

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

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September 16, 2014
Start: 10:20 a.m.
Recess: 12:39 p.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E: Mathieu Eugene
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Annabel Palma
Darlene Mealy
Margaret S. Chin
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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Bill Chong

Commissioner of Department of Youth and
Community Development

Denice Williams

Assistant Commissioner for COMPASS

Darryl Rattray

Assistant Commissioner of Beacons, Cornerstones,
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Allison Weingarten

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Director of the STEM Educator's Academy Program
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Northside Center

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Citizens Committee for Children

COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

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CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay, we're going to start. Good morning. I'm Council Member Mathieu Eugene, Chair of the Council Committee on Youth Services. The topic of today's hearing is afterschool programming in New York City. This program served an important role in our children's education and development. It has been estimated that students spend roughly two quarters of their waking hours outside school. These hours, time in young people's life can enrich the long term success. The US Department of Justice studies suggest that 29 percent of juvenile youth offenses happen during the hours of 2:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. At the same time, youth who are engaged in nurturing afterschool program score higher in tests and have a greater self-confidence. In New York City, especially, many student are children of working families, and parent cannot always be home to ensure that students are using their time positively and constructively. Afterschool organization provides students and families a valuable service. And I applaud everyone in this room for the work they do to better the life of our young citizens. There is no question that afterschool program improves all children life.

Student who participate in afterschool program have better attendance records, are less likely to make negative health decision and are more likely to go to college. I commend the USD [sic] and the network of afterschool programs, their--for the wide array of offering. It is wonderful that student have the opportunity to engage in art, sport and cultural activities as well as receive academic support and enrichment, all of which would enhance their career [sic] as student in their future life. That many afterschool programs which take, always take approach [sic] to working families of when purely and very important skill, like parental skill, ESL, GED courses are also a testament of the, you know, importance of the program. At today's hearing, we hope to learn more about what the after school program provide in New York City, and we'd also like to explore expansion of the Cornerstone and Compass programs and whether there is a plan to explain any additional afterschool program. At this moment, I would like to welcome all of you, Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner. I want to welcome you and I want to thank you for your time, and thank you for all the different jobs that you are doing in DYCD and

1 to all that advocate also, thank you very much,
2 because all of you are doing a wonderful job by
3 providing afterschool programs and many other program
4 that are very important for the success of our young
5 people. As we usually say, it take a village to
6 raise a child, and we are the village. But my father
7 usually said also, "My son, there is no such thing as
8 perfection. There is no perfection. There's always
9 room for improvement. Every single day we try to go
10 over what we have done and figure out how we can do
11 it better." And that's exactly the purpose of this
12 hearing today. We're working together. We are
13 investing a lot of resources and not enough, not
14 enough. We can do more as a city and we should do
15 more. And again, thank you very much for your
16 participation, your presence and your time, and thank
17 you again on behalf of the children and behalf of the
18 parents, and on my own behalf as the Chair of the
19 Youth Service Committee. And now, we're going to
20 start. You can start your testimonies. Before you
21 do that, it is a requirement from the City Council
22 that I say what I'm going to say. The affirmation--
23 okay, we got. You know that before we start you get
24 to--exactly, to commit yourself to tell the truth.
25

And then you say that, do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony before this committee and to respond honestly to Council Member's question?

BILL CHONG: I do.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Alright.

BILL CHONG: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I--

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: [interposing] Thank you much.

BILL CHONG: thank you for the opportunity to discuss the work of DYCD and afterschool services and for your support and for the support of the council and many of our program. Before I start my testimony, I want to take this opportunity to introduce a new member of my staff who started yesterday. Her name's Stacey Lynch. She's the new Assistant Commissioner for External Relations, and she's right here. She will be overseeing all the intergovernmental and external relations work, working with Anthony Yang [sic] and the Council staff on issues that affect our agency, but I also want to take this opportunity to thank Andrew Miller who has served in that position for

more than five years, and who will continue to work with DYCD in a new important role as the Senior Advocate for Community Resources, and it's a new position I created to work specifically with the Council and with community groups on organizations that are funded by the Council, so we can troubleshoot, improve services, so that we can get money more quickly and promptly to the organizations that you have supported. And so Andrew's fulltime job will be to take inquiries from your staff, other council staff, community organizations, so we can get to the bottom of what might be the problem.

Sometimes it's a bottleneck on our end. Sometimes it's a piece of document, a document that a group needs. So Andrew will taking on that responsibility and we hope it will help him better improve the services we provide to council-funded organizations.

Let me start. Good morning, Chairman Eugene and members of the Youth Services Committee. My name is Bill Chong, and I'm Commissioner of the Department of Youth and Community Development. I'm joined to my left by Denice Williams, who's the Assistant Commissioner for COMPASS, the Comprehensive After School System programs, and to my right, Darryl

Rattray who oversees--is our Assistant Commissioner in charge of the Beacons and Cornerstones and Community Centers. Thank you for holding this Oversight Hearing on Afterschool programs. As I sit here this morning, I'm excited and proud of our agency's accomplishments and afterschool services and our ability to help more youth develop successfully than ever before. Last year, actually last week, 271 new afterschool programs for middle school students were launched. The Mayor made this possible by making access to middle school afterschool programs a high priority. 145 million dollars this fiscal year and 190 million next year and beyond will support this expansion. These programs are part of COMPASS, our Comprehensive Afterschool System of New York City. COMPASS programs are for a mix of academic, recreational and cultural activities for young people after school, on holidays and during the summer. Programs are available for elementary, middle and high school aged students. They are located in schools, community centers, settlement houses, religious institutions, cultural organizations, public housing and parks and recreational facilities. The majority of these programs are in high needs zip

codes based on the following factors: youth and poverty, English language learners, and youth in state subsidized childcare. In fiscal year 2015 there were 88,938 program seats in COMPASS programs alone. The origins of COMPASS date back to the restructuring of the city's afterschool system last decade. In the late 2003, DYCD initiated a yearlong planning process that included providers, foundations, researchers and a few city agencies. The result was the combination of several afterschool and childcare funding streams to create a new model of afterschool services called Out of School Time, OST, which officially began in September 2005. The creation of OST had several innovations, which are the bedrock of COMPASS today. Required number of service hours, an age appropriate hours of programming to youth is offered. For example, all elementary programs offer services after school for three hours a day, five days a week during the school year. In our middle school afterschool program's youth get 15 hours of programming a week, nine structured activities and six in unstructured activities. Programs on school holidays and during the summer: As an economic support, this ensures

that working families have a safe, free and quality program for their children to attend when school is out at these times of year. A mix of activities: To promote quality and engagement, programs offer academic, recreational and cultural activities. Increased program data and tracking of outcomes: Youth development research shows the benefit of consistent attendance and engagement in afterschool programs. For the generous support of the Wallis Foundation, we built DYCD Online, a web-based program management system designed to increase accountability which allows DYCD and providers to track and analyze program attendance and trends in a timely fashion. Program support: To maintain program quality, DYCD offers program monitoring, coaching, professional development and capacity building services to its providers. And finally, program evaluation: Policy Studies Associates, a Washington D.C. based evaluation firm has analyzed the impact of COMPASS programs on the children and communities we serve. To promote the investments being made to the city's afterschool system we rebranded OST to COMPASS NYC, the Comprehensive Afterschool System of New York City, with the middle school programs being known as

SONYC or School's Out NYC. New logos and promotional materials have been developed along with dedicated SONYC website. A broad marketing campaign to promote SONYC enrollment was launched in mid-August. Elements have been included in social media, online pre-enrollment, letters from Chancellor Farina to PTA leaders and parents and subway ads in three languages. In the months ahead, we will continue to develop the COMPASS system. We will release another SONYC RFP for center-based and nonpublic school sites. We will also release a concept paper for a different model to be located at city family shelters and Department of Education District 79 schools. Finally, we're adding an additional capacity building for providers and identifying evaluators for the SONYC expansion. In addition to the COMPASS DYCD, Beacons and Cornerstone Community Centers offer youth programs during the school year and summer time in community based settings that also include services for adults and families. Launched under Mayor David Dinkins, Beacon's Community Centers have become a national and international model. Beacons are collaborative school based community centers operating after school in the evenings and on

weekends. They were created in the early 1990's in response to widespread concern about crime and drugs in New York City. Since their inception, Beacons have served more than a million youth or adults. Currently there are 80 Beacons, 50 of which also host Administration for Children Services Foster Care Prevention Programs. Beacons offer middle school youth 216 hours of programming annually which included summer programs. Beacon Youth can also participate in citywide activities such as the Beacon Girls Basketball and Soccer League, Step it Up Community Services and Dance, and the STEM, the mentoring program, First Lego League in partnership with the New York City, the New York Academy of Science. Envisioned after school programming for youth, Beacons also provide an array of services for adults and other community residents, such as life skills, activities to increase personal responsibility, self-esteem and confidence, career exploration workshops, civic engagement, community building activities to strengthen leadership skills and civic responsibility, recreational health and fitness activities, cultural and arts activities such as music, dance and drama. Together, all Beacon

programs serve more than 86,000 participants annually. Beacons are very popular and have become pillars of community development and support in their respective neighborhoods. Through our Cornerstones, DYCD offers programs for public housing residents and New York City Housing Authority Community Centers. They were initiated after NYCHA, New York City Housing Authority, proposed to close 25 of its community centers in 2008. Advocates and public housing residents urged to keep the centers open. In fiscal year 2009 budget, an agreement was reached to save the centers. Twelve million was added to DYCD's budget to develop a stronger program model to serve public housing youth, adults and families. The first 25 Cornerstones started in January 2009. Cornerstone Youth Programs help participants acquire the academic foundation and interpersonal skills they need to graduate from high school, succeed in the work place and give back to their community. Typical youth activities include homework help, STEM activities, and high school and college prep, community engagement such as community beautification and mentoring, visual and performing arts such as dance, music, singing and photography, and healthy living

activities through sports and workshops. Citywide, there is a Cornerstone mentoring program and boys' basketball league. Cornerstone adult programs are designed to enhance skills and promote social interaction, community engagement and physical activity. Typical adult activities include high school equivalency and English for speakers of other language instruction, employment services such as career exploration, job search strategies, resume writing, interviewing techniques, cultural activities, family relationships and parenting skills workshops, tend [sic] education and advocacy and intergenerational programing. Last year, New York City Housing Authority was faced with the same decision in 2008, to close several of its community centers. Again, they were saved and the operation of the centers was transferred to DYCD. As a result, we launched 45 more Cornerstones in January of 2014, bringing the total to 70 centers. Cornerstone centers goals have been an integral aspect of the 210 million dollars in mayoral initiatives to make New York City Housing Authority community safer. DYCD received new funding to extend the summer hours of Cornerstone centers until 11:00 p.m. daily, with centers

containing gyms extended to 12:30 on weekends. The extended hours were a huge success. Initial data shows that three and a half times the number of young people and adults attended Cornerstone programs this summer compared to last summer. DYCD also operates several smaller youth programs as follows. Teen ACTION, which stands for Achieving Change Together in Our Neighborhoods, is DYCD's service learning program. Young people in grades seven to ten engage in structured learning service projects and reflections. They have provided an opportunity to develop life skills while making a meaningful contribution to their community. Approximately 1,000 teens are in 17 Teen ACTION programs throughout the city. DYCD's in school youth programs or transition to adulthood helps high school juniors and seniors graduate from high school and prepare them for the next steps, whether employment, post secular education or both. Academic support is offered through tutoring, college visits and SAT prep. Career awareness activities include a paid summer job through SYP work readiness skills and mentoring. Participants also have support through guidance and counseling, stipends, leadership development

