

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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September 29, 2014
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HELD AT: 250 Broadway- Committee Rm, 16th Fl.

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Chairperson

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

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay good morning.

I'm Daniel Dromm and I'm the chair of the Education Committee. And I want to say welcome to the Education Committee's oversight hearing on guidance services for students in New York City public schools. We will also hear testimony on a bill and a resolution today, Intro number 403 sponsored by Antonio Reynoso and Resolution number 166 sponsored by Debbie Rose. I'll talk more about these items shortly after some opening remarks and then we'll move on to hear statements from the lead sponsors of the legislation we're considering today. A Gotham Gazette article last Friday got it right when it stated that the role of guidance counsellors in schools is increasingly being recognized as an essential factor in student support and key driver to help prepare students both for graduating from high school and succeeding in higher education. In fact there's been a renewed emphasis on school guidance services at the national level and in states and cities across the country. New York City is no exception. Within her first few months on the job Chancellor Fariña

1
2 recognized the importance of the work of guidance
3 counsellors by launching a new office of guidance
4 and school counselling dedicated to supporting and
5 promoting the work of guidance personnel including
6 school counsellors, social workers, and SAPIS
7 counsellors. Chancellor Fariña also held a welcome
8 back event for school counsellors and social
9 workers at the end of August and I was very pleased
10 that she invited me to attend that event so I was
11 able to hear firsthand some of the chancellor's
12 ambitious goals for guidance services and
13 Counselling. She also gave me an opportunity to
14 speak to the audience of several hundred school
15 counsellors and social workers about my experiences
16 as a gay teacher working for 25 years in the city's
17 school system and the importance of addressing the
18 needs of LGBTQ students, families, and teachers.
19 Afterwards I spoke with a number of counsellors who
20 all expressed agreement with the chancellor's goals
21 but wondered where are they going to find the time
22 to do all of these things that she envisioned. Many
23 of them currently spend much of their time
24 providing mandated Counselling for students with
25 disabilities and all of them have caseloads that

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2 are too large to allow for the individualized
3 attention needed to provide high quality assistance
4 for all students. School counsellors are required
5 to provide assistance to students across three
6 areas; academic planning, personal and social
7 development, and college and career planning. They
8 also serve as... point person in dealing with child
9 abuse and neglect, substance abuse prevention and
10 intervention, anti-bullying efforts, homeless
11 students, and crisis intervention. Counsellors are
12 already responsible for a dizzying array of
13 services and tasks providing individual and small
14 group Counselling; delivering classroom guidance
15 and presentations, participating in school based
16 pupil personnel committees and academic
17 intervention services, process and referrals to
18 outside agencies, working with parents and
19 conducting training for staff, assisting with high
20 school and college admissions, and the list goes on
21 and on. And each of these functions comes with its
22 own set of paperwork. So it's not surprising that
23 the counsellors that I spoke with are wondering
24 where they'll find the time for all of these
25 exciting new plans that the chancellor described.

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2 Research shows that school Counselling is very
3 beneficial to students leading to higher
4 achievement, lower disciplinary rates, increased
5 attendance rates, higher graduation rates, and
6 increased college enrollment. So we have to find a
7 way to deliver more and more guidance services for
8 all our children particularly those with the
9 greatest needs. What are the obstacles to achieving
10 that? There are too few counsellors with too few
11 case loads, too many responsibilities and too
12 little time, support, and training. Of course the
13 chief obstacle is insufficient funding to hire all
14 of the counsellors and make all of the necessary
15 improvements, another critical reason why we need
16 the state to live up to its funding commitment to
17 the city in the campaign for fiscal equity
18 settlement. Clearly this is an important topic and
19 we have a lot to examine today regarding guidance
20 services in the New York City public schools. The
21 committee also looks forward to hearing testimony
22 from parents, students, educators and advocates,
23 unions, CEC members, and others on this issue. As I
24 stated earlier we will also hear testimony on Intro
25 number 403 and Resolution 166 today. Now in regard

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2 to Intro number 403 it would require the Department
3 of Education to submit to the council and post on
4 the DOE's website an annual report each December
5 15th regarding guidance counsellors for the current
6 school year. The proposed bill would require the
7 DOE to report one the number of guidance
8 counsellors in each school, two the guidance
9 counsellor to student ratio in each school, three
10 whether the guidance counsellor is providing
11 Counselling assistance to more than one co-located
12 school in a school building, and four the number of
13 students served by each guidance counsellor and the
14 nature and scope of the counsellor received by each
15 student including academic Counselling, college
16 preparatory [SIC], and career Counselling. Intro
17 number 403 would also require the annual, annual
18 reports to include the number of guidance
19 counsellors in the absent teacher reserve pool,
20 information regarding the DOE's efforts to recruit
21 guidance counsellors for grade seven through 12 and
22 information regarding any guidance memorandums
23 issued by the DOE regarding college preparedness.
24 The proposed bill would also require the reports to
25 include demographic information for students in

1
2 each school including race, ethnicity, English
3 language learner status, special education status,
4 and the percentage of students eligible for free
5 and reduced price lunch. Reso number 166 calls on
6 the New York City Department of Education to
7 establish a comprehensive college preparation
8 program based on the college readiness model
9 proposed by the Urban Youth Collaborative to
10 improve and expand college access for all students.
11 The resolution calls on DOE to assess what schools
12 are currently doing to support students through the
13 college process and make that assessment public and
14 to create an early warning system so that all high
15 school students know whether they are on track for
16 graduation and college. It also proposes a maximum
17 student to counsellor ratio of 250. And I in
18 addition, to 250 to one and in addition that every
19 school should have a well-trained college
20 counsellor for every 100 seniors. The resolution
21 also calls on the DOE to maintain support for
22 existing student success centers and to create
23 additional ones at low performing multi campus high
24 schools. Resolution number 166 also calls on the
25 DOE to ensure that schools using the distributive

1 guidance model provide teachers with ongoing
2 training, adequate time, and the necessary
3 resources to fulfill their college support role.
4 Finally the resolution proposes that DOE provide
5 the necessary funding and support to implement
6 summer bridges to college programs at all New York
7 City high schools. I'd like to remind everyone who
8 wishes to testify today that you must fill out a
9 witness slip which is located on the desk of
10 Sergeant of Arms near the entrance to the room. If
11 you wish to testify on Intro number 403 or
12 Resolution number 166 please indicate on the
13 witness slip whether you are here to testify in
14 favor of or opposition to the bill or resolution. I
15 also want to point out that we will not be voting
16 on the bill or the resolution today as this is just
17 the first hearing. To allow as many people as
18 possible to testify testimony will be limited to
19 three minutes per person. And I will swear in
20 witnesses at this committee before testifying. So
21 now I'd like to turn it over to my colleague
22 Antonio Reynoso from Brooklyn for his, his remarks
23 regarding Intro number 403.
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2 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Thank you
3 Chairman Dromm for allowing me to speak on this
4 issue today. It's the first piece of legislation
5 that's being heard of mine so I'm extremely excited
6 and happy that it's education based introduction.
7 And just want to speak to some statistics. Only one
8 out of every five public school students earns a
9 college degree within 12 years of starting high
10 school. Over the course of a lifetime a worker with
11 a Bachelor's degree will earn 1.5 million more than
12 a worker with only a high school degree. More than
13 50 percent of students in city high schools have a
14 student to counsellor ratio greater than 250 to
15 one. Guidance counsellors have many roles including
16 behavioral, academic, and college readiness
17 counselling. Studies show lower levels of college
18 readiness in low income communities of color
19 particularly in the Bronx and Brooklyn. So right
20 now we need information so we can analyze the
21 impact of students who are under, underserved by
22 college readiness counselling and find ways to
23 proactively address the issue by ensuring that
24 students are getting the help they need to get into
25 college. Intro 403 would, would require the DOE to

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2 report on the following; the number of guidance
3 counsellors in a school, the guidance counsellor to
4 student ratio in each school, whether the guidance
5 counsellor is providing Counselling assistance to
6 more than one co-located school in the, in a school
7 building, the number of students served by each
8 guidance counsellor, and the nature of scope of the
9 Counselling received by each student including
10 academic Counselling, college preparatory, and
11 career Counselling, the number of guidance
12 counsellors in the absent teacher reserve pool,
13 information regarding the DOE's effort to recruit
14 guidance counsellors for grade seven through 12,
15 and any guidance memorandums issued by the
16 Department of Education regarding college
17 preparedness, and demographic information for
18 students in each school including race, ethnicity,
19 ELL status, special education status, and the
20 percentage of students eligible for free and
21 reduced price lunch. I've had, I've had the
22 privilege and the luck to be able to go to a school
23 in a scholarship, a high school through a
24 scholarship and had a ratio of less than 125
25 students for each counsellor plus a spiritual

1
2 counsellor and a college readiness counsellor. It
3 wasn't until about a year ago that I talked to some
4 students within my community in Bushwick that I
5 found out some of them had one to 500 for a college
6 counsellor and only one guidance counsellor for the
7 rest of the four school, school grades, or one
8 each, one in each grade. So it was, it was sad. I,
9 I felt that I didn't even know the impact or the
10 importance of guidance counsellors because I always
11 had it. It wasn't until I saw folks that didn't
12 have it the impact that it could possibly have. And
13 the, the model, or what I'm working on now is just
14 I want to make my luck the standard. In the past I
15 guess the priority for guidance counsellor has been
16 very low because we don't even have information as
17 to what exactly guidance counsellors are doing in
18 each of these schools. So when I asked for data so
19 I can propose a legislation that would let's say
20 would mandate a 250 to one ratio I didn't even have
21 that. So I'm extremely grateful that I could move
22 forward with at least putting legislation forward
23 that could get me more information so that we can
24 make a more informed decision. And also I want to
25 congratulate my sister from another borough Debbie

1
2 Rose for her resolution and I hope then they both
3 move forward. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you Council
5 Member Reynoso. And I'd like to give Council Member
6 Debbie Rose the opportunity to say a few words as
7 well.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you Chairman
9 Dromm. And thank you Council Member Reynoso for
10 your insightful legislation, one that I think is
11 long overdue. I'd like to thank Chair Dromm for
12 holding this important oversight hearing on
13 guidance services for students. I am thrilled that
14 my resolution calling on the New York City
15 Department of Education to establish a college
16 preparation program to improve and expand college
17 access for all will be heard as a part of this
18 hearing. This is an area of great importance to me
19 as I spent the last 20, the last 20 years before
20 becoming an elected official working with at risk
21 youth as the director of the Liberty Partnerships
22 Program at the College of Staten Island, a dropout
23 prevention program that provided students with
24 opportunities and support to ensure that they
25 stayed in school and were prepared for college and

1 for the workforce. Just last Thursday I hosted a
2 round table on Staten Island on workforce
3 development and a major focus of the discussion was
4 the mismatch between the skills needed for emerging
5 businesses in preparation for those careers by
6 local schools. Serious college preparation at the
7 high school level is critical to building a model,
8 a modern workforce and opening the door to good
9 jobs with good salaries as well as to lifelong
10 fulfilling careers for our young people. I commend
11 the urban youth collaborative for developing its
12 get us to college model. Last year I attended a
13 presentation of their work to the council's black
14 Latino and Asian caucus and was inspired to draft
15 what has become Resolution 166 calling on the New
16 York City Department of Education to establish a
17 comprehensive college preparation program based on
18 their college readiness model. Amongst other things
19 the urban youth collaborative model calls for
20 increasing student success centers in our high
21 schools and providing funding to high schools to
22 implement bridge to college programs. These are
23 exactly the innovative type of initiatives that
24 will help us create meaningful pathways to higher
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2 education ad as a result better jobs for our
3 students. And so I want to again thank you Chair
4 and Antonio as the guidance counsellors are an
5 important element in the preparation for college
6 bound students. So thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay thank you very
8 much Council Member Rose. I will say that the DOE
9 is not required to testify on resolutions but we
10 will have some discussion on that after this. And I
11 want to acknowledge as well that we've been joined
12 by my colleagues Mark Weprin from Queens, Margaret
13 Chin from Manhattan, Vincent Gentile from Brooklyn,
14 Mark Levine from Manhattan as well. And before we
15 proceed any further I want to thank my staff for
16 the work that they've been doing all weekend long;
17 Andrea Vasquez [sp?], Jan Atwell [sp?], Joan
18 Pavolni [sp?], Christina Parodi [sp?], and Medina
19 Nezamatidine [Sp?] for everything that they've done
20 to prepare for this hearing today. And again if you
21 would like to give testimony please make sure that
22 you filled out a form and that you give it to the
23 Sergeant in Arms at the desk over here. And I think
24 with that we will swear in our witnesses. So if you
25 would just raise your right hand please. And do you

1 affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and
2 nothing but the truth, and to answer council member
3 questions honestly? Thank you. And would you begin
4 please.
5

