

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Jointly with
COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S ISSUES

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February 11, 2014
Start: 1:07 p.m.
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HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E: Daniel Dromm
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

- Vincent Gentile
- Daniel R. Garodnick
- Margaret S. Chin
- Stephen T. Levin
- Deborah L. Rose
- Mark S. Weprin
- Jumaane Williams
- Andy King
- Inez Barron
- Chaim Deutsch
- Mark Levine
- Alan Maisel
- Antonio Reynoso
- Mark Treyger

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

Carmen Farina
Chancellor

Sophia Pappas
Executive Director of Early Childhood Education

Letitia James
Public Advocate

Richard Buery
Deputy Mayor

Josh Wallack
Children's Aid Society

Hirokazu Yoshikawa
Professor at Steinhardt School of Culture and
Education and Human Development

Steven Dow
Action Project of Tulsa

James Parrott
Fiscal Policy Institute

Michelle Yanche
Good Shepherd Services

James Merriman
New York City Charter School

Andy Ackerman
Children's Museum of Manhattan

Eric Pryor
Culture for Arts Education

Max Ahmed
New York Immigration Coalition

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

Patti Banghart
Children Defense Fund of New York

Randi Levine
Advocates for Children of New York

Mora Flavin
Citizens Committee for Children

Joanne Eichel
New York Academy of Medicine

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2 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: I want to
3 thank everyone for being here. Good afternoon.
4 Buenas tardes [speaking Spanish]. This is a
5 joint hearing between the Committee on Women's
6 Issues, jointly with the Education Committee
7 regarding Resolution 02, which is supporting
8 the City's plan to establish high quality
9 universal pre-kindergarten for all eligible
10 four year olds and a high quality after school
11 program for middle school-aged youth. I want to
12 thank the two Chairs of the Committees, Laurie
13 Cumbo and Council Member Danny Dromm, and I
14 also see that our Chancellor is here and our
15 Deputy Mayor. So thank you both for being here.
16 I'll start off with an opening statement and
17 then pass it off to my co-chairs here today.
18 So good afternoon. I'm Council Member Melissa
19 Mark-Viverito, Speaker of the New York City
20 Council. First I want to thank my colleagues,
21 Council Member Danny Dromm, Council Member
22 Laurie Cumbo and members of the Education and
23 Women's Issues Committees for joining with me
24 on this very important topic, and thank you to
25 the members of the administration, especially

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2 Education Chancellor Carmen Farina and incoming
3 Deputy Mayor Richard Buery for being with us
4 today, and obviously all the advocates that are
5 here in the room. Thank you so much. It should
6 come as no surprise to anyone in this room that
7 we have an achievement gap in New York City,
8 one that was brought into even starker light
9 when the results of the new Common Core aligned
10 exams were released last summer. Across the
11 City only 21.3 percent of students who qualify
12 for free or reduced price lunch passed the new
13 state English tests compared to 50 percent of
14 students who don't qualify for lunch
15 assistance. The gap was nearly the same on the
16 math exams with 24.8 percent of low income
17 students scoring proficient or higher compared
18 to 53.1 percent of their wealthier peers. We
19 also know that the achievement gap doesn't
20 start in the testing grades. The Center for
21 American Progress reports that by the time they
22 enter school, the gap between the wealthiest
23 children and the poorest children is already
24 pronounced, with children from low income
25 families having heard 31 million fewer words

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2 than their more affluent peers. Nationally,
3 students who are English language learners
4 enter at first grade reading a full year behind
5 their English speaking peers. At 31.4 percent,
6 New York City's child poverty rate is now at
7 its highest in over a decade, making the need
8 for early childhood education more urgent than
9 ever. But there is good news. High quality
10 culturally and linguistically appropriate pre-
11 school can reduce the school readiness gap and
12 can significantly impact everything from
13 reading at grade level to graduating high
14 school to being career ready later in life.
15 Research has proven that children who are the
16 most vulnerable, particularly low-income
17 children of color benefit the most from
18 participation in high quality preschool. A
19 2008 study of Oklahoma's universal preschool
20 program found that black and Hispanic children
21 in the program made gains in early literacy and
22 problem-solving skills, and Spanish speaking
23 children make both substantial language gains
24 and gains in early literacy and math skills.
25 Long term studies of programs like the Perry

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2 Preschool Project, The Abecedarian Project and
3 Chicago's child-parent centers have found that
4 participation in high-quality preschool leads
5 to increased achievement test scores, improved
6 behavior and attitudes, decreased grade
7 retention, decreased special education
8 referrals, decreased crime and delinquency, and
9 increased high school graduation. But while
10 preschool will have enormous benefits for
11 children who are still young enough to enroll.
12 There are students in our system who haven't
13 had all of the benefits a high quality
14 preschool program can offer. That's why I also
15 support the Mayor's proposal for after school
16 programming for middle school students. Two
17 thirds of middle school students in our city are
18 currently reading below grade level. That is
19 particularly alarming because students who
20 enter ninth grade two or more years behind
21 grade level in math and literacy have only a 50
22 percent chance of on time promotion to the
23 tenth grade. It is crucial that New York City
24 have the ability to provide a steady dedicated
25 funding stream for these programs, which is why

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2 I support the Mayor's call for a tax on the
3 wealthiest New Yorkers. New York City has long
4 had progressive income taxes. Studies show
5 that half millionaires--that millionaires do
6 not flee small changes in marginal tax rates,
7 and that all other things being equal, state
8 and local governments with progressive taxes do
9 not see lower rates of economic growth, as we
10 will hear from testimony today. With so many
11 known benefits in a documented return on public
12 investment in high school--I mean, sorry, in
13 high quality preschool between 2.69 dollars and
14 seven dollars and 16 cents, the long term
15 social and financial benefits of these programs
16 far outweigh the cost to the city. The majority
17 of New Yorkers support a tax for pre--for, I'm
18 sorry. The majority of New Yorkers support a
19 tax pay for preschool and after school
20 programming as do the majority of city council
21 members, as you can see by the number of
22 sponsors on the resolution we're hearing today.
23 I look forward to hearing more today about the
24 importance of universal pre-kindergarten and
25 after school programming for middle schoolers

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2 and to hear more details of the implementation
3 plan for both programs. And with that, I would
4 like to ask the Chair of the Education
5 Committee Danny Dromm to say a few words and
6 take it from here. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very
8 much Speaker Viverito. Boy, this is almost
9 like a classroom. It's so quiet in here today.
10 It's great to be here and for me this is a day
11 of personal significance in the sense that
12 having been a New York City public school
13 teacher at UFT, Chapter leader for 25 years and
14 to now sit at the Chair of the Education
15 Committee is very personally important to me.
16 And I want to thank Speaker Viverito for giving
17 me that opportunity and I also want to state
18 how wonderful it is to have a Chancellor under
19 whom I worked at one time as an educator and
20 also just wanted to say welcome to you for
21 being with us today. Thank you very, very
22 much. So good afternoon everyone. I'm Council
23 Member Danny Dromm and I'm the Chair of the
24 Education Committee if I didn't tell you that
25 before. First, I'd like to thank Speaker Mark-

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2 Vierito for sponsoring this resolution and for
3 her leadership on this very important issue.
4 Thank you to my co-chair, Council Member Laurie
5 Cumbo, the new Chair of the Women's Issues
6 Committee and thank you to all of you for
7 coming out to participate today. Today's
8 hearing on Resolution Number Two, which is a
9 resolution that supports the City's plan to
10 establish high quality universal pre-
11 kindergarten for all eligible four year olds
12 and a high quality after school program for
13 middle school aged youth is a very important
14 step towards improving the lives of children in
15 this City. As many of you know, I was an
16 educator for 25 years. Additionally, I was the
17 director of a daycare center. I've been in the
18 front lines and have seen firsthand tangible
19 proof that quality early childhood education
20 enhances the life of a child. In addition, the
21 benefits of early childhood education have been
22 established repeatedly through research. It
23 has shown how these crucial years in a child's
24 development can set the tone for a child's
25 future successes. For example, research

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2 conducted through a partnership with New York
3 University and the Children's Museum of
4 Manhattan concluded that the pre-school years
5 are critical, not only for developing basic
6 skills for school readiness but also for the
7 development of children's interests and beliefs
8 about their own capabilities and such benefits
9 don't stop at its early success. Some
10 longitudinal studies have shown that early
11 success can last well into adulthood, and that
12 such results and long term gains are
13 particularly important for disadvantaged
14 students. One particular study pointed to
15 participants having a higher median income at
16 age 40. So you see, the success can be built
17 upon and compounded like interest.
18 Unfortunately, high quality full day early
19 childhood education is frequently out of reach
20 for many because it is often hard to find and
21 it is exorbitant in cost. While the city does
22 already offer UPK, it is often unavailable for
23 a full day and sometimes over crowded. I
24 believe that expanding full time quality
25 universal pre-kindergarten for all four year

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2 olds is something we can all agree on for its
3 benefits are undeniable. While most of the
4 attention has been on UPK, Resolution Number
5 Two also supports the city's plan for high
6 quality after school programs for middle aged
7 students. As we know, middle aged and middle
8 school life can be tough. Middle school
9 students are not quite kids and yet, they're
10 not quite yet young adults, and they are often
11 too old for some programs and yet too young for
12 others. It's an age where guidance is sorely
13 needed. Unfortunately, over the past several
14 years, New York City afterschool programs have
15 been dramatically cut. The Mayor's plan seeks
16 to expand after school programs in order to
17 help students make positive gains in their
18 academic performance, improve communication
19 skills, decrease behavioral problems, and it
20 offers alternatives to "hanging out." These
21 programs are essential for moving the city
22 forward. An overwhelming amount of New Yorkers
23 agree with its intent. The Governor of New York
24 agrees it would be imperative, but has offered
25 a short-term solution. The city plans to

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2 address these vital issues by minimally
3 increasing taxes on those making over 500,000
4 dollars a year, which would ensure the funding
5 that would continue to be available to sustain
6 universal pre-k and after school programs long
7 term. Resolution Number Two fully supports this
8 plan. I want to thank everyone again for coming
9 and I will now turn it over to my Co-Chair
10 Council Member Laurie Cumbo who will say a few
11 words.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you.
13 Good afternoon. I am very excited to introduce
14 myself to you. I am Council Member Laurie
15 Cumbo and I am thrilled and honored to be the
16 Chair of the Women's Issues Committee at this
17 incredible time in history. I have declared
18 2014 the year of the woman, not just because it
19 sounds good, but because this is the year that
20 we are going to make incredible strides to
21 close the economic gap for women and to bring
22 forth unprecedented legislation that will bring
23 about the level of equality that women deserve.
24 First, I'd like to thank my Co-Chair, Council
25 Member Danny Dromm and members of the Education

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2 Committee, many of whom began their
3 professional careers as teachers, principals
4 and educators, and I'd like to acknowledge
5 them, Council Members Barron, Rodriguez,
6 Levine, Dromm, Treyger, Cabrera, and even my
7 very own science teacher from IS11, Mr. Maisel.
8 So it shows what a great quality collaborators
9 we have here today. And these are members that
10 have given their lives to education, and I'm so
11 very proud to work with each and every one of
12 them. I also want to thank Council Member Ben
13 Kallos who was the only member, male member, of
14 the Women's Issues Committee. Right? Special
15 recognition to him. And it was his idea to do
16 this joint hearing, and I think that that is so
17 profound that he too shares my ideology that
18 all issues are women's issues and you'll be
19 seeing many more joint hearings because we are
20 going to have a very powerful voice in moving
21 this city forward. And of course, a year of the
22 woman would not be complete without having our
23 Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito for sponsoring
24 this resolution as well as for her leadership
25 on this issue and for recognizing that every

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2 issue is a women's issue. As the new Chair of
3 the Women's Issues Committee, I am proud to be
4 part of an issue that is of particular
5 importance to the families of New York City. As
6 I start my tenure as Chair I have come to
7 realize that women's issues are going to be so
8 important as we create committees and committee
9 structures where we are going to advance the
10 causes of women's equality. Women have enormous
11 roles in caring for and educating children
12 while also looking to forward themselves and
13 further their educational and economic careers.
14 Let me tell you why UPK is critical to the
15 success of women, because as you may or may not
16 know, a lot of people have asked, what does the
17 Women's Issues Committee have to do with
18 universal pre-k? I'm about to break it down for
19 you. The gender wage gap doesn't just hurt
20 women, it also hurts family. With nearly two-
21 thirds of mothers heading their households,
22 women's pay checks are vital to their families
23 more than ever. Women on average earn 77 cents
24 for every dollar a man earns for comparable
25 work. These are figures that you know. Women

1 of color suffer from an even more severe gap.
2 According to the partnership for women and
3 families, African-American women and Latinas in
4 the United States earn 64 cents and 55 cents
5 for every dollar a man earns. Let's take it
6 even further. There are approximately four
7 million undocumented immigrant women living in
8 the United States, but because of their
9 immigration status they work the lowest paying
10 jobs in the country. Undocumented immigrant
11 women typically earn minimum wage or less, get
12 no sick leave or vacation time or health
13 insurance. Pay equity is often a lifeline for
14 immigrant women since many are mothers and are
15 most likely to support family members back
16 home. These wage disparities have made women
17 the new face of poverty and make it almost
18 impossible for women who are heading their
19 households to give their child the educational
20 and cultural foundation that is so necessary to
21 their success. Supporting UPK is a huge step
22 amongst many that will have to be taken in
23 order to put women on the pathway to the middle
24 class while simultaneously giving New York
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2 City's children the opportunity to not only
3 remain relevant in the new global world, but
4 rather to be leaders in our future development.
5 When we think about it, the United States is
6 only one of four nations that does not have
7 mandatory leave after having a baby. We are
8 with Liberia, New Guinea, and Swaziland, and
9 the United States are the only four that do not
10 offer this level of support for families.
11 Turning back is not an option and we will not
12 go back. So while we are all aware of and
13 mostly in agreement with the educational
14 development value of early childhood education
15 and meaningful after school programs for
16 children, we often miss the roles such programs
17 play in the economic and social help of
18 families and communities and adults involved.
19 Since childcare is essential for working
20 parents to thrive in the work force, lack of
21 such care could hinder a parent's ability to
22 earn a living, or in other cases, parents might
23 find it difficult to fulfill work requirements
24 for public assistance or to attend school due
25 to lack of childcare. Quality early childhood

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2 education and other after school programs are
3 often unattainable to all but the wealthy due
4 to the exorbitant costs and limited ability.

5 In order to address such issues Mayor de Blasio
6 is proposing to provide every four year old
7 with high quality full day pre-kindergarten and
8 every middle school student with high quality
9 after programs enriched with arts and cultural
10 programming. As a former museum director who
11 has operated after school programs for the last
12 14 years, I understand clear well how arts and
13 cultural programing can be instrumental in
14 every child's development. Not only is this
15 important for current parents, this program
16 will now enhance the lives of future
17 generations of New Yorkers. As was pointed out
18 in the resolution, a study found that children
19 who participated in quality early education
20 programs were more likely than non-participants
21 to graduate from high school, become employed
22 and have a higher median income at the age of
23 40. Now think about the impact that this will
24 have on our children. How can we not move
25 forward? The people have spoken and they have

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2 decided that making in the investment in our
3 children also known as our future should be the
4 number one priority of our society. This is
5 bigger than all of us. This is bigger than this
6 room. This is a nation-wide movement that
7 should have implications all over the world.
8 What we do here is going to have an incredible
9 impact for our future and for each and every
10 one of our children. I look forward to working
11 with each and every one of you. I thank all of
12 you for coming here today, for giving of your
13 time and your energy and for your testimony and
14 for sharing your ideas, your ideas, your goals,
15 your belief and your power behind this very
16 important opportunity is going to create
17 unprecedented levels of change for future
18 generations and each and every one moving
19 forward. Never underestimate the power of what
20 a few individuals can do. As you know, it's the
21 only thing that has ever changed the world.
22 Thank you very much for this opportunity.

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very
24 much, Council Member Cumbo. As you can see we
25 are fired up about this issue and--

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: [interposing]
3 Fired up.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yeah, we can't
5 take it. So, I want to introduce our Council
6 Members who have joined us. Over here to my
7 right is Council Member Chaim Deutsch, Council
8 Member Inez Barron, Council Member Brad Lander,
9 Council Member Corey Johnson, Council Member
10 Mathieu Eugene, Council Member Antonio Reynoso,
11 Council Member Mark Weprin, Council Member Alan
12 Maisel, Council Member Jumaane Williams,
13 Council Member Steve Levin who I see is just
14 out the door there but coming in, Council
15 Member Ben Kallos, I can see him, Council
16 Member Margaret Chin, Council Member Mark
17 Levine, Council Member Karen Koslowitz, of
18 course Council Member Cumbo and Speaker Mark-
19 Viverito and Council Member Andy King, and
20 Council Member Debbie Rose. So we have a full
21 committee today, and said I was going to swear
22 in our Chancellor and everybody who comes
23 before this committee, so I'm going to ask the
24 Chancellor to please raise your hand, and do
25 you swear or affirm to tell the truth, the

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2 whole truth, and nothing but the truth in your
3 testimony before this committee and to respond
4 honestly to Council Member questions? Okay,
5 Chancellor, if you could just turn that on.

6 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I do.

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Very good.

8 Alright, and Chancellor Farina, welcome. We
9 look forward to hearing your testimony.

10 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Good afternoon,
11 Speaker Mark-Viverito, Chairs Dromm and Cumbo
12 and all members of the Education and Women's
13 Issues Committees here today. I am the New
14 York City Chancellor Carmen Farina. It is my
15 pleasure to be here to discuss Resolution
16 Number Two in support of Mayor de Blasio's plan
17 to establish high quality full day universal
18 pre-K and high quality after school programs
19 for middle school students in New York City.
20 What many of you may not know is that
21 Chancellors generally do not appear before
22 Resolutions, but I think this is an important
23 one enough that I want to be here in person to
24 put my name and face behind what you are doing.
25 I would like to thank Speaker Mark-Viverito and

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2 the Council for your support on this important
3 issue, for your long standing support of full
4 day pre-k and after school programs. Seated
5 with me is Sophia Pappas, the Executive
6 Director of Early Childhood Education at the
7 Department of Education. During my 40 years in
8 Education I have learned that the only way to
9 improve education is to focus attention on the
10 classroom and quality instruction. And as
11 Chancellor, I want to see all of New York City
12 students receive the best possible education as
13 early as possible. As another side, we should
14 know that as a grandmother and abuela, I
15 absolutely wanted early childhood education for
16 my grandchildren. I've spending an entire
17 Saturday with my two year old looking at pre-k,
18 but we can afford to pay for it, and not every
19 one can. The opportunity to attend high quality
20 full day pre-k is an essential step in this
21 trajectory. We know that significant growth in
22 speech, language, and brain development occurs
23 before kindergarten. By getting children into
24 language rich environments that promote higher
25 order thinking as soon as possible, pre-k helps

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2 develop the critical vocabulary, oral language,
3 and problem solving skills that serve as a
4 foundation for academic success throughout the
5 remainder of their education. And by
6 establishing strong partnerships with families
7 from the beginning we set the tone for
8 continued active family involvement throughout
9 a child's time in our schools. What many
10 people may not know that this is the age of
11 which we insist that teachers go and visit
12 families in their home, and this is certainly
13 the first step to making sure that family
14 connection is firm and continuous throughout
15 the school years. In cities and states that
16 currently have universal pre-k, research has
17 documented significant academic gains across
18 all economic and racial groups. In Tulsa
19 Oklahoma, participation in pre-k was a powerful
20 predictor of children's pre-reading and pre-
21 writing scores and help narrow the achievement
22 gap. New Jersey's Abbott Districts pre-k
23 programs are designed to overcome chronic
24 educational disparities and have demonstrated
25 substantial impacts on achievement in language,

1 literacy and mathematics. A recent study found
2 that Boston's universal pre-k narrows the
3 achievement gap and produces gains in
4 vocabulary and math skills with children from
5 all backgrounds. This past Saturday I spent
6 almost two and a half hours meeting with
7 someone who was one of the architects from the
8 Boston program and she said by fourth grade the
9 achievement gap and the increase was almost 10
10 points by fourth grade reading scores. And
11 that's really, really one of the things that we
12 want to see happen in New York. Another step in
13 setting up our young people for success in
14 college in careers is to focus on the quality
15 of their middle school experience. For many of
16 us who are immigrant children, I remember the
17 settlement houses. I don't know how many of
18 them still exist, but I remember having a
19 membership card that allowed me to go after
20 school and be able to partake in physical
21 activities. They didn't work very well with
22 me, but I did enjoy the hanging out, which is
23 absolutely essential. You need to hang out in a
24 safe environment, which the settlement houses
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2 were and I'd like to see our schools become
3 those safe environments for our kids. Just
4 like pre-k, these programs offer crucial
5 resources that may not be otherwise available
6 to students. Not only do they help our students
7 improve academic performance, they force the
8 community at a critical time in child's
9 development. Middle schoolers need to be with
10 their peers. They're the ones that mostly pay
11 attention to, but imagine peers who are
12 actually in a safe environment with caring
13 adults. After school where academics is not
14 always the main subject. That really does make
15 a difference for them in the rest of their
16 lives. You understand that providing free,
17 high quality full day pre-k to an estimated
18 73,250 four year olds by the 2015/2016 school
19 year. We have the opportunity to dramatically
20 alter the academic life pardons of our city's
21 children. You understand that giving the
22 importance of pre-k for our children, family,
23 and city, we must start this two year roll out
24 with a significant increase and full day
25 options starting this coming year. Who wants

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2 to be the person that did not make a difference
3 in even just one child's life. You'll also
4 recognize that middle school is a pivotal time
5 for our students. As early as summer 2014 we
6 can begin after school expansion from middle
7 schools in targeted neighborhoods and expand to
8 the 116 stand-alone middle schools currently
9 without an after school program in September
10 2014. As I visited middle schools throughout
11 the city, and today I hit my number 16th, this
12 has become clearer to me. At an age where the
13 alternative can lead to dropping out or
14 incarceration, a good after school program has
15 the power, not only to change the course of the
16 student's academic career, but to change his or
17 her life. It is the only way we're going to
18 improve high school graduation rates. How do we
19 turn this information into real long lasting
20 change? The central challenge is sufficient
21 sustainable funding. Without multi-year,
22 guaranteed funding, agencies and providers will
23 be unable to secure the high quality educators
24 and space necessary to serve every child in New
25 York City. Thank you for recognizing that a

1
2 small tax increase will allow an enormous
3 investment in the future of our city. Every
4 child not already in a pre-k program has
5 already lost critical learning time. Filling
6 the gap in full pre-k access cannot wait,
7 providing quality after school programs for
8 middle school students is a must. If we are
9 truly committed to increasing the number of New
10 York City students who graduate from high
11 school college and career ready, the children
12 we could potentially place in these programs
13 this coming September will not get another
14 change of experiences that set up for
15 achievement and increase opportunities in life.
16 I also want to add that students for whom
17 English is a second language will actually
18 double their experiences the more time they
19 spend in school, and those are really one of
20 the specific targets that we want to be able to
21 serve. Thank you so much for your support. I'm
22 proud to stand with you in consensus on this
23 issue, and I look forward to working with you
24 in the future. I thank you for the ability to
25 testify before you today.

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2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you,
3 Chancellor Farina. I--Before I allow
4 questions, I would like to allow our Public
5 Advocate to make a statement. Our Public
6 Advocate Letitia James is here.

7 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you,
8 Chair and thank you Speaker Melissa Mark-
9 Viverito and the Chair of the Women's
10 Committee, Council Member Cumbo and all the
11 members of the Council for allowing me to say a
12 few words. Good afternoon. Here in New York
13 City, we have a choice to make. We can turn our
14 back on young children or we can offer them a
15 helping hand. New York has always been a place
16 of opportunity and it is up to us, everyone in
17 this room to make sure that universal pre-k
18 becomes a reality in New York City. New Yorker
19 would be best served with a recurring, a
20 dedicated revenue source for UPK such as the
21 plan to tax high earners that Mayor Bill de
22 Blasio has rightly proposed. The Mayor has
23 showed tremendous foresight when he put forth
24 his bold vision for universal pre-k, and we
25 must all get behind that vision. If you talk to

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2 educators, lifelong teachers, they would tell
3 you that the benefits of pre-k are innumerable,
4 and these benefits follow children for the rest
5 of their education and adult life. Contrary to
6 what republicans in Albany want you to believe,
7 the Mayor's bold plan for universal pre-k has
8 been embraced by New Yorkers and people around
9 the country for one simple reason: quality pre-
10 k works. It worked in New Jersey and it can
11 work here. We know that early education
12 provides a foundation that lasts a lifetime, a
13 strong self-esteem and confidence to carry
14 young students into the future. And we also
15 know unfortunately that comprehensive UPK
16 programs are often not accessible to low income
17 residents throughout New York City. Too many
18 low income families, too many single mothers
19 are left with the options to leave their young
20 child with family with neighborhood sitters or
21 in basic care centers which are often
22 underfunded. Universal pre-k is not a Woman's
23 Issue, it's a working and middle class persons
24 issue. It's a family issue. Access to a quality
25 pre-k and head start programs eases economic

1 stress on middle class parents and families who
2 might often wise pay thousands of dollars for
3 such a program, and in case you didn't know,
4 there are over 20,000 disanis [phonetic] in the
5 homeless system and more likely--and they are
6 more likely than their peers to experience
7 acute and chronic health problems,
8 developmental delays, clinical depression,
9 anxiety and behavior problems. They miss an
10 average of 31 days of school each term. They
11 perform lower on tests and are more likely to
12 repeat grades. I want to thank Chancellor
13 Carmen Farina, but I also urge the Department
14 of Education and Department of Homeless
15 Services to work collaboratively to address the
16 lagging of homeless children attending public
17 schools. I look forward to working with them on
18 this. We need to ensure that our most
19 vulnerable children start off on the right
20 foot. Lastly, as we all know education quite
21 simply levels the playing field. It did for me,
22 and that is why I want to work to ensure that
23 our most vulnerable children and their
24 families, those living in our shelter system be
25

1
2 given the extra support necessary to navigate a
3 sometimes overwhelming system. I stand by you
4 on universal pre-k. I stand with Chancellor
5 Carmen Farina, and I also stand with our Mayor.
6 Thank you, Speaker.

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you, Madam
8 Public Advocate. I want to say that we've been
9 joined by Council Member Mark Treyger and
10 Council Member Vinnie Gentile, and with that I
11 would like to turn it over to our Speaker for
12 questioning.

13 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: Thank you,
14 Mr. Chair. Chancellor, again, I thank you for
15 being here and I want to just reiterate
16 something that you mentioned that typically
17 Chancellors or heads of agencies don't usually
18 come to speak on behalf of resolutions, but
19 that obviously this is an issue of almost
20 priority to have you here and to have our
21 incoming Deputy Mayor here, I think just
22 continues to reiterate how much of a priority
23 this is for New York City. It's a call to
24 action that we have now our Public Advocate as
25 a city-wide elected official, that we have the

1 full City Council representing the 8.3 million
2 people all united in saying that we want to
3 implement universal pre-k in the way that the
4 Mayor has defined, by allowing for this
5 incremental increase in tax rate of those
6 earning the most. I think that that's important
7 that that message continue to be heard, sent,
8 the drum beat [phonetic] is growing. It's not
9 diminishing and we want to see a vote on the
10 floor of Albany to make this a reality. In the
11 ready to launch report, and I think that's one
12 of the things that I think some of us want to
13 focus on in terms of the implementation.
14 Moving forward, you indicated in your testimony
15 that you're ready to go for September. And
16 obviously, the--that's an issue that we want to
17 fully understand. This is obviously a, you
18 know, the UPK expansion is very complicated. It
19 involves multiple agencies as well. The
20 identifying of classroom space in order to make
21 this happen. Some of it has been mentioned in
22 the report, but I think we would like to get
23 just a little bit more detail on how you see
24 that moving forward. How do you see the
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different agencies? Are you as the Chancellor overseeing that interaction between all the agencies? Just in terms of the--speaking a little bit to that first.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, I think first of all, the Mayor considers this so important that he actually named the Deputy Mayor, Richard Buery, whose going to kind of be the liaison between all the agencies to make sure that we actually talk to each other, and that the plan that we put together has a responsibility for each of us. So that's definitely one thing. I think the other thing that I think is crucial is that we've appointed a key person on our staff, which is Sophia Pappas who has done a yeoman's [phonetic] job at doing all the hard work. I know I come before you I present the ideas and I try to get you revved up, but the real work is being done right here. But I think also we are very conscious that this has to also be something people buy into. So we have actually asked principals to designate the spaces in their buildings and CBO's do designate the spaces.