activities and follow-up services. In school youth is a two year program with up to one year of follow-up services. That's been supported by the Federal Workforce Investment Act. Finally, through our neighborhood development area we have youth programs that reach about 3,000 middle school and high school aged youth. Federal community services block grant funding supports anti-poverty programs in 42 neighborhood development areas across the city. A neighborhood development area is comprised of having at least 20 percent of residents living at or below 125 percent of the federal poverty level. Neighborhood advisory boards represents the neighborhood development areas as members guide the city in allocating the community service block grant funding for community based youth service programming. These include youth services, employment, housing, immigrant services, literacy and senior citizen services. Members conduct formal needs assessments which are part of the neighborhood development area request for proposal. Once again, thank you for holding this important hearing today on afterschool programs. We look forward to continuing to work with you to support positive youth

development programs for New York City. I'll be happy to answer your questions at this point.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much, Commissioner, for that testimony. Let me just commend for appointing to members to your staff to address the issue of litmus [sic], you know, that facing the organization in terms of receiving the funding. I think in the previous earlier you discussed in a previous meeting that I had with you, you discussed about, you know, what can be done to expedite the process of funding of--work [sic] to this organization. And I'm very pleased that you take decision to do that, and I think that Mr. Andrew will be the person we will be working and figure out how we can have those organizations receive the funding, you know, in a timely manner. But could you tell me what has been put in place to make sure that we make progress in this area, to make sure that we expedite the process and we ensure that the organization receives their money in time?

BILL CHONG: Well--

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: [interposing] What would be exactly--

BILL CHONG: [interposing] I mean, a number of improvements were made over the last few years, including streamlining the process so that if the contract was less than 100,000 dollars, it's less requirements. So, we recognize that a big contract requires more scrutiny, and then smaller contracts under a certain amount require less scrutiny. So often times, even for new groups that are new to the contracting process, it can be daunting. So, part of what Andrew's job will be is to work with the Mayor's Office of Contract Services to ensure that these groups get the special attention they need, and if they run into road blocks, that they have someone to call who can figure out exactly where the bottleneck is. Sometimes, it might be something that needs to be done at our end. Sometimes it's something that they need to do. So, I think having one person who they can turn to, who can figure out how to navigate our system will make a big difference.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: I know that, you know, this issue is not only under subsidy [sic] of DYCD, so it's part of the Administration, DYCD. Did you have any meaning with the their, the Administration to work together and to partner and

see how you can join forces to be more successful in doing this?

BILL CHONG: I'm not part of those discussions, and this was an issue I took on because I recognized we have 1,300 contracts that are awarded every year by the council. So I want to make sure for the amount of work that we're responsible for, that we can be as efficient as possible. So there's-- I'm not part of any larger discussions on that.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay. And in your testimony, you say that last week to every single one [sic], you have the school program for middle school student where lunch, and I was there and I saw you, that was wonderful, and you said that the Mayor made this possible by making access to middle school afterschool program a high priority, 145 million this fiscal year, and 190 million next year, and beyond will support this expansion. And I want to tell you that I'm very pleased and I want to commend the Mayor for his effort to provide afterschool programs to all the student, because I know firsthand, and I know and I've seen firsthand the positive impact on the life of the young people when they go to afterschool program. And the founder and the former director of

the nonprofit organization that I created also in the community, and we were providing afterschool programs, sports, music, you know, education to the young people, and I'm telling you I'm so proud to see those young people now. They are successful professional and some of them they're working with me in my office as members of my staff, and I was doing that for the 15 or 17 years before. I didn't have any idea that I was going to become the City Council Member and those young people who would be part of my staff. This is another way to see that afterschool programs and all the programs that we are providing are very, very, very important to have the young people success. We know about the DYCD and the city, you know, together are providing more afterschool programs to the young people, but when you improve your system, when you provide more services, that requires more staff, more work to be done. So could you tell us about what have been done to make sure that you recruit necessary staff, the staff that I need to make sure that addition of afterschool programs succeed and the children benefit from that?

BILL CHONG: You're absolutely right.

Once you have quantity and without--and there are--85

percent of the schools that serve middle school students have afterschool services, either through DYCD or through the Department of Education. So once you get to that level of quantity, you have to really focus on quality. So we've hired--how many new staff? We've hired 30 so far, new--I mean, I went to a recent meeting of my staff at DYCD, half the people I did not recognize. They started in the last month. In fact, we are running out of room and we're in the process of actually relocating our offices. So, part of the reason we wanted to hire new staff, one is we have 271 new programs, but we also wanted to reduce the number of contracts each person had. When I started in January, we had something like 33 contracts per person. You can't really provide quality support for programs when one person has 33 contracts. So part of hiring more staff was to also reduce the number of contracts to about, what, 20? Yeah, one to 20, which is a more reasonable number, because then you can spend time with groups that are struggling. You can provide them coaching. You can connect them to other resources we have. So you're absolutely right, monitoring is--once the programs

get fully enrolled, we want to focus like a laser beam on quality programming.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: When you say that you reduce the number of contract by providers from 33 to 20, so what about the rest? Let's say 32 to 20--

BILL CHONG: [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: 20--

BILL CHONG: [interposing] You have more staff so each staff has less contracts.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: So I'm talking about those young people who are receiving services from those 33 contracts.

BILL CHONG: The services continue, but each contract, each program manager who is hired by DYCD to monitor contracts will have fewer contracts who are responsible for.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Oh, I see. So, and tell me, when you said recruiting staff, but what is your ability or the ability of DYCD to recruit qualified staff? Because we know that afterschool--

BILL CHONG: [interposing] After investing--

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: program--

BILL CHONG: [interposing] You're talking about for the programs that operating services?

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Yes.

BILL CHONG: So we--I referenced this in my testimony. We've spent, I believe, another 400,000 or so in professional development and capacity building because we recognize that we want to make sure that the most qualified staff are running these programs, and I guess the best way we can ensure qualified staff is that we increased the amount we're investing in each young person. So, now, in the SONYC, School's After--School's Out NYC programs, we raised the investment to 3,000 dollars per young person. So what this allows a lot of the programs to do is they can hire more qualified staff. They can hire teachers who can work after school. We did a job fair in late June at the City University of New York and we got a lot of graduate students from social work, from the School of Education. We worked with the Actor's Fund who got artists involved, and a lot of now are working in the SONYC programs.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: And in your testimony you said programs, talking about program

support, you said to maintain program quality, DYCD offers program mentoring, coaching, professional development and capacity building services to each providers. And you mentioned in term of evaluation, because we got to evaluate, you know, what we are doing. Are we making progress or not, and this is very important to evaluate what we are doing and to provide support to your staff. You say that policy started assessing [sic]--DYCD, evaluation--you're talking about evaluation, you're talking about support. What--can you talk more in detail, talk about what type of support that you provide, and you know, the structure, what you have in place to evaluate, you know, the services?

BILL CHONG: Evaluation, let me take it in two levels. Each program has a separate contract. So under the city's requirements, we have to do an annual performance evaluation, which is called Vendex [sic], and we look at basic requirements of the contract, do they keep young people engaged? Do they meet their enrollment? Do they hit the attendance requirements? Do they maintain the staff ratios? And we developed a program quality monitoring tool which is used across all our programs to look at things

1 like the quality of the staff, and so all that goes
2 into the annual evaluation of each program, which is
3 the Vendex ratings. Separate and apart from that, we
4 are bringing on an evaluation firm who's going to do
5 an evaluation of the entire system to see what trends
6 might exist, to see how we implemented the program in
7 the first year, to see what impact it has on young
8 people who are enrolled in this program two or three
9 years out, perhaps, and that's the biggest system
10 evaluation. We're in the process of making a final
11 decision and then hope to announce sometime this fall
12 the evaluation firm that's going to do the system-
13 wide evaluation. So we're looking at the individual
14 program level to make sure we provide our accountable
15 to whatever the contract says, but with, you know,
16 the system wide level how to make improvements.

18 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: It is good to
19 evaluate and also to provide support, but overseeing
20 the providers to people who are providing services
21 also to the young people, what do you have in place
22 to oversee them, to make sure that every day the
23 services of the program that they're providing to the
24 young people are good program, sussative [sic]
25 program, cultural program, and we have to keep in

mind also dealing with young people is a very complex situation. The afterschool programs is a good idea, a good thing, but through the children we see really the benefit of that. What do you have to oversee the program, the staff--

BILL CHONG: [interposing] So the--

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: and the--

BILL CHONG: [interposing] The program managers that I, that we, I referenced earlier, they do regular site visits. Some are scheduled. Sometimes they're unscheduled so we can see firsthand the quality of the programs being delivered. We track attendance on a regular basis. We understand that for a program to have an impact on a young person, young people have to show up. So that's why in the SONYC programs there are nine hours of structured activities. So each provider, each program has to give us a schedule of weekly activities. So if we see that based on the attendance data that young people not showing, then we have to say to them, well, maybe you need to change what you're offering, because as you--had you saw firsthand on Friday that this age group especially, early adolescents, they are consumers.

1 They make the decisions. As the Chancellor said,
2 they make choices. So if what we're offering them
3 isn't engaging then we need to figure out different
4 programming that will engage them, because they will
5 not come to the program. So we--attendance is a key
6 factor that we look at very closely because it
7 measures whether you're engaging people on a regular
8 meaningful way.

10 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: You know, since you
11 have a system to evaluate and to oversee the services
12 provided to the young people, how would you rate the
13 services at the afterschool program that we have in
14 New York City? Can you say that we have a good high
15 quality afterschool program, fair quality, low
16 quality? How would you rate?

17 BILL CHONG: I think we're blessed with a
18 large community of high quality providers. Is every
19 program the same? Not there yet. And I think, you
20 know, especially when you launch a system expansion
21 of this scale, I think, you know, that's why we
22 wanted to make sure we had enough staff to do the
23 site visits. We invested enough in the capacity
24 building and professional development, because I want
25 to reach a system where no matter what community

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CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: You mentioned that, you know, the services are not the same on the board, and agree with you. There's so much to do, so much to be done, and but could you tell us what are the challenges that make the program different from each other?

BILL CHONG: I think the school based programs, and this is something we've been very aware of, is the partnership with the Principal. And that's why in the last few years in all the programs that we funded, a minimum requirement was that you had to have a signed agreement with a Principal. And in this particular expansion we went to great detail in working with the Department of Education to spell out the partnership in great detail. So each side, the nonprofit agency as well as the Principal knew exactly what was expected of them. Because we know for school based program one of the key to successes is a good relationship with the Principal so you can align what's happening in the school day with what happens in the after school and I think that probably is the biggest challenge. Sometimes we have to intervene. Sometimes we have to mediate, and sometimes a program doesn't work out and we may have to move the program or find a different partner.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: That was going to be my next question because I know that that relationship between the Principal and also the provider should be a good relationship, otherwise, the program is going to face a lot of challenges, and

I'm glad that you have something in place to respond to that and to try to resolve the situation. Let me ask one other thing. The resources and the funding for the programs, the funding is the same all over the place?