6 LOIS HERRERA: Good morning Chair Dromm
7 and all the members of the Education Committee here
8 today. My name is Lois Herrera and I am the Senior
9 Executive Director of the newly formed Office of
10 Guidance and School Counselling at the New York
11 City Department of Education. While the office is
12 new I've been working in this field for over 28
13 years. I started as a bilingual guidance counsellor
14 at a large middle school in Queens, moved to
15 District 25 to support the work of 55 counsellors
16 and I later became a school administrator. I've
17 spent the last seven years supporting the work of
18 guidance and Substance Abuse Prevention
19 Intervention Specialist also known as SAPIS with
20 the Office of Safety and Youth Development. I'm
21 joined by Vanda Belusic-Vollor, Senior Executive
22 Director of DOE's Office of Postsecondary Readiness
23 and the Division of Teaching and Learning and
24 Lawrence Becker, Chief Executive Officer of DOE's
25 Division of Human Resources. We thank you for the

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2 opportunity to discuss guidance and school
3 counselling in New York City schools and Intro
4 number 403. As a direct result of Chancellor
5 Fariña's commitment to, and deep understanding of
6 the critical work of school guidance counsellors
7 one of her first acts as chancellor was to create
8 the Office of Guidance and School Counselling. It
9 is the mission of the office to ensure that there
10 is a guidance counsellor in every middle and high
11 school in accordance with New York state Education
12 Commissioner's regulations. Increased professional
13 development and resources for guidance counsellors
14 and school counsellors on proactive approach is to
15 fostering social emotional learning, positive
16 behavior, and effective interpersonal skills,
17 broaden the college and career readiness focus for
18 guidance counsellors across elementary, middle, and
19 high schools through professional development,
20 collaborate with our superintendents and school
21 support teams to ensure the school leaders more
22 clearly understand the role of the counsellor, work
23 with other offices within the DOE such as the
24 Office of Postsecondary Readiness, the Division of
25 Specialized Instruction and Student Support, and

1 the Office of English Language Learners to provide
2 seamless support and professional development
3 opportunities. Guided by the models and ethical
4 standards developed by the American School
5 Counsellor Association, ASCA, the common core
6 learning standards and the state education
7 commissioner's regulation part 100.2 which outlines
8 the staffing and program requirements of school
9 guidance counsellors. This office will build the
10 capacity of school counsellors and social workers
11 to deliver a comprehensive program that positively
12 impacts student academic success, social emotional
13 development, and postsecondary planning. Under the
14 ASCA model the work of a school counselor centers
15 on three domains; academic development, personal
16 social development, and career post-secondary
17 development. There's a significant overlap in these
18 domains. For example it would be nearly impossible
19 to engage in college planning without considering a
20 student's academic achievement and personal goals,
21 preferences, and life circumstances. While there
22 are overlapping responsibilities across school
23 support professionals, guidance counsellors, social
24 workers, and school psychologists have very
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2 different training, certification, and areas of
3 focus. The intersection of the three professionals
4 is in their ability to provide individual
5 counselling and focus on personal social
6 development. Social workers are trained to be
7 community focused. School psychologists are trained
8 to focus on individual functioning, and guidance
9 counsellors are trained in career development and
10 postsecondary planning. The Office of Guidance and
11 School Counselling supports the work of guidance
12 counsellors and social workers in areas where they
13 overlap as well as the work of SAPIS. Approximately
14 3,100 guidance counsellors, and 1,400 social
15 workers currently work in New York City schools.
16 Since the formation of the Office of Guidance and
17 School Counselling over 250 new guidance
18 counsellors have been hired throughout the system.
19 Although the New York state Education
20 Commissioner's regulations only require the
21 services of a guidance counsellor at middle and
22 high school the majority of our elementary schools
23 have at least one guidance counsellor on staff.
24 While the state regulations do not specify or
25 required or recommended counsellor to student

1 service ratio we acknowledge that we can always use
2 more counsellors to increase personalization and
3 reduce the service ratios in schools. Our office
4 will continue to encourage counsellor staffing in
5 schools where we see additional need. To start off
6 the new school year on August 26th Chancellor
7 Fariña convened a meeting of counsellors and social
8 workers to welcome them back for the new school
9 year and to provide them with an overview of the
10 integral role they will play in achieving her goals
11 for our students. This was a voluntary meeting held
12 during summer vacation and we were thrilled to have
13 over 400 guidance counsellors and social workers in
14 attendance. We were thankful to have Chair Dromm
15 speak at this meeting and the event was such a
16 success that we held an encore event on September
17 23rd to accommodate the overwhelming response. As
18 part of our goal to increase communication with
19 counsellors, social workers, and SAPIS we developed
20 a newsletter called Counsellor Connections. The
21 first edition was released this month and we have
22 copies for you here with us today. In addition to
23 the newsletter the Office of Guidance and School
24 Counselling has begun to bring counsellors together
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2 for professional development. Today as we meet
3 there's a training session in progress for new
4 guidance counsellors taking place in collaboration
5 with the United Federation of Teachers. Some of the
6 office's plans for this fall include professional
7 development on promoting positive behavior, suicide
8 prevention for six through 12 counsellors, career
9 development for high school counsellors, and career
10 development for K through eight counsellors. We
11 will also hold over 30 child abuse prevention
12 workshops for designated liaisons from all schools.
13 Generally speaking guidance counsellors address the
14 specific needs of individual students as well as
15 provide information and programmatic support to the
16 whole school community. This work will vary based
17 on the unique needs of a school community. Some
18 examples of the services guidance counsellors
19 provide include but are not limited to; conducting
20 classroom lessons on building interpersonal skills
21 or anti-bullying, working with teachers on social
22 emotional components of an advisory curriculum,
23 conducting a career day in elementary and middle
24 school, and providing student presentations on
25 applying for financial aid and parent workshops on

1 the high school level. Counsellors meet with
2 students both individually and or in small group
3 settings. Small group and individual sessions might
4 address attendance managing one's emotions,
5 deescalating conflict, developing study skills, and
6 exploring one's personal career plans, or crisis
7 intervention. There are counsellors that provide
8 related services counselling for students with
9 disabilities which is determined by the student's
10 IEP. And there are counsellors that are more
11 involved with counselling students and families on
12 the middle and high school choice processes. Some
13 counsellors may also address students' needs by
14 connecting families to services in their school
15 community. In addition many schools partner with a
16 community based organization to provide services on
17 college advisement, counselling for at risk
18 students, or specialized services to enhance the
19 existing guidance program. I know the work of a
20 guidance counsellor is extremely challenging. No
21 two days are the same. When I was a guidance
22 counsellor a typical day could include helping a
23 new student new to the country register in my
24 school and get acclimated, making a classroom
25

1 presentation on respecting others, giving and
2 auditorium presentation on the high school
3 application, counselling a small group of students
4 on conflict resolution, meeting with a parent about
5 her child's report card grades, and soothing a
6 crying child. The areas of responsibility are
7 enormous but skilled counsellors choreograph this
8 dance on the daily basis. This administration is
9 committed to development of the whole child in
10 ensuring that all students are provided with both
11 the academic and non-academic supports needed to be
12 successful. This year for the first time ever all
13 middle school students will have access to high
14 quality after school program. The mayor is almost
15 halfway to fulfilling his commitment to establish
16 100 new community schools in his first term. We
17 recently identified 45 schools to partner with the
18 CBO to adopt a community school approach. These
19 schools will be provided with a full time resource
20 coordinator who will work with the school to
21 perform a needs assessment for a range of wrap
22 around services including additional counselling
23 services. The chancellor has tasked my office to
24 ensure that our guidance counsellors and social
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1
2 workers have the professional development and
3 requisite, central, and school level support and
4 resources to successfully provide our students with
5 high quality prevention intervention services and
6 increased parent engagement. In a few months we
7 have made a significant impact. We are confident
8 that we are moving in the right direction and I
9 look forward to providing you with an update on our
10 progress as the weeks and months ahead. While the
11 school guidance counsellor is important to college
12 planning and access there are many models of
13 working with students around this area. My office
14 works closely with the DOE's Office of
15 Postsecondary Readiness to ensure that all high
16 school students have access to college advising.
17 Before I turn it over to my colleague I would like
18 to express our support for Intro number 403 which
19 requires DOE to report information regarding
20 guidance counsellors in schools. This report will
21 be an invaluable resource to the DOE as well as the
22 school communities, elected officials, and other
23 stakeholders. We'd like to work with the council to
24 ensure that the reporting requirements align with
25 the information we currently track.

VANDA BELUSIC-VOLLAR: Good morning

Chair Dromm and members of the Education Committee here today. My name is Vanda Belusic-Vollor Senior Executive Director of the Department of Education's Office of Postsecondary Readiness which lives in the Division of Teaching and Learning. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss DOE's work to help increase our student's access to college and to ensure their success. Since this is my first appearance before this committee I'd like to tell you a bit about my background in education. Prior to my current position I served as the Executive Director of the DOE's Office to Multiple Pathways to Graduation where I supported the expansion of school and program models to meet the needs of New York City's overaged, under credited population. I am also the former principal of South Brooklyn Community High School, a successful transfer school focused on rigorous academics infused with youth development and college career preparation and career exploration. OPSR supports schools in their work to increase student's and family's access to educational and career postsecondary opportunities through several programs and initiatives that focus

1 on resource and professional development. As you
2 are aware many of the fastest, fastest growing 21st
3 century jobs require postsecondary degrees.
4 According to the Georgetown Center on Education in
5 the Workforce by 2020 65 percent of all U.S. jobs
6 will require at least some college or higher
7 education experience. We know that a distributed or
8 a school wide college and career planning culture
9 is essential to ensuring that all students graduate
10 from high school ready for post-secondary study or
11 career training. Although guidance counsellors play
12 an important role in the college application
13 process supporting student in accessing
14 postsecondary opportunities needs to be a full
15 school effort. Since 2012 with funding from the
16 Open Society Foundation the department has engaged
17 in a three year effort to train guidance
18 counsellors, teachers, school leaders, and other
19 staff to provide high quality individualized
20 postsecondary planning supports to all students
21 through Goddard Riverside's Option Institute. The
22 six day training steep school base staff in the
23 basis of, basics of application planning and
24 financial aid and includes training on working with
25

1
2 immigrant students for the college process. We also
3 offer additional workshops on topics such as
4 college counselling for students with disabilities
5 and career training and college alternatives. To
6 date 1,311 school base staff have participated in
7 our six day intensive college access training
8 institute across 75 percent of all high schools. We
9 are continuing to train additional staff through
10 the school year. OPSR also offers an intensive five
11 day institute to help school teens including school
12 leadership improve their current college and career
13 planning culture to develop a strategic plan. To
14 date 200 school based staff have participated in
15 this planning institute. We also know that families
16 are key partners in helping ensure students have
17 access to higher education. The DOE's Achieve New
18 York City Guide which is being distributed to all
19 New York City public school families next month
20 includes information about college access. Last
21 year we worked with the city council to expand the
22 section in this guide on college access and
23 financial planning. In addition OPSR publishes a
24 guide on college and career readiness for students
25 in grades six through 12 written by a volunteer

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2 committee of public school parents. We have also
3 provided financial support for the publication and
4 distribution of the New York Immigration
5 Coalition's College Access Guide for immigrant
6 parents and a center for New York City Affairs
7 Guide on financial planning. Our Office of Family
8 and Community Engagement conducts college planning
9 workshops for parents in every borough throughout
10 the school year. In addition to the professional
11 development and training opportunities we recognize
12 the valuable expertise and support that college
13 access focus CBOs provide directly to students and
14 schools. Where possible the DOE supplements school
15 funds to support the work of these groups through a
16 range of programs across, over 170 schools. These
17 programs include the College Bound Initiative a
18 program which provides 24 participating schools a
19 full time college access counsellor, College Bridge
20 a program to ensure that graduating seniors
21 matriculate to college, and Student Success Centers
22 a youth led college counselling program run by
23 several CBOs across the city to name a few. College
24 access for New York City public students is a
25 priority for this administration. We strongly

1
2 support the New York State Dream Act so that all
3 students including those who are undocumented can
4 apply for state sponsored college loans, grants,
5 and scholarships. Currently 72 percent of graduates
6 of New York City public schools enroll in college
7 within three months of graduation. We know we have
8 more work to do to ensure that all of our students
9 have the opportunity to successfully pursue the
10 postsecondary path of their choosing. And we look
11 forward to continue to partner with the city
12 council on this important issue. With that we are
13 happy to answer any questions you may have.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much.
15 And I'm just going to start off by asking a
16 question that maybe not everybody knows and that's
17 why I want to ask it is that in which grades are
18 guidance counsellors required by state law?