1
2 So this is not a matter of us coming and saying
3 we need x amount of seats and all of you have
4 to give it to us, but where is there space. I
5 know of one school in particular that just gave
6 us four different--four settings for classes in
7 their school. So I think it's a multifaceted
8 project. I'll let Sophia talk a little bit
9 about the ready to launch, but it's certainly
10 being spearheaded by me, but liaison by
11 Richard, and actually carried by Sophia. So you
12 have the three people here who are going to do
13 most of the work.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Just before you
15 start, Sophia, let me just swear you in as
16 well. Do you swear to affirm or tell the
17 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the
18 truth in your testimony before this committee
19 and to respond honestly to Council Member
20 questions?

21 SOPHIA PAPPAS: I do.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you.

23 SOPHIA PAPPAS: Thank you,
24 Chancellor. And thank you for having us,
25 Council Members. I think first and foremost,

1
2 quality is going to drive this entire process.
3 So there's a lot in the report about how we're
4 identifying space, our pipeline of teachers and
5 so forth, but we really want to make sure that
6 the quality of applications coming from public
7 schools and community based organizations will
8 determine what happens in terms of our
9 decisions of where the pre-k seats will go. So
10 in the process of evaluating proposals that
11 come in from community based organizations
12 starting this Friday, 'cause that's when the
13 deadline is, and proposals coming from our
14 public schools, from the deadline next week on
15 the 25th, we will be looking very closely at
16 written applications. We'll also be doing site
17 visits to assess both the quality of the
18 instructional program and the suitability of
19 space, and so we are already making enormous
20 strides in that direction. As I mentioned the
21 deadlines are fast approaching and we're really
22 preparing our staff to do those reviews. But
23 there's also tremendous coordination with other
24 agencies. So Department of Health and Mental
25 Hygiene is of course pivotal on the community

1
2 based organization end of things because they
3 permit the spaces, and so we're building on our
4 past collaboration to make sure that we're
5 prepared to do these reviews and make sure that
6 the spaces are viable come September. I also
7 work very closely with the Administration for
8 Children Services. As the report says, we have
9 roughly 12,700 seats that are UPK, but in ASC
10 Early Learn Centers, and so we're working very
11 closely to make sure that whether you're a UPK
12 seat in a public school, a CBO that contracts
13 with the DOE or with ACS, that you can meet the
14 quality parameters laid out in the report.

15 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I also want to
16 add that one of the other pieces that we're
17 very concerned about is the quality of
18 instruction. So, in two weeks I'll be meeting
19 with the deans of all the colleges of education
20 in New York City to lay our parameters, what we
21 think Early Education should look like and that
22 we expect this to be a need. Many of the
23 colleges had actually dropped their Early
24 Childhood courses and we're asking them to
25 review and to see how they may help us in maybe

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2 adjusting some of the courses they're presently
3 giving so that the teachers who are being
4 assigned to these programs are really trained
5 to work with young children which is very
6 different than working with children on other
7 grades.

8 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: Now, I'm
9 going to--I just have one more question, and I
10 know that on this issue there's going to be
11 many colleagues that want to get more details
12 on the UPK portion of it. I wanted to ask one
13 specific question regarding the after school
14 programing part of it, which I think there's
15 not as much detail on that. I would assume to
16 some extent that maybe the infrastructure so to
17 speak is pretty much easier to find on the
18 middle school front and providing the
19 appropriate slots than obviously the work that
20 needs to get done to prepare, you know, seats
21 for implementation of full UPK. So how do you
22 see finding the additional slots that you want
23 to fund for every middle school child? Where
24 do you find those? Are you finding those just
25 within a school setting? Is it within the

1
2 beacon school structure, the corner stone
3 structure?

4 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing] I
5 think it--yeah. I think it's a combination of
6 all those, but I think right now what we're
7 finding is a much wider gap where there aren't
8 any programs at all. So certainly looking at
9 schools that have the capacity for the programs
10 that presently don't have them. The other thing
11 is also trying to unify in many of the schools.
12 We now know there are several cooperative
13 ventures in many of the middle schools, like
14 you know, we have MS2I and we have Summer
15 Quest. We have programs that are working, but
16 we're only able to fund maybe 11 schools in the
17 entire city. We'd like to see some of these
18 programs that have shown unbelievable results
19 really raised dramatically and extend into
20 certain clusters of the city. Right now, most
21 of our programs are in the Bronx. We'd like to
22 see some of them in Brooklyn, Southeast Queens,
23 where the greatest need is these programs. And
24 also to some degree, tweaking programs and we
25 just met last week with a whole bunch of

1
2 agencies and one of the issues we discussed is
3 where does certain academic qualities fit into
4 them. For example, I'm a big believer in
5 independent reading as a way to increase
6 reading. So how do the after school programs
7 also make sure that they include some of these
8 in their programs. So, we're working on it, but
9 that's definitely going to be a multi-agency
10 approach because we're also meeting with all
11 the CBO's who we think have quality to offer
12 and seeing how many more of them we can get to
13 work together.

14 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: And the
15 agencies that you have to work with on the
16 after school front may be somewhat different
17 than the ones that you're dealing with on the
18 preschool front?

19 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing]
20 Yes.

21 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: Correct?

22 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing]
23 Absolutely, because a lot of them, you know,
24 guidance, and certainly someone mentioned
25 before, I think it was you Daniel, you talked

1
2 about "hanging out." Well we need to hang out,
3 but in a good environment.

4 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: Exactly.

5 CHANCELLOR FARINA: People like Good
6 Shepherd's Services certainly. Richard, I went
7 to visit a school that had the Children's Aid
8 society. How do these agencies all add value,
9 but in very different ways, and how do they
10 coordinate their efforts, because sometimes in
11 after school programs, this program was here on
12 Mondays and this program was here on Thursdays,
13 but how do we get them to work together so
14 there's a common purpose and common goals?

15 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: So on the
16 last--on that question, that's the last
17 questions with regards to cost per child on the
18 after school, have you identified that and when
19 will you be able to finalize what the expansion
20 is going to look like. You talked about
21 identifying programs that work and possibly
22 expanding their reach in terms of other
23 geographic areas, when do you factor that that-

24 -

25

1
2 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing] I--
3 we're hoping to have some of these in writing
4 by, in another month or so. We had our first
5 multiagency meeting and everybody had homework
6 to bring back to the table, and so I figure
7 within a month I should be able to have those.

8 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: On the
9 middle school--

10 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing] On
11 the middle school.

12 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: I appreciate
13 it. I know there's many, many questions my
14 colleagues have. I'll leave it there. Thank you
15 very much, Chancellor.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Thank you,
17 Madam Speaker. And I did want to follow up on a
18 couple of items that have been raised already,
19 and I'll try to be as brief as I can so that my
20 colleagues can also have an opportunity to ask
21 questions because we do have a number of people
22 signed up for questions already. In regard to
23 the space issue, I'm represent District 24 and
24 District 30 in the City Council and they are
25 our two most over-crowded Districts. Whereas

1
2 you're saying that there's going to be some
3 space in existing public schools. I don't think
4 that that's true in Districts like that, and
5 maybe a few others around the City. What are
6 your plans at this point to deal with that
7 issue?

8 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, in many of
9 those districts we're obviously looking at
10 CBO's and we're also looking at schools that
11 might want to convert certain programs into
12 pre-k, but--

13 SOPHIA PAPPAS: Sure. We're
14 confident that between the public schools and
15 CBO's we'll be able to accommodate the needs.
16 We also part of the plan has, includes start up
17 grants. So whereas certain programs may not
18 have been able to do this because of certain
19 space needs in the past. They perhaps will be
20 able to do it now. And that's why our
21 collaboration with DOHMH is so important too
22 because right when the proposals come in, we'll
23 prioritize those where it looks like they may
24 have additional space needs and we'll be able
25 to assess those needs right away and make sure

1
2 that seats are ready for September. Now, if
3 there are ones that aren't, that's where our
4 pipeline development comes in. This is a two-
5 year roll out. So we will do our best to get as
6 many seats available by September as possible
7 but will also have an eye towards full scale up
8 by the second year.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So that kind of
10 also takes me to the next question, which is
11 how do you define high quality preschool
12 education, because it varies from group to
13 group from DOE to CBO and you know, how will
14 you define that word, those words?

15 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, I think
16 first and foremost is making sure that the
17 teachers who are going into these programs have
18 some experience with four year olds. Four-year-
19 olds are very, very different than even late
20 five-year-olds and six-year-olds. So the also,
21 you know, there's been a lot of talk about what
22 schools should be like, especially, you know,
23 with core curriculum and standards. We believe
24 that four-year-olds need a lot of play, but
25 that play is what develops language. So what

1 does play look like in a four-year-old world?
2 What does an environment look like? Are there
3 blocks? Are there easels or are there paints?
4 The kinds of things we know are crucial so to
5 the point that we can even develop, and I know
6 Sophia's already done this, pictures of what a
7 classroom should look like. It's not just about
8 anything goes or we put big desks in rooms for
9 little kids. I think the other thing is we
10 anticipate at least one week of intensive
11 training of everyone who's going to teach in
12 universal pre-k, and that this training will be
13 the same for all people, but with a CBO teacher
14 or a public school teacher. So that for the
15 first time, the equity's going to also be in
16 the resources we give them. They will also be-
17 -we already have pre-k standards that have been
18 written out. So to what degree do we hold
19 teachers accountable to following these
20 standards? Is there a lot of talk in the
21 classrooms? Is there inventive writing and are
22 they read alouds, the kind of things we know
23 are crucial to develop language given, you
24 know, in fact that we really want to see
25

1 language develop as one of the major evidences
2 of these UPK working. How much language is
3 there? Is there constructed, you know, play
4 around language? So I think we're really kind
5 of working on that. We also know that in some
6 of the designated programs around the country,
7 they have had, used specific curriculums, and I
8 know Sophia's team is already looking at these
9 curriculums and seeing which one we'll adopt so
10 that all kids will have the same experiences
11 across the City.
12

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I'm so glad to
14 hear that, because you know, as a former public
15 school teacher, often times I taught fourth
16 grade. I would find that children came to
17 fourth grade unprepared with very basic early
18 childhood skills, putting square pegs into
19 round holes and not knowing quantities of water
20 and sand, etcetera. So I'm very glad to hear
21 that that's going to be the emphasis on that.
22 No testing right?

23 CHANCELLOR FARINA: No testing.

24 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright. We
25 don't want any testing of the four year olds.

1
2 CHANCELLOR FARINA: No way.

3 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Any standardized
4 testing of a four-year-old, so I'm glad to hear
5 that. So, you know, I was at City College this
6 morning also, and I spoke to about 150
7 education students. There is this need to
8 develop them and to open up the door to them.
9 Do you anticipate hiring new teachers for these
10 positions, and if so, how many and how would
11 you go about doing that?

12 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, absolutely,
13 but these teachers will also have to be
14 interviewed specifically for these grades. It's
15 not just about taking a fourth grade teacher
16 who all of a sudden decides they want to go
17 teaching pre-k. Sophia and I had a lot of
18 discussions on this. You've got to be the right
19 person for the job. You know, one of the
20 studies that had been done years ago is about
21 kids--remember, there was a time when there was
22 no all day pre--all day K, and we saw that the
23 difference was when kids were in Kindergarten
24 all day that the first grade was made a lot
25 easier for teachers or kids readiness. So I

1
2 think that we really have to ensure that to be
3 a successful UPK, you are ready and I don't
4 mean test ready. I mean social ready,
5 emotional ready, ready to love learning. We
6 want pre-k to be an experience that the kids
7 can't wait to say, "I can't wait to go to
8 school the next day." So I think we said about
9 2,000 teachers.

10 SOPHIA PAPPAS: Yeah, it's
11 approximately 2,000 teachers needed. We have a
12 strong pipeline of early childhood certified
13 teachers who already apply to the DOE every
14 yea, but in addition, we're really going to
15 double down on efforts to provide recruitment
16 and selection guidance to principals and
17 directors. CBO directors can already access
18 applicants who go through the DOE system,
19 provided the applicant says that they are open
20 to teaching in a CBO, so we'll really be
21 ramping that up to increase momentum behind
22 this, but also to make sure administrators have
23 the tools they need to select high quality
24 teachers.

1
2 CHANCELLOR FARINA: We also want to
3 make sure that principals who are having UPK
4 for the first time understand that it is a
5 different breed and that for example, perhaps
6 something like an earlier admit--later entry in
7 the morning, earlier dismissal so they're not
8 in the midst of all--I know those, some of the
9 things that those senior principals knew were
10 very important. There are certain rules and
11 regulations around UPK that are different than
12 other ages. So to the degree that principals
13 who may not have had these programs in the
14 past, they'll be some professional for them as
15 well.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And in regard to
17 the pay for teachers in the CBO's versus those
18 in the DOE schools, have you factored that into
19 the formula for the money that's needed to fund
20 this?

21 SOPHIA PAPPAS: We are committed to
22 drawing in and keeping the best teachers for
23 these classrooms, as we've talked about with
24 all the research, it's essential that we have
25

1
2 the highest quality instruction, and so we're
3 currently working out the details of that plan.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, good. I
5 hope you will keep that in mind as to
6 attracting higher teachers requires often times
7 being able to pay them well. So I know that
8 that's something of importance to us here. And
9 I don't want to take too much time, but I do
10 have one question about CFE funding. And to
11 me, that's kind of at the crux of what it is
12 that we're talking about in regard to promoting
13 the Mayor's plan for the 500 million, and for
14 those who make over 500,000 dollars a year.
15 Because I read an article in this morning's New
16 York Times where Michael Rubel [phonetic] said
17 that the state who had led the CFE campaign
18 said that the state is about four billion
19 dollars behind in fulfilling its agreement on
20 CFE funding. With that type of record, can we
21 trust the state to provide enough funding
22 moving forward for UPK, or do we need the
23 dollars that the Mayor is talking about?

24 CHANCELLOR FARINA: We need the
25 dollars, and the reality is I'm meeting Michael

1
2 Rubel. I have already plans on how I'm going to
3 spend the money, so I need to meet with him and
4 see how we get the money in our pockets.

5 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Cause that's
6 always been a concern of those of us who are in
7 education, is that the dollar that are promised
8 to us never really materialize from Albany, and
9 that is--we will not be able to do this unless
10 we have our own plan in place ready to go to
11 ensure for future generations that Early
12 Childhood, Early Universal Pre-K is available
13 to all.

14 CHANCELLOR FARINA: It should be a
15 supplement not in place of.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Exactly. I think
17 what I'm going to do is go to Council Member
18 Laurie Cumbo at this point, who has questions
19 as well, and then we'll go to the other Council
20 Members.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you,
22 Council Member Dromm. You were very thorough
23 in your questions. I just want to thank you
24 and Chancellor, I so appreciated your remarks
25 at Brooklyn Tech when you declared that

1 education is back, and so it's so good to hear
2 your thorough responses from that perspective.
3 I wanted to talk a little bit about, of course,
4 the role that arts and culture will play in
5 this. Have there been discussions involving
6 the Department of Cultural Affairs on both
7 fronts in terms of pre-k as well as with middle
8 school programs? Currently, the New York City
9 Council has a program called CASA, the Cultural
10 After School Adventures Program, that I and
11 many other organizations I'm sure here have
12 benefited from, but the challenges that each
13 Council Member only gets five, and so it has
14 always been a choice to say which of the five
15 schools will have after school programming.
16 And so I wanted to know has there been a real
17 strong push to see the arts community empowered
18 both on the pre-k as well as on the middle
19 school front?

21 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, I feel like
22 you planted the question. So one of my many
23 lives was as arts coordinator and I have
24 actually a very good relationship with the arts
25 community in New York City. On March 4th,

1
2 there's a breakfast being hosted in my honor at
3 the New York historical society to which all
4 the cultural institutions in New York City have
5 been invited, and I understand 65 people
6 already responded yes, and at that particular
7 meeting I'm hoping to ask them to be assistance
8 to us in this effort. I don't want to kind of
9 jump the gun, but one of the things that I
10 would really like for them to think about is
11 having one afternoon a week from 4:00 to 6:00
12 where they open their museums to teenagers,
13 accompanied by an adult, but never the less,
14 teenagers that will be able to go outside their
15 own neighborhoods and have another kind of
16 experience, and I'm hoping that they will
17 assign a curator and several museums have
18 already said yes when we've discussed the idea.
19 So my i--my thing is that for many of our
20 adolescents, particularly those who may not
21 have a lot of life experiences, if you think
22 about the test scores, for many kids it's
23 because what they're reading is not something
24 they can relate to. So the more experiences
25 they have, and museums give us all those

1
2 experience, certainly Museum of the Natural
3 History, all our Arts museums, they all have so
4 much to offer. So, I think the arts community
5 will be very much part of our partners. To the
6 degree they're working in UPK, I'm not quite
7 sure yet, but with teenagers, absolutely. I'd
8 like to see some of them as docents. The
9 Whitney [phonetic] Museum has a wonderful
10 program where they work with certain schools
11 and they teach the kids to be docents about a
12 particular artwork. If we could do that in
13 many of the places, that would be ideal. Many
14 of our cultural institutions have already
15 developed curriculum around American History.
16 Why are we going to write it if they already
17 have it. So to the degree that we're going to
18 work with them, absolutely, and I can't wait
19 and I'll report back to you what we end up
20 doing that day.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you so
22 very much. I am very excited about the
23 opportunity to see our museums as well as our
24 historical societies, as well as our artists
25 empowered through this new initiative. I also

1
2 wanted to ask you, as far as curriculum, is
3 there a curriculum in place for universal pre-k
4 If not, or if we're still--how will that
5 curriculum be formulated in time, because this
6 is going to happen, so I'm already in the
7 premise and working in the direction of that
8 timeline? How will the curriculum be developed
9 and who will be responsible for creating and
10 implementing this curriculum?

11 CHANCELLOR FARINA: The curriculum
12 is already done. I'll let Sophia talk a little
13 bit about it. 'Cause remember, we have pre-k
14 in the City and we have all day pre-k, it just
15 has been in selected places and it depends to a
16 larger degree on the funding and how the
17 principals were able to work around certain--
18 the loop holes that they had to work around. So
19 the curriculum is there. It also, which I think
20 is very important, it's a curriculum of
21 continuity. It, for example, what the UPK asks
22 to be done actually gets built up in
23 kindergarten and first grade and then up. So
24 it's not an isolated group of skills. It's
25 skills that get recycled every year thereafter.

1
2 SOPHIA PAPPAS: Sure. So our focus
3 is on making sure the curriculum advances all
4 the standards, the pre-k state standards known
5 as the Pre-kindergarten Foundation for the
6 Common Core, and that's critical because you
7 get a comprehensive curriculum that really
8 focuses on all areas of development from
9 social, emotional development to early
10 literacy, math, physical and so forth. We also
11 want to make sure that the curriculum is using
12 developmentally appropriate practice. So the
13 Chancellor mentioned having plenty of play,
14 the combination of whole group, small group,
15 and free play activities. Currently, what we do
16 is we enable pre-k programs across the City to
17 choose curricula or develop curricula that meet
18 those criteria. So, often times they're
19 choosing published curricula, such as creative
20 curriculum or tools of the mind, but other
21 times they are developing interdisciplinary
22 units based on their student's interests and
23 background that draw from some of those other
24 curricula, but that cover all the standards
25 that I mentioned. Additionally, my staff are

1
2 currently evaluating a set of published
3 curricula to see if we want to provide more
4 guidance and policies around that curricula.
5 We really want to make sure that it advances
6 the state standards. They came out in 2011. So,
7 we want to make sure that what's out there
8 that's published is aligned to those, but we
9 also have a lot of programs that are developing
10 curricula based on developmentally appropriate
11 practice and that our standards align, and so
12 it's our job to make sure that when we evaluate
13 those curricula and the implementation of it,
14 we don't want to stop with the plans. We want
15 to see how it's implemented, making sure that
16 it's really moving every child forward.

17 CHANCELLOR FARINA: And it's not
18 about moving kindergarten down to pre-k. It's
19 making sure the pre-k kids are ready to go to
20 kindergarten.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Excellent.
22 And I just want to add with that, in this
23 moment of opportunity where ideas are still
24 being formulated, it would be so incredible and
25 powerful that the curricula and the program

1
2 that you're talking about have the ability as
3 was stated to reflect the diversity of the
4 different historical and cultural experiences
5 of each and every child, and I feel if that
6 could happen, we will dramatically change the
7 dynamics of New York City in terms of how we
8 interconnect with one another. Thank you so
9 much.

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you,
11 Council Member Cumbo. And now my colleagues
12 are going to love me, but I have to hold you
13 all to three minutes. I'm going to put you on
14 the clock, and our first Council Member to ask
15 questions is Council Member Mark Levine. And
16 Sergeant, would you start the clock?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Thank you,
18 Council Member Dromm. Chancellor, I was so
19 happy to hear you emphasize quality in both
20 contexts, in Early Childhood and after school.
21 We don't want this to be just babysitting. We
22 want this to be an experience to help children
23 develop academically, socially, emotionally,
24 artistically, and the key to that really more
25 than any other factor is the adult in the room,

1
2 the instructor, the teacher. You've made
3 reference to this several times. So my
4 questions for you concern the critical process
5 of recruiting, selecting, training and
6 supporting staff in both contexts. We have a
7 big recruitment challenge ahead of us. I think
8 we're going to be looking to double the normal
9 intake of Early Childhood teachers. You
10 reference uniform training, and I'd love to
11 hear about who and how you think that would be
12 offered. If you could briefly talk about that
13 in both contexts, I would be appreciative.

14 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, I think
15 certainly the University partners that we
16 choose and we're not going to work with all
17 universities, we're going to work with
18 universities that have a track record,
19 particularly in Early Childhood. We're going to
20 propose to them what we want to see happen, and
21 Sophia and her team will actually review what
22 they bring to the table, and I think there
23 certainly have been enough teachers in the past
24 applying for early childhood slots, but we
25 didn't have enough early childhood slots to

1
2 give them. So I'm not worried that there won't
3 be enough people applying. I just want to make
4 sure that the people who do apply then are also
5 committed to be retrained. Because even if they
6 come with a license already, we're going to say
7 in addition to what you have, this is what you
8 also have to do. So that'll be part of what we
9 do, certainly for UPK.

10 SOPHIA PAPPAS: Just to add one
11 thing, and something we've seen in Boston and
12 New Jersey, is the powerful role of onsite
13 coaches for supporting the development of
14 teachers. So on my team we already have a cadre
15 of about 40 coaches. We're looking to increase
16 that so that they can actually provide the
17 follow-up to professional development training
18 and workshops that's very targeted to the needs
19 of individual sites. Just like every kid is
20 different, every teacher is different and need
21 different things, so we want to make sure we
22 have strong partnerships with universities. We
23 also want to provide a continuity of training
24 that really develops teachers and brings out
25 their full potential.

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2 CHANCELLOR FARINA: You should also
3 know that UPK in the past, and I'm assuming
4 it's going to continue, also had mandated half
5 days. There are certain times during the year
6 where the children only come to school half a
7 day, and that was to continue the professional
8 development for teachers, and in some cases to
9 even include time for home visits that teachers
10 would go during the course of the year to visit
11 homes to keep that home family connection
12 going.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: In my last 20
14 seconds, you referenced requiring credentials,
15 I assume that would apply to the after school
16 context as well, and I'm wondering what that
17 credential would be. Would it be college
18 training?

19 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, I think
20 for the after schools it's a different kind of
21 credential. For example, one of the things we
22 talked about is making sure that there's some
23 kind of guidance component to every after
24 school program. It doesn't have to be a
25 guidance counselor, per say. It could be a

1
2 social worker. It could be agencies who are
3 trained in that way. So that would be one of
4 the qualities.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you
7 Council Member Levine. Council Member Brad
8 Lander?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you to
10 both the Chairs and to the Speaker and
11 Chancellor and Ms. Pappas, wonderful to have
12 you here and working so hard on this.
13 Chancellor, one thing that I know you and I
14 both feel passionately about is parent and
15 family involvement, and this seems like both a
16 wonderful opportunity and a big challenge,
17 partly because you're in the schools and the
18 CBO's, but such an important moment when we can
19 engage parents in Early Childhood Development.
20 Are there some plans under way? Either does
21 this build on what we're already doing in the
22 UPK classrooms, or you're thinking we could
23 incorporate that would both help get parents
24 back into our classrooms and really build on
25

1
2 how families can be involved in their kid's
3 development.

4 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I think pre-k in
5 particular is a place where children feel most
6 comfortable in coming into classrooms, because
7 I think a lot of the activities, I mean, to the
8 old days if you want to call them that, there
9 were cooking activities. There were sewing
10 activities. There were all kinds of stuff
11 around play that parents were invited to come
12 in and partake with their children. To the
13 degree that in certain neighborhoods, we--it's
14 less threatening to a parent to come into a
15 pre-k classroom because there are no
16 established skills that you need have to play
17 in the sandbox, except be willing to get dirty
18 or messy. So I do think that that is a perfect
19 place to begin the engagement. And also, I
20 think it's incumbent upon principals that once
21 they get them in the door in UPK to figure out
22 a way to keep them vested in that school for
23 the rest of the time. So I think the
24 home/school connection that starts in UPK is
25 really, really crucial.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: It's great to
3 hear you say that, and I think the
4 opportunities both to help educators think
5 strongly about parent involvement and parents
6 to think about school involvement and really
7 have that be regardless of race, income,
8 neighborhood; a great opportunity, so I'm glad
9 to hear that you're thinking about it. I want
10 to push a little further on sort of the
11 connections between crowding class size and
12 funding. You spoke to the need to make sure
13 that the City not only gets this dedicated high
14 income earner tax, which is so essential, but
15 to keep pushing forward on the CFE money and
16 your thoughtfulness about the challenging
17 issues of finding seats in already over-crowded
18 districts, and I just want to make sure that
19 we're doing this with an eye to class size,
20 because in so many districts, cuts to the
21 classrooms, cuts in funding and crowing mean
22 that a percentage of our elementary school kids
23 in classes of 30 or more has gone through the
24 roof. That's part of why we must have the tax,
25 because we can't sacrifice our second, third,

1
2 fourth graders to too large class size in
3 exchange for UPK, but it's also going to take
4 smart planning on your part to be attentive to
5 class size even as we're driving big growth in
6 UPK.

7 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, I think
8 class size is certainly something I've been
9 struggling with in terms of how does it all fit
10 into this, and certainly some of the
11 conversations will have with Rubel, I think, on
12 Friday, but the other way to look at class
13 size, is not so many--how many kids sit in a
14 room, but how--how much support does the
15 teacher in that room get. So I know as a
16 principal of a school that was almost always
17 over-crowded and didn't have room for pre-k,
18 the one thing I was able to do and we assume we
19 can still do is I got part-time people in every
20 single grade in the building. So that every
21 teacher got at least an hour and a half of a
22 second body in their classroom who was
23 specially trained in AIS services. And that
24 actually really helped. Overall, it was almost
25 better, because it's the quality of the teacher

1
2 in the room, not necessarily how many kids sit
3 in the chairs, although, at some point there's
4 a tipping point. But I do think that getting
5 teachers who are specifically trained for
6 struggling readers in particular and being able
7 to be the second pair of hands in a room on a
8 rotating basis for grades first through fifth
9 grade. So, I do think that's one of things
10 we're putting on the table, and I'm going to be
11 focusing particularly that the money does come
12 through on first grade.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Not if, when,
14 and--

15 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing]
16 When.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: it is why we
18 are fighting so hard, absolutely.

19 CHANCELLOR FARINA: We need the money
20 to do something in first grade.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Absolutely.
22 Thank you very much.

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you,
24 Council Member Lander. Next up we're going to
25

1
2 have Council Member Jumaane Williams followed
3 by Council Member Margaret Chin.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you
5 to both Chairs and to the Speaker. Welcome and
6 congratulations to the Chancellor and the new
7 Deputy Mayor, Richard Buery. I also wanted to
8 give a shout out. I think I saw Felipe Luciano
9 somewhere in the crowd. I wanted to give him a
10 shout out. He's done such work, someone I
11 admired since I was young. Thank you.

12 Obviously, the previous relationship, I didn't
13 know if I should come in singing Kumbaya or
14 something with the new administration, but I'll
15 get right into the questions. Thank you for
16 coming here at all, and some of these may have
17 been asked, so if they have, you can just tell
18 me and I'll ask my colleagues. But what is the
19 administration's stance on including charter
20 schools in the pre-k expansion?