BILL CHONG: Right.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Or the funding different from one board to one board [sic].

BILL CHONG: I mean, for the SONYC program, every middle school program and every young person gets 3,000 dollars per student. For the programs that serve young people with special needs, we allow programs to ask for more money because the needs there might be different. So a young person is, you know, is mobility challenged or is visually challenged and to provide the kind of services at a high quality level, you need 4,000 dollars. We allow that as long as you can explain in your proposal what those costs are. So everyone gets 3,000 dollars in the SONYC programs, and we make exceptions for young people with special needs.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: But the providers of the organization, do they receive enough funding that we--

BILL CHONG: [interposing] I--

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: [interposing] that
would--

BILL CHONG: [interposing] I mean, I
think that--

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: [interposing] for
them to provide--

BILL CHONG: [interposing] The 3,000 was
a number that came, that we developed in consultation
with the provider community. Because previously it
was 2,100, and in a lot of the planning for this
expansion we did a white paper back in, I believe,
early March and the white paper was sort of the
blueprint for the program design, and the 3,000 was a
number that came as a result of conversations we had
with service providers.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: You do not mention
the funding, because the funding can, you know,
impact negatively in the ability of the organizations
or the providers who provide good services to the
people, but of all [sic], for them to be able to hire
qualified teachers and qualified staff, they don't
have enough funding, you know, the stuff they are
going to recruit or they require [sic] of that.

1 Because I think this is an issue we should look into,
2 and I would like you to talk a little bit about that.
3 Do they receive enough funding to hire qualified,
4 high quality qualified staff and also to provide high
5 quality services?
6

7 BILL CHONG: As I said, the 3,000 was
8 based on what the people who run programs said they
9 needed, because in the previous design of the program
10 was only 2,100. So obviously, cost will go up over
11 time and we can certainly look at that issue, but for
12 now, we're pretty confident that the 3,000, the
13 additional money that the Mayor invested, is
14 sufficient to ensure quality programs.

15 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: And I think also the
16 program may be different dependent on the location,
17 the site where the program is provided, like say for
18 example, space. The schools, they have wonderful
19 spaces in you know, June and stuff like that, but I
20 think some organization that I visit other places,
21 but even they would like to provide some program they
22 won't be able to because the places they are using
23 doesn't allow them to do so. Is there anything in
24 place to help them get, you know, adequate space or
25

facilities to provide those services that they are providing?

BILL CHONG: I think the schools have been tremendously cooperative in providing space and so--and that's part of the partnership agreement between the Principal and the nonprofit, is there's an understanding from the very beginning before they even submit a proposal about the space requirements because there are state regulations that require a certain amount of space for the certain number of young people you're serving, and then the Health Department looks at this, and if it doesn't meet those standards, the program is licensed. So, schools, we're not concerned about space. As we expand the program to community centers--community centers have less space, and you're absolutely right, those programs seem to be much smaller because they're limited in the space they have. But one of the beauties of having so many programs in schools is that after school, most of the school building is available, so space isn't as much as a limitation in the school setting as is in the community setting.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Talking about funding and resources, we know that most of the

1 funding come from the city, but in addition to the
2 city funding, can you elaborate, you know, about what
3 other sources of funding that the DYCD receive for
4 afterschool program--

5 BILL CHONG: [interposing] Okay.

6 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: and what can be
7 done?

8 BILL CHONG: Besides the city--

9 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: [cross-talk]

10 BILL CHONG: Yes, sir. The expansion,
11 the School's Out NYC expansion is basically state
12 education money that the Department of Education is
13 providing us. So the whole SONYC expansion, the 271
14 new programs are state education dollars. Besides
15 that, we have a small investment in federal money. I
16 reference the neighborhood development area programs.
17 That's antipoverty federal money. It's called the
18 Community Service Block Grant, and it's actually
19 funding that goes back to Lyndon Johnson's war on
20 poverty. It's a relatively small amount of money in
21 our budget, but it funds the neighborhood development
22 area programs, and then some of our Beacons, yeah 14
23 of our 80 Beacons or the community centers are funded
24 through what's called the Community Development Block
25

Grant funding which targets low income neighborhoods, but I would say 70 percent of our--well, maybe 60 percent of our funding is probably city tax levy and the rest is probably state and federal.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay. Let me take the opportunity to do something that I was supposed to do at the beginning and I didn't do it, to thank the staff who have worked hard to make this hearing possible. I want to thank Jennifer Wilcox, the counsel of the committee, and Michael Benjamin, Policy Analyst and Kenneth Grace, Financial Policy Analyst, and I want to thank my staff oh so much. Thank you very much for working, you know, and preparing this public hearing. And Commissioner, let me ask you one thing. We know that New York City and I say that every time and we all know that is home to many immigrant. You know, we got so many people coming from so many, from everywhere, and one of the challenges that some of the immigrant people they're facing is the language barrier and cultural barrier. So what do you have in place to make sure that those people who don't speak English properly, who come from a different culture, can benefit also from the afterschool programs?

BILL CHONG: One of the things when we selected which groups to receive contracts, we looked at cultural competency because we know different neighborhoods have different communities they serve. So, we asked people when they submitted their proposals if you're serving in a community that has a large Spanish speaking population, how are you going to address that in the program design and what kind of cultural competency do you bring to this process. So often times, people are very good about this. They hire staff in the community. They hire people who speak the language of the people in that community, because we know that, you know, it is a very diverse city. I mean, my parents came here as immigrants from China in the 1950's and we were the only Chinese family in the neighborhood, and today it's, you know, I can't walk a block without seeing another Asian-American. So you're absolutely right, this is a city of immigrants.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Can you--could you say some few words about your system, the way you award the contract to the providers, what is the process that you use to award funding to the providers? Is it the same like before? Is it

different because we have more afterschool program, more resources? What is the process, please?

BILL CHONG: We actually improved the process from a decade ago, because I actually was involved back in 2003 in the launch of the Out of School Time programs, and so what we did in five months what took us 24 months to do. And one of the things we did is we moved to an online application process. We used to ask people to write these really long proposals that went for like 30 or 40 pages, and I think it was unfair to small groups, so it can mean basic organizations that didn't have a fulltime proposal writer. So we did an online application with a set number of questions with--and you knew how many points each question was worth and you could only write so many words in each section, so that, you know, some people who can write like a 30 page proposal wouldn't be given advantage, and I think it leveled the playing field. I think there are a lot of new groups. Of the 110 organizations that were selected in the SONYC expansion, I believe 30 were brand new to the agency, and a lot of them were like very neighborhood organizations. One group that comes to mind and it's because it's a memorable name, it's

1 a group called Divas for Social Justice out in
2 Queens, and they were a group that received, I
3 believe, grants from the Department of Cultural
4 Affairs and they ran a part time afterschool programs
5 in, I think, southeast Queens. And I met the woman
6 at the job fair, and she had heard about our
7 expansion. Denice Williams, Assistant Commissioner,
8 went and spoke to several hundred of the groups that
9 the Cultural Affairs Department funded, and they,
10 because we had a simplified application process that
11 didn't--so you didn't have to have a proposal writer.
12 You could write an application and demonstrate your
13 experience. We were able to find a lot more groups
14 like that.

16 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: We know that also in
17 afterschool program the stuff that work for too many
18 hours, maybe 20, less than 20 hours. So what about
19 the salaries? Do they receive enough salaries that
20 can attract them and keep them, that can attract the
21 good qualified staff and keep the good qualified
22 staff? What about the salary--

23 BILL CHONG: [interposing] I think--the
24 3,000 dollars, I think, made a big difference,
25 because I know one provider had I want to say like

500 resumes for like 30 directors. So I--and because when you give the agency more money they can offer a higher salary and they can hire teachers in the afterschool which is I--which helps with the partnership between the agency and the Principal. So, I think, you know, quality costs money and we invested in quality by raising the investment to 3,000 dollars per young person.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: So where we're at now, do we have a list of young people waiting for afterschool programs?

BILL CHONG: Well, as you heard on Friday, slots, program seats are filling quickly, so as of this morning, 47 percent of the seats are filled. This time last year we were probably much lower. It takes about a month to get the, most school programs filled. So we've gotten halfway there in a week. So I'm very confident that we'll be fully enrolled before the end of the month, and that traditionally, we allow programs to over enroll a bit because we know every young person does not show up every single hour. So, I feel very confident about where we're at.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Commissioner, we know that in the City of New York, some of them we have good services, we have good programs, but people don't know that those programs exist, especially even young people. And the afterschool programs, I remember on Friday we were there and I was with there with the Mayor to mention the program to kick off the program and to encourage the parent to enroll the children. What DYCD has in place to motivate the parent, to ensure that the parent, you know, enroll their children, especially those who don't speak English properly and those in low income and the board [sic], what do you have in place? What will be done?

BILL CHONG: We did several things already. During the summer, before programs started, we worked with the Department of Education and they notified all the parent coordinators in all the schools in the City of New York. We had a meeting, a follow-up meeting with them last Friday, and they're getting the word out to all the parents, because you're absolutely right. Sometimes working parents who are very busy don't have the time to find out about these things. So that's why we rely on the

parent coordinators to connect with the parents, because as the Mayor said on Friday, the program seats are filling very quickly. You know, just in the last day we picked up 3,000 new enrollments. So we're confident that as word gets out we'll be at full enrollment in a couple of weeks. Oh, yeah, the other thing Denice points out is we did subway ads in late August in multiple languages including Spanish and Chinese, because we recognize that not everyone speaks English, and in the ads were intended to ensure that those that didn't speak English as a primary language learned about the programs.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: We have been joined by Council Member Annabel Palma and also Council Member Darlene Mealy. I don't know if they have some questions before I--no? Not yet. Well, Commissioner, with the rate of the child, ways to meet thousands, what is there to prevent the providers from not hiring teachers or better staff or just keeping the extra funds?

BILL CHONG: They're required to submit a budget with a staffing plan, and that in the course of the site visit that is done by our staff, we look

to see if the staff is there. So, that's the--that's the ultimate check is visual inspection.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay. So I see that we expanded. There's an expansion of seven [sic] program. Is there any other program that think, you believe that would be expanded in the future?

BILL CHONG: I'm sorry, which program are you talking--

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: [interposing] You were saying, I think, Cornerstone.

BILL CHONG: Oh, Cornerstone. At this point, we haven't made any final decisions about next summer, but the initial surveys were very positive. We served--without the extended hours, we would have only served 7,200 young people, but the additional hours, so at 10:00, 11:00 at night we served 18,000 more people than have been served. And you know, it is something that when the Mayor asked for suggestions of how to keep young people safe in the summer, I proposed this because I knew in the summertime when there's no school and the centers normally close at 6:00 p.m., that young people didn't have anywhere safe they could be at. So we extend the hours and it was a big success. I mean, the only

1 thing we could have done better is given, I think,
2 programs more notice, because we told them, I think,
3 in mid-June and they did an incredible job, an
4 incredible job of ramping up, hiring staff, paying
5 overtime to get those centers opened on July 7th. So
6 we're in the process of doing the evaluation and hope
7 to like make some final decisions before the planning
8 for fiscal 16 starts.

9 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much.
10 I want to recognize Council Member Darlene Mealy who
11 has some questions.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: I have--good
13 morning. The ACTION, Teen ACTION, who is funding
14 this program?

