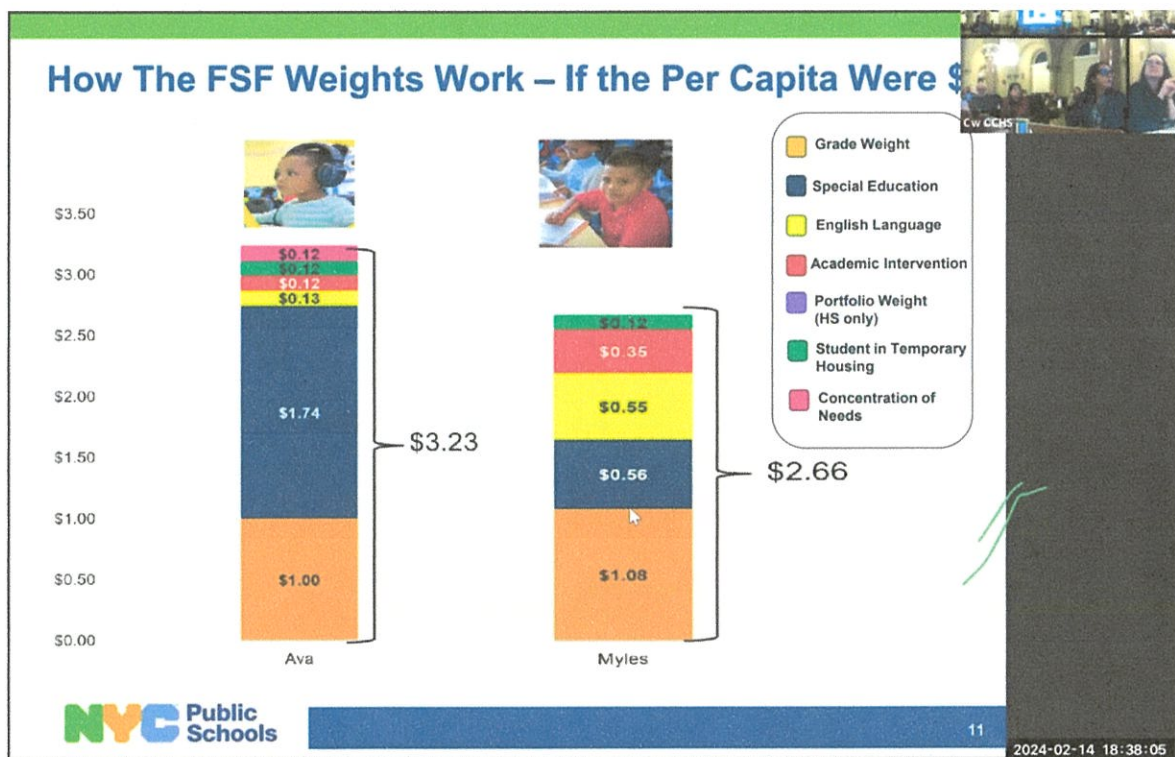


Last=Angela; Email=agreen419@gmail.com} <agreen419@gmail.com>; Zakry Ephraim <EZakry@schools.nyc.gov>; Ward Gladys <GWard7@schools.nyc.gov>; @{First=Faulkner; Last=Gregory; Email=gregfaulkner1@gmail.com} <gregfaulkner1@gmail.com>; Lee Jessamyn <JLee235@schools.nyc.gov>; Salas-ramirez Kaliris <KSalasramirez@schools.nyc.gov>; Chan Lilly <LChan85@schools.nyc.gov>; Sapp Maisha <MSapp@schools.nyc.gov>; Dienstag Marjorie <MDienstag@schools.nyc.gov>; @{First=Hasan; Last=Naveed; Email=naveed@cs.columbia.edu} <naveed@cs.columbia.edu>; Sade-arnold Phoebe <PSadearnold@schools.nyc.gov>; Aubin Shirley <SAubin@schools.nyc.gov>; Azad Tazin <TAzad4@schools.nyc.gov>; Sheppard Thomas C. <TSheppard5@schools.nyc.gov>; Panel for Educational Policy <Panel@schools.nyc.gov>  
**Subject:** Fair Student Funding Formula Is Not Fair for Students w. Disabilities with Evidence

Dear Members of the Panel for Educational Policy:

I am Jennifer Choi and I am a special education advocate and a Queens parent of a current and former student of NYC public schools, both of whom have disabilities who've been supported by IEPs in order to prepare for further education, future employment, and independent living. I am also the founder of a 1,400+ member group called NYC Parents of Teens with Disabilities.

I would like to ask the Panel members to please vote no and to order a change to the Fair Student Funding weights for students with disabilities. These formulas are simply unfair to students with disabilities to the extent that they cause our city's schools to violate the educational civil rights of our students with disabilities year after year. Please allow me to demonstrate by using a chart graphic used in a recent NYC Public Schools presentation about [School Budgets for SY 2024-2025](#).



This is a screenshot from a community education council meeting in which this chart was used to explain the Fair Student Funding Formula and how it is used to fund individual special education and other services.

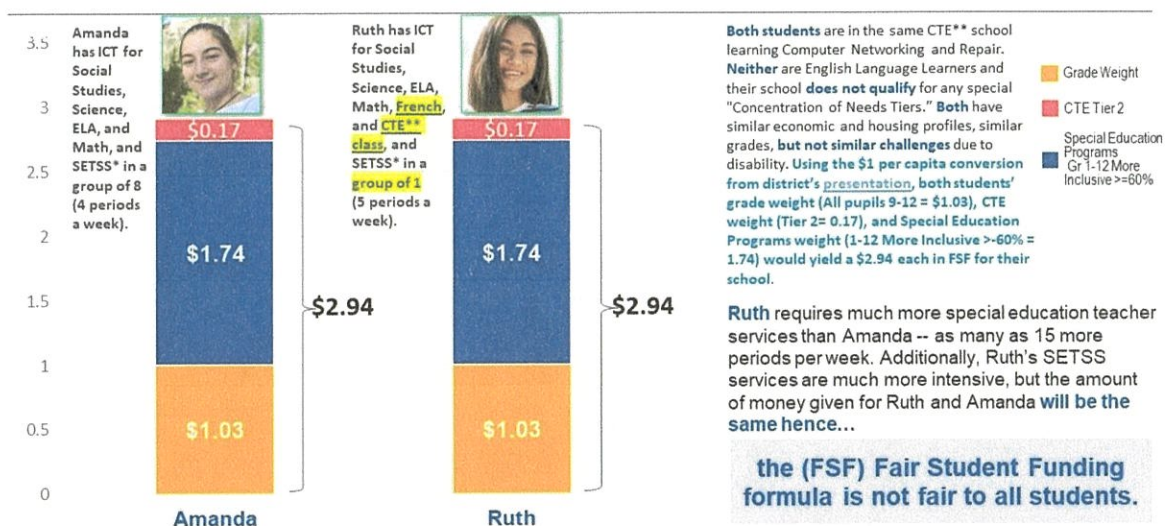


Our country's law dictates that a student with a disability is entitled to an IEP in which their services are determined in accordance to their **unique needs**, not the needs of the district. However, when looking at the responses parents receive when asking about special education service provision and given the actual Fair Student Funding (FSF) Formula in NYC Public Schools, a distinct pattern emerges: ***Because of the FSF formula, NYC will not fund schools fully for a student's special education costs as they might for a student without a disability therefore, NYC schools often do not provide needed services to students regardless of their legal entitlement.***

In an email on 4.12.2024, answers provided by a top-ranking NYC Public Schools Special Education administrator validated these claims when presented with questions about two students' funding based on the Fair Student Funding Formula. The chart design is the same one used in the [presentation](#) from NYC Public Schools. I had shared the details without a graphic. I was corrected with one minor detail in that high school students have a base weight of \$1.03 instead of \$1.00.

Using the same chart design, the actual FSF formula, the confirmation from the senior NYCPS Special Education official, it's clear how the FSF formula is not fair to schools and hence, it is not fair to the students they serve. Ruth has 10 more periods of ICT services than Amanda. Ruth also has one more period of SETSS than Amanda but Ruth's SETSS is 1:1. Still, her school would be getting the exact same funding as they would for Amanda. Here are the facts we can gather so far:

## How the FSF Formula is Not Fair to Students w. IEPs



\*SETSS= Special Education Teacher Support Services \*\*CTE=Career Technical Education (Amounts based on if per capita were \$1)

- The bar is set too low.** Why is the maximum amount of funding set at just having ICT for four core subjects (Math, English, History, and Science) or just having all of one's Special Classes for the four core subjects. What if a student needs more than that?
- Schools do not receive more funds for a student to have special education teacher services for a World Language class (French, Mandarin, Spanish, etc) even though it is required for graduation.**
- Schools do not receive more funds for a student to have ICT special education teacher services in a Career Technical Education (CTE) class.** These are the highly popular pathways-inspiring high schools capturing [today's headlines](#). Many of these schools offer "CTE-endorsed diplomas" requiring advanced testing and diligent preparation. Ex. Computer Repair, Structural Welding, Cisco, Oracle, Hair Stylist, Nail Technician, Plumbing, etc.



4. **Schools will not receive more special education funds when a student requires more special education instruction beyond special education in their 4 core subject classes.** These are called SETSS and they used to be called "Resource Room" a long time ago. These groups can have no more than 8 students to meet compliance. Still, the school will not be given more money to hire more teachers to teach these students. It's even more expensive to ensure that the students in the room are "**functionally grouped**." That is, the groups should be capped by need levels and not because 8 is the maximum number of students that can be in the group.

5. For one who is really struggling, **if the student's SETSS service needed to be 1:1, schools would not receive any more funds** to provide such a service despite the vast difference in teacher time requirements.

6. **Teachers don't come in pieces.** Lastly, while not on this chart, the largest problem is this: FSF funds special education per student and not by the class which means that if just one student or even three needs ICT or Special Class, it is still not enough to hire a teacher. Amongst administrator circles, this situation is commonly known as "breakage" and to parents, it tells us how much of a burden our children are. Only the [Minority Report for the Fair Student Funding Working Group](#) tried to address this problem.

**Given this information, couldn't the FSF formula be the cause of the billions of dollars in special education due process complaint filings against the city?** There are many more implications but the message remains the same: **The Fair Student Funding formula is not fair to students with disabilities.** Schools are left to act as if they do not have to provide a service or act as if a child does not need a service. Please, reject the Fair Student Funding Formula. Our city can do better than this.



Jennifer Choi, 4.16.2024,

Managing Member and Advocate, Special Support Services, LLC

**Attachments:** Evidence from NYCPS Senior Special Education officials and NYC public high schools making blanket statements that they don't provide specific services. These are IDEA and civil rights violations.

*Jennifer Choi*

*Advocate*

<http://specialsupportservices.com>

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**Testimony of St. Nicks Alliance  
Before the New York City Council**

**FY 2025 Executive Budget Hearing: May 15, 2024  
Committee on Education  
Council Member Rita C. Joseph, Chair**

**Submitted by Debra Sue Lorenzen, Director of Youth and Education**

My name is Debra Sue Lorenzen. I am the Director of Youth and Education for St. Nicks Alliance in North Brooklyn. St. Nicks Alliance serves more than 6,000 youth and 3,000 familial adults through comprehensive youth and education services for ages 2-24 years old.

I want to begin by thanking City Council for its understanding that affordable, Universal Child Care is vital to starting our children on a successful public education journey and Learning to Work is critical to ensuring our city's most vulnerable youth graduate from high school.

I am writing to implore City Council to invest in these education initiatives.

Early Childhood Education

**Ask: Achieve Full Parity for Early Childhood Workers at CBO's with NYSPS**

St. Nicks Alliance's Small World Early Childhood Center has been providing high quality child care and education to North Brooklyn families for over 50 years. We applaud City Council's commitment to Universal Childcare, but this is not achievable without investing in the childcare workforce.

Our 125 students have deeply caring, committed staff, who are paid as little as \$16.21 based on Birth to Five contracted rates—far below their NYC Public School's counterparts for the same work. The childcare workforce is comprised primarily of

woman of color who are, too often, living near poverty though they are crucial to the economy of NYC and the healthy lives of its children.

The City must fund a labor deal that will:

- Ensure salary parity between certified and uncertified teachers in Community-based settings with their DOE counterparts
- Guarantee a wage floor of \$25 per hour for all support staff in CBO settings
- Restore longevity differentials for CBO staff who have been in their positions for many years, in line with what DOE teachers receive
- Fund per diems for staff working in extended day/year programs. These staff work a longer day (8am-4pm or 6 pm) and during the summer months; they deserve extra compensation for their time.

### Learning to Work

**Ask: Baseline LTW's full \$42.1 million budget through sustainable funding sources.**

For nearly 20 years, St. Nicks Alliance has operated a Learning to Work (LTW) model at Bushwick Community High School, a transfer school with some of NYC's most persistent and courageous students fighting to graduate high school ready for college and the workforce. As Bushwick Community High School's community-based partner, we are caring adults who ensure youth have the academic and socioemotional supports, post-secondary planning and paid internships needed to transition out of high school prepared for what lies ahead.

St. Nicks Alliance's Learning to Work is one of 66 across the city uplifting nearly 17,000 students who earned over \$9 million for their low-income families that is pumped back into NYC's economy.

NYC elected to cover 72%--or \$33 million--of this long-established program with American Rescue Plan (ARP) stimulus funds. With ARP funds expiring, New York City replaced only \$31 million for only one year. These resources are insufficient to maintain the level of service of young people need to graduate. We urge the city to baseline Learning to Work at \$42.1 million budget through sustainable funding sources.

Thank you for your consideration of St. Nicks Alliance's written testimony and for your deep commitment to NYC's children and youth.





**New York City Council Committee on Education  
Regarding the Fiscal 2024 Preliminary Budget for the Department of Education  
Support for NYCPS PK-12 BLACK STUDIES CURRICULUM**

TO: The Honorable City Council Member Rita Joseph  
FROM: Prof. Sonya Douglass, Director, BERC, Teachers College, Columbia University  
DATE: May 15, 2024

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony. The Black Education Research Center (BERC), housed at Teachers College, Columbia University, is a group of research faculty, postdoctoral scholars, graduate students, and alumni of Teachers College who conduct and analyze research with the goal of improving educational experiences and outcomes for students of African descent in the United States and internationally. Our home, Teachers College, is the country's oldest and largest graduate school of education.

BERC is part of the landmark three-year Education Equity Action Plan (EEAP) initiative, launched by the City Council in 2022 to develop the first PK-12 Black Studies curriculum for the city's public schools. Since then, BERC has led a team of influential Black Studies scholars and New York City classroom teachers who together have developed an historic curriculum for New York City. These experts in culturally relevant curriculum and teaching have created over 100 lesson plans across 13 grades aligned with New York social studies standards and Next Gen standards for English Language Arts and History and Social Studies. Topics include early African civilizations, the global migrations of African people throughout the African Diaspora, the continuum of the Black experience in America since the 17th century, as well Black history in New York state and New York City (Appendix A). BERC has developed and led monthly virtual professional learning sessions covering Black Studies content and instructional models that have reached over 1,000 school and community educators (Appendix B). In addition, BERC has coordinated a curriculum pilot in 120 schools in 18 districts across all five boroughs, reaching close to 6,500 students (Appendix C). BERC is currently fine tuning lessons based on feedback from pilot teachers and conducting a thorough, rigorous evaluation of the overall EEAP project.

While much has been accomplished in a short time, BERC respectfully asks the Council for continued funding to support the ongoing development and rollout of the Black Studies Curriculum in FY 2025. BERC has submitted an application requesting \$1 million to craft additional Black Studies lessons with a focus on literacy instruction, a top priority for New York City. Lessons will also be modified for students with disabilities and English Language Learners. In addition, funding will support in-person and virtual professional learning opportunities for teachers and school leaders, including multi-day institutes, a continuation of the popular monthly virtual learning series, and virtual "office hours" professional coaching. The funding will also support virtual orientation workshops for new districts implementing the Black Studies Curriculum next year.



At a time when teaching the truth is under attack across the US, and Black history and perspectives in particular are being silenced, the City Council has chosen to take a different approach. However, without ongoing funding the project is unlikely to make a significant impact on the students in our city's schools. By providing this funding, on the other hand, the Council would ensure that our children receive an education in which their cultures, experiences, and contributions are reflected and celebrated.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Sonya Douglass'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

Sonya Douglass, Ed.D.  
Founding Director

## **Appendix A**

### **Black Studies Curriculum Content: List of Lessons Across All Grades PreK-12**

#### **Grade PK**

- Lesson 1: What's My Name?
- Lesson 2: My Five Senses
- Lesson 3: I Like Myself!
- Lesson 4: Water in Burkina Faso
- Lesson 5: Transformation-Juneteenth

#### **Grade K**

- Lesson 1: Adinkra Symbols - Sankofa
- Lesson 2: Adinkra Symbols - Values
- Lesson 3: Ancient African Community Study: Ingenuity and Imagination
- Lesson 4: Ancient African Community Study: The Great Mali Empire
- Lesson 5: Ancient African Community Study: Kente Cloth of Ghana

#### **Grade 1**

- Lesson 1: My Family and its Lineage
- Lesson 2: Black Families are Important
- Lesson 3: Black Families Share Stories - Part 1
- Lesson 4: Black Families Share Stories - Part 2, Day 1 of 2
- Lesson 4: Black Families Share Stories - Part 2, Day 2 of 2
- Lesson 5: My Family Story
- Lesson 6: A Family Long Ago - The Benin Kingdom
- Lesson 7: Families in Africa Long Ago - Cultural Traditions
- Lesson 8: Families in Africa Today - Lagos, Nigeria
- Lesson 9: Black Families Create Change, Now and Long Ago
- Lesson 10: My Family Long Ago

#### **Grade 2**

- Lesson 1: A Map of a Black Community
- Lesson 2: The Black Community and the Environment
- Lesson 3: The Black Community and Black Businesses
- Lesson 4: Innovators and Activists in the Black Community
- Lesson 5: Contributing to the Community
- Lesson 6: Sandy Ground, New York's 1st Free Black Community
- Lesson 7: Seneca Village: Life Before Central Park
- Lesson 8: The Great Migration: A Wave of Change For Black Communities

Lesson 9: The Harlem Renaissance: A Celebration of Black Culture in a Black Community  
Lesson 10: Black Communities Change Over Time

### **Grade 3**

Lesson 1: Africa is Not a Country  
Lesson 2: Celebrations of Dance Across Cultures  
Lesson 3: Sense of Pride  
Lesson 4: Components of Culture in an African Culture  
Lesson 5: Rooted in Values

### **Grade 4**

Lesson 1: Is the Cakewalk a Dance of Freedom or Oppression?  
Lesson 2: The Value of Education for Black/African People During Enslavement  
Lesson 3: Black New Yorkers and the “Empire State of Mind”  
Lesson 4: Resilience: The Great Migration and the Harlem Renaissance  
Lesson 5: The Power of Poetic Expression

### **Grade 5**

Lesson 1: All About Haiti Research Day  
Lesson 2: Who is Toussaint L’ouverture?  
Lesson 3: Who is Toussaint L’ouverture?  
Lesson 4: Exploring Haitian Art as a Window Into History and Culture  
Lesson 5: Haitian Art Can Be a Window Into Its History and Culture

### **Grade 6**

Lesson 1: Influence of Power - Project Launch  
Lesson 2: An Archeological Dig  
Lesson 3: Credibility of Sources  
Lesson 4: Cause and Effect Relationships: Power and Human Rights  
Lesson 5: Cause and Effects Relationships: Freedoms  
Lesson 6: Field Research Presentation  
Lesson 7: Organizing for Collective Action  
Lesson 8: Appealing to an Audience  
Lesson 9: Presentations of Power  
Lesson 10: The Influence of Power

### **Grade 7**

Lesson 1: “We Wish to Plead Our Own Cause”: A Free Black Press Part 1  
Lesson 2: “We Wish to Plead Our Own Cause”: A Free Black Press Part 2  
Lesson 3: In Pursuit of an Education: The Power of Literacy Part 1  
Lesson 4: In Pursuit of an Education: The Power of Literacy Part 2  
Lesson 5: Black Soldiers During the Civil War Part 1  
Lesson 6: Black Soldiers During the Civil War Part 2  
Lesson 7: The Black Enclave Series: Van Cortlandt Park (Bronx, NY)





# BLACK EDUCATION RESEARCH CENTER

TEACHERS COLLEGE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Lesson 8: The Black Enclave Series: Seneca Village (Upper East Side, NY)

## Grade 8

- Lesson 1: Ida B. Wells - Investigative Journalism and the Reconstruction
- Lesson 2: American Heroes: The Legacy of African American Political Leadership
- Lesson 3: American Heroes: New York's The Harlem Hellfighters of World War I
- Lesson 4: Greenwood: The Tulsa Star
- Lesson 5: Forever Henrietta: Long Live Henrietta Lacks
- Lesson 6: Power to the People: The Black Panther Party's 10 Point Program
- Lesson 7: Where's the Party? African Americans and Political Party Alignment
- Lesson 8: The Black Enclave Series: Sandy Ground (Staten Island, NY)
- Lesson 9: The Black Enclave Series: Canarsie Colored Colony (Canarsie, NY)
- Lesson 10: The Black Enclave Series: San Juan Hill (Midtown Manhattan, NY)
- Lesson 11: The Black Enclave Series: Weeksville (Brooklyn, NY)
- Lesson 12: The Black Enclave Series: Carrsville (Brooklyn, NY)

## Grade 9:

- Lesson 1: Warrior Queens, Stateswomen, & Queen Mothers: Female Leadership in Africa
- Lesson 2: African Architectural, Technological, and Communicative Ciphering
- Lesson 3: African Civilizations: Aksum—The Ancient Land of Coins and Scents
- Lesson 4: New World Declarations of Independence: Haiti and the U.S.
- Lesson 5: Strengthening Africa: Exploring Pan-African Unity and its Advantages

## Grade 10:

- Lesson 1: Age of Black Liberation - Unveiling the Dynamic Forces of Geography and Civilization
- Lesson 2: Age of Black Liberation - Unraveling the Legacy of the Scramble for Africa
- Lesson 3: Age of Black Liberation - Examining Global Struggles for Liberation
- Lesson 4: Age of Black Liberation - Exploring Interconnected Narratives
- Lesson 5: Age of Black Liberation - Envisioning African Futures
- Lesson 6: Carnival, Mardi Gras, and Traditions of Remembrance Across the African Diaspora
- Lesson 7: The Haitian Revolution: Cultural Legacy and Commemoration

## Grade 11:

- Lesson 1: Black Disenfranchisement
- Lesson 2: The Future of Policing in Black Communities
- Lesson 3: Reparations L1: Intro to Reparations
- Lesson 4: Reparations L2: The Case for Reparations: One Man's Experience
- Lesson 5: Reparations L3: The Case for Reparations: Making a Second Ghetto

## Grade 12:

- Lesson 1: Black Political Thought and Activism During Slavery
- Lesson 2: Black Women Advancing Democracy
- Lesson 3: The Black Vote and Current Trends in Voter Legislation in the U.S.
- Economics*
- Lesson 4: Slavery and the American Economy
- Lesson 5: The Black Effect: Black Genius in the Apparel Industry

# The NYCPS Black Studies Curriculum

## Virtual Learning Series 2023-2024

Join us for a series of 8 professional learning programs designed to engage teachers with the rich content and critical pedagogies featured in the **Black Studies as the Study of the World: PK-12 Black Studies Curriculum** for New York City Public Schools (NYCPS). Presented by the Black Education Research Center (BERC), these virtual sessions will take place monthly on Mondays from 3-4:30pm EST. Free Admission. CTLE credits available for New York City Public School teachers.

Participating teachers will receive access to pilot lessons, teaching resources and opportunities for instructional support from BERC's Curriculum and Professional Learning Team.

## Schedule

All sessions are from 3-4:30pm EST.

November 13	<b>Intro to Black Studies for PreK-12 Classrooms</b>
December 4	<b>Mapping the African Diaspora: Teaching the Global Black Experience</b>
January 8	<b>Teaching Black Studies through Reading: Great Books for All Ages</b>
February 5	<b>Chronicling the Black Freedom Struggle in the U.S.: 17th-21st Century</b>
March 4	<b>African Civilizations and Culture: Past and Present</b>
April 8	<b>Teaching Black Studies through Art: Visual Literacies</b>
May 6	<b>Black Heritage and Cultural Communities in New York City</b>
June 3	<b>Teaching Black Studies through Music &amp; Dance</b>



Register here:



Questions?

Email us at

[berc@tc.columbia.edu](mailto:berc@tc.columbia.edu), or visit  
[www.blackeducationresearch.org](http://www.blackeducationresearch.org)



## Appendix C

### Black Studies Curriculum Pilot Phase 2 Participation

#### Breakdown of Districts

**1. Total Number of Districts Participating in Pilot Phase 2: 18**

- a. **District 5** (Manhattan/Harlem), Superintendent Sean Davenport and Deputy Superintendent Dawn Brooks-DeCosta
- b. **District 29** (Queens), Superintendent Crystal Bonds
- c. **District 3** (Manhattan/Upper West Side), Superintendent Kamar Samuels and Principal Lopez (PS 163)
- d. **District 10** (Bronx), Superintendent Maribel Hulla
- e. **District 31** (Staten Island), Superintendent Marion Wilson
- f. **District 13** (Brooklyn), Superintendent Meghan Dunn
- g. **District 16** (Brooklyn), Superintendent Brendan Mims
- h. **District 21** (Brooklyn South HS/Michael Prayor), Superintendent Isabel DiMola
- i. **District 28** (Queens), Superintendent Eric Blake
- j. **District 18** (Brooklyn South HS/Michael Prayor), Superintendent Celeste Douglas
- k. **Consortium HS Districts 2, 8, 12, 15, 18, 21, 27** (Citywide), Superintendent Alan Cheng and Principal Harper-Richardson (Clear Channel HS)
- l. **District 27** (Queens), Superintendent David Norment

**2. Total Number of Pilot Teachers: 204**

**3. Total Number of Pilot Schools: 120**

### Current Breakdown By Pilot Lesson Grade Level

#	District	Borough	# of Teachers	# of Schools	PK-2	3-5	6-8	9-12
1.	<b>D5</b>	MN-Harlem	<b>48</b>	<b>23</b>	17	14	11	6
2.	<b>D29</b>	Queens	<b>26</b>	<b>19</b>				
3.	<b>D3</b>	MN-UWS	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	2	4	1	
4.	<b>D10</b>	Bronx	<b>31</b>	<b>12</b>	8	11	11	
5.	<b>D31</b>	Staten Island	<b>17</b>	<b>10</b>	4	5	3	4
6.	<b>D16</b>	Brooklyn	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	3	2	3	
7.	<b>D18</b>	Brooklyn	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>				3
8.	<b>D21</b>	Brooklyn	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>				5
9.	<b>D13</b>	Brooklyn	<b>23</b>	<b>16</b>	10	5	5	
10.	<b>D27</b>	Queens	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>				
11.	<b>D28</b>	Queens	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	1	1	2	
12.	<b>CHS D2</b>	Consortium HS/Citywide	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>				1
13.	<b>CHS D8</b>	Consortium HS/Citywide	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>				1
14.	<b>CHS D12</b>	Consortium HS/Citywide	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>				2
15.	<b>CHS D15</b>	Consortium HS/Citywide	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>				1
16.	<b>CHS D18</b>	Consortium HS/Citywide	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>				1
17.	<b>CHS D21</b>	Consortium HS/Citywide	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>				1
18.	<b>CHS D27</b>	Consortium HS/Citywide	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>			1	2
		<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>120</b>				



## **Breakdown of Teachers and Schools**

### **District 3 - 7 Teachers in 2 Schools:**

PS163 (5)

PS 87 William Sherman (2)

### **District 5 - 48 Teachers in all 23 Schools:**

P.S 30 (Hernandez/Hughes)

P.S. 36 The Margaret Douglas School

PS/MS46

PS 92 Mary McLeod Bethune

PSMS 161

Mahalia Jackson PS 123 (3)

PS 125 The Ralph Bunche School (20)

P.S. 133: Fred R. Moore

CS 129 John H Finley

Thurgood Marshall Academy - Lower School

Thurgood Marshall Academy (2)

PS 175 Henry Highland Garnet

PS 194

PS 197 M

C.S.200

MS371 Harlem SEED School

New Design Middle School M514

Teachers College Community School

Urban Assembly Academy for Future Leaders

Eagle Academy M148

Eagle Academy for Young Men of Harlem (2)

Columbia Secondary School

Frederick Douglass Academy

### **District 10 - 31 Teachers in 12 Schools:**

PS/MS 3 Raul Julia Micro Society (4)

P. S.77

PS 205 Fiorello LaGuardia (8)

PS226x

MS.244

PS 340

M.S. 390 (3)

Jonas Bronck Academy 228 (2)

Rose Hill Pre-K Center (6)

The New School For Leadership and the Arts

IN-Tech Academy

Bedford Park Elementary School (2)

### **District 29 - 26 Teachers in 19 Schools:**

29Q015

29Q033 (2)

PS 35Q

PS 036 Q (4)

IS 59Q

PS37Q

PS 38Q (The Rosedale School)  
P.S. 95Q Eastwood School (2)  
PS/IS 116 William C. Hughley  
Public School 118  
PS 132  
PS 134Q Hollis  
PS 135Q The Bellaire Magnet School (3)  
PS/MS 138Q Sunrise  
PS 195Q  
P.S. 176Q  
P.S. 181Q  
I.S. 238 29Q  
Community Voices Middle School

**District 31 - 17 Teachers in 10 Schools:**

PS69 Daniel D Tompkins (5)  
I.S 27 Anning Prall (2)  
Eagle Academy S.I. (1)  
P.S. 74 Future Leaders Elementary School (1)  
Henry Boehm School (1)  
Public School 8 (1)  
P.S. 16 (2)  
CSI High School (1)  
Curtis High School (2)  
PS 21

**District 16 - 8 Teachers in 3 Schools:**

Dr Ronald McNair PS005 (5)  
The Brooklyn Green Magnet School of Eco-Activism  
MS 35 Stephen Decatur Middle School (2)

**District 13 - 23 Teachers in 16 Schools:**

Academy of Arts and Letters 305 (2)  
Marcus Garvey-PS 44  
Park Place Community Middle School 266  
PS 11, Purvis J. Behan School  
Ps 307  
Park Slope 282  
PS 93 William H. Prescott Elementary School  
PS 20 Clinton Hill School  
Ps 133 (3)  
PS 8  
Purvis J Behan  
Sarah Smith Garnet PS 9  
Ronald Edmonds Learning Center-MS113 (4)  
13K008: Emily Warren Roebling School  
PS 54  
Ps 270 Johann DeKalb (2)

**District 18 - 3 Teachers in 3 Schools:**

Cultural Academy for the Arts and Sciences  
Academy for Conservation and the Environment  
Victory Collegiate High School

**District 21 - 5 Teachers in 4 Schools:**

Rachel Carson High School for Coastal Studies

John Dewey  
Abraham Lincoln High School  
High School of Sports Management (2)

**District 28 - 12 Teachers in 8 Schools:**

PS 54Q Hillside (2)  
Russell Sage JHS 190 (2)  
Middle School 358 Queens  
Samantha Smith  
Samuel Huntington School PS 40 Queens  
PS 48 David N. Dinkins (3)  
Catherine and Count Basie Magnet School  
MS 72

**District 27 - 14 Teachers in 13 Schools:**

PS 62 Chester Park School  
MS 137  
PS/MS 43Q - The School by the Sea  
PS 045 Clarence Witherspoon  
MS 226  
MS 210Q  
PS 317 Waterside Child Studio  
PS/MS 124Q (2)  
District Office (Mr. Cooper)  
PS/MS 42Q  
Waterside School for Leadership  
PS 232 Lindenwood  
PS 254Q

**Consortium High School Districts - 10 Teachers in 7 Schools  
(7 Districts Total - 4 New Districts including 8,15, 2, 12)**

**D27** - Channel View School for Research (3T) (8, 12)  
**D8** - Virtual Innovators Academy (9th)  
**D18** - Brooklyn Community HS for Excellence & Equity (12th)  
**D15** - BCS (11th)  
**D21** - John Dewey High School (11th)  
**D2** - School Without Walls (11th)  
**D12** - Arturo A. Schomburg School (2T) 12, 9,10

## **Appendix D**

### **Testimonials for the NYC Black Studies Curriculum**

“It is rare that we review a curriculum that is so intentionally rooted in the creation of positive and affirming stories and narratives for historically marginalized groups. We are excited for New York City students and are hopeful educators and schools are equipped with the tools, resources, and training to deliver this dynamic content to our students.”

– NYU Metro Center CRSE Curriculum Scoring Overview

“My students were excited and eager to learn about the advancements we made throughout history. They were especially excited to discover this lesson [about Ida B. Wells] during Women's History Month.”

– 8th grade teacher, M.S. 226, District 27, Queens

“Throughout the lesson, I observed a shift in the classroom dynamic as students became more engaged and passionate about the subject matter. They connected historical events to contemporary issues, challenged stereotypes, and demonstrated a newfound empathy for marginalized communities. Ultimately, this experience reinforced the power of culturally relevant curriculum in sparking student interest and fostering critical thinking skills. It reminded me of the importance of providing students with opportunities to explore diverse perspectives and engage in meaningful discussions about social justice issues.”

– High school English teacher, Thurgood Marshall Academy, District 5, Manhattan

“The students were excited about the overall experience! It was great to see them embrace the learning opportunities, and be able to take ownership of the new vocabulary words like ‘lineage & ancestor.’ Also, they were able to come up with thoughtful questions that they would have liked to ask their ancestors.”

– 1st grade teacher, P.S. 74, District 31, Staten Island

“As an educator, I was able to fill my own knowledge gaps about black studies that I had not known prior to implementing these lessons. It was a positive learning experience for both me, as the educator, as well as for my students. The JOY that I saw in the classroom when learning about these periods of history and the diversity of the black culture across the African Diaspora.”

– K-5 social studies teacher, P.S. 340, District 10, Bronx



“In our current units of study, my students have not had the opportunity to do image analysis. It was such a rewarding experience to hear my students’ noticings and meaning-making as we unpacked the painting during the teacher model-guided practice experience. One of my colleagues when she heard about the lesson content, asked can your students do that work? And I replied yes, I think they can. She went on to say that she hadn’t had to do such work until high school and college. It was so fulfilling and heart-warming to hear the high-level discussion my students have and to know that yes, they can analyze and interpret artwork.”

– 5th grade teacher, Arts and Letters 305 United, District 13, Brooklyn

“I incorporated many lessons prior but I have never taught Harlem Hellfighters for example and listening to the testimonies and watching the videos made me realize that I, as a NYC public school student, have never been exposed to this-not in high school, not even in college even when I intentionally took African American focused classes. I openly shared that with my students. I also learned that I made many assumptions about my students given some of their backgrounds, thinking that they might not appreciate it and it will be something that I will need to put extra effort [into] for them to appreciate. All students were engaged. I am eager to share this with ALL my students next year.”

– 8th grade French and Social Studies Teacher, Russell Sage JHS 190, District 28, Queens

“My students enjoyed the Black Studies curriculum very much and were engaged throughout each lesson. They frequently asked, "Are we going to have a Black Studies lesson today?"

– PreK teacher, P.S. 181, District 29, Queens

### **Recommendations from NYCPS Pilot Teachers**

“I recommend continued professional learning to support curriculum implementation.”

– 6-8th grade Social Studies teacher, PS/IS 180 - Hugo Newman, District 3, Manhattan

“Professional PD was great, would love more. I appreciate the activities we learned to try out in the class.”

– 5th grade English Language Arts teacher, P.S. 182 Samantha Smith, District 28, Queens

“The read aloud books coming with the curriculum and continued professional learning to support curriculum.”

– Kindergarten teacher, PS 92 Mary McLeod Bethune, District 5, Manhattan

“The current professional learning series has been an effective way to support the implementation of the lessons. An opportunity for students and educators to highlight and reflect on the experience as a community would be advantageous. A list of supplementary texts, a summative assessment, including the suggested graphic organizers and trip suggestions, would be great additions to the curriculum.”

– 8th grade Social Studies teacher, Park Place Community Middle School 266, District 13,  
Brooklyn

“Quarterly Professional Developments in person and remotely, an Outreach/mentor, Leadership having professional development around it.”

– 10th grade Humanities teacher, School Without Walls, District 2, Manhattan

“Better planned for different populations and abilities of the students”

– 3rd grade teacher, P.S. 205 Fiorella LaGuardia, District 10, Bronx

“I think you need to think about the needs of students with disabilities because this lesson was not accessible to them. I am happy to help with this. Great structure and content; it just needs to be adapted in order for it to be accessible.”