21 CHANCELLOR FARINA: It's a work in
22 progress.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Will
24 beacon schools be utilized for after school
25 programs. I think Mayor Dinkins did a couple of

1
2 things great that our Mayor Giuliani took
3 credit for. First, was the opening of the
4 beacon schools and increasing the number of
5 troops of officers on the ground in the beacon
6 schools have gone down since then. So is that
7 something that will be reutilized?

8 CHANCELLOR FARINA: We're not taking
9 anything away. We're adding things on. So in
10 places where there are already existing
11 programs and they're working well, there's no
12 reason to take that away. So, making them
13 stronger, maybe a little bit more robust is the
14 only part of our plans, but we're not taking
15 anything away.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Alright.
17 My first job out of school was running a beacon
18 program that's no longer there, but schools are
19 just a great place for, particularly for
20 communities that don't have community centers.
21 Hopefully we'll look into that. In terms of
22 college readiness, it's about 90 percent for
23 black students, 20 percent for Hispanic
24 students are deemed college ready, and 53
25 percent for white and 62.4 for Asian students.

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2 Do you think the UPK plan will have an
3 achievement gap effect?

4 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Absolutely. The
5 problem is that nobody's ready to wait over
6 time. Everybody wants to see results tomorrow,
7 and the reality is that the UPK programs, my
8 feeling is they're going to show the first
9 results by third grade. Not everybody is
10 patient to do that, but the reality is that
11 good results take time. My feeling is that the
12 reason I think we need to do both, UPK and
13 middle school, is that a middle school is not
14 only working on middle school. My major focus
15 in seventh grade. We know that if seventh
16 graders focused on very strongly, that those
17 kids are going to be successful by ninth grade.
18 Working on high school graduation rate in 10th
19 grade is way too late. So to me, it's about how
20 we build incrementally, the progress that needs
21 to take place to make sure they can. And also,
22 it's not about getting kids to college. If you
23 look at the new statistics, it's keeping them
24 there. Many of our kids get into their
25 freshman year of college and drop out at the

1
2 end of the first year. So it's how are we not
3 only college ready, but how are you career
4 ready so you have the stamina and the
5 sustainability to continue going through there.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you.

7 My last question and a comment, as I'm running
8 down the clock. I've read a lot of reports in
9 places where they state they actually can look
10 at the third grade reading scores and see how
11 many prison cells they're going to build. How
12 accurate is that and how does the DOE take that
13 into account with the things that they're doing
14 and the last comment, I asked the last
15 administration for a break down demographically
16 of Carter cases, the demographics of people who
17 have those Carter cases. They told me back
18 then that they could not do it because of--
19 because it was giving too much information. I
20 forgot the word. So, I believe that that was
21 not quite accurate, so I'm making this request
22 again. I'd love to see a demographic break down
23 of the Carter request.

24 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Okay, first off,
25 let me ask one--the grade at which we look at

1
2 incarceration in the future is third grade.
3 Third grade reading scores nationally are the
4 grade by which jails are chosen to be built.
5 The Carter cases I'm happy to discuss, but I
6 don't know how that fits into anything else
7 we're talking about.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: No, it
9 doesn't. That's just a--that was just my--

10 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing]
11 Oh, it's your--

12 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS:
13 [interposing] My time was running out.

14 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Okay.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Just a
16 question I wanted to ask.

17 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Alright, got it.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: I'm so--

19 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing] I
20 don't know. I don't have that figure.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay. But
22 so we do look at those third grade--

23 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing]
24 Third grade scores is what is known nationally
25 as the kind of building that will take place.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: I'm
3 finished, but thank you. I'm looking forward to
4 continuing to push the UPK in New York City
5 taxing ourselves.

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you.
7 Council Member Chin followed by Council Member
8 Kallos.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you to
10 both Chairs and the Speaker, and welcome
11 Chancellor. It's really great to have and
12 educator at the helm, and as a former teacher
13 and a after school teacher, I think this is so
14 wonderful that the Mayor is targeting after
15 school program for middle school students. In
16 your testimony you talk about starting with
17 just targeting neighborhood and then expanding
18 later. I'm concerned about how do you target
19 neighborhood and the criteria that you use,
20 because in the last Administration when they
21 target neighborhood they left out a lot of low
22 income communities, immigrant community because
23 they were only looking at zip codes, and there
24 are pocket of poverties in different zip codes,
25

1
2 so maybe you could talk about to make sure that
3 it would be, you know, fairly equal.

4 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Our idea of
5 after school is city-wide. It's--what I'm just
6 thinking that if at some point there's limited
7 money, particularly for summer program, there
8 are some places we expect to have priorities
9 over others. But in terms of after school,
10 because we don't have to worry about space.
11 After--every middle school has space for after
12 school. So to the degree that we can start
13 putting together programs and principals can
14 choose around the programs that we offer, and
15 I'm sure--Richard, you going to talk about that
16 too later? That you will be able to get a lot
17 more information. This is all--most middle
18 schools have some form of after school. What we
19 want to make sure is that the after school is
20 the same way we're talking about UPK are
21 universally of high quality. One of the things
22 you'll hear principals say, "I'd rather have no
23 program than have bad program." So to the
24 degree that we can develop five models or so of
25 these are the things that we have to offer, and

1
2 these are the things, the standards that we
3 think they all have. That's the kind of thing,
4 but I certainly expect it to be city-wide.
5 We're not looking at zip codes that's for sure.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Great. That's
7 really great. And my second question is on, in
8 terms of over-crowding, because parts of my
9 district, we don't have enough seats even for
10 kindergartens, and two schools so far have told
11 us that they might just eliminate pre-k, while
12 we're fighting to put pre-k in, they're taking
13 away pre-k because they don't have enough room
14 for kindergarten. So if you're rolling out this
15 program in two year, how can we work together
16 to make sure that there are pre-k in every
17 single schools, you know, in our districts?

18 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Again, we have
19 to look at the CBO's. We're looking at all
20 kinds of other spaces that are available,
21 reconstructing some spaces that may be in
22 neighborhoods that haven't been thought of in
23 the past. Everything's on the table, but
24 certainly we're going to look at this as city-
25 wide initiative, and to the degree that some

1
2 schools say they have no space, going back to
3 those schools and helping to solve problems.
4 Interestingly enough, some schools may have
5 space that they don't deem as space for any
6 number of reasons. So helping people think
7 through some of these issues, but I expect that
8 we really will be able to over two years be
9 able to put every child who wants to be in a
10 UPK class in a UPK Class.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Great. I look
12 forward to working with you on this. Thank you,
13 Chair.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Thank
15 you. Council Member Kallos followed by Council
16 Member King.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you,
18 Chairs Dromm and Cumbo, and especially my
19 Chair, the Women's Issues Committee Chair
20 Cumbo, because without her all the members of
21 the Women's Issues Committee would not be here.
22 I also want to make sure I acknowledge a
23 special person in the audience, Raglan George,
24 the Executive Director of DC1707. He's been
25 doing the one man march during the previous

1
2 administration making sure that this issue
3 remained in the forefront, and he brought me to
4 this issue early on, and I just wanted to thank
5 him and his brothers and sisters at DC1707 for
6 all of your amazing hard work. I want to thank
7 the Chancellor and the Deputy Mayor for coming
8 before us. I know this is new and we appreciate
9 it. I'm a public school graduate. I spent a lot
10 of time in after schools every day if possible,
11 and that's what kept me out of enough trouble
12 to get to sit here. So I think it's really,
13 really important, and as a member of the
14 Women's Issues Committee and as a child of a
15 single parent, a single mother, how many single
16 mothers can we expect to see rejoining the
17 workforce in the same numbers as we see in
18 cities that have been offering this program?

19 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I can give you a
20 number, but I will tell you that that is one of
21 my hopes. As a superintendent and actually with
22 the support of Letitia James, who was the City
23 Council person at the time I was a
24 superintendent, one of the programs that we did
25 put in place for after school was exclusively

1
2 for single mothers. And also starting
3 something such as movie night where parents
4 could come and just talk to each other in one
5 room and we'd babysit for the kids in another
6 room. I think it is one of the issues,
7 certainly that I hope the Women's Issue group
8 takes on, that we need to be more supportive of
9 different family styles, and to the degree that
10 we can do that so that people also have a
11 break. I always tell the story that as a
12 grandmother, my daughter has herself, her
13 husband, her babysitter, her grandfather, her
14 grandmother all helping, but many of our single
15 parents have no one. So the fact that they
16 don't get a break or relief or talk to other
17 adults, so how do we structure schools and
18 other places for that to take place I think is
19 very important, and certainly some of the
20 issues that you guys should be talking about in
21 your group.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I look
23 forward to working with you. Thank you.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you.
25 Council Member King?

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Thank you,
3 Madam Chair and Mr. Chair. I know the Speaker
4 left, but thank you. But Chancellor, it's an
5 honor and a pleasure to meet you, and I thank
6 you for your commitment to education and
7 helping us have a paradigm shift of how
8 education service is delivered to all our
9 families in the City of New York. I also want
10 to add that, you know, we are this push with
11 everyone's having a conversation with how we
12 establish Universal Pre-k for all four-year-
13 olds and making sure that the future is
14 protected, and the only way we do that is by
15 putting money in the front end as opposed to
16 putting money in the back end for people who
17 had some miss steps. So I'm eager in us
18 accomplishing this task and with the amount of
19 democrats in Albany and the amount of democrats
20 as the Mayor and in the City of New York, if we
21 don't get it done, we have nobody to blame but
22 ourselves. So I'm looking forward to us
23 accomplishing this. Well I only really have
24 one question for you. With UPK, CBO, DOE, is
25 there a plan one day somehow to merge all this

1
2 under one system as opposed to having ACS and
3 everything else involved and making sure that
4 we have an education, 'cause it is education.
5 It's not social--I don't want to look at it as
6 social services for educating--putting it all
7 under one system that you can have agencies not
8 figuring out how they work together. But
9 everything falls under one umbrella so we can
10 move as a collective piece.

11 SOPHIA PAPPAS: So while I can't
12 speak to what the future would bring in terms
13 of that idea, I think what's important to note
14 is that in place we have very strong
15 collaboration across the agencies. It's
16 something that I've been committed to for the
17 past few years and I think we have even more
18 momentum to build on now. When the Mayor first
19 came in and he pulled together a working group,
20 one of the things that happened was that all
21 the agencies came together to develop what you
22 see in the ready to launch plan. We can't do
23 this without that kind of collaboration, so
24 whatever form it might take down the road, I
25 think what you can know now is that everyone is

1
2 on the same page about wanting to make sure
3 that this plan is successful.

4 CHANCELLOR FARINA: And I think the
5 other think you should keep in mind is that
6 traditionally the CBO's also offer the
7 additional services are from three to six, and
8 that was a really important tool. So I actually
9 think it's going to be a symbiotic
10 relationship, because many parents who are in
11 universal pre-k may then still want to use the
12 CBO's after school, which has always been a
13 tradition in Early Childhood. No school was
14 able to handle that aspect of it, but with this
15 kind of collaboration that we have now, you
16 know, they pick them up at the school, they
17 walk them to their center, so I see that as a
18 symbiotic relationship.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Thank you.
20 Well, thank you. Best of success and in your
21 tenure, and I know we're going to do all we can
22 to work with you in the City Council. Thank you
23 again.

24

25

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you.
3 We'll have Council Member Barron and then
4 Weprin, and then Levin.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you. I
6 want to thank the Chairs and the Speaker for
7 calling this hearing. I want to thank the
8 Chancellor for coming to present before us, and
9 as many of my colleagues have indicated, we
10 share similar backgrounds in terms of working
11 with the DOE. I spent 36 years in various
12 capacities, 18 years in the classroom and 18
13 years outside. I also want to recognize Raglan
14 George and Doctor Lenora Fulani who was here
15 and Brother Luici--Felipe Luciano. The
16 advantage of early learning programs is well
17 documented. An early introduction into a
18 structured learning environment has long
19 lasting effects, but what advantage is gained
20 if that early start is an introduction into a
21 system that is counter to intellectual inquiry
22 and distorts iconic figures of African-American
23 History? Today, Mrs. Brown, the mother of a
24 fourth grader called me from Queens regarding
25 her son's elementary school. It is a glaring

1 contradiction that during February, a time
2 established by Carter G. Woodson and adopted by
3 the US for the celebration of black history,
4 that her son was told that as a technology
5 project he could not select Malcolm X as a
6 subject because Malcolm X was "bad and
7 violent." An objection reading of history doe
8 not bear this act. Even today, Malcolm X is
9 acknowledged for his achievements and
10 accomplishments and his legacy is honored and
11 commemorated by US postage stamp. We cannot
12 send our children to be in environments where
13 their culture and history is being dishonored.
14 There's a growing emphasis being placed on
15 STEN, science, technology, engineering and
16 math. It is critical for our students being
17 able to advance and be successful in the
18 ensuing years, yet this fourth grade technology
19 teacher says that she reached her conclusion
20 that Malcolm X was bad and violent based on an
21 internet research she did at one site that she
22 visited. It is disturbing and counterproductive
23 that a teacher charged with guiding children in
24 the use of technology weighing resources and
25

1
2 making informed conclusion made a conclusion
3 based on a visit to a single questionable site.
4 This is alarming. The parent has been told
5 she'll get an apology, they'll be an assembly
6 program and they're going to look at the
7 curriculum. That happened last week, and she
8 has not yet had any of those actions taken. The
9 parents wants to meet with you. She asked me to
10 facilitate that meeting as a representative of
11 the Mayor who is control of the education
12 system. She would like to see that there's a
13 clear strong statement that such actions are
14 not being tolerated. She also would like that
15 there be a comprehensive bibliography of
16 African-American sources and recommended that
17 this book be included in that. We want a
18 teaching system that stimulates inquiry, that
19 challenges what might be the old tenants, and
20 we know that everything happens in the
21 classroom. So I'm calling on you to address
22 that parent's request and to tell us how it is
23 that we can get into the class. We know that
24 principals have been freed up from much of what
25 kept them from getting into the classrooms, but

1
2 we've got to get into the classroom. So what
3 can we expect going forward?

4 CHANCELLOR FARINA: First of all,
5 one of the most important core standards is
6 points of view. And students have to learn all
7 points of view on almost every subject. So to
8 me, it fits right into that one. It's not
9 outside the curriculum, it's in the curriculum.
10 And also just so you know that one of the
11 series of biographies that we actually
12 encourage our students to read is--there's a
13 series called "Who Is" and that particular
14 series actually has the book, "Who is Malcolm
15 X." So, happy to follow up with you on it, but
16 everyone's entitled to make a mistake and an
17 error in judgment. I'm sure that teacher is
18 actually a very good teacher in many ways.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: She may be,
20 but she hasn't acknowledged that it's a
21 mistake, per the parent--

22 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing]
23 Well--

24
25

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: at a meeting
3 that they had. So I would love to follow up
4 with you.

5 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And if I just may
6 interject as well at this point, Madam
7 Chancellor. There was an issue last year with a
8 young boy named Camron Slade [phonetic] who
9 wrote an essay on marriage equality and was not
10 allowed to read that essay to the student body
11 and then parents had to opt into it. So these
12 issues of diversity are issues of major concern
13 to this committee, and I stand firmly behind
14 what Council Member Barron has said and I know
15 next on the February 25th, our next hearing is
16 going to be on LGBT students and their families
17 and that's an area that I would like to address
18 as well moving forward with your administration
19 in the public school system.

20 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Look, I think
21 that on some of the--we've all grown up at a
22 certain age, and we grow up with certain
23 feelings because, look, at my age I've seen the
24 gamut of things in education. We've come a
25 long way, but have we trained everybody in

1
2 what's the best way to open controversial
3 subjects in our classrooms? No. Is every
4 parent comfortable with their kids being faced
5 with certain things? No. Is every parent
6 happy with the way their kids are being taught?
7 No. So what our job is to use professional
8 development to the degree possible, both with
9 administrators and teachers to kind of let them
10 understand that these subjects are not only
11 okay in classrooms, they need to be discussed.
12 How do these people defend their views as they
13 get older outside in public if they haven't
14 learned to deal with them in the classrooms.
15 I'm all for controversy in the classroom, but
16 you need to be in an environment where that's
17 going to be handled delicately, and then not
18 cause the same parents who are upset about one
19 thing will be upset if it happens the other
20 way. So, yes, professional development, I'm
21 happy to work with you on these topics.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I just want to
23 remind my colleagues that the Chancellor has a
24 very limited schedule and so we'll have to keep
25

1
2 our questions even briefer. I apologize. I'm
3 now going to call on Council Member Weprin.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Thank you.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: And then
6 followed by that Council Member Levin.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Thank you,
8 Chair Cumbo. Chancellor, good to see you
9 again. Thank you very much over here. I'm
10 Mark Weprin, and I'm the parent of three public
11 schools students, so that's where I get my
12 street cred, and with all these teachers I got
13 to fight for that. And a couple of things you
14 said I just wanted to extrapolate on you
15 mentioned about the beacon programs, that you
16 weren't looking to cut, you were looking to
17 add. Is it safe to say then from that that
18 tomorrow's budget won't include cuts to
19 beacons, cuts to OST in the budget? Do we know?

20 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I haven't seen
21 the budget.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Oh, join the
23 club. No [laughter]. Okay, alright. Well I
24 was hoping I could guess on that, because that
25 would be nice. You would free up a lot of time

1
2 on City Hall steps for press conferences if you
3 were not to do that, Mr. Mayor. A couple of
4 other things I was very delighted to hear you
5 talk about keeping parents vested in schools. I
6 always thought that was a mistake on the part
7 of the previous administration, that they never
8 really tried to engage those parents, 'cause so
9 much of really students achieving is making
10 sure those parents are aware of what's going on
11 in that school and in that classroom and giving
12 them real involvement and try to find
13 especially those parents who want to get
14 involved, let them. That's especially true in
15 middle school where I get the feeling many
16 middle schools purposely turn away parents and
17 don't want them to come by. The kids feel that
18 way too sometimes, but I think it's very
19 important that those parents to stay engaged.
20 Just one other thing. You talked about
21 teacher, retraining some of the teachers who
22 have the license, how long is that process and
23 how does that process work to get this all done
24 by September?

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2 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Now, I think in
3 terms of teachers who are now in schools who
4 really don't know which way to go in terms of
5 what specialty they have, we want and encourage
6 many of them to actually get licenses in Early
7 Child. The reason, one of the many reasons I'm
8 meeting with the deans of the colleges, is that
9 for a long time, many of them did away with
10 their early childhood licensing. They didn't
11 think there was a real need for it in the City.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Right.

13 CHANCELLOR FARINA: So to the degree
14 they can up their programs or make sure that
15 people when they apply to them go to the--it's
16 not just Early Child. We need special needs
17 teachers, we need ESL teachers. Those are all
18 shortage areas. So we want the deans to start
19 really pushing for places where people will get
20 jobs rather than people will go to college and
21 not have jobs at the end of it.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Good. And
23 last question, what if by some chance we don't
24 get the tax increase and we have to go to the
25 Governor and try to get money for the pre-k,

1
2 what--is there a plan b just in case or we
3 haven't got to that yet?

4 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Like what Brad
5 says, I don't want to think about that.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Alright. I
7 guess that's the standard line and I've been
8 using it myself on occasion, but I guess we'll
9 wait and see over the next couple of months,
10 but obviously, it's something we have to gear
11 up quickly.

12 CHANCELLOR FARINA: In education you
13 always have a plan b, and if necessary a plan
14 c, but we have to be optimistic otherwise
15 they'll tell us go right to plan b without
16 giving us a chance to do plan a.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: I'm not
18 saying we should. I'm not saying we should.
19 Thank you very much. We'll see you soon,
20 Chancellor. Thank you. You've made us all very
21 happy.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you.
23 I'd just like to acknowledge that Council
24 Member Crowley of the Women's Issues Committee
25

1
2 has joined us, and now we'll hear from Council
3 Member Levin.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you
5 very--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: [interposing]
7 Followed by Council Member John--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Thank you
9 very much, Madam Chair. Thank you very much
10 Chancellor. It's great to see you. Thank you
11 Deputy Mayor Buery. I do want to recognize
12 Karen Alford of the UFT, Vice President of the
13 UFT as well as Raglan Geroge from 1707. One
14 thing I just want to say on the outset, Madam
15 Chancellor, is how excited I am not only that
16 we have an educator as Chancellor, but I'm also
17 excited how many educators we have here in the
18 Council and on the Committee and I think that
19 that's going to produce a really great
20 collaborative working relationship, and I
21 really look forward to working with you. The
22 question that I wanted to ask is with regard to
23 how the plan is going to interface with the
24 Early Learn Program that is under the auspices
25 of ACS and as you are aware that it's had kind

1
2 of a rocky roll out, and we're quite under
3 enrolled in our center-based Early Learn
4 enrollment, where originally we were--It's
5 been--it's lopsided. Originally they had
6 planned for about 43,000 seats. We at around
7 29,000 seats. However, the vouchers are a lot,
8 way over where they are originally intended to
9 be. And so I wanted to see if there's a--if
10 there's kind of a plan in place to how to deal
11 with that? Are the four-year-old Early Learn
12 UPK slots going to be part of the universal
13 UPK, and if so then that's going to, I guess,
14 count towards our overall goal, and if not, are
15 they then going to age down, or is there a
16 discussion as to how that's going to work?

17 SOPHIA PAPPAS: I mentioned earlier
18 that one of the goals of this plan is to make
19 sure that whatever UPK setting a four-year-old
20 is in, they're getting high quality services,
21 and so we think about that in all these
22 different settings including early learn. So
23 right now, the 12,681 four-year-olds who are in
24 Early Learn settings do get some UPK through
25 the DOE.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right.

3 SOPHIA PAPPAS: It's two and a half
4 hours. And as you know, I'm sure, a lot of the
5 Early Learn centers require childcare fees. So
6 one of the pieces of this is that starting in
7 year one, for those six hours and 20 minutes
8 which is how we define full day pre-k, there
9 will be no childcare fees. So that's important-

10 -

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: [interposing]

12 Great.

13 SOPHIA PAPPAS: Because we're talking
14 about free universal pre-k for six hours and 20
15 minutes. Additionally, we will be increasing
16 resources to those programs so that for example
17 Early Learn teachers can attend the same
18 professional development as DOE and that goes
19 for during the school year and over the summer.
20 The other pieces that as we did last year, we
21 have a policy in place where Early Learn
22 programs if they have empty classrooms can
23 apply to the DOE to offer additional full day
24 pre-k. So we expect that some of the proposals
25 coming in will come from those programs.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Great, great,
3 and so there's an opportunity to help the DOE
4 offset some of the space needs by filling up
5 those classrooms that are here to for not being
6 filled.

7 SOPHIA PAPPAS: Right, and many of
8 those programs as you know are in high needs
9 areas, so absolutely ACS Early Learn is part of
10 this plan.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Great, great.
12 Thank you very much. Thank you very much Madam
13 Chancellor.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you
15 Council Member Levin, and now we'll hear from
16 Council Member Johnson.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Chancellor,
18 I'll be quick because I know that other folks
19 have questions and that your time is limited.
20 Thank you for being here today. I know when
21 Council Member Williams asked about the charter
22 school component or potential component you
23 said that, you know, it's not formulated yet.
24 It's still being figured out. I had a question
25 about the Time's story from a few days ago, 210

1
2 million dollars potentially being diverted from
3 charter schools that are receiving subsidies
4 from the City for their rent or other expenses
5 that being directed to UPK. Is that money just
6 sort of a one shot deal? Would it just be this
7 year or would that be something that would come
8 back annually? Is it initial startup cost for
9 UPK?

10 CHANCELLOR FARINA: No, that money
11 was meant for capital improvements or capital
12 building over five year period.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Five years.
14 And Council Member Dromm asked earlier I
15 believe about locations and is there, and I
16 apologize if you answered this, but I need more
17 clarity on it. Is there a plan for where the
18 need is for the seats, even if there's lack of
19 space in those neighborhoods or CEC districts?
20 How does that happen?

21 SOPHIA PAPPAS: So when we think
22 about need, because this is universal pre-k, we
23 look at the difference between kindergarten
24 enrollment and available full day pre-k
25 options. So as you can imagine, in communities

1
2 across the city, there is some need gap. In
3 some areas it's as high as 2,000 and other
4 seats in other areas it may be lower, a few
5 hundred, but we're going to determine how many
6 seats go in each neighborhood based on that
7 gap. And as I mentioned before, we have a
8 public school application process and a CBO
9 process, and as we look at those proposals
10 community by community, we'll determine based
11 on space availability and the quality of the
12 proposals how many seats go to different
13 settings.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you.
15 And lastly, I just want to mention one of the
16 schools in my district, PS51, Principal Nancy
17 Singbach [phonetic] in Hell's Kitchen, a brand
18 new school which is fabulous and the school's
19 doing quite well. I just want to mention that
20 I believe last year they were promised to have
21 three sections of pre-k in that school and for
22 some reason with I guess a co-location
23 temporarily of a middle school in that
24 building, it got cut back to two, which I think
25 really disappointed a lot of parents who were

1
2 counting on that pre-k in the neighborhood, and
3 so I think it's really important, of course,
4 that we enact this so that it doesn't come down
5 to these type of decisions, neighborhood by
6 neighborhood, community by community, that
7 everyone has the availability for their kids
8 throughout the city. And thank you again for
9 being here today.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you,
11 Council Member Johnson. We'll now hear from
12 Council Member Rodriguez.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: First of
14 all, I am so happy that we have a educator
15 being a Chancellor, someone that understands
16 that--someone like myself who taught for 13
17 years in high school. In order for me to get
18 the best student in that grade, I needed to
19 give a human being who really have a top
20 quality education in the early year of their
21 life. So you know, what we talking today in
22 this hearing, this is not about a privilege.
23 This is about doing the right thing. I believe
24 that education is a new civil right movement.
25 I believe that when we look when we ask--if we

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2 did a survey today upper class, and we ask
3 anyone from the upper class and we look at what
4 percentage of the upper class has a child
5 enrolled in a UPK, you can be sure that a top
6 percentage, they have their children in the
7 best UPK program in the community. So, what we
8 need to do right now is to be sure that we also
9 go out there, especially to the one percent of
10 the wealthy community and say if we as a city
11 want to do better, if we want the city want to
12 be a lot stronger upper class and middle, a
13 stronger middle class with more resources to
14 invest and buy stocks in the world history. We
15 need to invest. We need to follow all the study
16 the university in Maryland and all them will
17 say when we invest in education zero to four,
18 we produce a human being that is in a better
19 position to raise their family. But my
20 question is, one, I would like to hear more
21 concrete details on what is--how will you be
22 assessing the pre-k program knowing that we
23 will hire pre-k, knowing that we would not
24 allow a republican from Long Island to decide
25 the future of our children. So knowing that we

1
2 have already been winning this debate because
3 of the Mayor initiative on the universal pre-k,
4 and we're going to be starting a pre-k very
5 soon. How will we be providing a top quality
6 UPK, because I don't want to see just a UPK. I
7 want to see something that our children are
8 using the park resources, the cultural affair
9 resources, that we can say they are already
10 learning. And here you have a Deputy Mayor who
11 also was working with children in society, who
12 they also have a previous experience. I can
13 tell you because two of my nieces, they are
14 starting the Head Start Program that they run
15 in PS8, and they end up being a student at
16 beacon school. I want to see every single
17 child in our city with choices to apply to a
18 special ed school, to beacon school, or any
19 good schooling out there. So, how is that we're
20 going to be doing the--what is your plan to
21 have the best assessment to provide the best
22 early child education on the new UPK that we
23 will have it done? That is a winter topic.

24 SOPHIA PAPPAS: So I think it's
25 important to look at how we evaluate quality,

1
2 sort of soup to nuts. So from the moment a
3 program, whether it's a public school or a CBO
4 program is applying to offer these seats, we
5 are looking at quality in terms of their
6 potential to do all the things that we talked
7 about. So to have a really strong curriculum
8 that covers all areas of development that has
9 ways of looking at how kids are progressing on
10 a regular basis and making sure we're
11 individualizing instruction, and also on the
12 family engagement side. We don't want to miss
13 this opportunity to get families in, so we're
14 looking for concrete plans that schools have
15 and CBO's but also when we go on our site
16 visits, evidence that they're already doing
17 some of these things, because we got to start
18 in September. We need to make sure everyone's
19 ready. From there there's a process of ongoing
20 support and monitoring of quality to make sure
21 our programs are actually meeting those
22 expectations. So we mentioned a few things
23 about teacher development. There's
24 administrator development. We also use tools to
25 look at the equality of the learning

1
2 environment to make sure kids have a diverse
3 range of materials, that their cultures are
4 being respected and that they have plenty of
5 opportunities for interactions with each other,
6 other adults, because we really want to develop
7 their oral language skills, and then--so we
8 look at all those data points together, but we
9 also have in the plan, an intention to invest
10 in research, because we really want to look at
11 city-wide trends. We also want to look, follow
12 kids to see how they do through elementary
13 schools. That information's going to be useful
14 for all of us to see how we're doing, but also
15 for my office to make sure we're improving the
16 program as we go.