15 BILL CHONG: I'll start and then Darryl
16 can add in. Teen ACTION is a program that started, I
17 believe, in 2006 or 07, 2007. It was a pilot program
18 of the Center for Economic Opportunity that was
19 started by former Mayor Bloomberg and former Deputy
20 Mayor Gibbs. So the funding for that program is
21 fairly modest. It's a program that is a pilot--

22 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: [cross-talk]

23 BILL CHONG: 1.5 million. I mean, Darryl
24 can talk a little bit more about this.
25

COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

45

DARRYL RATTRAY: Good morning.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Good morning.

DARRYL RATTRAY: Darryl Rattray, I'm the Assistant Commissioner for Beacon and Cornerstone, the service learning programs. So Teen ACTION, we currently serve 1,022 young people across 16 programs across the city. The funding is 1.5 million for this fiscal year.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: So, y'all are saying that y'all have mental health and risky behavior. Do you have sexual orientation in this program?

DARRYL RATTRAY: We do.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: What kind? Teach them about abstinence or condoms, what do you do?

DARRYL RATTRAY: So we work with Planned Parenthood who provides workshops and also evaluation services across all 16 programs.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: That's to age 17?

DARRYL RATTRAY: This is ages middle school to high school.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: So how do you know this program is working? Have y'all did a assessment as of yet, since it's just minimum funding for it?

COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

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DARRYL RATTRAY: We haven't done a formal evaluation across Teen ACTION programming, but we get numerous feedback from providers, young people, even parents that the program is working. We evaluate the program ourselves through site visits of our program managers. We have great usage. I think last year there was over 150,000 service hours accumulated by young people in our programs.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: So they say that they--you teach them projects in regards to the community needs, do they go to any of the community meetings, or where do they get their initiatives from? They just meet with counselors and then come up with something or they meet with the counselors and the community and then come up with an initiative plan?

DARRYL RATTRAY: It varies from program to program, but for the most part, the counselors are empowering these young people to become leaders with their--within their communities. So at some program sites you have them attending Community Board meetings, council meetings, and other cases they'll form groups within their program sites, activating

community service opportunities as well as project based learning.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Could you tell me how many programs are in Brooklyn? If I would have known that we advisory board meetings, no slots, advisory board on the DYCD, I would love to put some of these young people on these committees since they are learning how to be leaders. Why not give them slots that are open for the city to put them on. So I would love to know where, where are they? I don't--I didn't know of any.

CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: We can get a directory.

BILL CHONG: Yeah, we'll send you the list.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Okay. Thank you, Chair. I would love to have that list.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: I want to recognize Council Member Palma, please.

COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. A follow-up question on Council Member Mealy's inquiry about Teen ACTION, how are the sites or the programs identified? Like, how do you determine where you are going to place--

BILL CHONG: I get a request for proposal and people competed. And so, you know, usually--

COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: [interposing]
People meaning the providers.

BILL CHONG: Providers.

COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: Providers competed, but what type of assessment was done to make sure where the programs were going to be located?

BILL CHONG: Proposals are read by three proposal reviewers, and, you know, and their scores are averaged and the highest ranked proposals are--

COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: [interposing] I know how--sorry, I know how a proposal is--I know what a RFP is.

BILL CHONG: Oh.

COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: And the process of an RFP, but I want to know--

BILL CHONG: [interposing] We targeted high need neighborhoods.

COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: Okay, that's what I wanted to know. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much, Council Members. Now, Commissioner, when you spoke

about challenges facing in term of languages and culture, but we didn't talk about children or youth with special needs. In the afterschool programs, what do you have in place to serve those young people with special needs?

BILL CHONG: Well, two things. As I mentioned earlier, in the SONYC request for proposal we allowed programs to serve young people with special needs and they could apply for more money.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

BILL CHONG: We can give you a specific number of the 27,000 new program seats, a certain number were proposed for young people with special needs. On top of that, there was additional funding provided to the Department of Education where they're going to roll out sometime next month, after school programs at the District 75 schools. Because you have young people with special needs in two places. Many of them attend District 75 schools and rather than DYCD designing the programs, we thought it was better that Department of Education work with each Principal on designing a program that met the needs at that given school, because sometimes a young person may be autistic. Sometimes they may have

visual challenges, and rather than try to do one size fits all, the Department of Education budgeted funds and they're designing programs to serve, I think, 3,000 young people in District 75 schools.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Yes, I do remember that you mentioned the funding for special need children, but in term of recruitment, qualified staff, and the environment to fit their need, that's what I want to know.

BILL CHONG: The money, additional money, can go towards accommodating any equipment needs, and we have a capacity provider, yeah, Ramapo [sic] for children. Ramapo for Children, resources for special children, which provides professional development and capacity building for programs that are serving young people with special needs. So we have--we've invested additional money per young person to accommodate equipment needs, whether it needs different types of staff with different kinds of qualifications, and we've also provided the professional development opportunities for programs that serve young people with special needs.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Council Member Mealy? Oh, alright. So there's an another issue I

would like to, not to address, but I would like you to talk about it a little bit, you know, the safety of the children, of the youth. You know, anytime that we are doing something, especially when we are working with the young people, the children, we have to be proactive and preventive, and those young people that are doing sports and many other activities, what do you have in place, what is your safety plan, emergency plan in case something happened to those children? Do you--do they have nurses and medical staff? Are the people trained in CPR? People who know exactly how to intervene, what the first assistance to provide the ambulance or emergency staff get to the place?

BILL CHONG: I'll let Denice Williams walk you through all the school-aged childcare regulations, well not all of them. We'd be here forever.

DENICE WILLIAMS: I will tell you some and if you have more specifics, I think Mike's here, Sarah, school-aged childcare guru. But the one thing I want to emphasize is that if you're in a school-based program, we ask our providers to be part of the safety plan that the Principal has to develop for

everybody in the school. Unfortunately, we just passed 9/11. There have been other emergencies, whether it's the black out, where we all know as adults we have to have kind of an emergency plan. So all of our providers must work with the schools to be part of the safety plan. Part of the DOE support for our programs include nursing support at the school site for afterschool when requested by providers. We'd just be going back and forth about a particular site. So DOE supports us with that. To the Commissioner's point about increased funding, not only are we asking for school day teachers to be part of our programs, but professionals in terms of basketball, like in the coaches and folks who have specific skills to help our young people not only improve their game, as they say to me, but also have a specific training, whether it's CPR or other supports. As part of the school-aged childcare regulations, there are trainings that the directors and the inside staff need to have related to CPR and things like that. We often get asked about swimming. We're taking young people swimming. There are special requirements, not just at the pool related to lifeguards, but that the training that staff need to

BILL CHONG: And the only other thing I would add is that every person who works in the program is fingerprinted and has to be cleared by this central child registry to make sure there's no abuse claims against them. So we take safety of paramount importance, and so every site is inspected by the Health Department and licensed by the Health Department.

BILL CHONG: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Do you go and ensure that everything is in place for the safety of the children and the youth?

DENICE WILLIAMS: But part of our monitoring tool, the program quality monitoring tool that the Commissioner referenced is eight areas, and safety is one of the primary areas, which you know, we don't inspect the way the DOH inspect, but in terms of ratios, school facilities, anything that would be a safety hazard we address along with other things like the quality of the curriculum and program implementation, but safety is one of the core eight areas that my staff looks at when they visit. During summer, for example, we have to look at the safety plan as part of their relocation for example to other sites. So we do look at it. I wouldn't say we're experts in the way the DOH looks at facilities or the Fire Department. So they look at those things first, but my staff does follow up in terms of safety each and every time we do a site visit.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay. Council Member Mealy, did you say that you have a question?

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Yes. I'm sorry, I'm still stuck on the ACTION. How many participants are in this program?

DARRYL RATTRAY: 1,022 to be exact.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Can you describe one of the services that is going on right now in the area that this program is serving?

DARRYL RATTRAY: Well, right now we just started programing, so provided the programs are doing recruitment of the young people in enrollment--

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: [interposing] But haven't this been in effect since 2006?

DARRYL RATTRAY: 2007.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: 2007?

DARRYL RATTRAY: But every--so every September they start a new enrollment and outreach for new students.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: For new students. So last year? What was the participation? What kind of programs? Could you name one of the programs?

DARRYL RATTRAY: We, so we programmed in Brooklyn, El Puente [sic]. There was a shooting a local park. So the young people decided that this would be their focal point, and it was a park that was a bit dilapidated, so they took control of this park, worked with the Parks Department. The young people mobilized other young people, their friends, program staff and the community. They cleaned the

1
2 park up, fixed it up, had a community fair at the
3 park, and that became their service project from
4 October through June, and in June they come in with a
5 huge rally sort of fair at the location.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: So, I see that you
7 have something going in, last year NYCHA was faced
8 with some of the same decisions with several of the
9 community centers closing, and as a result, y'all
10 launched 45 more Cornerstones in January 2014,
11 bringing a total to 70 centers. So, did you
12 coordinate this program with the centers that were
13 closing in Brooklyn, because I know I have Van Dyke,
14 Howard, Tidlon [sic], where they fight every--well,
15 shoot every other day, and I heard nothing of a
16 program like this that was in NYCHA. So you tell me.

17 DARRYL RATTRAY: We didn't coordinate the
18 serve the city [sic] program with those closing NYCHA
19 centers. What we did was we funded providers to
20 operate Cornerstone programs. So we amended Beacon
21 and existing Cornerstone contracts to provide
22 services at those 45 locations, which includes Van
23 Dyke, Tildon--

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: [interposing] I know Tildon had a--has a Cornerstone, but the other ones like Howard?

DARRYL RATTRAY: Howard doesn't, but Van Dyke--Howard is still operated directly by NYCHA.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Yes.

DARRYL RATTRAY: But Van Dyke, Unity Plaza in that area has Cornerstone programs.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Okay. And could you--you say that y'all do coaches. How do you get--where do you get your people from? How do you put the application out? You said that at the last minute you opened up the program in June for this year, you started the program in June where you had to hire people for the afterschool programs. So how did you get--

BILL CHONG: [interposing] Okay, so I think--

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: [interposing] the list out there?

BILL CHONG: it's a different. That's not related to Cornerstone.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Yeah, that's separate from that now, sorry.

BILL CHONG: So, and then you missed the earlier answer I gave. In the expansion of the School's Out NYC, the 145 million dollars that Mayor was able to get from the state, we added 271 new middle school programs that started on September 8th, last Monday. So, to get a program off the ground, you obviously have to have staff in place. So we did a job fair--

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: [interposing]
Where?

BILL CHONG: At CUNY, at Borough Manhattan Community College, and CUNY advertised it so all the graduate programs throughout the 19 campus CUNY system from the schools of education and the schools of social work, to-- we wanted young people who were skilled and educated, and I worked with the Actor's Fund of New York City, and you have thousands of young talented actors and people in the arts who were working quite frankly waiting tables who would rather work in an afterschool programs. So, it was a big success, and if we continue to expand we'll do more job fairs.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Okay.
Commissioner, I understand that, and I thank you for

CUNY students and all, but how can we get people from the local level who has went through the fingerprinting and lives in the neighborhood and can more better reach out and touch half of the community because they live in the community? So how did they know about this CUNY job fair?

BILL CHONG: The job fair was mostly for program directors, but there are always jobs at each program, and I'd encourage anyone who's interested in working in afterschool program to go to the local program. They're looking for activity specialists. They're looking for different types of people from the neighborhood that had different skills. So, they're still job openings, so I would encourage people to contact their local provider.