19 LOIS HERRERA: Part 100.2 requires that
20 there be a certified counsellor in any school
21 serving grade seven through 12.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So they all have to
23 be covered. I just want to also say that I'm very
24 much in support of the launching of the new office
25 which you'll be heading. And I very much appreciate

1
2 having had the opportunity to address the guidance
3 counsellors as well. This is something that in my
4 very first meetings with Chancellor Fariña we
5 talked about and it's good to see that we're moving
6 in this direction. And I applaud those efforts. One
7 of the things that I have some questions about in
8 terms of your testimony is there anything in your
9 plans that will help to measure the success of
10 these new efforts.

11 LOIS HERRERA: Yeah success of a
12 counselling program really is measured best at the
13 school level. And success takes on different forms.
14 Certainly it should take on the form of improved
15 academic achievement, better planning for one's
16 future, aligning with the academic instructional
17 mission of the school, and all of that takes place
18 at, at the school level.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Is there a, a
20 central count of how many students get into college
21 that leave the, our high schools and go directly
22 into college?

23 VANDA BELUSIC-VOLLAR: There is a
24 central count. Bear with me for one second. It is
25 72 percent, it was the last page of the testimony

1
2 I'm sorry. Currently 72 percent of graduates of New
3 York City public schools enroll in college within
4 three months of graduation.

5 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And do we have a
6 record of what colleges they're enrolling in?

7 VANDA BELUSIC-VOLLAR: We give schools a
8 report but we do not have a detailed tracker.
9 Student level data is not available.

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: It would be
11 interesting to see if we could begin to think about
12 how we can capture that information because I find
13 it to also be a motivation for other kids when they
14 see the, the schools and colleges that graduates
15 are attending. I have attended some graduations in
16 individual schools where they do list the colleges
17 that students have been accepted into. And I think
18 that, that inspires kids to think that maybe they
19 can do the same thing as well.

20 VANDA BELUSIC-VOLLAR: I think, I think
21 that's a great idea.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. One of the
23 complaints and one of the things that I saw when I
24 was teaching is that many guidance counsellors are
25 weighted down with really just doing IEP mandated

1
2 services all day. And this still remains in my
3 opinion a very big issue. So I notice that in your
4 testimony Ms. Herrera you said that there are
5 guidance counsellors that provide related services,
6 counselling for students with disabilities which is
7 determined by a student's IEP and there are
8 counsellors that are more involved with counselling
9 students and families. Often times those two things
10 overlap especially when you only have one guidance
11 counsellor or two guidance counsellors in highly
12 enrolled schools. And I know that the intention is
13 for the guidance counsellors to be able to do other
14 services but they're often scheduled only to do
15 IEPs. Are you thinking about how we might be able
16 to free up some of those guidance counsellors so
17 that they can accomplish some of the goals that the
18 chancellor has set out to do?

19 LOIS HERRERA: Yes I, I think as you
20 said many of the counsellors have overlapping
21 responsibilities. They have a portion of their case
22 load or students with mandated related service
23 counselling and, and other whole school activities.
24 And so our professional development is about
25 thinking about our effects for the whole school and

1
2 having a broader reach. So yes this is something
3 we're looking at.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So do we track in
5 schools where there are, do we track how many
6 guidance counsellors are only doing IEPs in
7 schools, is there a way to be able to find out that
8 information versus those who have a period of free
9 where they could do a, a group for students that
10 are going through divorces or some of the things
11 that the chancellor has said that she'd like to see
12 happen in the schools.

13 LAWRENCE BECKER: The council... [cross-
14 talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...identify yourself.

16 LAWRENCE BECKER: Yes, my name is
17 Lawrence Becker, the Chief Executive Officer for
18 the Division of Human Resources. We have an
19 assignment for certain guidance counsellors that
20 are related service providers only as you may know
21 Chair Dromm. So we could look and see how many of
22 those folks are related service providers. The only
23 hesitation I would have in reporting that number is
24 I know that related service providers also do other
25 things as you do too but we could report on the

1
2 number of pure related service providers we have
3 whose main job it is to do IEP related counselling.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And I agree. I, I
5 just find that often times those who are doing the
6 mandated required services often times get stuck
7 with that and then on top of it they also have to
8 do everything else.

9 LAWRENCE BECKER: Right.

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And that will give
11 us a little bit of insight into what it is that we
12 need to be able to provide better counselling
13 services in the schools. I think if we had those
14 numbers that would be very insightful.

15 LAWRENCE BECKER: And we will try to
16 report that to you. I would say one of the things
17 that my colleagues are working on to your point is
18 that you don't need to have an IEP to have, to see
19 a counsellor. And as we all know there's no
20 requirement about that and the more we can work on
21 that aspect of getting students access to
22 counsellors the more counsellors will have to see
23 students without an IEP.

24

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Exactly. Good so...
3 How many guidance counsellors are employed by the
4 DOE.

5 LAWRENCE BECKER: So I'll answer that
6 again. There are 3,000 as Lois said in her
7 testimony there are 31 hundred, the exact number if
8 you're interested is 3,080.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. And how does
10 that compare? Is that this year or... [cross-talk]

11 LAWRENCE BECKER: That's this year
12 currently right now.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Have you hired any
14 additional guidance counsellors above... [cross-talk]

15 LAWRENCE BECKER: This...

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...what was the number
17 last year?

18 LAWRENCE BECKER: Yes we have. This year
19 Chancellor Fariña made it a point to tell schools
20 at the beginning of the hiring season this summer
21 that there were no hiring restrictions. Some of the
22 council may know that due to budget issues we in
23 the past have had restrictions on hiring guidance
24 counsellors but this year we had no such
25 restrictions and we have hired over 250 new

1
2 guidance counsellors for the system starting this
3 September.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So currently the DOE
5 requires every school to have a parent coordinator.
6 I would actually like to see every school be
7 required to have guidance counsellors. I know that
8 the chancellor has put priority on the schools
9 having them but have you given thought to requiring
10 every school to have a guidance counsellor as we do
11 every school to have a parent coordinator?

12 LAWRENCE BECKER: Well I'll go first
13 then my colleagues will weigh in. I think the
14 chancellor has given thought to that. I think that
15 the, the two rolls can sometimes overlap. To a
16 certain extent I think that of course there are a
17 lot of considerations taken into account. Her main
18 focus I think has been to make sure the secondary
19 level that there are enough guidance counsellors.
20 Obviously her commitment to hiring more this year
21 is part of her intent to try and spread guidance
22 counsellors throughout the system. And future plans
23 will come from Lois' office.

24 LOIS HERRERA: Yes, we've been focused
25 on making sure, ensuring that we're meeting the

1
2 state mandate of having counsellors in schools
3 serving students in seven through 12 but most of
4 our elementary schools do have a counsellor. And so
5 yes we are looking at staffing.

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And Ms. Herrera did
7 you state in your testimony, I'm trying to recall,
8 the ratio of guidance counsellor to student?

9 LOIS HERRERA: No I did not state a
10 ratio.

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Do you have figures
12 that would indicate what those ratios are?

13 LOIS HERRERA: No it's not something
14 that we have calculated on a regular basis. We, we
15 do know that that is a, a recommendation of the
16 Intro and that might be a really helpful measure
17 for us but we haven't looked at the ratio in the
18 past.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Would you agree that
20 in many elementary schools the ratio is 1,000 to
21 one?

22 LOIS HERRERA: Since we haven't
23 calculated I couldn't say.

24 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well from my
25 experience having been a teacher at PS199Q we had

1
2 11 hundred students and one guidance counsellor.
3 It's very hard often times also to get a bilingual
4 guidance counsellor which was really important.
5 That's a whole other issue. We'll talk a little bit
6 may, more about that I think later on. And from
7 many reports that I do hear the ratio in many of
8 the high schools is two guidance counsellor, or one
9 guidance counsellor per 500. So I think looking at
10 those numbers is also going to be a very telling
11 story about why we need more guidance counsellors
12 in our school system. And then before I turn it
13 over to my colleagues for questions can you define
14 for me the difference between the social workers
15 and SAPIS counsellors and what they do, what their
16 different responsibilities are, and how those
17 responsibilities are divided up? In other words I
18 know in certain IEPs counselling is required. What
19 I've seen happen is that sometimes the counselling
20 component is given to a SAPIS worker or to a, a
21 social worker rather than to a guidance counsellor
22 and I'm wondering how that's determined.

23 LOIS HERRERA: Well let me, let me
24 clarify what a SAPIS... [cross-talk]

25 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Mm-hmm.

1
2 LOIS HERRERA: ...worker is first because
3 their, their line of work is very unique and very
4 focused. Our SAPIS, or Substance Abuse Prevention
5 Intervention Specialist. They are funded by the
6 state OASAS which is the Office of Alcohol
7 Substance Abuse Services and they have a very
8 dedicated mission between preventing evidence based
9 classroom lessons that are preventive in nature as
10 well as intervening when students are grappling
11 with issues around substance abuse. They do not do
12 related service counselling. They really focus on
13 the substance abuse prevention, the decision making
14 that goes into that, looking at tobacco use, and
15 looking at gambling. That's, that's what their
16 mission is. Social workers often are aligned with
17 the IEP teams and so at the time a student is given
18 related services a, it is either indicated on the
19 IEP that the counselling is done by a school
20 counsellor done by a social worker or a school
21 psychologist. And so it's at the point of an
22 evaluation or an annual review that it's decided
23 who the service provider is.

24 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So there should not
25 be an occasion where a SAPIS worker is replacing a

1
2 guidance counsellor a social worker if it's been
3 indicated in a child's IEP that they are to receive
4 one or, one of those services?

5 LOIS HERRERA: No it should not be the
6 case.

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. And what are
8 the qualifications to become a SAPIS worker?

9 LOIS HERRERA: They are not required to
10 have a master's degree in the same way that a
11 school counsellor is and a social worker are.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Are they required to
13 have a Bachelor's.

14 LAWRENCE BECKER: In some instances it,
15 they, they are but they can start without.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Is there requirement
17 for them to obtain a Bachelor's before a certain
18 period of time?

19 LAWRENCE BECKER: No I think that, we'd
20 have to get back to you on that Chair but I think
21 to a certain degree it depends on the time, when
22 they started, and how the requirements have changed
23 over time. But we could certainly get back to you
24 on that.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And then the
3 requirements to be a, a social worker, do you know
4 what those are?

5 LAWRENCE BECKER: Social workers are
6 required to...

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Have a master...
8 [cross-talk]

9 LAWRENCE BECKER: Yes they are and
10 achieve... [cross-talk]

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And...

12 LAWRENCE BECKER: ...it during a certain
13 period of time.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And the same thing
15 with guidance counsellors?

16 LAWRENCE BECKER: Yes that's correct.

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And guidance
18 counsellors have to have additional credits over
19 and above... do they have to have a teaching license
20 or can they just have a guidance license?

21 LAWRENCE BECKER: No they, they can,
22 they are required to have credits in counselling
23 and be a state certified school guidance counsellor
24 to be a guidance counsellor in New York City.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And their hours that
3 are required hours are longer than a teacher's
4 hours?

5 LAWRENCE BECKER: The required hours are
6 a little longer than a teachers and they actually
7 work a longer school year by a day or so.

8 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay thank you very
9 much and want to turn it over to my colleague
10 Council Member Levine. Council Member Reynoso.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Thank you
12 Council Member Levine for sitting sometime over,
13 I'm sorry. So first I want to just thank you guys
14 for agreeing that this is a good piece of
15 legislation and actually wanting to do it. So you
16 know once again we're in line and I'm just grateful
17 for the chancellor to allow for us to get there in
18 the right way. But I do want to ask, so getting
19 back to statistics I'm going to try to get as much
20 as I can before the report is even, is even
21 legislated. How many guidance counsellors do we
22 have in our high school system?

23 LAWRENCE BECKER: So in our high school
24 system defining high schools you know as six to 12
25

1 schools and I'm not defining high schools.. just
2 pure high schools we have about 1,188.

3
4 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: And how many
5 students do we have in high school?

6 VANDA BELUSIC-VOLLOR: Our high schools
7 vary in size but there are roughly 437 high schools
8 with 9th through 12th graders if you divide it that
9 way so we can get a greater level of detail back to
10 you but without knowing we, we'd have to get back
11 to you in detail but...

12 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: You don't, you
13 don't have a rough number of how many high school
14 students we have in the system?

15 VANDA BELUSIC-VOLLOR: I was going to
16 say, and to put me, I was an English teacher, math
17 on the spot is hard. But it's roughly 420 high
18 schools varying size some... Fort Hamilton are up to
19 four five thousand.. that large some of the smaller
20 schools are 430 so they vary, we'd have to get back
21 to you with that detail.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Okay. And I
23 don't, I don't necessarily want to know how many on
24 average per school but system wide how many
25 students do we have in high school, system wide,

1
2 you can't, if you don't have the exact number is
3 what I'm getting there.