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So I just want to
18 thank you. I want to remind my colleagues for
19 our next question that we--the Chancellor's
20 going to have to leave shortly. We only have a
21 few more questions, and I do want to remind
22 them to keep them as short as possible, and so
23 this Chancellor--you got three minutes, no more
24 than three minutes for question and answering.

25

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2 The next one will be Council Member Reynoso and
3 then followed by Council Member Treyger.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: [speaking
5 Spanish]

6 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Gracias.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: I do want
8 to ask--I'm a ESL student. When I was in public
9 education I was educated through the daycare
10 system so I didn't go to pre-k, but it was
11 extremely helpful in my transition and my
12 simulation into, you know, the American culture
13 and the language to have a bilingual teacher,
14 and currently especially in my district where
15 there are Latino students, we have issues
16 regarding the lack of bilingual teachers. I
17 don't know where we're going to find them
18 necessarily, but if we do have them, I hope
19 that they would have been in my district
20 already, but I already see it as an issue and
21 this just could be exasperate, I guess, if we
22 don't find quality bilingual teachers to help
23 with ESL students. I'm just wondering what plan
24 of action do we have to ensure that everyone is
25 well represented.

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CHANCELLOR FARINA: I think that's one of the things that I said is one of the, the things we're asking universities to kind of, you know, get more teachers in. They just can't keep training teachers for fields that we don't need them. What we need teachers in ESL, bilingual, special needs, early childhood. Those are the four areas. Certainly science and math, but those tend to be in the higher grades. The other thing you should know--what District are you from?

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: District 14.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: Okay

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: At CEC District.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: Yeah, no, I'm very familiar with District 14. Used to be under my region when I was a superintendent. One of the things that you're seeing is a trend, is that we're doing a lot more dual language schools, where one of the teachers is actually a bilingual teacher, and the other teacher is a monolingual teacher, and those have become extremely popular. We almost

1
2 tripled the use of dual language and I'd love
3 to see that even become quadrupled, because I
4 really do think that's the wave of the future.
5 In this country, we haven't actually featured
6 enough second language learning, and it's not
7 just for kids who come in not knowing English,
8 it's for kids who only know English, who really
9 in my opinion is a deficit. So how do we make
10 sure that we're teaching two languages to the
11 degree that we can. So I think in District 14
12 there are already some good dual language
13 programs and I hope to see a lot more of them.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Thank you
15 very much and I can't wait to stand beside you
16 in Albany making sure we make this happen.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you. I
18 also want to acknowledge that we've been joined
19 by Council Members Garodnick as well as Council
20 Member Rosenthal, and now for Council Member
21 Treyger.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you,
23 Chair Cumbo and thank you Chair Dromm, Madam
24 Chancellor and Deputy Mayor. I've waited a
25 long time for this. I've been an educator for

1
2 the last eight years at New Utrecht High
3 School.

4 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Oh.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: I also went
6 to Brooklyn College to get my school
7 administration license where we actually--I had
8 a professor Constant [phonetic] who we used
9 your book in our class. Some pretty good
10 writing, Chancellor.

11 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Thank you. I'm
12 not allowed to advertise the book. It's against
13 the conflict of interest.

14 [laughter]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: I--it was
16 definitely useful and thank you. There's so
17 much I'd like to say today, but we'll limit it
18 to definitely to the topic's agenda. One of
19 the--first of all, I want to just thank you and
20 I'll thank the administration for wasting no
21 time getting to work and really trying to
22 embrace the changes that we truly need in our
23 system. And our system has seen quite a bit of
24 changes over the past decade. We went from
25 decentralization to centralization from regions

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2 with Rizz's [phonetic] Liz's [phonetic] bizz's
3 [phonetic] dizz's [phonetic] to districts and
4 so forth, and you know we can go on. And now
5 we're at a juncture where we want to have a
6 UPK, have middle school after school programs,
7 but in the previous administration towards the
8 end of the year, they rushed through a series
9 of co-locations with significant community
10 opposition and particularly in my district,
11 schools that impact my district, Seth Will
12 [phonetic] middle school, Caballero [phonetic],
13 schools that are, you know, near capacity
14 trying to expand their programs. So, what
15 advice would you give principals of these
16 schools that are really trying to, you know,
17 expand the programs, the options for
18 neighborhood kids and also they have after
19 school programs, beacon program at Seth Will,
20 which is run by the Federation of Italian
21 Americans, what advice would you give them when
22 there's so much uncertainty with these, you
23 know, rush co-locations that were approved at
24 the previous administration? And now we want to
25 embrace middle school programs by this current

1 administration. What advice would you give
2 those schools now, Chancellor? Thank you.

3
4 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I think
5 principals are the most unsung heroes in the
6 whole system, and I think for principals, my
7 best advice is stay focused, look at what's
8 going on in the classroom and let the noise all
9 around you kind of become deafening. Don't
10 listen. Stay focused on what you have to do.
11 Caballero is actually a school I'm going to be
12 visiting I think in the next two or three
13 weeks. I have it on my agenda, and when I go to
14 schools, what I really, really taken aback by
15 in spite of all the noise and all the nonsense
16 that we have constituted for them to deal with,
17 most of them when I speak to them say the most
18 important thing is being in my school with my
19 teachers and with my kids, and right now that's
20 the only thing I can say because it's going to
21 take us a while to get on the right path. I
22 heard Tony Shuris [phonetic] on City Hall last
23 night, and he said it's not just about looking
24 to see what's done and looking to see what we
25 want to do, but it's also about changing the

1
2 direction of the train. So I'm going to quote
3 Tony and say that I really believe that we're
4 trying to change the direction of the train.
5 So to the degree that we need some time, just
6 be patient with us.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you,
8 Chancellor.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Just want to say
10 that we have three more questions, Madam
11 Chancellor, and then we'll let you go.

12 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I'm going to be
13 sorry I came to talk to a Resolution.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: No, it does show
15 how much interest there is in this topic,
16 though, and I appreciate our audience also for
17 staying.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: We thank you
19 so much because we know you had to leave 15
20 minutes ago, a half hour ago. So thank you.

21 CHANCELLOR FARINA: As long as they
22 cancel the--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: [interposing]
24 We'll take Council Member Miller followed by
25 Council Member Rose.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Good

afternoon Chairs. Thank you for putting this together. Thank you, Chancellor for coming out and being a part of this so important. I have long been a child care advocate, kind of cut my bones there and I see many of my colleagues, Mable and Raglan and many of the union child care coalition back there. This has been decades coming and we are so glad to be a part of such progressive administration and be a part of this role reversal of administration head disinvested and working families from our young children to our working families of which we will be also holding those hearings later this week. But we don't want to reinvent the wheel today. Some of these folks that I just mentioned have been at this, as I've said, for the past two decades in Early Childhood Education and development. What role would they be playing as we move forward? And as we mentioned earlier about teacher development and expanding their roles outside of DOE and even within what are the plans for these already engaged within the system?

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2 SOPHIA PAPPAS: Just to clarify,
3 Council Member, you mean what role will
4 community based centers play in this?

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: That is
6 correct.

7 SOPHIA PAPPAS: Absolutely. So,
8 currently 60 percent of our pre-k seats are in
9 community based organizations. So we anticipate
10 that through the new seats and the existing
11 seats. We will continue to partner with
12 community based organizations of all kinds
13 across all five boroughs, and you know, my
14 office works very closely with these community
15 based organizations already with everything
16 from onsite coaching to teacher professional
17 development and director development. I mean,
18 we see these providers as essential partners to
19 make sure every kid gets what they need before
20 kindergarten.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: That is
22 great. And as far as the after school program,
23 is there a standard program that will be
24 provided and who will be the vendors providing
25 service?

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2 CHANCELLOR FARINA: There's going to
3 be several pro--actually many providers, but
4 they're all going to have to fit a certain
5 standard and we're going to try to come up with
6 several different models that principals can
7 choose from.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Okay. Thank
9 you so much for coming out. I appreciate it.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you and
11 then we will hear now from Council Member Rose
12 and then Council Member Deutsch and then that
13 will conclude our council questions and then we
14 will be having our presentations. Thank you.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you
16 Chair Cumbo, and to the Chair, Chair Cumbo and
17 Chair Dromm I say congratulations. I think
18 you're doing a wonderful job, and I thought I
19 was going to make a unique statement by
20 applauding the Mayor's choice of having an
21 esteemed educator at the helm, but several of
22 my colleagues have already beat me to that, so
23 I just say ditto.

24 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Never gets tired.
25

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: And so I say
3 ditto. And to Deputy Mayor Beury, you know,
4 I've had the pleasure of seeing some of your
5 efforts in terms of community schools, and I'm
6 looking forward to seeing and working with you
7 to extend those wonderful systems. But the
8 system is stratified with ACS and DYCD
9 designated CBO's providing pre-k services, and
10 this is probably going to sound a lot like
11 Council Member Miller's question, but I was
12 wondering how are you going to identify the
13 CBO's that you will be working with and are you
14 planning to work with, just include all of the
15 existing pre-k programs that pre-k programs
16 that are in existence now or how are you going
17 to identify them? Because right now there's
18 several processes, RFP's and whatever else. So
19 how are you going to identify those programs?

20 SOPHIA PAPPAS: So when we talk about
21 the 73,250 children to be served, some of those
22 children are already in programs, so for those
23 we're talking about keeping those programs as
24 long as quality maintains itself and so forth.
25 For the other--for the new seats and the seats

1
2 to be converted from half day to full day, we
3 have the application process for the public
4 schools that's already under way, and then we
5 have for the CBO's we have an RFP that is due
6 this Friday, and those can be existing CBO's
7 that work with us, whether it's a site that
8 contracts with DOE or ACS. It can also be new
9 providers that haven't worked with us in the
10 past, and so through those processes we will
11 choose which programs provide these additional
12 seats, either through conversions or through
13 creating new seats and even though they're
14 different processes, our expectations in terms
15 of instructional quality, the quality of family
16 engagement are consistent across. And so, yes,
17 we have different processes. One's a formal
18 procurement, one's not a procurement but it is--
19 -but it does entail a written application and a
20 site visit, and we really try to make sure that
21 there are--there is that consistency because at
22 the end of the day, they're all our kids and we
23 want to get them all prepared for school.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: The programs
25 that were, that the city council had to restore

1
2 last time will be given sort of automatic
3 acceptance into the program?

4 SOPHIA PAPPAS: They would ha--
5 sorry.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Go ahead.

7 SOPHIA PAPPAS: So as we did last
8 year, those programs were eligible to apply
9 through our RFP. Some of them did. We want to
10 encourage as many programs to apply as
11 possible, and including those, I can't say
12 right now how many of them will actually apply,
13 but we made sure that the word was out to all
14 different providers. So we sent emails to
15 everyone who has a Department of Health Mental
16 Hygiene child care permit. We also engaged
17 current providers so that they know about this,
18 and so we did a lot to get the word out because
19 we want as many people to apply to be in our
20 pipeline as possible.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: But the current
22 providers will remain in the program?

23 SOPHIA PAPPAS: Yes.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you.
25

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I want to now
3 call on Council Member Deutsch, who is also the
4 non-public school education committee Chair and
5 also has a very strong interest in public
6 schools as well.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Thank you,
8 Chair, and I still want to know why I'm always
9 last. But when I sat down here, Madam
10 Chancellor, at first I thought I was in trouble
11 sitting in front of you, but then I looked to
12 my left and I saw the Deputy Mayor, so I did
13 something right. But I just want to say that
14 for more than half my life I've been working
15 with teenage homelessness and runaways, drug
16 addicts, and children at risk, so I'm also a
17 father of five and a grandfather so I
18 understand what it means to have education at a
19 early age, a UPK, and I fully support the
20 Mayor's proposal on it, and as a Chair of a
21 subcommittee in education on public schools, I
22 want to ensure that the private parochial
23 schools, Catholic schools, Hebrew schools that
24 across the board, across the city of New York
25 in addition to the public schools that every

1
2 child gets accounted for, no one gets
3 disenfranchised on the UPA [phonetic] program
4 and you know, all our children need to have
5 this tool to learn and grow and I want to make
6 sure that this program is beneficial to all our
7 children just because I'm in a subcommittee for
8 non-public schools, I do support public
9 schools. I reach out to the children of public
10 schools and I go to all my older schools in my
11 district and I speak to the parents, the PA
12 meetings and the children. And over the last 20
13 plus years I made it my business to go to parks
14 and to speak to teenagers and to see what they
15 do during the summer months, and I believe that
16 occupying yourself during the summer will help
17 enhance the education during the school year
18 because it keeps their minds busy, and the same
19 I believe when we have UPK that it'll make our
20 children learn better and especially on Woman's
21 Issues, although I'm not a Woman's Issues yet,
22 but I do believe that it is a Woman's Issues
23 because the hard working mothers who go to
24 school, who go to work and have to take their
25 children to school and who don't have a place

1
2 to have the kids go during the early years, I
3 think it's very important. So, and in addition
4 to after school programs, also should be across
5 the boards for all children in the city of New
6 York, and the bottom line is that the success
7 of our children is a mark of our great city. So
8 that is a comment and I look forward to working
9 with you Madam Chancellor, and on the issues of
10 UPK throughout the boards and throughout the
11 city of New York, and hopefully throughout the
12 state. Thank you.

13 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Thank you.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you.

15 And this concludes this portion of testimony. I
16 thank Council Member Deutsch. There is still
17 room on the Women's Issues Committee if you're
18 interested in--

19 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH:

20 [interposing] Thank you.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: And I will now
22 turn it over to my Co-Chair, Council Member
23 Dromm. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Just to also say
25 thank you to you, Chancellor Farina for your

1
2 attendance here today and also for your tone
3 and for your openness with this committee. I
4 deeply appreciate that that's a big change from
5 the past and I look forward to working with you
6 on these issues.

7 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Listen, it's only
8 together that we can get this done, and what I
9 love about New York is that here people don't
10 worry about just their child, they worry about
11 their neighbor's child, and that's the focus
12 that we have to do get this done.

13 [applause]

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Abso--

15 [applause]

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Now, I would like
17 to call up our Deputy Mayor, Richard Buery, who
18 has been waiting so patiently and who we are
19 all so grateful for having here with us today.
20 Okay, gentleman, I'd like to swear you both in,
21 if you'd just raise your right hand. Do you
22 swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole
23 truth, and nothing but the truth in your
24 testimony before this committee and to respond
25 honestly to Council Member questions?

1 RICHARD BUERY: I do.

2 JOSH WALLACK: I do.

3 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. And
4 Deputy Mayor, if you'd like to start that would
5 be great.
6

7 RICHARD BUERY: Absolutely. Good
8 afternoon.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Good
10 afternoon.

11 RICHARD BUERY: My name is Richard
12 Buery. I am the president and CEO of the
13 Children's Aid Society, and of March 1st I will
14 be the Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy
15 Initiatives. Today, I want to speak to you
16 from those two perspectives. Before I begin my
17 testimony I would like to thank the Speaker,
18 the Public Advocate, Education Chair Daniel
19 Dromm and members of the Committee on
20 Education, Women's Issues Chair Cumbo, and
21 members of the Committee on Women's Issues for
22 the opportunity to testify today about this
23 important and critical issue for children and
24 families in New York City. I also want to
25 introduce my colleague Josh Wallack, who is the

1
2 Children's Aid Society's Vice President for
3 Early Childhood programs and is a member of the
4 working group, the UPK working group that
5 helped develop the Ready to Launch Plan. And I
6 also want to thank the Chancellor for her
7 leadership and for hopefully wearing you all
8 out with questions. So, hopefully all the
9 questions are exhausted. As President and CEO
10 of the Children's Aid Society I have worked
11 over the last four years to help build a high
12 quality Early Childhood Programs, including
13 pre-kindergarten services and high quality
14 after school programs as critical parts of the
15 pathway to college for children living in
16 poverty. Children's Aid Society is a pioneer
17 in Early Childhood programs. In 1881 we opened
18 the first nursery in the country for infants
19 and children when women joined the workforce
20 during the Industrial Revolution and we
21 operated some of the first Head Start and early
22 Head Start programs in the City. Currently we
23 serve children in four high needs
24 neighborhoods, Harlem, Washington Heights, the
25 South Bronx and Northern Staten Island, managed

1
2 by a team of 200 capable and highly trained
3 staff in our early childhood division. Out of
4 160 year old anti-poverty, multi-service
5 organization serving thousands of children and
6 families each year, we view Early Childhood and
7 after school programs as essential components
8 of our cradle through college strategy that we
9 call "Keeping the Promise." As incoming Deputy
10 Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives, I will
11 work with agencies across the administration to
12 implement Mayor de Blasio's ambitious vision to
13 provide free full day high quality pre-
14 kindergarten programs to each and every four
15 year old in after school--each and every four
16 year old, and after school program for every
17 middle school youth whose family choose to take
18 advantage of it so New York's children enter
19 elementary school ready to succeed and are
20 supported when they get to middle school. A
21 critical part of this is advocating at the
22 state level for the City's ability to raise the
23 resources for this plan through a personal
24 income tax surcharge. So I want to take my time
25 with you today to focus on the pre-k proposal

1
2 and talk about how the Mayor's plan can be
3 implemented based on the valuable lessons we've
4 learned at the Children's Aid Society over the
5 past decades as well as information gathered
6 from the best programs across the city and the
7 country. These ideas were also informed by the
8 contributions of the universal pre-kindergarten
9 implementation working group, along with the
10 many other experts that the Mayor has assembled
11 over the past months to shape this plan. I
12 think the city has arrived at a plan that I
13 believe will put us on the path to a high
14 quality universal program and will have a
15 transformative impact on the life of our city.
16 Early Childhood program at Children's Aid have
17 five critical features. They include
18 exceptional certified lead teachers in every
19 classroom, research based curriculum, extensive
20 teacher support, family support and authentic
21 assessment. I want to talk about each of these
22 in turn. So exceptional certifiably teachers:
23 At Children's Aid we ensure that each classroom
24 is led by a teacher with certification in birth
25 through second grade education. Mayor de

1
2 Blasio has made the same commitment with his
3 Ready to Launch Plan. We must also invest in
4 helping talented assistant teachers get
5 certified as quickly as possible, so that we
6 can build a type line of talent moving forward.
7 Second, research based curriculum: At
8 Children's Aid we are also adopting a
9 curriculum called "Tool of the Mind" which not
10 only produces gains on the standard measures of
11 cognitive, social, emotional and physical
12 development, but it also develops executive
13 function, which is essentially the child's
14 ability to plan ahead, to hold a series of
15 tasks and memory and to resist distractions.
16 Research has shown that these critical
17 foundational skills for schools are also the
18 keys to lifelong success. The Department of
19 Education, ACS, already ensure that programed
20 youth curricula to advance a stage of pre-k
21 Common Core learning standard to advance a
22 state pre-k Common Core learning standards and
23 are developmentally appropriate. Mayor de
24 Blasio has re-affirmed this commitment in his
25 plan. The third is teacher support. Having a

1 research based curriculum and excellent
2 teachers is only a piece of the puzzle.
3 Teachers need ongoing support and professional
4 development to implement the curriculum
5 reliably across multiple classrooms and sites
6 and to individualize it to the educational
7 needs of students. To do that, at Children's
8 Aid, we have educational directors that meet
9 once a week with teachers to help them target
10 support to teachers. I'm sorry, help them
11 target support to students. We also provide the
12 equivalent of one day a month of professional
13 development and have invested in training from
14 the creators of "Tools of the Mind" to ensure
15 that we are implementing the curriculum
16 faithfully. Recent research show that this
17 coaching and support produces high quality
18 programs and significant positive impacts on
19 children. Mayor de Blasio has taken the lesson
20 of this research and incorporated them into his
21 plan, investing in coaches, professional
22 development and other supports for teachers so
23 they can continue to grow and develop
24 professionally. Family support: Of course,
25

1 what happened in the classroom is only one part
2 of a child's life and only one part of a
3 successful Early Childhood program. In the high
4 needs communities where Children's Aid Society
5 works, we hire family workers from the
6 community to help support families as the
7 primary educator to their children, 'cause we
8 know first and foremost that a parent is the
9 first and most important teacher that our
10 children will ever have. The principle role of
11 the family worker is to assist families with
12 everything from housing to job training, to
13 obtaining food stamps and getting a library
14 card. But even more than that, family workers
15 help involve families in shaping the program
16 itself. Each of Early Childhood programs have a
17 parent council that reviews our budget, a dash
18 board their program results and give our
19 directors feedback and suggestions on how to
20 make the program better. We also ensure that
21 each classroom has a bilingual staff member to
22 ensure maximum communication with our immigrant
23 families. Ready to Launch expands on some of
24 these approaches by investing additional social
25

1
2 workers in programs and providing additional
3 support to programs in high need neighborhoods
4 to ensure that each child can succeed. Finally,
5 authentic assessment: Once we have these
6 pieces in place, we should have a high quality
7 pre-kindergarten system, but how will we know
8 for sure? It is critical that we use research
9 based reliable ways to measure how well our
10 children are developing, our teachers are
11 teaching and our programs are running. We are
12 making a significant public investment and New
13 York City will and should demand excellence. At
14 Children's Aid we use weekly teacher
15 observations, record in the database and
16 tracked over time to accomplish this. Program
17 staff not only observe cognitive development
18 but social skills and physical development,
19 measure that reflect our holistic approach to
20 child development. At the same time, teachers
21 use those observations to individualize
22 instruction for children. The teachers can
23 focus on the particular needs and particular
24 strengths of each and every child. This
25 information is also shared with our families so

1 that they understand how their child is
2 progressing or what additional supports the
3 child might need. It is these observations,
4 not tests, that we use to measure progress and
5 program effectiveness. Under the Ready to
6 Launch Plan, city agencies will use similar
7 tools and Mayor de Blasio is committed to
8 making investments to ensure that every program
9 has access to them. So in conclusion, looking
10 forward, there is one critical ingredient
11 needed to build a high quality program with
12 these program components. The steady guaranteed
13 reliable revenue stream that the Mayor's
14 proposed personal income tax surcharge would
15 provide. They've guaranteed revenue would
16 enable programs to sign leases for high quality
17 space, attract the best teachers who would
18 otherwise question the stability of a career
19 entering the Early Childhood system in New
20 York. It would allow programs in the city to
21 invest in the best curriculum and training over
22 time to bring teachers up to speed and would
23 put in place the systems to tell whether our
24 programs are working and whether teachers have
25

1
2 what they need to succeed and whether children
3 are benefitting from the program. It is an
4 opportune time when we have achieved a
5 remarkable consensus among the Mayor, the
6 Governor and the President, all of whom agree
7 along with so many others on this Council, in
8 this room, and in this city, that Early
9 Childhood is not only important but it is a
10 critical priority for the education and
11 economic future of our city. Failure is simply
12 not an option. I personally look forward to
13 working with each of you to make this program a
14 reality and to ensure that New York City's pre-
15 k and after school programs keep its promise to
16 New Yorkers. We have a responsibility to
17 ensure that each and every child had a fair
18 shot, not just a chance to succeed and thrive
19 and realize his or her full potential. Thank
20 you.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you so
22 much, Deputy Mayor. It's an honor to have you
23 here today. I just want to say that I
24 appreciate very much in your assessment from
25 your previous experiences. Weekly evaluations

1
2 are quite timely, quite powerful, and
3 unprecedented and to see that level of
4 evaluation will be quite exciting moving
5 forward. I'm going to relinquish my questions
6 in the interest of time to those that are here
7 to testify. To my Co-Chair Council Member
8 Dromm.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. I just
10 want to say thank you also to the Deputy Mayor
11 for being here with us today. I don't know if
12 you would know, but do you have an idea how
13 parents would apply for the pre-k? Is that
14 something that you've been talking about yet in
15 your role as Deputy Mayor, or soon to be Deputy
16 Mayor?

17 RICHARD BUERY: I'm going to let
18 Josh--so I should say for a full disclosure, I
19 do not actually work for the city yet.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Right.

21 RICHARD BUERY: I've got two more
22 weeks. I am going to let my colleagues Josh
23 answer the question.

24 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Sure.
25

1
2 JOSH WALLACK: I can tell you about
3 the discussions that we had in the pre-k
4 working group and I think that the
5 administration's still working through the
6 details, but the idea is that it should be very
7 similar to the enrollment process that's
8 happened for universal pre-k and for
9 kindergarten itself, and so it should be a
10 simple streamlined enrollment process.

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: 'Cause you know
12 there are many complaints regarding
13 Kindergarten Connect, and that's something that
14 I think we should probably look at even at a
15 future hearing, the implementation, etcetera.
16 So that's kind of why I was asking that, to
17 just caution you not to make the same mistakes
18 that were made with--

19 JOSH WALLACK: [interposing] Thank
20 you for that.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: the
22 implementation of that. Thank you. I also want
23 to ask, what is the administration's stand on
24 including charter schools as sites for these
25 preschool programs?

1
2 RICHARD BUERY: Well, I think as the
3 Chancellor answered, it's something that we're
4 still working through and the City's still
5 working through. The Mayor had expressed
6 previously his openness to the role that
7 charter schools could potentially play in this
8 system, and I think even today as we move
9 forward as organizations there is a rule that
10 charter organizations could play in the
11 delivery of pre-k. The Children's Aid Society
12 operates a school. We operate Early Childhood
13 program. We operate after school programs, and
14 so that possibility exists currently, and I
15 think moving forward I know the city is
16 committed to--with a tax such as this, we
17 really want to be open to every partner, every
18 ally who cares about the system and we're going
19 to continue to look at ways that charter
20 schools and others can play a role in making
21 sure that every four-year-old has access to the
22 best possible pre-kindergarten education.

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So is this
24 Children's Aid Society operate a charter school
25 or?

1
2 RICHARD BUERY: We do.

3 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Okay. I'm
4 going to turn it over to Council Member Debbie
5 Rose and follow by Council Member Barron.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Hi, Deputy
7 Mayor. I just wanted to follow up on my
8 question with the Chancellor that was in regard
9 to how you're going to select the other
10 qualified day care provider centers with, you
11 know, to participate in the program. So we
12 have qualified day care centers already that
13 participate in pre-k. Why are they being
14 subjected to an RFP? Why are they not
15 automatically just being rolled into the DOE
16 program?

17 RICHARD BUERY: So, I think it's a
18 little premature to talk about a specific
19 procurement process, because the procurement
20 process has not been developed yet and so I
21 want to be careful there. But I would say that
22 it's very important that the city have an
23 organized process of identifying and evaluating
24 those who can provide a high quality service in
25 the way we've described, and so I think the

1
2 commitment is to making sure that we have a
3 process that allows us to evaluate everyone who
4 hopes to provide universal pre-k services. And
5 we're committed to making sure that that
6 process allows to evaluate what the programs
7 are doing now so that we can ensure that they
8 are able to deliver services at the level of
9 which we've committed to the city that our
10 providers will do.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: And so this RFP
12 is due on Friday. Were all of these other
13 programs made aware that they have to provide--
14 they now have to go through the RFP process?
15 And I'm particularly concerned about the
16 programs that the City Council restored last
17 years budget.

18 JOSH WALLACK: I can--I think that
19 those questions are probably best, you know,
20 referred back to the Department of Education,
21 but my understanding is that as I think Sophia
22 Pappas said, there was very wide outreach about
23 the request for proposal to all of the
24 different programs that offer early childhood
25 education throughout the system, and I think

1
2 there was--there were a lot of efforts to
3 encourage as many programs as possible to apply
4 because of the ambitious goal that we've set,
5 and I think that the idea at least from the
6 working group was to engage as many programs as
7 possible and try to lay out for them the fact
8 that these new opportunities were coming online
9 and that there would be resources to help build
10 quality over time. Even for high quality
11 programs we can always do more and better and
12 we want to build on that quality throughout the
13 system, throughout the entire system as we
14 scale up. And so I think that message got out,
15 but there may be specific concerns you have
16 that the administration should address.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: And if in fact
18 they did not get the message, is there the
19 opportunity where this might, the deadline
20 might be extended, because I've gotten some
21 feedback that they've--

22 RICHARD BUERY: [interposing] I--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: [interposing]
24 did not all understand or receive that message.