– 2nd grade Special Education teacher in ICT classroom, P.S. 8 Emily Warren Roebling School,  
District 13, Brooklyn

Testimony by Dr. Marsha Jean-Charles, Director of Organizing of The Brotherhood Sister Sol

15 May 2024

*Good afternoon, Members of the Committee on Children and Youth as well as the Committee on Finance. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.*

For over 25 years, The Brotherhood Sister Sol (BroSis) has been at the forefront of social justice; educating, organizing and training to challenge inequity and champion opportunity for all. With a focus on Black and Latinx youth, BroSis is where young people claim the power of their history, identity and community to build the future they want to see. BroSis provides around-the-clock support and wraparound programming, making space for Black and Latinx young people to examine their roots, define their stories and awaken their agency.

All youth deserve safe, high-quality, holistic, and positively transformative educational experiences. If we believe in equity and want to create the futures all New Yorkers deserve, we must build within our schools systems of accountability, restorative justice, and behavioral management that do not include the NYPD *and* holistically support student success. Our vision for education in New York public schools includes safe, restorative, and healing environments where all students have the opportunity to learn and grow. To meet this goal, we must equitably resource New York State public schools and defund the tactics that push out marginalized students.

Our youth at The Brotherhood Sister Sol collectively not only want but need the city to provide NYC schools the funding for mental health support staff, along with the funding for wellness centers within their schools. In December of 2021, U.S Surgeon General Vivek H. Murthy issued a public health advisory, stating that we are experiencing a “devastating mental health crisis among American youth,” one made much worse by the COVID-19 pandemic. For this reason, we implore New York State elected officials to create a budget that prioritizes student mental health and puts New York public schools on a path to fund a student-to-student-support-staff ratio of 1:100. This will necessitate an increase in the budget for NYS public schools so as to quadruple the number of student support staff – including but not limited to Guidance Counselors, Social Workers and Psychologists. This vision for education in New York State includes safe, restorative, healing environments where all students have the opportunity to learn and grow.

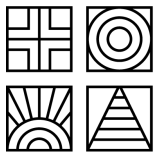
Our youth demand a cessation of the cuts to the education budget and that our elected officials protect critical programs funded with \$1 billion in federal COVID relief funds. including protecting and base-lining the current \$21 million allocation for restorative justice, \$5 million for the Mental Health Continuum, and \$77 million for counselors, social workers, and mental health professionals. They know that expanding school-based restorative justice and social-emotional

supports is essential and propose investing \$75 million to hire school-based Restorative Justice Coordinators in 500 schools. Furthermore, we need continued investment in our young people both in school and in the broader community; funding like the Young Women's Initiative, Summer Youth Employment Program, and more also needs to continue.

The function of education is to advance the next generation, providing them with the academic, social, and life skills necessary to be engaged and innovative world citizens. We need elected officials to invest in our students, their successes, and their academic futures. Instead of funding surveillance and criminalization, we believe that "federal, state, and local dollars must prioritize counselors, psychologists, social workers, and nurses instead of police." We must deconstruct the school-to-prison pipeline and truly decriminalize low-level offenses that lead to our youth having negative contact with the state and carceral systems. And, we must do this now in order to safeguard our young people. Increasing access to quality guidance counselors, social workers, therapists, and other support staff in schools is a great way to invest in our larger communities and our holistic futures.

For more information, contact the Director of Organizing, Dr. Marsha Jean-Charles at [mjc@brotherhood-sistersol.org](mailto:mjc@brotherhood-sistersol.org)





**THE  
BROTHERHOOD  
SISTER SOL**

512 West 143rd Street  
New York, NY 10031  
(212) 283-7044  
[www.brotherhood-sistersol.org](http://www.brotherhood-sistersol.org)

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My name is John Paul Infante and I am a Liberation Program Facilitator at the Brotherhood Sister Sol or BroSis. BroSis provides around-the-clock support and wraparound programming, making space for Black and Latinx young people to examine their roots, define their stories and awaken their agency. The Liberation Program works with youth to support their organizing skills, grow their agency, and teach them about systemic oppression. Our current campaign focuses on implementing wellness centers on every school campus in the city, ensuring that they are properly staffed by culturally responsive professionals and community members.

I am here testifying today in support of restorative justice and redirecting funding from school policing and policing infrastructure into supportive staff and healing-centered programs for students. The city must expand school-based restorative justice and social-emotional supports and serve our young people's needs.

For over a decade I have taught as a tutor for elementary school children, a special education teacher for high schoolers and as an adjunct professor. For the last four years I have been a facilitator for BroSis. The Black and Latinx youth I have worked with and continue to work with are unique in their brilliance, dreams and struggles. And yet every time they share their experiences around being "disciplined" it sounds like the same story. They are kicked out of classrooms or suspended for "acting out." I have learned parents and teachers want for our young people to be held accountable, but they also expect for them to be handled with intentional care. Our young people do not need school safety officers escorting them out of classrooms and school buildings, they need restorative justice coordinators to help them get to the root of their situation. Our young people need counselors, social workers and other mental health professionals. They do not need more police officers disappearing them.

As a facilitator for the Liberation Program, I regularly speak with educators and social workers in high schools throughout the city. Time and time again, I hear of the multiple roles they take on in addition to implementing and creating curriculum. Teachers are spending time outside of regular school hours to address conflicts between students, and sometimes between teachers and students. Social workers are working overtime to connect their students and sometimes parents with mental health support and resources outside of the DoE network.

Last year I spoke with a young man who was suspended over text messages he sent about a teacher. The young man missed days of school and in the end did not understand the harm of his actions or the point of his suspension. Another youth was suspended for recording a fight on his phone. After listening to him, I learned that he recorded his sister fighting in order to show

school authorities, as she was being bullied and nothing had been done about it. In both of these examples, these young men did not learn anything from their suspensions and missed valuable instructional days.

As a high school student I was suspended twice for fighting. Being forced to stay at home felt like a reward. I was struggling academically and regularly cut class. During my suspension I hung out with the drug dealers on my block in Washington Heights. Anytime spent outside the school building during school hours had me in danger of interacting with the police. My first suspension made me feel comfortable hanging on the block during school hours while the second suspension cemented my relationship with those on the corner working the morning shift.

If it wasn't for counselors like Ms. Jaleh at Vanguard High School in the Julia Richmond Complex or Ummi Modeste at City-as-High School, I don't know where I would be today. These women provided a space for me to process my stepfather being in and out of jail and my mother's substance abuse struggles. My academic struggles were tied to my home life and thanks to Ms. Jaleh connecting me with a school social worker, I was able to understand and articulate my predicament in order to overcome it. If it wasn't for the school-based mental health services I received in Vanguard High School and City-as-School, I would've never had access to any mental health support. If it wasn't for BroSis and the mental health support we provide to our members, they would also be forced to fend for themselves and navigate the long term impact of the COVID pandemic and all the other challenges of adolescence.

As adults we have a responsibility to prove and protect our young people. It is not enough to say we care and call them "our future." Any budget cuts to programs that support restorative justice, Student Success Centers, the Mental Health Continuum, immigrant family communication, and school nurses is a blow to New York City. This is why I and BroSis want the city to fully fund meaningful Restorative Justice and divest from school police and policing infrastructure the funding and implementation of school-based mental health services across New York City.

**TESTIMONY**

**NYC COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
CHAIR, RITA JOSEPH**

*New York City Council Budget Fiscal Year 2025  
Executive Budget Hearings - Education*

**Presented on  
Wednesday, May 15, 2024**



**The Council of School Supervisors and Administrators  
Henry Rubio, President  
Rosemarie Sinclair, Executive Vice President  
Dale Kelly, First Vice President**

**40 Rector Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10006  
(212) 823-2020  
[www.csa-nyc.org](http://www.csa-nyc.org)**

Good afternoon, Speaker Adams, Chair Brannan, Chair Joseph, and the distinguished members of the City Council. Thank you for conducting another critical hearing that allows a comprehensive response to the Mayor's Executive Budget. On behalf of over 17,000 in-service and retired Principals, Assistant Principals, Educational Administrators, Supervisors, as well as Directors and Assistant Directors of Early Childhood Centers, we appreciate the opportunity to again provide our union's input on the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget.

### **Funding**

In our testimony on the Preliminary Budget, we reiterated our long-standing belief that spending cuts should never directly impact students. We've consistently implored the city to find ways to replace the expiring federal aid provided since the pandemic. So, we're thankful that the DOE will avoid another round of budget cuts, and that Mayor Adams recently announced \$500 million in funding to sustain services and programs that have been supported by federal funding. The mayor's pledge for additional funding is essential, including the funding for 3K expansion and more outreach to families, social workers and psychologists providing mental health supports, special education Pre-K services, arts funding programming, and coordinators to help students in temporary housing. We thank the Council for their advocacy for these programs in the Council's official response to the mayor's Preliminary Budget; this additional funding would not have been provided without the Council's persistent efforts.

As the Council knows well, there are still other cuts coming due to previous reductions in city spending and the expiration of federal aid. In the Council's response to the mayor's Preliminary Budget, the Council called on the Administration to restore \$170 million for early childhood education programs to allow for universal access to 3K and UPK seats, and we agree more ECE funding is necessary from the city. In addition, as the Council's response to the Preliminary Budget stated, 113 of 421 Community Schools are funded with federal stimulus funding that will soon expire. So, we thank the Council for its advocacy in calling on the administration to restore and baseline \$77 million to substitute for expiring federal and City funds and cover the costs of keeping necessary programming in all our Community Schools. The Council also called on the administration to restore and baseline \$3 million for District 75 special education programs since the city implemented baselined PEG savings of \$3 million from lower-than-expected spending in District 75. Given the increasing need for schools to provide quality special education services, we fully agree with the Council that the DOE should spend all budgeted funds for D75 programs, particularly to fill vacancies in D75 teaching positions and other special education positions.

Additionally, CSA believes the DOE must ensure an adequate budget appeal pool of funds to effectively support schools during the budget appeals process. The city must also continue to fund the purchase and repair of student devices. Our system's dependence on these tools escalated with the pandemic and now includes their utilization for testing and more; we must not allow the expense of these tools to become an unfunded mandate for schools.

As you know, the finalized New York State budget will provide \$35.9 billion in school aid funding for next school year, which includes \$24.9 billion in Foundation Aid. That's a \$934.5 million increase from last school year, which is nearly double what the Governor first proposed in her Executive Budget in January (a \$507 million increase). This is a huge win for New York



City schools, and we ask that the City Council help us ensure that this state funding goes directly to school budgets.

### **Funding for Class Size Law Implementation**

We believe in smaller class sizes. School leaders know firsthand the positive effects that smaller classes can have on students. Anyone who has ever stepped foot in a classroom can understand how fewer students often leads to more individual attention and feedback for each, better connection between teachers and students, and more meaningful participation in lessons.

However, from the inception of the class size law, we have been steadfast in our position that the city must implement the class size law in a responsible manner. We must begin any conversation about this law by acknowledging that, despite best intentions, there are critical challenges to address so that the law's current mandates do not harm school communities more than help them. Many school leaders have shared substantial concerns that the lack of adequate funding for additional teachers and/or the absence of space makes it incredibly challenging for their schools to comply with the class size legislation. If additional funding is not provided to help their schools meet the new class size limits, school leaders may be forced to eliminate existing programs, reduce their enrollment, and/or alter how they utilize spaces.

With New York State's recent budget deal, the State Senate and Assembly mandated that that the city do more to support schools as we phase in the class size law, including an additional \$2 billion in funding to build more classrooms and schools. Another key component was the mayor's assurance that the Foundation Aid allocated to the DOE will not be reduced or diverted, as has happened in the past. This was welcome news to school leaders in April. In addition, in the DOE's updated plan that they intend to submit to the state in the coming months, the city pledged \$45 million in additional C4E funding for use in any of the six allowable purposes of C4E and another \$137 million in additional funding for class size reduction only, to be directed at schools with high economic needs and space to bring additional classes below the caps.

Despite these pledges, we believe more must be done by the administration to support the implementation of the class size law, and we again call on the Council to support school leaders as we elevate substantial concerns. The DOE has been transparent that while some schools are well-positioned to comply with the new class size legislation without any complications, there are many schools that have no capacity to expand and no additional space for new construction. Therefore, some school districts will require new school buildings to adhere to the class size requirements. Soon after the state legislature passed this law, the DOE estimated that the capital cost of constructing new spaces or repurposing existing rooms would total approximately \$35 billion. However, there is no indication how we will pay for this construction. Additionally, constructing a school can take between three to five years, and the city has not even identified sites for these new schools. There is existing construction work in various parts of the city, but much of that work began before the class size legislation. So, the locations of these construction projects do not necessarily align with the areas of need identified by the new law. We are already two years into the phase-in, and there is no clarity on how we will find adequate funding for these and other needs.

Earlier this month, the Archdiocese of New York announced that four Catholic schools in New York City will permanently close at the end of the school year. Last year, twelve Catholic schools closed, and this trend may continue in the coming years as Catholic officials continue to cite declining enrollment and financial pressures since the pandemic. We urge the city to consider leasing these buildings and engage communities about opening new public schools to help implement the class size law.

Meanwhile, concerns about staffing needs abound. The DOE initially projected the need for approximately 9,000 additional teachers to comply with the new mandates, but recent estimates have increased this number to between 10,000 and 12,000. The need for a substantial increase in the number of teachers will clearly result in the need for additional supervisors. Current school leaders, who are already operating under untenable demands and workloads, will be overwhelmed by additional evaluations, observations, and professional development responsibilities to train the significant increase in new teachers and paraprofessionals. We must ensure that the existing supervisory workforce is not further overstretched and burnt out. As the plan that the city submitted to NYSED suggests, we will continue to advocate for a proportional increase in supervisory support to maintain effective instruction and professional development for the anticipated influx of teachers. Otherwise, the academic gains from smaller class sizes may be eroded since the law necessitates hiring new teachers who may require more professional development and support due to their lack of experience.

The state's Contracts for Excellence (C4E) funding provides schools with resources based on factors such as per capita enrollment and the demographic composition of the student body, including special needs students and those in temporary housing. As the class size law stands, the state does not offer schools any additional funding to comply with the new class size limits. Without a new or increased funding stream, schools will be forced to reallocate their existing monies to comply with the new staffing requirements and likely eliminate vital after-school tutoring, intervention, clubs, sports, arts, music, drama, STEM, robotics, and other extracurricular programs or partnerships with community-based organizations. Given the influx of your newest New Yorkers and their current needs, educators are already concerned that our reading, math, and graduation rates will stay level or slightly decline. We need to do everything possible to accelerate their learning. Schools use C4E funds to support students with the greatest needs, including English Language Learners, students with disabilities, and students in poverty. Forcing schools to divert these funds would put the cost of reducing class sizes directly on schools themselves and would inevitably lead to a reduction of services and support that our most vulnerable students need.”

The city’s Fair Student Funding Formula is therefore a critical element of this discussion. We have maintained for years that this formula is inherently flawed. It has consistently disadvantaged certain schools, leaving them in a perpetual state of financial appeal simply to secure the resources needed for basic operation. The city obviously constructed the current formula before the law, and the current construct assumes classes made up of thirty students. The city must find new funding streams or increase Fair Student Funding to properly implement the new class size limits, otherwise too many schools may have a financial inability to provide the same level of programming.

When schools enact the new caps, some will be forced to reduce enrollment which will lessen the FSF funding they receive. After reducing class sizes, the per-student funds may no longer be sufficient. For instance, a school with a third-grade class of thirty students may currently receive enough per-student funding for one teacher; however, when the new law limits third-grade classes to twenty students, the school's budget must suddenly fund two third-grade teachers. We must increase FSF to align with the new caps or too many schools will now become underfunded according to the city's own formula.

### **Pathway to Pay Parity**

Chief amongst CSA's concerns is the issue of pay parity for Early Childhood Educators (ECE). CSA represents Directors and Assistant Directors of Early Childhood Centers run by Community-Based Organizations (CBOs). As the Council articulated well in its response to the Mayor's Preliminary Budget, the City's prioritization of early childhood education is vital for working class families, and our ECE programs enable parents, particularly working-class women, to pursue career opportunities. We wholeheartedly agree with the Council that the administration must ensure that the city fully invest in preserving and our early childhood education programs since they not only facilitate future educational success but also protect against student enrollment declines.

As you know, the success of the City's Pre-K and 3-K initiatives are dependent on these CBO directors who work tirelessly to serve NYC families. As it stands, the top city-funded salary for these professionals is \$63,287, while their DOE counterparts make more than twice as much. This is an egregious disparity that has existed within our system for far too long. CSA has consistently demonstrated that CBO directors and assistant directors perform substantially equal work under similar working conditions as directors of early education programs operated in public school facilities.

This pay-scale inequity not only smacks of racial injustice and patent unfairness, but also threatens to compromise the stability and quality of early childhood education. CBOs struggle to recruit and retain staff precisely because their salaries do not match DOE salaries; CBOs consistently lose staff to higher paying positions. Meanwhile, the DOE has asserted the same standards apply in all early childhood programs in New York City. When the city pays CBO Directors on a lower scale and treats them like second-class citizens, they and the children in their care are stigmatized and branded as less important. The city's unwillingness to address this disparity communicates to the families that utilize these programs that they deserve less.

Our CBO-based members have been without a contract since 2020. Unfortunately, the city has not yet sat down with CSA and the Day Care Council to negotiate a new contract for these educators. We ask, again, that you urge the mayor to do right by these incredible CBO directors. We ask that you support our members that serve our city's youngest children in CBO-based centers. We know that the Speaker, Education Chair, and many other city council members are on record as strong advocates of pay parity, and we thank you for your efforts.

### **Executive Leadership Institute**

One way that we support the educators that we represent is through our professional development affiliate, the Executive Leadership Institute (ELI). In 2002, CSA recognized a significant void and need in professional development, training, and support services for school leaders. We established ELI because we recognize that the success of our faculty, support staff, and most importantly, our students, is dependent on our ability to lead. Thanks to the City Council's financial support, ELI has been able to provide critical support to school leaders and administrators for over 20 years. Yet, ELI has not received an increase in funding from the city for five years, so we humbly request a \$1,000,000 increase in support to the Executive Leadership Institute to support the following initiatives:

- To expand ELI's professional development services for school leaders. Currently, over 150 single-topic workshops are offered throughout the year to our school leaders.
- To support school leaders in the training and implementation of curricula and instructional practices aligned to the science of reading.
- To provide all school leaders with training in applying restorative practices to reduce suspensions and implementing vital mental health programs.
- To expand mentoring and coaching to first-year principals through one-on-one exchanges as they assume the heavy responsibility of running their schools for the first time.
- To enhance the School Leadership Institute, our three-year educational program that supports newly assigned Assistant Principals, Education Administrators, and Early Childhood Directors. Currently, ELI is mentoring over 350 new supervisors.
- To provide professional development on how school leaders can best take advantage of emerging AI technology to better serve students.
- To provide professional development on combatting chronic absenteeism in all grades

CSA and ELI also believe we must expand our Advanced Leadership Program for Assistant Principals (ALPAP), to attract and support school leaders considering becoming a school principal. This is vitally important as we anticipate a high turnover in school leadership in the coming months. Many school leaders delayed their retirement during the pandemic so that they didn't leave their school community stranded at a particularly vulnerable time. Others are departing the system earlier than expected due to burnout from the mental, emotional, and physical toll that the job has taken on them and their families. ALPAP helps school leaders and administrators develop leadership skills aligned with the NYCDOE School Leadership Competencies. ALPAP provides a path forward for Assistant Principals and Education Administrators who have demonstrated a readiness to become Principals, and every year we foster a new cohort of strong, inspired, and dynamic leaders to help our youth succeed.

There is no entity that has done more to recruit, train, and retain New York City school leaders than ELI. As our system faces increasing challenges in recruiting, training, and retaining supervisors and administrators, we ask that you increase the city's investment in ELI and its flagship principal preparation program, ALPAP.

### **School Safety**

To teach and learn, teachers and students must feel valued, respected, and safe. The first and most important priority of every school leader is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of our students while maintaining a culture that is conducive to learning and respectful to all. CSA has



shared our members' growing concerns about school safety for years, advocating for resources allocated to schools to provide safe learning environments and warning about the erosion of school leaders' discretion over decisions that affect the well-being of their communities. CSA would like to call upon the City Council for its continued support as we fight for safety measures that will allow our children to learn, our teachers to teach, and our administrators to lead. Here are our safety priorities:

1. Our schools need an adequate number of safety agents, and they must be appropriately funded. We ask for the full support of the City Council in ensuring that the administration fills all school safety agent openings, and no hiring reduction occurs. We must also consider how to better protect our ECE centers and provide them with school safety officers as well. If a 3K class is in a DOE school building, school safety officers those children; we must not let there be inequity when it comes to the safety of our youngest children.
2. Every NYC school must have at least one assistant principal and the budget to accommodate this. Recognizing that safety issues and concerns are exacerbated in schools without an assistant principal, CSA secured a contractual provision calling for an assistant principal in every building. It is necessary to have an appointed administrator to oversee the protocols and procedures to keep students safe in an emergency. Assistant principals are particularly necessary given that our system is deeply committed to using restorative approaches to student missteps, anti-bullying initiatives, and parental communication which understandably takes time and requires training.
3. Our union has long advocated that school doors should be locked during the school day and visitors should have to communicate through a buzzer entry system. We were pleased to see a considerable investment in the Mayor's Preliminary Budget to install new security measures in school facilities. This common-sense measure will certainly strengthen our first line of defense for keeping our school communities safe. Our union believes this is something that should be afforded to all elementary schools and all other schools at the principal's discretion. Most buildings in New York date back to when our current concerns around school safety would have been inconceivable. Many entrances allow access to the entire building before a visitor must encounter a safety agent. Too many of our schools have an insufficient number of agents or other out of classroom personnel to adequately cover the building and supervise exits during dismissal. All buildings should have enough cameras for monitoring inside and outside, and the city should install panic buttons in key areas.

We also have safety concerns around the utilization of school buildings for early voting. To be clear, CSA fully supports early voting; we recognize that it ensures accessibility and provides convenience for all citizens to exercise their rights. However, we obviously must balance this need with the well-being and educational needs of our students, and we believe the city can utilize alternative spaces for this important purpose. Utilizing schools as early voting sites can present challenges that disrupt the academic environment and compromise the safety of our students. The displacement of students during early voting periods impacts students' regular routines and usually interferes with essential facilities such as cafeterias and physical education spaces. More importantly, the presence of unfamiliar individuals on school premises during voting hours can raise obvious security concerns, particularly given the lack of safety agents

across the city. While early voting is essential for fostering civic engagement, it should not come at the expense of our children's education and safety.

### **Conclusion**

Once again, we thank the Council for the opportunity to address you today and share our feedback and concerns. Thank you all for your continued leadership, partnership, and thoughtful consideration regarding school leaders' concerns as we all look to do our best to improve the lives of our city's most crucial resource – our children.

Sincerely,

Henry Rubio  
CSA President

**The New York City Charter School Center**  
**Erik Joeress, Vice President of Advocacy and Government Affairs**  
**Testimony Presented to the Executive Budget Hearing for the Education Committee**  
**New York City Council Fiscal Year 2025 Executive Budget Hearings**  
**May 15, 2024**

The New York City Charter School Center (Charter Center) respectfully submits the following testimony. The Charter Center thanks the New York City Council Committee on Education for providing the opportunity to comment on the Executive Budget Hearings on behalf of students attending New York City charter schools.

For over twenty years, public charter schools have been an integral part of the public education system in New York City (NYC). In the 2023-24 school year there are 274 public charter schools operating in the five boroughs serving over 146,200 students. This represents 15% of public school students, of which nearly 90% are Black/African American or Latinx. New York's public charter schools are serving primarily low-income NYC families (82% are economically disadvantaged), offering additional high-quality educational options for families.<sup>1</sup>

Learn to Work is a Department of Education (DOE) funded program that provides grants to community-based organizations which allows them to partner with public transfer high schools serving overage/under-credited students. Currently, all DOE transfer high schools have or are eligible to have a CBO partnership under this program. This partnership provides students with critical benefits such as intervention and support, internships, workforce and college preparation, social and emotional counseling, alongside experiential learning and enhancement activities.

The 1900 charter transfer high school students (distributed among 8 NYC charter schools) have been denied access to these impactful Learn to Work programs. There is no rationale for this exclusion. Charter school transfer high school students, like their counterparts in the district, need career readiness skills and mentorship opportunities, in addition to potential job opportunities. The Learn to Work program has been shown to significantly benefit students by bridging the gap between education and employment. It provides students with the skills, experience and connections needed to succeed in their chosen career path and should be expanded to include charter school students. Given the relatively small number of charter transfer high schools, the expansion of the Learn to Work program to charter schools is expected to cost under \$3 million.

Charter school students remain the lowest funded public-school students in NYC. It is nothing more than a myth that charter schools drain resources or cost the district a disproportionate amount of public aid. A NYC student attending a charter school receives much less public funding than their New York counterparts in district public schools. The most recent Independent Budget Office of New York City (IBO) analysis found that NYC charter schools were

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<sup>1</sup> Enrollment figures and demographics based on NYSED Preliminary Enrollment Data for 2023-24 School Year.

underfunded between more than a \$1,000 to up to almost \$5,000 per student.<sup>2</sup> The exclusion from programs such as the Learn to Work program continues to exacerbate the inequities between district and charter students.

In our city, every student should have equal access to resources that empower them to reach their fullest potential. Programs like Learn to Work play a vital role in leveling the playing field by equipping students with practical skills, real-world experiences, and valuable connections to an already challenging workforce. By ensuring that all students, irrespective of their public-school choice can participate in such initiatives, we not only promote equity but also can foster a community where every student in New York City has a chance to succeed and contribute meaningfully to society.

We ask that you expand the Learn to Work program to include students who attend charter transfer high schools.

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<sup>2</sup> The most recent analysis done by the Independent Budget Office of the City of New York (IBO), an arm of New York City's government, found that NYC charter schools were underfunded between more than a thousand dollars to up to \$4,863. See *With State Formula for Charter School Funding Likely to Change, City Costs to Grow More Than Budgeted*, available at <http://www.ibo.nyc.ny.us/iboreports/with-state-formula-for-charter-school-funding-likely-to-change-city-costs-to-grow-more-than-budgeted-march-2017.pdf>





FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**New York City Council  
Committee on Education, Honorable Rita Joseph, Chair**

**Testimony of YMCA of Greater New York  
Submitted by Chelsea Baytemur, Director of Policy and Advocacy**

**New York City Council Fiscal Year 2025 Executive Budget Hearing  
Committee on Education**

I respectfully submit the following testimony on behalf of the YMCA of Greater New York.

The YMCA of Greater New York is committed to empowering youth, improving health, and strengthening community. With 24 YMCA branches and more than 100 community sites across New York City, the Y is among the City's largest providers of human services spanning from infancy to older adult — and an important anchor, convener, and catalyst for transformational change in underserved communities.

The YMCA is also a proud member of the Coalition for Community School Excellence (CCSE), the Campaign for Children (C4C), and the Emergency Coalition to Save Education Programs (ECSEP). As a member of these networks and coalitions we support their policy and budget agendas.

We stand with the Council, and our non-profit partners, to oppose the harmful budget cuts to Education, including Community Schools and early childhood education, which were proposed in the November 2023 Financial Plan Modification and remain in the Fiscal Year 2025 Executive Budget (Executive Budget). Budgets reflect our priorities; and this budget demonstrates to our students, families, school staff, and nonprofit providers that this Administration does not value their needs.

While we thank the Administration for including around \$600 million in the Executive Budget to continue many of the critical education programs that were funded by the expiring federal COVID-19 relief funds, the Executive Budget failed to bridge the full budget gap for programs such as Community Schools, added funding to select programs for one year only instead of baselining their respective budgets, added no funding for other essential programs and staff, and failed to reverse detrimental cuts for areas such as early childhood education introduced in the previous two financial plans.

YMCA OF GREATER NEW YORK 5 West 63rd Street New York, NY 10023  
cbaytemur@ymcanyc.org

**YMCA OF GREATER NEW YORK** | Where there's a Y, there's a way.

We question the Administration's justification for moving forward with such detrimental cuts to our education system and providing no contingency plan for the looming fiscal cliff. How can we elevate and empower the next generation of New Yorkers if we take away the critical resources that sustain their systems of care and further their development? How do we keep families in the city who are overburdened by the cost of living, the cost of childcare, and face the loss of critical supports for their young ones? This budget as is will decimate access to invaluable services that support child and youth development, social and emotional wellbeing, school readiness, and are central to families staying in the city and flourishing their communities.

## **Early Childhood Education**

We were pleased to see that the Executive Budget added \$92 million to maintain 3-K seats funded by the expiring federal COVID-19 funding. However, this funding was added to Fiscal 2025 only, maintaining a budget gap in Fiscal 2026 and in the outyears. Furthermore, the Executive Budget does not reverse the cut of \$170 million to early childhood education services included in the Fiscal 2025 Preliminary Plan, citing inefficiencies including unused seats. We counter that narrative by emphasizing that underutilization is the result of barriers to access; including language access for parents who may not see advertisement for programs in their home language, inadequate mapping of need by district, and generally the lack of information families have received about the program. The cut of \$170 million could translate into 9,000 to 15,000 seats being cut from the system, leaving many children without Pre-K and halting the timeline of the citywide expansion of 3-K. Community-based organizations like ours are the backbone of the city's plan for early childhood education, so we are concerned by the impact these cuts will have on the New Yorkers who rely most on our services to make sure their children begin their educational journeys in safe environments.

Citywide, [80% of families cannot afford](#) childcare or after school programs:

- Across the city, families can pay up to 63% of their annual income on childcare or after school care.
- The inability to secure childcare resulted in a [loss of \\$23 billion in economic activity](#) in NYC in 2022.
- New Yorkers departing the city at the fastest rate in 2023 were families making between \$32,000 and \$65,000 annually.

The YMCA's early childhood programs serve nearly 1,000 children. The need for early childhood education continues to increase across the city, with the YMCA having a waitlist at more than half of our program sites. Early childhood education is a vital part of New York City's social and economic ecosystems, as it allows parents and guardians to go to work, supports the development and enrichment of children, and enhances the quality of life for some of our most vulnerable communities. To sustain these ecosystems, as well as meet the growing need for youth programs and early childhood education, community-based organizations like the YMCA need seamless support from our agency partners. This means fully staffed divisions, clear and timely communication, and designated points of contact. This way we can ensure a smooth process in hiring and onboarding staff, and in turn have the support we need to maximize our

enrollment. None of which can occur with direct cuts to Pre-K and 3-K, central support, and an agency-wide hiring freeze which further exasperates bureaucratic hurdles to the delivery of childcare early childhood education.

Additionally, to ensure equity and access, NYCPS needs to enable non-profit providers of early childhood education to directly enroll children and youth onsite. We stand with the City Council in opposing these cuts and we support the Council's efforts on holding the Administration accountable to strengthen our city's early childhood system, by protecting Pre-K and 3-K, expanding access to full day/year-round programs for all children, especially infants and toddlers, and achieving salary parity for early childhood educators.

Build a stronger, more inclusive future for our city by investing in the following critical services:

- **Restore** \$170 million in city tax-levy funding to early care and education. This restoration would protect the path to 3-K expansion and protect Pre-K capacity for 9,000 to 15,000 children.
- **Restore** and baseline \$25 million for PromiseNYC to provide child care to undocumented children and families.

The City should take the following steps to ensure the ECE and youth services workforce can support access to services:

**Fund** an Early Childhood Education labor deal that will: a) **Ensure** salary parity between certified and uncertified teachers in CBO settings with their DOE counterparts, b) **Guarantee** a wage floor of \$25 per hour for all support staff in CBO settings, c) **Restore** longevity differentials for CBO staff who have been in their positions for many years, in line with what DOE teachers receive, and d) **Fund** per diems for staff working in extended day/year programs.

## **Community Schools**

We thank the Administration for investing, restoring, and baselining a combined total of \$56 million to support Community Schools in Fiscal 2025 and in the outyears. This includes \$48 million to fund 113 Community Schools funded through federal COVID-19 stimulus, and an \$8 million cut restoration to Community Schools, introduced in the November 2023 Financial Plan. However, 62 Community Schools are still facing a \$14 million loss in one-time city funding, including \$5 million for 10 schools in the zip codes most detrimentally impacted by the pandemic, and 52 campus model schools. We stand with the Council and call on the Administration to restore and baseline the remaining gap of \$14 million to make our Community Schools whole.

New York City has one of the largest portfolios of community schools in the country and serves as a leader in upholding and implementing the model. A cut of any magnitude undermines the incredible progress of Community Schools; progress in boosting and sustaining student attendance, supporting the social and emotional well-being of students, and bridging the gap

between our families and resources such as food and/or health care. The YMCA has ten community schools across the city, each of which works in getting our kids on the path to success by developing essential life, community building, and leadership skills.

Community School providers also deliver real time support and solutions to families as unprecedented challenges transpire. For example, many Community School providers were the first responders during the onset of the pandemic, connecting families with essentials such as food and clothing, translation services, and even delivery of electronic devices for remote learning. Community Schools also provided aid to families during the Bronx Fire tragedy and work to support students who are asylum seekers as they navigate the school system and classrooms. Community Schools are an essential part of the communities they work with, beyond the walls of a classroom. Any divestment of Community Schools would ultimately lead to a void in the community and foster a distrust of the City and providers.

### **Federal Funding Stimulus Cliff**

Over the last few years, NYCPS has been using around \$1 billion per year in temporary federal COVID-19 relief funds for important long-term programs that were necessary long before the pandemic and will continue to be critical long after, such as 3-K, preschool special education, Summer Rising, 450 school social workers, Community Schools, school nurses, restorative justice, 60 school psychologists, 75 coordinators working in homeless shelters, bilingual staff, translation and interpretation, dyslexia and literacy initiatives, and more.

The Executive Budget added around \$600 million to sustain many of these initiatives, including school social workers and psychologists, coordinators working in homeless shelters, Learning to Work, bilingual supports, and more. However, other essential programs were left out of the budget or did not see a full restoration of current funding levels. We stand with the Emergency Coalition to Save Education Programs and call on the Administration to pass a final budget that includes funding for these vital supports, including but not limited to:

- Early Childhood Education \$170M
- Community Schools \$14M
- Restorative Justice \$12M
- Mental Health Continuum \$5M
- Pre-school Special Education \$13M
- Immigrant Family Communication and Outreach \$4M
- Student Success Centers \$3.3M
- School Nurses \$65M

The funds are expiring, and unless the City adds funding to the budget to continue these programs, they could be rolled back or eliminated as soon as July. The reductions in the November and January Plan, as well as the expiration of federal stimulus dollars and expiration of one-time city funding, jeopardize access to a quality education impacting children's



foundational years as well as families' economic well-being. We must reject cuts that harm and destabilize the education and youth services systems and sustainably fund these programs in Fiscal 2025 and in the outyears.

We urge the Council to look carefully at these incomplete restorations and remaining cuts, and to fight to protect key services for young children, youth, and families across the city. We appreciate your support, leadership, and partnership in helping deliver quality services, and helping more youth learn, grow, and thrive. Thank you so much for fighting for children, families, teachers, and non-profit providers across New York City.

If you have any questions, please contact Chelsea Baytemur, Director of Policy, and Advocacy, at [cbaytemur@ymcanyc.org](mailto:cbaytemur@ymcanyc.org).

## **TESTIMONY: UJA-FEDERATION OF NEW YORK**

### **New York City Council Budget and Oversight Hearings on the Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 2025**

**New York City Council Committee on Finance  
Honorable Justin Brannan, Chair**

**New York City Council Committee on Education  
Honorable Rita Joseph, Chair**

**New York City Council Committee on Higher Education  
Honorable Eric Dinowitz, Chair**

**Submitted by:  
Faith Behum, UJA-Federation of New York**

**May 15, 2024**

Thank you, Chairpersons Brannan, Joseph, Dinowitz and members of the Committee on Finance, Education, and Higher Education for holding this hearing and for the opportunity to submit testimony. My name is Faith Behum, and I am a Senior Advocacy and Policy Advisor at UJA-Federation of New York.

Established more than 100 years ago, UJA-Federation of New York is one of the nation's largest local philanthropies. Central to UJA's mission is to care for those in need—identifying and meeting the needs of New Yorkers of all backgrounds and Jews everywhere. UJA supports an expansive network of nearly 100 nonprofit organizations serving those that are most vulnerable and in need of programs and services and allocates over \$180 million each year to combat poverty and food insecurity, nurture mental health and well-being, counter antisemitism and strengthen Jewish life, and respond to crises here and across the globe.

UJA submits the following recommendations for the FY 2025 budget.

### **EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

#### **Preschool Special Education**

Over the last few years, New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) has been using around \$1 billion per year in temporary federal COVID-19 relief funds for important long-term programs that were necessary before the pandemic and will continue to be critical. These investments include (but are not exclusive to), money to sustain and expand 3-K and funds that were used to increase salaries for preschool special education teachers. Nearly \$600 million was included in the Executive Budget to maintain many of the educational programs that were supported with temporary funding. While UJA appreciates the Adams' Administration and the City Council's commitment to sustaining some of these programs, additional investments must be made to maintain and strengthen these programs for youth, children and families who rely on them.