4 LAWRENCE BECKER: No we'll give you the
5 number and the ratio divided by the 1,188.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Okay that would
7 be helpful. And then when my concern is, it's the
8 outliers that I'm extremely concerned about. And I,
9 you know I, I kind of don't want to see the numbers
10 because I think I know where they're going to be so
11 I just want us to be very mindful when we get, to
12 get that as soon as possible because we don't
13 necessarily just want principals to go hire
14 counsellors and it, in certain areas they need to
15 prioritize resources. And we want to make sure that
16 in struggling schools specifically that we make,
17 that we have more resources is what I, I think we
18 need to get at. Especially ELL guidance counsellors
19 I think are a big issue, I was ELL student as well.
20 So those guidance counsellors, I didn't even know
21 we had a guidance counsellor by the way. So just
22 think that that's very important. Now New York
23 state requires that each public school district
24 must develop a...

1
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I'm sorry just to,
3 just to interrupt one minute as well. So if in the
4 data that we're looking at, collecting, if we can
5 get the number of high schools, especially small
6 high schools that share guidance counsellors as
7 well I think that would be helpful to us.

8 LAWRENCE BECKER: I'll see if we can do
9 that.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Thank you
11 Chair. So New York state requires that each public
12 school district must develop a district plan for
13 guidance counsellors to reviewed annually. New York
14 City must submit a separate plan for each community
15 school district, for the high school division, and
16 for the special education division. Has DOE
17 submitted these plans to the state?

18 LOIS HERRERA: I, my office is nearly
19 formed and it's something that we're looking
20 forward to moving forward.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Okay. So prior
22 to you, your administration was this ever submitted
23 to the state?

24 LOIS HERRERA: I know in... [cross-talk]

25 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Recently?

1
2 LOIS HERRERA: ...back in the district
3 days for sure. But in the intermediate time I don't
4 believe it was, I'm not sure.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Okay. Do you
6 have the most recent one, the most recent plan that
7 was submitted to the state?

8 LOIS HERRERA: No I do not.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Okay. I guess
10 I, thank you very much for your time. I appreciate
11 it.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Council Member Mark
13 Levine.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Thank you Mr.
15 Chair. And thank you for your testimony today. I
16 want to continue on the theme of the numbers here.
17 I was a math teacher so I did a little bit of back
18 of the envelope calculations and it looks like if,
19 if you have 1,188 counsellors in high schools and
20 by my estimate maybe there's about 350 thousand
21 high school students in grades nine through 12
22 that's just, just a guess, you can correct me if
23 I'm wrong that gets us at about 300 counsellors per
24 student, sorry 300 students per counsellor right.
25 Does, does that sound like it's in the ball park.

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LAWRENCE BECKER: Don't know.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Don't know,
okay. Do you accept the assertion in Resolution 166
that 250 students per counsellor is the ideal
target?

LOIS HERRERA: I know that the American
School Counsellor Association uses that figure as
what they recommend.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Okay. So clearly
we're not meeting it on average. And then there's
the issue of the, the wide variation. There could
be some schools where you have relatively few
students but then on, that means on, on the other
end there's going to be some which the numbers are
going to be totally un, unacceptable. Could you
estimate what portion of students are, are served
by counsellors in this ratio? Is it more than
half?

LOIS HERRERA: I can't estimate that.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Right. But these
are the types of things that you, would emerge from
the reporting that we're... [cross-talk]

LOIS HERRERA: Mm-hmm.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: ...we're seeking
3 to legislate, is that accurate?

4 LOIS HERRERA: Yes.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: These kind of
6 ratios, okay. You mentioned that you rely in part
7 on non-profits on CBOs for counselling services.
8 You mentioned one provider that, that has 250
9 counsellors. You mentioned two other providers I
10 didn't know if there was a head count there. Did I
11 have those numbers right? How many total CBO
12 counsellors are there in the system?

13 LOIS HERRERA: No, actually CBO services
14 supplement the work of school counsellors, don't
15 replace so I would not say that we have CBOs in
16 place of a school counsellor.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Got it. Could
18 you briefly explain the division of duties between
19 the CBO and the, and the DOE staff?

20 VANDA BELUSIC-VOLLOR: So we work with
21 CBOs to provide college access and advising. So we
22 work with them in that portion of that work. They
23 vary, they go through a training, and they support
24 schools. Schools often self-select and we
25 supplement where we can.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: So not every
3 school has a CBO support right? Would that be the
4 goal if, if we had the resources?

5 VANDA BELUSIC-VOLLOR: Where schools
6 make independent choices that would be the goal.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: So it's up to
8 the discretion of the school leadership, got it,
9 okay. Reso 166 also sets a target of 100 college
10 counselling trained staff for every 100 seniors
11 which I assume is a subset of, of guidance
12 counselors right, who, who receive supplemental
13 training, is that correct?

14 VANDA BELUSIC-VOLLOR: I'm sorry can you
15 just repeat that last part, my apologies.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: I think I might
17 have reversed the numbers again. So if there would
18 be 100, a ratio of no more than 100 seniors for
19 every well trained college counsellor... do I have,
20 do I have this right, yes, okay. So is that a
21 subset of, of general guidance counsellors who get
22 supplemental training?

23 VANDA BELUSIC-VOLLOR: That's a subset
24 of school staff. It could be a teacher, school
25 leader, it could be anyone in the school staff that

1
2 the school leadership has deemed as appropriate to
3 sit for the training and to do that work with the
4 guidance counsellor.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Got it. And
6 what, what's the number of staff trained system
7 wide today?

8 VANDA BELUSIC-VOLLOR: We have 1,311
9 school based staff that have participated across 75
10 percent of the schools that have a nine through
11 12th grade at this point.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: So that would
13 only be some of something like 300 high school, no
14 no we have nine, so if, if you have 80 thousand
15 high school seniors and you have 1,311 so I guess
16 you're, you're, you're at a, below 100 as a ratio
17 currently presumably. We've talked a lot about IEP
18 duties distracting from some of the core functions.
19 And actually I notice that, that most of the core
20 functions you describe are, are beyond the IEP
21 duties so could you estimate in total what portion
22 of staff time is diverted to IEP duties among the
23 guidance staff? Could it be as much as half?

24 LOIS HERRERA: It's really on a case by
25 case basis. There are some counsellors who

1
2 exclusively are doing related service counselling
3 and others who have it as a mixed model and it
4 would be determined by the number of students who
5 have related service counselling on their IEP.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: So my, my time
7 is up I'll just observe that I think this is
8 critical to understanding the workforce needs here
9 because when we talk about a ratio of 250 students
10 per guidance counsellor I think most of us are
11 assuming only a very small portion of their time is
12 diverted to IEP functions as, as important as they
13 are. So we may be looking at much greater staff
14 needs if indeed we're spending significant portions
15 on IEP. Thank you so much.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Council Member
17 Weprin.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Thank you Chair
19 Dromm. Thank you very much. I, you know I'm glad
20 we're all in agreement how important guidance
21 counsellors are and how we need them in greater
22 numbers, I'm just curious I know Council Member
23 Dromm alluded to the idea, how many, how many
24 schools are, currently have guidance counsellors,
25 let me start with how many high schools, do every

1
2 high school, does every high school have a guidance
3 counsellor at the moment? It does?

4 LOIS HERRERAS: Yes.

5 LAWRENCE BECKER: Yes.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Now are those
7 numbers based at all on the number of students.
8 Because as in Council Member Reynoso, the Council
9 Member from Le Moyne College, is alluding to and,
10 and is that, 250 is a number out there but are,
11 are, are guidance counsellors assigned based on
12 numbers of students at all?

13 LOIS HERRERAS: It's up to the
14 individual principal to, to decide their staffing
15 and so they hire their, their counsellors. It's not
16 essential hiring and deployment of counsellors.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Right. I ask
18 only because I, I know what Council Member, ideally
19 we'd have guidance counsellors in every school and
20 have them one for every 250 student obviously that
21 cost a lot of money, it's a big outlay of funds. I
22 do agree with your, your testimony that priority is
23 high schools and then middle schools as far as
24 where we really need to focus as children get ready
25 for college and how important that is. I represent

1
2 well one high school that's in my district and two
3 that my students go to that are three the most
4 overcrowded high schools in the entire country,
5 Cardozo High School, Francis Lewis, and Bayside
6 High School. I don't even know, I must admit I was
7 going to try to find out as I'm sitting here how
8 many guidance counsellors they have at those
9 schools. Do you know, are they, I mean you have
10 thousands of students, do they have more guidance
11 counsellors because of those thousands of students?

12 LOIS HERRERAS: I am a parent of a, of a
13 Bayside graduate..

14 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Uh-huh.

15 LOIS HERRERAS: ...and they have more
16 counsellors they, to accommodate the, the amount of
17 students that they have.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Great which was
19 the middle school that you were, used to be
20 principal of, you were involved, you were working
21 at, didn't you say you worked at a middle school in
22 Queens.

23 LOIS HERRERAS: I worked at 189.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: 189, okay. Just
25 was curious. Yeah I'm, I'm a parent of a Cardoza

1
2 high school last year and his guidance counsellor
3 was, was very important in his life in planning on
4 how he was going to handle his senior year and
5 activities and in and out of school. So I know how
6 important they are. But in a school like that
7 where, where it is wildly overcrowded it must be
8 very difficult for these guidance counsellors. And
9 I, I think they have a few but I don't think they
10 have many you know. And they would need a lot more
11 and I, I would just say that as we go forward
12 Chairman Dromm I know how important it is to you
13 get these in every school and mandate them but I
14 want to make sure that the high schools have enough
15 to take care of the students who are in, most in
16 need at that age and that point in their lives when
17 it's most important. Obviously there are issues in
18 middle schools and certainly issues in elementary
19 schools but I think we need to prioritize those
20 students who are at that age where they most need
21 that counselling. So that's all, thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well thank you. And
23 I agree with you on that. And one of the purposes
24 of having this hearing was that we've done a lot of
25 focusing on UPK but we also don't want to forget

1
2 about our high school students and that's why we
3 wanted to get, to have this hearing as our first
4 opening one this year. And I think the Chancellor's
5 placing a priority on it. And I, I also wanted to
6 just again stress the importance of having those
7 numbers, those numbers are vitally important. And
8 I'm glad, I'm glad that you're in agreement with
9 us. And then I think Mr. Becker said that every
10 school has, every high school has a guidance
11 counsellor and that includes the small high schools
12 are there... from what I understand there are
13 differently titled people who prepare students for
14 college but don't necessarily have what they would
15 call a real guidance counsellor there.

16 LAWRENCE BECKER: Well I'm not
17 including, I wasn't including the very small
18 schools that just starting out. I'm including our,
19 I'm, I'm talking about the more traditional nine to
20 12... [cross-talk]

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So like at the
22 Flushing campus, the Flushing, the old Flushing
23 High School Campus you have four or five schools in
24 there.

1
2 LAWRENCE BECKER: May share a
3 counsellor.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: They share one?

5 LAWRENCE BECKER: They may. I mean I
6 don't know for a fact... [cross-talk]

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Right. So that's
8 important for us to know that information as well.

9 LAWRENCE BECKER: Yes that's a little,
10 that's harder for us to report on. The council
11 members should understand that if one guidance
12 counsellor, as you know Mr. Dromm, is assigned to
13 one school but works with two it's hard for me to
14 tell that just from looking at where that
15 counsellor is assigned. They're assigned to one
16 school but they could serve two I would have to
17 reach out and find that information out. It can be
18 done it's just a little more difficult than just
19 producing a report for you... [cross-talk]

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay but, but that's
21 vitally important for us to know.

22 LAWRENCE BECKER: I understand.

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yeah, okay. Alright
24 Council Member Williams.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you Mr.
3 Chair. Thank you for your testimony. So one I want
4 to say I'm glad that you seem to be on the same
5 accord of how important guidance counsellors are
6 and important the information is. But I got to say
7 I think it's terrible that you don't have any of
8 the information that seems it would be necessary
9 for this hearing. And I know the bill is to get
10 some of that information but I need to understand
11 how you can come to a hearing and not have any
12 ratios of guidance counsellors, not even a number
13 that we can work with. Like why is none of this
14 information been captured anywhere?

15 LAWRENCE BECKER: I don't understand
16 that comment.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: What don't you
18 understand? There was a few questions asked about
19 the ratios.. [cross-talk]

20 LAWRENCE BECKER: Yes I understand the
21 questions..

22 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Yes.

23 LAWRENCE BECKER: ...but when you say we
24 don't have information we've provided the number of
25

1
2 guidance counsellor we have in the system... [cross-
3 talk]

4 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: No no wait a
5 minute so let... [cross-talk]

6 LAWRENCE BECKER: Let... [cross-talk]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: No... [cross-
8 talk]

9 LAWRENCE BECKER: Let me finish. [cross-
10 talk]

11 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: ...no, I'm going
12 to finish. So what I'm... [cross-talk]

13 LAWRENCE BECKER: Well... [cross-talk]

14 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: ...what I said...
15 [cross-talk]

16 LAWRENCE BECKER: ...we've provided a
17 number of... [cross-talk]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: ...what was said
19 here... [cross-talk]

20 LAWRENCE BECKER: ...bilingual guidance
21 counsellors we have... [cross-talk]

22 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Excuse me,
23 excuse me. I'm asking a question.