25

1
2 RICHARD BUERY: Well, I think it's
3 unlikely. I mean, there was already an
4 extension. There was already an extension up
5 until the February 14th for CBO's to reply. I
6 think we would like to hear more about where
7 that communication break down--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: [interposing]
9 Great.

10 RICHARD BUERY: break down happened,
11 so I would love to hear more. The intention of
12 the city was to cast a wide net, because again,
13 in building the system and increasing the
14 capacity of the system in this way, the city
15 really wanted to hear from community based
16 organizations what were their capacity to step
17 up and do more to do better. So, I can be
18 certain that the intention was to cast a very
19 broad net with a loud megaphone to get as many
20 people to stand up and to say here we are,
21 here's what we can do and here's what we need
22 to do it. So I know that we want to hear that
23 that did not happen properly. I know we'd love
24 to understand more of those details.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Great. I'd be
3 glad to share that information.

4 RICHARD BUERY: Thank you.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I just want to
7 add very quickly, perhaps in the future as a
8 new Council Member and maybe this happened and
9 I was not aware of that, the 51 different
10 council members could be charged with the
11 responsibility of disseminating that
12 information to our constituents so that we
13 reach a wider net, and I also have another idea
14 that I'd like to add that I'm hearing quite a
15 bit about the RFP process, and I'd like--and
16 maybe this exists and it's in my ignorance, but
17 that there's something called like RFP.NYC
18 where RFP's across the board from education to
19 construction to not for profits to all of these
20 different opportunities could have one landing
21 place so that people could be empowered to
22 access this information on a regular basis
23 that's updated with deadlines.

24 RICHARD BUERY: And the city had been
25 in critical among the work. I will say to

1
2 create streamline systems, coherent systems for
3 RFP's and certainly can talk to you more about
4 what that system looks like. But I do agree
5 with the idea that the Council can and
6 absolutely should play a very important role in
7 getting information out to providers and
8 families and just from my perspective as
9 someone who has run community based
10 organizations for most of life here in New York
11 City, I'm really committed to working with you
12 and all the council to make sure that we're
13 getting the word out because you're absolutely
14 right. It's a powerful place to bring people
15 together to get information out. I look forward
16 to working with you on that and hearing your
17 ideas about how to do so effectively.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you very
19 much, and now we'll hear from Council Member
20 Barron.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you,
22 Madam Chair. Congratulations, look forward to
23 working with you. My question is similar to
24 that of my colleague Rose and also alluding to
25 what Council Member Levin had said. When the

1
2 Early Learn was rolled out there was much
3 criticism and even some illegality has been
4 charged in how those programs and how those
5 proposals were rated. There were some that
6 received a substantial rating and they were
7 told go back, rate it again, and the score
8 should not be this high. What is the process
9 that you're using in terms of scoring these
10 proposal? Who is overseeing the evaluation of
11 proposal? How are we going to be assured that
12 this is an objective process that is above
13 criticism, that it can be open to scrutiny, and
14 that people will know this was done fairly? I
15 know this was under previous administration
16 that these allegations were raised, but it's a
17 very serious issue. There was one program that
18 is nationally acclaimed that was particularly
19 targeted and wound up with a score which was
20 about 20 points lower than the initial scoring.
21 So, what is it that's going to be done?

22 JOSH WALLACK: I think that future
23 Deputy Mayor Buery and I are both at a bit of a
24 disadvantage, again, not being part of the
25 Administration and not being privy to all of

1
2 the details of a live procurement. But again,
3 I think what we're able to learn as part of the
4 working group that worked closely with the
5 administration is that just a few facts that I
6 can offer. One is that the Department of
7 Education will be--is running the procurement
8 that's currently live and that is due next
9 week. They will be evaluating those proposals,
10 and I would just say that I think the charge as
11 they laid out is to try to find the highest
12 quality programs that can ramp up according to
13 the ambitious timeline that's been laid out by
14 this Administration and the Mayor in the
15 neighborhoods that have high need for seats,
16 but as to the mechanics of how that evaluation
17 occurs and who specifically does it and how
18 those are rated, we just don't have access to
19 that information from the Children's Aid
20 Society.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I think
22 that's a critical point and if we want to have
23 support and collaborative spirit going forward,
24 people need to know that it's being done
25 objectively. And there might also be some

1
2 outreach to some of those programs that were
3 defunded. I don't know what kind. I heard you
4 say you cast a wide net, but I think that those
5 in particular that have a history of having
6 been successful should be solicited to submit.

7 JOSH WALLACK: Thank you.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you
9 Council Member Barron. And now we'll hear from
10 Council Member Miller.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you so
12 much for coming out today to participate and I
13 look forward to working with you in the near
14 future in your new endeavors. I just want to
15 piggy back on what was said by Council Member
16 Barron and Council Member Rose. There is a
17 concern about whether or not we are reinventing
18 the wheel here and whether or not the RFP
19 process and certainly the Chancellor, we're not
20 saying that in any shape, form, or fashion was
21 disingenuous in her testimony, but the question
22 was asked and in my ignorance about the CBO's
23 and the role that they would play. Let me
24 quantify that in saying that those individuals
25 that we had spoken about that had been on the

1
2 ground doing this critical work over the last
3 20 years and doing it correctly, whether or not
4 they would be a part of the process and those
5 are the same ones that we were talking about
6 that we restored in the budget. Those are the
7 subsidized centers. Those are the centers that
8 policy and curriculum were set and guidelines
9 were set up around the council itself, so we
10 actually know that they work and they do the
11 job and they represent a significant portion of
12 unionized workers as well. So that's also when
13 we start talking about how we impact working
14 families. That's really significant as well. So
15 the Chancellor also mentioned that there would
16 be a sit down evaluation. Sit down evaluation
17 certainly is different from an RFP. So if in
18 fact that--if in fact the person I did not--is
19 not timely with the RFP and/or is somehow, you
20 know, the technical aspects are of whether the
21 paperwork and RFP is not up to snuff at that
22 moment they are disqualified ill regardless of
23 what their body of work says that they are
24 capable and qualified of doing. So, in the past
25 it was an issue that it was more of a contract

1
2 of guidelines and a negation around that. Is
3 there a possibility that we will see something
4 like that in the future, and are these people
5 who have been committed to providing this
6 service under these guidelines for so many
7 years? You know, what kind of preference will
8 they have in this process?

9 RICHARD BUERY: So, I mean, again, I
10 want to say that I'm not in a position to speak
11 with detail about the procurement process but
12 certainly hear your feedback and will take it
13 back. What I will say is a few things. One,
14 that it would be impossible to make good on the
15 promise of Ready to Launch without a
16 significant role of community based
17 organizations. This work can't happen without
18 strong network of community based organizations
19 in our city. So what I can promise you that
20 there'll be a significant role for community
21 based organizations in the execution of
22 universal pre-kindergarten. So that's one.
23 Second, if I think I understand the heart of
24 your question, it's important that we have an
25 evaluative process that respects the community

1
2 ties, the cultural ties, the expertise, the
3 community grounding of providers, and there's
4 an organization. You know, again, leading an
5 organization that's 161 years old where in many
6 of the communities we work in, like northern
7 Staten Island we've been in for 100 years. I
8 mean, we understand the power and value that
9 being grounded in the community delivers, and
10 what it means for an organization's ability to
11 support families comprehensively and
12 holistically. So what I will be committed to,
13 my promise to you that we want to have a
14 process that respects the roles of community
15 based organizations, not just because we need
16 community based organizations that deliver the
17 work, but because community based organizations
18 are uniquely qualified to understand the
19 dynamics in communities and needs of families,
20 the relationships with hospital [phonetic] and
21 other institutions that are going to be
22 critical to giving families what we need and
23 what they need. So if I understand the heart of
24 your question, I can commit to making sure that
25 we have developed a process that does that, but

1
2 unfortunately I can't speak to the procurement
3 process that's currently developed.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Well, just a
5 very brief follow-up is--and that is just a
6 commitment to kind of fill in some of these
7 loop holes that may have--that we may have
8 incurred that may have left some of these
9 organizations and some of these community
10 groups on the outside. So we want to make sure
11 that we have an opportunity to speak to their
12 needs as well, because they have been the ones
13 over the past few decades along with Children's
14 Aid that has done this critical work. Thank
15 you.

16 RICHARD BUERY: Thank you.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you
18 Council Member Miller. We'll now hear from
19 Council Member Treyger and that'll be the last
20 question.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you,
22 Chair Cumbo, and congratulations incoming
23 Deputy Mayor. We definitely welcome you and
24 look forward to working with you. I think as a
25 city we are definitely united and we're

1
2 embracing this initiative to have universal
3 pre-k. As a teacher, I fully understand and
4 appreciate the value of this. The Mayor has
5 made comments about that we're talking about
6 expanding by the thousands of number of kids
7 that would be eligible, you know, eligible
8 children would be in these classes. I'm
9 assuming that--I wanted to get clarity from
10 administration as far as there have been
11 freezes as far as hiring new teachers. Are we
12 talking about lifting the freeze to hire
13 additional teachers, to hire additional
14 guidance counselors and support staff to
15 accommodate the needs of adding thousands of
16 children to our schools and to our spaces?

17 RICHARD BUERY: You talking about
18 for pre-kindergarten?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Right.

20 RICHARD BUERY: Yeah, so in order to
21 deliver this plan we're talking about hiring
22 teachers, family workers, guidance counselors.
23 We really developed a model that would allow
24 for comprehensive holistic high quality support
25 to children and families and we do that by

1
2 creating the resources for UPK programs or the
3 CBO schools to hire staff to do so. We're
4 talking about a significant increase both by
5 creating new slots, by turning half day slots
6 into full day slots, and by increasing the
7 capacity of all programs to deliver better
8 services for children. This is a major
9 expansion and one that I'm confident that the
10 city will be able to deliver, high quality on
11 time.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Alright. And
13 to be clear, these are teachers and these are
14 staff members who are licensed by the state DOE
15 is that correct, or this is beyond that? I
16 mean--yeah.

17 RICHARD BUERY: So--

18 JOSH WALLACK: You got it. Go ahead.

19 RICHARD BUERY: So it--so there's an
20 expansion both by community based organizations
21 and by schools and the idea is to be able to
22 hire quality certified Early Childhood
23 educators and all of those contexts and that's
24 central to the commitment of the Ready to
25 Launch Plan.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: And the
3 second part is that I know space is a challenge
4 and an issue of finding. In the previous
5 administration they sometimes were to place
6 elementary schools in high school space, and
7 just to be mindful that that doesn't always--
8 that doesn't work. Just to be mindful of the
9 fact that we need to make sure that we're
10 placing these kids in age appropriate buildings
11 where they feel safe and the parents feel safe
12 and communities feel safe. Just wanted to
13 share that comment with you.

14 RICHARD BUERY: Of course and indeed,
15 and frankly there are regulations which limit
16 where you can put pre-k spaces, you know,
17 beyond what makes sense educationally and there
18 are limits to what you can do legally. Again,
19 one of the reasons why we're casting a wide
20 net, not just in schools and community based
21 organizations, but libraries. We need to look
22 broadly around the city to see what spaces can
23 be appropriately adapted to deliver a UPK for
24 the children who need it.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: We've just
3 been joined by Council Member David Greenfield,
4 and we are concluding the questions portion of
5 today. I want to thank everyone who has
6 remained because your testimony as well as your
7 questions are very important for the public
8 record as well as those who are watching this
9 at home. So we thank you very much for staying
10 tuned and we very much look forward to your
11 testimony and I'll now turn it over to Council
12 Member Dromm, my Co-Chair. And I thank you both
13 for your time and your energy and your vast
14 experiences which are going to make our city so
15 much more of a dynamic, inclusive, and
16 equitable place. Thank you.

17 RICHARD BUERY: Well thank you for
18 your time and for your leadership. We
19 appreciate it. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you also
21 from here. I'd like to bring up our next panel,
22 Hirokazu Yoshikawa from New York University,
23 and Steven Dow from Tulsa and I'd like to say
24 for everybody's who's here and who's waiting to
25 testify, we're going to keep everybody who's

1
2 testifying to their three minute limit moving
3 forward because we do have a lot of people who
4 have signed up to give testimony today. So I
5 want to mention that for the record we have
6 received testimony from Literacy Inc., from the
7 Coalition for Asian-American Children and
8 Families, from United Neighborhood Houses and
9 from the Doctor's Union Council, SEIU, and that
10 will be put into the record formally. All in
11 support, by the way, of this Reso. I'm going
12 to ask Mr. Dow and Mr. Yoshikawa, if you would
13 raise your right hand please and do you swear
14 or affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth
15 and nothing but the truth in your testimony
16 before this committee and to respond honestly
17 to Council Member questions?

18 HIROKAZU YOSHIKAWA: Yes, I do.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. And
20 whomever would like to begin may start.

21 HIROKAZU YOSHIKAWA: Sure. Council
22 Members Dromm and Cumbo and members of the
23 Committee on Women's Issues and Education,
24 thank you very much for the opportunity to
25 appear before the New York City Council today.

1
2 My name is Hirokazu Yoshikawa and I teach in
3 the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and
4 Human Development at NYU. I've conducted
5 research for over 20 years on Early Childhood
6 programs and policies. It's exciting that New
7 York City is leading in the effort in this
8 country to bring high quality preschool to all
9 young children. The goal of my testimony today
10 is to tell you what the science base on
11 preschool evaluations shows that might be
12 useful as plans for New York City's universal
13 preschool program moved forward. I'm going to
14 present evidence from two sources, a meta-
15 analysis of 84 rigorous studies of preschool
16 education going back to 1960 and a review
17 called "Investing in our Future" where we focus
18 on the most recent 15 years of research, which
19 have particular relevance for the issue of
20 quality. "Investing in Our Future" was written
21 by myself and nine leading experts in preschool
22 research with input from 20 additional experts.
23 So essentially what you have before you in the
24 full testimony is that report called "Investing
25 in Our Future, the Evidence Base Preschool

1
2 Education." It was sponsored by the Foundation
3 for Child Development and the Society for
4 Research and Child Development. So what is this
5 exciting new wave of evidence say? It shows a
6 few things we didn't know until recently about
7 how to invest in children during the years when
8 the developing brain is most sensitive to the
9 quality of the environment. First, high
10 quality preschool has shown evidence of
11 substantial impacts on children's learning when
12 implemented at scale, across entire cities.
13 Second, quality preschool can produce positive
14 returns on investment at scale, not just in
15 small demonstration programs. Third, the most
16 effective way to improve quality is to combine
17 evidence based curricula with weekly or
18 biweekly coaching in the classroom as intended,
19 I believe, by this proposal in New York. And
20 finally, benefits extend to moderate income
21 children as well as the poor. So I'm just going
22 to tell you a tiny bit more about each of these
23 four points. First we know from the meta-
24 analysis of 84 studies that overall preschool
25 education increases children's learning, but

1
2 these studies have been mostly in small scale
3 circumstances, and we now have evidence that
4 large scale preschool programs not just small
5 can have substantial positive effects on
6 children. Children and studies on Tulsa and
7 Boston's universal pre-k program showed between
8 a half and a full year of additional growth in
9 reading and math above and beyond comparison
10 group children, and what's particularly
11 impressive about that is that most of the
12 comparison group children were actually in
13 other centers and preschool programs. So these
14 are large effects above and beyond other
15 preschool programs. So there's something that
16 Tulsa and Boston did that we can now look at as
17 high quality. And certainly studies on some
18 state programs like New Jersey are also showing
19 important benefits for kids. Second, we have
20 new evidence on the returns to investment of
21 quality preschool. So we've known for a long
22 time that the Perry Preschool Program
23 implemented in the 1960's saved seven dollars
24 per dollars spent and increased high school
25 graduation and earnings and reductions in

1
2 crime. What's new is a recent study on the
3 city-wide Tulsa Pre-Kindergarten Program by the
4 economist Timothy Bartik. He showed that the
5 Tulsa program saved over three dollars per
6 every dollar invested and that's based on
7 projected adult earnings benefits alone, not
8 other benefits like potentially reduced crime.
9 Preliminary data from Boston suggests a similar
10 pattern of return on investment. So how can we
11 actually implement high quality preschool at
12 scale, an exciting set of over a dozen rigorous
13 controlled studies shows that the combination
14 of two important elements, curricula focused on
15 specific aspects of learning and weekly or bi-
16 weekly coaching and mentoring in the classroom
17 can substantially improve the kind of quality
18 that matters most, and that is the quality of
19 instruction provided by teachers and the
20 responsiveness of their interactions.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I hate to be
22 the time keeper here and to be the bad guy, but
23 I will in the interest of time have to--

24 HIROKAZU YOSHIKAWA: [interposing]
25 Sure.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: ask you to
3 conclude because we would like to hear from all
4 the presenters and we have limited time here,
5 but I do appreciate your testimony thus far.
6 Thank you.

7 HIROKAZU YOSHIKAWA: So just one
8 more minute? Yeah. So this combination of
9 curriculum and coaching has been proven in
10 studies not only in public pre-k systems but
11 also in Head Start and in both center and home
12 based child care. So we now know how to improve
13 quality in a variety of delivery systems. The
14 key is that there are about 12 evidence based
15 curricula that focus on specific skills like
16 language, literacy, math or socio/emotional
17 development and we encourage this menu of
18 choices of rigorous evidence based choices as
19 being a foundation for quality in addition to
20 the coaching and onsite professional
21 development. And the final point is that
22 quality preschool does reduce specific kinds of
23 gaps and disparities in early learning. So for
24 example, all groups benefitted in Tulsa and
25 Boston, middle class children, moderate income

1
2 children as well as children from disadvantaged
3 backgrounds, but the kids from disadvantaged
4 backgrounds simply benefitted more, and that's
5 why these programs actually reduce disparities.
6 For example, the Boston Universal Preschool
7 Program completely wiped out the Latino/white
8 school readiness gap in reading and math skills
9 and substantially reduced black/white income
10 based and language based gaps. It also
11 improved children's executive function and
12 self-regulation skills.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I appreciate
14 very much your national analysis on that to
15 give us some other models to look at in other
16 cities that have been successful. Thank you
17 very much. Yes, sir?

18 STEVEN DOW: Good afternoon. My
19 name is Steven Dow. I am the Executive Director
20 of Community Action Project of Tulsa, a
21 community based organization that was involved
22 in establishing pre-k as state policy in
23 Oklahoma back in 1998, and has been involved in
24 implementing it across the city of Tulsa with
25 three major school district partners since

1
2 then. I have traveled nearly 1,500 miles to
3 attend today's hearing because I believe that
4 Mayor de Blasio's initiative that you're
5 discussing is not only important to the young
6 children and families in New York City, but it
7 is also critical importance to national Early
8 Childhood Education policy. Nearly two decades
9 ago cognizant of the unfortunate fact that the
10 achievement gap that is manifest at the time of
11 kindergarten entry only widens as children get
12 older despite decades of K-12 common education
13 reform efforts. We in Oklahoma set out to
14 develop a different kind of educational reform
15 strategy, one that focused on narrowing if not
16 trying to eliminate entirely the achievement
17 gap before children entered kindergarten. After
18 all, we are the Sooner state. Over the course
19 of the last 15 years, we in Tula along with
20 many others around the country as Professor
21 Yoshikawa's just described have learned many
22 lessons about what to do, what not to do, what
23 some of the major stumbling blocks are as well
24 as what some of the major benefits are of
25 universal pre-k. New York City has the

1
2 opportunity to avail itself of all of this
3 accumulated knowledge of implementation as you
4 scale pre-k across the city and realize the
5 ambitious yet attainable goal and vision of
6 high quality pre-school for all young children
7 in New York City. After initial set of pilot
8 efforts, Oklahoma established pre-k in state
9 legislation in 1998 imbedded in the state aid
10 funding formula. When we did so, we
11 incorporated several important factors that
12 have contributed to its success as we have
13 operated its scale. First and foremost by
14 embedding four-year-old pre-k as part of the
15 education state aid formula, we ensured that
16 there would be adequate and permanent
17 sustainable funding including additional
18 weights for economically disadvantaged English
19 language learners and special needs children.
20 Second, we required that there be a bachelor
21 degree early childhood certified teacher in
22 every classroom. Third, we limited class size
23 to no more than 20 children per classroom, and
24 fourth, we enabled school districts to
25 implement their efforts in partnership with

1 child care operators, community based
2 organizations and Head Start programs. So,
3 what are some of the most important lessons
4 learned from the Sooner State? First and
5 foremost, quality matters, and quality is a
6 function of having a skilled and talented
7 teacher and workforce along with an effective
8 evidence based curriculum. Unfortunately, for
9 far too many years we have not valued teachers
10 and educators generally, but we've been
11 especially bad as a society in paying decent
12 wages and salaries to people who work with our
13 youngest children. So, it is no surprise that
14 the overall workforce of teachers who have the
15 training and expertise to deliver effective and
16 quality preschool is often wanted. We face that
17 exact problem in Oklahoma when we enacted
18 universal pre-k in 1998, and as we went about
19 expanding preschool, we made the critical
20 decision to pay Early Childhood education
21 teachers salaries that were commensurate with
22 what other teachers in the community were paid.
23 But all those are setting initial compensation
24 levels initially was necessary it was not
25

1
2 sufficient to ensure that teachers would come
3 into pre-k classrooms.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I so
5 apologize. I've gotten so in tuned to you that
6 I forgot that the buzzer went off quite a few
7 minutes ago, and I apologize for that. I would
8 ask you to begin to conclude your comments.
9 They're fascinating, though.

10 STEVEN DOW: Sure. Well, what I will
11 say is that what we needed to do and thankfully
12 were able to do to ensure the long term--was to
13 ensure the long term sustainability of their
14 positions by having a permanent source of
15 funding for the operations in the classroom,
16 and as a result of that important initial
17 strategic decision, we have been able to
18 attract and retain the quality of the res--the
19 workforce that has enable us to implement a
20 scaled high quality program that has been able
21 to generate the kind of results that Professor
22 Yoshikawa has described. And I will be happy to
23 submit the remainder of my testimony in writing
24 for review of the Council.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I just want to
3 thank you so much for coming over 1,500 miles
4 today. It's quite humbling that you have come
5 here because you recognize the national
6 significance of what we're working to do here
7 in New York and I thank you both for your
8 testimony and I want to open it up to my
9 colleagues, because what you've done is
10 provided solutions that we can utilize here in
11 New York. So I thank you so much for your
12 testimony, for your patience today, and now I
13 will turn it over to my Co-Chair Council Member
14 Dromm who has questions, as I believe also does
15 Council Member Barron.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So in Mr.
17 Yoshikawa's written testimony, I don't know if
18 you hit it when you were speaking, there's the
19 issue of the second year preschool which shows
20 additional benefits. Can you describe that a
21 little bit for me and put it on record in terms
22 of one year for four-year-olds is good, but
23 even more time is better, and what are your
24 feelings on that, and although the gain is
25

1
2 smaller in the second year from what I'm
3 reading here.

4 HIROKAZU YOSHIKAWA: Yes, the
5 existing studies show that there are benefits
6 from a second year of preschool. They're not
7 always doubled the benefits of one year, and we
8 think that one of the reasons might be that
9 there needs to be careful attention to the
10 sequencing of instruction in the classroom. So
11 if there is a second year, ensure that for
12 example it's not three and four-year-olds in
13 essentially the same classroom with the same
14 level of instruction for two years, but that
15 the second year builds on what was learned in
16 the first year. So we think there has to be
17 careful attention in the curricula and
18 instruction in the professional development
19 around the sequencing.

20 STEVEN DOW: If I may jump in there.
21 One of the things that we've been able to do in
22 Tulsa is a result of having the funding for
23 pre-k through the State Aid formula. It has
24 been able to then reallocate our Head Start
25 dollars to serve more three year olds than we

1
2 were previously able to do. So those most at
3 risk children are in fact getting the two years
4 of preschool that I think we really want to
5 make sure they get.

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Also in your
7 report it says that the aspects of process
8 quality that appear to be most important to
9 children's gains during the preschool years
10 include teachers providing frequent warm and
11 responsive interactions. In addition, teachers
12 who encourage children to speak with
13 interactions involving multiple turns by both
14 the teacher and child to discuss and elaborate
15 on a given topic foster greater gains during
16 the preschool year across multiple domains of
17 children's learning. So that is what you feel
18 is the key to a high quality successful
19 program?

20 HIROKAZU YOSHIKAWA: Yes, and that
21 that combination of, again, of rigorous
22 evidence based curricula with weekly or
23 biweekly coaching in the classroom is what is
24 key to doing that, and some of those examples
25 involve curricula that combine domains. For

1
2 example, in Boston it was a language and a math
3 curriculum together that not only boosted
4 reading and math skills, but also boosted self-
5 regulation and executive function skills. And
6 one set of coaches was trained in both
7 curricula. So it was feasible to implement.
8 Now, there may be more of a situation of a menu
9 where there's choice and programs choose which
10 of the evidence based curricula they might
11 implement. That might be more realistic for a
12 mix delivery model like the one that's in
13 development here in New York.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And just curious
15 to know before we let Council Member Barron ask
16 some questions as well. Do African-Americans,
17 those born here in the United States, show the
18 same gains or less gains? Is it--is there a
19 difference between immigrant Latino populations
20 from African-American gains? Has the numbers
21 been compiled on that?

22 HIROKAZU YOSHIKAWA: Of course all
23 the studies, all groups benefit no matter what
24 their racial or ethnic background, no matter
25 what their language background. In Boston, what

1
2 we saw was that children from African-American
3 backgrounds, children from Latino backgrounds,
4 and in fact, children of immigrants from other
5 backgrounds like Asian backgrounds, there's a
6 large Vietnamese group and in Boston. All
7 groups benefitted, but those groups had
8 actually even stronger positive effects and
9 that's why these disparities were reduced. You
10 certainly don't want to reduce disparities by
11 having no effects on some groups, the more
12 advantaged groups, but that's not what the
13 studies in Tulsa and Boston show. Literally,
14 all groups benefitted whether they were white
15 or black or Latino or Asian, but the children
16 from lower income backgrounds, children from
17 dual language learner backgrounds showed
18 particularly impressive gains.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So did African-
20 American show as much--as many gains as other
21 subgroups?

22 HIROKAZU YOSHIKAWA: I can only speak
23 to the Boston study, not across all prior
24 studies, but they're the--the African-American
25 children did on general show stronger gains

1
2 than white children in Boston, and I don't
3 think--I think they were comparable to the
4 gains of Latino children, but on both groups
5 benefitted more than white children. That's not
6 to say that white children didn't benefit. They
7 also showed substantial benefits, and I believe
8 the pattern was quite similar in Tulsa.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you.

10 Council Member Barron?

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you,
12 Mr. Chair. I want to thank you for coming and
13 sharing information. I certainly appreciate the
14 preparation which is reflected in your
15 testimony and I will take the time to read
16 through all of it. In terms of Tulsa,
17 especially because this is Black History month,
18 we recall that in 1921 there were the so-called
19 Tulsa Race Riots and the community of Rosewood
20 was destroyed and then in 1997 there was a
21 commission which was organized to study whether
22 in fact reparations were due and I don't know
23 that that report finally came up with any
24 conclusions. So I know that there was at one
25 point a black community and I'm wondering about

1
2 the Native American Community. Think of
3 Oklahoma and think that perhaps there's a
4 Native American community there. Is that the
5 case? Are they a part of the general school
6 system or are there other kinds of educational
7 programs that meet their needs?

8 STEVEN DOW: Yes, the Native American
9 community is a part of the normal integrated
10 school system.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And
12 approximately what percent do they represent?

13 STEVEN DOW: I'm not sure.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: okay.

15 STEVEN DOW: In terms of the
16 enrollment. I will say one of the most
17 interesting pieces that we've seen in terms of
18 an immediate return on investment in Tulsa has
19 to do with our English language learners,
20 particularly our Hispanic children who as a
21 result of the scaling of and higher
22 participation rates of those children in our
23 pre-k program, the school districts need to do
24 subsequent remedial English education and
25 remediation declined significantly and we

1
2 realized the cost savings very, very quickly as
3 a result of having those kids in the preschool
4 program.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: In terms of
6 dual language or English as a second language,
7 is there--are there programs that reflect the
8 Native American's language? Are there attempts
9 to preserve their language, or is it just a
10 part of--

11 STEVEN DOW: [interposing] Yes, and
12 actually in part of my written testimony that
13 I'll be submitting--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing]
15 Okay.