A total of \$96 million in federal COVID-19 relief funds was used to support preschool special education programs and services throughout New York City. The Executive Budget baselined \$83 million for preschool special education which will be used to continue to increase teacher salaries in these programs to the same level

of 3-K and Pre-K teachers at CBOs. **UJA requests that an additional \$13 million be included in the Executive Budget for preschool special education programs.**

1,000 children were still waiting for a seat in a special education program at the end of the 2022-2023 school year. NYCPS is now projecting a shortage of between 866 and more than 1,400 seats in preschool special education classes this spring. Under federal law, children with disabilities are entitled to a free and appropriate education. Any decrease in funding to preschool special education programs will result in further damage to a system that is already struggling to meet the needs of students with disabilities in a timely manner. **UJA requests that Councilmembers and the Administration include an additional \$13 million for special needs preschools (for a total of \$96 million) in the adopted budget to meet the growing need for these educational opportunities.**

### **Pre-K and 3-K programs**

UJA's network of nonprofit partners provides early childhood education programs including Pre-K and 3-K throughout New York City. Each of these programs is in multi-service community centers that offer children full-day care if it is needed by their families. Child care for children under five is a significant cost for families. According to a 2023 Citizens' Committee for Children report on the affordability of child care in New York City, 80% of families with children under five included in the report could not afford child care.<sup>1</sup> The Executive Budget includes \$92 million in one year funding, to cover the expiring federal COVID relief funds that were used to expand 3-K. An additional \$5 million investment is included to support early childhood education outreach in communities across New York City, a service that was underfunded recently and impacted the numbers of children enrolled in 3-K and Pre-K.

While these investments are appreciated, a \$170 million cut still remains to the early childhood education (ECE) system. The projected \$170 million cut from 3-K and Pre-K would result in a loss of up to 15,000 seats for children. **UJA urges Councilmembers to work with the Administration to reverse any potential cuts to the Pre-K and 3-K system that will result in reduced capacity.** Free, high quality early childhood education programs like Pre-K and 3-K provide an invaluable resource to families struggling to make ends meet in New York City. Most importantly, they strive to ensure every child has access to educational programs that will prepare them for kindergarten. Reduced access to free early childhood education opportunities will drive families out of New York City and potentially harm educational outcomes for future generations.

The Adams' Administration justified the \$170 million PEG funding reduction by tying it to unused 3-K and Pre-K seats. In the UJA network, there are numerous providers who have extensive waitlists for their 3-K programs. Instead of cutting these seats, UJA urges NYCPS to analyze data on areas that have open seats and determine the reasons as to why those seats are open. UJA also requests the Administration use the \$5 million investment in early childhood education outreach for a linguistically and culturally appropriate multi-media community engagement and enrollment effort to fill open, budgeted seats. Before reducing the number of seats available in 3-K and Pre-K programs, a concerted effort must be made by the NYCPS to ensure access is not decreased for children who want and need these programs.

Besides potential funding cuts, a few issues including, continued delayed reimbursement from NYCPS, lack of comprehensive pay parity for the workforce and the inability to directly enroll families continue to threaten the sustainability of the 3-K and Pre-K programs in CBOs. Since October 2022, NYCPS has slowly improved the timeliness of payments on Birth to Five contracts. While some providers have benefitted from this, others still wait to be compensated. One of the biggest issues nonprofits in UJA's network faces is waiting for approval of students. Students must be approved before a program can invoice. Providers in UJA's network have students that have been waiting to be approved since September-because of this delay they have been unable to submit invoices and be paid. Students not being approved also delays providers' ability to enter data into the vendor portal about completed developmental screenings, which are required to be done 45 days after a child is

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<sup>1</sup> <https://cccnyc.org/data-publications/from-birth-to-age-12-child-care-and-out-of-school-care/>

enrolled. When providers contact their enrollment specialist and/or operational analyst about these issues they struggle to receive concrete suggestions on what can be done to rectify the problems delaying students to be registered.

No City contracted 3-K and Pre-K programs at community-based organizations should have to wait months to be compensated for completed work. UJA urges the Administration to address the payment issues facing the 3-K and Pre-K systems by:

- **Paying** early care and education service providers on time and complete payments owed immediately.
- **Fully staff** NYCPS divisions responsible for invoicing and payment and make permanent the ability of ECE providers to batch multiple months of invoices.

Lack of comprehensive pay parity across the early childhood education workforce also continues to plague the sector. The 2019 salary parity agreement resulted in certified CBO teachers in pre-kindergarten programs receiving the same compensation as entry level DOE pre-kindergarten teachers. This investment alleviated some of the recruitment and retention issues CBOs experienced in their Pre-K programs. However, some outstanding issues need to be addressed to achieve comprehensive pay parity. Since the salary increases negotiated in 2019 match the compensation entry level NYCPS teachers are making, teachers who have worked in CBO Pre-K programs for multiple years are making the same amount as a teacher who is working in their first year at a CBO. Directors and educational directors in CBO Pre-K programs were not included in the 2019 salary parity agreement. As a result, many are being compensated less than the teachers they supervise, resulting in directors and educational directors leaving CBOs for higher paying jobs. Additionally, non-teaching staff in CBOs, including assistants, janitors, cooks, and other staff, are being compensated less than their counterparts in New York City Public Schools.

To combat this, UJA urges the City to fund an early childhood education labor deal for staff in CBOs which would result in equivalent salaries and benefits for equal levels of education and experience between certified and uncertified early childhood educators inside and outside NYCPS programs. This should also account for the differences in school days and longer hours worked by CBO educators. Longevity increases for teachers in community based early childhood education programs must also be included. A minimum wage floor of \$25 an hour must also be included for non-teaching staff in CBOs. Lastly, when pay parity agreements are achieved, contracts must be promptly amended to include additional funds for CBOs to have the financial means to compensate their workforce according to those agreements.

Enrollment procedures create additional issues for families and providers. Currently, families enroll their children in 3-K and Pre-K programs located in CBOs through NYCPS. The DOE enrolling families in CBO 3-K and Pre-K programs creates another unnecessary step in the enrollment process that families would not have to deal with if they could enroll through the CBOs. It also results in CBOs obtaining their list of enrollees from the DOE meaning NYCPS ultimately has control over who is or is not attending CBO programs. CBOs interact directly with the families who are interested in attending their 3-K and Pre-K programs and should be given the option to directly enroll them in their programs.

UJA's nonprofit partners entered contracts with NYCPS, agreeing to be funded by the City to provide high-quality early childhood education programs to the communities they serve. These nonprofits have kept up their end of that agreement and need the City to address the previously stated issues to maintain a thriving early childhood education system in New York City.

## **NON-PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

### **Supporting Non-Public Schools**

UJA is grateful to the City Council for the multiple programs and funding streams provided to the benefit of students in nonpublic schools. In the months since Hamas' October 7<sup>th</sup> attack, Jewish schools have faced increased security threats. Providing a secure learning environment is a core responsibility for all schools.



## **Lowering Local Law 2 Student Enrollment Threshold**

The security needs of New York's Jewish day schools are intensifying and evolving, and additional funding is required to meet those needs. Many schools across New York City have already started paying for additional personnel at additional cost and have even begun charging parents for this new expense. Currently, New York City operates the Nonpublic School Security Reimbursement Program (Local Law 2) which reimburses procurement of a school security guard only if the school has more than 300 students.

If the enrollment threshold were lowered from 300 students to 150 students, over 200 more schools would become eligible for this funding. There is currently money left over that can immediately be used to keep children safe. This funding is critical to all nonpublic schools, no matter their size, especially our most vulnerable religious institutions such as Jewish day schools, yeshivas, and Islamic schools. Lowering the enrollment threshold from 300 students to 150 would help schools immediately without any extra cost to the city.

## **Health and Wellness Services for Nonpublic Schools**

Section 912 of the NYS Education Law requires school districts to provide nonpublic school students the same health and wellness services provided to public school students. However, we know that there are a wide range of services NYC Public Schools offers in city and state funded schools but not private schools and these include social worker, counselor, and mental health services.

Several programs championed by the City Council focused on the health and mental health needs of the children of New York City and we applaud the Administration's focus on meeting the needs of school-aged children. These initiatives include increasing support for peer mental health programs in schools. The pandemic has had a significant adverse psychological impact on many vulnerable students and educators continue to report behavioral concerns years after students returned to the classroom. Nonpublic and public schools now face a new reality: a mental health crisis affecting their students. As the city continues to meet the evolving needs of children and we continue to strive to meet school-aged children's needs and challenges, the Administration must ensure that the health and safety of the non-public school community is not left behind and that all schools are provided expanded supports for mental health.

**UJA urges the city to provide services to nonpublic schools in parity to the public school community, including peer mental health support and other subsidized supports. UJA urges the city to lower the enrollment threshold from 300 students to 150 for the Nonpublic School Security Reimbursement Program (Local Law 2) to help ensure the safety of more nonpublic schools.**

## **ADULT LITERACY**

### **Increase investment in Adult Literacy Programs**

DYCD is currently reviewing proposals under an RFP that will fund community-based adult basic education, high school equivalency, and English for Speakers of Other Languages programs for the next three to six years. At a time when the need for services in our communities is expanding, this RFP cuts DYCD funding for adult literacy education by 30% -- from \$16.83 million in FY24 to \$11.85 million in FY25 through FY27. This dramatic cut in funding will mean that only 9,118 students will be served through DYCD-funded classes annually, less than half of 1% of the 2.2 million adult New Yorkers in need. And a decrease between 25% to 45% of the number of students served through DYCD funded programs as compared to previous fiscal years. Because of this, UJA-Federation of New York, as a member of the New York City Coalition for Adult Literacy is calling for the FY25 Adopted Budget to **baseline \$21.8 million for DYCD two RFP-funded Adult Literacy programs, to restore cuts and maintain services for over 16,000 students. This requires adding \$11 million to the \$10.8 million in the Mayor's FY25 Executive Budget, which will:**

- Restore the \$6 million that the FY25 Executive Budget has cut from the \$16.8 million in administration-side funding in the FY24 Adopted Budget, and

- Provide an additional \$5 million to sustain community-based adult literacy services for 16,769 students at the new per-student rate that will take effect in FY25.

In addition, UJA requests the City Council renew and expand its crucial funding initiatives:

- 1. Maintain the \$4 million in City Council Discretionary Funding for the Adult Literacy Initiative.**
- 2. Double the funding for the City Council Adult Literacy Pilot Project from \$2.5 million to \$5 million and expand the number of programs that receive this funding.**
- 3. Change the name of the City Council Adult Literacy Pilot Project to the City Council Adult Literacy Innovation Project to better reflect the purpose of this funding going forward.**

A substantial investment in adult literacy education means that more New Yorkers will have the capacity to access better jobs and organize for better wages and working conditions; more parents will be able to advocate for their children and their families; more New Yorkers will speak up for their rights and participate in the democratic process; and more communities will be healthier and safer. For these reasons, UJA urges the Administration and the Council to consider the previous recommendations.

### **Conclusion**

UJA-Federation of New York respectfully urges your consideration and support of these vital programs that assist New York City's most vulnerable and the organizations that serve them. Thank you for your time and if you have any questions, please contact me at [behumf@ujafedny.org](mailto:behumf@ujafedny.org) or 212-836-1338.



45 Broadway, 22<sup>nd</sup> Floor, New York, NY 10006  
212-967-0322 | [www.unhny.org](http://www.unhny.org)

**Testimony of United Neighborhood Houses  
Before the New York City Council**

**FY 2025 Executive Budget Hearing:  
Committee on Education  
Council Member Rita C. Joseph, Chair**

**Submitted by Paula Inhargue, Policy Analyst  
May 15, 2024**

Thank you, Chair Joseph and members of the New York City Council Committee on Education for convening today's Executive Budget hearing. United Neighborhood Houses (UNH) is a policy and social change organization representing neighborhood settlement houses that reach over 765,000 New Yorkers from all walks of life at 770 locations. A progressive leader for more than 100 years, UNH is stewarding a new era for New York's settlement house movement. We mobilize our members and their communities to advocate for good public policies and promote strong organizations and practices that keep neighborhoods resilient and thriving for all New Yorkers. UNH leads advocacy and partners with our members on a broad range of issues including civic and community engagement, neighborhood affordability, healthy aging, early childhood education, adult literacy, and youth development. We also provide customized professional development and peer learning to build the skills and leadership capabilities of settlement house staff at all levels.

Settlement houses have been community hubs for education for decades, and continue to provide New York City's communities with guidance around academic instruction and enrichment, as well as navigating the Department of Education (DOE) at large. They have also served as sites for DOE programming, and as mediators between communities and the DOE to ensure that schools remain as responsive to the needs of their local communities. Many also contract with the DOE to provide early childhood education in New York City, serving an estimated 12,000 children under the age of 5.

Our testimony at today's hearing will focus on recommendations to support and stabilize the early childhood education workforce, support crucial education programs, and preserve access to care for families across the city, including:

- Complete the path to salary parity for the early childhood education workforce;
- Restore \$170 million in PEG budget cuts to 3-K and Pre-K early childhood education programs to preserve access for families;
- Restore federal stimulus cliff funding to education programs
- Baseline \$25 million for the Promise NYC program;
- Reduce the impact of the 60-day rule limiting shelter stays for asylum seeking families;
- Invest in Human Services workforce and make a long-term investment by creating and funding a prevailing wage schedule.

## Complete the path to salary parity for the early childhood education workforce

UNH settlement house members report that the main obstacle for hiring and retaining staff in early childhood education programs is low salaries, which are a direct result of low contract values set by the NYC Department of Education (DOE). For New York City providers, there is an added challenge because those low salaries are not at parity with salaries for similar positions working at the DOE. On average, a head teacher with a master's degree working for a settlement house-run early childhood education program earned about \$67,000 a year in 2022, 21 percent below the annual salary earned by their DOE counterparts<sup>1</sup>. Lack of parity between the DOE and center-based community-based organizations (CBOs) is leading to higher vacancy rates and making it difficult for CBOs to fill and retain critical positions. Center-based programs are left with staff shortages, preventing them from running at full capacity due to required children-adult ratios. Furthermore, high turnover rates threaten the stability and continuity of care that is necessary for young children's behavioral and cognitive development. And finally, it is unfair and unjust that teachers with the exact same credentials and doing the exact same work would earn different salaries. Over the course of a 25-year career, a teacher with a Master's degree who chooses to work at a CBO stands to earn \$1.7 million less than a DOE-employed teacher.<sup>2</sup>

The City must **fund new early childhood education labor contracts** that advances the next phase of salary parity between center-based and school-based early educators. This includes:

- Ensure salary parity between certified teachers in CBO settings with their DOE counterparts, as well as for uncertified teachers;
- Guarantee a wage floor of \$25 per hour for all support staff in CBO settings;
- Restore longevity differentials for CBO staff who have been in their positions for many years, in line with what DOE teachers receive; and
- Fund per diems for staff working in extended day/year programs. These staff work a longer day (8am-4pm or 6 pm) and during the summer months; they deserve extra compensation for their time.

Labor negotiations between the City, DC37 and the Day Care Council of New York are underway, and we are hopeful they will result in a contract that compensates CBO staff—including teachers and support staff—in the same manner as their DOE counterparts. To expand the early childhood education services that New Yorkers need, we need to make sure there are teachers and staff to serve children. We must ensure that all providers are able to offer competitive salaries and wages to their staff, as staff underpin the success of all programs. For the City to offer quality education of families' choice that is safe, accessible, and affordable, first and foremost, we need to support the workforce.

## Restore \$170 million in PEG budget cuts to 3-K and Pre-K early childhood education programs

Mayor Adams and the Department of Education have undermined our early childhood education system with poor financial and operational management that have been well documented over the last two years. The 2023 November Plan cut \$120 million for early childhood education programs in

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<sup>1</sup> Settlement house teacher salary is from the 2023 UNH Salary Survey. DOE salary is from the UFT-DOE Contract Salary Schedules, as of January 2024

<https://www.uft.org/your-rights/contracts/contract-2023/contract-2023-salary-schedules>

<sup>2</sup> The Enduring Value of the Early Education Workforce,  
<https://www.dccnyinc.org/our-work/public-policy/publications/>

FY25 and beyond, and then the FY25 Preliminary Budget cut another \$50 million for FY25 and beyond, citing efficiencies including unused seat reductions. This is on top of a \$283,962,000 cut for “3-K Cost Avoidance” in FY25 that was in the November 2022 Financial Plan, meaning that the Adams Administration cuts to early childhood education in FY25 total nearly \$400 million.<sup>3</sup>

Unfortunately, the DOE has not released any analysis to describe how this cut will be implemented, but we estimate this could translate into 10,000 seats being cut from the system, leaving as many children without Pre-K and 3-K.

Our city's child care system is facing serious challenges, such as unclear enrollment processes, delayed contract reimbursements to CBOs, and obstacles for hiring and retaining staff because of low salaries at CBO programs that are not on par with DOE staff doing the same work. These issues are discouraging people from working in child care, making it hard for providers to keep their doors open, and causing confusion among families as to whether or not they are eligible for services, leading to underutilization of vital programs. Additionally, the system's mismanagement creates a false impression that there is little demand for child care in New York City, despite research showing that more than 80% of families with children under age 5 cannot afford child care in New York City.<sup>4</sup>

Instead of addressing these problems, the City seems to be simply assuming there is no demand and is cutting programs. This shortsighted approach overlooks the real issues at hand and neglects the pressing need for affordable child care for working families. Settlement houses and community-based organizations are the backbone of the City's plan for early childhood education, so we are concerned by the impact these cuts will have on the New Yorkers who rely most on these services. The messaging around these cuts is also very confusing for providers and families; though OMB documents show nearly \$400 million coming out of the DOE's early childhood education programs in FY25, Adams Administration officials continue to say publicly that any child who wants a 3-K and Pre-K seat will receive one. How can we square these comments with proposed budget cuts? Clarity is needed as soon as possible for families and providers so they can plan and prepare.

It is crucial to recognize and tackle the underlying challenges, ensuring that child care programs are not only maintained but also improved to meet the needs of families facing financial hardships. **We urge the City to restore budget cuts to early childhood education, and to work to strengthen our City's early childhood system.**

## **Restore Federal Stimulus Cliff Funding to Education Programs**

The FY25 Executive Budget included \$514 million to backfill expiring federal stimulus dollars for education programs including:

- \$31 million for Learning to Work for FY25
- \$48 million to support the 113 Community Schools
- \$92 million to maintain 3-K funding
- \$56 million for Preschool Special Education

Some of these funds, like the \$92 million to support citywide 3-K expansion and the \$56 million for Preschool Special Education, are not baselined, which threatens the continuation of these programs

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<sup>3</sup> <https://ibo.nyc.ny.us/iboreports/drifting-from-the-plan-changes-to-early-childhood-budgets-february-2024.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> From Birth to Age 12: The (Un)Affordability of Child Care and Out-of-School Care in New York City  
<https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cccnewyork.org/2023/10/CCC-From-Birth-to-Age-12-Child-Care-Affordability-and-Cost-Burden.pdf>



after FY25. The Century Foundation estimates that 3.2 million children will lose access to child care across the country when COVID relief dollars expire, including more than 250,000 children in New York State alone.<sup>5</sup>

Not only that, but there is still a big gap in funding that is set to expire after June, and that will result in children losing access to care. Absent federal or state action, we urge the City to restore the remaining funds for FY25 and outyears, therefore guaranteeing continuity of care for families and to keep the child care system stable in New York City. These funds include:

- \$13 million for Pre-K special education programs;
- \$12 million for Restorative Justice programs;
- \$5 million for Mental Health Continuum programs;
- \$4 million for Immigrant Family Communication and Outreach;
- \$3.3 million for Student Success Centers; and
- \$65 million for school nurses.

## **Invest in Community Schools**

Students learn better when their various physical and socio-emotional needs are met and when they have significant relationships with caring adults. If students are coming to their classes hungry, dealing with the stress of living in temporary housing, receiving inadequate mental or physical health care, or dealing with other social-emotional or economic hardships that have been exacerbated by this pandemic, it will only be that much harder to focus on academics. Community schools address those barriers by partnering with community based organizations in holistic and innovative ways, and represent a long-term resource coordination strategy to sustainably invest in youth, families, and communities.

Specifically, the success of the community schools is built on the pillars of integrated student supports, expanded learning time and opportunities, family and community engagement, and collaborative leadership and practices. These inextricable elements work together to address socioeconomic and health disparities in schools and communities through a partnership between school staff and community based organizations to deliver wraparound services.

Given their track record of success<sup>6</sup>, the New York State Education Department recommended the community schools model as part of their reopening guidance to school districts,<sup>7</sup> and the City committed to using federal stimulus funding to expand the number of NYC community schools from 266 to 406. The community school model is the best strategy for supporting the education spectrum: academic, enrichment, student and family support, engagement/ reengagement and restorative justice policies and practices, and have also served as a community centers of mental health through depression/anxiety screenings, in-house mental health services and referrals to larger networks of support outside of the school. Community schools are also an investment in conflict mediation, a pliable model for delivering mental health services to young people to meet them where they are, and can be spaces for families to begin the steps of accessing culturally competent care for their young people.

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<sup>5</sup> Child Care Cliff: 3.2 Million Children Likely to Lose Spots with End of Federal Funds

<https://tcf.org/content/report/child-care-cliff/>

<sup>6</sup> The RAND Corporation released a comprehensive report on the impact of NYC community schools [accessible here](#).

<sup>7</sup> [Guidance accessible here](#)

The City expanded the initiative from 267 to 406 schools using American Rescue Plan federal stimulus dollars. NYC has yet to develop a permanent long-term sustainable funding solution for our community schools, which is especially concerning as federal stimulus funding is set to expire in less than four months. The future of these neighborhood lifelines remains unclear in the face of budget gaps.

Settlement houses within UNH's network operate 33 Community School contracts. UNH recommends smart and sustainable investments from the City in the Community Schools Initiative to support the long-term existence of these crucial services. Consistent and sustainable funding are critical to building community trust and authentic school-community partnerships.

In the Executive Budget, the City restored \$56 million (of the requested \$77 million) in funding to Community Schools, including \$48 million to supplant expiring American Rescue Plan funding and \$8 million to restore funding cut as part of the Program to Eliminate the Gap (PEG). Despite this discrepancy, both DOE Finance and the Office of Community Schools have assured that this restoration reflects actual spending and will not negatively impact or reduce contract budgets. However, this causes concern about the funding to support the operations of the Office of Community Schools, and whether it is sufficiently funded to support CBO programming and to ensure timely contracting and payments.

Even with the aforementioned restorations, the Community Schools Initiative has not been made whole. The City's Community Schools Initiative should be baselined, and in order to do so, the City must utilize a sustainable funding source to fill in the gaps left by temporary American Rescue Plan dollars.

**An investment of \$14 million is needed to restore one-year City funding, and ensure continuity and maintain comprehensive services in FY25.** This funding gap threatens the stability of 62 community schools citywide, including \$5 million to support community schools in the zip codes most impacted by COVID-19.

Finally, the Department of Education's unique procurement process must be examined and reformed to address the lengthy contract registration process, delays in payment and an inconvenient bridge loan process. These are barriers to consistently delivering services.

### **Restore \$3.3 Million to Student Success Centers**

Students respond better to support that is consistent and individualized to their circumstances. However, in New York City Public Schools, one guidance counselor serves an average of 221 students.<sup>8</sup> This astounding ratio only tells part of the story as post-secondary planning is just one of responsibilities a school guidance counselor is tasked with. With rising concerns about youth mental health and an influx of newly-arrived young people to NYC's public schools, the demands on guidance counselors' time are greater than ever.

Student Success Centers (SSCs) aim to fill this college counseling gap by pairing the expertise of community-based organizations with youth leadership training. In an SSC, youth leaders are trained as Peer Leaders. Together with CBO staff, Peer Leaders provide workshops, college trips, and one-on-one individualized counseling to help students through the college admissions and financial aid processes. The Student Success Center model is available at 34 high schools citywide. Settlement Houses operate 27 of these programs.

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<sup>8</sup> Hilliard, T. (2017). Degrees of Difficulty: Boosting College Success in New York City. Center for an Urban Future.

It is vital that the City commit to supporting all students navigate postsecondary options and the college admissions systems by restoring this program. UNH urges the City to **restore and baseline \$3.3 million for Student Success Centers. through sustainable funding sources.**

### **Invest in Learning to Work**

The Learning to Work (LTW) model supports every student in a Transfer School or Young Adult Borough Center (YABC) as they work towards their high school diploma and the development of a post-secondary plan. Community based organizations (CBOs) are embedded in the fabric of these schools through LTW contracts with the DOE and provide academic and socioemotional support, career and college exploration, skills development, internships, and much more.

The Learning to Work model is available citywide in 46 Transfer Schools and 20 YABCs. Settlement houses operate 27 of these contracts. In the 2019-2020 school year, LTW providers supported 16,446 students and provided 3,006 internships, which amounted to over \$9 million in revenue to students.

Although we are glad that the Executive Budget restores LTW funding for FY25, UNH urges the City to **baseline LTW's full \$42.1 million budget through sustainable funding sources**, to ensure sustainability for the outyears.

### **Invest \$25m in Promise NYC in FY25 to Provide Child Care for Immigrants**

Due to restrictions on certain funding sources, the only public early childhood education programs that undocumented children can directly join are 3-K and Pre-K programs and federal Head Start. This leaves a major gap in child care for undocumented immigrants, including the tens of thousands of recent asylum seekers in New York City. To help address this challenge, UNH urges New York City to invest \$25 million in the FY 2025 Adopted Budget to baseline the new Promise NYC program to provide subsidized child care to low-income undocumented children.

Under Promise NYC, four providers, including three settlement houses, have contracted with the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) to implement a child care voucher program in each of their respective boroughs (NMIC in the Bronx and Manhattan, Center for Family Life in Brooklyn, Chinese-American Planning Council in Queens, and La Colmena in Staten Island). The 6-month program launched in January 2023, and after a six-week period of administrative preparation, providers were able to begin outreach to families in February. Providers are contracted to serve a total of 600 children citywide for the remainder of the fiscal year through June.

For NMIC (Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation), this venture into child care services was new for the organization, yet they were chosen due to their presence in both Manhattan and the Bronx and the strong relationships they hold with the community they serve. Unsurprisingly, they did not need extensive outreach efforts; the program's popularity was swift and substantial, emphasizing the pressing need for child care services, particularly among undocumented community members. However, the budget allocation still falls short of addressing the demand, with NMIC only being able to serve 110 children in Manhattan and 125 in the Bronx, while having over 400 children waitlisted.

Promise NYC was funded with \$16 million in the City's FY 2024 budget after extensive support and negotiation from the Council. However, this funding was not included in the Executive budget, so programs are anticipating that child care will end on June 30th and undocumented families will abruptly be left without a child care arrangement.

**We urge the City to extend funding for Promise NYC to \$25 million in the FY 2025 budget and each year thereafter so that undocumented families can continue to access the affordable, subsidized**

**child care they need.** This investment will allow providers to expand the number of children they serve, including funding for increased staff capacity necessary for invoicing and matching families to available child care providers. With an expanded budget, the goal is to further facilitate families' access to care and serve as a pipeline into the K-12 school system, solidifying its status as a crucial community resource. In sum, Promise NYC has emerged as a lifeline for families facing childcare challenges, illustrating the positive impact that accessible child care can have on individuals, families, and communities.

### **Reduce the impact of the 60-day rule limiting shelter stays for asylum seeking families**

Settlement houses have shared that newly arrived families with children who are already enrolled in 3-K and Pre-K programs are also in need of extended care outside of traditional school-day hours, but undocumented families are not eligible for child care subsidies to help pay for this wraparound care. The City's policy limiting families' stays in the homeless shelter system to 60 days has been destabilizing for newly arrived families and has impacted their children's ability to remain enrolled in early childhood education programs. A settlement house early childhood program director noted, "It's challenging for the program to see [children] go. We know they need a stable setting with consistency. It's not what they're experiencing right now." In some cases, a child may be enrolled for just a few weeks before they reach the 60-day limit and are forced to move. Providers have reported that families who re-apply for shelter after the 60-day limit are typically relocated to a different borough and struggle with traveling to their child's early childhood education program. However, settlement houses have shared that some families continue to commute as long as two hours to their child's center, demonstrating the urgent need for child care among newly arrived families.

Additional funding is necessary to help stabilize and retain families in early care and education programs, particularly with the volatility that families have experienced in their housing situation due to the City's 60-day shelter limit policy. Providers have shared that subsidized Metrocards or transportation stipends would be beneficial for families with young children enrolled in early childhood programs who are forced to move from their shelter. Many families continue to lack basic resources such as food, warm winter jackets, backpacks, shoes, diapers and cell phones.

In addition to the destabilizing impacts of the City's 60-day limit on shelter stays, providers have shared that the early childhood education (ECE) program enrollment process has been challenging for newly arrived families who lack the necessary documentation to officially enroll into programs and be entered into the DOE's vendor portal. At the same time, parents able to complete the necessary paperwork may receive a 60-day notice and are forced to leave before enrolling their child into the program.

Furthermore, settlement houses have shared that they face a shortage of Spanish-speaking teachers and that linguistic challenges impact teachers' abilities to communicate with parents, as well as provide referrals to trauma-informed therapy and mental health resources in their native language.

Longer-term, more funding is necessary to hire bilingual early childhood education early childhood education teachers to open more classrooms, as well as for hiring additional enrollment and recruitment staff to support newly arrived parents in gaining necessary documentation for enrolling into ECE programs.

### **Invest in the Human Services Workforce and Make a Long-Term Investment By Creating and Funding a Prevailing Wage Schedule**

Human services workers in New York City are grossly underpaid. Across UNH's network of settlement houses in New York City, 76% of their total budget comes from government sources, and 65% of that is from New York City. Unfortunately, contracts from New York City often do not include sufficient funding to pay workers a fair and dignified wage.

Wages have failed to keep up with both inflation and changes to the job market, and as a result the human services sector continues to sit on the cliff of a staffing crisis. On average, more than a third (35%) of UNH settlement house members reported double-digit job vacancy rates of 10% or higher in 2023, up from 31 percent the previous year, and nearly two-thirds (65%) of UNH settlement house members reported that job positions remained vacant for 3 months or more in the past year, including 14% who said that positions remained vacant for 6 months or longer.

Without increased budgets in government contracts to cover wage increases, nonprofits will be unable to recruit and train the next generation of nonprofit leaders, setting future New Yorkers up for significant barriers to accessing services that grow over time. Further, insufficient staffing has made it increasingly difficult for nonprofits to serve New Yorkers, leading to under-enrollment and program closures which then leads to budget reductions and a vicious cycle that harms New Yorkers seeking services.

We thank the City Council and Mayor Adams for funding a 3-year Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for human service workers. This will provide immediate relief, we must do more to undo years of budgets that left behind human service workers.

### ***Create a Prevailing Wage Schedule for Human Services Workers***

UNH supports Int 0734-2024 (sponsored by Council Member Stevens) to establish a prevailing wage for city-contracted human service workers, which would require City agencies to include sufficient funding to cover those wages in contracts, and track implementation of those wages by human service contractors. While prevailing wage schedules are an imperfect tool to address the current conditions faced by human service workers, it is a significant improvement from the status quo. This process to design a true prevailing wage system is arduous and will require careful analysis, but we cannot continue to afford ignoring the need. For years, the government at every level has asked nonprofit partners to do "more with less." This dynamic has pushed our sector to a real breaking point, and our workforce has suffered the consequences. It's time for us to look beyond stopgap measures and towards efforts that would have a long-lasting impact on the human service sector.

### **UNH urges the City Council to pass CM Stevens' prevailing wage legislation and fully fund it in the FY25 budget to limit impacts to programs.**

Taken together, these two measures will provide immediate relief and a long-term solution to an ongoing problem that has limited New York City's human services sector.

Thank you for your time. To follow up, you can contact me at [pinhargue@unhny.org](mailto:pinhargue@unhny.org).





University Student Senate  
555 West 57<sup>th</sup> Street, 1420  
New York, NY 10019  
Tel: (646) 664-8844  
Website: [www.usuncny.org](http://www.usuncny.org)

**To: Committee on Higher Education, Committee on Finance**

**Members: Eric Dinowitz, Chair, Justin L. Brannan, Chair, Erik D. Bottcher, Gale A. Brewer, Oswald Feliz, Christopher Marte, Diana I. Ayala, Selvena N. Brooks-Powers, David M. Carr, Amanda Farias, Kamillah Hanks, Crystal Hudson, Farah N. Louis, Francisco P. Moya, Chi A. Ossé, Keith Powers, Yusef Salaam, Pierina Ana Sanchez, Althea V. Stevens, Nantasha M. Williams and Julie Won**

Good afternoon. Thank you Finance Committee Chair Justin Brennan and Higher Education Chair Eric Dinowitz for chairing this joint hearing on the FY25 Executive Budget. Thank you, distinguished members. I am The CUNY University Student Senate Chairwoman Salimatou Doumbouya. Myself and student leaders from across the 25 CUNY campuses represent approximately 225,000 students. I serve as the student trustee on the CUNY Board of Trustees and a member of the Higher Education Services Committee. I am also the Student Government President at the City College of Technology.

On April 24th, 2024 Mayor Eric Adams released the FY25 Executive Budget. CUNY is expected to receive \$1.29 billion in FY25, \$167.7 million less than FY24. The expiration of Federal COVID relief funds further strains the budget. CUNY needs to be fully funded to provide quality services and improve the student experience.

The CUNY University Student Senate advocates for investing in programs and services to reduce the barriers CUNY students face while pursuing Higher Education. Students are stressed by experiencing food insecurity, housing insecurity, high transportation costs, lack of child care, academic advisement, and mental health counseling. The stresses outside the classroom impact academic performance. By improving the student's experience enrollment, retention, and graduation rates can increase.

Increasing funding for the University's 17 Campus Children's Centers would provide support for student-parents and their families. Funds should enhance programs and curriculums, materials, and equipment upgrades. Additionally, a pilot program can be funded to provide Unlimited Metrocards for student-parents. Transportation costs contribute as a barrier to student success. Providing Unlimited Metrocards as a pilot program would address this challenge. Investing in critical support for student-parent success also invests in the family's success.



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Invest in the quality and accessibility of our campuses. Increase funding for projects that correct health, safety, and ADA accessibility of campus buildings. Prioritize projects to remove barriers to access and advance compliance with the Disabilities Act and other statutes. Ensure each campus has enhanced cafeteria programs to have access to healthy quality food. Students have a nutritional need to have a quality cost effective food service on campus. Investing in these spaces improves student's experience. The cafeteria services are also a form of revenue campuses could be receiving.

Invest in providing much-needed mental health counseling and academic advisement for students. Provide support for the hiring and training of additional counselors and advisors to accommodate the needs of the students. The support should be persistent and comprehensive to provide more guidance for students during their academic careers.

We the University Student Senate are calling on this legislative body to invest in improving the student experience in the City University of New York. Invest in programs that remove barriers to access and enhance campus quality. Invest in the students so we can continue to be the driving force behind upward mobility, representation, and opportunity.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Salimatou Doumbouya**

***Pronouns: she/her/hers***

**CUNY Trustee**

**University Student Senate Chairperson**

**Student Government President of New York City College of Technology**

**555 W 57th St, Suite 1420, NY 10019**

**[www.usscuny.org](http://www.usscuny.org)**

***"Knowledge without wisdom is like water in the sand"***

***African Proverb***





Subject: USS Student Commuter Proposal 2024 Briefing

The students of CUNY are aspiring minds pursuing a degree to improve their lives and contribute to their communities. They face many struggles during this endeavor that cause barriers to completing their degree on time, if at all. A few challenges students face to well-being include housing, food, tuition costs, mental health, and transportation. [The University Student Senate](#) of the City University of New York advocates for All CUNY students to get Free Unlimited Metrocards, starting with the **CUNY Student Commuter Grant Pilot Program**. We ask that the University (CUNY) include transportation benefits as a priority in strategic planning and city and state budget ask.

Grant recipients will receive transportation funding to travel to and from classes and other academic activities. Community Colleges have a total of 74,636 students at CUNY. This proposal considers a breakdown by student population to launch a pilot program that provides free MetroCards to students.

This pilot program recommendation is to give monthly MetroCards to students and not swipes for financial and logistical reasons. (supporting documents available).

#### General Criteria

- Metrocards valid for one academic semester (4 months) to be renewed before the beginning of each semester based on academic performance.
- Eligible students do not include ASAP recipients and students who utilize the Fair Fares program
- Students must be enrolled at CUNY and take at least 2 in-person classes.
- Each **commuter** student shall receive a monthly unlimited MetroCard
  - Only to be used by the student to whom it was assigned
  - For traveling only on days CUNY campuses are open per the [Academic calendar](#)
  - Valid for one school semester to be renewed

Additionally, eligible students may immediately use their student MetroCard at every subway, local bus, and Access-A-Ride. College Student Metrocards may be: Different from “regular” Metrocards sold to the public.



### Student Population

Vulnerable student groups may be considered when initially rolling out the program with added criteria based on their unique characteristics. The University Student Senate endorses any(or all) of these populations for the pilot program.