DENICE WILLIAMS: Okay. There's also a site called Afterschool Pathfinder, which you can--

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Excuse me?

DENICE WILLIAMS: The Pathfinder, which is a online site that's free and a lot of our providers use it to advertise--

BILL CHONG: [interposing] To post jobs.

DENICE WILLAIMS: We post jobs.

BILL CHONG: Because we'll send that to you.

DENICE WILLIAMS: We can send that to you as well, but there are always jobs on there for all levels.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Okay, and my last question, Chair, please describe how the awarding of contracts has evolved in the last year or so. Previously the providers said that the process was too slow and that the impact, it really impact the ability to know what their funding stream would like. So some of them held back on doing anything because they didn't feel that they would get the money in enough to time to pay certain people.

BILL CHONG: I think it's a different world from a year ago, because--

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: [interposing]
That's why I'm asking you the question.

BILL CHONG: One of the big changes is that many of the things that the City Council had funded in previous years were base lined. I think that's what the uncertainty was is that when you have one year funding and you're never quite sure whether that money's going to be there. So whether you think

1 that was done by the previous Administration, which
2 was continued by this Administration was that
3 something in the neighborhood of 69 million dollars,
4 that was money that had been previously awarded by
5 the Council was base lined. So the uncertainty, that
6 existed in previous years. And I was at DYCD during
7 many of those years, that year--it's very difficult
8 to maintain a program if you're funding this year to
9 year because you're not sure--

11 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: [cross-talk] So,
12 the ultimate question, how has it changed?

13 BILL CHONG: It's been base lined.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: So the funding--

15 BILL CHONG: [interposing] It's been base
16 lined.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: The programs get
18 the funding much quicker than before.

19 BILL CHONG: Yes, well, they know they
20 have it.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Okay, so no
22 budget. They automatically get it and they're okay.

23 BILL CHONG: Right.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Okay, thank you,
25 Chair.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: You're very welcome Council Member Mealy, and I think that's--this is a wonderful thing to base line certain program and then know in advance that we have the funding. This is--that make a very big difference, and I applaud the Administration and the Speaker for that. We think that Commissioner, we are going to let you go, because we have been keeping you for a while, but before we let you go, we know that and I said that, and we all know that we are in this together, DYCD, the providers, we City Council Members, elected officials. So what do you think that in addition to the funding that we provide to DYCD for the afterschool programs and the different other youth program, what can we do, what is your advice to us, we Council Members, Council Members of the Youth Committee, what do you think that we can do in addition to providing services to make sure that we join forces and we make the afterschool programs the best program possible?

BILL CHONG: I would say just publicize the programs in your own districts. Talk about them, because, you know, word of mouth is very powerful. I mean, we tend to rely a lot on social media and

1 things like that, but you know, the word of mouth,
2 like I think the success of the extended hours in the
3 Cornerstones this summer, it was word of mouth. You
4 know, one young person went and said, "Oh, this is
5 great." You know? Or, give you one example. One of
6 our providers did cooking classes, because they were
7 trying to figure out what will work to get young
8 people in the door, and so they did cooking classes,
9 and what surprised them was it was young men who came
10 to the cooking classes, and you know, they--you know,
11 word of mouth. So I don't think we--you know, it's
12 good old fashion community organizing. You know, we
13 tend to like rely on all this high tech stuff, but
14 people talk to each other. You know, if there's a
15 good buzz and people say it's a great program, that's
16 how we ended up serving 18,000 people in the extended
17 hours that we more than tripled what we would have
18 normally served. It's word of mouth and good
19 programming, because you know, what always works in
20 good programming is listening to people. If you do a
21 workshop on cooking and nobody shows up, well maybe
22 you shouldn't do the workshop on cooking. But there's
23 one provider that did a workshop on cooking, and it
24 you know, challenged his assumption. He thought it
25

was going to be young women, but it was young men who showed up.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay, thank you very much, sir.

BILL CHONG: Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you, Commissioner, and thank you also to the Assistant Commissioner Darryl Rattray. Thank you very much, and to Assistant Commissioner Denice Williams. Thank you to all of you. Have a wonderful day. See you again next time. Thank you. Now, we are going to call the next panel, Allison Weingarten from the Queens Community Houses and Sabrina Gomez [sic] from TASC, Gregory Brender from United Neighborhood Houses. Thank you. Thank you very much. So you can start, please, Mr. Gregory.

GREGORY BRENDER: Thank you. Thank you Chair Eugene and members of the council for the opportunity to testify. My name is Gregory Brender. I'm here on behalf of United Neighborhood Houses. We are New York City's--

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: [interposing] Your microphone is on?

GREGORY BRENDER: Oh.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: It should be red.

GREGORY BRENDER: Yeah, it's lit.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you.

GREGORY BRENDER: United Neighborhood Houses is New York City's federation of settlement houses and community centers. Almost all of our member agencies are afterschool providers and we represent about 15 percent of the new SONYC providers. We're also a part of the Campaign for Children, which is well-represented here today, which is working to see high quality early childhood education in afterschool for every child in New York City. First, I just wanted to say how glad we are to have--that this is such a different hearing in afterschool than we're used to. When we used to come before you and beg you to stop cuts, but we are in a period of expansion and true visionary expansion is really exciting. Some of the suggestions we have to complete this expansion and to further improve afterschool in New York City is fully funding the Beacon model. The Beacon model from 1991 was funded at 400,000 per child. It's significantly decreased. We want to see Beacons come up to their level. This is a very effective multigenerational model that

really builds on the effective work of settlement houses. We do want to see the expansion in elementary school students. We believe that the expansion that happened with SONYC where we set a new paradigm where young people have a right to afterschool is a great model for how we can move forward with elementary school where member agencies and afterschool providers still have long lists of people on their waiting lists. Of course, we are very grateful to the City Council for restoring 17.2 million this year for 181 elementary school summer programs. That money should be base lined. We've always pushed for base lining in afterschool programming, but for summer programming which starts just days after the city budget passes, it's especially important. We'd also like to work with both the City Council, DYCD and NYCHA to expedite repairs in the NYCHA facilities that are home to afterschool programs. Many of these facilities are dilapidated or in need of repairs. I know that many Council Members have visited these sites and have even put some capital funds into improving them, and really talking as well with NYCHA, but we wanted to see some action to expedite the repairs of the NYCHA

1 sites that are hosting afterschool programs. I have
2 written testimony with some more specific stuff, but
3 thank you again for this hearing, for the opportunity
4 to testify.
5

6 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much.

7 ALLISON WEINGARTEN: Hi, I can start.

8 Thank you for having me. My name is Alison
9 Weingarten and I'm a Program Director at Queens
10 Community House. It's an organization that serves
11 25,000 Queens residents a year in 11 different Queens
12 neighborhoods. Our program sites stretch from
13 Jackson Heights to Corona, Elmhurst, Regal [sic]
14 Park, Forest Hills, Hue [sic] Gardens and into South
15 Ozone Park and Jamaica. Thank you for the
16 opportunity to testify today. Queens Community House
17 is a community based organization providing 10
18 COMPASS programs and one fee based afterschool
19 program. The new SONYC programs present good news
20 for middle school youth, and the Principal of the
21 Universal Afterschool is one that we have supported
22 for many years, and the expansion of opportunities
23 for middle school youth was significant. The cost
24 per participant was significantly increased to a
25 level that enables us to provide quality programming

at 3,000 per student, and there is some flexibility within the model for organizations to plan programming that is responsive to the needs at the site. But we still have challenges. In order to operate afterschool programming we must secure a SACC [sic] license. Many school buildings are not compliant and the process of securing the SACC is both lengthy and beyond our control, yet programs are penalized with poor Vendex ratings when the SACC approval is delayed. The requirements continue to be burdensome and in some cases unrealistic for school buildings that are already housing children during the day. The new SONYC model does not include summer programming, a time of risk in summer of learning loss for youth. At the same time, it avoids what has been a very difficult process of mandatory relocations when programs have to move from their host school for summer. There has been an evident effort by the city to expedite administrative delays by using the HHS accelerators for the SACC license process, eliminating the requirement of dual fingerprint of most staff by DOH and DOE. We were particularly delighted that DOE's space permits were approved as quickly as within in a day. However, our

1 directors are being asked to enter newly enrolling
2 participant's information daily into the DYCD online
3 data system. Each entry takes some time. As our
4 staff are required to leave the school buildings by
5 6:00 p.m., this means that our supervisory staff have
6 to spend program time updating the database rather
7 than providing the care that they should be providing
8 to the participants. The purpose of the daily entry
9 is to that DYCD receive daily updates on enrollment
10 and indicators of grow out. The time required for
11 daily reporting takes away from the many tasks needed
12 for effective start up, hiring staff, enrolling
13 participants, meeting with school staff, planning
14 program and interacting with youth and staff. The
15 expansion of middle school afterschool is an
16 important step toward the goal of providing
17 afterschool for all who need it. We were
18 particularly pleased that services were made
19 available to all youth regardless of the zip code of
20 their school. There are many unmet needs that
21 persist. There is funding through three hours a day.
22 So at schools that dismiss at 2:20, that means that
23 children are released at 5:20, and that is not a good
24 situation for many parents. We are very concerned
25

1 that elementary school students will have
2 opportunities under the new RFP, and there is
3 continuing need for community center base as well as
4 school based programs. I'm the director of a
5 program, actually, that was--the funding was cut due
6 to the zip code because the area is--it has more
7 wealth in it than other areas, however, there are
8 many partic--or people in our area that need funding.
9 So we're hoping that this afterschool for all model
10 that is currently in place for middle school students
11 will become available for elementary school students
12 as well. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much,
15 Ms. Weingarten.

16 SABRINA GOMEZ: This is Ms. Gomez.

17 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Please.

18 SABRINA GOMEZ: So good morning Chairman
19 and Council Members. So my name is Sabrina Gomez,
20 and I'm the Director of the STEM Educator's Academy
21 Program at TASC. And first, I'd like to thank the
22 Youth Services Committee for the opportunity to
23 testify today. So, as you are aware, TASC is also
24 known as the Afterschool Corporation, and we've been
25 supporting afterschool programming across New York

City, since 1998 with much support from the New York City Council. So today I'm very thrilled to tell you about my work as Director of one of TASC new initiatives, the STEM Educators Academy, STEM, meaning science, technology, engineering and math. So, with the STEM Educators Academy, teams of day school teachers and community educators work together with TASC, the New York Department--excuse me, the New York Hall of Science and the Institute of Play to design and to deliver STEM instruction, which this has led to not only more and better STEM learning for students throughout New York City, but has really sparked student's interest in STEM and also, you know, rediscovered students as explorers and as scientists in their learning. And this is really an important topic and point for me because as a former educator in the South Bronx, I really fear that students are losing their excitement and their love of learning, particularly in the STEM fields. When I enter classrooms, you often see students as passive learners. They're listening to the teacher often in lecture style. They're taking notes and they're really not engaging with the material as they could be. So the STEM Educator Academy is drastically

different from that. So, in the STEM Educator model, students are collaborating together on projects. They're designing experiments. They're using evidence to really debate and really dig deep into what they're learning, becoming very active learners in the process. For example, when I enter Ms. Robie's [sp?] classroom at PS 182 in Queens, you see fourth and fifth graders who've been studying forces of motion and simple machines, and they're hunched over their desks around their designs, around books, and they're debating whether or not which design is better than, you know, another design, all rooted in evidence. And in this particular case, students were designing catapults to be launched, to launch items across the gym floor. So hearing this kind of buzz and seeing this excitement is really why the STEM Educator Academy is a fabulous program for afterschool, because in afterschool the teachers and community educators really have the time to bring the curriculum of what they're learning in the day school to life through these design challenges, and very authentic also. And another example, at MS 447 in the Bronx you see middle schoolers, and I was lucky enough to co-facilitate a dissection of a sheep's

heart with middle schoolers, but they're seeing again in the afterschool space, the circulatory, respiratory systems that they're learning about in their middle school. Science classrooms come to life figuratively with the STEM Educator Academy. So that's just one of the STEM initiatives that TASC is promoting and involved with. So I'd like to thank you for your time.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much. We have been joined by Council Member David Greenfield. So Council Members and my colleagues, I don't know if you have questions. No questions. This question is going to address to all of you. Anyone can answer. Could you tell me how many young people that you are serving in your program?