16 STEVEN DOW: because we enacted
17 universal pre-k so many years ago, the next
18 frontier of the State of Oklahoma has been to
19 create a public privately funded program to
20 serve children from ages birth through three.
21 And in that program, the Cherokee Nation has
22 been one of key partners and has been doing
23 some very interesting dual language emersion
24 work.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: That's good
3 to know. Thank you. Look forward to getting
4 your testimony.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you so
6 very much for your testimony today. It was very
7 much appreciated and thank you for sharing your
8 national experiences with us here in New York
9 City. Thank you. We are now going to take the
10 opportunity to move things along a little bit
11 more aggressively. The next panel will consist
12 of five individuals, Karen Alford, United
13 Federation of Teachers, Doctor Randi Herman,
14 First Vice President of CSA, Santos Crespo,
15 President of Local 372, Raglan George,
16 Executive Director DC1707, I hope I pronounced
17 that correctly, and Mabel Everett, President
18 Local 205 DC1707. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And Sergeant,
20 we're going to need some chairs. Yeah, we need
21 some chairs this round. Okay, Karen, yes.

22 KAREN ALFORD: Greetings everyone.
23 In the interest of time, I won't read my full
24 testimony. You have it on record. I'll just do
25 some highlights from the testimony, but

1
2 greetings to our Chairs Dromm and Cumbo, you've
3 been doing a fabulous job there today. Now is
4 the time and when we have national leaders like
5 President Obama, we have the Governor, we have
6 our Mayor talking about pre-k, it's time to
7 harness that energy. And it's such a pleasure
8 to be able to agree with so many of the
9 comments from the Department of Education. We
10 haven't been able to do that in a while. The
11 UFT stands here though in support of the City
12 Council Resolution Number Two. We are certainly
13 supporting the city's plan to establish high
14 quality universal pre-k for all eligible four-
15 year-olds with this number being around 73,000
16 for the 2015/2016 school year and with the
17 thought of making high quality middle school
18 after school programs a reality for so many of
19 our teenagers. We understand and the UFT
20 supports the need for this tax increase to
21 ensure a dedicated and reliable funding stream
22 that is certainly most important in this
23 discussion for us. We have certainly given
24 consideration to adequate spacing. We are in
25 agreement with DOE public schools being

1 utilized as well as underutilized city
2 buildings and city space and our CBO's to make
3 sure that we have adequate seats for all of our
4 children. We are constantly focusing and
5 certainly want the conversation to be around
6 high quality and for the UFT that includes full
7 day programs, the need for certified teachers
8 at both the DOE public school as well as the
9 CBO level. There has to be developmentally
10 appropriate environments including play. That
11 so--play is paramount to learning at that age,
12 and instruction is given through play often
13 times. There must be this component of family
14 engagement. The parent voice has been lost too
15 long and we have to make sure particularly at
16 this level as we are bringing families into the
17 system that they invest and they feel like
18 they're part of the equation. There must be
19 pre-k state standards that are aligned with a
20 high quality curriculum so that not only do we
21 know what the standards are, we know how to
22 teach the standards. There must be
23 professional development to help teachers as
24 they learn this curriculum. We must be devoted
25

1
2 to small class sizes. There has to be parody.
3 We must seek comparable pay for CBO's in line
4 with what's being made in the public schools,
5 and we have to have on site instructional
6 coaches. There has to be some form of job
7 embedded PD as folks are in these classrooms
8 doing this work that they have a resource on
9 site. I'm just going to wrap up with saying
10 that we know what the research says. It's
11 devel--with pre-k, we certainly develop better
12 critical thinking and our youngest learners,
13 they build their oral vocabulary. There are
14 certainly greater gains in literacy and math,
15 and the UFT is proud to stand with the city
16 council and all of our colleagues today and we
17 are certainly on the right side of history.
18 Thank you.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you.
20 Thank you very much for your testimony.

21 RANDI HERMAN: Good afternoon, I'm
22 Randi Herman, First Vice President of the
23 Council of School Supervisors and
24 Administrators. To those members of the
25 council and to the Education Committee Members

1 both past and present, thank you for your
2 consistent attention to the Early Childhood
3 education issues. I've often come before you
4 with the mission of persuading you that Early
5 Childhood Education is important. But today, my
6 purpose is a little different. I'm here to lend
7 the support of the CSA and its membership, the
8 school leaders of New York City to City
9 Council's Resolution Number Two. We're here
10 today in support of the resolution, in support
11 of the city's plan to establish high quality
12 universal pre-k for all eligible four-year-olds
13 and a high quality after school program for our
14 middle aged youth. You've heard the research.
15 I don't have to go into it again, and I have to
16 say you're more well versed in it than most
17 groups I talk to. As school leaders, our
18 educators and supervisors in both the
19 department of Education and those who are
20 working in the city-funded community-based
21 organizations provide Early Childhood Education
22 supervision and support. Karen spoke to you
23 about the need for qualified teachers in every
24 classroom. We'll take it a step further. We
25

1
2 need qualified supervision at all levels, at
3 the district level from the superintendent's
4 office to the CBO's, to the DOE programs,
5 because those teachers need support and they
6 need embedded professional development, but we
7 also have to make sure those standards that we
8 heard about earlier are maintained, and who
9 better than a supervisor connected to a
10 superintendent to provide those resources when
11 they're identified as being needed. Somebody
12 has to be able to be the decision maker. Yes,
13 we must level the playing field for all our
14 children and that's what UPK does. There's a
15 whole world of Early Childhood Education that
16 comes before universal pre-k, but right now the
17 conversation here is about the need for
18 universal pre-k and we're all agreed it's a
19 need, it's a right. Our children aren't
20 failing. We're failing them by not giving them
21 the opportunity to have access to full day
22 universal pre-k. And having the discussion not
23 about whether or not it's necessary--

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: [interposing]

25 Right.

1
2 RANDI HERMAN: but about how to fund
3 it. That's a big change in the conversation
4 for me, a very big change. The winds of change
5 are blowing through this room. So, we need to
6 get past our differences and keep our eyes on
7 the prize and remember what's at stake. Let's
8 not be naïve. Introducing more than 73,000 new
9 children into an already over-burdened system
10 is going to bring an entire new set of
11 challenges. We have to find the classrooms,
12 supplies, supervisions, structure and
13 oversight. I assure you we will work with
14 anyone and everyone to meet those challenges as
15 they arise. Now's not the time to argue over
16 the small stuff.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you so
18 much.

19 RANDI HERMAN: You're welcome.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you.

21 SANTOS CRESPO: Good afternoon. Let
22 me first thank the Chairpersons, Councilman
23 Dromm and Councilwoman Cumbo for having Local
24 372 present to give this testimony. My name is
25 Santos Crespo, and I am the President of Local

1
2 372 of District Council 37, and our union
3 represents over 25,000 non-teaching employees
4 of the New York City public school system and
5 our members are folks like parent coordinators
6 and school aids and school crossing guards,
7 about 300 substance abuse
8 prevention/intervention counselors and
9 thousands of more that give vital services. Our
10 members are the women and men who stand on the
11 front line between the Department of Education
12 and the families and communities of the
13 students we serve. So on behalf of those
14 families, those communities, and more
15 importantly their children and especially the
16 increasing number of children that are
17 homeless, I sit here before you to offer the
18 full, complete, unvarying steadfast support of
19 our members in moving forward with this long
20 overdue initiative. Clearly, we at Local 372
21 are not alone in support of the universal pre-
22 k. During our recent election, New Yorkers were
23 asked if the time had come to charter a new
24 course for our great and diverse city, and the
25 voters have spoken and demand that change, and

1
2 now we are here to begin chartering that new
3 change. For too long too many of our children
4 have been left behind without even a chance to
5 get the educational or get on the educational
6 starting line. In study after study the
7 evidence had demonstrated a long term value of
8 early learning in pre-k classrooms. We at Local
9 372 will also stand steadfast in support of the
10 proposal to enact a small tax increase, and I
11 want to emphasize a small tax increase upon New
12 York city residents earning more than 500,000
13 dollars a year to fund the ongoing universal
14 pre-k program. Think about it, at the cost of
15 little more than 10,000 per child, per student,
16 more than 73,000 four-year-olds will finally
17 find a seat within those vital early learning
18 programs. Why should anyone with the ability
19 to help fund those programs turn their back?
20 Yet, time and time again we read and hear that
21 the proposed taxes are an attack on the rich.
22 Should this tax be enacted, those same wealthy
23 New Yorkers who are now spending millions on
24 one or two or three bedroom condos, co-ops,
25 yachts, will be putting up for sale, they

1
2 claim, and leaving town by the thousands. We
3 know that's a fantasy. The rich have turned
4 dodging taxes in to an art form, but where else
5 can they find the restaurants and the theaters
6 and the museums and the parks and all those
7 cultural institutions that make unique--make
8 New York City unique. And I--am I alone in
9 finding it odd that these folks would leave? I
10 don't think so. But we do have two concerns,
11 however. How will this program roll out,
12 meaning the registration, and that was earlier
13 brought out and DOE was not too clear yet on
14 that, and we do have some concerns. And of
15 course, the support services that my members
16 give will be--and we'll be providing are going
17 to be the crucial in the success of the pre-k,
18 universal pre-k program and not making it a
19 failure.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you very
21 much. Thank you for your testimony.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Before I forget,
23 I forgot to swear everybody in, so I have to do
24 that to be consistent. So I'm going to ask all
25 of you and those of you who have already given

1
2 testimony to state that the testimony that you
3 gave already was the truth, the whole truth,
4 and nothing but the truth in your testimony
5 before this committee and to respond honestly
6 to Council Member questions.

7 [off mic]

8 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you.

9 MABEL EVERETT: Good evening.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Good evening.

11 MABEL EVERETT: My name is--excuse
12 me. Chairperson Dromm and Cumbo, my name is
13 Mabel Everett. I'm the President of the Local
14 205 Day Care Employers and been a teacher in
15 the day care at a public day care for 34 years.
16 Our members of the Early Childhood are
17 professionals. Our teachers are certified to
18 teach kindergarten to pre-k in the New York
19 City child care centers just as the public
20 school teachers do in the New York City public
21 school. Our classroom expand the reach of
22 essential kindergarten and pre-k services to
23 many neighborhoods that may not have been--may
24 not be close to a public school. Help alleviate
25 overcrowding in the public school, allow

1
2 working parents to keep their children in a
3 safe environment until all their work is done
4 and add critical funds that chronically under
5 fund our day care centers. Beginning in 2009
6 the Bloomberg Administration began to remove
7 full day kindergarten from our centers. Then in
8 the last two years, Mayor Bloomberg so-called
9 Early Learn program resulted on some centers
10 actually--excuse me--having fewer children in
11 classroom funded. This has created a vacant
12 Early Childhood classroom space in some of our
13 neighborhood schools that need space for our
14 children. So we strongly support Mayor de
15 Blasio UPK proposal and I am here today to
16 remind you that any expansion that you can pay
17 must return to our classrooms and our day care
18 centers as well in the public school.
19 Opportunity to make the best decision for our
20 children. Our subsidized child cares have
21 played a critical role in Early Childhood
22 Education in our city for the children over
23 four years. We look forward to doing this
24 again. There are scores of classrooms available
25 in our centers right now ready to serve the

1
2 pre-k children. One of the things that--I got a
3 few minutes left--that we're asking is that
4 many of our day care centers we need to have
5 something that our teachers--the program is
6 where it says. Many of our programs that need
7 Early Learn was not funded who had very high
8 scores. I know I can personally speak for my
9 center. I taught at Afro-American Parent Day
10 Care Center for 34 years, and my site was one
11 of the sites that ACS used to use for all their
12 models. Whenever they had any training, the
13 Afro 1 [phonetic] was one that was always--was
14 there to--and our center did not make it back
15 in. I am a grandmother, a great grandmother of
16 22 great grans, and I'm finding that--I have
17 taught for 32 years and I really don't want to
18 babysit. So I'm asking that we can put back in
19 place so that my grandchildren and my great
20 grandchildren will have some place to go.
21 Thank you.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you so
23 much for your testimony.

24 RAGLAN GEORGE: I, my name is Raglan
25 George, Jr. I'm the Executive Director of

1
2 District Council 1707. I did have about 18
3 pages to read to you today, but I guess I have
4 to break it down to the last one. So I'll try
5 to be brief in my testimony, but I thank you
6 Chairpersons Dromm and Cumbo for allowing us to
7 come before you to express our thoughts on pre-
8 k, and just to let you know that District
9 Council 1707 is in strong support of the City's
10 plan to bring stability and expansion to public
11 center based day care or child care. For too
12 long we have been seeing disastrous corporate
13 inspired models that have weakened our public
14 child care institution and plans like Early
15 Learn and slashing fully funded child care have
16 only harmed our children and have forced
17 parents to pay punitive amounts of child care
18 and sometimes because the amount was
19 unaffordable for some parents to stop working
20 and no longer contribute to the city's economy.
21 Most of you already know how I am supportive of
22 our dedicated and professional public daycare
23 and Head Start members, many of whom hold the
24 same degrees and credentials as public school
25 teachers, but earn significantly less because

1
2 they are dedicated to the children and the
3 communities they serve while earning
4 considerably less than their public school
5 counterparts due to unsound changes in their
6 healthcare funding. Only 40 percent of our
7 members can afford healthcare through their
8 jobs. The previous administration seriously
9 harmed full time public center based day care,
10 but it is up to this administration and this
11 council to prevent innovative plans to prepare
12 the city's children to compete in this world.
13 That is why we support this resolution. Our
14 centers have available class rooms that can be
15 used for universal pre-k and the city must
16 consider returning U pre-k to our centers.
17 Public child based care has harmed by the
18 previous administration but not--irresponsibly.
19 Our children, parents and members are resilient
20 and look forward to working with this
21 Administration and this council to allow New
22 York to won against precamus due for our
23 children. At one time we were one of the
24 biggest and most effective childcare
25 communities in the country and now we've been

1
2 reduced to struggling to try to keep it afloat
3 and we're hoping that this administration and
4 your committee are going to be able to put some
5 of this back to what--we like to see the 1,300
6 members that lost their jobs under Bloomberg
7 because of Early Learn be restored. Thank you
8 very much.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you. I
10 want to thank you all for your service to New
11 York City. I want to thank you for the
12 exceptional representation that you provide on
13 behalf of your membership and for me as a new
14 Council Member, it's been an incredible
15 learning experience to hear your testimony and
16 to charge me with that level of information. I
17 also wanted to just point out too that Council
18 Member Barron is also, I'm sure you do know, is
19 the Chair of Higher Education, so the weight of
20 the gravitas of who is here is very important
21 and it's going to be up to all of us to do our
22 job on the early levels so that her committee
23 can be the most successful on the back end side
24 with higher education. So, I will relinquish my
25 time to Council Member Barron for questions.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you,
3 Madam Chair. I want to commend all of you for
4 coming and sharing your experience and your
5 ideas. In terms of those programs that have
6 been defunded and where people have lost their
7 jobs, which I see as a basic assault from the
8 previous administration on unions and the
9 workforce. Now, the previous panel, two panels
10 before you said that there was a wide net that
11 they put out to encourage people to respond to
12 the RFP's. Have your unions--were you your
13 unions contacted and encouraged to have people
14 respond to these RFP's? Were they given
15 assistance or guidance as to what they needed
16 to do to be successful?

17 RAGLAN GEORGE: I, I--let me answer
18 that because with the programs that were
19 devastated by the loss of some of the programs
20 you're talking about. The Mayor came into
21 office and promised that he was going to do the
22 pre-k and I--we applaud him for what he's been
23 attempting to do, along with this
24 administration. The City Council, I know
25 you've been one of the prior, had been

1
2 supportive of trying to put us back on track,
3 but when they--but what we are, we focus on
4 when they put into place a lot of these
5 programs, we're the last ones to be contacted,
6 the last ones. We're the ones that's impacted
7 the most, we're the last ones to be impacted. I
8 think we have to be part of the process. We
9 know where the bodies are buried. We know where
10 the programs are. We know where those RFP's
11 went to those programs that never opened. If
12 you want space to put pre-k, open those
13 programs that were giving RFP's under Early
14 Learn that never opened. That's where you'll
15 find them, but they never contact us. We--they
16 have to contact us and talk to us. There has to
17 be a communication between the union that
18 represents these childcare workers both in Head
19 Start and daycare so that we could find those
20 sites--

21 RANDI HERMAN: Quite honestly, the
22 attitude has been that if they post it, it is
23 sufficient communication. If it is on the
24 website, communication is sufficient. There is
25 no additional outreach necessary. Same with

1
2 kindergarten admissions, universal pre-k
3 admissions, post it and that is sufficient.
4 They do it with professional development too.

5 SANTOS CRESPO: In my case,
6 Councilwoman, we are not of that process, but
7 we have not yet been notified of the 3,000
8 members that I've lost under the past
9 administration that provide the support
10 services in terms of how many will be coming
11 back to continue to give those vital support
12 services.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you. I
14 would suggest then to the Chairs that we make
15 the recommendation that there be direct contact
16 and outreach to involve these unions and
17 agencies that are right in the midst of this
18 and have expertise and not just see them as
19 someone who's just on the receiving end, but
20 helping to formulate what's going forward.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you.
22 Excellent point.

23 MABEL EVERETT: One of the things
24 that I found last year, and I know this has--
25 the pre-k was like the kindergarten. Many of

1
2 the parents were not notified and what they did
3 was send out notices. If you didn't register in
4 time, you had to take--if there was no seat in
5 your area, you had to take wherever they had
6 open for you. We're hoping this, that will be
7 the case as far as the UPK, and like you said,
8 they may put it on the web. Many parents may
9 not have access to a computer. I think there
10 was no dialogue or there was nothing that was
11 coming into the community to let them know of
12 this service and many of our parents how have
13 now no longer in the daycare because they could
14 not afford the daycare, they may not know that
15 this is open back up for them. It's something
16 that's in your neighborhood, 'cause so many
17 others who were not before. Early Learn is
18 there now and they may not be reaching out.

19 RANDI HERMAN: Just to be clear,
20 with this online registration as a principal, I
21 would never see the parent. I would never have
22 an opportunity to talk to that parent, see the
23 child. They would simply come. They have 30
24 days grace to provide documentation, but as we
25 all know, once the child is in the seat and the

1 documentation doesn't follow, well, the child
2 is still in the seat. It's a more backwards way
3 of doing registration which is a very personal
4 thing, and they also commented to you on
5 borough enrollment centers. Now, it used to be
6 as you know that you could register a child
7 over the counter at the school. That is no
8 longer the case in many instances. They're sent
9 to a borough enrollment center. Parents aren't
10 always aware of this. I'll tell you quickly the
11 story of the father who showed up at a local
12 elementary school with two children. It was a
13 rainy, cold day. He tried to register them at
14 the school. The principal was very appreciative
15 of the fact that he came but had to say to him
16 that she couldn't register those children, that
17 he had to go to a borough enrollment center. He
18 said, "I only have this one metro card. There's
19 one fare left. It's enough to get me home. I
20 have two babies, and you're sending me back out
21 into the cold and the rain?" Well, she gave
22 him a metro card, of course, but she couldn't
23 register his children. Not the first impression
24 we want to make.
25

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Excellent
3 point. We'll take one more.

4 KAREN ALFORD: That home school
5 connection has to begin at the inception and my
6 colleagues have said it brilliantly. It is
7 very disrespectful in some ways to not be able
8 to go to your community school and register
9 your child and see the tone of the building and
10 possibly the culture of the school, and also
11 the enrollment period is so short that for
12 right now it's kindergarten enrollment period.
13 By March, that time is done. So for those
14 parents who don't have a familiarity with how
15 the system works, that when they think in April
16 or May, let me start thinking about my school
17 options, they've already missed that enrollment
18 period. So that is certainly something to think
19 about as we move forward in this process.

20 SANTOS CRESPO: You know, also, our
21 parents are so engaged in trying to, you know,
22 as I say put, you know, rice and beans and
23 chicken on the table that they have to take a
24 day off from work to register their child and
25 then not to be able to register their child,

1
2 and they cannot afford, you know, to take off
3 another day and lose--'cause some of them will
4 run the risk of losing their job. Again, that's
5 a real negative impression. If they wind up--
6 there's not a parent that I know of that
7 doesn't not want the best education possible
8 for their children, and they will sacrifice
9 themselves to do that and will run that risk of
10 taking that next day off only to find, guess
11 what, the boss just put me out the door.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I want to
13 thank you all for your testimony today. We're
14 going to--in the interest of time, we're going
15 to move onto the next panel, but I just wanted
16 to let you know that your points were duly
17 noted and you have been heard today and we're
18 going to work on the issues that you brought--

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing]
20 Just before I let you go, I do have one thing.
21 Is there any representative from the DOE here?
22 This is the problem. Okay? And I will
23 guarantee you from here on in, at every
24 education hearing that we have, a DOE
25 representative will sit through the whole

1
2 hearing or I will use my subpoena and oversight
3 power to enforce that regulation. That is the
4 end of that. Thank you.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you. We
6 are now going to hear from Doctor Fulani from
7 the All Stars Project. Thank you. Thank you.
8 And students, oh how wonderful. Thank you.
9 Five of them, thank you. Thank you.

10 [off mic]

11 DOCTOR FULANI: Good afternoon
12 everybody.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Good
14 afternoon.

15 DOCTOR FULANI: I just wanted to
16 acknowledge that we had about 20 people with
17 us, half of whom were young people who had to
18 leave to go to my after school program who were
19 going to join me. Who we have with us is
20 Starshima [phonetic]. I'm going to read my
21 statement, and then I'm going to ask her a
22 couple of questions and we're going to be
23 precise and brief. So, thank you for the
24 opportunity to testify. Though I have
25 frequently appeared in these chambers as a

1 political activist and independent reformer,
2 today I'm here as a developmental psychologist
3 with advanced degrees from the CUNY system and
4 an extensive research background. I also am a
5 co-founder of the All Stars Project, a
6 constellation of privately funded youth and
7 adult after school development programs which
8 serve more than 10,000 inner city kids each
9 year and we also have an adult program that we
10 started in 2012 for adults in the community and
11 4,500 adults in our communities have joined in
12 our programs which are based on performance.
13 They're innovative and they step outside of the
14 box and I will give you information on it. I'm
15 not here today to speak for or against
16 Resolution Number Two, though I am a supporter
17 passionately of Early Childhood Education and
18 would like most developmental psychologists, I
19 recognize the positive effects of high quality
20 pre-k experiences for all children. I am here
21 instead to try to call attention to the defects
22 in the science that underlies the idea that
23 pre-k is the most effective and most necessary
24 intervention into the long-term development of
25

1
2 poor kids and to express my deep concern that
3 the current initiative miss-educates the public
4 about this. Pre-k and the call to create a
5 dedicated tax base funding scheme for it rests
6 on the idea that we must grab the opportunity
7 to school low income three and four-year-olds
8 because once these kids get older and most
9 especially once they become teenagers, any
10 developmental disparities with more well to do
11 kids become uncorrectable. According to
12 traditional educational and psychological
13 dogma, human development can only take place
14 before age five or six years old. That is not a
15 fact. This philosophical assumption is
16 dangerous and untrue, dangerous because it
17 dictates certain policy directions and preempts
18 others. Untrue because the premise and
19 methodology of the research cited in Resolution
20 Two dates back 50 years and there is far more
21 current and innovative research which defines
22 the finding that development is essentially
23 over by the time you hit kindergarten. We have
24 found as have other researchers and
25 practitioners from Stanford University,

1 Columbia, Rutgers, various other places that
2 development can be ignited or re-ignited at any
3 age if the proper tools and approaches such as
4 performance play and becoming more cosmopolitan
5 are used. This is not simply an abstract
6 discovery. It has serious public policy
7 implications. In New York City there are 100's
8 of thousands of poor kids, mainly of color
9 between the ages of 15 and 19. They are in
10 desperate need of developmental opportunities
11 and they are well past the age of pre-k. In
12 large measure, I'm afraid they're being written
13 off or swept under the rug by advocates of a
14 public policy that focuses on pre-k while
15 failing to address the developmental challenges
16 of middle and high school kids and their
17 families. To ignore the newest most cutting
18 edge discoveries that recognize the human
19 capacity to develop and create at all ages in
20 favor of high profile easy to digest
21 politically symbolic initiatives that rest on
22 incomplete out of date and frankly narrow
23 minded and anti-human forms of social science
24 would represent a significant failure on the
25

1
2 part of this body. This is not a time for
3 lowest common denominator science given the
4 crisis of poverty and income inequality. It's
5 time to turn to the most advanced and
6 sophisticated discoveries. This is not an
7 argument against pre-k. It is an argument for
8 a rigorous exploration by the City Council and
9 the Mayor of the breakthroughs in development
10 at all ages that we see at the All Stars every
11 single day. Finally, where--

12 [applause]

13 DOCTOR FULANI: Thank you. Where you
14 choose--where one chooses to engage a problem,
15 and in this case, we're talking about the
16 educational failure of incredible magnitude in
17 the poor communities. You must also take into
18 consideration the impact that that engagement
19 could have not just on the kids, but on the
20 entire community. Teenagers, the very ones
21 hanging out on corners and jumping turn styles
22 are actually the role models for the little
23 kids in our communities. They look up to them
24 and they watch what they do. If those teenagers
25 can be developmentally engaged, this can be

1
2 impactful on the small kids who look up to them
3 as well as on the parents and the adults in the
4 community. I can't tell you how many parents
5 have joined our adult programs because they saw
6 their teenage kids transformed by the
7 experience of performing or being exposed to
8 the world beyond the boundaries of East New
9 York or Far Rock Away. I would love to work
10 with all of you on this and to move the
11 discussion of youth development out of the
12 narrow box that it takes place in while we
13 continue to lose more and more people in our
14 community to poverty and underdevelopment and I
15 want to end by dedicating this statement to
16 Kalil [phonetic], a 14-year-old black kid who
17 failed eighth grade last year, actually eighth
18 grade failed him, after we talked openly about
19 his humiliation around being related to as
20 dumb, he said, "Doctor Fulani, how do you build
21 confidence?" I said to him that he needed to
22 have outside of school experiences that made
23 him confident, then he could go back into
24 school and put that confidence to work in ways
25 that lead to his development as a learner no

1
2 matter how lousy the school is. He said to me,
3 "I want to do that." Millions of teenagers
4 feel the same way and we cannot afford to
5 abandon them. Thank you.

6 [applause]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Doctor Fulani,
8 I want to thank you very much for your
9 testimony and I also want to thank you for your
10 leadership by bringing your students here
11 today. I think it's very powerful to be able to
12 bring our young people along in this process so
13 that the passing of the baton becomes more
14 seamless as the generations go on. I have one
15 brief question before Council Member Barron. I
16 just wanted to know, I've been to--I've had the
17 fortune of coming to your space and being a
18 part of the performances and seeing the
19 excellent and phenomenal work that you are
20 doing with young people, and forgive my
21 ignorance on this. Is your work also tied to
22 that preschool age as well, or has your work
23 focused mostly on teenagers and middle school
24 students in terms of the educational programs
25 that you do?

1
2 DOCTOR FULANI: Are youth programs
3 are primarily teenagers but they're like 13
4 going up, and our talent show network, however,
5 kids start performing in it on stage in front
6 of audiences of 500 people at five and six, and
7 what they do is develop a sense of themselves
8 as performers, as people who can step outside
9 of what is their normal experience and do new
10 and different kinds of things and a lot of
11 those kids continue to work with us and other
12 programs, but we're also family focused. So I
13 have students that are 85 years old. I have
14 parents who I've said to what is your lost
15 dream, and they just open up because they got
16 pregnant early, they were stopped and they come
17 out and they start doing all of these new kinds
18 of things and it has an impact on the entire
19 family, but I really do want to underscore the
20 impact of teenagers, because they really are
21 the trendsetters in our community and we should
22 constantly think of ways of engaging them or
23 we're in deep trouble.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: and let me
25 just ask you one question, as a CBO, as a not

1
2 for profit org--no, you're not a not for profit
3 organization are you?

4 DOCTOR FULANI: Yeah, we are--

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: [interposing]
6 You are.

7 DOCTOR FULANI: a not for profit, we
8 just don't take money from the government. We
9 take money from rich white people.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: That's right.

11 DOCTOR FULANI: I remember there was
12 a catch when I was asking the question.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: My question
14 with that is, are you familiar with the
15 capacity that you're in with what's happening
16 with middle schools in terms of how it relates
17 to universal pre-k? Are you as a CBO, do you
18 understand your pathway right now here and
19 today how you are going to be a part of what's
20 going to be happening with this middle school
21 roll out and community based organizations, or
22 are you still trying to figure out where you're
23 going to fit in into this bigger picture?