24 LAWRENCE BECKER: Yes but I'm... [cross-
25 talk]

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COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: So what...

[cross-talk]

LAWRENCE BECKER: ...trying to answer.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: ...no you said you didn't understand so I'm going to explain. And I know that it says here that the law says that you do not, is not required any particular ratio, while state... does not specify required or recommended counsellor student service ratio, I understand that. But we asked several questions about ratios of students to guidance counsellors in high schools and as a whole. And your response suggested I don't know what I'm talking about... [cross-talk]

LAWRENCE BECKER: No.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: ...but I heard every answer that you gave when it came to ratios and you said didn't have it. So my question was why wasn't any of that prepared for this hearing today specifically when we're going to be talking about this.

LAWRENCE BECKER: Council Member the only number we didn't have is the total number of students in high schools nine to 12. We can get it. We just didn't bring... [cross-talk]

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: That's, that's
3 just not, that's not true. There was, there was,
4 there had been several questions about ratios.

5 LAWRENCE BECKER: But they all relate to
6 that number. If we don't have... [cross-talk]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: That's what
8 we're talking about today. [cross-talk]

9 LAWRENCE BECKER: ...the number of
10 students we can't have the ratio.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: So you, you're
12 actually making this a lot more contentious than it
13 should have been... [cross-talk]

14 LAWRENCE BECKER: I don't think I am.
15 [cross-talk]

16 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: But there was...
17 Yes you are. There was a few questions asked about
18 ratios and you didn't have the answers. And that's
19 what I was pointing out, trying to point out a
20 little less contentious of this but it is clear
21 that there wasn't proper preparation for this
22 hearing... [cross-talk]

23 LAWRENCE BECKER: I disagree. [cross-
24 talk]

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: And that's
3 what I'm saying today. You can disagree if you want
4 but you didn't answer the questions. [cross-talk]

5 LAWRENCE BECKER: I just... [cross-talk]

6 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: So I'm hoping
7 the next time that there's a hearing that more
8 preparation will be made. I understand that the
9 bill that's there would force to get some of this
10 information put out but my hope is that this
11 information would be gathered some place, even if
12 it's wrong I think it's helpful to have a starting
13 point even if it's not the most accurate. And to
14 repeat you don't know and then pretend as if that's
15 not what you did when I asked the question I think
16 even makes it even worse. [cross-talk]

17 LAWRENCE BECKER: I don't think I did
18 any of that Council... [cross-talk]

19 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: I think you
20 did it and luckily it's on tape so you can think
21 what you want. [cross-talk]

22 LAWRENCE BECKER: We all can.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: But... Yes. But
24 still I have some more questions for you. So it
25 says counsellors meet with students both

1
2 individually and are, in small group settings. I
3 wanted to know what triggers someone in a school,
4 in a group setting or meeting with a guidance
5 counsellor individually.

6 LOIS HERRERAS: If it has to do with
7 related services counselling that's determined
8 through the IEP and through the committee that
9 meets. If it's in terms of servicing students who
10 are general ed students it may be because of the
11 thematic nature of a small group, often will have
12 groups that might look at conflict resolution or we
13 might have students as the chancellor was talking
14 about in her former school she had a group for
15 students whose parents had recently divorced. And
16 so if you have a small number of students who have
17 a similar issue it's often very effective to bring
18 them together in a group. If you have students who
19 have very personal matters and it's not something
20 that lends itself to a group it's a decision, a
21 professional decision made to see them
22 individually.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLAMS: So as I
24 mentioned before and I know everyone is shocked I
25 was a bit of a trouble maker in school so I had to

1
2 meet with principals, guidance counsellors, bunch
3 of places, there was something called Spark that
4 was, I don't know if it's still going on... [cross-
5 talk]

6 LOIS HERRERA: SAPIS are Spark.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: SAPIS is Spark
8 now?

9 LOIS HERRERA: Mm-hmm.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER WILIAMS: Okay well I had
11 do part of that. So I think it was, I guess it was
12 helpful, I turned out okay. So I'm very interested
13 in making sure that... well I think I turned out
14 okay, I think that it's very helpful to have these
15 programs there but I want to make sure that
16 everybody has access to it. And so I know what
17 triggered a lot of mine is actually getting into
18 trouble or what have you. Is, are there other
19 triggers or does a student get into trouble first,
20 is there a trigger that we're looking for? Are
21 teachers trained to recognize something to say that
22 students need assistance, can you talk about that
23 process a little?

24 LOIS HERRERA: Sure, there's any number
25 of reasons why a teacher would reach out to a

1
2 counsellor to, to refer a student. It could be a
3 change in academic functioning, it could be a
4 change in attendance, a student who is starting to
5 be chronically absent or who's starting to show a
6 pattern of, of attendance issues. So it's not just
7 behavioral. It may also be students who are not
8 communicating freely in class and a teacher is
9 concerned that the student is, isn't contributing.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you. Can
11 I ask one more question.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yes.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you. One
14 I just want, this is a great definition of social
15 workers, school psychologists, and guidance
16 counsellors so I want to thank you for that so I
17 can understand. I didn't, I didn't hear that there
18 were any school psychologists reported on so I'd
19 like to know if there is. And then I wanted to know
20 what the average salary of a guidance counsellor
21 under the new UFT contract.

22 LAWRENCE BECKER: So the total number of
23 school psychologists including a program we have
24 called psychologists in training which is a
25 scholarship program for bilingual psychologists is

1
2 1,337 at the moment. And the average salary of a,
3 did you say guidance counsellor councilman?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Yes.

5 LAWRENCE BECKER: The average salary of
6 a guidance counsellor under the new UFT collective
7 bargaining agreement is 82,898 without the fringe.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: For guidance
9 counsellors?

10 LAWRENCE BECKER: For guidance
11 counsellors without the fringe. That takes into
12 account the May 1st, 2013 May 1st, 2014 collective
13 bargaining increases. It does not take into account
14 the May 1st, 2015 increase that's yet to come.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you very
16 much and thank you Mr. Chair.

17 LAWRENCE BECKER: You're welcome.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay thank you.

19 Council Member Chin followed by Council Member
20 Rose.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you Chair.
22 My question is really getting a little bit more
23 information in terms of the guidance counsellor
24 support for LEP student, English language learner.
25 And also college advisor for this group of student

1
2 and how... I mean I know that I mean they would have
3 to do more work in some ways because they also have
4 to deal with the parents who don't speak the
5 language and probably don't understand the whole
6 college process, the financial aid. So are these
7 services available to the LEP students and, and how
8 this would work?

9 LOIS HERRERA: Yes, we have a number of
10 counsellors who are working on bilingual licenses.
11 I, myself was a bilingual counsellor. In the school
12 that I worked at we had bilingual certified
13 counsellors in Mandarin, Spanish myself, and Korean
14 but that would vary by school. There're also
15 counsellors who are working on a monolingual
16 license who are bilingual they're just not using
17 that certification per say. And counselling
18 services are, you have to use a degree of, of
19 creativity when you come to serve a family that
20 doesn't speak one of the languages that you speak.
21 But in my school we had, that was, that was the
22 norm rather than the exception. So we had a lot of
23 staff members in our building who spoke different
24 languages and we would tap into them to be able to,

1
2 to work with parents one on one or in small groups.
3 In terms of college advisement...

4 VANDA BELUSIC-VOLLOR: One of, we have
5 an entire day of our six day training focused on
6 immigrant students. In addition we've worked with
7 the Immigration Coalition on developing their guide
8 and their supports to ELL families.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Because it seems
10 like some of the guidance counsellor that I, I know
11 from my district they do everything. I mean there's
12 one guidance counsellor, especially in the small
13 school, they do everything from regular counseling,
14 admission, to college, talking to parent whether
15 their kids is having problems or not. So I wanted
16 to go back to this whole issue of ratio. Because
17 even though in your testimony you said the state
18 regulation does not you know mandate ratio have you
19 like in the training with the guidance counsellors
20 and, and in your new department, have you thought
21 about like what is, what should be the, the correct
22 ratio? I mean like one counsellor, I don't think
23 they could take care of you know couple hundred
24 student. Back in the 80s I work as an assistant to
25 a bilingual, to a counsellor in the bilingual

1
2 program. She was not bilingual so I did the
3 translation but she had a case load of over 400. We
4 saw each student maybe once, twice a year to work
5 on their schedule, that's it. Unless you're in real
6 trouble then you know you, you get to see the
7 counsellor a few more but... This just really
8 overload in terms of caseload. So are you guys
9 really looking at, there should be some kind of
10 ratio to really make sure that the student you know
11 get the services that they need?

12 LOIS HERRERA: We haven't really been
13 looking at a ratio and here's why. There's a whole
14 variety of ways that counsellors collaborate with
15 other stakeholders and other school staff members
16 to be able to service children. So when we're
17 talking about some of the proactive work that goes
18 into college advisement or goes into social
19 emotional learning we've, we talk about
20 distributive counselling and so we rely on staff
21 members, perhaps an advisory program, perhaps
22 embedded in the curriculum where you can do some of
23 the pre-work that needs to happen in terms of
24 decision making, exploring careers, thinking about
25 how one interacts with another. And then it, it

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2 makes it so that the counsellor can address
3 students with more of a specific need or a more
4 personalized need. So it's about being clever and
5 in, engaging all the staff in this work.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: But in your
7 testimony you do say that you do need more guidance
8 counsellor because you just... [cross-talk]

9 LOIS HERRERA: Always.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: ...hire 250 right?

11 LOIS HERRERA: Always. I don't disagree.
12 Always, we could always use with, more. But we do
13 have real budget... you know.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: My last question
15 is a how, how do you support CBO that are providing
16 the extra help, especially let's say for LEP
17 students and student with special needs in the
18 school?

19 LOIS HERRERA: I can say that when we
20 have had projects such as the chronic absentee
21 initiative last year we met on a regular basis with
22 our CBOs that were supporting our work in this
23 area. We had a round table that met once a month
24 with the CBOs and we addressed all sorts of issues
25 that might come up in their work in schools.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Does, so does DOE
3 have a also a designated pool of funding to, for
4 the CBO to provide those program or do they just
5 have to get it from other sources?

6 LOIS HERRERA: It's, it's a mixed bag.
7 As, as Vanda testified DOE supplements some of the
8 CBO work. Others, schools foot or may decide on
9 and, and foot the bill for.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Okay. Thank you
11 Chair.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So just to be clear
13 there are some schools who hire outside guidance
14 services, for example Western Queens Guidance
15 Services is in some schools. I, I can't recall off
16 the top of my head where they are...

17 LOIS HERRERA: Mm-hmm.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...but that meets the
19 guidance requirement?

20 LOIS HERRERA: No it supplements the,
21 the guidance program. And some of the Western
22 Queens is part of our school based health clinics
23 which is an addition to guidance services. We
24 haven't included them in the count here.

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2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So anybody who's
3 referred to a place like Western Queens I, I don't
4 want to pick on Western Queens, there are other
5 groups as well but it's the one I'm most familiar
6 with, those services are held in the school or
7 outside of the school or a combination of the
8 above?

9 LOIS HERRERA: A combination of the
10 above.

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: But they never
12 substitute for the mandated requirement for, in an
13 IEP?

14 LAWRENCE BECKER: No.

15 LOIS HERRERA: No.

16 LAWRENCE BECKER: No.

17 LOIS HERRERA: Not to my knowledge.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Okay is that
19 it then... Council Member Rose.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you. I want
21 to thank Council Member Levine for your
22 comprehensive questions and the fact that I
23 appreciate that you're a math teacher and you
24 helped establish some numbers here today. So I just
25 want to start by saying you, you said that there is

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2 one guidance counsellor in all of the high schools,
3 the traditional nine through 12s?

4 LAWRENCE BECKER: Yes.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Okay and I, and I,
6 I just, for the record I want to state that my high
7 school is 180 percent over enrolled so with all of
8 the responsibilities that guidance counsellors have
9 do all of the students actually have access to a
10 guidance counsellor and if so you know how long are
11 these sessions, you know how in depth is, is that
12 interaction.

13 LOIS HERRERA: You know it's not really
14 a standard answer. I would say access, yes and
15 access comes in many forms. It may come through a
16 classroom presentation, it may come through meeting
17 with the counsellor individually or in a small
18 group. And so I can't put a time period, a minute
19 period on it but I can say access of a counsellor
20 is in a school a student has access to that
21 counsellor.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: In your, in your
23 statement that according to the Georgetown Center
24 on Education and Workforce by 2020 65 percent of
25 all U.S. jobs will require at least some college or

1
2 higher education experience. So what are we doing
3 to, to meet this demand and to prepare our students
4 based on the number of guidance counsellors or
5 affiliated staff to meet this demand?