ALLISON WEINGARTEN: Well, my--in-- my specific program is around 60 children, but in total--oh, I don't--I'm sorry, I don't have the number here, but I will get back to you. It's probably around--if there's ten programs, it's probably around, between 600 and 1,000 kids.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: 600 and 1,000? What is the age range?

ALLISON WEINGARTEN: That would be the elementary school through middle school programs. So kindergarten through eighth grade.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay, but you're serving only children from Queens.

ALLISON WEINGARTEN: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Only from Queens. Okay, and why do you--you don't, you know, serve also children from other neighborhood? Is that a decision that--is that by the mission statement of the organization or?

ALLISON WEINGARTEN: Yeah, our organization is the Queens Community House. It's one of how many settlement houses and we, our focus is to focus on the, our local communities, but there are programs like ours all over the city.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: In your testimony you say that challenges do persist, in order to operate afterschool program, we must secure a school aged childcare certification and many school building are not compliant. And the prices of securing the SACC is both lengthy and beyond our control. And you know, and also you say that your program are penalized with poor Vendex rating when the SACC

1 approval is delayed. What you providers who have
2 being doing to try to, not to correct that, but to
3 waive that issue, what do you believe that should be
4 done to correct that or to resolve, to overcome such
5 challenges? Is there anything that should be done
6 from the Administration, from DYCD, from the City
7 Council or you, is there anything that you can do to
8 overcome those challenges? Not all, but some of the
9 time, is there anything that we can do?

11 GREGORY BRENDER: So a lot of the SACC
12 regulations are determined by the--

13 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: [interposing] Or
14 some advice, you know, how to resolve that.

15 GREGORY BRENDER: The SACC regulations
16 are determined by the New York State Office of
17 Children Family Services, and the city has an
18 important voice in talking to the state. One of the--
19 -there are a lot of--there is a lot of regulatory
20 changes that need to be made in SACC. There's a lot
21 of regulations that are either redundant or not
22 really appropriate to be in child settings, but one
23 of the sort of easy ways to go about it is to
24 basically say that programs that are in spaces that
25 are licensed for children's use during the daytime,

1 so school buildings should be automatically
2 appropriate for use in afterschool. Because right
3 now it's different regulatory settings looking at,
4 you know, a classroom that has some kind of just even
5 the same children during the day for school day and
6 then in afterschool program in the afternoon and they
7 get an inspection for DOHMH who needs to then find
8 them for say not having a radiator covered that is
9 not required during the day as part of their license
10 as a school base set.

12 ALLISON WEINGARTEN: Thank you. I'd like
13 to add to that. The--just coming in as a new
14 director it would be really useful, and this is
15 something that's done during the summer, is to have a
16 state or city funded training for directors on how to
17 implement the SACC license, because it's actually
18 kind of difficult to read through the regulations and
19 it would be very useful, I think, to attend maybe
20 annual or biannual trainings on how to actually
21 implement the SACC regulations.

22 SABRINA GOMEZ: So, the STEM Educators
23 Academy, last year we began working with five
24 educator teams in four schools, and this year we're
25 expanding to working with 15 educator teams in 12

schools, and we're across New York City, all boroughs minus Staten Island, unfortunately.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: So, Ms. Weingarten, you mentioned, you stated in your testimony that however our directors have been asked to enter many enrolling participant's information daily into the DYCD online data system. This entry takes some time and all staff are required to leave the school by 6:00 p.m. This means that our supervisory staff have to spend program time of data in the database rather than providing supervision, but a good leader needs it to be pulled away from the program. This is really a big problem, because I think that we need people to work and to provide services to the young people in the afterschool program. We need competent qualified staff, and people are going to be there to ensure that the afterschool programs is a wonderful successful program, and I'm really sorry that, you know, your staff have to go through these challenges. But let me ask you that, why you didn't hire additional staff to do the data entry?

ALLISON WEINGARTEN: I don't work with one of those programs, but I have heard my colleagues, you know, feeling overwhelmed by having

1 to enter all of that data. I would assume that there
2 is not--you say hire additional staff to do the data
3 entry, you know, it's kind of--what do we hire
4 additional staff for? Do we want more staff to be
5 interacting with the kids and you know, doing those
6 things or do we want to be dedicating not only the
7 director's time but also other staff's time to
8 entering this data. And as the Commissioner said,
9 it's important to have this data so that we can see
10 the trends, but on the other hand, it is taking away
11 from programming. So, I don't know what the right
12 answer is, but it's a lengthy process right now.

14 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: So, what I'm trying
15 to figure out is it a resource, you know, funding
16 issue? Because those staff numbers should be there
17 for the young people to provide the services that
18 they are providing. If somebody has to leave the
19 site where he or she's providing services to the
20 young people, to go to the office to do
21 administrative work, that's when--those children are
22 going to be underserved. So I want-- I'm trying to
23 find out if this problem is buried in funding or
24 resources. Because there's a need, there's a need
25 for additional staff, the staff that are serving the

ALLISON WEINGARTEN: I imagine it is. I imagine that they are using all the funding that they have to hire, you know, staff in the areas that they think are most necessary, whether that's an activity specialist, a group leader and so on. So maybe if there was more funding it could go to someone to add it, to enter data, but you know, I think that that is just a issue of what is more important to be done. So I think you're right, funding could be an answer, but I think that the process is just lengthy and--do you know anything else about?

GREGORY BRENDER: Administrative costs should always be funded as part of a contract, but I think we can look for ways to, you know, streamline it to make sure that, you know, the current staff can put as much of their time into actual activities as possible.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much.

Ms. Weingarten, you mentioned also about a program that was previously funded by the city was omitted due to the zip code location. Could you give us more detail and help us understand, you know, why that was the situation, what exactly happened?

ALLSION WEINGARTEN: Yeah, no, I'd love to talk to you about that. So, I actually came on last June, but the September before we started our program for the first time with no funding because we're in Forest Hills and there are other programs like that that were cut the year before including some on the upper west side because they are technically in areas that do have people living in those areas with more wealth, but the area that I'm in is--it is a public hou--it is an area of public housing and also around it are areas of lower income children and our funding was cut based on that zip code. But we've created a program that is fee based that is not--that we try and make affordable for the parents, but there are a lot of kids that can't afford to come to our program, and unfortunately a lot of them, you know, just leave elementary school with nothing to do after school. So we are able to

create a program that a lot of children can come to, but we certainly don't serve all the students in the area because their parents just can't afford the afterschool.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much.

Ms. Gomez, you mentioned that, you know, you realized that the students, they were not engaged, not engaged in their activity, but you feel like you managed to make that interesting and to engage them in what they're doing. Can you explain to this why these attaining [sic], why these are possible, what you do exactly to make them interested, to engage them in the learning process?

SABRINA GOMEZ: Sure, of course. Well, like Commissioner Chong mentioned that STEM really is a great opportunity for students to be involved in inquiry learning, meaning to ask questions, to discuss, you know, their findings. So in the STEM Educator Academy, the teams of teachers and community educators, first, in the summer attend a week long, 30 hour professional development institute at the New York Hall of Science and at the Institute of Play where they get 30 hours of PD on how to create these much more engaging activities that include design

1 challenges in STEM that included engineering
2 challenges. How do you create a lesson that
3 incorporates more of what real scientist, architects,
4 engineers are experiencing, you know, in their
5 careers, and to bring those kinds of experiences and
6 activities to the classroom? So for example, in my--
7 when students in Queens, fourth and fifth graders,
8 they were trying to design a catapult, right, that
9 would launch objects across the gym floor. So
10 through this design process of, you know, getting
11 into groups, working collaboratively, designing their
12 activity trial and error and using science concepts
13 at the root, this is just one example of how students
14 become much more engaged when what they're producing
15 in the classroom is real for them and tangible and
16 they have seen it.

18 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay. Before I let
19 you go, I got a question, you know. Anyone can
20 answer. I know that there are many challenges that
21 you are facing in your effort to help the young
22 people and to provide them with education,
23 afterschool program and other program, and the
24 opportunity that you are trying to offer them. If I
25 ask you what is the biggest challenge that you face

in your effort to provide resources to the young people, what is it?

SABRINA GOMEZ? I think for in the STEM Educator Academy, one of the biggest challenges is building the capacity of the community educators and the youth workers. In our model they are trained side by side, trained next to teachers and are provided ongoing professional development, observation and coaching throughout the year, but it still not enough. It's--we still, in the academy are trying to find ways to provide additional professional development for the community educators to deliver this STEM.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Either one of you want to add something to that question?

ALLISON WEINGARTEN: Yeah, I would just say it's a continued challenge is the community and parent and teacher involvement and just getting everyone on board to continue the school day and keep children engaged.

GREGORY BRENDER: I'd agree with those and just add retain recruiting and maintaining qualified staff. The good part of an expansion is that there are a lot more positions, but we want to

make sure we have the highest quality and the highest trained staff to really run these programs and make sure they are engaging and educational for all the kids.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much.

GREGORY BRENDER: Thank you.

ALLISON WEINGARTEN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: And thank you for what you're doing for the young people, the children in New York City. Keep on doing the wonderful job that you are doing.

SABRINA GOMEZ: Thank you.

GREGORY BRENDER: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you. So we're going to call the next panel, Gigi Li from the Neighborhood Family Services Coalition, Kimberly Wence [sic]--is it Wence? Went, thank you very much. Northside Center for Childhood Development. Shawn Levy [sic] YMC [sic] a Greater New York. Stephanie, is that Gidell? Thank you. From Citizens Committee for Children. Thank you very much.