- Students with disabilities:
  - Registered with the [office of accessibility services](#)
  - Current data: Total student population of 10,128
  - Unlimited MetroCard for 4 months
  - Cost \$5,347,584
- Student Parents
  - Using the [Childcare Centers](#) at CUNY
  - Current Data: 1400 childcare seats available in CUNY
  - Unlimited MetroCard for 4 months
  - Cost \$739,200
- Students who were in the [foster care system](#)
  - Students in Foster Youth College Success Initiative (FYCSI)
  - Expend this service to unhoused students (unknown number)
  - Current Data estimate of foster care students within FYSI CUNY 150
  - Unlimited MetroCard for 4 months
  - Cost \$79,200
- [College discovery](#) students
  - Current Data 956 Students
  - Cost \$504,768
- International students with the [CUNY International Student Services Office](#)
  - Current Data: 6000 students total
  - On their last semester
  - In good academic standing
  - With an internship or research project
  - with a cost of \$3,168,000,

The cost may vary based on the number of students who meet all the criteria.

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### System Recommendations

1. The eligibility of students for this pilot should be monitored and managed through CUNY First in the form of An Application for Commuter Status
  - a. To be eligible Commuter/non-commuting status may be determined based on students' commute distance to campus and input into Cunyfirst. Currently, enrolled college students who commute may be eligible if they





University Student Senate  
555 West 57<sup>th</sup> Street, 1420  
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Tel: (646) 664-8844  
Fax: (646) 664-8863

live more than 0.5 miles from campus. Exceptions can be made for reasonable accessibility accommodations. Students enrolled in the Summer and Winter sessions may be eligible.

2. The University should establish the CUNY **Office of Transportation Services (OTS)** which would be incorporated inside the [Central Office of student affairs](#)
  - a. The CUNY OTS would ensure the success of the Student Commuter Pilot Program by fulfilling all necessary tasks such as: reporting, advising affiliated programs, cuny first accuracy etc
3. A grant fund may be established specifically for students' transportation needs. Funds will be transferred to the office of the treasury and the funding limits are set up by the budget and the student financial aid systems teams. Based on the commuter status input into Cunyfirst the Metrocards may be distributed by the OTS to the programs or to the students directly

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### Promoting a brighter future for New Yorkers

[USS CUNY](#) is advocating for programs and services that address non-tuition costs with commuting costs as the primary focus. Qualified students who attend public school in the NYC DOE receive a MetroCard. When they transfer to college they don't have access to commuter benefits and the student's economic status has not changed drastically. USS CUNY encourages State, City, and institutional partners to itemize a fund that would be accessible support for all CUNY students regardless of their eligibility for a program, citizenship status, or economic background.

The need to eliminate CUNY students' commuter costs would remove a barrier to entry to receive a high-quality education. The effects would remove stress from students consequently improving academic performance and momentum. The student would then be able to complete the desired degree and stay in New York to contribute to rebuilding the economy.

Yours in partnership,

Office of the University Student Senate  
Chairperson Salimatou Doumbouya  
Office Contact: [legislatedirector@usscuny.org](mailto:legislatedirector@usscuny.org)







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Thomas P. DiNapoli State Comptroller Office "Higher Education in New York Evaluating Competitiveness and Identifying Challenges"  
March 2024 <https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/reports/pdf/higher-education-nys.pdf>

Center For an Urban Future, "OPPORTUNITY COSTS Nontuition financial barriers are derailing lowincome students' path to a college credential—and a shot at economic mobility" JUNE 2021 [https://nycfuture.org/pdf/CUF\\_OpportunityCosts\\_Final.pdf](https://nycfuture.org/pdf/CUF_OpportunityCosts_Final.pdf)

Jonathan Bowles & Winston Fisher, et al.; AMNY, "Op-Ed  
Op-ed | The city should provide free MetroCards to CUNY students, October 16, 2023  
<https://www.amny.com/oped/op-ed-free-metrocards-for-cuny-students/>



# **CUNY Student Commuter Grant**

**Evaluating Student Commuter Needs**

**April 2024**

## I. Introduction

New York City and the State recognize CUNY as a cornerstone for the restoration of the economy and communities after COVID-19. CUNY is an economic engine that provides social mobility for graduates at a low cost and of the highest quality. In a time with challenges in mental health, housing, and population retention on the rise, Higher Education is vital. CUNY must be fully funded to be properly equipped to address the needs of the students, staff, faculty, and community partners.

The students of CUNY are aspiring minds pursuing a degree to improve their lives and contribute to their communities. They face many struggles during this endeavor that cause barriers to completing their degree on time, if at all. A few challenges students face to well-being include housing, food, tuition costs, mental health, and transportation.

USS CUNY is advocating for programs and services that address non-tuition costs with commuting costs as the primary focus. Qualified students who attend public school in the NYC DOE receive a MetroCard. When they transfer to college they don't have access to commuter benefits and the student's economic status has not changed drastically. USS CUNY encourages State, City, and institutional partners to itemize a fund that would be accessible support for all CUNY students regardless of their eligibility for a program, citizenship status, or economic background.

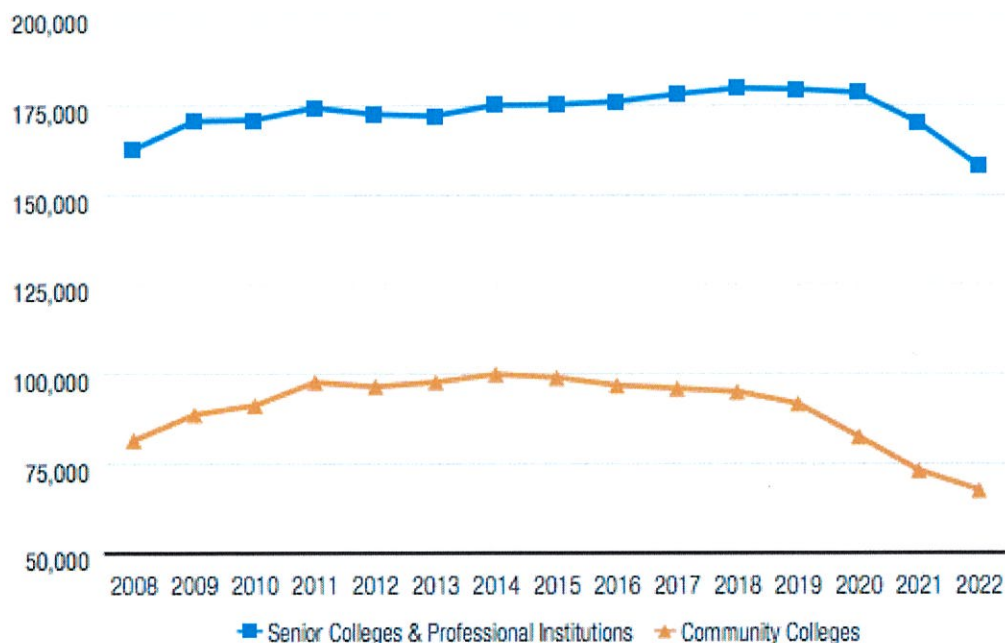
The possible model could be the creation of a new grant program for non-tuition expenses and the amendment or expansion of existing state grant programs such as TAP and Excelsior for additional commuter student support. NYC DOE Pupil Transportation Program can be used as a model to structure the program. The city can pilot a program to supplement the remarkable impact CUNY ASAP, Single Stop and the campus Student Life Offices have had and broaden the scope of access. The program can be rolled out in phases depending on the funding available.

The need to eliminate CUNY students' commuter costs would remove a barrier to entry to receive a high-quality education. The effects would remove stress from students consequently improving academic performance and momentum. The student would then be able to complete the desired degree and stay in New York to contribute to rebuilding the economy.

#### a. Cost as a Deterrent to Graduate

The non-tuition barrier was mentioned in a press release from the NYS Senate and Assembly regarding landmark budget decisions, "TAP's maximum income threshold was last raised from \$50,500 to \$80,000 in 2000, almost a quarter-century ago. At a time when **more than 70% of students cite cost as a barrier to attending college**, TAP's funding has not kept pace with rising tuition, enrollment, inflation, and the growing cost of living, forcing students and families dependent upon TAP to shoulder a growing financial burden."<sup>1</sup> The legislation introduced to address student tuition costs has not kept up with the needs of the students. The decoupling of TAP with tuition in 2010 and the consistent raising of tuition exacerbated the TAP gap, increasing student expenses, and adding to the trend of declining enrollment. The Covid-19 shutdown accelerated the trend. Recent reports of CUNY student enrollment from Fall 2023 reported in "Spotlight: CUNY and the New York City Economy" show an increase in enrollment from Fall 2023, stating, "Enrollment declines since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic have put CUNY under pressure. Fall 2023 enrollment has rebounded from post-pandemic lows, but at 231,978 students, remains 14.5 percent lower than in fall 2019. CUNY's community colleges have borne the brunt of the enrollment decline, from 91,715 in fall 2019 to 67,584 in fall 2023, a 26 percent decline. Senior college enrollment fell from 179,527 to 158,297, or 12 percent, during the same period."<sup>2</sup>

#### Fall Headcount Enrollment: City University of New York



Source: The City University of New York, "Fall Enrollment, Headcount," Student Data Book, at <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/oira.cuny/viz/StudentDataBook/Enrollment>.

<sup>1</sup> TOBY ANN STAVISKY, et al., The New York State Senate, "Senate, Assembly Higher Education Committees United in Push for Landmark Investments in Final NYS Budget", March 20, 2024 <https://www.nysenate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2024/toby-ann-stavisky/senate-assembly-higher-education-committees-united>

<sup>2</sup> New York City Comptroller Brad Lander "Spotlight: CUNY and the New York City Economy, April 9, 2024



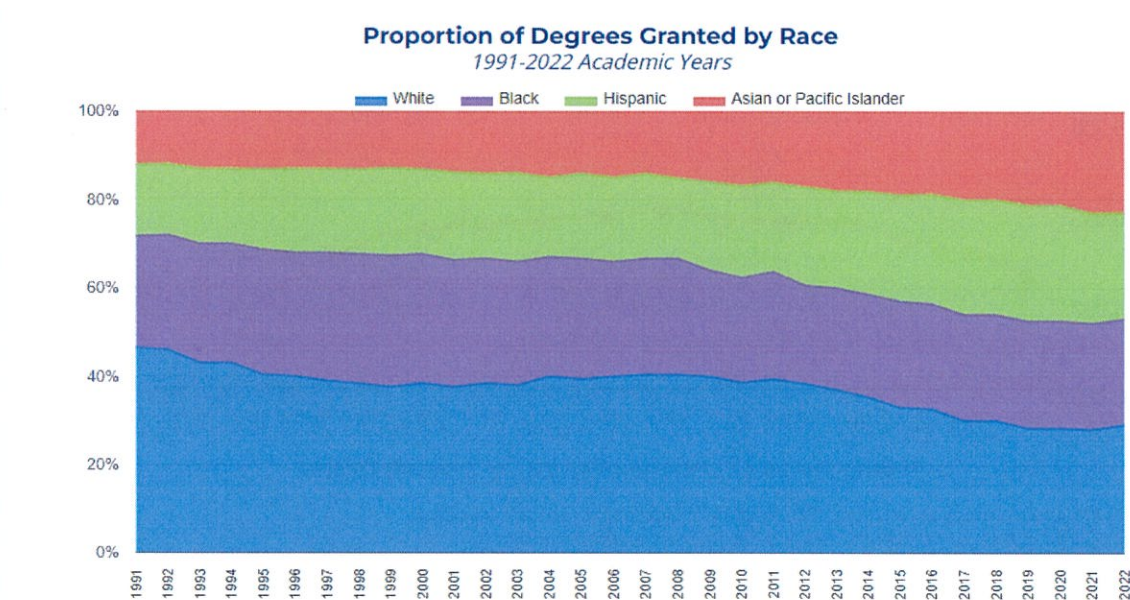
### Fall Enrollment in Degree-Granting Postsecondary Institutions: 1970 – 2020

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2019	2020	Change in 2020 from:	
								1970	2010
United States	8,580,887	12,096,895	13,818,637	15,312,289	21,019,438	19,630,178	18,991,798	121.3%	-9.6%
New York	806,479	992,349	1,048,286	1,043,395	1,305,151	1,235,691	1,182,412	46.6%	-9.4%
California	1,257,245	1,791,088	1,808,740	2,256,708	2,714,699	2,714,753	2,579,991	105.2%	-5.0%
Florida	235,525	411,891	588,086	707,684	1,124,778	1,055,664	1,027,331	336.2%	-8.7%
Massachusetts	303,809	418,415	417,833	421,142	507,753	492,875	473,731	55.9%	-6.7%
New Jersey	216,121	321,610	324,286	335,945	444,092	413,175	392,343	81.5%	-11.7%
Texas	442,225	701,391	901,437	1,033,973	1,535,864	1,660,470	1,601,399	262.1%	4.3%
<b>As a Share of the United States</b>									
New York	9.4%	8.2%	7.6%	6.8%	6.2%	6.3%	6.2%		
California	14.7%	14.8%	13.1%	14.7%	12.9%	13.8%	13.6%		
Florida	2.7%	3.4%	4.3%	4.6%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%		
Massachusetts	3.5%	3.5%	3.0%	2.8%	2.4%	2.5%	2.5%		
New Jersey	2.5%	2.7%	2.3%	2.2%	2.1%	2.1%	2.1%		
Texas	5.2%	5.8%	6.5%	6.8%	7.3%	8.5%	8.4%		

Note: Degree-granting institutions grant associate or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Table 304.10, *Digest of Education Statistics*; Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS), "Fall Enrollment in Colleges and Universities" surveys, 1970 and 1980; Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), "Fall Enrollment Survey" (IPEDS-EF:90); and IPEDS Spring 2001 through Spring 2021, Fall Enrollment component (prepared April 2022) at [https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/data/digest/d21/tables/dt1\\_304.10.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/data/digest/d21/tables/dt1_304.10.asp).

The overall trend of declining enrollment contributes to the insecure financial situation as the revenue from enrollment declines and less tuition is collected. Programs should be created to improve the student experience and recruit more students while improving retention and graduation rates.



Source: CUNY Student Data Book

NOTE: American Indian and Native Alaskan students make up less than 0.3% of the student body.

As seen in the chart above CUNY has granted degrees to a diverse group of recipients. The trend in the graduate pool is becoming more inclusive and diverse. As a result the workforce becomes more diverse.



## **II. Free MetroCard Commuter Program**

### **a. Eligibility Outlines**

Commuter/non-commuting status may be determined based on students' commute distance to campus similar to the NYC DOE eligibility criteria. Currently, enrolled college students who commute may be eligible if they live more than 0.5 miles from campus. Exceptions can be made for reasonable accessibility accommodations. Students may only be enrolled in one online course, the rest must be hybrid or in-person classes. Students enrolled in the Summer and Winter sessions may be eligible.

A similar list of restrictions can be applied to commuting students receiving Metrocards as outlined below from the NYC Schools website:

#### **NYC School Eligibility**

#### **Proposed College Commuting Student Eligibility**

<p>"You can immediately use your student MetroCard at every subway and local bus. Student MetroCards cannot be used on express buses.</p> <p>Student MetroCards are:</p> <p>Different from "regular" MetroCards sold to the public</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Good for three trips each school day; allowing a student to travel to school, from school to an after-school activity, and from that activity to home</li><li>• Only to be used by the student to whom it was assigned</li><li>• For traveling to and from school and school-related activities between 5:30AM and 8:30PM</li><li>• For traveling only on days when the student's school is open for classes</li><li>• Valid for one school semester"</li></ul>	<p>You can immediately use your student MetroCard at every subway, local bus and Access-A-Ride. College Student Metrocards may be:</p> <p>Different from "regular" Metrocards sold to the public.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Good for six trips each school day for part-time students and 14 trips for full-time students; allowing a student to travel to school, from school to a curricular activity, and from that activity to home while taking into account the student may have multiple classes a day.</li><li>• Internships and research are to be included as school-related activities.</li><li>• For traveling to and from school and school-related activities</li><li>• Only to be used by the student to whom it was assigned</li><li>• For traveling only on days CUNY campuses are open per the <a href="#">Academic calendar</a></li><li>• Valid for one school semester to be renewed</li></ul>
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### **b. System Recommendations:**

- Eligibility criteria for such expenses related to students' commuting/non-commuting status can be input through [Cunyfirst](#) for students' progress to be tracked.
- If the student's enrollment status changes or they are academically dismissed the MetroCard may be suspended. Students should receive a notice and a chance to appeal before the suspension of MetroCard.
- Students currently in the ACE/ASAP program or who receive Fair Fares may not be eligible.

**Curricular activities may include courses**, internships, research, class field trips, and experiential learning. Metrocards may not be considered needed for extracurricular activities such as clubs, student government, volunteering, honor societies, and athletics.

While rolling out programming at Community Colleges, particular vulnerable demographics may be identified as a priority to increase academic momentum and graduation rate for students most in need of intervention to complete academic programs. Student groups in need can be identified based on academic status, enrollment status, ethnicity, residency, financial need, level of education, equal opportunity, age, and health.

Population	Classification	Criteria
First-generation Students	Ethnicity, Residency	- Diversity, In-state students
Students With Disabilities	Health	- Registered with the office of accessibility.
Students With Outstanding Tuition	Enrollment, Bursar hold	- Supplied with a curricular paid internship to resolve outstanding balance within a year.
Single Parents	Financial, Residency	- Single-parent household with dependents.
Unhoused/Formerly Incarcerated	Financial, Education, Residency	- Applied for Fafsa, Tap, or eligible programs. - In-state student - High school diploma, GED, or equivalent certificate.
Last Semester Students	Residency, Enrollment status	- Part-time last semester. - Qualified for reduced course load. - International students are eligible
Transfer Students Within CUNY	Academic	- In good academic standing. - Transfer from another CUNY campus.
Students under 20 and under 22	Education	- Graduated High School - Could be an internal Student

**First-generation students** are pioneering for families and communities that may not have had access to higher education. They may not have the financial support or guidance to navigate academically.

**Students with disabilities** may need transportation accommodations and should be registered with the accessibility office on campus.

**Students with outstanding balances** may require financial support, they should also apply for a paid internship to resolve their outstanding balances.

**Single parents** may struggle with child care and other expenses causing challenges toward graduation.

**The unhoused or formerly incarcerated** students may require additional resources to achieve academic success.

**Students who have reached the final semester** of their academic journey are close to graduation and may need additional resources to complete their academic program.

**Transfer students** require resources to acclimate to the new campus environment and should be in good academic standing.

### c. Addressing the Challenge

In a report from the New York State Comptroller's office in March 2024, titled "Higher Education in New York Evaluating Competitiveness and Identifying Challenges", a possible solution outlined is "The creation of a new grant program for non-tuition expenses or the amendment or expansion of existing state grant programs – such as TAP and Excelsior– so these awards may be available to cover room, board and



other non-tuition expenses with eligibility criteria for such expenses related to students' commuting/non-commuting status"<sup>3</sup>

The University Student Senate CUNY agrees that the challenge may be addressed by creating a new grant program for non-tuition expenses that may be related to a student's commuting/non-commuting status. Existing programs can be amended or expanded such as TAP, Excelsior, ACE/ASAP, and FairFares to broaden the services provided for commuter students.

Private partnerships can be made to implement the program. The city may implement a pilot program to address the needs of commuter students.

CUNY Central may develop an office dedicated to commuter student transportation with a director and supporting staff. A strategic plan may be devised to address the commuter student population. Reports can be made regularly on the status of the commuter student population.

The state and city comptrollers may fund the service with tax revenue generated.

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<sup>3</sup>Thomas P. DiNapoli State Comptroller Office "Higher Education in New York Evaluating Competitiveness and Identifying Challenges" March 2024 <https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/reports/pdf/higher-education-nys.pdf>

#### d. Budget Breakdown

The table below shows the breakdown of CUNY Students by college in the senior and the college

College	Total Students	Under 20 Students	Under 22 Students	Annual Year Enrollment of Students with Disabilities Reported to NYSED 2H-2 2022-2023 Academic Year			
<b>Senior</b>				<b>College</b>	<b>SWD N</b>	<b>Total N</b>	<b>Percent SWD</b>
Baruch	19,698	6,135	11,340	Baruch	622	22,993	2.7
Brooklyn	13,935	3,923	7,141	Brooklyn	407	17,226	2.4
City	14,628	5,499	8,847	City	537	16,567	3.2
Graduate School	3,228		15	Hunter	1,227	27,061	4.5
Hunter	22,879	7,149	12,367	John Jay	454	17,284	2.6
John Jay	13,510	4,394	7,682	Lehman	532	16,655	3.2
Journalism School	190		7	Medgar Evers	123	4,983	2.5
Labor & Urban Studies	492	121	130	NYCCT	461	15,997	2.9
Law School	681		9	Queens	626	20,603	3
Lehman	12,894	3,376	5,741	Staten Island	475	12,648	3.8
Medgar Evers	3,846	1,363	1,916	York	273	8,013	3.4
Medical School	384		73	Graduate Center	301	3,418	8.8
NYCCT	13,767	5,973	8,596	Journalism	0	200	0
Professional Studies	4,302	20	187	Professional Studies	238	5,304	4.5
Public Health	904		12	Labor and Urban Studies	10	665	1.5
Queens	16,481	5,209	9,032	Public Health	46	1,098	4.2
Staten Island	10,736	4,133	6,910	Law School	99	720	13.8
York	6,161	2,649	3,664	Medical School	1	371	0.3
<b>Total Senior</b>	<b>158,716</b>	<b>49,944</b>	<b>83,669</b>	<b>Total Senior Colleges</b>	<b>6,432</b>	<b>191,806</b>	<b>3.4</b>
<b>Community</b>				BMCC	880	24,519	3.6
BMCC	18,225	6,794	10,679	Bronx	434	9,365	4.6
Bronx	6,465	2,278	3,457	Guttman	205	1,029	19.9
Guttman	1,101	702	940	Hostos	506	6,657	7.6
Hostos	5,526	1,796	2,660	Kingsborough	582	19,324	3
Kingsborough	19,070	13,487	15,217	LaGuardia	413	16,726	2.5
LaGuardia	13,998	6,119	8,462	Queensborough	676	13,616	5
Queensborough	10,251	4,588	6,607	<b>Total Community Colleges</b>	<b>3,696</b>	<b>91,236</b>	<b>4.1</b>
<b>Total Community</b>	<b>74,636</b>	<b>35,764</b>	<b>48,022</b>	<b>Total University</b>	<b>10,128</b>	<b>283,042</b>	<b>3.6</b>
<b>Total University</b>	<b>233,352</b>	<b>85,708</b>	<b>131,691</b>				

Source CUNY Office of Applied Research, Evaluation, and Data Analytics (OAREDA)

institutions. There are a total of 74,636 students enrolled in CUNY Community Colleges for the 22-23 Academic Year. There are about 6,000 international students enrolled at CUNY, according to the [International Student & Scholar Services \(ISSS\) website](#). There are a total of 10,128 Students with Disabilities enrolled in CUNY.

Breakdown	Description	Number of Students	Dollar Amount
By Type of College	All Community college students enrolled at CUNY - A monthly Metrocard (\$132) - For 4 months	74,636	\$39,407,808
By Age	All Community College students under 20 - A monthly Metrocard (\$132) - For 4 Months	35,764	\$18,883,392
By Age	All Community College students under 22 - A monthly Metrocard (\$132) - For 4 Months	48,022	\$25,355,616
Students with Disabilities in CUNY	All Students with Disabilities within CUNY - A monthly Metrocard (\$132) - For 4 months	10,128	\$5,347,584

International Students	All international Students Enrolled in CUNY - A monthly Metrocard (\$132) - For 4 months	6000	\$3,168,000
1st Generation College Students	the first in their family to pursue higher education		
Unhoused Students/ Expanding Foster Youth College Success Initiative	- Lacking a stable, secure, and nontemporary space to sleep, reside, and store your belongings. Students with a background in foster care or those qualifying as eligible orphans.	34,000	\$4,488,000
Formerly Incarcerated Students	Students that have a justice involved background.	unknown	N/A
Parents	Students with dependents.	Student parents with child enrolled in CUNY child care. 1400 child care seats available	
College Discovery	First year college discovery students	956	\$713,558.

#### OPTION BASED ON SWIPES

Breakdown	Description	Number of Students	Dollar Amount
By Type of College	All Community college students enrolled at CUNY - 4 swipes a week - 16 swipes a month - 64 swipes for 4 months - \$2.90 a swipe - \$185.6 for 4 months per student	74,636	\$55,708,310
By Age	All Community College students under 20	35,764	\$26,694,250
By Age	All Community College students under 22	48,022	\$35,843,621
Students with Disabilities in CUNY	All Students with Disabilities within CUNY	10,128	\$7,559,540
International Students	All international Students Enrolled in CUNY	6000	\$4,478,400
1st Generation College Students	the first in their family to pursue higher education	30,000	\$15,840,000
Unhoused Students/ Expanding Foster Youth College Success Initiative	Lacking a stable, secure, and nontemporary space to sleep, reside, and store your belongings. Students with a background in foster care or those qualifying as eligible orphans.	34,000 within all CUNY campuses	\$25,377,600



Formerly Incarcerated	Formerly justice involved individuals.	Information is not disclosed.	N/A
Parents	Students with dependents.	Student parents with child enrolled in CUNY child care. 1400 child care seats available.	\$259,840
College Discovery	First-year college discovery students	956	\$177,433.6

**b. Pilot Program**

The final outcome after rolling out the pilot program should be for all CUNY students to receive a Metrocard. A few vulnerable groups that should be considered that would benefit are students that are freshmen students, students with disabilities, international students, 1st generation students. Unhoused students, formerly incarcerated students, students who were in the foster care system, and college discovery students.

### c. The need for Metrocards

According to a 2018 student survey cited by The Center for an Urban Future, "The challenge of affording a MetroCard came up more than any other single barrier in the course of our research. Ninety percent of CUNY community college students commute to school primarily via public transit."<sup>4</sup> Commuter costs are deterring students from completing their degrees. The overall cost of tuition and non-tuition expenses puts a burden on students. Providing MetroCards for students would relieve the financial stress associated with commuting to campus. The benefits of this initiative would outweigh the costs as reported in an Op-Ed in

AMNY Oct. 2023 "The benefit of a free MetroCard should be extended to all community college students. We estimate that it would cost just \$50.5 million a year, a tiny fraction of New York City's annual budget, to give a free MetroCard to every CUNY community college student not currently in ASAP. This investment in our city's future will help them earn a valuable credential that will lead to a lifetime of increased economic opportunity for them and their families."<sup>5</sup> Community College students should be considered as a pilot program when first rolling out the program at the projected cost of \$50 million which would expand the scope of student commuter benefits to students that may not qualify for ASAP or Fairfares may not provide enough financial support.

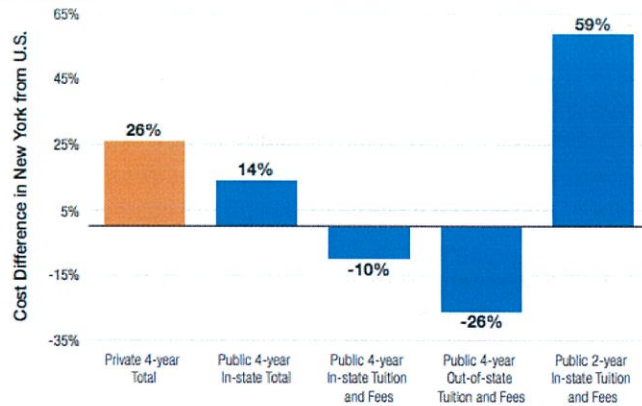
According to studies comparing New York higher education costs with the national average the total cost for public 4-year in-state tuition is 14% above the national average. Public 2-year In-state Tuition and fees are 59% above the national average. New York Higher Education should be leading the trends of national affordability, instead, the inverse is being exemplified. New York State needs innovative narrative-changing policies such as free community college or student MetroCards to incentivize students to complete degrees on time. If the needs are not addressed the challenges other colleges are facing such as closures and massive renovations would be necessary.

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<sup>4</sup> Center For an Urban Future, "OPPORTUNITY COSTS Nontuition financial barriers are derailing lowincome students' path to a college credential—and a shot at economic mobility" JUNE 2021 [https://nycfuture.org/pdf/CUF\\_OpportunityCosts\\_Final.pdf](https://nycfuture.org/pdf/CUF_OpportunityCosts_Final.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Jonathan Bowles & Winston Fisher, et al.; AMNY, "Op-Ed  
Op-ed | The city should provide free MetroCards to CUNY students, October 16, 2023  
<https://www.amny.com/oped/op-ed-free-metrocards-for-cuny-students/>

**Higher Education Costs: New York Compared to the United States,  
AY 2020-21**



Note: Average charges for the entire academic year. At degree-granting institutions; weighted by number of full-time equivalent undergraduates; out-of-state amounts were weighted by number of first-time freshmen attending from out-of-state.  
Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Table 330.20 at [https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/data/ipeds\\_datacenter/ipeds\\_datacenter.asp?table=330.20&current=yes](https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/data/ipeds_datacenter/ipeds_datacenter.asp?table=330.20&current=yes)

Research on the residency of CUNY graduates suggests that a large majority of CUNY students who graduate remain NYS residents. As they remain in New York they contribute to the community with the knowledge they acquire. As a result, they contribute to fueling the economy and enable labor and population retention in New York State. The benefits of supporting students to graduate pay dividends in the long term.

Middle Atlantic										
Period after Graduation		Total	New York	Not New York	South Atlantic	New England	East Central	Mountain	West Central	Pacific
CUNY Associate Degree										
One Year	Number	67,972	66,532	1,440	1,930	597	750	129	618	669
	Percent	93.5	91.6	2.0	2.7	0.8	1.0	0.2	0.8	0.9
Five Years	Number	51,701	49,906	1,795	2,250	567	673	125	589	644
	Percent	91.4	88.3	3.2	4.0	1.0	1.2	0.2	1.0	1.1
Ten Years	Number	22,071	20,991	1,080	1,485	320	368	65	359	345
	Percent	86.2	83.9	4.3	5.9	1.3	1.4	0.3	1.5	1.4
CUNY Bachelor's Degree										
One Year	Number	194,294	187,424	6,870	6,289	2,387	2,781	532	2,317	2,799
	Percent	91.9	88.7	3.3	3.0	1.1	1.3	0.3	1.1	1.3
Five Years	Number	122,773	116,777	5,996	6,283	1,963	2,287	442	2,023	2,506
	Percent	88.8	84.5	4.3	4.5	1.4	1.7	0.3	1.5	1.8
Ten Years	Number	82,323	77,022	5,301	5,866	1,728	1,693	499	1,705	2,307
	Percent	85.6	80.1	5.5	6.1	1.8	1.8	0.5	1.8	2.4
CUNY Master's Degree										
One Year	Number	81,608	78,572	3,036	2,464	981	1,024	212	847	1,252
	Percent	92.3	88.9	3.4	2.8	1.1	1.2	0.2	1.0	1.4
Five Years	Number	45,658	43,130	2,528	2,508	975	839	271	759	1,222
	Percent	87.4	82.6	4.8	4.8	1.9	1.6	0.5	1.5	2.3
Ten Years	Number	18,272	16,980	1,292	1,344	514	436	120	383	592
	Percent	84.4	78.4	6.0	6.2	2.4	2.0	0.6	1.8	2.7

Source: The City University of New York and CUNY's use of U.S. Census Bureau, Post-secondary Employment Outcomes (PSEO) data (submitted as CUNY Post Grad Resid Flow Follow up to 2023-24 Executive Budget on Higher Education, Joint Legislative Hearing, on February 27, 2023; see [https://www.assembly.state.ny.us/testimony/?ph\\_id=1348](https://www.assembly.state.ny.us/testimony/?ph_id=1348))

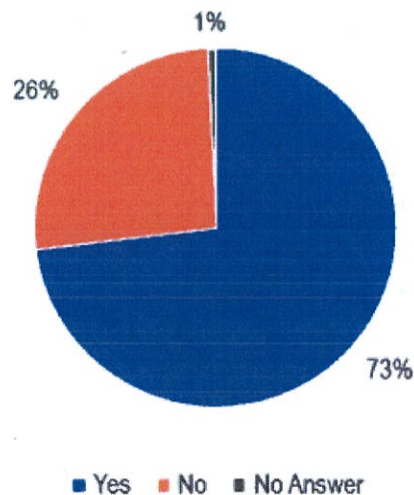


**d. Student-Led Survey to Evaluate the Impact of Transportation Expenses**

In a student-led survey conducted by the Welfare Rights Initiative at Hunter College in the Spring of 2024 with a 141-student data set, **73% of students cited transportation as an issue due to finances**. The cost of transportation comes at the expense of other necessities such as tuition, food, and bills. **45% of students spend \$30 or more a week on transportation**. Students are directly impacted by each dollar they have to spend on non-tuition expenses to complete their degrees.

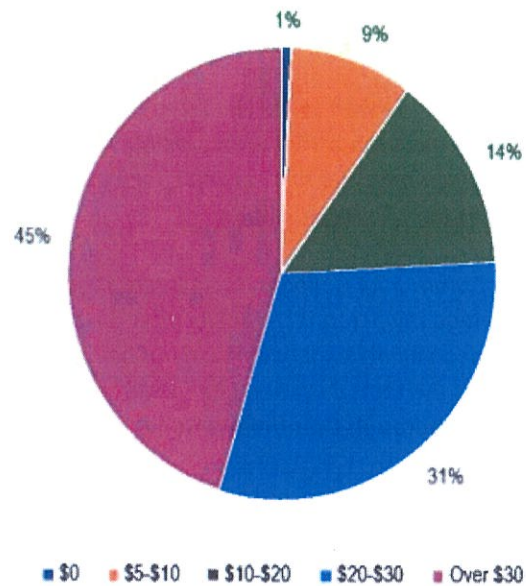
Categories	Conducted on - 2/26/2024	Conducted on- 3/11/2024	Conducted on- 3/21/2024	Total
Freshman	24	15	4	43
Sophomore	21	10	7	38
Juniors	18	11	5	34
Seniors	16	5	5	26
Yes	59	28	16	103
No	19	13	5	37
No Answer	1	0	0	1
\$0	0	1	0	1
\$5-\$10	10	2	1	13
\$10-\$20	11	6	3	20
\$20-\$30	21	13	9	43
Over \$30	37	19	8	64
Tuition	39	25	9	73
Transportation	55	28	15	98
Books/ Computers	36	13	11	60
Clothes	14	1	3	18
Cost of living (Rent)	16	13	7	36
Medical Expenses	11	5	4	20
Food Expenses	35	16	10	61
Child Care Expenses	1	0	1	2
Bills	19	14	10	43
None of above	5	2	2	9
Other	5	0	1	6
Prefer not to say	2	2	1	5

Is transportation to & from school an issue due to financial reasons?

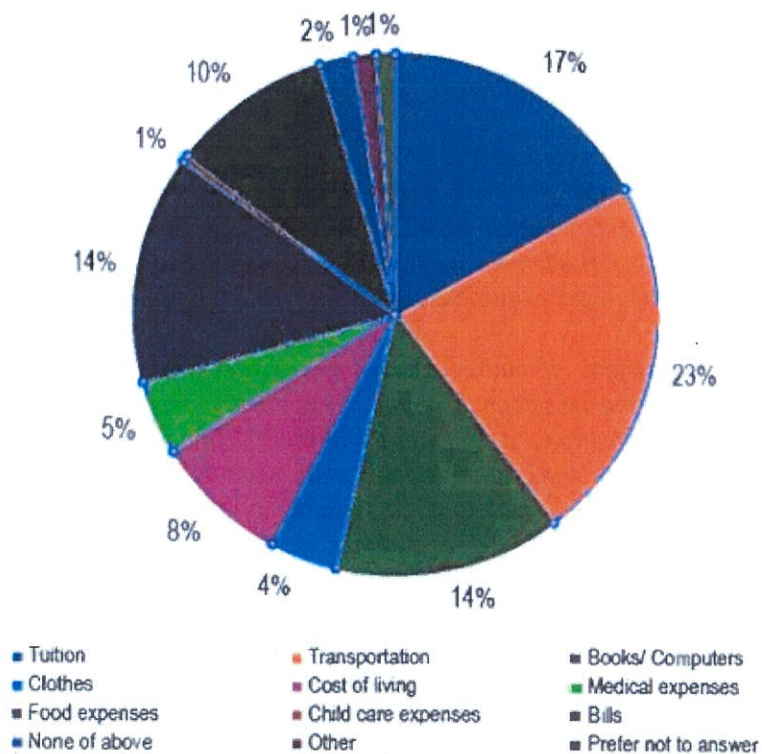




Approximately how much do you pay weekly in transportation to & from school?



Which financial issue and/or issues you currently might be facing?