6 LOIS HERRERA: So in this distributive
7 guidance model that we speak of we share the
8 responsibility of college and career readiness and
9 college and career access across the entire school.
10 We encourage schools to start that thinking with
11 young people in the 9th grade. We share that,
12 recognizing the numbers that you're, you're
13 mentioning. And we train teachers, school leaders,
14 school staff, and we encourage them to start
15 college and career planning in the 9th grade as
16 opposed to the traditional 11th. We offer free PSAT
17 for all 10th and 11th graders in, in high schools so
18 that they can deepen their trajectory and think
19 about it. In addition there are high schools that
20 are doing internships and mentoring, all of things
21 that research shows lead to positive postsecondary
22 outcomes.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: And, and these
24 are, these services are provided by a broad base of
25 people not just guidance counsellors. And everyone

1
2 in the school is exposed to this level of, of, of
3 preparation support.

4 LOIS HERRERA: Of our participating
5 schools absolutely.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: In someone's
7 comments you talked about leadership determines
8 whether or not CBOs are brought into the school to
9 provide some of the, of these services but it's not
10 mandatory. So in schools where we have a gap in
11 services or school where we have like mine one
12 guidance counsellor for a school that's 180 percent
13 over enrolled how do you fill the gaps, how do you
14 fill the gaps? And especially if you know CBOs, if,
15 if CBOs aren't mandated.

16 VANDA BELUSIC-VOLLOR: It's, it's true
17 that CBOs aren't mandated. They really, where they
18 are placed they do help with the vision of the
19 school and carry out and, and supplement. But it
20 really is up to the individual school community to,
21 to identify what their priorities are and how they
22 wish to spread out the services. CBOs are just one
23 way, one option.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: So my last
25 question is, in what, to what extent does cultural

1
2 competency come into account in, in the placement
3 of guidance counsellors and these services?

4 VANDA BELUSIC-VOLLOR: Again this is a
5 school level decision, the staffing decision and
6 our school leadership would have to take that into,
7 into account where they find that there's, they
8 feel that their school has more need. They would
9 need to increase services if they feel the needs
10 are being met with a variety of models then that's
11 what they would choose to do.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: So if some of
13 these services are provided by titles that are not
14 guidance counsellor titles what is the level of
15 professional development that is required so that
16 they can meet the needs, the service needs?

17 VANDA BELUSIC-VOLLOR: In the college
18 advising portion of the guidance counsellor work we
19 have 40 schools in a, a program called the expand..
20 success initiative which has focused its last three
21 years in culturally responsive education and
22 culturally relevant education. Those are whole
23 school efforts around college and career readiness
24 for black and Latino boys and we started with 40
25 schools in the city and hope to go to scale. The

1
2 culturally responsive professional development has
3 been given by experts in the fields from Columbia,
4 NYU, and some of our CBO providers.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: And I just want to
6 ask are you supportive of the Student Success
7 Centers and do you believe that they should be
8 included in all of the schools?

9 VANDA BELUSIC-VOLOR: I think Student
10 Success Centers are one model of college advising.
11 We differ to the leadership of a school to
12 understand it's differentiated population and to
13 find the best college access for them. We've worked
14 with success centers and have had great success but
15 differ to the school leadership about which program
16 matches its school's needs.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you my time
18 is up.

19 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay Council Member
20 Gentile.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Thank you Mr.
22 Chairman. Thank you very much. And I, I must say
23 that I come from one of those large large high
24 schools, Fort Hamilton High School, that you
25 mentioned earlier in your testimony and I must say

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2 without the, without the guidance of a college
3 advisor I don't think I, I would have gone to
4 Cornell University. And with that encouragement I
5 was able to do that. So is, it, in my, my view it
6 is extremely important at the high school level to
7 have that kind of guidance. But if I Recall
8 correctly the, the advisor that I had at the
9 school, and this may be a way of getting around the
10 requirements of having a certified guidance
11 counsellor they called him a college advisor. And
12 he was a chemistry, he was my chemistry teacher and
13 he was the college advisor. And that's where I got
14 all the information about college and, and the
15 encouragement to go ahead and apply to these
16 schools. Is, is that something that's still
17 happening is that a way of, of, of getting around
18 the requirements of, of, of college, of guidance
19 counsellors.

20 VANDA BELUSIC-VOLLOR: Sharing the
21 responsibility of college advising is a way to
22 ensure that students get the access that they can
23 and need. So it's a way to support, we don't, we
24 don't farm out mandated counselling or
25 individualized counselling, I'll let Lois answer

1
2 that. But college advising we actually encourage
3 schools to make it the understanding of the entire
4 staff so it's a conversation students have all the
5 time with any adult in the building. So I, I would
6 hope that it is happening more and more.

7 LOIS HERRERA: And the, if a school has
8 a college advisor who is not a counsellor that's
9 not added into the numbers that we, we gave to you.
10 So this is an addition to a counsellor at that
11 school if this is the model they chose.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: So are they
13 necessarily trained in, in advising in, in anyway,
14 you know a few, your, your career path or the steps
15 you have to take? If you, if you're a chemistry
16 teacher then next week you become a college advisor
17 in addition to being a chemistry teacher what,
18 what, how do you, how do you take on that
19 responsibility?

20 VANDA BELUSIC-VOLLOR: It is the reason
21 that we implemented our six day training which is a
22 nuts and bolts training for school based staff sent
23 by their school leadership that are perusing these
24 models. So our assumption is that they are trained,
25 that they understand the financial aid process,

1
2 they understand how to work with immigrant
3 students, they understand how to match young
4 people, or suggest matches of colleges so there is
5 training available to college advisors who are not
6 licensed guidance counsellors.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: And that's
8 required or suggested?

9 VANDA BELUSIC-VOLLOR: It is not
10 required.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: It's not
12 required for that training?

13 VANDA BELUSIC-VOLLOR: Correct.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: I see. So there
15 could be others, there could be advisors out there
16 that really need the training but don't have it?

17 VANDA BELUSIC-VOLLOR: Yes. The only
18 thing I would add is that up until, or up until
19 recent times guidance counsellors received only
20 peripheral training in college and career access.
21 And so it's only until recently and I think Lois
22 knows more about this than I do that licensed
23 guidance counsellors experience training to receive
24 a degree to do college advising, it's one of the
25 reasons that we created a six day training to

1
2 supplement because nationwide there had not been a
3 single program that was teaching licensed guidance
4 counsellors how to do college advising and I know
5 there's one emerging or some emerging.

6 LOIS HERRERA: Yes this is actually
7 something that is big in the field nationally
8 looking at the, the preparation of counsellors so
9 that it includes college access. Up till now
10 there's been training in, in career development and
11 larger, more as a broad stroke but not the nitty
12 gritty of college access, and so the training..
13 postsecondary readiness is offered in, in
14 partnership with Goddard Riverside has really been
15 a very very key thing. Even for folks trained as
16 counsellors because it does give the specific how-
17 to's and it's, I went through it myself and I can
18 tell you it's very very good training, very solid
19 training.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: That's good
21 news. Thank you Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay Council Member
23 Treyger followed by Council Member Rosenthal.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you Chair
25 Dromm for holding this very important hearing. And

1
2 certainly as a former high school teacher myself I
3 take this issue very serious. You know would you
4 agree that our educational system has undergone
5 great change particularly in the last decade?

6 LOIS HERRERA: Yes.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: So when you
8 speak to superintendents, when you speak to
9 principals they'll say that they, they definitely
10 need more support services to help make sense of
11 the changes. When you speak to teachers that was a
12 major issue that's why I was a big supporter of
13 teacher centers because it's a place where they can
14 help process the changes and to turn it into
15 something positive for instruction. But who's
16 looking out for the students? And that is one of
17 the critical roles I think guidance counsellors
18 complain in a school is because so much change has
19 occurred and is still happening but who's helping
20 them make sense of this changes. And that is a
21 critical issue because it's not just about general
22 counselling, it's about making sure that they're
23 taking the right classes and making sure that
24 they've taken the right exams and passed the right
25 exams. That is a real critical issue that I think

1
2 that goes ignored many times. It's not just about
3 general discussions about just social discussions.
4 It's about are you in the right classes, are you
5 taking the right tests, have you passed the exams
6 to graduate. Standards are changing and if kids
7 don't have access to people to help make sense of
8 those changes that's how kids fall through the
9 cracks. So it, it is a critical thing not just,
10 just to have general talks to make sure that kids
11 are, are on the proper track. Do you have any data
12 on how many bilingual guidance counsellors we have
13 in the city of New York?

14 LAWRENCE BECKER: 363 licensed bilingual
15 guidance counsellors.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: 363?

17 LAWRENCE BECKER: Yes.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: I, I, I would
19 argue that there's a tremendous demand for more.

20 LAWRENCE BECKER: I think you're right
21 council... [cross-talk]

22 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: And I could
23 tell you that it's not just, it's certainly about
24 making sure that we're reaching these kids but it's
25 also about many of the kids for example that I

1
2 served in my school came from different countries
3 where they had to go back to their country. And
4 that would be used against our school because they
5 would be seen as long term absences meanwhile
6 there's cultural reasons why they had to go back to
7 their school. So teachers would have to work with
8 counsellors and everyone is trying to chase down is
9 the kid safe, is the kid okay, getting something in
10 writing. I, I believe that is a critical critical
11 issue for the DOE to take up to make sure that we
12 have bilingual counsellors particularly in schools
13 that, that need them. Let me ask you this, very
14 often the DOE, whatever they value, they would put,
15 they would, they would put down on their progress
16 reports or school report card, is there a space on
17 a school report card or progress report how many
18 licensed guidance counsellors a school has? Is, is
19 that currently asked on a school's progress report
20 or a school report card?

21 VANDA BELUSIC-VOLLOR: That is not
22 currently on the school report card.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Well see when
24 you say that principals have that discretion,
25 principals, I, I would argue that principals,

1
2 because of their limited resources, they tailor
3 their budgets to where they're being measured. And
4 I can't, I can't fault them because they want to
5 make sure that their school is, is, is thriving and
6 they're teaching kids and they're, and they're
7 advancing an instructional agenda forward. But if
8 they're not being measured on this and this is not
9 being used against their school then that means the
10 DOE is not making this a priority. Their budgets,
11 their budgets follow where your priorities are. So
12 if we're serious about getting more guidance
13 counsellors let's give the schools more resources
14 and let's make it a measurable goal as well. I
15 would also argue the issue of college and career...
16 [background clatter] That's okay Jumaane, that's
17 okay.

18 [background comments] [laughter]

19 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: On the issue of
20 college and career readiness I came from a large
21 high school. Many of my high schools in my district
22 are still those large traditional large high
23 schools. Do you know how many people that they
24 would have advising kids on college or just a
25 college counsellor?

1
2 VANDA BELUSIC-VOLLOR: We do not
3 currently track that.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Yeah, just one.
5 Many of them just have one if they have any. And
6 because they just have one, because again there's
7 budgetary constraints, they only tailor it towards
8 seniors and juniors who are coming into the
9 following year. When you mentioned before that you
10 want them to enter 9th grade already having that
11 mindset there's, there's just not enough capacity
12 to accommodate the volume of kids so... And there is
13 changes in the college entrance system for both
14 CUNY for both SUNY for, for both private schools.
15 I, it is, it is a tremendous... if I have extra time
16 Chair... it is a tremendous issue to help kids make
17 sense of the changes both academically in their
18 schools but also the requirements to become college
19 and career ready. Teachers use their time in class
20 to advance instruction. There's not much time
21 during the course of their day to meet with all
22 their classes to go over all these changes, help
23 process these changes. Teachers for example should
24 have, should have professional development time to
25 help them make sense of the changes to improve

1
2 their instruction. But who is looking out for the
3 kids. And that's, in my opinion is a critical role
4 that guidance counsellors play. But because of the
5 budgetary constraints and because of the case loads
6 which they have they've become, many of them have
7 become just programmers whereas mentioned by my
8 colleague Council Member Chin they, they, they
9 would just schedule classes. And they want to do
10 more, many of them are hardworking people, they
11 want to do more, they don't have the time, they
12 don't have the budgetary resources and the
13 capacity. So if we're serious about this let's give
14 our schools the money, let's give them the
15 capacity, and let's make it a measurable goal as
16 well. Thank you Chair.

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay thank you.
18 Council Member Rosenthal followed by Council Member
19 Williams.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you. I
21 appreciate the opportunity to ask a quick question.
22 Chair Dromm thank you for holding the hearing on
23 these two very important bills and I appreciate
24 your time being here. You mentioned just a few
25 Council Members back you mentioned a program where

1
2 you were targeting 44 schools with black and Latino
3 boys, could you talk a little bit more about that.