24 DOCTOR FULANI: I'm already a part of
25 the bigger picture.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Fantastic.

3 DOCTOR FULANI: And our work at--the
4 kids who are in middle school, in my opinion,
5 and I just want to say something as a
6 developmental psychologist, they grow up in
7 communities that are way off the beaten path.
8 They don't have the access to the main stream.
9 There was an article by--in the New York Times
10 a number of months ago that says, "Kids who
11 come from wealthy backgrounds have 1,500 more
12 outside of school experience than kids in our
13 communities." That's not because their parents
14 don't love them, it's because their parents
15 ain't got no money and they're not connected in
16 the same way to the mainstream. So I think that
17 by middle school you're no longer blind to the
18 fact that your life is falling apart, that
19 you're living in a shelter, that things aren't
20 working. The kids are in tremendous, tremendous
21 pain.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Right.

23 DOCTOR FULANI: And people say to
24 them, "if you stay in school you're going to go
25 to college and you're going to be great."

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2 Number one, most of the schools are
3 dysfunctional, but aside from that how--these
4 kids can't do it. They're barely eating. So if
5 we don't connect to the emotional impact of
6 being poor in this country and in this state
7 and in our communities, the kids are not going
8 to grow.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Right. Thank
10 you very much. Council Member Barron?

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Yes, I'm
12 late for an appointment, but I certainly had to
13 stay for your presentation. Doctor Fulani's
14 work stands on its own. Her record over the
15 decades is without question and a model
16 certainly for what it is when someone who has
17 the energy, the passion, the intelligence and
18 the commitment to go out and make things
19 happen; dedicates her life to that. So I wanted
20 to just be here to put onto the record that we
21 appreciate what you do. We want to encourage
22 you to continue that, and I agree with you in
23 that it's not--I saw one of the testimonies
24 said by age five 85 percent is set. I--

1
2 DOCTOR FULANI: [interposing] It's
3 ridiculous.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I'm glad that
5 we're going forward with universal pre-k, but
6 we can't come with the opinion that if our
7 children don't do it by age whatever then they
8 can't move one and do it. There is no age.
9 There is no terminus unless you're, you know,
10 going in the ground. There's no limit to what
11 we can do. So I applaud you and I appreciate
12 the work that you're doing and encourage you--
13 and if your young student wanted to say
14 something, I'd be glad to hear it before I have
15 to leave.

16 STARSHIMA TRENT: The All Stars has
17 changed my life in many ways because growing up
18 I was labeled as slow and in high school it
19 took a real big toll on me because I took in
20 many, many tests and failed miserably. And
21 there was this one day in school my teacher
22 told me, "Put your hand or you're not going to
23 graduate." So I felt very devastated about it,
24 and after they gave me many, many tests to take
25 I kept on failing so I told him that they don't

1
2 understand my standards differently. So I took
3 the Regular Regents [phonetic] and I was very
4 surprised that I passed with flying colors.
5 While I graduated I found out also that at
6 graduation I also got a Public Applicant
7 [phonetic] Award by Bill de Blasio and I did
8 not know at first that he was the Mayor. Yes,
9 so All Stars changed my life in many, many
10 different ways. I'm actually at a development
11 school for U Production team, and I too am late
12 for an appointment. I'm at the orientation at
13 One Chase Plaza and I have my internship at Met
14 Life and it opened my eyes in many different
15 ways, and what I feel is that is when I go to
16 school, if I can memorize plays while I'm in
17 All Stars, because I've done many different
18 programs. I'm a spokesperson. I'm a host. You
19 name it, I do it. So they take people out their
20 comfort zone and make me feel like I'm not so
21 shy. So growing up I was very shy person, but
22 with them I can feel like I'm on top of the
23 world. They never hold you back. They just
24 push you more to become a bigger, better person
25 and with the schools in the system people are

1
2 just invested in things that don't work. So
3 with the school, I feel like they need to be
4 more brunt [phonetic] with the students. If you
5 push them away and make them feel like they're
6 not going to, you know, grow or if like they
7 can't, you know, graduate, then what are you
8 going to do? They mostly pay attention to the
9 teachers. The teachers need to pay attention
10 to the students, make them feel like they are
11 special, you know, talk to them. Because when
12 you after school, I'm there for like a good 25
13 to 45 minutes and then they just leave. I feel
14 they don't pay attention and give that much
15 support and a lot of times is all we see is
16 kids are not in school. They have their rate
17 that they mostly pay attention to about the
18 gradation. Forget graduation, how about you
19 focus on what's going on at that moment, and
20 then you'll get them to where they need to be.

21 DOCTOR FULANI: Now, this is
22 somebody who was labeled as special ed. So
23 thank you so very much.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

25

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Doctor Fulani,
3 I want to thank you for reminding us by
4 bringing--please state your name for the
5 record, 'cause your testimony was phenomenal.

6 STARSHIMA TRENT: Thank you.
7 Starshima Trent, by the way.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you very
9 much.

10 STARSHIMA TRENT: And thank you for
11 your time and your patience.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you and
13 thank you for giving us of your time and
14 sacrificing a little bit of what was important
15 to you today. I hope this was a educational
16 experience for you.

17 STARSHIMA TRENT: Absolutely.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: And thank you
19 so much, Doctor Fulani by reminding us why we
20 are all here today. Thank you.

21 STARSHIMA TRENT: Thank you.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: We are going
23 to bring up the next set of testimony. We are
24 going to have Zakiyah Ansari. We are going to
25 have Ocynthia Williams. We are going to have

1
2 Lordes Lebron, Barbara Denham, and Isaac
3 Carmignani. Thank you so very much.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And while the
5 panel is assembling, I want to say that we have
6 received for the record, testimony from the
7 Center for Children's Initiatives, from The
8 Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, from
9 SCO Family of Services, from the Northside
10 Center for Child Development, and from the
11 Committee for Hispanic Children and Families
12 Incorporated. It's good to see all of you,
13 Zakiyah, would you like to start us off?

14 ZAKIYAH ANSARI: Sure. So good
15 afternoon City Council, what's left.
16 Congratulations to--absolutely. And
17 congratulations to I didn't know was Co-Chair
18 so I apologize Chair Dromm and as well as Chair
19 Cumbo.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you.

21 ZAKIYAH ANSARI: Thank you for being
22 around having this. So my name Zakiyah Ansari.
23 I'm the Advocacy Director for the Alliance for
24 Quality Education and a public school parent.
25 I've been testifying at City Council hearings

1
2 for the last 12 years and I'm testifying about
3 something that our new Mayor supports and that
4 is universal pre-k and after school for middle
5 school students. I just have to say what a
6 difference a year makes. As many of you may or
7 not know, I have eight children and began
8 testifying while most of them were still in
9 school. Actually, some of them were probably in
10 pre-k at the time. Seven of the eight of my
11 children attended pre-k and even though it was
12 half day, it taught them a lot, a great deal.
13 They learned sharing, responsibility, the days
14 of the week, months, counting and even some
15 Spanish. In two and a half hours they learned a
16 lot. I just wonder, just say imagine what they
17 could do for a full day. In pre-k is where
18 they began to bring home those beautiful pieces
19 of artwork, right? Home portraits of
20 themselves and families that we have big
21 humongous heads with skinny bodies, eyes, nose
22 or no mouth or we had eyes and a mouth but no
23 nose, but whatever it looked like, I always
24 displayed it on the refrigerator and showed it
25 to anyone who visited and they were so proud of

1
2 what they accomplished. Quality full day pre-k
3 is what every four year old needs and should
4 have access to. The research tells us over and
5 over again that children in poor communities
6 who don't have access to quality Early
7 Childhood Education enter school knowing tens
8 of thousands of words less than those who have
9 access and opportunity. The places like New
10 Jersey who have implemented universal pre-k
11 well have seen a decrease in the achievement
12 gap. We know that children who receive early
13 education perform 25 percent better on math by
14 the second grade, 20 percent better on English,
15 30 percent are more likely to graduate from
16 high school and 32 percent are less likely to
17 be arrested as a juvenile. Mayor de Blasio
18 earlier this morning talked about him and
19 Charlene [phonetic] being fortunate enough to
20 have both of their children attend a high
21 quality pre-k program when they were younger,
22 and now he wants to ensure that all four-year-
23 olds here have the same. This is really such a
24 surreal moment. I actually agree and support
25 an education policy by the Mayor of New York

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2 City. After 12 years of disagreeing with
3 former administration, it feels really good. If
4 we all believe in his vision that we must
5 stand--then we must stand together, all of us,
6 and tell the Governor, Senator Skelos, and
7 anyone else who stands in our way to stand
8 aside and allow us to pay for universal pre-k
9 and after school by asking those who make
10 500,000 or more to pay just a little more.
11 There has been a lot of debate about whether or
12 not New York City can provide pre-k without the
13 small tax height Mayor de Blasio has proposed
14 on New Yorkers earning more than 500,000
15 dollars. Governor Cuomo has said that he has a
16 plan to provide pre-k for all New York four-
17 year-olds without tax. Well let's stick to the
18 facts, Mayor de Blasio's plan would provide
19 pre-k for 53,000 four-year-olds this September
20 2014. The cost is 340 million. But by
21 contrast Governor Cuomo is providing a five
22 year statewide plan and this year's budget he
23 is proposing 100 million dollar investment in
24 pre-k statewide. However, what we must know is
25 that 25 million of this is to renew existing

1 competitive grants leaving only 75 million in
2 new pre-k funding. It's that fuzzy math. The
3 Governor's plan is a statewide plan and not all
4 of the money would go to New York City. In last
5 years' competitive grants, New York City was
6 capped at 40 percent of new pre-k dollars which
7 would mean New York City could not get more
8 than 30 million of the total if the same cap is
9 in place. In prior years, New York City has
10 received 58 percent of the total pre-k funding
11 which would mean 44 million in year one. In
12 other words, the Governor's would serve-- in
13 the Governor's proposal he would serve between
14 one-eighth and one-eleventh as many four-year-
15 olds in year one as the Mayor's plan. The
16 Governor has said he will give New York City a
17 blank check for pre-k, but if we are to serve
18 the 53,000 four-year-olds Mayor de Blasio is
19 proposing to serve, then that check will bounce
20 due to insufficient funds. As I shared in the
21 beginning, I'm a mother, but I'm also a
22 grandmother of a 16 month old grandson and a
23 six month old granddaughter, and in two years
24 Ayelli [phonetic] my grandson will be ready for
25

1
2 pre-k. The question is will pre-k be ready for
3 him? We need a dedicated source of funding to
4 be able to bring opportunity for children,
5 especially black and Latino children who live
6 in poor communities to have access to full day
7 universal pre-k and after school programs. What
8 happens next year when the Governor tells us
9 that the state can't afford to give money to
10 the programs any more. Who suffers? My
11 granddaughter lives in Newark and in two years
12 will have access to a full day pre-k program as
13 a three year old, because that is when pre-k
14 begins for children in Jersey and their program
15 is exceptional, yet my grandson may not have
16 the opportunity and that is unfair. Let us
17 stand united and send a message to the Governor
18 and others to allow us to have home rule on
19 this decision, to tax the wealthy in New York
20 City, to increase school aid for the state by
21 1.9 billion dollars and get back on track to
22 funding the campaign for fiscal equity. New
23 York City is still owed 3.1 billion dollars.
24 Thank you.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you.

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OCYNTHIA WILLIAMS: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: OCynthia.

OCYNTHIA WILLIAMS: Sure. Before I start I just wanted to also to thank you guys for convening this hearing and for inviting us. And I must say I've been coming here for years and years and years too, and I was telling Zakiyah that it really feels like I belong here.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Wow.

OCYNTHIA WILLIAMS: It really feels that way today. So, good afternoon. My name is Osynthia Williams and I'm an organizer and Parent leader with the United Parents of Highbridge, and the Coalition for Educational Justice, and I'm here to testify in support of Resolution Two. As a mother of six children who all attended the City's public schools starting with half day pre-k program, I can honestly say that it made a difference in their preparation for kindergarten, but if they were able to attend a full day of classes I could only imagine how better prepared they would have been for kindergarten and throughout the

1
2 rest of their school years. I know that if they
3 were able to receive high quality after school
4 programming they would have struggled less to
5 complete high school in four years. I've seen
6 children who've benefited from great after
7 school programming and they're usually the
8 students who become successful in college and
9 their careers, and I think that our students
10 deserve the same kind of programming. Now, I
11 have four beautiful grandchildren. One--

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: [interposing]
13 Wow. You all have a fountain of youth that I
14 have not been privy to, but please proceed.

15 OCYNTHIA WILLIAMS: Thank you. Four
16 beautiful grandchildren, three who will be
17 entering school over the next couple of years,
18 one who's already in a great charter schools.
19 He's doing really great. Doing the same things
20 that I would want their school to do, and they
21 will get Head Start--they'll get a head start
22 on receiving a well-rounded and quality
23 education. I'm sorry I lost place. I think it--
24 yeah, alright. No, I'm right. Where they
25 would be getting a head start on receiving a

1 well-rounded and quality education. I don't
2 want them--oh boy, I don't want them to
3 struggle, to be below or on grade level when
4 they reach third grade. Two of my grandchildren
5 are black boys, and by the time they reach
6 third grade and take a test, I don't want their
7 grades to determine whether or not they will
8 graduate from high school, be successful in
9 college or career, or if they have a jail cell
10 waiting for them. I believe that this program
11 will ensure that they're on the path to
12 success. It will close the opportunity gap that
13 thousands of our children face every day in
14 this city. It's the chance, I believe, that
15 we've all been talking about for decades and
16 it's time to close that gap and ensure that all
17 eligible children receive universal full day
18 pre-k and that all eligible middle school
19 students have high quality after school
20 programs so that they are better prepared for
21 success in life. And while we are implementing
22 this program, let's not forget parents and
23 opportunities for parents with it. I remember
24 when my kids were in pre-k--oh, my times' just
25

1
2 about up. When my kids were in pre-k, they had
3 a great parent program that we all participated
4 in. We were in all those things that Zakiyah
5 was talking about that their kids came home
6 with, you know, drawings and stuff. We were
7 able to help with that, and in addition do
8 other things that we could help practice with
9 those kids at home, and it was the foundation
10 of the person that I have become as a leader.
11 It taught me the beginnings of being a leader.
12 So let's not forget the parents and let's just
13 make this program happen. Thank you.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you.
15 Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Isaac?

17 ISAAC CARMIGNANI: Thank you and
18 once again, congratulations to both Chairs,

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you.

20 ISAAC CARMIGNANI: for doing this
21 work that you're doing. I am Isaac Carmignani.
22 I am the Co-President of Community Education
23 Council for District 30, one that Council
24 Member Dromm also represents, one of our most
25 crowded districts in the City along with

1
2 District 24 and one or two others. I can speak
3 personally that early education led me to above
4 level--above grade level reading when I was in
5 the first grade. Now, in my case it was my mom
6 who was able to stay home, who when I went to
7 the first grade totally shocked teachers, and I
8 remember this one teacher just asking me how do
9 you pronounce words so well and so forth, but
10 it was all because of that early training. Now,
11 she had the ability to stay home and do that.
12 What if she was not? She sacrificed. She
13 sacrificed a career, sacrificed us having money
14 and as the Woman's Issues Committee so clearly
15 knows, our women so desperately need this pre-
16 k. So my point is, if she had not been able to
17 do that, how would that have impacted me? I am
18 definitely in support of this plan. We need a
19 dedicated funding stream. Albany's plans are
20 partial and when you consider the results of
21 the campaign for fiscal equity case where most
22 of those billions are in a rears. Can we trust
23 a not dedicated funding stream? I'm very
24 interested to see how this will work in over-
25 crowded districts like 30 and 24 however. We

1
2 don't have space. I met with a principal at
3 PS212 yesterday who said her enrollment is down
4 and she has over 800 kids in a 500 capacity
5 school building and this is right in the middle
6 of Jackson Heights. So CBO's may be able to
7 help. They may not be able to help enough. We
8 have to really monitor this and I'm very
9 concerned about how this will roll out, but
10 yes, we need it and I'm--it's long overdue.
11 Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I just want to
13 say thank you to all of you. You are my three
14 probably most favorite advocates in the
15 Education world and community, and--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: [interposing]
17 I didn't want to say anything because, you
18 know.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I have to--
20 [laughter]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: [interposing]
22 I saw some preferential treatment here.

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: self-disclosure
24 here. They've been long time people in the
25 battle for what we saw today and it's a major

1
2 achievement and it's--and big part because of
3 what you have done and laid the ground work
4 for, and so I just thank you for coming in. I
5 couldn't agree more with all of your testimony
6 and we're just so pleased to have you here, and
7 we're going to continue the battle to makes
8 sure that this goes right.

9 OCYNTHIA WILLIAMS: Thank you.

10 ZAKIYAH ANSARI: Thank you.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you.

12 Thank you very much for your testimony today.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Now our
14 next panel is James Parrott from the Fiscal
15 Policy Institute, Michelle Yanche from Good
16 Shepherd Services, James Merriman, from the New
17 York City Charter School Center, Eric Pryor
18 from the Center for Arts Education, and Andrew
19 Ackerman from the Children's Museum of
20 Manhattan, whose graphic is up there on the--on
21 the television, yes.

22 [off mic]

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I just want to
24 say that Lordes Lebron has left a testimony for
25

1
2 the record, so that will be officially included
3 in the record.

4 JAMES PARROTT: Shall I go first?

5 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yes.

6 JAMES PARROTT: Okay, alright. Thank
7 you. Good afternoon, Chairpersons Dromm, Cumbo.
8 Thank you for having this hearing on this
9 important topic. My written testimony covers
10 three areas, one that this is the right policy
11 for the City, two that dedicated funding stream
12 is a necessary given, the state budget and the
13 relationship Albany has to the City, and three,
14 I want to talk about the precise funding
15 mechanism that the tax proposal. I think on the
16 first issue that this is the right policy, you
17 probably heard a lot about that today so I'm
18 not going to go into that. Let me go right to
19 the state budget dimension. It's certainly
20 positive that the government has embraced a
21 commitment to expand universal pre-k statewide,
22 and has proposed new state funding for this
23 purpose. However, there's a real concern that
24 the amount of funding proposed by the
25 government falls short, far short of the amount

1
2 needed as evidence by estimates by Columbia
3 Professor Mike Rubel, the Citizen's Budget
4 Commission and the State Education
5 Commissioner, John King, all of whose estimates
6 were in the billion plus range compared to the
7 Governor's 500 million a year commitment.

8 Moreover, the Governor's proposed 2014/15
9 budget calls for four more years of austerity
10 budgets on top of the six that New Yorkers have
11 seen since the recession began in 2008.

12 Considering the severity of the budget cuts--I
13 just came from a budget briefing this morning
14 where we presented our in depth analysis of the
15 state budget so that we've seen severe budget
16 cuts in almost every are of local aid and state
17 spending in the four year budget plan. It's
18 difficult to see how the Governor can make good
19 on a commitment to follow through with funding
20 to pay for qualitatively adequate statewide UPK
21 program. Despite claims to contrary, there's no
22 two billion dollar surplus in the out years of
23 the state budget. There's only a determination
24 to push through billions of dollars in
25 unspecified budget cuts in order to create the

1
2 impression that there's a surplus so that
3 massive unaffordable tax cuts can be proposed
4 to soak up nearly every last dollar of surplus.
5 The Governor's recent budgets have already
6 seriously short changed New York city in terms
7 of revenue sharing and the education aid needed
8 to honor the spirit of the legislatively
9 enacted 2007 statewide resolution to the CFE
10 case. In addition, 15 years ago, the state made
11 a commitment to fund universal pre-k and has
12 yet to fulfill that commitment. Turning to the
13 tax proposal to pay for this. The mayor's
14 dedicated tax proposal would modestly increase
15 the top city personal income tax rate on filer
16 with incomes over 500,000 dollars. The top
17 income tax rate would rise by a little over 0.5
18 percent making it about 4.4 percent, a rate
19 lower than the top rate that prevailed through
20 most of the 1990's and lower than the top rate
21 under Mayor Bloomberg for the years 2003 to
22 2005. About 40 to 50,000 households would be
23 affected those represented basically the 1.1
24 percent of tax filers with the highest incomes.
25 Keep in mind that with the deductibility of

1 state and local income taxes on the federal
2 income tax that about 40 percent of the New
3 York city increase will effectively be paid by
4 the federal government for those who itemize
5 deductions. Given existing state and local tax
6 differentials in the tri-state region,
7 economist Don Boyd [phonetic] found that an
8 increase in the City's top income tax rate of
9 0.75 percent, that's greater than the increase
10 the Mayor's talking about, would have only a
11 modest impact on the differential between New
12 York City and the surrounding areas. Our own
13 research on the local tax burden born by
14 households indicated that the wealthiest one
15 percent of households bear a smaller share of
16 the local tax burden than their share of total
17 income. For 2010 we estimate that the top one
18 percent had 36.5 percent of all income received
19 by city residents but paid 27.6 percent of
20 local taxes. Even with this proposed increase,
21 that would raise their share of local taxes to
22 less than 30 percent, still much less than
23 their share of income.
24

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I want to--the
3 timer has gone off and I--

4 JAMES PARROTT: Okay.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: wanted to ask
6 you--I mean, your presentation is really a
7 presentation for an entire hearing in a sense
8 because this really gets to the, the crux of
9 what the issue is about, and if I could just
10 leave you with a question while you're
11 concluding too, is with this particular
12 initiative being funded or proposed to be
13 funded by the city for the city, if you could
14 explain to me as a new Council Member what is
15 the basis of the challenge from the state on
16 not allowing the city to tax itself for a
17 program that it wants for itself?

18 JAMES PARROTT: Well, I don't know
19 that there's a good policy reason for that. I
20 mean, right now the way the state constitution
21 is written and state laws are written, the city
22 does not have the authority to raise tax on its
23 own.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Right.
25

1
2 JAMES PARROTT: Keep in mind, New
3 York City's economy is a larger than economy
4 than 45 states.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Right.

6 JAMES PARROTT: And one of the
7 state's that's larger than New York City is New
8 York State, of course, and New York City counts
9 for 55 percent of income. Maybe it's because in
10 it's election year and the state legislature
11 doesn't want to be seen voting for a tax
12 increase, the Governor after all has presented
13 a package, you know, a huge package of tax cuts
14 that are very appetizing and tempting for
15 Albany to consider this year. So there's not
16 really a good policy argument for it. maybe
17 there's a political argument against it, but
18 clearly--

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: [interposing]
20 Is there an economic reason for it?

21 JAMES PARROTT: Well, I think--
22 there's a political argument for it, I guess,
23 that the voters of New York, this was very
24 clear that the Mayor made this the centerpiece
25

1
2 of his campaign. He won the primary and the
3 general elections by large margins.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Correct.

5 JAMES PARROTT: Hopefully, Albany
6 will see this as if they don't support this,
7 they will effectively be thwarting the will of
8 New York City voters who also vote in November.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Correct. Thank
10 you.

11 JAMES PARROTT: Sure.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you very
13 much.

14 JAMES PARROTT: Sure.

15 MICHELLE YANCHE: Good afternoon.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Just before we
17 proceed, I--we've forgotten to swear everybody
18 in. So I can ask you to do that again. Do you
19 swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole
20 truth, and nothing but the truth? We didn't
21 get you guys, alright. And to respond honestly
22 to Council Member's questions. I just wanted to
23 show we treat everyone equally.

24 ANDY ACKERMAN: We do.

25 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you.

1
2 ANDY ACKERMAN: Hi, I'm Andy
3 Ackerman, I'm Director of the Children's Museum
4 of Manhattan and a graduate of public schools
5 kindergarten through college here in New York,
6 in the Bronx. I want to address some issues
7 that have come up before and show you some
8 great photographs as a vision, and it's really
9 a vision about a double return on this
10 investment. That address is quality, training
11 and the engagement of families and community,
12 including teenagers. So we work throughout the
13 city in Head Start with ACS implementing a new
14 health and literacy curriculum. These are some
15 of the things we've learned, and here's what we
16 believe is possible, that we can turn pre-k
17 facilities in to adult learning centers to
18 learn about child development. We can take
19 curriculum like this which we've developed with
20 the National Institutes of Health and the CDC
21 to prevent childhood obesity and about literacy
22 and bring it into Head Start Centers, and I
23 want to give you an example. IT's a vision of
24 the best for every kid. This is Johnson Center
25 in East Harlem before we begin to work there.

1
2 It's a Head Start run by Union Settlement. This
3 is what it looks like now.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Wow.

5 ANDY ACKERMAN: These are all
6 interactive devices and information in
7 particular parenting resources that are
8 accessible for training for both educators and
9 engaging parents through parent feedback where
10 they tell us what they want to learn about
11 their kids. This wall is about health and
12 literacy and unveils to educators and children
13 and adults, the parents, the best way to teach
14 literacy and health based upon the best
15 research, not just done here in New York, but
16 nationally. This can be done everywhere. What
17 it's done in Johnson in just a very short
18 period of time is to make the parents active
19 participants in what their children are eating,
20 how they're sleeping, how they're exercising
21 and how they're learning language. The literacy
22 and health, we have five research reports in
23 New York city to demonstrated the efficacy of
24 the approach and it's now been launched by the
25 First Lady's office and the NIH Nationally.

1
2 It's the first federally approved curriculum of
3 it's nature. This is about literacy. This is
4 something we transplanted from the museum or
5 replicated. Alphie [phonetic] is a talking
6 dragon. The Speaker had a chance to see this
7 last Friday. So when you feed this dragon
8 letters, he will tell you the letter, B,
9 Banana--these are photographs. It connects
10 literacy and it connects health all in the same
11 lesson. So in addition to that we developed a
12 web-based tool kit that's coming online for
13 educators now. Professional development and
14 family festivals. The success of all of this is
15 rooted in the arts, and it was a lot of fun
16 convincing the medical authorities in
17 Washington that the arts of the heart of all
18 learning, particularly for pre-k, but for
19 everyone, because affective education in
20 addition to cognitive education is what changes
21 behavior and motivated people to learn. We can
22 do this in every pre-k center in the City.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Wow. Thank
24 you.

MICHELLE YANCHE: Good afternoon.

I'm Michelle Yanche from Good Shepherd Services. I'd like to thank the Chairs, Council Members Dromm and Cumbo for the opportunity to testify. Good Shepherd Services is a not for profit organization. We provide 23 after school programs in the communities of East New York, Red Hook, Brooklyn, and the Central Bronx. Also would like to thank Ocynthia, the Chancellor for the shout out to Good Shepherd Services. While we are--our expertise is in after school, we're an after school provider not an early childhood provider. We've also served for the past two years as a founding member and steering committee member of the campaign for children which has been leading the fight to preserve after school and child care and as such I have also become a child care advocate. I'd like to concentrate my testimony on one primary point, and that is why we need a dedicated funding stream, and I'm going way off script here in saying that the primary reason we need it is because when there is budget pressures and there always are, these are the

1
2 programs that are the first things that are
3 cut, and I can actually speak from this from 20
4 years of experience and our, the City Council's
5 wonderful Sergeants at Arms can back me up on
6 this, I have literally been in sitting in this
7 seat testifying at every budget hearing for the
8 past 20 years and spending the entire month of
9 June on the steps of City Hall for the past 20
10 years fighting to preserve, essentially the
11 same money for after school programs throughout
12 New York City, and while that's happening I
13 originally was getting phone calls and now it's
14 more like emails from providers all over the
15 City saying, "Do you really think our money is
16 going to get restored? I mean, I know you can't
17 say for sure, but like wink, wink, nod, nod.
18 Is it going to get restored?" this is no way
19 to run a child care and after school system.
20 And so everyone of those providers is
21 representing the parents who are calling them
22 saying, "Am I really going to have a program?
23 Summer camp starts the beginning of July." This
24 is why we need to have a dedicated funding
25 stream and that's why Good Shepherd Services

1
2 has lend its name and our efforts in Albany to
3 UPK NYC effort which is both for child care and
4 afterschool. I guess I'll use my remaining
5 minute to make a few extra points. As a member
6 of the steering committee of the Campaign for
7 Children, I really enter into testimony the
8 transition plan of the Campaign for Children
9 which has been sent to each one of the City
10 Council members. We're also working to set up
11 meetings with you to talk about them, but
12 there's also a one pager that I included with
13 my testimony and a link to the full plan and
14 so, you know, that plan really lays out a
15 number of detailed recommendations around
16 quality, investment and expansion. And on those
17 points I wanted to make a few other additional
18 mentions. One is supporting quality is
19 critical. We must make sure in this expansion
20 that the resources are dedicated to ensure that
21 we're providing quality programs. Secondly, is
22 that the needs for programs dwarfs supply and
23 while we can do some initial expansion by
24 adding slots to our existing after school
25 programs, the majority of what is needed is

1
2 adding programs and new schools. Just this week
3 our Bronx division director said she was
4 contacted in the last month by five principals
5 begging Good Shepherd Services to come and
6 offer a program in their schools. We would love
7 to do that, but we're limited by available
8 resources. This is an opportunity to meet those
9 needs. And finally, the cost for participant
10 of the new program needs to really cover the
11 full cost of the program. For our middle school
12 programs fro example, we have to add about one-
13 third of the funding in order to provide
14 quality. That means going to private
15 foundations and working very hard to raise
16 those dollars. I can tell you for sure that the
17 private investment in the current system cannot
18 be scaled up. So in order to provide this level
19 of expansion, the city really has to invest the
20 full amount of the money that's needed. Thank
21 you.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you.