**Why #FreeMetroCardsforCUNY Now University Student Senate Survey**

The University Student Senate's Spring 2024 Student survey collected 850+ responses from students across CUNY sharing the struggles of being a commuter student. The out-of-pocket expenses for commuting cause stress which is not conducive to academic performance. A few of the responses are below:

*"I couldn't afford to pay textbooks on time because I had to wait to get fair fares then supply my fair fares. In Laguardia community college I had asap program helping me with metrocards but moving into Hunter I find nothing available. How are we supposed to pursue higher ed like this? I even spoke about this on Pix 11 last summer 2022."* **Hunter College, Junior**

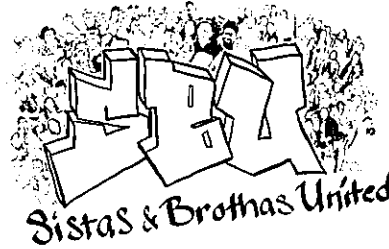
*"I am an international student at Queensborough Community College. As an International student my tuition fee is quite high and I am having trouble to manage my personal finances after paying my tuition every month. It's getting hard for me at this point to manage all my expenses, I am not being able to buy my study materials properly. It would be helpful even if I get the transportation financed from college, as I am not getting any scholarship or aid."* **Queensborough Community College, Freshmen**

*"Before I didn't have to pay because I was in the ASAP program, but after my associate degree I was no longer eligible because I finished my associate degree and now I had to pay out of pocket because the program called ACE that is associate with ASAP couldn't support my major (which is mechanical engineering). They told me that they didn't have an advisor for my major which sucks because the most important thing that I needed for them was the metrocards and the financial support for textbook and supplies. Now when it comes to Metrocards I have to pay out of pocket which is kinda of a hassle because I have my own money that I have to spend and it's not very high, and some of the money that if I were to earn I would need to put it towards my tuition, which makes it more difficult."* **New York City College of New York, Junior**

*"Being a full-time student attending campus classes and clubs, the cost of transportation poses a substantial financial burden. It not only affects my ability to cover essential expenses but also limits my active participation in campus activities. Advocating for more student-friendly transportation options or subsidies can help alleviate these financial challenges and enhance the overall student experience."* **Lehman College, Senior**

*"I have to manage working and going to school. I rather focus that energy in my rigorous program that is nursing. Sometimes I hop the turnstiles. I feel less capable of managing good grades because I have to survive and pay out of pocket for a monthly metro card. Sometimes the metro card can get lost and that's extra coming out of my pockets and my labor doesn't add up to inflation costs let alone metrocards. It sucks out here. It's getting greedy with funding."* **Laguardia Community College, Freshmen**

*"Originally, I was eligible for the Fair Fares program which did help with commuting expenses. Then my case was randomly cut off. I already receive TANF and SNAP. I'm a single adult with no children so I receive 95 dollars twice a month and 295 in SNAP. I'm unable to work because I've been looking for months and nothing is available. There were times I had to borrow money for carfare. I was given a Metrocard from the Student Resource Center but it's only good for one month and after it expires, I'll have to pay out of pocket again."* **Borough of Manhattan Community College, Junior**



**City Council Budget Hearing on Education: Youth Testimony  
Sistas and Brothas United UYC: Ava Harris**

Good afternoon elected officials, peers, and community members. My name is Ava, my pronouns are she/her and I am a youth leader for Sistas and Brothas United at the North West Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition and the Urban Youth Collaborative.

I'm here today because at the last hearing I shared my experience with our school metal detectors and how racially profiled I felt by the cops who every morning manage them. I shared that the Police in my school make me feel judged, uncomfortable and extremely unwelcomed. I have described in the past my own experiences about being made to get scanned two or more times on a multi-weekly basis despite not having anything on me and the alarm not ringing, as well as oftentimes still being pulled to the side for an additional wand check despite the alarm's silence. In my last testimony I asked this City Council to fight for a budget that doesn't criminalize us and to invest in us and our future. Unfortunately we still see some significant cuts to vital school programs and still see funding for vacant school police positions and no hiring freeze in school cops. The hundreds of millions of dollars the City currently chooses to spend on the NYPD's school policing division should be redirected away from policing young people and towards hiring supportive school staff and sustaining restorative practices—these are what schools need to support young people to learn, grow, and pursue their dreams.

Another thing to note that I and many others found very alarming, is that this morning I walked into my school and was met with brand new metal detectors which is shocking because I thought we were in a budget crisis. These shiny new metal detectors have only exacerbated the challenges I named last time. When I walked through them this morning, despite having nothing more than the normal things that I carry on me every day the metal detector went off, this hasn't happened previously with the other detectors. I saw someone walk next to the metal detector not through but at least 6 inches next to it and it still went off. The



dysfunctionality of the scanners has now added even more time for people at the scanners because now a larger amount of people walking through or even walking by are ringing with nothing on them. While today was the first day I already see this being another reason to make us students feel like criminals throughout any school activity. It was bad enough that we had to feel like criminals at the beginning of the day. With these new metal detectors that can be moved we now can be scanned everywhere. I know with these or any metal detectors being implemented in my school I will always feel the condescending judgment and negative perceptions when walking anywhere within the premises.

It feels like the city continues to take steps backwards and while you all and the Mayor continue to prioritize policing over our futures we the students have to pay the price. Next year our school counselor will be transitioning out of her role and soon making this ratio 12 cops to 0 mental health counselors with this it feels evident that schools are only prioritizing police and I fear that the students in the school won't have a counselor who can support them. This doesn't and never has felt like the right thing to do especially because in many cases that I've seen policing as well as metal detectors in schools has been shown to not be effective and also not help kids with what they really need and instead make them feel uncomfortable and threatened. I've witnessed many times, at minimum 2 times a week, where a student isn't in a mentally stable position and due to the one counselor in our school often being with another student during those moments, the student is left without support in an environment that adds more stress to them and are unable to access mental support. This can lead to outbursts as the students aren't getting what they need to support them. Outbursts that could've been easily prevented with more counselors, conflict mediators, and restorative justice practices.

We call for the city council to fight for a budget that secures a hiring freeze on school cops. This hiring freeze would not allow the city to fill for attrition. Cut funding for the vacant school cop positions. Use the money from both these divestments to baseline funding for school support staff that schools like mine desperately need. It's time *that* the City Council stand with students and fight for a budget that funds our *futures*, *not* our criminalization!



## **City Council Budget Hearing on Education: Youth Testimony**

### **Future Of Tomorrow UYC: Aylin Frias**

Good afternoon, my name is Aylin Frias. My pronouns are she/he and I am a youth leader with Future of Tomorrow and The Urban Youth Collaborative. I'm a student at Franklin K. Lane High School. I am here today to demand that the City Council say no to taking more money out of resources we need and putting it into policing our school, and instead invest that money in our schools, the resources we need and prioritize students. School policing makes my school feel like an unsafe place, filled with stress and constant intimidation and discrimination against students who look like me. Every morning when I wake up, I feel discouraged going to school. My mind goes over every item I have in my backpack to make sure I don't leave a hair pin misplaced. I feel uneasy, just the thought in my mind that my hair, my blackness or my mother's background could be a trigger that causes a school cop in a bad mood to disturb my learning process.

All the time we see in the news how police regularly arrest, beat, and even murder, black and Latinx youth who very often are going through mental health processes and just need someone to talk to, who are often screaming for help. Recently I was chosen for a program at my school called peer leading. This is a program that lets you talk to your peers who are in conflict and with them think of solutions to de-escalate the problem before taking disciplinary actions. Programs like this help de-escalate conflict between students and offer them support based and long term solutions that would help students come out of these conflicts, thrive and head towards success. I urge you today to say no to the mayor's budget, to prioritize our mental health, and to provide us with real resources that will help us thrive. Today I want to make sure that student's voices are heard and that our city invests in programs like peer mediation and restorative justice, that we get the support we need from counselors and social workers instead of school cops. I urge you to secure a hiring freeze on school cops that does not allow for attrition and use the funding from these divestments to invest in our care and essential resources we need. Let's make schools a safe and welcoming environment instead of a place that feels like a prison. A safe school is not one with police and surveillance, but one with resources.





Good afternoon,

My name is Samuel. I'm in the tenth grade, and I'm a youth leader at Make the Road NY. I go to a community school in Brooklyn. Our schools should feel safe, not like prisons. Students like myself deserve a true investment in our education NOT more school cops. That is why I am here today.

Every time I enter my school building. I see cops screaming at us the students while going through the metal detectors. Every morning is chaotic, theres always a long line of students trying to get to class. Some times I get late to my class which leads to a phone call to my family saying I was late and at the end up been in trouble for no reason. Couple of weeks ago my school received new scanners and earlier in the year, school cops received new bulletproof vests which cost 3M dollars. But, where are our new counselors, our new therapists, restorative justice, nurses? That's what we truly need

cops in our schools don't make me feel safer, they only add to an unjust system of over-policing in black and brown neighborhoods and schools. We're calling for a freeze on hiring more police officers because their presence makes us feel watched when we've done nothing wrong. We want to walk through our school doors feeling like students, not suspects. Having more police in schools makes it more likely for young people like myself to fall into the school-to-prison pipeline. Restorative justice would help us talk things out and find solutions together

There are 574 vacant cop positions in our schools. That's a whole lot of money just sitting there, wasted. Instead of pouring cash into filling those positions, let's cut the funding and put it where it matters - In our education. Put it into programs that help us, such as restorative justice, support services and staff trained to be in those roles. More counselors, nurses, and therapists mean more support for us when we need it the most. We're not just numbers in a system, we are real people too. It's time that our city and Mayor recognized that and give us the help we deserve. The money we are using to fund cops in our schools could be the start of addressing those lack of resources.

It's time for a change. It's time for Mayor Adams and the City Council to listen up and take action by investing in students futures. Let's make our schools a place where we can learn,

BROOKLYN  
301 GROVE STREET  
BROOKLYN, NY 11237  
TEL 718 418 7690

QUEENS  
92-10 ROOSEVELT AVENUE  
JACKSON HEIGHTS, NY 11372  
TEL 718 565 8500

STATEN ISLAND  
161 PORT RICHMOND AVENUE  
STATEN ISLAND, NY 10302  
TEL 718 727 1222

LONG ISLAND  
1090 SUFFOLK AVENUE  
BRENTWOOD, NY 11717  
TEL 631 231 2220

WESTCHESTER  
46 WALLER AVENUE  
WHITE PLAINS, NY 10605  
TEL 914 948 8466

grow, and thrive without the over-policing and surveillance of students. We can build a future where students feel safe, supported, and empowered. Thank you for your time.



Urban Youth Collaborative



Hello,

My name is Esther. My pronouns are she/her. I'm a youth leader with Make the Road NY. Council Member Carr is my representative for where I live and go to school. Thank you Chairwoman of the Education Committee, Rita Joseph, for giving me the time and space today to talk about the school budget priorities.

In my school there's only 2 counselors with over 1,000 students. That's almost 1 counselor for 694 students. There's also no social workers and only 1 restorative justice coordinator. From my experience though, a sophomore student was facilitating the restorative practice process. So even then with 1 restorative justice coordinator, they still need help from other students and by that tactic not all conflicts can be solved when there's a thousand students. Even with some of the education budget being restored, it still means that I will only have 2 counselors. Even with the recent announcement of investments for the DOE, important programs and services were not on the list, like restorative justice, student success centers, and a mental health continuum. These are vital resources that open up a lot of opportunities to young people because in my experience RJ helps to resolve conflict at school. It resolved a conflict between me and a peer a couple of months ago. There was a young person who started untrue rumors about me disliking his partner. His partner wanted to fight me because of this and I was emotionally frustrated about him starting a problem with a girl that I did not know. A staff member approached me and asked me about the situation where he then suggested I sit in a restorative circle with the girl to have a conversation and hear each other's sides of the story. Restorative justice was the solution to my situation.

Another point that should be made is that the NYPD approved 400 new "assistant" school cop positions - to create a pipeline to recruit youth straight out of HS to be school cops. As of right now there is no job description of an assistant school cop. Will these "assistants" harass and target students like regular school cops? How will we tell the difference between the "assistant" and the actual school cop? Why are assistant school cop positions opening up for fresh high school graduates? How can you fund these new positions and can't open up more options and

BROOKLYN  
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opportunities for graduates to accomplish their goals. Some graduates might want to be a nurse, internships for these jobs should be opened up to high school graduates.

If this city cares about job opportunities for youth we need more money invested. We need to place a hiring freeze on school cops and cut funding for the 574 vacant school cop positions. This would give us close to 90 million that we could use to immediately fund school support staff. Police in schools, whether they have assistants or not, do not make students feel safe. What keeps us safe is the support we get from our guidance counselors, social workers, and restorative justice practitioners. We need to continue to fund and increase the funding on mental health support in our schools because we deserve the resources and services that will help us into our futures.





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**City Council Budget Hearing on Education: Youth Testimony**  
**Sistas and Brothas United UYC: Reign Jenkins**

Good afternoon elected officials and all those who joined us today. I am Reign Jenkins, pronouns they/them, and I am a part of Sistas and Brothas United at the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition and the Urban Youth Collaborative. As a student who has attended public school all of my life I am here testifying today because I believe students like me know best how our schools could improve. We know the things we need the most and the things that make us feel safe and supported.

As a student, I'm always looking for a brighter future, however it feels hard to achieve when we don't often have all the things that we need to succeed but we always have all the things to criminalize us. While the programs that help us grow and thrive are at risk of disappearing, the school is buying school cops pointless new metal detectors and bulletproof vests. At my school, policing practices impact our learning on a daily basis; for example, in the mornings I'm often late to school because of the long lines because of metal detectors, even if you came to the school early at least 15 to 30 minutes early, you would walk in late meaning you often miss part of your early classes which can later impact your grades. As a student I think there's better investments than police in our schools.

As a sophomore, it is important to me to have more opportunities that help prepare us for the future. I believe resources like extracurricular activities, job opportunities and culturally competent counselors will give us more real world experiences and chances to succeed in the long run. The safest schools have the most resources, NOT the most police. It's past time to take action & listen to youth - look at Chicago and Oakland. New York needs to step up and lead the way.

Today my peers and I are calling for the Mayor and the city to prioritize our care, not criminalization with the following budget demands: 1) secure a hiring freeze on school cops that does not allow to fill for attrition 2) cut funding for the remaining vacant school cop positions 3) use the funding from both these divestments to protect and expand restorative justice, mental health, and other staff and practices that help students learn and thrive.



**New York City Council - Committees on Education, Higher Education, & Finance- NYC**  
**Preliminary Budget Hearing**  
**Submitted by Sean Henry Miller, Northeast Regional Director - Young Invincibles,**  
**Wednesday, May 15, 2024**

Thank you committee chairs Joseph, Brennan, & Dinowitz & council members. I'm Sean Miller, Northeast Regional Director of Young Invincibles. We're a national policy and advocacy nonprofit, dedicated to amplifying the voices of young adults, 18 to 34, in the political process and expanding economic opportunity for our generation. I'm here today to share our thanks and adamant support for the [resolution](#) calling for [the New Deal for CUNY](#), as well support to maintain and increase the ACE/ASAP Programs, sufficient community college funding, basic needs resource access, the CUNY CARES pilot program, and FAFSA completion supports.

Young Invincibles strives to represent and elevate youth priorities with a focus on access and equity in higher education, health care, and workforce development. The New Deal for CUNY aligns with these values and the expressed needs of the young adults whom we serve. We know that state funding continues to be insufficient when it comes to addressing decades of underfunding CUNY facilities, faculty, staff, and students. Thus, we call on the city budget to help fill the gap toward achieving the \$1.5 Billion needed over 5 years to

1. hire a sufficient number of full-time faculty,
2. Hire a sufficient number of academic counselors & life-saving mental health counselors
3. fix crumbling CUNY buildings and IDEA Act violations (including those at Queens College, CSI, & others we've heard about from students & the CUNY Coalition for Students with Disabilities), and,
4. Return CUNY to its former status as a tuition-free and fully accessible university system of the people

Our working-class young folks in NYC, although being a historically underrepresented constituency, are speaking **loud and clear** when they tell us that **CUNY schools do not have enough counselors, full-time faculty, or financial support.**

I also want to stress the lack of sufficient counselors, as suicide is the second leading cause of college student deaths, second only to accidental death. It's therefore, the most preventable, yet the ratio of counselors to students at CUNY schools often exceeds one counselor to every 2,500 students, causing students to wait weeks or sometimes months for a meeting with a mental health counselor. The cost of increasing the ratio of mental health counselors CUNY-wide to the nationally approved ratio, 1-1,000, would be roughly \$15 million, per PSC estimates, just ~0.01% of the city's proposed \$115 Billion Budget.



SUNY is also far exceeding CUNY in its implementation of housing liaisons, to support homeless or housing insecure students, and streamlining automatic SNAP enrollment and outreach for eligible students. Many of these life-saving services were previously covered by the Single Stop program, which was ended in 2020. The CUNY CARES program is wonderful and comprehensively addresses students' basic needs at the 3 Bronx colleges, but this pilot only serves 3 of CUNY's 25 colleges and universities.

We know this long-overdue re-investment will help ensure that thousands of low-income students at CUNY can survive and thrive, rather than suffer in silence. We also need to fully fund CUNY FAST and investments in language-accessible FAFSA resources and trainings across NYC high schools as we implement our newly passed statewide Universal FAFSA policy.

We need your support and the Mayor's - not negligent budget cuts, but bold investments in equity & care. Thank you.



Hello, good afternoon, My name is Alexandra. I am in my last year of high school and I'm a leader with Make the Road New York and the Urban Youth Collaborative. Council Member Moya represents where I live in Corona and Council Member Julie Won represents the area where I go to school.

When I arrived from Ecuador in 2021, I felt really excited to be a new student and my guidance counselors were extremely helpful in getting me oriented to the new school. Unfortunately, things have changed since then and in my junior and senior years I have not been able to see my guidance counselor as often as I need. We used to be able to just talk to counselors anytime and now we have to make an appointment. We only have three counselors, and we have more and more students coming in every year. My class size went from 23 students to more than 30 students in classes. We do not have enough guidance counselors to meet the needs of young people and families. My mom came to my school to try and speak with a counselor and they turned her away and said she needed to make an appointment. My mom felt so frustrated and unwelcomed and now she avoids going to my school, because she doesn't feel like they can support us in the way we need.

In a year where I am focusing on the future and next steps, it's stressful to see more school cops than counselors. From corner to corner, the hallways are crowded with students and the school cops have a whistle that they use to make us walk faster. The sound is so loud and aggressive. It hurts my ears and leaves them ringing for several minutes after that. I hate feeling like we're all just a bunch of sheep to be moved. Just this week, I saw that my school put a ton of new cameras in the hallways and in the staircases. It makes me feel really uncomfortable to know that they are always watching every single move I make or every single conversation I have. I heard another dean say they were going to install even more cameras in the school.

Through my participation with Make the Road New York, I have been able to meet students from different schools across the city. So many other young people have shared that they have had similar or worse experiences with school police. Instead of the over the \$400 million dollars that goes into school policing, we want investments in our education.

If the City Council and mayor need more money for education, here are some clear ways to help free up the funds we need. First, place a hiring freeze on school cops. Second, cut funding for the 574 vacant school cop positions. This would give us over \$90 million dollars that we could use to immediately fund more guidance counselors and professional mental health support, and more adults to help support parents and families. We do not need school police to resolve conflicts or intimidate us just for being young people in school. The money is there and I hope you will choose to use it for our education and not police in schools. Thank you.





My name is Estefania, I am graduating high school in a month and headed to John Jay College. I'm a leader with Make the Road New York and the Urban Youth Collaborative. Council Member Krishnan represents me in the City Council and Council Member Won represents my school neighborhood.

When I first arrived at my New York City high school from Ecuador in 2021, I really appreciated my guidance counselor guiding me through what I needed to do. Now as a senior, I rarely get to see my counselor. The four guidance counselors at my school are overwhelmed by the number of students they need to support, and by default the students who need the most amount of help get their attention. I send email after email, but still it's a struggle to get an appointment to see a guidance counselor. We used to only have two lunch periods, but now we're up to 4 different lunch periods and the school is so crowded. With the increase in students, I've also seen an increase in school cops. On an everyday basis, I see school cops more than I see guidance counselors.

New York City has the largest school police force in the country, with 4,000 cops and a budget of more than \$400 million. We have the largest school cop to student ratio in the country. Here in New York City there is one school cop for every 200 students. Yet in Los Angeles, the second largest school district in the country, there is one school cop for every 3,000 students. That's a huge difference and a lot of money to spend on school cops. Instead of cutting the budget of services we actually need like counselors, mental health supports, restorative justice, community schools and student success centers, we should remove that money from the school police budget. Right now New York City could put a hiring freeze on school cops and stop funding vacant school cop positions that would immediately free up over \$90 million dollars.

Removing that money from the school police and reinvesting it in our education would help me and all of my classmates thrive so much more. It could open up possibilities for our schools to have music instruments, to have up to date technology to learn, better food and better functioning heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems. Instead of school cops, I would also like to see more nurses in the schools. Right now, when students are not feeling well, the only real option the nurse gives us is to send us home, because they do not have many resources to help. Above all, reinvesting all the money from school cops would mean my school would have enough guidance counselors, social workers and restorative justice counselors to help us when we need it.

Thank you for listening and I hope that you stand with young people and fight for a budget that funds our futures, not school cops.



Good Afternoon Everyone, My name is Nuha Hauter, my pronouns are she/her. I am a Youth Leader at Make the Road New York's Student Success Center at Bushwick Campus. That means that I and 7 other students support our peers not only through the college process but also in becoming more involved with our community. My SSC has become a safe space to talk about real world conflicts and issues knowing that we will be heard and seen. Our SSC is always full with students who come to decompress at lunch or get help with scholarship applications. I've seen proof that the SSC works because one of my teachers now was a student at Bushwick Campus who worked as a college advisor in high school for the SSC and now she teaches a class on career readiness that I am in. I can see that the SSC gave her a space for her passion of assisting others in answering the question of what happens after high school. She works with the SSC in the creation of her class and I have found it so helpful. It's so cool to be taught by someone who went through what I am experiencing right now. By being a YL, I am a point person for students in my school who need advice.

As a YL I have learned to give career advice, counseling, social-emotional counseling, advocacy, and when I don't know something, I know who in the SSC to go to. I have taken the resources that I've learned at my SSC and I have shared scholarship opportunities, CUNY/SUNY events,

and common app insight with my friend who goes to high school in Manhattan. She doesn't have an SSC in her school. I wasn't aware of how lucky I am to have a designated space in my school that is dedicated to my success. If the SSC was not here today, I would not have been as involved in my community as I am now. Without the SSC I would've been lost in my college process and would've probably not cared as much. Now I am a senior who will be attending York College in the fall semester with a Nursing major.

I was upset when I heard that the city spent 3M on bulletproof vests for school police this year when that money could have gone to continue supporting SSC's and students in figuring out their future and following their dreams. This choice the city made makes me feel like a criminal rather than a student because of the environment that the city enforces and funds is scary and intimidating. I believe the only reason police need bulletproof vests is due to the city's lack of funding to schools and programs. They don't give schools enough money to fully fund after school programs, fun activities during the day, and well balanced lunches. Because we don't have these resources, students are left on their own, meaning more disruption in class and more conflicts in and out of school. If the city government properly funded schools there wouldn't be the need for extra police protection. Treat students the way you want to be treated because after all students are also human.

In conclusion, Student Success Centers are important to our growth and success. They improve grades and prepare us for college and careers, and change lives for the better. Please invest in our futures and fund SSCs, thank you.



Good afternoon,

Chair Joseph and members of the City Council; my name is Pamela Vasquez. I work at Make The Road New York and am the college counselor at our school's student success center. I am before you today as a proud advocate for funding student success centers across our city. These centers, like the one at the Bushwick Campus, are more than just spaces—they're beacons of hope and opportunity for students who have been told they're not enough or aren't trying hard enough!

Let me share the story of Lewis, a remarkable young man who migrated from the Dominican Republic in 2018. Starting school at BSSJ, Lewis became a beacon of inspiration as a Youth Leader at the Student Success Center. Despite facing challenges, he pursued his dreams steadfast, utilizing SSC services for his post-secondary plans. Today, Lewis stands on the brink of obtaining his Ph.D. in Neuroscience at Brown University, a testament to the transformative power of student success centers.

And then there's my journey. As a Dominican immigrant, I discovered the Bushwick Campus SSC during my senior year of high school. With their unwavering support, I navigated the daunting college and financial aid application process, setting me on the path to pursuing my dreams. From seeking to become a police officer to pursuing a degree in International Criminal Justice, I owe much of my success to the guidance and opportunities provided by the SSC.

The impact of student success centers extends far beyond individual stories. Just this past fall, the Bushwick Campus SSC played a pivotal role in helping 90% of seniors complete their college applications and provided essential support during the chaotic FAFSA rollout. With over 50 workshops and events, including college fairs and resume preparation sessions, the SSC is not just a resource—it's a lifeline for our community.

In closing, I implore you to recognize the vital role that student success centers play in shaping the futures of our youth. They are not merely facilities but sanctuaries of



empowerment and possibility. By investing in these centers, we invest in the promise of a brighter tomorrow for generations to come. Let us ensure that every student has access to the support and guidance they need to thrive academically, professionally, and personally.



Good afternoon,

My name is Yorwis, I am a freshman in a Queens high school and I'm a youth leader at Make the Road New York and the Urban Youth Collaborative.

Two weeks ago, I spent my last day of spring break talking to council members about how frustrating it is that the city spends millions of dollars on school police, instead of funding the restorative justice and mental health supports we need. And the month before that my friends and I spoke at the Queens Town Hall in front of Council Member Joseph, Krishnan and Guterrez about police free schools. We are frustrated that adults in power are not listening to us when we say we don't need cops in our schools - what we need is care.

I moved here from Ecuador, almost one year ago. When I walked into my school, I initially felt so weird and different because it was a completely new atmosphere and language. It was really hard to be a new student in a new place. When I saw police in my school for the first time, I felt really unsafe. I saw how school police discriminated against students of color and immigrant students through their treatment. From my point of view, police do not belong in schools. I do not trust them or go to them when I need help. I go to a teacher or counselor.

We had to fight all year against cuts to our education, all while the city continues to spend over \$400 million on school police. Mayor Adams and the NYPD also further militarized our schools this year by wasting 3 million on bullet proof vests for all school police and hundreds of millions on video surveillance, door locks and new metal detectors. We have more school cops than social workers, counselors and restorative justice coordinators combined.

It does not make sense to me how we can continue to spend all that money for school police and in the same breath say we don't have enough money for the real safety supports we need, like the ones I've just mentioned. The safest schools have the most resources, not the most school cops.

I appreciate the City Council included so many mental health support programs in their response to the budget. Young people definitely need more school psychologists and social workers in schools. It is not enough to have one social worker for every six hundred students. And I'm here today to call on you to take it a step forward and follow in the steps of Chicago and Los Angeles, because young people in New York City need you to remove cops in schools - stop recruiting, hiring, and training school cops. If New York City did this, we would have over \$90 million dollars that could be invested into resources we need to actually help us thrive.

As a new student, I would like more help around language access. I would also like to see more programs dedicated to helping the newest students adapt to their environment. It is more important for young people to have access to after school programs, mental health professionals and guidance counselors than school cops. Our mental health is just as important as physical health. Thank you for your time and I hope you continue to stand with youth and invest in our education not criminalization.

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Alison Bardsley [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 16, 2024 3:32 PM  
**To:** Testimony  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Testimony from budget hearing on 3 15 2024

[REDACTED]

From Alyson Bardsley, Associate Professor, College of Staten Island, PSC-CUNY member, and Stapleton resident (Kamilliah Hanks' district!)

We at CUNY depend on the Council to be our allies and advocates. We believe that you understand the need to avoid the short term focused policies and the embrace of a manufactured austerity represented by the Mayor's budget. We trust that you understand the urgent need to invest in our city's future, a future that CUNY has and will continue to foster, come what may. It's public knowledge, and our city's shame, that CUNY facilities are falling apart after a generation of willful neglect. My students and colleagues are brave, strong people. But how can they continue to work and to learn in these conditions? The stairwell I climb to my office has holes in the walls and the ceiling; the rubber safety mats over the concrete floor are gone. Lucky for me I can use the stairs, because the elevator is unreliable, such that student tutors from the second floor writing center have had to come meet with wheelchair using tutees down in the first floor hallway, lest they get stranded upstairs. A colleague was issued a bucket to put under the hole in her office ceiling because Buildings and Grounds knew they weren't going to be able to fix the roof. The library rotunda leaks when it rains; I made the mistake of leaving a snack in my desk this semester, only to have the presence of rodents re-confirmed. I could go on, and every CUNY school has similar stories (although, I have to add, CSI's maintenance problems are aggravated by a funding formula based on building footprint, that doesn't recognize the needs of our 204 acres). Does the council want my students to come to believe that they, as the future of this city, deserve no better, that to study in dirty and dangerous buildings? Does the council want to deplete the city's human capital as my professional staff colleagues continue to grow ill and exhausted, and leave CUNY because the physical and mental strain is unbearable given their depleted numbers and our students' needs? I trust that the answer is no, and that for your current and future constituents you will fight for a fully funded CUNY.

Arianna Lloyd  
Testimony for Education Rally  
5/15/24

As a young student of color, budget cuts and decreased funding for certain activities make it even harder for students from different backgrounds to access the opportunities that students from privileged backgrounds receive. This situation unintentionally creates discrimination against people of color, such as Hispanics, African Americans, various Caribbean groups, and many more. Most of the students offered seats in the eight specialized high schools come from much higher economic backgrounds, while only a small percentage of Hispanic, Black, and Caribbean students are offered seats. However, the Middle School Student Success Center prides itself on providing the best opportunities for their students, regardless of race or ethnicity. They have offered free Specialized High School Admissions Test classes to both I.S. 171 and Highland Park Community School, giving the students opportunities to prepare for the specialized high school test. My older sister, who participated in the youth leader program with the Middle School Student Success Center, managed to get into one of her dream high schools with their help, and she is now in college, pursuing her dream career. Without the Middle School Student Success Center, I don't think my sister could have gotten the opportunities she did, and she most likely wouldn't be where she is today without their help.



Council General Testimony,

Dear Speaker, Council Finance Chair, Committee Chair & staff,

I am submitting written testimony for public record. I support a #PeoplesBudget that invests in CUNY instead of cutting our most affordable higher education system and one of our most prized economic engines. Stopping the cuts will ensure CUNY is able to restore course offerings, stop enrollment caps, prevent layoffs, and more — benefiting faculty, staff, and CUNY students who are being shortchanged by these cuts.

Currently, the FY25 preliminary budget presents harmful cuts to the CUNY system that places unnecessary burdens on both students and CUNY faculty and staff. We demand funding to:

- Restore \$94M in cuts to CUNY and lift hiring freezes
- Baseline \$35.5 Million in Funding for Advisors to Move Toward ASAP for All and screen students for Fair Fares

The cruel cuts to CUNY's budget are a huge loss to all New Yorkers. CUNY is a fundamental city institution that provides lifelong learning and skills-building opportunities for all New Yorkers. An affordable, quality higher education experience is essential to supporting New Yorkers in achieving their dreams.

I hope that the Mayor and Council can accomplish a people's budget through negotiations. BUT if not, we need Council to use its full budget powers of amending the budget and passing terms and conditions to make sure CUNY is restored in any budget that passes. Thank you.

Ashley Tjhung

[ashley.tjhung@gmail.com](mailto:ashley.tjhung@gmail.com)

Brooklyn, New York 11201

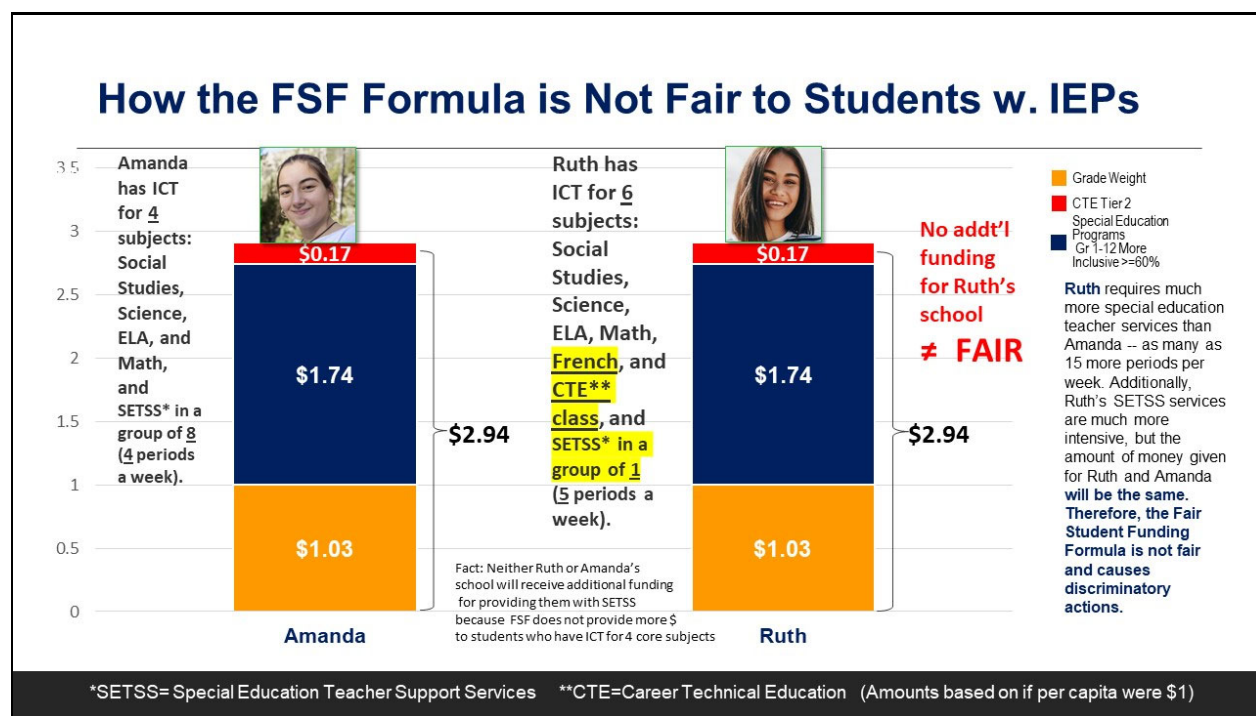
May 15, 2024

Re: T2024-1894 City Council Testimony Education Budget

Dear Chair Joseph, Chair Dinowitz, Chair Brannan, and members of the Committees of Education, Higher Education, and Finance of the New York City Council:

I am a parent of a student with a disability in New York City. I am aware of the budget cuts threatening our city's students in the upcoming school year thanks to the hard work of the Emergency Coalition to Save Education Programs ([ECSEP](#)). I am writing to tell you that budget cuts must be halted. If the pandemic has taught parents of students of disabilities one thing it was this: **When educational resources are threatened, students with disabilities will be one of the first to be impacted disproportionately.**

We can not bear to witness this again and as proof that our city's school system already discriminates against our students, please review this graphic below created by special education advocate, Jenn Choi, the founder of NYC Parents of Teens with Disabilities (1500+ members). A month ago, she received email confirmation from a top level NYC special education official regarding special education facts of NYC Public Schools' Fair Student Funding Formula to make this graphic below.



All parents are told that their child's IEP is created regardless of school's budget but if you look at the evidence, how can one expect parents to believe this? It clearly shows a student can have **vastly more instructional services** and **more intensive services** than another child but the schools will be funded **with the same amount**. How is a school supposed to afford to provide the services for the student with more needs when the district's "Fair" Student Funding Formula won't be fair to them? **I am a parent and I want the Fair Student Funding Formula to be fair to my school.**

When we talk about education budgets and which programs we must save, we should never forget the elephant in the room:

The **billion dollar payments** for impartial hearings costs for Carter cases, compensatory services, lawyer fees, etc. We believe that the Fair Student Funding Formula (FSF) has a lot to do with that and when we talk about the education budget, it would be irresponsible of the city not to talk about this because our tax dollars are paying for this too. Here's what we think many may not know about the Fair Student Funding Formula and students with disabilities:

1. **Teachers don't come in pieces.** The largest problem is this: FSF funds special education per student and not by the class which means that if just one student or even three needs ICT or Special Class, it is still not enough to hire a teacher. Amongst administrator circles, this situation is commonly known as "**breakage**" and to parents, it tells us how much of a burden our children are. Only the [Minority Report for the Fair Student Funding Working Group](#) tried to address this problem. To date, we only know of the CORE checklist from NYCPS Principal's Weekly [2/29 /2024](#) that is a formal process designed to support special education teacher costs apart from FSF.

**Superintendents Hub**  
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**SPECIAL EDUCATION**

## Support Schools with the CORE to Ensure Full Provision of Special Education Programs

The [Checklist for Organizing Resources \(CORE\)](#) is designed to help school leaders and the School Implementation Team (SIT) analyze their overall instructional and programming needs, evaluate current resources (e.g., budget, staff, space), and make strategic decisions about how to deploy resources to fully implement students' Individualized Education Program (IEP) recommendations.