4 VANDA BELUSIC-VOLLOR: Sure. As part of
5 the Young Men's Initiative... [cross-talk] that was
6 launched a few years ago the DOE received private
7 funding from the Open Society Foundation to change
8 the trajectory for black and Latino boys. Our
9 choice was to focus on college and career readiness
10 and success as the focus for that project there,
11 with the, with the knowledge that it was a huge gap
12 in the system. And so we targeted 9th graders three
13 years ago, they're currently in our junior year.
14 Teachers at the 40 schools have the opportunity,
15 teacher... [cross-talk] school leadership and school
16 staff have received college advising training. They
17 work with the CBO to figure out what their need is.
18 We, we think about college access and college and
19 career readiness and four domains. One is academic
20 programming to make sure that our, all of our
21 students but especially our black and Latino boys
22 have access to courses that research suggests leads
23 to success in college and careers, AP courses,
24 College Now courses, things of that nature. So
25 essentially we are in our third year. We targeted

1
2 the 9th grade cohort. Obviously the entire school
3 benefits from it but for the purpose of our fenders
4 we wanted to be sure to have a particular cohort
5 to, to focus in on. And so we're in year three of
6 that project. Those schools especially just went
7 through a two week summer immersion, excuse me a
8 one week summer admission, immersion on culturally
9 responsive education and continue to grow as a
10 network and we look forward to watching those
11 outcomes as we think we're going, they're going to
12 be quite positive.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So it sounds
14 like it's an established study. Is that something,
15 do you have the information on that Chair? I mean I
16 would be interested in, to seeing the names of the
17 schools and sort of the, you know the tracking that
18 you're doing if that information could be sent over
19 to the council. And I'm also wonder... was that a
20 yes?

21 VANDA BELUSIC-VOLLOR: I think... [cross-
22 talk]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: No problem.
24 And then also you said that you, I'm wondering how,
25 how long, how much longer is the study funded for

1
2 and what are your, you, you mentioned goals for
3 expansion?

4 VANDA BELUSIC-VOLLOR: So part of the
5 goal of the project was to start with a targeted 40
6 so that we could go to scale by teaching to the
7 rest of high schools and that continues to be,
8 that's already in play, the college, the six day
9 college training institute we do comes out of the
10 work from ESI as well as a number of other things.
11 They program is funded for four years. We're
12 negotiating a 5th and 6th because we want to see
13 college outcomes. We're quite confident that these
14 young men will graduate high school but we want to
15 be able to track them, that is not currently part
16 of the plan because it is a four year grant.

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Council Member
18 Williams.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you. So,
20 as I was speaking to actually Council Member
21 Rosenthal we were talking about the fact that
22 sometimes there's no guidance counsellors other
23 people kind of fill in the cracks. And so my 5th
24 grade teacher Ms. Jeanie Nedd [sp?] who I love to
25 shout out got me through junior high school, 8th

1
2 grade, one of the reasons I was able to go to high
3 school. She was at my inauguration. I try to offer
4 her the respect she deserves at any point in my
5 life. So when we were talking about ratios are you
6 going to be, be able to calculate other people will
7 fill in the cracks, for instance the CBOs that
8 you're talking about, how will that be calculated
9 or how are we going to figure out how access is
10 given to these kind of services? It probably would
11 be hard to, to calculate someone like Ms. Nedd but
12 you probably have the CBOs or whomever is in that
13 network, how are we going to get to that? And then
14 also do we have a ratio that we think is one that
15 points to some kind of success that is, that works?
16 I think we were trying to calculate out by the
17 numbers that you did gave, it was maybe one to 204
18 but that doesn't sound exactly right because there,
19 there are a lot of outliers so it's hard to figure
20 out. But if you can kind of address both of those
21 questions please.

22 LOIS HERRERA: So if it's a CBO that
23 centrally we've placed in a school I'm sure that we
24 can figure out where those CBO, well I know we can
25 figure out where those CBOs are, it becomes more

1
2 difficult when it's a school that's hired a CBO to
3 work just with their population and it's through
4 their own budget. So it would be very very
5 difficult to calculate the other supports that
6 supplement the services of the counsellor. But if
7 we start with the counsellors I think that would
8 give us a great, start a great dialogue.

9 LAWRENCE BECKER: Yeah just let me add I
10 think we can try councilman to look at the CBOs,
11 add them in understanding that they supplement to
12 try to come up with a working hypothesis if you
13 will of what the ratio is per students in high
14 school. I think the other point to make here is
15 that you know for some of our students who, Council
16 Member Treyger mentioned the bilingual guidance
17 counsellor, I know you're interested in that area
18 as well, the state requirements to become a
19 bilingual guidance counsellor are extremely
20 challenging. And many of our counsellors become
21 monolingual counsellors because they don't have to
22 go to, they don't have to take as many tests,
23 that's something we're working with the state
24 Education Department on because that would also
25 increase the number of counsellors that we have

1
2 that would both able to council monolingual and
3 bilingual students, be we'll try to come up with
4 the ratio including the CBOs.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you. Do
6 we know of what is, a good ratio looks like?

7 LOIS HERRERA: I can only be guided by
8 what the American School Counselling Association
9 recommends. They are really, they really look at
10 this and.. [cross-talk]

11 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: What is their
12 recommendation?

13 LOIS HERRERA: Their recommendation's
14 250 to one.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: 250 to one,
16 okay thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay we're almost
18 there. So hang in there, you're doing pretty good
19 so far. What types of professional development do
20 you offer guidance counsellors? That's one question
21 and I know that was a focus of the teachers and the
22 guidance counsellors who came in voluntarily off of
23 their summer vacation, and I like to stress that,
24 to receive some professional development, but also
25 in terms of addressing the need for bilingual

1
2 guidance counsellors. Have we worked to get perhaps
3 bilingual teachers into the guidance counsellor
4 field?

5 LAWRENCE BECKER: So let me answer the
6 second question first... [cross-talk]

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Mm-hmm.

8 LAWRENCE BECKER: ...then my colleagues
9 can... We do. It's kind, it, sometimes it's difficult
10 to convince a currently employed bilingual teacher
11 to go back and take the course work and the state
12 exams to become a bilingual guidance counsellor.
13 What we've had more success with is individuals who
14 are working in a monolingual setting who want to go
15 back to school to become a bilingual professional,
16 while we don't call it a full scholarship because
17 they're already working with us we will give them
18 some financial support to go back to school. I
19 think the challenge here is that the requirements
20 of an additional nine to 12 credits in education
21 plus maybe content depending on what they want to
22 teach make it difficult for people and make people
23 wonder well I already, I already am working for the
24 DOE why would I want to do this. One of the
25 suggestions we had dialogue with the state

1
2 Education Department around and the council might
3 be interested is making it easier for people doing
4 it online, tailoring courses. We have many
5 professionals who are bilingual, I know they speak
6 a second language, and they're teaching a subject.
7 If we could make it easier for them to be certified
8 as a bilingual teacher it would greatly expand our
9 opportunities. As to the PD for guidance
10 counsellors I'll let my colleagues speak to that.

11 LOIS HERRERA: I'm really thrilled that
12 you asked about PD. Today is a busy day for us and
13 in my office I have new counsellor training going
14 on at UFT headquarters for, for about 200 new
15 guidance counsellors. I also have training in the
16 building next door to their for their school based
17 liaisons, designated liaisons in child abuse
18 prevention. We have 30 cohorts of training that
19 goes on around the city on child abuse prevention.
20 And it's done in collaboration with ACS. And these
21 are done throughout the fall. We have lots of other
22 professional development planned for this year. I
23 think we've hit the ground running for a new
24 office. We have professional development coming up
25 on election day that's going to look at promoting

1
2 positive behavior. We have two different sessions
3 looking at career development and one focused on
4 high school counsellors and another session focused
5 on K through eight counsellors. So professional
6 development is something that we're just running
7 with.

8 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So Ms. Herrera I
9 sometimes at the, on the November training
10 professional development days on election day it's
11 difficult is just what I'm hearing from guidance
12 counsellors for them to get release from their
13 principals..

14 LOIS HERRERA: Mm-hmm.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...to come to some of
16 the training that's available. What remedy could
17 you propose to fix that situation?

18 LOIS HERRERA: What we have found,
19 understand that mind isn't the only game in town.
20 We also have a structure, a network structure in
21 place and many of the youth development managers
22 are offering professional development that's a
23 little bit closer to the school and maybe more
24 aligned with what that particular network is
25 focusing on. I will tell you that our professional

1
2 development fills up very quickly and there's
3 demand and we, when we see that there's a demand we
4 roll out another section of it just as we did with
5 that event in August. We saw we had 400 counsellors
6 and social workers sign up and we knew we had a
7 space limitation, the room only holds so many. And
8 so we held an encore event. And that's something
9 that we've done. The career development training
10 that I mentioned for K through eight, we actually
11 started last year and it was such a hit we offered
12 it about two or three times in different boroughs.
13 And it's still something that was of interest to
14 counsellors so we continue to offer it.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Good. And then let
16 me just make this... finally. One of the things that
17 I did speak about when I was inviting to speak to
18 those guidance counselors was the issue of LGBT
19 students. Can you elaborate on what plans you have
20 to address their specific needs as it relates to
21 guidance? I also want to say that you know I don't
22 think that LGBT student's needs should only be met
23 by guidance, I believe that it should be across the
24 curriculum, that we need to talk about LGBT
25 history, we need to affirm LGBT families etcetera

1
2 so forth and so on. But I'm particularly interested
3 today in what you might be thinking in terms of
4 having that affirmative guidance services for LGBT
5 students. Particularly because after I spoke at
6 that training many many guidance counsellors either
7 came up to me, actually scheduled appointments with
8 me, and on a whole hist [sic] of it, a whole host
9 of issues around that topic about how do they deal
10 with families, how do they deal with the students
11 etcetera integrating them into the school
12 environment, gay straight alliances etcetera.

13 LOIS HERRERA: Mm-hmm. And yes I do
14 recall when, when we had that event in august there
15 was a great clamor and need and desire to have more
16 professional development. And so that's something
17 that we are exploring. And what we're looking to do
18 is for some of the topics I've already mentioned it
19 embed a piece of it that's dedicated specifically
20 for working with LGBTQ students practically in
21 suicide prevention and bullying prevention. I think
22 that there's an actually fit and a need but we can
23 certainly explore going beyond that.

24 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: One of the things
25 that a guidance counsellor mentioned to me was

1 particularly about how to deal with families,
2 particularly when you have conservative families
3 who don't accept their children. Because you know
4 it's estimated there's about 7,000 homeless
5 children on the streets of New York many of them
6 who would have been in our public school system.
7 Half of them are probably LGBT, maybe 3,500 a
8 night. And often times those children are on the
9 streets because their parents have thrown them out
10 of their homes. And so I think we need to begin to
11 think of how we can deal with not just those
12 students but with their families as well to prevent
13 those type of situations from occurring.

14
15 LOIS HERRERA: Thank you. And I welcome
16 you as a thought partner on that.

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay definitely
18 we'll, we'll, we'll definitely work together on
19 that, on that issue. So okay any other questions?
20 Alright well thank you very much for coming in. I
21 really appreciate it. And I will call our next
22 panel; Rich Mantell the vice president for middle
23 schools for the United Federation of Teachers,
24 Rosemarie Thompson also from the UFT, and Doctor
25 Randi Herman from CSA Council of Supervisors and

1
2 Administrators. Okay I'd like to swear you in if
3 you just raise your right hand please. Do you
4 solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth,
5 and nothing but the truth and to answer council
6 members' questions honestly? Okay and should we
7 start over here with Rich or with Randi, toss a
8 coin?