23 Mr. Pryor?

24 ERIC PRYOR: Okay. Good afternoon
25 Chairs Dromm and Cumbo and thank you for the

1
2 opportunity to testify here today on pre-k and
3 afterschool programs. My name is Eric Pryor,
4 I'm the Executive Director of the Center for
5 Arts Education. Our mission is to bring dance,
6 theater, music and visual arts to all New York
7 City school children. We do this through
8 putting programs in the schools. We also do it
9 through training school leaders and teachers as
10 well as we have awareness programs in which we
11 advocate for the art as a learning tool. We
12 believe that high quality universal pre-k and
13 after school is critical in the early learning
14 of children as well as their middle school
15 learning. One thing that we think both have in
16 common is there are two critical points in an
17 individual's life. For the little kids, when
18 they first become aware of who they are, and
19 for middle school students it's when they
20 become aware of who they want to be as an adult
21 and this is a critical moment for both. We
22 think that this is an opportunity to seize that
23 moment and support what we're trying to do with
24 them and we think the arts have to be a
25 critical component of that. I'm totally going

1
2 off my testimony. You have it there, but I was
3 inspired by what I heard from some of the other
4 speakers earlier. Doctor Fulani talked about
5 confidence. Confidence is critical. My oldest
6 daughter is in middle school right now and
7 smart girl, been in all kinds of programs but
8 even with all that being said, her confidence
9 level, we still constantly have to deal with
10 her confidence. So we put her in dance and
11 other programs. We can pay for those programs,
12 but there are a lot of people who don't have
13 the money to pay for programs and if they don't
14 have that money to pay for those programs,
15 where will they get them? And that's one of
16 the things that concerns us greatly at the
17 Center for Arts Education. The other thing I
18 would say is that while we really are--we
19 really do believe in after school programming.
20 They're very important. Kids need a safe place
21 to go, and we think the arts should be a core
22 part of after school programs, and most times
23 they are, but in middle school, we also need
24 the arts to be part of the school day. I know
25 this is not part of the discussion, but we

1
2 believe that, you know, we want school to be a
3 place where that's engaging and students want
4 to go to. If you enjoy going to school, if you
5 want to be there, then I think we'll get better
6 results. We'll have students who want to be
7 part of the school day and want to be there and
8 will be more active learners. Once again, I
9 want to thank all of you for having the
10 opportunity to speak before you. I think that
11 this is about young people finding their
12 identity, their voice, learning about different
13 cultures. It's an opportunity to learn
14 different art forms and also just to be
15 productive citizens and part of our society.
16 Thank you.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you.

18 JAMES MERRIMAN: Hi, good afternoon,
19 Chair Cumbo,

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Good
21 afternoon.

22 JAMES MERRIMAN: Chair Dromm, I know
23 it's been a long day. My name is James
24 Merriman, I'm Head of the New York City Charter
25 school Center. We provide support and advocacy

1
2 for charters in New York City and I want to
3 thank you for the opportunity for testifying. I
4 will say as an intro as a citizen of New
5 Jersey, we've made history today 'cause I think
6 this is probably the first time that someone in
7 New York has said something nice about New
8 Jersey.

9 [laughter]

10 JAMES MERRIMAN: So it's
11 heartwarming. Look, you've heard a lot. I will
12 not repeat. We are in complete alignment with
13 the Chancellor and the soon to be Deputy Mayor,
14 Richard Buery about the importance of this
15 program. Charter leaders are eager to be a part
16 of it, and we've heard a lot about how
17 important it is for it to be high quality,
18 right? And given the political and economic
19 investment that this is going to represent, we
20 need this to be successful as a city. We cannot
21 have people become disillusioned. The other
22 thing you've heard over and over and this is
23 just true, is right now the supply of good
24 seats for pre-k is going to be out stripped the
25 demand for them, particularly for those

1 students who need it most. This is a big, big,
2 big ramp up, and we applaud the Mayor for being
3 ambitious. He should, but it's going to take
4 everyone rowing in the same direction. So
5 Charter schools serve about six percent of the
6 population. In about four years they'll serve
7 10 percent of the population of the public
8 school population. I'm not going to tell you
9 it's a silver bullet and that we can alone
10 write this and make it work for New York.
11 That's just patently untrue. On the other hand,
12 right, it's a mountain climb, and this is one
13 step that right now New York City can't take by
14 including charter schools in that. What I'll
15 tell you is that we have 44 elementary charter
16 schools in private space and more that are also
17 in co-locate space and we've just began to poll
18 the school leaders, but there is enormous
19 interest in doing this and making this program
20 successfully from our elementary school
21 leaders. The other thing I'd say is and
22 obviously we think the CBO's are important
23 partners in this, but charter schools like the
24 public schools we think are ideal settings
25

1
2 because they can provide seamlessness and
3 that's another word we heard a lot today,
4 between pre-k and K, right? The same teachers
5 will be able to talk to the kindergarten
6 teachers and so forth. So in order for charters
7 to be a part of this, it will require a change
8 in state law and what we would like to see in
9 that change is not only the right to do it, but
10 also that the same random selection process for
11 students that now governs kindergarten govern
12 the process of selecting students for admission
13 in charter schools, and so we love what the
14 Mayor is doing. We were heartened to hear today
15 Chancellor Farina's word about work in progress
16 and Richard Buery's similar words. I think we
17 can all get there on this and hopefully we'll
18 get there together. Thank you again.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you. I
20 just wanted to say that to your final point
21 that it is important that we prioritize our
22 children first and to make sure that all
23 children benefit from universal pre-k as well
24 as middle school opportunities. But I want to
25 say as a former founder and Executive Director

1
2 of a not for profit organization, I understand
3 full well the sacrifice that you have made to
4 give of your entire day today to be here, the
5 preparation that goes into your testimony. I
6 understand full well the budget dance as I have
7 participated over the last decade and that
8 unharmonious, unrhythmic dance and I feel very
9 confident in this new administration that we're
10 going to work towards ending that because I
11 understand thoroughly what it's like not to
12 know if you're going to have an organization
13 year after year much less having to make budget
14 cuts here and there. You have to live with the
15 reality that your whole organization could be
16 wiped out every single year, and I understand
17 that full well, and that is why I'm here,
18 because I certainly want to be that advocate
19 for the not for profit organization and I,
20 similar to my co-chair here, have also invited
21 some folks here because I certainly want arts
22 and culture to be an integral part of what this
23 discussion about universal pre-k is about,
24 because if we don't embrace arts and culture
25 and if we don't make it pivotal and at the

1
2 foundation of what we're attempting to do here,
3 it won't be successful. And so it's important
4 and that's why I wanted you to be here to
5 testify about the importance of art and culture
6 being a pivotal point to this and all that
7 you've said here is up here and it's also in my
8 heart as well, and so even after today's
9 testimony I'm going to continue to champion
10 what you've discussed and brought forward
11 today. So thank you. Do you have any
12 questions?

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Quick, quick.
14 One--Mr. Parrott, we have your testimony?

15 JAMES PARROTT: You should have it.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. I just
17 wanted to make sure about that, 'cause as
18 Council Member said, we need to sit with it and
19 digest it and I think there's an awful lot of
20 good stuff that I know some other issues that
21 we've worked on together that'll be in that
22 report, and I'm sorry we're limited about the
23 time today, and just--

24 JAMES PARROTT: [interposing] Yeah,
25 and it's after five o'clock.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yes. And just to
3 finally ask James Merriman, have the DOE
4 reached out to you on any of this at all yet?

5 JAMES MERRIMAN: We're meeting with
6 the Chancellor on general charter issues. As
7 you know, there are a lot of issues and I
8 imagine this will be part of the discussion.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So, do you have a
10 number at this point of how many seats you
11 might be able to accommodate?

12 JAMES MERRIMAN: We're trying to
13 gather that information. I don't have a good
14 number right now.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I'd appreciate if
16 when you do get that you'd let us know what
17 that number is.

18 JAMES MERRIMAN: Absolutely.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you.

21 Thank you again. [off mic]

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Next panel is
23 Warner ? Citizens Committee for Children, Randi
24 Levine, Advocates for Children of New York,
25 Patti Banghart, Children's Defense Fund of New

1
2 York, and Loren Miller, United Way of New York
3 City. I'm sorry. And Max Ahmed, please, from
4 the New York Immigration Coalition.

5 MORA FLAVIN: Good evening.

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Just one minute.

7 I have to swear you in. Would you please raise
8 your right hand, and do you swear or affirm to
9 tell the truth the whole truth and nothing but
10 the truth in your testimony before this
11 committee and to respond honestly to questions
12 from Council Members?

13 MORA FLAVIN: Yes.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very
15 much. And would you identify yourself when you
16 begin.

17 MORA FLAVIN: Good evening. My name
18 is Mora Flavin and I'm the Policy Associate for
19 Early Childhood Education, education and youth
20 services at Citizens Committee for Children of
21 New York. CCC is a 70 year old independent
22 child advocacy organization dedicated to
23 ensuring that every New York City child is
24 healthy, housed, educated, and safe. Thank you
25 to the Chairs for holding today's hearing. CCC

1
2 is extremely grateful to the Speaker and the 46
3 additional Council Members who sponsored
4 today's resolution. This incredible show of
5 support for the value of Early Childhood
6 Education and after school programs is
7 historic. CCC is a member of the Campaign for
8 Children and together we have laid out a vision
9 for New York City. We believe that every New
10 York City child should have access to high
11 quality affordable Early Childhood Education
12 and after school program. The City's plan to
13 provide full day universal pre-kindergarten to
14 every four year old and after schools to every
15 middle school student is an extremely large
16 step towards achieving this vision. We look
17 forward to working with the next Administration
18 and the City Council to make this plan a
19 reality. A key component to making the City's
20 plan come to fruition is ensuring that the City
21 has a dedicated sustainable funding source for
22 the expansion. Mayor de Blasio's proposal to
23 implement a modest, temporary personal income
24 tax on the wealthiest New York City residents
25 ensures that the City has the dedicated and

1
2 stable funding it needs. Research overwhelming
3 shows the benefits of quality Early Childhood
4 education and afterschool programs to children,
5 families, communities and the economy as a
6 whole. It is critical that Albany allow New
7 York City to implement this plan immediately.
8 Four year olds will only get to be four years
9 old once, and we need to make sure that they
10 are prepared for kindergarten and ultimately
11 for life success. Similarly, we know the
12 Administration is in the midst of finalizing
13 its plan for middle school and after school
14 programs. These programs will also be high
15 quality and aimed at ensuring middle school
16 students achieve academically, socially, and
17 developmentally. Ultimately, these programs
18 will help keep middle school students on track
19 and on the path to high school graduation. CCC
20 is committed to working with Administration,
21 the City Council, and with other advocates and
22 providers to ensure that this plan is improved
23 in the budgeted session and that the City can
24 begin our expansion this fall. We also look
25 forward to working with the city council on

1
2 this and other initiatives that will continue
3 strengthening and expanding Early Childhood
4 education and after school for all children of
5 New York City. Thank you.

6 RANDI LEVINE: Thank you for the
7 opportunity to speak with you. My name is Randi
8 Levine and I'm an attorney and project director
9 of the early childhood education project at
10 Advocates for Children of New York. For more
11 than 40 years, Advocates for Children has
12 worked to promote access to the best education
13 New York can provide for all students
14 especially students from low income backgrounds
15 and students of color. You've already heard
16 the research about the benefits of pre-
17 kindergarten from some of the national experts,
18 and just to respond to an earlier speaker, that
19 doesn't mean that we give up on children if
20 they've missed pre-kindergarten. After all, the
21 research on afterschool programs is also quite
22 strong. It means that we need to fund both
23 programs and give them to as many children as
24 possible. I saw the impact of pre-kindergarten
25 firsthand when I worked at Head Start centers

1
2 for several years starting in 1999. Some
3 children enter preschool not speaking a word,
4 not knowing the concept of colors, or how to
5 use a book. I saw the difference that a high
6 quality full day pre-kindergarten program made
7 in preparing these children for kindergarten,
8 both academically and socially. I was surprised
9 to learn at that time that for every child in
10 Head Start there was an eligible child shut out
11 of the program due to lack of funding. Fifteen
12 years ago, these children were waiting for
13 elected officials to fund universal pre-
14 kindergarten. Fifteen years later, we're still
15 waiting. We were pleased to hear Governor Cuomo
16 announce his support for making full day pre-
17 kindergarten programs universal in New York
18 State. However, the New York State Executive
19 Budget Proposal doesn't not provide sufficient
20 funding to realize this vision. That's why we
21 need New York City's plan to create a new
22 funding stream to pay for a rapid expansion of
23 universal pre-kindergarten and after school,
24 and that's why Advocates for Children's
25 supports Resolution Number Two. And we must

1
2 get this done now. After all, children have
3 only one chance to go to preschool. In
4 implementing this plan we look forward to
5 working with the City Council and
6 Administration to make sure that universal pre-
7 kindergarten serves all preschoolers, including
8 preschoolers with developmental delays or
9 disabilities, English language learners, and
10 preschoolers living in temporary housing or
11 foster care so that the children who need this
12 program most can benefit from it. We thank you
13 and the City Council for your support of this
14 Resolution and ask our state leaders to act
15 quickly to allow New York City to make pre-
16 kindergarten truly universal and to expand
17 after school program for all middle school
18 students in New York City. Thank you for the
19 opportunity to testify.

20 PATTI BANGHART: Good afternoon.
21 Thank you for this opportunity--

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Just turn the mic
23 on.

24 PATTI BANGHART: Good afternoon.
25 Thank you for this opportunity to testify. My

1 name is Patti Banghart and I am a Senior Early
2 Childhood Policy Associate at the Children's
3 Defense Fund of New York. The Children's
4 Defense Fund is a national nonprofit child
5 advocacy organization that has worked
6 relentlessly for 40 years to ensure a level
7 playing field for all children. CDF New York is
8 also a member of the New York City's Campaign
9 for children, and we are also supporting member
10 of the Mayor's UPK NYC Coalition. CDF New York
11 fully supports this resolution and the Mayor's
12 plan to provide free high quality and universal
13 pre-kindergarten to all of New York City's four
14 year old and after school programs to all
15 middle school children funded through the small
16 tax of New Yorkers with an annual income of
17 over 500,000 dollars. We believe that creating
18 this dedicated funding stream is the only fair,
19 smart, and sustainable plan to guarantee the
20 530 million dollars needed annually to
21 universally serve over 73,000 four year olds
22 and nearly 120,000 middle school students.
23 We've been waiting on Albany for universal pre-
24 k since 1997. We want New York City to do it
25

1
2 now. The nearly 54,000 four year olds who
3 currently receive inadequate part time pre-k or
4 no pre-k at all and the one in four children
5 left alone after school can't wait any longer
6 for us to make them a priority. We've heard a
7 lot today about the benefits of pre-k. I'll
8 just say that we absolutely stand by the
9 research and what others have said about the
10 developmental benefits of it. I would also add
11 we've heard a lot about what quality entails in
12 pre-k. Again, we stand behind the research that
13 has been quoted. And we also believe that the
14 Mayor's plan incorporates all of the
15 characteristics of quality, particularly, we
16 really think that the ready to launch plan
17 calls for serving the one in five children who
18 enter kindergarten as English Language learners
19 by providing intensive training from DOE
20 instructional coaches on how to support these
21 students is really important. And CDF also
22 believes that the after school programs are
23 critical to the success of children. We've
24 heard a little bit less about the research on
25 that, so I'll just add that regular attendance

1
2 and high quality after school programs is
3 associated with a range of positive
4 developmental outcomes including improved
5 academic performance, task persistence,
6 improved work habits and study skills, improved
7 social skills and fewer aggressive behaviors.
8 The quality of after school programs also
9 really counts just as in pre-k. There's a
10 wealth of information on what constitutes
11 quality and the research on after school
12 programs, and we know that the quality of after
13 school programs is a key determinant of getting
14 youth in the door and engaged in order to
15 really reap the maximum benefits of
16 participation. In closing I'll just say that
17 again we approve of the resolution and we're
18 happy to help the Council in implementing this.

19 MAX AHMED: Good afternoon. Thank
20 you to all members of the Council. It's been a
21 long day, I know, and I'd like to congratulate
22 you both on your Chairmanship. My name is Max
23 Ahmed. I am the Education Program Associate at
24 the New York Immigration Coalition. We are an
25 umbrella advocacy and policy organization of

1
2 nearly 200 community based organizations, labor
3 unions, civic groups, and we hope to work
4 together with our Coalition members to fight
5 for immigrants and English language learners
6 within the system, and broadly we cover a range
7 of issues from civics to health to immigration
8 reform. I know it's been a long day so I will
9 get right to it. We strongly support Mayor de
10 Blasio's plan and we strongly support the
11 resolution number two. We are really happy that
12 the plan includes a full day pre-k program and
13 the provision for after school and support for
14 middle school children and we were also pleased
15 to see that English language learners were
16 prominently included in the Ready to Launch
17 Program. High quality full day pre-k program
18 is especially important for English language
19 learners. These children are all dual language
20 learners in essence as they grew up learning
21 their own language at home and they're learning
22 English in school. So we--as the City looks
23 forward to expanding this program, it would be
24 crucial to look at certain key areas to ensure
25 that the quality of instruction for dual

1 language learners in all aspects of the systems
2 development are implemented. So four main
3 points from my testimony here. The first is
4 that the City has this opportunity to at the
5 very beginning of our children's educational
6 career to make an impact. English language
7 learners are especially important as their
8 early development happens in the years before
9 age five. So young dual language learners
10 should have the access to programs that value
11 their home language and support its development
12 in addition to English. And then the second,
13 the City acknowledges that you can't have a
14 quality system without good teachers. So we
15 should ensure that professional development
16 efforts are rooted in practices that are
17 effective and relevant to dual language
18 learners, and also the city should work to
19 recruit a diverse work force from the
20 communities that the children are in. And
21 along these lines it's important to ensure that
22 teachers have the right qualifications. The
23 City should not overlook the critical
24 importance of teacher assistance and those in
25

1
2 similar supportive roles. Third, just quickly,
3 there's a system-wide approach that's needed
4 and so families just translation and
5 interpretations already difficult within the k-
6 12 system. We need to ensure that our parents
7 are being informed about the right choices and
8 we should be doing it in their native
9 languages. And finally, a more fine grain data
10 system regarding the demographics of family's
11 needs to be implemented and we need to make
12 sure that matching programs that match
13 community needs to programs are implemented.
14 We're really pleased with the City's plan, and
15 in closing we whole heartedly support this
16 program and we'd love to work with the City
17 Council to ensure that these programs can top
18 the enormous potential that our city's
19 immigrant student have. Thank you.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I want to
21 thank you all for staying and remaining. I know
22 it's been a long day for you. I hope also
23 educational, but I can't stress enough the
24 importance of your testimony. It's so powerful
25 for us as co-chairs of this to be able to say

1
2 that we received so much of an outcry, so much
3 support, so many people came out to testify
4 today and for this to be documented as part of
5 a public record and also to be televised,
6 certain portions of it, this really gives us an
7 opportunity to state our case even stronger. To
8 know that there was so much support for it.

9 Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. I have
11 to say Max, thanks for coming and for making it
12 clear that pre-k, UPK is an immigrant rights
13 issue as well. Thank you.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: That's right.
15 Thank you. We are going to have our final panel
16 for today. You know what they say about saving
17 the best for last right? That's a consolation.
18 We're going to have Ann Jannet Peretas
19 [phonetic]. We are also going to have Joanne
20 Eichel, is that correct? And we're also going
21 to have Kevin Collins from the Doctors Council.
22 Here, okay. They supplied their testimony and
23 I actually had an opportunity to read it and it
24 was phenomenal.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And for the
3 record, we do have testimony from United Way as
4 well. Do you swear or affirm to tell the
5 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the
6 truth in your testimony before this committee
7 and to respond honestly to the Council Member
8 questions?

9 JOANNE EICHEL: I do.

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And state your
11 name please for the record?

12 JOANNE EICHEL: Joanne Eichel.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you.

14 JOANNE EICHEL: So good evening, and
15 I appreciate your resilience. I'm Joanne
16 Eichel. I'm Director of the Office of School
17 Health Programs at the New York Academy of
18 Medicine and I'm a former pre-k teacher. I want
19 to thank you Chair Dromm and Chari Cumbo for
20 the opportunity to be here and to voice our
21 support and to discuss the impact that we feel
22 that high quality pre-k programs can have on
23 the health of participants in the short and the
24 long term and the program features that support
25 these outcomes. Going off script, I think we

1
2 tend to think of education and health as
3 separate, but when I look at what's going on,
4 It's completely integrated. Health impacts
5 learning and learning impacts health. So the
6 New York Academy of Medicine has taken a very
7 special interest in school health education
8 beginning back in in 1979 with our
9 collaboration with DOE to provide curricula,
10 educational materials and professional
11 development for k-5 classroom teachers to
12 institutionalize growing healthy in New York
13 City, which was the first comprehensive health
14 ed program run by the school system, started at
15 the Academy. So as we've continued to expand
16 our k-12 we recognize the growing and the
17 compelling research based case for working to
18 impact the health of children at an even
19 younger age and the profound role that pre-k
20 programs can have in these efforts. So we know
21 that children who are healthy are more likely
22 to be ready for school and ready to learn.
23 They're less likely to be absent and more
24 likely to pay attention and learn while in
25 school. So the positive association between

1 better health and schooling is very well
2 established and I know you know that. Early
3 childhood programs can improve both the health
4 and the academic achievement of children which
5 translate into long-term improvements in health
6 for adults and that's kind of the piece that I
7 wanted to just highlight today. So the evidence
8 available identifies the features of high
9 quality Early Childhood programs that have the
10 potential to produce health benefits. They
11 include the integration of education about
12 health, nutrition, and physical activity, the
13 use of evidence based curricula with an
14 emphasis on children's social and emotion
15 development and self-regulation, well trained
16 highly qualified teachers and the provision of
17 screenings and referrals for health, dental,
18 mental health, developmental issues, vision and
19 hearing, or the facilitation of access to these
20 through other programs. Facilities need to be
21 safe and health promoting environments that
22 improve healthy meals and healthy snacks and
23 opportunities for exercise. And as many of the
24 other speakers talked about parent engagement,
25

1 fully engaged families is critical. So
2 systematic reviews of the studies, examining
3 the impacts of preschool programs on children's
4 health found evidence of increased health among
5 preschool participants, decreases in obesity,
6 greater mental health and social/emotional
7 competence. Children in preschool are more like
8 to be physically active and more likely to
9 consume a nutritious diet in preschool.
10 Preschool programs appear to have protective
11 effects against allergies and respiratory
12 problems including asthma. We also know that
13 health during adulthood and old age is
14 influenced by experiences in early childhood
15 and there was a study that came out just a few
16 weeks ago that was it the New England Journal
17 of Medicine that--and it's just an example that
18 supports the idea that not only is obesity
19 established very early in life, but that it
20 basically tracks through adolescents and
21 adulthood. So the premise here is that obesity
22 prevention needs to start even earlier, in
23 preschool is an opportunity. So we know that
24 the multiple pathways both direct and indirect
25

1 through which early childhood programs can
2 contribute to better health manifest in the
3 short and the long term. For example, children
4 attending high quality pre-k programs make
5 cognitive and social/emotional gains that are
6 associated with improved adult health.
7
8 Preschool participants also more likely to go
9 to a doctor, receive appropriate screenings and
10 immunizations and receive dental care laying
11 the early foundation for early later adult
12 health. Additionally, preschoolers and their
13 parents often learn about health and nutrition
14 which can result in lifestyle changes that
15 prevent obesity and malnutrition. Finally,
16 children who participate in high quality
17 preschool programs may experience less abuse,
18 neglect, and injury in the home. So there are
19 two paradigm in operation, adult health is
20 dependent on childhood and healthier children
21 become healthier adults. The benefits of high
22 quality pre-k interventions extend beyond the
23 first few years of life and into adulthood.
24 You have the rest of the details. In the
25 interest of time, let me just say that we're,

1
2 the New York Academy of Medicine is pleased
3 that the City Council has convened this
4 hearing. We appreciate your efforts and we
5 support your efforts and we look forward to
6 working with you on this important issue. And I
7 just need to say I'm amazed by how focused you
8 all stayed in spite of the late hour. So I
9 thank you.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: It's been an
11 incredible learning experience for me, and I
12 want to say that while it seems like your every
13 day and it's a given, I hadn't looked at this
14 issue from a health perspective, and so it's
15 very important that you provided that level of
16 testimony because when we think about it, we
17 think about your cognitive skills, we think
18 about development. We think about arts. We
19 think about all the different sorts of things,
20 but the development of your health, and I just
21 wanted to conclude by asking a question. I know
22 you mentioned it in your remarks, but what
23 would be the key core services, if you will,
24 that every pre-k student currently is receiving
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or would be able to receive through this type of educational initiative?

JOANNE EICHEL: Meaning?

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Would they be--and I don't have children and I haven't studied it in the same way. So a child that's going to be in the universal pre-k, and it's going to be--

JOANNE EICHEL: [interposing] I think just to have a lens, a health lens in everything--

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] Is your mic on?

JOANNE EICHEL: I'm sorry. I thought it was on. I think to have a health lens in everything that you're doing. I was struck by the gentleman from the Harlem Children's Museum and he talked about teaching literacy and health through the arts, and so that's the kind of thing that I mean I think that's an ideal program. Because you can't--you don't think of these things separately. They have to be integrated and you don't have time to do them separately.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Like, would
3 you get an opportunity to have an eye exam or
4 dental exam?

5 JOANNE EICHEL: I think screenings.
6 I think that's something that you might want to
7 think about, just screenings.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: That's
9 interesting.

10 JOANNE EICHEL: At that early an age
11 because they're not, you know, they're often
12 not even done in first and second grade now,
13 but to do pre-k vision, hearing, dental
14 screenings, and then--

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: [interposing]
16 would be critical to get them on that right
17 path so that way when they're--I find with so
18 many young people that when they get to a
19 certain level they think that they have
20 learning disabilities, well maybe it's that
21 they have a vision or hearing impairment that
22 was never checked early on.

23 JOANNE EICHEL: Never identified.
24 Absolutely. So if I had to pick the one
25 component that I think I haven't heard today, I

1
2 would say it would be the screenings, because
3 everybody's talking about parent engagement and
4 evidence based curricula.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Right.

6 JOANNE EICHEL: But that health, you
7 know, that would be almost a key piece as well
8 as nutrition and a healthy environment.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you so
10 very much for your perspective. It was a huge
11 eye opener and I'm glad you were able to close
12 us out with that vital piece of information to
13 this comprehensive discussion.

14 JOANNE EICHEL: Thank you so much.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Just before you
17 go, I remember the day I started teaching in
18 public school in 1984 and we had a dentist
19 office in the school. We had a doctor's office
20 in the school, and we had regular screenings
21 going on in the school. So you're bringing
22 something to mind that is vitally important and
23 that we should really go back to and I think
24 that the Mayor in his community schools that
25

1
2 they're setting up has some of this in those
3 community schools as well.

4 JOANNE EICHEL: I think--right.

5 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And I think it's
6 really important that we make that system wide
7 if we can.

8 JOANNE EICHEL: Right, and bring it
9 down to the earliest--

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing]
11 Right.

12 JOANNE EICHEL: level. We're happy
13 to help if we could be of any help from the
14 Academy.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So it is 5:42 and
18 I'm adjourning this meeting. Thank you vey
19 much for coming.

20 [gavel]

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COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is no interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date 02/19/2014