District administrators of special education (ASEs), working with budget directors and human resources directors, should support schools to fully implement students' IEPs and to consider completing the [Checklist for Organizing Resources \(CORE\)](#) to appeal for additional funding or to request a new school offer for a student, when they are unable to do so immediately. Before initiating this process, ASEs should email [CORE@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:CORE@schools.nyc.gov) to consult on completion of a CORE.

Appeals related specifically to special education staffing (e.g. special education teachers or classroom paraprofessionals) and school transfers on the basis of a student's IEP recommendation will only be considered after a CORE has been submitted to and approved by the Central Special Education Office (SEO).

For more information, review the [Introduction to the Checklist for Organizing Resources \(CORE\) Process](#). For questions, email [CORE@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:CORE@schools.nyc.gov).

2. In fact, Jenn Choi, asked the district to share documentation about the appeals process available to schools and they only shared that the appeals process is separate from the CORE Checklist. However, we've been able to find that Appeals can only be made if the incredibly complex and time-consuming CORE checklist is approved first. **How is this helpful to getting a student's mandate filled faster?** For all we know, for example, in order for a school to receive more money to fulfill possibly just ONE student's IEP mandate, a school must:
  - a. Work with budget directors, supervisors of school psychologists, HR directors, etc
  - b. Provide names, IEP dates, grades, ID #s of multiple students

- c. Provide names, what kind of special education certificate, Current Assignment(s), Periods per week assigned to provide special education services of multiple teachers
  - d. List their unscheduled funds, list funds beyond “allowable thresholds,” funds in “set aside,” **This sounds like my school is being audited and not supported.**
  - e. List the students history at the school, potential temporary housing status, attendance, if they’ve ever been left back? **Why does this matter? This sounds very discriminatory.**
3. **Other need-to-know facts about the FSF visible on the 1st chart:**
- a. On top of core ICT classes, schools do not receive more funds for a student to have special education teacher services for a World Language class (French, Mandarin, Spanish, etc) even though it is required for graduation.
  - b. **Schools do not receive more funds for a student to have ICT special education teacher services in a Career Technical Education (CTE) class.** These are the highly popular pathways-inspiring high schools capturing [today's headlines](#). Many of these schools offer “CTE-endorsed diplomas” requiring advanced testing and diligent preparation. Ex. Computer Repair, Structural Welding, Cisco, Oracle, Hair Stylist, Nail Technician, Plumbing, etc.
  - c. **Schools will not receive more special education funds when a student requires more special education instruction beyond special education in their 4 core subject classes.** These are called SETSS and they used to be called “Resource Room” a long time ago. These groups can have no more than 8 students to meet compliance. Still, the school will not be given more money to hire more teachers to teach these students.
  - d. For one who is really struggling, **if the student’s SETSS service needed to be 1:1, schools would not receive any more funds** to provide such a service despite the vast difference in teacher time requirements.

As parents, we ask you, when a school needs more money to hire a special education teacher to fulfill a child’s IEP, why is any of the above information necessary in the CORE Checklist? How is this not discrimination? How is this not a civil rights violation? If a school knows that they must go through this process, why would any school ever want to lay down a mandate for a child when there are no guarantees?

Again, with budget cuts looming, we ask you to please use your legislative powers to pressure the New York City Public Schools system to do better. Every year, I go to my child’s IEP meeting and I am told the same things that make me feel as though my child and I are “less than” and I am told things that I believe are violations but to fight this would be costly in both money, time, and emotions for both me and my child.

Our own family has suffered due to the inequity for student with disabilities such as

- I am not a full member of the IEP team as the law intends. I never get to see the draft of the IEP during the meeting only at the end of the meeting. Even though the team has the draft in front of them I do not. I always ask for any assessments before the meeting. This is only sometimes done.
- I have been told that ICT and SETSS cannot be provided at the same time. When we asked for this, we were told by the team that is against the law. If only I had known better

at that time. What a ridiculous thing to say to parents of a child that can not read in second grade.

- I am told there can't be any ICT in LOTE or AP classes. –
  - We were told in order for my daughter to be able to take AP Biology she would have to give up her ICT for Science.
  - My daughter is taking Spanish and does struggle with LOTE. She is trying her best and plans to take the regents but is very worried she will fail.
- I never get IEP goal progress reports for my child when report cards come out.

I hope that decisions can be made during this budget season to advise NYCPS that the Fair Student Formula needs to be changed to make funding special education fair to our children with disabilities. This formula makes it automatic to not give more funds to students who need more services. I believe this formula creates a foundation for discriminatory judgments at schools. This formula is the reason for the billions of dollars in impartial hearing costs. We would have more money for the education budget if we can make the changes there.

Can you please help us and make them make changes?

Thank you.

**Beth Litt-Wahl**

Parent of a student with a disability  
in Manhattan

Below is our community's evidence in these links:

- Link to NYC Public Schools' Introduction to CORE: <https://bit.ly/3KfEaW1>
- Link to NYC Public Schools' **CORE Checklist** <https://bit.ly/3UPqy9P>
- Evidence of Top Level NYCPS Special Education Official saying what the Fair Student Funding does and doesn't pay for is here with some emails from principals saying we don't do this special ed or that special ed is here: **The Chicken and The Egg**: <https://bit.ly/4agXtZx>
- Evidence of the district poorly answering questions about how schools can get more money faster when they need more money to hire special education teachers to fulfill an IEP mandate. **The Appeals Convo**: <https://bit.ly/AppealsandCORE>



Hello everyone my name Is Brandon Gonzalez a student From Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High school. I am a resident of The South Bronx!

Growing up in the Bronx is not easy. Watching your closest family and friends be set aside from basic physical activities due to asthma. As people from oppressed communities we feel this pain a little extra than others for the lack of good quality air in our neighborhoods. Seeing my great grandmother and sister endure the reality of having to breathe through a pipe while the rest of the family enjoys their time isn't right! And what makes it worse is knowing there are many more families sharing their pain and struggles since every 1-4 students have Asthma or other lung diseases here in the Bronx. Therefore I ask the city for its 600 million capital budget to electrify and upgrade Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom high school and prioritize schools Treeage has identified for Fiscal Year 25. Investing the money will demonstrate the sympathy we feel has not been shown to our communities, investing this money will help our people as we have been suffering for too long. A healthier, and greener world is something we envision for our future generations, we refuse to abandon our land for it has been neglected for too long.

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Bryan Fotino <bryanfotino@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 15, 2024 3:33 PM  
**To:** Testimony  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] 5/15 CUNY Hearing Testimony

[REDACTED]

My name is Bryan Fotino. I'm a tenant organizer, a member of the UAW union, and a visiting fellow at the City College of New York. I'd like to begin with a moment of silence for the over 35,000 Palestinians murdered by Israel since October 7, and the millions more Palestinians murdered, injured, and displaced since 1917. I am disgusted by Chancellor Matos and the NYPD's response to non-violent protests against genocide. Numerous injuries—including chemical burns, broken bones, concussions, bruises, and swelling—have been reported by protesters and individuals clearly identified as press. Close to 200 people were arrested, with several held for over 36 hours, in violation of the law requiring detainees to be arraigned within 24 hours of arrest. Those arrested were subjected to inhumane conditions at the jail—they waited in long lines for several hours in the cold and rain while in zip ties, were denied water, chairs, and warm clothes as well as access to bathrooms. There was at least one incident in jail where a Muslim woman's hijab was taken off amidst outrage and protest from fellow detainees—despite past cases that were settled by the NYPD for removal of women's hijabs. At least one detained protester was denied medical attention and passed out on the floor. Some of those arrested are facing trumped up felony charges of burglary, based on the lie that CUNY community members entering a CUNY administrative building constitutes a "break in." No amount of property damage justifies this violence against our community members. The City Council, which funds CUNY, must push CUNY to support the five demands of the protests: 1. Divest. 2. Cultural boycott. 3. Solidarity. 4. Demilitarize CUNY and Harlem. 5. Free CUNY. Put simply, the City of New York and CUNY must fund our communities, not genocide and the police. In addition, I am disgusted that many members of this body have not publicly called for a ceasefire, which is the absolute bare minimum. Shame on you.

Council General Testimony,

Dear Speaker, Council Finance Chair, Committee Chair & staff,

I am submitting written testimony for public record. I support a #PeoplesBudget that invests in CUNY instead of cutting our most affordable higher education system and one of our most prized economic engines. Stopping the cuts will ensure CUNY is able to restore course offerings, stop enrollment caps, prevent layoffs, and more — benefiting faculty, staff, and CUNY students who are being shortchanged by these cuts.

Currently, the FY25 preliminary budget presents harmful cuts to the CUNY system that places unnecessary burdens on both students and CUNY faculty and staff. We demand funding to:

- Restore \$94M in cuts to CUNY and lift hiring freezes
- Baseline \$35.5 Million in Funding for Advisors to Move Toward ASAP for All and screen students for Fair Fares

The cruel cuts to CUNY's budget are a huge loss to all New Yorkers. CUNY is a fundamental city institution that provides lifelong learning and skills-building opportunities for all New Yorkers. An affordable, quality higher education experience is essential to supporting New Yorkers in achieving their dreams.

I hope that the Mayor and Council can accomplish a people's budget through negotiations. BUT if not, we need Council to use its full budget powers of amending the budget and passing terms and conditions to make sure CUNY is restored in any budget that passes. Thank you.

Bright Limm

[bdlimm@gmail.com](mailto:bdlimm@gmail.com)

Jamaica, New York 11435

Council General Testimony,

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Bruce Brown

[bbrown111@verizon.net](mailto:bbrown111@verizon.net)

New York, New York 11361

Council General Testimony,

Dear Speaker, Council Finance Chair, Committee Chair & staff,

I am submitting written testimony for public record. I support a #PeoplesBudget and restorations to schools and childcare, key resources that New Yorkers and their children rely on. Mayor Adams' priorities are upside down and his cuts to public education and childcare are completely unnecessary.

Specifically, the following key education programs that are at risk of being rolled back or eliminated must be included in the final budget (\$103.3M):

- Restorative justice practices (\$12M)
- Mental Health Continuum (\$5M)
- Community Schools (\$14M)
- Immigrant Family Communication & Outreach (\$4M)
- Student Success Centers (\$3.3M)
- School Nurses (\$65M)

(More information on those programs here: [https://advocatesforchildren.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/ecsep\\_budget\\_ask.pdf](https://advocatesforchildren.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/ecsep_budget_ask.pdf))

Separately, the following childcare programs and funding must be included in the final budget (\$361M):

- Restoration of proposed cuts to 3K and pre-K (\$170M)
- Extended day seats (\$60M)
- Advertising and outreach for childcare programs (\$10M)
- Promise NYC (\$25M)
- Restorations to special education preschool by (\$96M)

Additionally, the city must follow the law and fund class sizes in this budget including:

- Restoring teaching positions cut in this budget and next (3,000 positions) and increasing funding to hire an additional 3,000 teachers costing \$308 million
- Increase the schools capital plan by \$2B to provide space for class size reduction
- Hold school budgets harmless for enrollment decline

Finally, the Council must pass terms and conditions that:

- Increase transparency around class size laws by adding new units of appropriations to ensure



proper funding of each school for class sizes and prevent violation of state “supplement not supplant” requirements

- Increase transparency by enacting terms and conditions that report on uses of foundation aid
- End mid-year cuts to schools through terms and conditions

I hope that the Mayor and Council can accomplish a people’s budget through negotiations. BUT if not, we need Council to use its full budget powers of amending the budget and passing terms and conditions to make sure education and childcare are restored and funded in any budget that passes. Thank you.

Caitlyn Passaretti  
[cdpassaretti@gmail.com](mailto:cdpassaretti@gmail.com)

NYC, New York 10031

Council General Testimony,

Dear Speaker, Council Finance Chair, Committee Chair & staff,

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Caitlyn Passaretti

[cdpassaretti@gmail.com](mailto:cdpassaretti@gmail.com)

NYC, New York 10031

From: Christina Dekatay-Aptowitz

Re: Written testimonial for City Council Education Budget Hearing May 15, 2024

Dear members of the City Council,

I'm here to give a voice to all of our city's parents concerning the budget crisis faced by our schools. In particular I'm concerned about the funding of preschool special ed programs. As a special ed parent of a NYC highschooler on the autism spectrum, I'm here to let you know that if it were not dedicated preschool educators and administration of CSE (Committee on Special Education) he would not be a successful highschool freshman at one of our city's top public highschools today. My family's journey started with Early Intervention and then preschool special ed services so I've seen the successful impact of having our children's learning supported early on. I'm a parent who pays this support forward so every time I've helped a family whose child is struggling (often farther along in grade school and beyond sadly), I just can't help but think where this child would be if they had the help from the very beginning. We have to support the next generation and think of the big picture. As it is, the unemployment rate of adults with a disability is twice as high as their nondisabled counterparts and is significantly higher amongst autistic adults, some of who I know are brilliant. I can see that in my son who is on a pre-engineering and robotics track at his highschool. Please consider the lasting effects of not supporting our children early and fund our children so that they become a contributing member of our great city as an adult. Much appreciated for your time!

Sincerest Regards,

*Christina Dekatay-Aptowitz*

*"Our true nationality is mankind"*

*~ H.G. Wells*



I am Dr. Claire Sylvan, the founder & Senior Strategic Advisor at Internationals Network for Public Schools. I have worked for more than 40 years to support immigrant adolescents in public schools in NYC, 28 of those years as a classroom teacher. I worked both as a bilingual teacher in District 20, at Ditmas Intermediate School, where I grew the bilingual program from 1 Spanish bilingual class, to multiple classes in Spanish, Haitian and Chinese and in 1991, I transferred to the International High School at LaGuardia Community College, then the only International High School in the NYC public school system. I was part of the team driven by the fact that we had 6 applicants for every seat in that very small school that planned and helped open both Manhattan and Brooklyn International High School. Together with the leaders of those schools, I built a collaborative network among existing Internationals. In 2003, I left teaching to found Internationals Network, a non-profit aimed at transforming education for multilingual learners. In 2004, and subsequent years, Internationals Network supporting the opening of 12 more International High Schools in NYC, 1 International Middle School in the Bronx, and 15 more schools including 1 in Buffalo, as well as in California, Maryland, Virginia, Washington, DC with additional schools in planning.

Internationals Network worked with the NYCDOE to open these district secondary schools (including 1 transfer high school) and 1 middle school (in 13 City Council districts) which serve about 6000 newcomer MLL/ELLs. In addition, Internationals Network has always joined with immigrant and bilingual advocates, and

is a member of both the New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC) and its Education Collaborative, as well as coalitions led by Hispanic Federation, New York State Association of Bilingual Education, and many others. Internationals Network works tirelessly with both our partners at the NYCDOE and with the immigrant and bilingual advocacy community to ensure that multilingual (ELL) learners, particularly newcomers at the secondary school level receive high quality educational opportunities that lead to college, career and full participation in democratic society. It is important to point out that in Internationals Network's 15 high schools, on average, 57% of the students in our high schools are overage and under-credited immigrant students, with the lowest percent of OA/UC students at 40% and the highest at 78% of individual schools' student populations. Yet, our schools have consistently outperformed NYCs graduation rate for ELLs.

This school year, we worked closely with immigrant advocates struggling to enroll the recent influx of newly arrived students to NYC, who are often in temporary housing. At the end of the summer of 2023, Internationals Network reached out to our schools to keep their doors open and fill (and overfill as much as possible) their classrooms. Still, even with the expansion of seats in 6 transfer schools for overage/undercredited ELLs, an expansion which our organization supported as part of our work with the NYIC Education Collaborative, Internationals Network realized that despite this expansion and despite our schools' efforts to enroll students, that there would not be



enough seats for the arriving students in these transfer and Internationals Network schools that were designed/or learning to support ELLs.

Starting in August, to meet the broader need, Internationals Network rolled out [free resources on our website](#), for both district & school leaders and teachers. Further, we developed Project SOARING (in 6 City Council districts, 3 of which overlap with Internationals Network schools). Project SOARING (see attachment) provides hands-on timely support to schools outside our own network so that they develop capacity to transform their schools into welcoming environments with appropriate structures, supports, instruction and culture. With philanthropic support for 9 Project SOARING schools, and a 10<sup>th</sup> school funded with UFT support, Project SOARING is working with 3 high school districts and 10 schools.

Project SOARING supports vertically aligned communities of professional learning for:

1. district leaders
2. school leaders
3. teacher leaders
4. teachers,

and provides one-to-one coaching for school leaders to plan strategically with their school-based vertical team to continue to transform their schools.

For example, after the first session with school leaders, several leaders walked away with plans to revise intake procedures and

implemented the plans successfully with support from their coaches. One principal, after participating in a workshop session led by Internationals recreated the workshop he had experienced for his staff. He did this in order to support teachers in deeply understanding how new arrivals experience learning in a language they do not know and to develop teacher empathy, leading to changes in their instructional approach, their grading practices resulting in an immediate impact on scholarship reports and eventually, credit accumulation.

Further, in leader evaluations of their most recent community of professional learning session, leaders noted that they learned about:

- *Resources*
- *Onsite College classes onsite that staff can teach*
- *Intake process and needs assessment*
- *Teams of teachers meeting 3x/week to learn & plan jointly*
- *How to increase family engagement*
- *Different modes of communication for family engagement.*

Internationals Network has received requests from individual schools as well as from superintendents who want to expand Project SOARING to other schools in their district, as well as from schools that want continued support to transform. As part of the efforts of the NYIC Education Collaborative to support over-aged, under-credited MLL students in the NYC, we ask city council to include 500K to fund Project SOARING.

**New York City Council Higher Education Committee  
Hearing  
May 14, 2024**

**Testimony of  
DAVID M. GERWIN  
Professor & Chair, Department of Secondary Education, Queens College/CUNY**

I regret being unable to appear in person but am happy to submit this testimony. While I write about my experience as a department chair in the secondary education department at Queens College/CUNY, I speak only for myself, providing my personal perspective, not representing any positions held by Queens College.

The main purpose of my testimony is informing you of the consequences of austerity at Queens College. I write to discuss cuts in the Secondary Education department.

I write to provide a simple message: Queens College, and much of the rest of CUNY, needs additional operating funds in order to serve our students. We require a reasonable operating budget from NYC and NYS, one that does not “set aside” \$140 million of the operating budget for a contract settlement. CUNY must negotiate a contract with the faculty and staff unions that accounts for past inflation and puts us in a strong position to recover from the pandemic and move ahead. Such a contract requires a separate pay bill from the NYS legislature, not a move to cannibalize the CUNY operating budget.

Allow me to illustrate the problem of inadequate operating funds from my direct experience as a department chair.

I want to brush aside any conception that the Secondary Education department operate with a budget. We have well under \$1000 in Other Than Personell Services (OTPS), and mostly we order toner for the copier and paper for the printer. We receive a modest allocation for travel, roughly \$2000 a semester or a year for a department of 20 faculty, that we dole out to junior faculty. We have received a few hundred dollars in overhead from faculty grants, and on occasion we have money from summer courses that we use to supplement the travel funds. Faculty use this money to travel to conferences such as the National Council for Teachers of Mathematics or English or Social Studies or Arts or the American Educational Research Association to present conference papers and learn of research and developments in their fields. It is so inadequate as to be a joke. A single faculty member attending a single conference, with a flight, hotel, food and registration fee, can take up nearly our entire travel budget, so we pay very partial amounts and spread it around.

I do request faculty lines, which has budgetary implications for the college. At the department level this is a matter of staffing our programs, rather than a decision about budget. I am never given a substantial budget for the department and asked to make choices.

With one exception.

I have been a department chair for two years, and twice I have been told that, due to fiscal crisis, we are slashing the “adjunct budget.” Last year, in spring 2023, I was told to “manage” a 20% reduction in the adjunct budget for fiscal year 2024 (academic year 2023-2024), a figure we nearly met (19% reduction), without harming our class schedule. This year I was told our department had an additional 5% budget reduction on top of last year’s cuts, and this year they have had a devastating impact I will describe in a moment.

But first, I want to explain that there is no such thing as an “adjunct budget.” We do not make a “budget”. We make a schedule. We look at our current majors, the number of students who need to take foundations of education, or educational psychology. We check students moving through the programs and use software such as Navigate to understand how many seats we need to offer in methods of teaching social studies or methods of teaching mathematics or science or art or world languages. We look at the number of student teachers we will have and how many supervisors we need. We make the same calculations about courses in the advanced certificate, in our MS Ed courses and in our post-masters certificates. Of course, there is some guess work as we cannot predict how many transfer students or undergraduates will declare the major, and we are still admitting graduate students for the fall 2024 semester will be taking spring 2025 applications through next fall semester. But, generally, we make a fairly accurate schedule based upon good enrollment data.

I do not make the schedule on my own. The faculty in Foundations of Education submit their courses indicating who among the full-time faculty will teach which courses, Educational Psychology submit their courses, Science Education submit their courses, etc... and then we review to make certain that courses are not all scheduled on Wednesday at 4:30 but are spread out across the week and that students have opportunities to take all necessary education courses. Our scheduling occurs in conjunction with other departments that rely upon us to provide courses in Foundations of Education or Educational Psychology or Language Literacy and Culture for their music education or physical education majors. We work with the Education and Community Program department as they offer the required Special Education course. We have faculty who teach courses in the Biology and Mathematics department. All of this requires attention from faculty, staff, and the department chair.

When we have completed our schedule, we look at how many courses require hiring an adjunct. That sum, added up, becomes the “budget” for the department, or the “adjunct budget.” We do not have a “budget” for full-time faculty teaching courses, because those funds, “professional staff – regular” is baked into the budget and must be paid. Not all full-time faculty teach three courses because they are released by contract for pre-tenure research time, by grants for research, by the Provost for administrative duties such as running part of the Middle States

Accreditation effort, by the Center for Excellence in Teaching Learning and Leadership for an initiative, or they are on sabbatical leave. We also have administrative course releases in the different areas to manage graduate admissions, undergraduate advising, student teacher placement and supervision, accreditation tasks (we are accredited separately from Middle States by CAEP, the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation), and making those schedules.

As a moment of reflection makes obvious, the “adjunct budget” does not really stand alone. The adjunct cost of the schedule is actually a function of the number of SEYS full time faculty (the PS-R budget) and their teaching schedules. Last year we hired 4 new faculty members, including 2 adjuncts who were part of a CUNY initiative to reduce the adjunct budget. Since they teach four courses each semester they “offset” \$48,000 in adjunct costs each, or \$100,000. We had a faculty member who had been on sabbatical in 2022-2023 return to a full, six course teaching load. We hired a substitute lecturer to hold the place for a vacancy we expected to fill this year, another \$48,000 reduction in the adjunct budget. No wonder we were able to cut 19% of the “adjunct budget” for this year without affecting the schedule – we had many more fulltime faculty.

This coming year we are not so fortunate. We are facing two retirements (\$72,000 in adjunct costs), a one semester sabbatical (\$18,000 in adjunct costs), and President Wu fired our substitute faculty member (\$48,000 increase in adjunct costs) and there are no new hires. The “adjunct budget” would have felt strain even without an additional 5% cut. When we put together the schedule we discovered that we were \$180,000 over our \$513,000 adjunct budget. We ended up submitting three budgets. Our regular budget with our full schedule, accounting for the fact that faculty retire, was \$180,000 over. We could not cut that deficit by simply increasing class size (if we merged all three undergraduate educational psychology courses into a jumbo lecture we would only save \$12,000). We could only meet that number eliminating by fall student teaching, so we submitted a schedule with no fall school placements, and that came well under budget. But it meant we would have only one semester of student teaching, in the spring. Our third budget, in consultation with our Dean of Education, stripped out the 2 course releases a year for the deputy chair of the department, the 1 release a year for coordinator of Educational Psychology, the 1 release a year for the coordinator of Educational Foundations, and one other release, a savings of \$30,000. We also worked a scheme to place students in schools but only observe them twice in the fall (instead of the four observations we ordinarily hold), allowing us to increase the number of students per supervisor. By reducing the number of supervisors we hire, we reduced our student teaching budget to around \$72,000. These maneuvers left us only \$40,000 over budget. The Queens College provost accepted that budget. It reflects a less robust fall student teaching experience and increases the workload on the department chair in a way that will not be sustainable over the long term unless we hire more administrative staff.



I am appalled by the fiction of an adjunct budget that does not link with the number of full-time faculty. It was appropriate and simple to “cut” the adjunct budget for this academic year (fiscal 24) because we hired four new faculty and others returned from sabbatical. It is impossible and inappropriate to slash the adjunct budget for next year (fiscal 25) when I am facing retirements and fired faculty. It is inaccurate to refer to the “adjunct budget” as if it has some independent existence. I make a schedule, not a budget, and then there are adjunct costs (and now cuts). There are also student revenues – but I never see them nor are they considered.

I need CUNY to receive an adequate operating budget for fiscal 2025 so that I do not have to think of cancelling fall student teaching.

Sincerely,

David Gerwin

NYC citizen speaking for myself

Personal experience recounted that of the role of Professor and Department Chair, Department of Secondary Education and Youth Services, Queens College/CUNY

Good afternoon,

**My name is Divad Durant. I am a CUNY student and I am here today on behalf of NYC 4 Ceasefire**, a coalition which demands this Council take action in support of a Free Palestine. Most immediately, we call on the Council to pass a resolution calling for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza and an end to U.S. supply of arms to Israel.

**This hearing examines CUNY's budget.** We simply cannot speak about the budget without speaking about how CUNY dollars and resources have been used to suppress and criminalize students.

**We stand with CUNY students**, staff, faculty and alumni in expressing outrage that Chancellor Rodriguez and President Boudreau invited the NYPD to inflict violence and harm onto students in the Gaza Solidarity Encampment.

**We endorse the 5 demands of the Encampment** and we also demand the charges be dropped against the students now defending themselves from prosecution.

**For months, we have called on Speaker Adams and this Council to take action.** In February we held a 24 hour vigil in City Hall Park demanding a resolution, and last month we sent a letter - from over 50 local organizations - calling on the Council to act.

**We reject the response that this is not a local issue.** The genocide in Gaza and the invasion of Rafah have a direct connection to our communities. This Council's silence disregards the over 50,000 Palestinian New Yorkers, the long history of tactics-sharing between the NYPD and Israeli Occupation Forces and the use of over \$118M of our local tax dollars to kill, harass and terrorize Palestinians. **This takes place while the Mayor pushes devastating cuts to our city.**

**This Council also has a precedent of taking positions** on critical international issues - such as the war in Iraq, the invasion of Ukraine, and apartheid in South Africa.

**Over 100 city councils - including Chicago, Atlanta, and San Francisco - have passed resolutions** calling for a ceasefire and an end to U.S. supply of arms to Israel.

Your constituents - and your own CUNY students - have spoken. You cannot continue to ignore us - **it is YOUR JOB to listen to us.**

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Elizabeth Stevenson

[liz.stevenson@gmail.com](mailto:liz.stevenson@gmail.com)

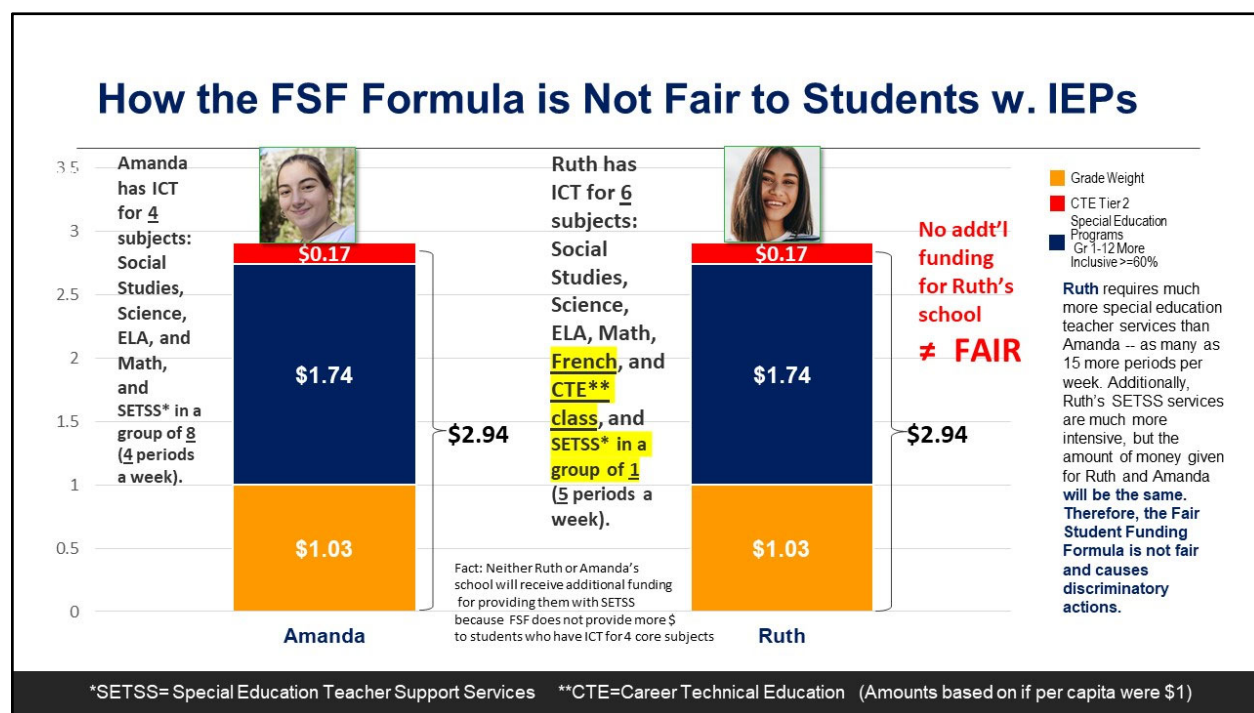
New York, New York 11201-2876

## Re: T2024-1894 City Council Testimony Education Budget

Dear Chair Joseph and members of the Committees of Education, Higher Education, and Finance of the New York City Council.

I am a parent of a student with a disability in New York City. I am aware of the budget cuts threatening our city's students in the upcoming school year thanks to the hard work of the Emergency Coalition to Save Education Programs ([ECSEP](#)). I am writing to tell you that budget cuts must be halted. If the pandemic has taught parents of students of disabilities one thing it was this: **When educational resources are threatened, students with disabilities will be one of the first to be impacted disproportionately.**

We can not bear to witness this again and as proof that our city's school system already discriminates against our students, please review this graphic below created by special education advocate, Jenn Choi, the founder of NYC Parents of Teens with Disabilities (1500+ members). A month ago, she received email confirmation from a top level NYC special education official regarding special education facts of NYC Public Schools' Fair Student Funding Formula to make this graphic below.



All parents are told that their child's IEP is created regardless of school's budget but if you look at the evidence, how can one expect parents to believe this? It clearly shows a student can have **vastly more instructional services** and **more intensive services** than another child but the schools will be funded **with the same amount**. How is a school supposed to afford to provide the services for the student with more needs when the district's "Fair" Student Funding Formula won't be fair to them? **I am a parent and I want the Fair Student Funding Formula to be fair to my school.**

When we talk about education budgets and which programs we must save, we should never forget the elephant in the room:

The **billion dollar payments** for impartial hearings costs for Carter cases, compensatory services, lawyer fees, etc. We believe that the Fair Student Funding Formula (FSF) has a lot to do with that and when we talk about the education budget, it would be irresponsible of the city not to talk about this because our tax dollars are paying for this too. Here's what we think many may not know about the Fair Student Funding Formula and students with disabilities:

1. **Teachers don't come in pieces.** The largest problem is this: FSF funds special education per student and not by the class which means that if just one student or even three needs ICT or Special Class, it is still not enough to hire a teacher. Amongst administrator circles, this situation is commonly known as “**breakage**” and to parents, it tells us how much of a burden our children are. Only the [Minority Report for the Fair Student Funding Working Group](#) tried to address this problem. To date, we only know of the CORE checklist from NYCPS Principal's Weekly [2/29 /2024](#) that is a formal process designed to support special education teacher costs apart from FSF.

**Superintendents Hub**  
Home Superintendents Hub Calendar Superintendents Digest Library District Leadership

**SPECIAL EDUCATION**

## Support Schools with the CORE to Ensure Full Provision of Special Education Programs

The [Checklist for Organizing Resources \(CORE\)](#) is designed to help school leaders and the School Implementation Team (SIT) analyze their overall instructional and programming needs, evaluate current resources (e.g., budget, staff, space), and make strategic decisions about how to deploy resources to fully implement students' Individualized Education Program (IEP) recommendations.

District administrators of special education (ASEs), working with budget directors and human resources directors, should support schools to fully implement students' IEPs and to consider completing the [Checklist for Organizing Resources \(CORE\)](#) to appeal for additional funding or to request a new school offer for a student, when they are unable to do so immediately. Before initiating this process, ASEs should email [CORE@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:CORE@schools.nyc.gov) to consult on completion of a CORE.

**Appeals related specifically to special education staffing (e.g. special education teachers or classroom paraprofessionals) and school transfers on the basis of a student's IEP recommendation will only be considered after a CORE has been submitted to and approved by the Central Special Education Office (SEO).**

For more information, review the [Introduction to the Checklist for Organizing Resources \(CORE\) Process](#). For questions, email [CORE@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:CORE@schools.nyc.gov).

2. In fact, Jenn Choi, asked the district to share documentation about the appeals process available to schools and they only shared that the appeals process is separate from the CORE Checklist. However, we've been able to find that Appeals can only be made if the incredibly complex and time-consuming CORE checklist is approved first. **How is this helpful to getting a student's mandate filled faster?** For all we know, for example, in order for a school to receive more money to fulfill possibly just ONE student's IEP mandate, a school must:



- a. Work with budget directors, supervisors of school psychologists, HR directors, etc
  - b. Provide names, IEP dates, grades, ID #s of multiple students
  - c. Provide names, what kind of special education certificate, Current Assignment(s), Periods per week assigned to provide special education services of multiple teachers
  - d. List their unscheduled funds, list funds beyond “allowabled thresholds,” funds in “set aside,” **This sounds like my school is being audited and not supported.**
  - e. List the students history at the school, potential temporary housing status, attendance, if they’ve ever been left back? **Why does this matter? This sounds very discriminatory.**
3. **Other need-to-know facts about the FSF visible on the 1st chart:**
- a. On top of core ICT classes, schools do not receive more funds for a student to have special education teacher services for a World Language class (French, Mandarin, Spanish, etc) even though it is required for graduation.
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As parents, we ask you, when a school needs more money to hire a special education teacher to fulfill a child’s IEP, why is any of the above information necessary in the CORE Checklist? How is this not discrimination? How is this not a civil rights violation? If a school knows that they must go through this process, why would any school ever want to lay down a mandate for a child when there are no guarantees?

Again, with budget cuts looming, we ask you to please use your legislative powers to pressure the New York City Public Schools system to do better.

I hope that decisions can be made during this budget season to advise NYCPS that the Fair Student Formula needs to be changed to make funding special education fair to our children with disabilities. This formula makes it automatic to not give more funds to students who need more services. I believe this formula creates a foundation for discriminatory judgments at schools. This formula is the reason for the billions of dollars in impartial hearing costs. We would have more money for the education budget if we can make the changes there.

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Thank you.

**Hannah Scholl**

Parent of a student with a disability  
Manhattan

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Council General Testimony,

Dear Speaker, Council Finance Chair, Committee Chair & staff,

I am submitting written testimony for public record. I support a #PeoplesBudget that invests in CUNY instead of cutting our most affordable higher education system and one of our most prized economic engines. Stopping the cuts will ensure CUNY is able to restore course offerings, stop enrollment caps, prevent layoffs, and more — benefiting faculty, staff, and CUNY students who are being shortchanged by these cuts.

Currently, the FY25 preliminary budget presents harmful cuts to the CUNY system that places unnecessary burdens on both students and CUNY faculty and staff. We demand funding to:

- Restore \$94M in cuts to CUNY and lift hiring freezes
- Baseline \$35.5 Million in Funding for Advisors to Move Toward ASAP for All and screen students for Fair Fares

The cruel cuts to CUNY's budget are a huge loss to all New Yorkers. CUNY is a fundamental city institution that provides lifelong learning and skills-building opportunities for all New Yorkers. An affordable, quality higher education experience is essential to supporting New Yorkers in achieving their dreams.

I hope that the Mayor and Council can accomplish a people's budget through negotiations. BUT if not, we need Council to use its full budget powers of amending the budget and passing terms and conditions to make sure CUNY is restored in any budget that passes. Thank you.