GIGI LI: Good morning. My name is Gigi Li and I'm here to testify on behalf of Neighborhood Family Services Coalition regarding afterschool

programs in New York City. I'd like to thank you for this opportunity to testify and to also recognize the leadership of Chair Eugene and the Youth Services Committee. Neighborhood Family Services Coalition is a group of service providers and advocacy organizations that are committed to the delivery of high quality neighborhood based services for children, youth, and families. Neighborhood Family Services Coalition is also a steering committee member of the Campaign for Children, and I don't want to repeat what Gregory said before, but we share the excitement of the investment in the afterschool field and feel like from a sector-wide level, we'd really also like to see this type of investment for both elementary and high school programs. We know that there's waiting lists for elementary afterschool programs and currently Beacons and Cornerstones really are the only programs available for high school students. And with Beacons, they have not seen an increase in their annual contract since they were founded in 1991. So those are very high priorities for us, but I wanted to spend some time elaborating on some of the operational and regulatory processes that we would like to see improvement on,

because they affect every afterschool provider in the city. We, you guys spoke a little bit about the state school-aged childcare, which is the SACC licensing. Some of the steps that we've taken are about six months ago when we knew that this would be a challenge with the middle school expansion, there was a open state comment period where we submitted and had providers and advocates submit extensive recommendations and the easiest one to kind of understand, which was stated before is that if this classroom is deemed viable and safe for kids during the school day, then that should carry over from 3:00 to 6:00. The New York State Afterschool Network is working on this, but we feel like the city has a lobbyist and the city lobbyist can also work with us on the state level, because any changes will not only be made to afterschool providers in New York City, but it has to be done statewide. So there is a larger kind of issue and advocacy push that can help there. Regarding fingerprinting, which is the second issue, every staff member has to be fingerprinted and passed through kind of pass, so to speak, in order to be greenlit and be hired to work at these programs. So if you think about the afterschool expansion, 271

new programs, that's a lot of staff in addition to the existing programs that already exist in the staff turnover there. We think that there can be room for improvement in how the fingerprinting is--how long it takes. Right now it's done through the Department of Health and how that information can be conveyed both to the staff member that's going to get fingerprinted as well as to the CBO that is potentially hiring that employee. Space utilization and repairs in NYCHA were brought up before. And then there's two issues that have not been brought up. One, is this idea of data sharing with DOE. So we see that increasingly providers are really being held accountable to academic gains in afterschool programs, and with this transition to Common Core and this focus on STEM, a lot of afterschool programs now work very closely with the teachers and the staff at DOE to really mirror what they're--and reinforce what's being taught during the school day into what's being taught in afterschool. But providers and DYCD do not have access to basic student achievement data and what the strengths and challenges of each student are, so it makes it difficult. That process is made more difficult. And with the new afterschool expansion,

1 because there is choice and because at by middle
2 school age, young people are more mobile and maybe
3 want to choose programs, the afterschool program
4 that's not in their middle school, but maybe is
5 closer to home, closer to where their parents work or
6 where their friends are going, it's going to be
7 harder for providers to really without access to the
8 achievement, just basic data, it's going to be harder
9 for them to really coordinate that kind of--and
10 tailor that kind of programming and consistency from
11 the school day to afterschool. And then the other
12 issue I want to raise is around summer programming.
13 So, looking forward to next summer, we're going to
14 see over 200 new afterschool, I mean, summer programs
15 and there has been some huge issues around which
16 schools are going to stay open, and whether they're
17 convenient and what the commute is going to look
18 like, how much time the providers have to prepare,
19 and for those spaces, and that has been a struggle
20 with the existing capacity. And as we see and prepare
21 for the expansion moving forward, we think that there
22 has to be some very serious interagency coordination
23 with DYCD and DOE to be very strategic and
24 intentional about which schools to stay open
25

throughout the summer. So those are my operational and regulatory issues, and I'm happy to answer any questions.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much. Next speaker, please?

KIMBERLY WENT: Good morning and thank you to the distinguished members of the City's Youth Council Services for conducting this hearing today. My name is Kimberly Went, and I am special educator and a coordinator of the afterschool program at Northside Center for Child Development. Northside is a 68 year old community based agency providing educational, mental health, childcare and social services for over 3,000 children across New York City. Our flagship site is located in East Harlem where our afterschool and summer school programs are held. We currently have a school-aged childcare program designed to provide services to children with special needs. Our DYCD funded COMPASS program cultivates activity, achievement, increases self-esteem, and provides behavioral support to many youngsters who do not thrive in standard schools and school environments. What makes Northside stand out from other youth development organizations is our

integrated holistic approach. We address the children's educational needs and behavioral health and therapeutic support. We strive to give our children every chance to succeed. Our program ranges from ages five to 12 and runs daily. We have a host of music, arts, sports and fitness, nutritional wellness activities designed to ensure the development of motor skills, socialization, lifestyles and self-esteem. During the academic year we also have a foundational funded program for special tutoring for children that have low scores on the ELA and their math testing, which happens during, usually during third grade. During the summer program, children also participate in a reading laboratory which is done by the Bank Street interns, and they tutor the students every day. This latter program is crucial in preventing students from, you know, learning loss during the summer. We have homework help. We also have with activity specialists that are certified teachers every day that help children with homework. We have a technology center which ranges from learning activities with 3D designs and pre-engineering software to help problem solving. We also have a

children's library that has a collection of 3,000 books, films and materials that hosts enrichment activities also that feature storytellers, poets, and artists. And we also have a collaboration with the Harlem School of the Arts, and they come in and they participate with media, digital art, drawing and quilt making, and this summer and this fall coming up we have African drumming, which is one of the program's favorites. Our program is a necessary resource to stakeholders in the community, including our school partners, the Northside families, provider organizations that we are uniquely able to service special needs children who might otherwise be unable to attend an afterschool program. I can't tell you how satisfying it is to see these children flourish in our supportive environment. Needless to say, their parents are full of gratitude because we haven't given up on our children. In summation, a central theme in Northside services are our holistic approach. However, inadequate funding across the systems, these much needed wrap around services are endangered. An increase in afterschool funding will allow us to expand services within the program itself by adding a social worker to coordinate care as well

as provide some direct group services in crisis prevention and intervention. Additional support for our school educational team that will help them really work with the students in their education, which is not covered by the COMPASS budget would also enhance our efforts. All of our Northside children are at risk and mental health clinics and special needs afterschool programs are underfunded. For children of families with complex needs, afterschool programs need to address both learning issues, social/emotional concerns, and they play a critical role in reducing poverty and improving academic performances, and fostering healthy outcomes of the children in the city's most religious [sic] communities. Thank you. You're welcome.

SHARON LEVY: Hi, good morning. My name is Sharon Levy. I am the Vice President for Public Affairs at the YMCA of Greater of New York. First, I'd like to thank you very much for hosting the hearing, and also I'd like to thank both the Administration and the Council for all they've done for afterschool the last year. This may sound trite, but I want to say ditto to everything that's been stated so far, because it really does cover most of

my testimony. The YMCA is also a member of the New York City Youth Alliance and of course, the Campaign for Children, and as such, we have a list of the same priorities, so rather than waste your time and repeat all of those things, I just wanted to highlight a few short points. First off, we want to be sure that the City of New York that afterschool is not purely a service for children and families directly, but it is also an economic development tool. People work within those programs and people also are able to work because of those programs. So that's just a nuance that we like to highlight every now and again. And the other thing is that I know a lot of the focus of the hearing thus far has been on city funded youth afterschool programs, but we also don't want to forget about the state funded, federally funded and privately funded afterschool programs that exist within our school buildings every day, and we would like to hope that one of the things I think many of have mentioned is the collaboration between city agencies and CBO's as it relates to afterschool, but that should extend beyond city funded afterschool programs. So we're hoping for an increased understanding of the relationship between other

funding streams and CBO's and city agencies. Specifically, and if you've heard me testify before this is one of my ongoing things, security fees. So there is an MOU between various city agencies as it relates to security fees and other fees that CBO's would normally have to pay to keep school buildings open and running in the afterschool hours, and so OST pro--I'm sorry, sorry, COMPASS, SONYC, Beacons and Cornerstones all do not have to incur those fees necessarily, or the city covers those fees in some way, but with non-city funded afterschool programs or city funded afterschool programs that aren't in one of those buckets, in other words, if a City Council Member funds an afterschool program as some do via the YMCA, we need to incur that--we incur those security fees. It could range as far, as high as 20, 25,000 dollars each school year. So, we'd like an increased understanding in the city agency world of what that means to programs. Other than that, you had mentioned our greater challenge in the earlier, with your earlier panel, and I just wanted to say that the overall challenge for us has been, and this is going to sound corny, but the resources needed to truly meet the needs of the communities we serve. So,

it means increasing the number of seats in existing programs that have wait lists, as well as meeting the needs of Principals who contact our agency and ask us to provide programs that we don't have the resources to provide. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much.
Next speaker, please?

STEPHANIE GENDELL: Good morning. My name's Stephanie Gendell. I'm the Associate Executive Director for Policy and Government Relations at Citizens Committee for Children. We're a 71 year old independent multi issue child advocacy organization, and our mission is to ensure every New York Child is healthy, housed, educated and safe. I just wanted to start by thanking you and the committee for holding this hearing and for the City Council's unwavering commitment to protecting afterschool services. This is an incredibly exciting time to be testifying about afterschool programs. As one of my colleagues stated, usually I'm sitting here begging you to please safe afterschool, and we are now in the midst of the largest expansion. You know, I'm incredibly grateful to the new Administration. This afternoon, thousands more children will be in afterschool

1 programs than this time last year. It's really
2 remarkable. As you know, afterschool programs are
3 open from about 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. each day and
4 the holidays and the summer, which are the times when
5 youth are at the greatest risk of engaging in
6 delinquent behavior, and also every one dollar
7 invested in youth services saves three dollars for
8 tax payers and participants. So having high quality
9 afterschool programs are not only good for children's
10 development and their academic performance. They
11 allow parents to work. They're a win for communities
12 and they're a win for tax payers. They're just a
13 win/win all around. Citizens Committee for Children
14 is also a member of the steering committee of the
15 Campaign for Children and a part of the Youth
16 Alliance. So I will also ditto much of what's already
17 been said. Just very quickly highlight a couple of
18 priorities. One of them is that we need to continue
19 the expansion to elementary and high school students.
20 It is worth noting that high school programs have
21 been especially hit hard by budget cuts over the past
22 Administration. In addition for parents to be able
23 to work, they often need care for their younger
24 elementary school children who cannot be home alone.
25

We also need to address the rates of the programs that have not been impacted by the middle school expansion. We are very pleased with the increased rate for middle school. We need to do something for elementary and high, and it's also important to remember that in the elementary programs, those that had been previously funded by the City Council now base lined have a lower reimbursement rate than the other elementary formerly known as OST programs that are now COMPASS. And lastly, along those lines, that the Beacons have not had an increase since 1991. WE also wanted to enhance the amount elementary school model by ensuring younger children, children with special needs and English language learners are engaged in programs that adjust to their unique needs. We believe this includes thinking about what we need to do for the four year olds who are now in pre-k programs and are not technically part of COMPASS, but also need care in the afternoon. As stated, we wanted to continue to enhance the communication, collaboration and data sharing. And lastly, we need to ensure that the funding the City Council put in this year for thousands of elementary school children to have summer program continues in

the budget and is base lined. We look forward to the continued success of the afterschool system and working together.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much. Thank you so much. Ms. Gigi Li--

GIGI LI: Yes?

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: You mentioned about, you were talking about stuff independent [sic].

GIGI LI: Right.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: And also data sharing, but let me ask you since you are talking about staff. You know, how do you ensure that you have qualified staff and also people who won't put in danger the children that we are serving? Is there anything in addition to fingerprinting the staff and the supervision background check and stuff like that?

GIGI LI: Right, so--

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: That you would like to talk about?