[hbjames@gmail.com](mailto:hbjames@gmail.com)

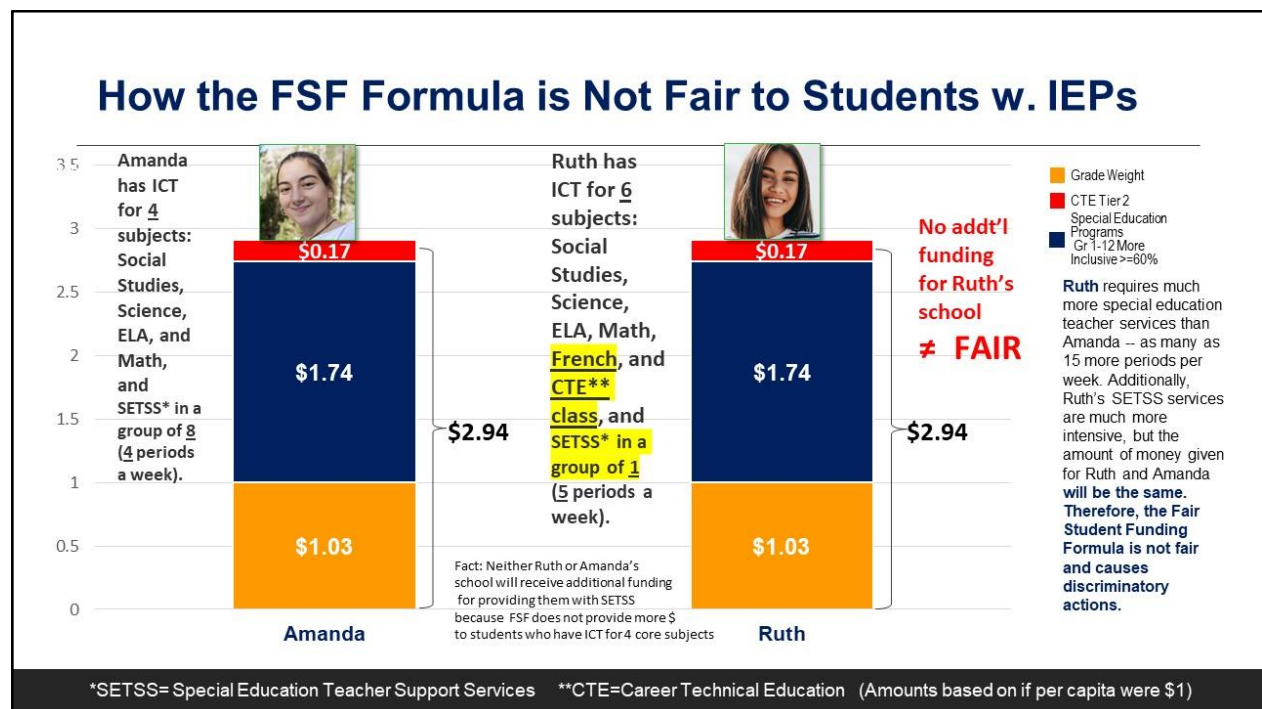
May 16, 2024

## Re: T2024-1894 City Council Testimony Education Budget

Dear Chair Joseph, Chair Dinowitz, Chair Brannan, and members of the Committees of Education, Higher Education, and Finance of the New York City Council:

I am a parent of a student with a disability in New York City. I am aware of the budget cuts threatening our city's students in the upcoming school year thanks to the hard work of the Emergency Coalition to Save Education Programs ([ECSEP](#)). I am writing to tell you that budget cuts must be halted. If the pandemic has taught parents of students of disabilities one thing it was this: **When educational resources are threatened, students with disabilities will be one of the first to be impacted disproportionately.**

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be fair to them? **I am a parent and I want the Fair Student Funding Formula to be fair to my school.**

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The **billion-dollar payments** for impartial hearings costs for Carter cases, compensatory services, lawyer fees, etc. We believe that the Fair Student Funding Formula (FSF) has a lot to do with that and when we talk about the education budget, it would be irresponsible of the city not to talk about this because our tax dollars are paying for this too. Here's what we think many may not know about the Fair Student Funding Formula and students with disabilities:

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Again, with budget cuts looming, we ask you to please use your legislative powers to pressure the New York City Public Schools system to do better. Every year, I go to my child's IEP meeting and I am told the same things that make me feel as though my child and I are "**less than**" and I am told things that I believe are violations but to fight this would be costly in both money, time, and emotions for both me and my child.

Our own family has suffered due to the inequity for student with disabilities such as:

- I am not a full member of the IEP team as the law intends. I never get to see the draft of the IEP and things are decided on the IEP without me all the time.
- I am told that they can never have special education services afterschool.
- Everything my child needs must be initiated and monitored by me to ensure quality.
- What I see in my child at home bears little significance to them despite the IEP's purpose being to prepare my child for further education, employment, and independent living.

I hope that decisions can be made during this budget season to advise NYCPS that the Fair Student Formula needs to be changed to make funding special education fair to our children with disabilities. This formula makes it automatic to not give more funds to students who need more services. I believe this formula creates a foundation for discriminatory judgments at schools. This formula is the reason for the billions of dollars in impartial hearing costs. We would have more money for the education budget if we can make the changes there.

Can you please help us and make them make changes?

Thank you.

Heather Wise  
Parent of a student with a disability  
Queens

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[REDACTED]

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**From:** Jessie Daniels <jessiedanielsnyc@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 16, 2024 3:03 PM  
**To:** Testimony  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] TESTIMONY - Higher Education Hearing

[REDACTED]

15 May 2024

Thank you esteemed members of the New York City Council for the opportunity to submit this testimony

My name is Jessie Daniels, and I am a full professor at Hunter College and The Graduate Center, CUNY, where I teach in sociology. I am the author or editor of six books, and an expert in the ways digital technologies are reshaping patterns of human social behavior. I also direct a master of science degree program, the Applied Digital Sociology, at Hunter College. In this program, we do the important work of helping to transform the lives of our students who come to us as baristas and bartenders, and leave with their degree equipped to become data analysts, researchers and program managers. This cutting edge program, one of about a dozen like it worldwide, helps our students move from the service economy to the information economy, where they find jobs in [public interest technology](#) - a goal that CUNY claims to support.

Yet, despite this, it is almost impossible to continue this work. I am not able to expand or advertise this program, much less keep up with the day-to-day operations of it, because I have no administrative help at all. My program and our department has been without full-time administrative support for months and months, and have relied on two overworked college assistants to handle most administrative tasks.

In addition, there is not a single bathroom on my campus that is fully operational. The toilets and sinks and door handles are left broken for months, even years, at a time. The escalators and elevators at our vertical campus are often broken. The constant state of disrepair of the physical buildings across CUNY campuses sends a clear message to our students: that no one cares for them. But we, the faculty, show up and keep doing the work of caring for them, every day.

I urge the City Council to tell the Mayor to restore all cuts to CUNY's budget.

Thank you for your time.

Jessie Daniels, PhD  
[REDACTED]

\* \* \*

Jessie Daniels, PhD (she/her)  
[Professor, Sociology](#)  
Director, Applied Digital Sociology (MS, BA/MS)  
Hunter College

Professor, Sociology, Critical Psychology & Africana Studies  
The Graduate Center, CUNY

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**Questions/testimony for Education budget hearing 5/15/24**

1 message

**Johanna Bjorken** [REDACTED]

Wed, May 15, 2024 at 7:32 AM

To: District40@council.nyc.gov, Dinowitz@council.nyc.gov, [REDACTED] shanif@council.nyc.gov,  
[REDACTED] District14@council.nyc.gov, [REDACTED] rjoseph@council.nyc.gov, askjb@council.nyc.gov,  
aaviles@council.nyc.gov, [REDACTED] gbrewer@council.nyc.gov, [REDACTED]

Dear city council education committee,

I cannot testify today so I am submitting my testimony, or really, questions I hope you will ask as they could have a significant impact on school funding. I was the co-chair of the Class Size Working Group budget and finance committee, and the particulars of school based funding is top of my mind. Here are my questions.

- 1). Will any schools that currently receive the new Fair Student Funding "concentrated needs" weight fall out of eligibility, and/or will any new schools be added? If so, have schools been informed of this so they can plan, or will there be any transition funding to help schools adapt?
- 2) the draft 2024-25 class size reduction plan charges every superintendent with bringing 3% more classrooms into compliance for 2024-25 within their district. Can parents expect superintendents to present and discuss the specific plans for their districts at the upcoming Contract for Excellence hearings?
- 3) In the past, collective bargaining changes have not been reflected in the Fair Student Funding, which means that the amount of Fair Student Funding, and changes to it at mid year, has been very different from what the simple math should indicate. This amount has been steadily going up, and last year was almost 30%. With the new labor contracts, how much will collective bargaining be on top of the formula. Is there a plan to fold these changes into it?
- 4) In determining the list of schools that will receive the \$137 million and/or \$45 million of new Contracts for Excellence funding, was consideration given to schools that would experience a decline in funding given the expiration of "hold harmless" funding?

Thank you!

Johanna Bjorken  
Parent of 9th grader in district 2  
Former co-chair of the Class Size Working Group budget and finance committee  
School business manager in D15 (but I write now solely in my personal capacity)

[REDACTED]  
Brooklyn NY 11220

[REDACTED]  
[Jbjorken@verizon.net](mailto:Jbjorken@verizon.net)

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony for City Council Budget hearing

Thank you Chair Brennan. Thank you Chair Joseph. My name is Maggie Sanchez. I'm the Public Advocate Appointee and the Recording Secretary on the Citywide Council on Special Education. I am speaking on behalf of our Council.

Our council has sent out surveys to the community and we've provided those results to the DOE.<sup>1</sup> In our Nov. 2023 Related Services survey, a vast number of students were not receiving all of their related services mandates, due to lack of staff. We continue to request that the DOE abide by students' related service mandates as per their IEP, required by law.

There's still a ~~\$13M~~ <sup>\$25M</sup> gap in preschool special education. Current investments are insufficient, due to the ongoing shortage of seats in legally required preschool special education classes.

Some programs, critical to students with disabilities, like the SEED and Summer Rising programs, received only a **one-year reprieve**. These are programs that should be baselined in the final budget.

Additionally, the DOE has had a history of paying (paraprofessionals), teaching assistants, among other providers, very late. Paraprofessionals are among the lowest paid employees in the DOE.

Paraprofessionals make it possible for children with disabilities to access programs like Summer Rising. Therefore, the DOE must be more transparent with the breakdown of payments to these providers.

Furthermore, according to an NYC Comptroller's report on the Investigation of the Implementation of the "60-Day Rule" for Asylum-Seeker Families, the City has implemented the 60-Day Rule in a **haphazard manner**, without adequate policies or training in place. This policy alone has severely impacted newly arrived families of students with disabilities. According to this report, "City policies specifically provide that returning families with children in kindergarten through 6th grade may not be placed in DHS sites. The City offered no rationale for this policy."<sup>2</sup> Multilingual special education students are especially subject to more challenges and endless FAPE violations to their education from the 60-Day Rule policy. Thank you.

1-Survey results attached in email to NYC Council.

2-<https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/report-on-the-investigation-of-the-implementation-of-the-60-day-rule-for-asylum-seeker-families/>



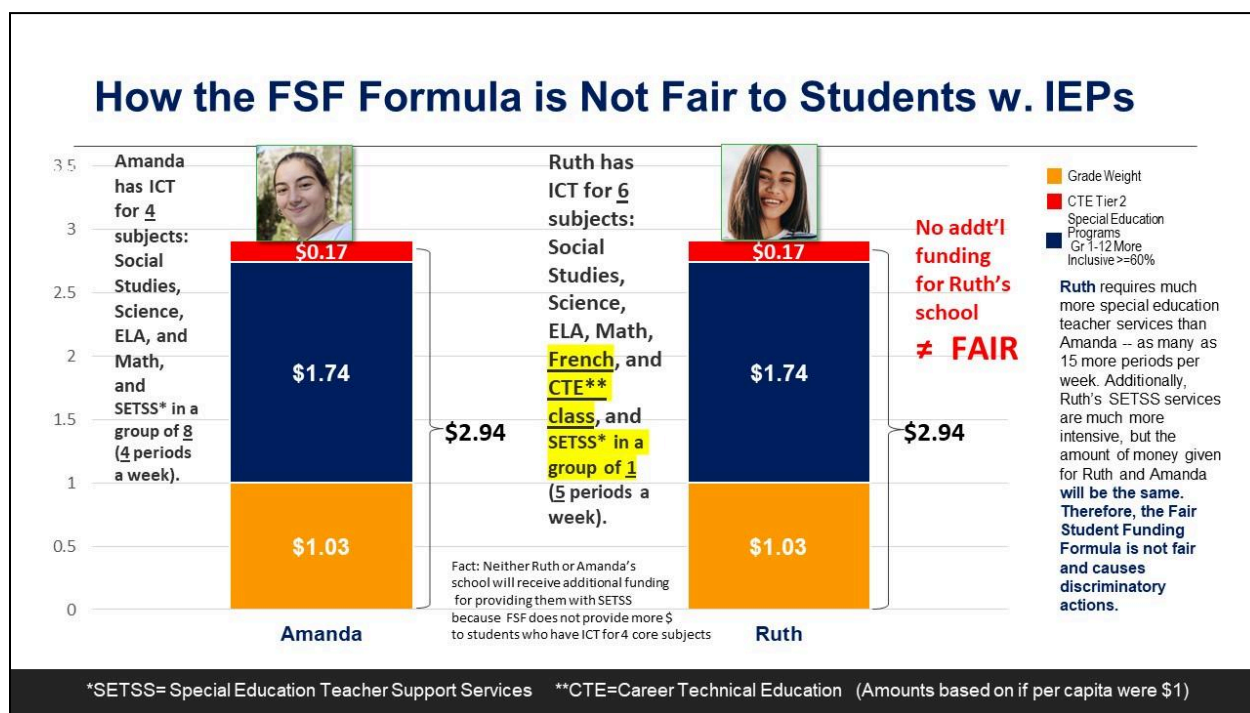
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Thank you.

**Marine Putman**

Parent of a student with a disability  
Brooklyn, NY

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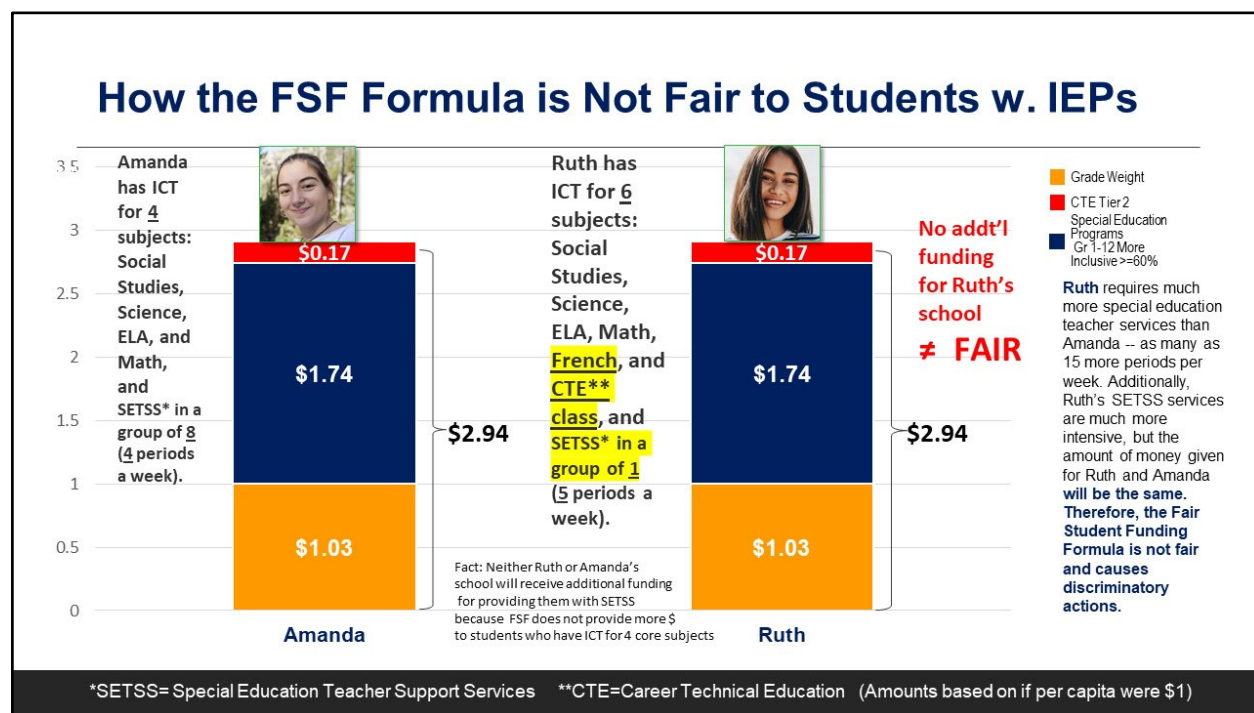
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When we talk about education budgets and which programs we must save, we should never forget the elephant in the room: the **billion dollars in annual payments** that the DOE must make for impartial hearings costs for Carter cases, compensatory services, lawyer fees, etc. We believe that the Fair Student Funding Formula (FSF) has a lot to do with that. If the DOE wants to reduce what it pays to educate disabled students privately, then it must allocate money for those students in a way that makes it possible to educate them publicly.

Here's what doesn't work about the Fair Student Funding Formula and students with disabilities:

1. **Teachers don't come in pieces.** The largest problem is this: FSF funds special education per student and not by the class, which means that if just one student, or even three, needs an ICT or Special Class, the school will still not receive enough to hire the necessary teaching staff. Amongst administrators, this problem is commonly known as **"breakage."** To parents, it represents innumerable hours of phone calls, meetings, school tours, and paperwork to find an appropriate placement for a child after being told that the school where the child has been admitted cannot provide the required IEP services.. Only the [Minority Report for the Fair Student Funding Working Group](#) tried to address this problem. To date, we only know of the CORE checklist from NYCPS Principal's Weekly [2/29 /2024](#) that is a formal process designed to support special education teacher costs apart from FSF.

**Superintendents Hub**  
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**SPECIAL EDUCATION**

## Support Schools with the CORE to Ensure Full Provision of Special Education Programs

The [Checklist for Organizing Resources \(CORE\)](#) is designed to help school leaders and the School Implementation Team (SIT) analyze their overall instructional and programming needs, evaluate current resources (e.g., budget, staff, space), and make strategic decisions about how to deploy resources to fully implement students' Individualized Education Program (IEP) recommendations.

District administrators of special education (ASEs), working with budget directors and human resources directors, should support schools to fully implement students' IEPs and to consider completing the [Checklist for Organizing Resources \(CORE\)](#) to appeal for additional funding or to request a new school offer for a student, when they are unable to do so immediately. Before initiating this process, ASEs should email [CORE@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:CORE@schools.nyc.gov) to consult on completion of a CORE.

**Appeals related specifically to special education staffing (e.g. special education teachers or classroom paraprofessionals) and school transfers on the basis of a student's IEP recommendation will only be considered after a CORE has been submitted to and approved by the Central Special Education Office (SEO).**

For more information, review the [Introduction to the Checklist for Organizing Resources \(CORE\) Process](#). For questions, email [CORE@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:CORE@schools.nyc.gov).

2. In fact, Jenn Choi asked the district to share documentation about the appeals process available to schools, and they shared only that the appeals process is separate from the CORE Checklist. However, we've been able to find that appeals can be made only if the incredibly complex and time-consuming CORE checklist is approved first. **How is this**

**helpful to getting a student's mandate filled faster?** For all we know, for example, in order for a school to receive more money to fulfill possibly just ONE student's IEP mandate, a school must:

- a. Work with budget directors, supervisors of school psychologists, HR directors, etc
  - b. Provide names, IEP dates, grades, ID #s of multiple students
  - c. Provide names, what kind of special education certificate, Current Assignment(s), Periods per week assigned to provide special education services of multiple teachers
  - d. List their unscheduled funds, list funds beyond "allowabled thresholds," funds in "set aside." **(This sounds like my school is being audited, not supported.)**
  - e. List the student's history at the school, temporary housing status, attendance records, and information about whether they've ever been left back? **(Why does this information even matter? Requiring that schools provide this information, which by law should have no effect on a student's educational rights, is a recipe for illegal discrimination against disabled students.)**
3. **Other need-to-know facts about the FSF formula visible in the graphic on page 1:**
- a. On top of core ICT classes, schools do not receive more funds for a student to have special education teacher services for a World Language class (French, Mandarin, Spanish, etc) even though these classes are required for graduation.
  - b. **Schools do not receive more funds for a student to have ICT special education teacher services in a Career Technical Education (CTE) class.** These classes are taught in the highly popular pathways-inspiring high schools capturing today's headlines. Many of these schools offer "CTE-endorsed diplomas" requiring advanced testing and diligent preparation in skills including computer repair, structural welding, Cisco, Oracle, cosmetology, plumbing, etc.
  - c. **Schools will not receive more special education funds when a student requires more special education instruction beyond special education in their four core-subject classes.** These are called SETSS (they used to be called the "Resource Room"). To be in compliance, these groups can have no more than 8 students. Still, if there are more students who need this help, the school will not be given more money to hire more teachers to teach these students. The result is that many times, the teacher-to-student ratios in these groups are not in compliance, and schools must hope that parents either don't find out or don't complain.
  - d. **If a student who is really struggling needs SETSS services to be provided 1:1, schools still would not receive any more funds** to provide such a service, despite the vast difference in teacher time requirements.

As parents, we ask you: When a school needs more money to hire a special education teacher to fulfill a child's IEP, why is any of the above information in the CORE Checklist necessary? How is this not discrimination against disabled students? How is this not a civil rights violation? If a school knows that it must go through this process, why would any school ever want to lay down a mandate for a child when there are no guarantees it can afford to meet that mandate?

Again, with budget cuts looming, we ask you to please use your legislative powers to pressure the New York City Public Schools system to do better. The way to make a free, appropriate public education affordable for every disabled child is not to push parents and schools to swallow, year after year, inequities and full-on violations of students' legal rights that neither the parents nor the school have the time, energy, or financial resources to rectify. It is to provide funding for disabled students, and the schools that serve them, in ways that make it possible for disabled students to receive the services to which they are entitled and which they must have to thrive as full members of our society in a public-school setting. Without truly fair funding for disabled students in public schools, parents will be forced to fight for their children to receive these services privately, at the DOE's expense. Those students whose families are unable to engage in such a fight will be segregated, discriminated against, underserved, ignored, and shown in every conceivable way that the New York City public school system does not care about them.

I hope that decisions can be made during this budget season to advise NYCPS that the Fair Student Formula needs to be changed to make funding special education fair to our children with disabilities. New York City could be a leader among cities for educating disabled students to make use of their talents and live fulfilling adult lives. Can you please help us and make them make changes?

Thank you,

**Molly Pisani**

Parent of a student with a disability  
District 27, Queens

Below is our community's evidence in these links:

- Link to NYC Public Schools' Introduction to CORE: <https://bit.ly/3KfEaW1>
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- Evidence of Top Level NYCPS Special Education Official saying what the Fair Student Funding does and doesn't pay for is here with some emails from principals saying we don't do this special ed or that special ed is here: **The Chicken and The Egg**: <https://bit.ly/4agXtZx>
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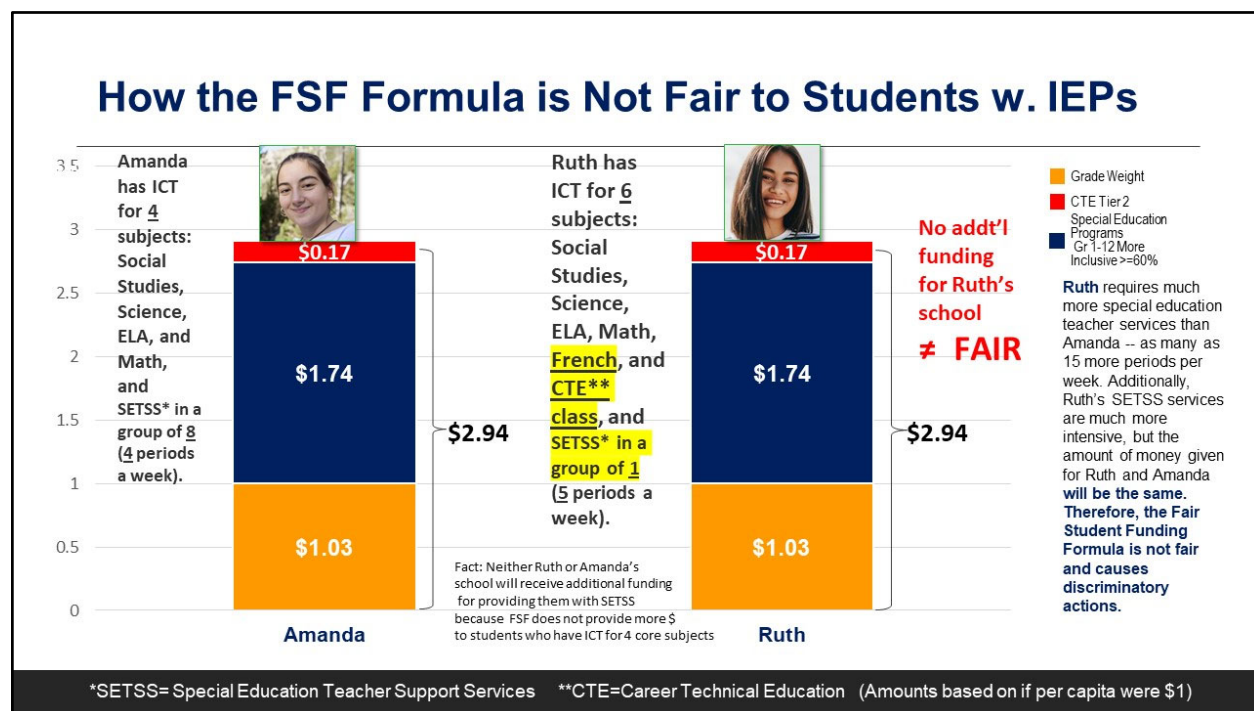
May 16, 2024

Re: T2024-1894 City Council Testimony Education Budget

Dear Chair Joseph, Chair Dinowitz, Chair Brannan, and members of the Committees of Education, Higher Education, and Finance of the New York City Council:

I am a parent of a student with a disability in New York City. I am aware of the budget cuts threatening our city's students in the upcoming school year thanks to the hard work of the Emergency Coalition to Save Education Programs ([ECSEP](#)). I am writing to tell you that budget cuts must be halted. If the pandemic has taught parents of students of disabilities one thing it was this: **When educational resources are threatened, students with disabilities will be one of the first to be impacted disproportionately.**

We cannot bear to witness this again and as proof that our city's school system already discriminates against our students, please review this graphic below created by special education advocate, Jenn Choi, the founder of NYC Parents of Teens with Disabilities (1500+ members). A month ago, she received email confirmation from a top-level NYC special education official regarding special education facts of NYC Public Schools' Fair Student Funding Formula to make this graphic below.



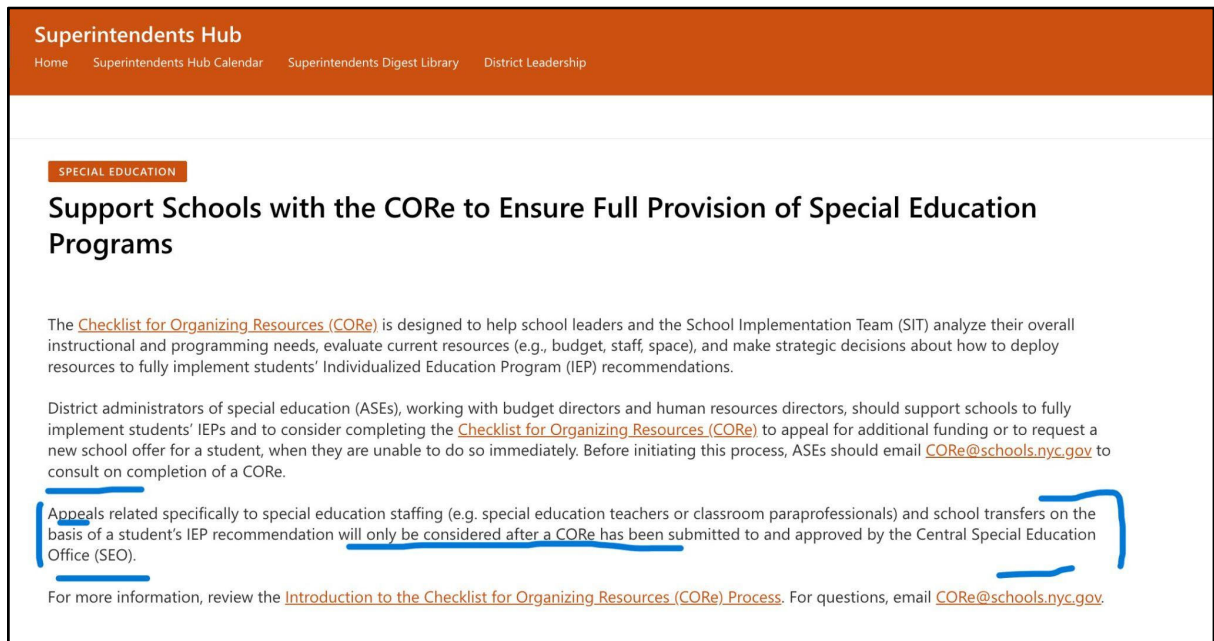
All parents are told that their child's IEP is created regardless of school's budget but if you look at the evidence, how can one expect parents to believe this? It clearly shows a student can have **vastly more instructional services** and **more intensive services** than another child, but the schools will be funded **with the same amount**. How is a school supposed to afford to provide the services for the student with more needs when the district's "Fair" Student Funding Formula won't

be fair to them? **I am a parent and I want the Fair Student Funding Formula to be fair to my school.**

When we talk about education budgets and which programs we must save, we should never forget the elephant in the room:

The **billion dollar payments** for impartial hearings costs for Carter cases, compensatory services, lawyer fees, etc. We believe that the Fair Student Funding Formula (FSF) has a lot to do with that and when we talk about the education budget, it would be irresponsible of the city not to talk about this because our tax dollars are paying for this too. Here's what we think many may not know about the Fair Student Funding Formula and students with disabilities:

1. **Teachers don't come in pieces.** The largest problem is this: FSF funds special education per student and not by the class which means that if just one student or even three needs ICT or Special Class, it is still not enough to hire a teacher. Amongst administrator circles, this situation is commonly known as "**breakage**" and to parents, it tells us how much of a burden our children are. Only the [Minority Report for the Fair Student Funding Working Group](#) tried to address this problem. To date, we only know of the CORE checklist from NYCPS Principal's Weekly [2/29/2024](#) that is a formal process designed to support special education teacher costs apart from FSF.



The screenshot shows the 'Superintendents Hub' website. The header is orange with links: Home, Superintendents Hub Calendar, Superintendents Digest Library, and District Leadership. Below the header, there's a white section with an orange 'SPECIAL EDUCATION' tag. The main heading is 'Support Schools with the CORE to Ensure Full Provision of Special Education Programs'. The text explains that the 'Checklist for Organizing Resources (CORE)' is designed to help school leaders and the School Implementation Team (SIT) analyze their overall instructional and programming needs, evaluate current resources (e.g., budget, staff, space), and make strategic decisions about how to deploy resources to fully implement students' Individualized Education Program (IEP) recommendations. It also states that District administrators of special education (ASEs), working with budget directors and human resources directors, should support schools to fully implement students' IEPs and to consider completing the 'Checklist for Organizing Resources (CORE)' to appeal for additional funding or to request a new school offer for a student, when they are unable to do so immediately. Before initiating this process, ASEs should email [CORE@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:CORE@schools.nyc.gov) to consult on completion of a CORE. A blue box highlights a key point: 'Appeals related specifically to special education staffing (e.g. special education teachers or classroom paraprofessionals) and school transfers on the basis of a student's IEP recommendation will only be considered after a CORE has been submitted to and approved by the Central Special Education Office (SEO)'. At the bottom, it says 'For more information, review the [Introduction to the Checklist for Organizing Resources \(CORE\) Process](#). For questions, email [CORE@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:CORE@schools.nyc.gov)'.

2. In fact, Jenn Choi, asked the district to share documentation about the appeals process available to schools and they only shared that the appeals process is separate from the CORE Checklist. However, we've been able to find that Appeals can only be made if the incredibly complex and time-consuming CORE checklist is approved first. **How is this helpful to getting a student's mandate filled faster?** For all we know, for example, in



order for a school to receive more money to fulfill possibly just ONE student's IEP mandate, a school must:

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3. **Other need-to-know facts about the FSF visible on the 1st chart:**
- a. On top of core ICT classes, schools do not receive more funds for a student to have special education teacher services for a World Language class (French, Mandarin, Spanish, etc) even though it is required for graduation.
  - b. **Schools do not receive more funds for a student to have ICT special education teacher services in a Career Technical Education (CTE) class.** These are the highly popular pathways-inspiring high schools capturing [today's headlines](#). Many of these schools offer "CTE-endorsed diplomas" requiring advanced testing and diligent preparation. Ex. Computer Repair, Structural Welding, Cisco, Oracle, Hair Stylist, Nail Technician, Plumbing, etc.
  - c. **Schools will not receive more special education funds when a student requires more special education instruction beyond special education in their 4 core subject classes.** These are called SETSS and they used to be called "Resource Room" a long time ago. These groups can have no more than 8 students to meet compliance. Still, the school will not be given more money to hire more teachers to teach these students.
  - d. For one who is really struggling, **if the student's SETSS service needed to be 1:1, schools would not receive any more funds** to provide such a service despite the vast difference in teacher time requirements.

As parents, we ask you, when a school needs more money to hire a special education teacher to fulfill a child's IEP, why is any of the above information necessary in the CORE Checklist? How is this not discrimination? How is this not a civil rights violation? If a school knows that they must go through this process, why would any school ever want to lay down a mandate for a child when there are no guarantees?

Again, with budget cuts looming, we ask you to please use your legislative powers to pressure the New York City Public Schools system to do better. Every year, I go to my child's IEP meeting and I am told the same things that make me feel as though my child and I are "**less than**" and I am told things that I believe are violations but to fight this would be costly in both money, time, and emotions for both me and my child.

I hope that decisions can be made during this budget season to advise NYCPS that the Fair Student Formula needs to be changed to make funding special education fair to our children with disabilities. This formula makes it automatic to not give more funds to students who need more services. I believe this formula creates a foundation for discriminatory judgments at schools. This formula is the reason for the billions of dollars in impartial hearing costs. We would have more money for the education budget if we can make the changes there.

Can you please help us and make them make changes?

Thank you.

Paula Kepos  
Parent of a student with a disability  
Brooklyn

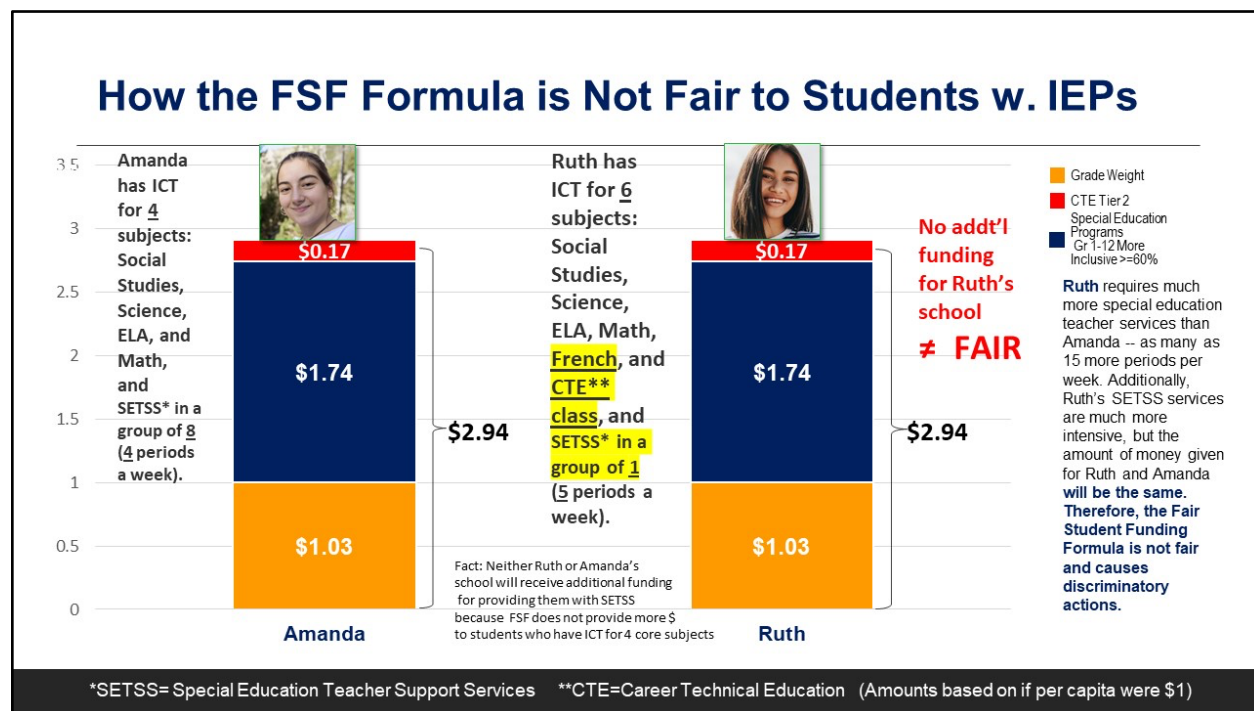
May 15, 2024

Re: T2024-1894 City Council Testimony Education Budget

Dear Chair Rita Joseph and members of the Committees of Education, Higher Education, and Finance of the New York City Council:

I am a parent of two autistic high school students with IEPs in New York City Public Schools. Thanks to the hard work of the Emergency Coalition to Save Education Programs ([ECSEP](#)), I am aware of the budget cuts threatening our city's students in the upcoming school year. I am writing to tell you that these budget cuts must be halted. If the pandemic has taught parents of students with disabilities one thing, it was this: **When educational resources are threatened, students with disabilities will be one of the first to be impacted disproportionately.**

We cannot bear to witness this again. As proof that NYC Public Schools already discriminates against our students, please review this graphic below created by special education advocate, Jenn Choi, the founder of NYC Parents of Teens with Disabilities (1500+ members). A month ago, she received an email confirmation from a top-level staff member at the central Special Education office regarding how the Fair Student Funding Formula breaks down for students with IEPs. She made the following graphic:



To align with the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), parents are told that their child's IEP is created regardless of a school's budget. Yet, looking at the graphic, how can one expect parents to believe this? This graphic clearly shows a student can have **vastly more instructional**

**services and more intensive services** than another child but the schools will be funded **with the same amount!**

How is a school supposed to afford to provide services for students with more needs when the district's "Fair" Student Funding Formula is not fair? **I am a parent and I want the Fair Student Funding Formula to be fair to my school.**

When we talk about education budgets and which programs we must save, we should never forget the elephant in the room:

The **billion-dollar payments** for impartial hearings costs for Carter cases, compensatory services, lawyer fees, etc. We believe that the Fair Student Funding Formula (FSF) has a lot to do with that and when we talk about the education budget, it would be irresponsible of the City not to talk about this because our tax dollars are paying for this too. Here's what we think many may not know about the Fair Student Funding Formula and students with disabilities:

1. **Teachers don't come in pieces.** The largest problem is this: FSF funds special education per student and not by the class which, means that if just one student needs ICT or Special Class service, it is still not enough to hire a teacher. In school administrator circles, this situation is commonly known as "**breakage**" and to parents, it tells us how much of a burden our children are. Only the [Minority Report for the Fair Student Funding Working Group](#) tried to address this problem. To date, we only know of the CORE checklist from NYCPS Principal's Weekly [2/29 /2024](#) that is a formal process designed to support special education teacher costs apart from FSF.

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  - d. List their unscheduled funds, list funds beyond "allowable thresholds," funds in "set aside," **This sounds like my school is being audited and not supported.**
  - e. List the students history at the school, potential temporary housing status, attendance, if they've ever been left back? **Why does this matter? This sounds very discriminatory.**
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  - a. On top of core ICT classes, schools do not receive more funds for a student to have special education teacher services for a World Language class (for languages other than English such as French, Mandarin, Spanish, etc) even though it is required for graduation.
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  - c. **Schools will not receive more special education funds when a student requires more special education instruction outside of their 4 core subject classes.** These are called SETSS and they used to be called "Resource Room" a long time ago. These groups can have no more than 8 students to meet compliance. Still, the school will not be given more money to hire more teachers to teach these students.
  - d. For students with severe learning challenges (like my son), who needs **1:1 or individual service for SETSS, schools do not receive any additional special education funds** to provide such a service despite the vast difference in teacher time requirements.

As parents, we ask you, when a school needs more money to hire a special education teacher to fulfill a child's IEP, why is any of the above information necessary in the CORE Checklist? How is this not discrimination? How is this not a civil rights violation?

Again, with budget cuts looming, we ask you to please use your legislative powers to pressure the New York City Public Schools system to do better. Together, my children have been receiving special education in NYC Public Schools for almost 15 years. Over the course of their school



careers, I am told the same things that make me feel as though services for my children have been predetermined and not based on unique needs, per the IDEA. I am told things that I believe are violations, but to fight this would be costly in both money, time, and emotions for both me and my child. Here is just a sampling of what I've been told:

- I am not a full member of the IEP team as the law intends. Many school teams have refused to share the documentation (teacher reports, evaluations) available to school staff with me in advance of the meeting. I am told we cannot have a draft IEP.
- I am told that ICT and SETSS can not be provided at the same time.
- I am told there is no Special Class at the school.
- I am told that there is no 1:1 SETSS – in fact, I had to go so far as to transfer my son out an ASD Nest program high school in 10th grade and put him in a high school that was more willing to provide individualized supports.
- I am told there can't be any ICT in LOTE or CTE or AP classes. Yet, another reason I transferred my son in 10th grade.
- I am told that my child can never have specialized transportation to access school services like tutoring after school.
- I have been told that both of my children did not require support because they were not failing academically, even though IDEA and NY State Education Regs state that students can qualify for special education despite progressing from grade to grade.
- Too often I am told that my child's developmental and functional needs are not relevant even though the IDEA defines that the purpose of special education is to allow students with disabilities "further education, employment, and independent living."

I hope that decisions can be made during this budget season to advise NYC Public Schools that the Fair Student Formula needs to be changed to make funding special education fair to our children with disabilities. This formula makes it automatic to not give more funds to students who need more services. I believe this formula creates a foundation for discriminatory judgments at schools. This formula is the reason for the billions of dollars in impartial hearing costs. We would have more money for the education budget if we could make the changes there.

Can you please help us and make them make changes?

Thank you.



**RACHEL FORD**

Parent of a two autistic high schoolers with IEPs  
Queens, Districts 30 and 25

Below is our community's evidence in these links:

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Council General Testimony,

Dear Speaker, Council Finance Chair, Committee Chair & staff,

I write as a CUNY graduate, the husband of a CUNY graduate, the son of a CUNY graduate, the father of a CUNY graduate, and the grandson of a CUNY graduate. All of us had or have careers in New York City owing in part or entirely to our experiences in the University.

I am submitting written testimony for public record. I support a #PeoplesBudget that invests in CUNY instead of cutting our most affordable higher education system and one of our most prized economic engines. Stopping the cuts will ensure CUNY is able to restore course offerings, stop enrollment caps, prevent layoffs, and more — benefiting faculty, staff, and CUNY students who are being shortchanged by these cuts.

Currently, the FY25 preliminary budget presents harmful cuts to the CUNY system that places unnecessary burdens on both students and CUNY faculty and staff. We demand funding to:

- Restore \$94M in cuts to CUNY and lift hiring freezes
- Baseline \$35.5 Million in Funding for Advisors to Move Toward ASAP for All and screen students for Fair Fares

The cruel cuts to CUNY's budget are a huge loss to all New Yorkers. CUNY is a fundamental city institution that provides lifelong learning and skills-building opportunities for all New Yorkers. An affordable, quality higher education experience is essential to supporting New Yorkers in achieving their dreams.

I hope that the Mayor and Council can accomplish a people's budget through negotiations. BUT if not, we need Council to use its full budget powers of amending the budget and passing terms and conditions to make sure CUNY is restored in any budget that passes. Thank you.

Robert Nelson  
[rsngc@outlook.com](mailto:rsngc@outlook.com)

Brooklyn, New York 11231

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Rulisa Galloway-Perry

[rulisag@gmail.com](mailto:rulisag@gmail.com)

New York, New York 10019

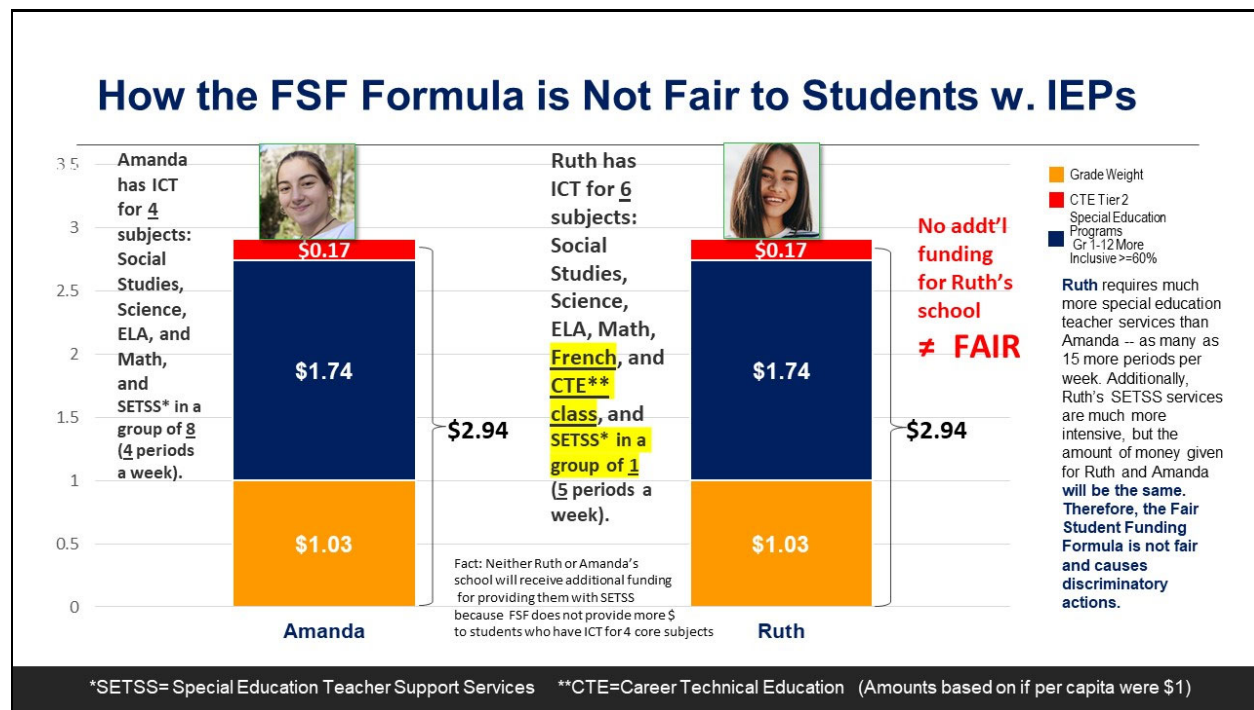
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**SPECIAL EDUCATION**

## Support Schools with the CORE to Ensure Full Provision of Special Education Programs

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  - a. Work with budget directors, supervisors of school psychologists, HR directors, etc
  - b. Provide names, IEP dates, grades, ID #s of multiple students

- c. Provide names, what kind of special education certificate, Current Assignment(s), Periods per week assigned to provide special education services of multiple teachers
  - d. List their unscheduled funds, list funds beyond “allowabled thresholds,” funds in “set aside,” **This sounds like my school is being audited and not supported.**
  - e. List the students history at the school, potential temporary housing status, attendance, if they’ve ever been left back? **Why does this matter? This sounds very discriminatory.**
3. **Other need-to-know facts about the FSF visible on the 1st chart:**
- a. On top of core ICT classes, schools do not receive more funds for a student to have special education teacher services for a World Language class (French, Mandarin, Spanish, etc) even though it is required for graduation.
  - b. **Schools do not receive more funds for a student to have ICT special education teacher services in a Career Technical Education (CTE) class.** These are the highly popular pathways-inspiring high schools capturing today’s headlines. Many of these schools offer “CTE-endorsed diplomas” requiring advanced testing and diligent preparation. Ex. Computer Repair, Structural Welding, Cisco, Oracle, Hair Stylist, Nail Technician, Plumbing, etc.
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  - d. For one who is really struggling, **if the student’s SETSS service needed to be 1:1, schools would not receive any more funds** to provide such a service despite the vast difference in teacher time requirements.

As parents, we ask you, when a school needs more money to hire a special education teacher to fulfill a child’s IEP, why is any of the above information necessary in the CORE Checklist? How is this not discrimination? How is this not a civil rights violation? If a school knows that they must go through this process, why would any school ever want to lay down a mandate for a child when there are no guarantees?

Again, with budget cuts looming, we ask you to please use your legislative powers to pressure the New York City Public Schools system to do better. Every year, I go to my child’s IEP meeting and I am told the same things that make me feel as though my child and I are “less than” and I am told things that I believe are violations but to fight this would be costly in both money, time, and emotions for both me and my child.

Our own family has suffered due to the inequity for student with disabilities such as

- I am told there can’t be any ICT in LOTE or CTE or AP classes.
- I am told that they can never have special education services afterschool
- I am told that my child is not able to do things because of their behavior but they do not provide them with a Functional Behavior Assessment or a Behavior Intervention Plan.
- Everything my child needs must be initiated and monitored by me to ensure quality.
- I never get IEP goal progress reports for my child when report cards come out.

- I am told that my child does not require support because they are passing even though the law says that they can qualify for services despite progressing from grade to grade.
- What I see in my child at home bears little significance to them despite the IEP's purpose being to prepare my child for further education, employment, and independent living.

I hope that decisions can be made during this budget season to advise NYCPS that the Fair Student Formula needs to be changed to make funding special education fair to our children with disabilities. This formula makes it automatic to not give more funds to students who need more services. I believe this formula creates a foundation for discriminatory judgments at schools. This formula is the reason for the billions of dollars in impartial hearing costs. We would have more money for the education budget if we can make the changes there.

Can you please help us and make them make changes?

Thank you.

Samantha Fong  
Parent of a student with a disability  
Brooklyn, NY

Below is our community's evidence in these links:

- Link to NYC Public Schools' Introduction to CORE: <https://bit.ly/3KfEaW1>
- Link to NYC Public Schools' **CORE Checklist** <https://bit.ly/3UPqy9P>
- Evidence of Top Level NYCPS Special Education Official saying what the Fair Student Funding does and doesn't pay for is here with some emails from principals saying we don't do this special ed or that special ed is here: **The Chicken and The Egg**: <https://bit.ly/4agXtZx>
- Evidence of the district poorly answering questions about how schools can get more money faster when they need more money to hire special education teachers to fulfill an IEP mandate. **The Appeals Convo**: <https://bit.ly/AppealsandCORE>

[REDACTED]

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**From:** shael flessel Guirand [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 15, 2024 6:31 PM  
**To:** Testimony  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Testimony for Restorative Justice

[REDACTED]

My name is Shaël Flessel-Guirand I am a student and peer mediator and a member of Dignity of Schools campaign- New York, a coalition of over 20 New York City based organizations consisting of students ,parents, educators, and advocates who work to create a system of School discipline and safety that is based on mutual respect and problem-solving to end the school to prison pipeline.

I do not understand how the Mayor believes that replacing a restorative,process with a punitive, systematically oppressive one is a positive change.

As a peer mediator I have seen the difference that talking and building human skills and connections makes. When I am in peer mediation meetings the students don't see me as a teacher who has authority over them, they do not see me as threat, they see a student who lives in a world at the same time and age and perspective as them. I am a black woman in a school full of POC. When the parties in the peer mediations see me they see a peer. Someone who can relate to them. A person who doesn't speak down to them but takes the time to listen to them and speak to them as a person. That is what peer mediations that is what restorative justice is. Taking the time. The time to sit and not only point out the problems in issues but focus on the why and how. Why it's wrong, why it needs to be changed, why we do things we doand how it can be fixed.

By placing cops in schools you are placing a forcing an unsafe systematically oppressive environment where students are supposed to feel safe to grow to learn. How are we supposed to be humans and children if at every moment we are more scared of being arrested or hurt than learning from our mistakes and growing as people.

We want the city to fully fund meaningful restorative Justice and divest from school police and policing infrastructure. A commitment to restorative justice requires a meaningful culture shift that makes it possible to build community safety and respond to when it occurs.

We are calling on the city to not only protect previous investments in restorative justice, but also expand them to ensure all students have access to school-based Restorative Justice coordinators and for all schools to be able to hire caring community members into supportive positions. Funding should also be allocated directly to schools to ensure they can provide training for staff, fund restorative justice elective that includes funds for students to lead restorative Justice in their schools. We are calling on the NYC council to move money away from policing, including ceasing all NYPD recruitment, hiring and training of school police and stopping funding for surveillance technology. Simply by not hiring any more school police, NYC could save up to \$90M in one fiscal year.

Envoyé de mon iPhone

Hello!

My name is Susie Gomes, Chair of the City Affairs Committee at the League of Women Voters for the City of New York. I am here today to share with you from a seasoned Early Childhood Educator on the importance of early childhood education for all children. She could not be here as the hearing date was changed and she now has a class to teach on this day, I share her notes with pride,

My name is Ciara Hedderman and I have over **25 years of Early Childhood experience in NYC.**

-as classroom teacher with 2-5 year olds

-as an administrator

-as a SEIT, where I worked with special needs preschool children in public and private schools

-and most recently I am the founder of Downtown Atelier: a process-art and sensory-play studio for 1-4 year olds in the Seaport.

I was asked to speak to you today by Susie Gomes whose child I had the pleasure of teaching when he was 4 years old.

There is this fancy word in brain development called **neuroplasticity**. Basically neuroplasticity is the brain's ability to make connections and grow. It's how we learn new things. The word always makes me think of plasticine - you know, that putty-like clay that you can shape and mold.

Same kind of idea.

We all have neuroplasticity going on right now. However - **neuroplasticity is the STRONGEST in the early childhood years, specifically birth to age 5.** These are crucial years for brain development. I'm always amazed each year as I watch this development and growth unfold.



It is here, in these early childhood years, that the foundation for lifelong learning, development, and success is laid. Study after study has shown that children who receive **high-quality early education** are more likely to succeed in life.

High-quality early childhood programs do the following things:

- place a focus on **whole-child** development (social, emotional, cognitive, and physical)
- value a **play-based** environment and allow for brain development in this play exploration
- provide opportunities for children to express themselves through **open-ended** art exploration
- partner with families
- provide ongoing teacher professional development

I stand here today to advocate for children who are not able to advocate for themselves. We must ensure that **every young child in NYC has access to high-quality early education** programs that set them up for success for the future.

Thank you for your time.

May 16, 2024

Re: T2024-1894 City Council Testimony Education Budget

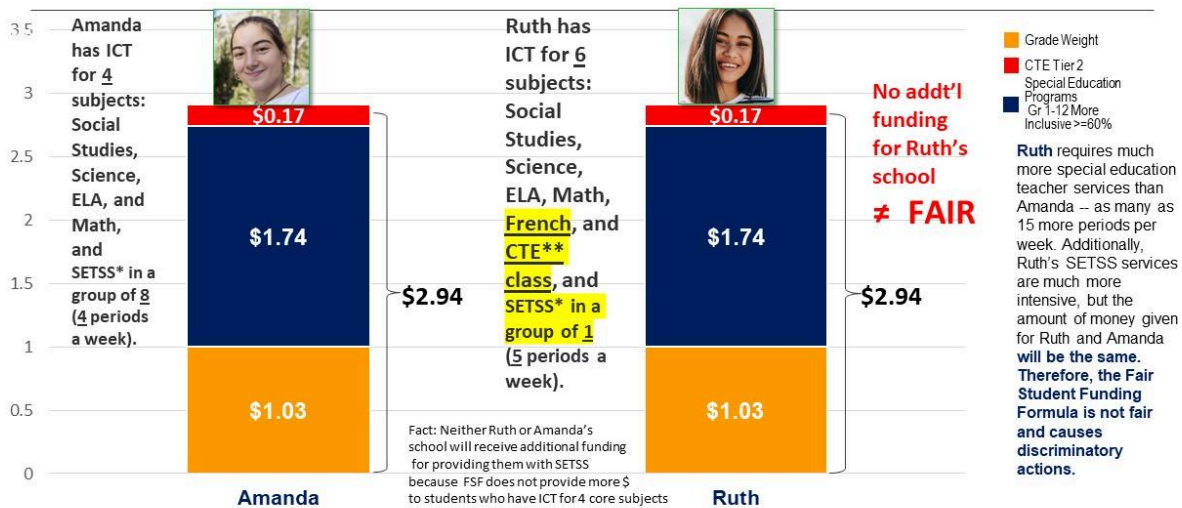
Dear Chair Joseph, Chair Dinowitz, Chair Brannan, and members of the Committees of Education, Higher Education, and Finance of the New York City Council:

I am a parent of two students with disabilities in New York City. I am aware of the budget cuts threatening our city's students in the upcoming school year thanks to the hard work of the Emergency Coalition to Save Education Programs ([ECSEP](#)). I am writing to tell you that budget cuts must be halted. If the pandemic has taught parents of students of disabilities one thing it was this: **When educational resources are threatened, students with disabilities will be one of the first to be impacted disproportionately.**

First, I am very disappointed to see the planned budget cuts to preschool special education, when there are already hundreds of children in the city waiting for legally mandated seats in special education classrooms and thousands more being denied their special education services. Proper special educational supports in preschool can set the stage for a child to be able to access a general education curriculum in Kindergarten. I experienced this first hand with my own two children, who made tremendous gains in their special ed preschool classrooms and are now both thriving in elementary school.

Second, we can not bear to witness this again and as proof that our city's school system already discriminates against our students, please review this graphic below created by special education advocate, Jenn Choi, the founder of NYC Parents of Teens with Disabilities (1500+ members). A month ago, she received email confirmation from a top level NYC special education official regarding special education facts of NYC Public Schools' Fair Student Funding Formula to make this graphic below.

## How the FSF Formula is Not Fair to Students w. IEPs



\*SETSS=Special Education Teacher Support Services \*\*CTE=Career Technical Education (Amounts based on if per capita were \$1)

All parents are told that their child's IEP is created regardless of school's budget but if you look at the evidence, how can one expect parents to believe this? It clearly shows a student can have **vastly more instructional services** and **more intensive services** than another child but the schools will be funded **with the same amount**. How is a school supposed to afford to provide the services for the student with more needs when the district's "Fair" Student Funding Formula won't be fair to them? **I am a parent and I want the Fair Student Funding Formula to be fair to my school.**

When we talk about education budgets and which programs we must save, we should never forget the elephant in the room:

The **billion dollar payments** for impartial hearings costs for Carter cases, compensatory services, lawyer fees, etc. We believe that the Fair Student Funding Formula (FSF) has a lot to do with that and when we talk about the education budget, it would be irresponsible of the city not to talk about this because our tax dollars are paying for this too. Here's what we think many may not know about the Fair Student Funding Formula and students with disabilities:

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- I am told that there is no ICT in core classes at a school
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Thank you.

Teresa Yamana



Parent of a student with a disability  
Your borough

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Yesybell Wright  
Testimony for Education Rally  
5/15/24

My name is Yesybell Wright, and I willingly decided to come and share my opinion on this significant change and how poor of a choice it is to get rid of things that we need. From my experience as a youth leader, the MSSSC known as the Middle School Student Success Center is a great program for young leaders to do what they want in life and make a change. We go on many trips for many careers, mostly colleges such as Stony Brook and York college based on the trips I know of. Also I would like to add I know a few students are now interested in becoming pilots based on a trip we went to, JFK Airport and not just for my school I.S. 171 but also HPCS. Not only that but MSSSC gave us free classes for specialized high schools testing and not many kids can afford that so this is also a great opportunity not only for kids who can afford something like that so big. MSSSC has a great mindset for kids to do good and become leaders so why should we let go of a program so great that only two schools are able to have it? I would also like to talk about school nurses, school nurses are very important for any injuries that can happen at school. Without a school nurse kids who have so much opportunity can possibly die. If a kid has an allergic reaction how are we able to save them, without a school nurse that can provide things to save you from that. Other things like really big open wounds. We should have a nurse near to help you because you can lose a lot of blood and possibly die or pass out. Overall I believe we should keep MSSSC and school nurses because these are really important needs for kids like me.

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jennifer Choi

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Keith Fuller

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: UYC

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Andrea Colon

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

DOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Elijah Karim

Address: [REDACTED] 21st Street

I represent: TREEage

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

DOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: MAY 15 2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Franchey Jones

Address: [REDACTED] Hunts Point Ave

I represent: TREEage

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

DOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ava Baranowski

Address: [REDACTED] Brooklyn NY 11238

I represent: Student, TREEage

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



D.O.E.

Student

# THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

Cafeteria  
Enhancement  
Experience

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: May 15, 2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Faith Jones

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Youth Food Advocates

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

# THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kheham Al-asmav

Address: [REDACTED] Staten Island

I represent: WEC NYC

Address: 537 77 st Brooklyn

# THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Esther Lanchimba

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: WEC student

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

DOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Alexandra Lucero

Address: UVC student

I represent: UVC Student

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

DOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Anderson, Guaman

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: UVC student

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

DOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dulce Olavarria

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: UVC student

Address: \_\_\_\_\_



Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

DOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Yorwis Romero

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: UYC Student

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

DOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Samuel Rodriguez

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: UYC Student

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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DOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Isabel Ariza

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: UYC Student

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



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DOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Samuel Rodriguez

Address: NYC Student

I represent: NYC Student

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
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DOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Avan...

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYC Student

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

LOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Reign Jenkins

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYC Student

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

DOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Anna Elias

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYC Students

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sam Miller

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Young Invincibles

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

DOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Helan Ann Brady

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Treeage

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



D.O.E.  
Student  
Student

# THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

Cafeteria  
Enhancement  
Experience

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: May 15, 2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Crystal Alcock

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Youth Food Advocates

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

D.O.E.  
Student  
Student

# THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

Cafeteria  
Enhancement  
Experience

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: May 15, 2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Aarmeen Khan

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Youth Food Advocates

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

D.O.E.  
Student  
Student

# THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

Cafeteria  
Enhancement  
Experience

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: May 15, 2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Umida Ibragimova

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Youth Food Advocates

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



D.O.E.  
Student

# THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

Cafeteria  
Enhancement  
Experience

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: May 15, 2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Safowana Islam

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Youth Food Advocates

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

D.O.E.  
Student

# THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

Cafeteria  
Enhancement  
Experience

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: May 15, 2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Simrin Begum

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Youth Food Advocates

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

# THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

DOE/CUNY

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Susie Gunes League

Address: [REDACTED] NY NY

I represent: League of Women Voters NYC

Address: 4 W 43rd St NY



Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

DOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kathryn Gioiosa

Address: Yellowstone Blvd

I represent: TREEage

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

DOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Pamela Vasquez

Address: Make the Road NY

I represent: Student Success Center @ Make the Road NY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

DOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Pamela Vasquez

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Student Success Center @ Make the Road NY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

DOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Brianna Abad

Address: [REDACTED] College Point, Queens

I represent: TREEage / Student

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

DOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5-15-24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Marlene Delgado

Address: [REDACTED] Kingsbridge Terrace

I represent: SSC Coalition/Kingsbridge Heights  
Comm Ctr

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

DOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Stephen Greene (KHCC)

Address: [REDACTED] NY

I represent: Kingsbridge Heights Community Ctr 10463

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

DOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Eleanor Geagan

Address: [REDACTED] Bronx, NY 10463

I represent: Kingsbridge Heights Community Center

Address: 3101 Kingsbridge Terrace Bronx, NY 10463

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

DOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: May 15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Maggie Sanchez

Address: [REDACTED]

I represent: CCSE - Citywide Council on Special Education

Address: [REDACTED]

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

DUE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: May 15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Solomon Blecher

Address: [REDACTED] 8th Street

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

DOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jurden Worth

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Liberation Diploma Plus Highschool

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

DOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Daniella Galardo

Address: Bay Parkway

I represent: Liberation Diploma Plus HS

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: LISA DECASTILLO

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: DOE/LTW/LIBERATION/JCIA

Address: 2865 W 19th St

57 Wilcox St

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

DoxE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: May 15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Saad Ali Ahmed

Address: [REDACTED]

I represent: Liberation Diploma Plus

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

DOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Adonis Favorite

Address: [REDACTED]

I represent: Liberation Diploma Plus

Address: [REDACTED]

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Imani Delvalle

Address: [REDACTED]

I represent: Liberation High School

Address: CUNY

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

**Appearance Card**

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Eadi Nadat

Address: DOE

I represent: Liberation Diploma Plus

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

**Appearance Card**

DOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5-15-24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Eabriella Rogers

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Liberation Diploma Plus

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

**Appearance Card**

DOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Natasha Quiroga

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Inside Schools - NYC Education

Address: 79 5th Ave collaborative

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 4725 Res. No. DOE Edu budget

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Shin Soim

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: TREEAGE

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Eric Poindexter

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Symphony Space

Address: 2537 Broadway

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. DOE

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Claire E Sylvan

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Internationals Network for Public School

Address: 29-46 Northern Blvd 4th FL LIC NY

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

DOE

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Faiza Azam

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Climate works For All / ALIGN

Address: 50 Broadway

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

DE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Razan Al-Abed Allat

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Brooklyn NYC

I represent: women's Empowerment Coalition

Address: 77 st Brooklyn

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Aminah Elkhoully

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Brooklyn NY

I represent: The Women's Empowerment Coalition

Address: 237 77 St Brooklyn

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL**  
**THE CITY OF NEW YORK** CUNY 5/15

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chancellor Felix V. Matos Rodriguez

Address: CUNY 205 East 42nd Street

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL**  
**THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

Education

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ben Dorman

Address: 350 W 31st Street, 8th Fl, New York, NY 10001

I represent: Climate Jobs NY

Address: 350 W 31st Street, 8th Fl, New York, NY 10001

**THE COUNCIL**  
**THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Arturo H. Enamorado III

Address: [Redacted] Brooklyn NY

I represent: PSC-CUNY Kingsborough Community College

Address: 2001 Oriental Blvd, Brooklyn NY

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition *Child Care - DOE*

Date: *5/15/24*

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: *Steven Morales*

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: *All Our Kin*

Address: *2929 3rd Ave Bx*

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: *ALYSON BARDSLEY*

Address: *5th Pauls Ave St NY 10301*

I represent: *PSC-CUNY*

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: *Michael Sill*

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: *UFT*

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

DOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kalliger Mark

Address: [REDACTED]

I represent: Equity in Schools

Address: Boerum Hill School for International

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. DOE

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mark Gonslaves

Address: [REDACTED] NY, NY

I represent: Citywide Council on Special Education

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

DOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Shael Flessel-Guiraud

Address: [REDACTED]

I represent: Boerum Hill School for International Studies

Address: 284 Baltic

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

DOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: 5/15/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jdene Kim

Address: [REDACTED]

I represent: Student dignity in schools

Address: 284 Baltic

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

DOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. Student Res. No. Doe

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: 5/15/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Stella Snyder

Address: [REDACTED]

I represent: Student dignity in schools

Address: 284 Baltic

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

Education  
DOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jakoub Chen

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: CACT ASAP students

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

**Appearance Card**

Education

DOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Agida Rama

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: CACF ASAP Students

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

**Appearance Card**

Education

DOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kyle Lin

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: CACF ASAP students

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

**Appearance Card**

Education

DOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Julie Wu

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: CACF ASAP students

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

Education  
DOE

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kulsoom Tapal

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: CACF

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

CUNY

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: May 15 2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Salimata Dumbouya

Address: [REDACTED] NY 10026

I represent: CUNY University Student Senate

Address: 355 West 57th Street

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Esther DelievRE

Address: [REDACTED]

I represent: Cultivated Community Foundation

Address: 89-14 Parsons Blvd.



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. CUNY Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: May 15, 2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Noam Gilboord

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: JCRC

Address: 540 520 8th Ave

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Gabrielle Lezner

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Young Invincibles

Address: 25 Broadway

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. NYCP Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/2023

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sara Aeder

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: JCRC-NY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

Higher  
Education  
and  
Education

# THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5-15-2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sir Michael Cohen

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Simon Wiesenthal Center

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

# THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

DOE

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Shelby Lohr (for Day Care Council of NY)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

# THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Bryan Fotino

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: CCNY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 05/15/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Miya

Address: [REDACTED] Brooklyn NY 11231

I represent: Students

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Marah Birnbaum

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: CUNY Student

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MAUREN Silverman

Address: [REDACTED] CUNY 10017

I represent: SELF - CUNY Alum

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Divad Durant

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: CUNY Student

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 14 MAY 2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JESSIE DANIELS

Address: [REDACTED] NY, NY 10035

I represent: SELF / PROFESSOR @ CUNY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sherif Bolimant

Address: Senior Vice Chancellor for

I represent: Budget & Finance and Chief

Address: CFD @ CUNY - 205 East 42nd

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Hector Batista

Address: Executive Vice Chancellor and

I represent: COO at CUNY - 205 East

Address: 42nd Street NYC



THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Wendy F. Hensel

Address: Executive Vice Chancellor

I represent: and University Provost

Address: CUNY - Wendy.Hensel@cuny.edu

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Micah Dicker

Address: [Redacted] New York NY 10022

I represent: New York Immigration Coalition

Address: 130 West 33rd Street New York, NY 10001

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Liz Accles

Address: 115 Broadway

I represent: Community Food Advocates/Lunch4

Address: School meal

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Randi Levine

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Advocates for Children of New York

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Melanie Fanith (Student)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Dignity in Schools NY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Shael Fiesel - Gibran

Address: (Student)

I represent: Dignity in Schools - NY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

▶ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◀



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Stella Snyder (Student)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Dignity in Schools - NY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jolene Kim (Student)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Dignity in Schools NY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ren Chavez Peña (Student)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Dignity in Schools - NY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kalliope Muerox (Student)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Dignity in Schools NY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lexi Greenberg (Student)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Dignity in Schools - NY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Martin Urbach (Peer mediator)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Dignity in Schools - NY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tina Zeng (Student)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Dignity in Schools - NY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Narelin Bueno (Student)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Dignity in Schools - NY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Calvin Zhou (Student)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Dignity in Schools - NY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Emily Flores (student)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Dignity in Schools - NY

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sandra Mitchell

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: New Settlement Parent Action Committee

Address: 1512 Townsend Ave Bronx NY 10452

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Charmaine [redacted]

Address: [redacted] Bronx NY 10452

I represent: New Settlement Parent Action Committee

Address: 1512 Townsend Ave Bronx NY 10452

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Andrea Ortiz

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Dignity in Schools - NY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/29

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kimberly Olsen

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYC Arts in Education Roundtable

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Debra Freeman

Address: [REDACTED] NYC 10128

I represent: Four Freedoms Democratic Club

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: May 15, 2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Annie Minguez

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: PAULA INHARGUE

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: UNITED NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSES

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/11/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: #6 Nellie Solterueh Student

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Generation Citizen - Student Panel

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

**Appearance Card**

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: (#5) Sury Gittle - Student

Address: Generation Citizen - Student

I represent: Generation Citizen - Student Panel

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

**Appearance Card**

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: (#4) Xavier Alcantara - Student Panel

Address: Generation Citizen - Student

I represent: Generation Citizen - Student

Address: Student Panel

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

**Appearance Card**

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: (#3) Sadya Das Adam - Student Panel

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Generation Citizen - Student

Address: Student Panel

**Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms**



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: (#2) Martin Glover - Teacher

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Generation Citizen - Student Panel

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: (#1) Christina Karahisailidis - GC staff

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Generation Citizen - Student

Address: Panel

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: May 15, 2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Michael Rance (with Leonie Hamson)

Address: 2065 Steinway Street

I represent: Class Size Matters

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kesi Gordon

Address: 131 W 33rd Street

I represent: NYIC

Address: 11

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: May 15, 2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rosemarie Sinclair, Executive Vice Pres.

Address: 40 Rector St.

I represent: CSA Council of School Supv. & Admin.

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jenny Veloz

Address: 14 Wall Street

I represent: Citizens' Committee for Children of NY

Address: 14 Wall Street

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/15/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Donald Nesbit

Address: 125 Barclay Street NY NY 10007

I represent: Executive Vice President, Local 372

Address: DC37

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Leonie Harrison

Address: 124 Waverly Pl

I represent: Class Size Matter

Address: "

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mia Theresa Tate

Address: NYCPS

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Shirley Adebisi

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: SEIU Local 32 BJ

Address: 25 W. 18th Street, NYC

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: May 15, 2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Louis Cholden Brown

Address: United Federation of Teachers

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: May 15, 2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mike Sill

Address: United Federation of Teachers

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: David Banks

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYCPS

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dan Weisberg

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYCPS

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Emma Vadehra

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYCPS

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

▶ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◀



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Christina Foti

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYCPS

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Seritta Scott

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYCPS

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mark Rampersant

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYCPS

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: CHRIS TRICARICO

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYCPS

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Cardelia Vere

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYCPS

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Flavia Phella Perdomo

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYCPS

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

**Appearance Card**

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**(PLEASE PRINT)**

Name: Kara Ahmed

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYCPS

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

**Appearance Card**

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**(PLEASE PRINT)**

Name: Milza Sanchez Medina

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYCPS

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

**Appearance Card**

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**(PLEASE PRINT)**

Name: Hewette Moore

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYCPS

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms**



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kenita Lloyd

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYCPS

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Danika Rux

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYCPS

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nickesha Francis

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Emergency Coalition to Save Education

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Trevonda Kelly (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYCPS

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Lori Pookisa (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 520 8th Avenue

I represent: INCLUDE NYC

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Marie Alcis (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Good Shepherds Foster Care

Address: \_\_\_\_\_



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**(PLEASE PRINT)**

Name: Jackie Okin-Barney

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Parents for Inclusive Education

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**(PLEASE PRINT)**

Name: Maggie Maoff

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: ARISE Coalition

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