GIGI LI: So the fingerprinting does help kind of get a history of, to make sure they're not in the state's central registry. There also is--there's actually been some improvements. When we were working on the roll out of the middle school expansion, they

1 were considering two separate--having to be
2 fingerprinted in two separate systems, both DOE and
3 DOH because DOE was rolling out a stricter policy
4 around, you know, any afterschool staff that was
5 working in Department of Education or school
6 building. And so we actually went back and forth and
7 developed sort of a new hybrid system and we worked
8 with the Deputy Mayor Barrios Palis' [sic] office so
9 that if there is a flag, so to speak, that's raised
10 in the DOH fingerprinting process or if an individual
11 has previously had some sort of issue with the
12 Department of Education system, that there would--
13 that it would then trigger a more extensive and
14 thorough background check before this individual
15 would be allowed to work. So, it's a very
16 straightforward system where if you don't get a full
17 clearance through this fingerprinting process, which
18 is now a multistep process that the CBO cannot hire
19 the individual and they cannot be working with
20 children in a afterschool setting.

22 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: In term of summer
23 programming, you mention also the challenge of
24 preparing for this space, you know, for coordination.
25 Could you speak a little bit more in detail about the

challenge you are talking about in term of being prepared, you know, to collaborate and to coordinate and to use the space that would be available?

GIGI LI: The space for, are you talking about the NYCHA or the school-aged child?

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: The school, school.

GIGI LI: The school-aged childcare?

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Yes.

GIGI LI: So, with issues with space is that if you--if a provider does not already have a SACC license approved on the day that they're opening, then they are limited to one particular type of activity for the entire day in one particular space. Right. So for example, if I'm September 8th and I didn't have my SACC license ready, I can only in school pick one room and deliver one type of activity and I have to from 3:00 to 6:00 or from 2:30 to 4:30, whatever my hours are, I can only do one type of activity, whether it's homework help or gym or--you have to pick one and that whole time you can only do that one type of activity because you have to wait until you have your SACC license approved before you can actually carry out your entire schedule with all the different types of activities at different

1 times in multiple rooms. And what we've seen happen
2 is that when providers are limited to that kind of
3 structure, that kids, especially in the middle school
4 age, where they can go home by themselves or they
5 have other options, will then even if they come into
6 your program that afternoon, they then turn around
7 and they're not going to stay because that's not why
8 they came to your program for that day.

10 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: What is the process
11 the providers have to go through to get the license?
12 How long it take, and what would prevent them to get
13 the transition of the license to start?

14 GIGI LI: Sharon, do you want to address
15 that?

16 SHARON LEVY: I don't know that I have
17 all the details, but it depends on the site and it
18 depends on if you're renewing a license or getting it
19 for the first time, but there is a coordination of
20 different agencies that all relate back to the SACC
21 license and I think that one of the things that was
22 highlighted before is one of those things that we
23 often laugh about but is very true, the idea that
24 those same spaces are safe enough and clean enough
25 and have the right radiator covers for the school

1 day, yet not all of those things for the afterschool
2 hours, and that's sort of the challenge that we've
3 found. If they're okay enough for the school day,
4 then they should be okay for the afterschool hours as
5 well, and that's I think part of what one of the
6 challenges that we brought up during those
7 discussions with the Deputy Mayor on the SACC
8 regulations.
9

10 GIGI LI: So the SACC regulations cover
11 everything from depending on what age the children
12 you're serving, so elementary versus middle school,
13 there is a specific staff to child ratio. So you have
14 to show that you will always be in compliance with
15 the staff ratio. It covers things like radiator
16 covers, how many bathrooms have to be opened. You
17 have to have a security plan in case of an emergency.
18 What's your--if you want to offer an alternative
19 security plan, if you don't want to incur fees. For
20 example, if you have to pay additional fees for
21 security guard, what that would look like. So it
22 covers a whole range of issues down to how many rolls
23 of toilet paper are supposed to be, you know, in the
24 bathroom. And then so you submit all of that
25 information, how many classrooms, etcetera, and then

1 Department of Health and Mental Health will then have
2 to send someone out to inspect the site, and then if
3 they see any regulations that are not being met, you
4 then have to go back and forth and rectify it, and
5 then they come back out, and you have to go through
6 that whole process. So if you think about a provider
7 who, you know, is getting Council money or is kind of
8 waiting to the end of a budget cycle to know whether
9 or not they're funded and funded with how many slots,
10 and it's a summer program where you're not really
11 sure, working with DOE, if you're going to be school
12 A or school B. You can't submit any of those plans
13 up to the state until you know all of those things.
14 So it's a trickle-down effect of with every decision
15 that's being made later, that it really effects how
16 that program can--how quickly they can become open
17 and how they can serve the kids in the way that they
18 want to serve them.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much.
21 Ms. Went, you mentioned in your testimony that
22 Northside Center you're serving children of special
23 needs.

24 KIMBERLY WENT: Yes, we are.
25

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Could you please elaborate of the needs of those children? Are they mentally challenged, physically challenged children?

KIMBERLY WENT: Well, our children that come into, we also have a mental health clinic. So some of the children come and they have ADHD, ODD, behavioral issues, so those are the types of special needs that we have at our program, and that, you know, obviously causes an issue because they're--they have these behavioral issues and they're not able to really go to a lot of programs because, you know, they have these behavioral issues, but we, here in our staff are more trained to handle children with behavioral issues, ODD, ADD, things like that.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: If you are dealing with children of special needs, so that mean you need special teachers. You know, what can you tell us about the staff, the teachers? How do you recruit them? What is their qualification? What are the requirements, you know, those teachers should fulfil?

KIMBERLY WENT: Well, I, myself, I'm a special educator. The staff that I do hire, we make sure that they have experience with children with special needs. So either some of them they've worked

1 previously, they are educators, for instance, are
2 activity specialists. They also have degrees in
3 special education. Some of them have worked previous
4 camps or day after schools that they work
5 specifically with special needs children. So that's
6 how we, I guess, see who is more set for our type of
7 children. We do have different types of children.
8 We don't only have special needs children, but the
9 children that we do have, we have staff that can
10 really work with them well.

12 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay. And you
13 mentioned also that we fund--inadequate funding
14 because system is much needed to wrap around [sic]
15 services are endangered. And you say that our, most
16 of our children are at risk in mental health clinic
17 and special needs afterschool programming are
18 underfunded.

19 KIMBERLY WENT: Yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: And I think I was
21 very pleased when Lisa from YMCA, when you mentioned,
22 you know, the different sources of funding, because I
23 know that because I created a not for profit
24 organization also. I was on the other side, and I
25

1 know we cannot rely on the government funding for the
2 survival of the program.

3 KIMBERLY WENT: Absolutely.

4 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: So my question to
5 you, what has been done, what effort you have been
6 done to try to get other funding to guide funding, to
7 raise funding, you know, to make sure that the
8 programs continue, the program in our system, the
9 organization really be able to continue to provide
10 services to those children of special needs.

11 KIMBERLY WENT: Well, we do have a
12 developmental team that really goes out there and
13 helps us create partnerships with people that can
14 help us bring in the funding that we do need. As far
15 as partnerships itself with the program, we do
16 partner up with schools that are in the area that can
17 really help us kind of form a bridge with the
18 children that do have special needs as well as our
19 clinic. We are trying and trying and trying to get
20 funding for special needs, because I guess they feel
21 that because our program is not fully special needs,
22 that we don't get special needs funding. So right
23 now, we do not receive special needs funding for our
24 program. So we only, because we are a SACC license
25

1 for school-aged children we get funding for school-
2 aged children, but these children that we have that
3 are in the area, our demographic, our children that
4 have these needs and we are not able to get the
5 special funding that we need for them, and that's why
6 they're endangered.
7

8 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: I see. But do you
9 serve only special needs children, or you serve
10 regular children also?

11 KIMBERLY WENT: We serve bothe.

12 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Oh, both.

13 KIMBERLY WENT: Yes.

14 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: I see. Okay. For
15 our YMCA, I know that you mentioned about the
16 different sources of funding, and could you tell us a
17 little bit what is the percentage of city funding and
18 state, federal or private funding, just a percentage,
19 just to see what is the basic funding source? Is it
20 city, state or federal?

21 SHARON LEVY: For us?

22 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Yeah.

23 SHARON LEVY: For the Y? The city--

24 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: [interposing] For
25 the Y.

SHARON LEVY: without question makes up a majority of the funding that we use for afterschool programs, between Beacons and Cornerstones and COMPASS and SONYC, I want to say easily it would be, don't quote me, 70 percent, 60 to 70 percent of the funds are city funds.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: From the city?

SHARON LEVY: From the city, and the other 30 to 40 would be private, state, other city, and a small amount of federal funding.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: So that means from the city we're doing good, right?

SHARON LEVY: Yeah, uh-huh. No, and that's why--that would be technical terminology, yeah, uh-huh. In all honesty, I mean, that's we started and all of us I think started with a big thank you to the council to the Administration to DYCD for all the efforts because it has been--it is a, I hate to overuse this, historic time for afterschool. So thank you.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Very good. So, we care about young people, about youth, because as we said they are the future of this great city. They're the future of the nation and we will try to do

1 better. Alright? My last question is, I didn't
2 mention also about the security, which seemed to be a
3 burden.
4

5 SHARON LEVY: Oh, yeah. Talk to me.

6 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Security fee, and
7 you mentioned 25,000 dollars a year?

8 SHARON LEVY: It can, yes. So--

9 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: [interposing] What
10 that cover? Tell me exactly. What is--

11 SHARON LEVY: [interposing] One to two
12 security guards depending on the size of the program
13 for three hours in the afterschool hours. So if there
14 is a privately funded afterschool program, so we do a
15 lot of our own, not a lot--we do some of our own
16 fundraising, and we also get state funds as I said,
17 so advantage afterschool programs or extended school
18 day violence prevention programs that are funded by
19 the state, those programs have to pay security fees
20 more often than not. And so depending on the size of
21 the program, I believe it's one security guard per
22 100 students. So if you have 110 students,
23 technically, you're supposed to pay for two security
24 guards, three hours a day, every day after school.
25 So think about the hourly rate for a security guard

multiplied by that number of hours and that's how it could reach 25,000 dollars.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Wow.

SHARON LEVY: Most principals have worked with us in figuring out how, let's say a PTA program is going on during some of the same hours, so they wouldn't charge us necessarily for all of the hours. Some have multiple programs going on in the school building so we share the fees. But in some cases, the principals don't have the funds to cover the costs and they have now officially been told by the DOE that they are not to cover the cost, and that the CBO partner is supposed to cover the cost of the security fees moving forward.

GIGI LI: Can I just add something on the fees? I think the like larger issues is that DOE is charging those who use the afterschool time period for any kind of services in their school, a fee for security as well as for janitors, and so it applies to afterschool programs, it applies to school based health and mental health centers. They're all getting charged this fee, which makes providing services from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. in schools prohibitive for some organizations that could provide

good services in schools where the kids are and where we want to provide services for them.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay. Thank you very much. So, let me then one more time thank you for the wonderful job that you are doing, for your effort to provide important resources and opportunity for our young people. And I want to state that we from this committee, we Council Members and the Speaker and all the City Council Members, we are committed to our children and to the youth, and we will continue to do everything in our power to make sure that we support you, to make sure that we help you continue the good job that you are doing protecting and providing the best education forward and programing to our young people. Thank you very much. Have a wonderful day. The meeting is adjourned.

[gavel]

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COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date September 18, 2014