9 RICH MANTELL: Ladies first.

10 CHAIRPERMAN DROMM: Ladies first. Okay
11 Randi Herman.

12 RANDI HERMAN: Good morning. My name is
13 Randi Herman. I'm here representing the Council of
14 School Supervisors and Administrators of New York
15 City. Today we're talking about a topic that is
16 very very essential to student success, student
17 achievement. And I think we're all agreed that yes
18 we need guidance counsellors in schools and we need
19 social workers in schools and we need a lot of
20 related service providers to support our families
21 and our children. What I haven't heard yet and
22 I'll, I'll speak to the letter of support that you
23 have in front of you with the attachments in just a
24 moment, is about the structure designed to provide
25 these supervision and support for those guidance

1
2 counsellors and social workers. I haven't heard
3 anything about a reporting structure, I haven't
4 heard anything about oversight, I haven't heard
5 anything other than the fact that yes we need more
6 of them at the schools to support our children and
7 our families. So in the packet that we provided to
8 you today you'll first see the letter of support.
9 Then you'll also see the copy of a page from a 1992
10 Department of Education publication that speaks to
11 a supervisory position that was designed to do just
12 that, provide the supervisory structure for
13 guidance. You'll also find an article I believe
14 that speaks to the case load for guidance
15 counsellors and what it is today. It's abysmal. It
16 shouldn't have been allowed to devolve this way but
17 it did. And now we have raised the level of
18 awareness in the city so that we can do something
19 to correct it. You heard about the numbers of bi,
20 of bilingual guidance counsellors, the total number
21 of guidance counsellors in the system but what you
22 didn't hear was how many of those people are
23 actually assigned to schools, how many of them are
24 providing mandated services, how many of them are
25 providing college and career services. You also

1
2 heard that not everybody that provides college and
3 career guidance is a licensed guidance counsellor
4 which begs another sort of question about levels of
5 competence for what's provided to students and
6 their families. So all that said we need to look at
7 a supervisory structure that make sense because it,
8 it's very nice that the DOE has opened an office
9 for, for guidance and counselling. It, it is, used
10 to be there, wasn't there for a long time, now it's
11 back on the front burner and for that they, they
12 deserve recognition. But there's still a way to go.
13 So I urge the council to look at a supervisory
14 structure as you move forward with the reporting
15 that you're asking from the department.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So just before we
17 move off that topic because it's something I was
18 briefly briefed on prior to coming into the
19 hearing. It's my understanding that before the
20 Bloomberg Administration there were maybe not a
21 sufficient number but a larger number of
22 supervisors of guidance. And around 2003 or so if
23 I'm not mistaken... [cross-talk]

24 RANDI HERMAN: You're correct.

25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...those numbers were
3 diminished. Today's there's only perhaps three
4 supervisors. Am I wrong on that number? [cross-
5 talk]

6 RANDI HERMAN: There aren't any
7 supervisors of guidance or social work.

8 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Aren't any at all?

9 RANDI HERMAN: Correct.

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Are there positions
11 or roles within networks that claim to provide that
12 supervision?

13 RANDI HERMAN: Yes, sort of. They do
14 other things in addition to that. It's... [cross-
15 talk]

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So they're... [cross-
17 talk]

18 RANDI HERMAN: ...not a dedicated
19 position.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So, so they may be
21 offering advice to the principals on things other
22 than just guidance?

23 RANDI HERMAN: Correct.

24 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Are there any who
25 are, you know are there any networks who

1
2 specifically have staff dedicated to supervising
3 and or providing assistance to guidance counsellors
4 in the schools?

5 RANDI HERMAN: Sole dedication, no. As I
6 said they have other responsibilities as well. It's
7 kind of multi-purpose position.

8 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: How many supervisors
9 were there prior to 2003?

10 RANDI HERMAN: Off the top of my head I
11 couldn't tell you but we might be able to get you
12 that information maybe. I'll look.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Do you have a rough
14 number?

15 RANDI HERMAN: Not off the top of my
16 head. 2003 was a long time ago.

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I just... very
18 interesting that guidance services were
19 minimalized, put down as really not being just as
20 important as all the other services in the schools...
21 [cross-talk]

22 RANDI HERMAN: It was placed under the
23 purview of the supervisor of school psychologists.

24

25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Right. And that, was
3 that the same time that the Office of Guidance
4 Services was eliminated as well?

5 RANDI HERMAN: Right about that same
6 time.

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Right about the same
8 time. [cross-talk]

9 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Chair if I may
10 just... [cross-talk]

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yes.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: ...quickly? The
13 reason why I asked the DOE about whether or not
14 guidance services and guide, number of counsellors
15 are measured on a progress report or a school
16 report card is because as, you know and I'm sure
17 you would agree with me that that is where, because
18 of the constrained budgets that principals have
19 they align their budgets to what's being measured.
20 And Chair I cannot tell you the number of positions
21 that have been created over the last ten years just
22 because of what's being measured on these progress
23 reports and, and, and report cards. So if this
24 became a real priority for the DOE and they would
25 make this a measurable I would safely assume that

1
2 you would see, and of course with more money, you
3 would see the return of these positions and you,
4 and because if you, if, if, if you don't make it a
5 measurable goal that each school has a certain
6 number of guidance counsellors and the ratios are,
7 are, are very favorable I think we're just debating
8 amongst ourselves. They, they have to make this a,
9 a, a priority and they have to give this, the
10 principals the flexibility and the resources to
11 actually see, to see this to fruition. That's,
12 that's kind of what I mentioned by that measurable,
13 and that leads to what your, the supervisory
14 structure because now you have to... If this is being
15 measured, if there's a microscope now watching this
16 you have to do something about it. So I thank you
17 for crystalizing the point. Thank you Chair for
18 your time.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Did you
20 want to respond.

21 RANDI HERMAN: Just to echo Councilman
22 Treyger we are being told what's important. What's
23 important is what's measured and what's measured is
24 what's funded. It's the way of things.

25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well in my opening
3 statement I referred to the fact that there are
4 parent coordinators in every school mandated by the
5 DOE and I think something along those lines also is
6 needed to happen for our guidance structure as
7 well. Okay. Mr. Mantell.

8 RICHARD MANTELL: Okay. Thank you
9 committee members for letting me testify about the
10 importance of guidance counsellors in our schools.
11 I submitted written testimony but I'm just going to
12 discuss a few brief items. So guidance counsellors
13 are the one man's band of our schools. Just some of
14 the many functions include addressing the social
15 and emotional and academic needs of our schools as
16 well as advising our students about college and
17 careers. Counsellors help our students pick the
18 proper coursework and stay on track to graduate
19 with appropriate credits. Additionally in many
20 schools counsellors are handling disciplinary
21 issues instead of deans or administrators. This is
22 in addition to reporting suspected or confirmed
23 child abuse, bullying behaviors, suicidal
24 ideations, and anything that could have
25 consequences on a child's learning in school.

1
2 Counsellors also have a great deal of paperwork and
3 data entry as part of their daily responsibilities;
4 items such as SESIS which is the Special Education
5 Student Information System or as the Online
6 Occurrence Reporting System, ATS which is Automate
7 the Schools, and something called ILOG where
8 counsellors have to track student interventions.
9 Now all this work is compacted by the fact that
10 more than 50 percent of students have a student to
11 counsellor ratio of 250 to one. Included in that
12 statistic are some schools where there's one
13 counsellor who services between 600 and 1,000
14 students. Now furthermore a counsellor can service
15 more than one site, they can go to various schools.
16 I might have been talking about co-located schools,
17 I'm talking about being stretched way too thin. The
18 chancellor did hire 250 new counsellors at the
19 start of the school year but that's just a, a drop
20 in the bucket to what we really need. We support
21 403 and thank Councilman Reynoso and the other bill
22 sponsors. It forces transparency and requires the
23 DOE to account for which schools have full time
24 counsellors, the number of cases, as well as the
25 types of issues these counsellors are handling.

1
2 Furthermore it calls for the recruitment data and
3 utilization of counsellors in the absent teacher
4 reserve. In addition to grades seven through 12 we
5 believe that all elementary schools need
6 counsellors, social workers, and school
7 psychologists. So a moment ago I mentioned the, the
8 amount of paperwork and data entry the counsellors
9 are faced with so I just want to stress the fact
10 that any future implementation of 403 must be
11 managed from central DOE and not instead delegated
12 to the school level and dumped onto the
13 counsellors. Their time is stretched as it is. We
14 believe in and are committed to expanding college
15 counselling and college prep programs. Our union
16 whole heartedly supports two such programs run by
17 CUNY's Office of Collaborative Pre-college
18 Programs. One is called the Carpe Dia which helps
19 some of CTE students pursue pathways in the
20 business sector and the other is the Teacher
21 Leadership Quality Program which helps educators
22 improve their schools. We also lobbied for College
23 Now, another collaborative program run by CUNY that
24 served over 20 thousand students in 390 high
25 schools. The program is free for students who

1
2 enroll in basic skills courses and college credit
3 classes before or after school or on weekends.
4 Public private partnerships that bring outside
5 resources into our school buildings and expose
6 students to new technologies and careers are very
7 important to us. It's at our core of our advocacy
8 for the community learning schools where
9 partnerships are formed to serve the needs of the
10 entire school community, students, families, and
11 the neighborhood. To her credit the chancellor did
12 establish the Guidance, the Office of Guidance and
13 School Counselling. The de Blasio Administration
14 spear headed important initiatives such as full day
15 universal pre-k in community schools. Since taking
16 office the new administration has worked closely
17 with the UFT and our members to move our school
18 system forward. If we continue to operate in an
19 environment of neutral respect where members have a
20 real voice we'll believe that we'll continue to
21 move forward and that our students' counselling
22 needs and college and career readiness goals are
23 met. So that's my prepared statement. I just want
24 to speak personally my experience with guidance
25 counsellors. I'm a product of the New York City

1 public school system. I went to PS115 in Canarsie..
2 junior high school, and South Shore High School.
3 For whatever reason my last year of elementary
4 school I became school-phobic, I did not want to go
5 to school. I used to leave school running and
6 screaming and crying, same thing my first year of
7 junior high school. I had a great guidance
8 counsellor in elementary school, Mrs. Katz who
9 worked very closely with me and I had another great
10 counsellor too, two years in a row, Mrs.
11 Franzedean-Bildersie [sp?]. If it was not for those
12 two counsellors rest assured I would not be sitting
13 here now testifying in front of you as a teacher.
14 Those two ladies went above and beyond and helped
15 me more than I could ever describe in this 30
16 seconds I'm speaking to you now. So to me they are
17 incredibly important folks in all of our schools.
18 Thank you.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well thank you. Is
21 there any UFT incentive to move teachers from the
22 teaching into the guidance field?

23 RANDI HERMAN: Not at this present time.
24 Well teachers can move up and in, in, in title. So
25 they would go back to school and they can go back

1
2 and become school counsellors and now with the
3 freeze that's lifted it's more of an incentive for
4 them to, to go back to school and enter this
5 profession.

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And just want to
7 offer as a suggestion as well, I mean I, I know we
8 do the G credit courses and stuff like that and I
9 don't. It, I guess you would need more than the g
10 credits to move up but if there way that we could
11 work together on that along with the DOE to move
12 some of the folks, particularly in the bilingual
13 field up I think it would be a, a good thing to
14 look at.

15 RANDI HERMAN: If I may there was a time
16 there was a loan forgiveness program for school
17 counsellors moving, who wants to become bilingual
18 counsellors. I don't believe that program still
19 exists..

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And who offered
21 that?

22 RANDI HERMAN: The Department of
23 Education a while back.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Chair, I'm
25 sorry... [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Mm-hmm.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Please after
you.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Can't help it
another teacher on the committee I have.. [cross-
talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...to give him the
option to say his piece, yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Chair thank you
and my sense is that and I still to speak to many
teachers, former colleagues and my sense is that
there are many teachers who will be interested in
becoming guidance counsellors, the issue remains
budget. The issue remains a principal will say at
the end of the day that you know I, I have to meet,
expect, you know city state federal mandates, I
have to make sure that all the resources are there
for testing and test prep and making sure you know
after school programs to you know follow, follow up
on, on test prep and so forth so.. The issue I
think, you'll, you'll see a tremendous amount of
teachers looking to enter the guidance field, the
issue will be do the principals have the

1 flexibility of the budget to accommodate the
2 volumes of request. That to me is a real issue and
3 they'll point to the school report card and the
4 progress report saying well it's not being
5 measured, they're not giving me money, it's not a
6 big priority for the DOE. We're going to circle
7 back to this point I think time and time again
8 during this hearing but thank you Chair for your
9 time.
10

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I agree. And I want
12 to thank the panel for coming in. And we're going
13 to call the next panel. Thank you very much. The
14 next panel will be Jazmin Cruz from Make the Road,
15 Mubashar Ahmed from the New York Immigration
16 Coalition, Dacia Read Children's Defense Fund, Dawn
17 Yuster from Advocates for Children, and David
18 Debose [sp?] who's going to give an eyewitness
19 account on the issue as a retired teacher from an
20 elementary school. So if you're in the other room I
21 will call the witnesses again. Dawn Yuster? Okay
22 she's here. David, is he here? Okay. Jazmin Cruz
23 from Make the Road? Okay so we'll take her off this
24 panel. Mubashar Ahmed from the New York Immigration
25 Coalition? Okay. And Dacia Read from the Children's

1
2 Defense Fund? Is that you? Come... there. Yep,
3 please. We'll get you a chair. Yep, over here. Okay
4 if I could ask you all to raise your right hand.
5 And do you solemnly swear or affirm to the truth,
6 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth and to
7 answer council member questions honestly? Okay. Who
8 would like to begin? Okay, very good. Just put that
9 mic on and identify yourself please.

10 DAWN YUSTER: Good afternoon Chair. Is
11 this on, can you hear me. Okay. Good afternoon
12 Chair Dromm and committee council members. My name
13 is Dawn Yuster. I am the school justice project
14 director at Advocates for Children. I focus on
15 individual and systemic advocacy aimed at
16 dismantling the school to prison pipeline. Thank
17 you so much for the opportunity to submit testimony
18 on guidance services for students Intro number 403
19 and Resolution number 166. Since 1971 just a little
20 bit about Advocates for Children of New York we
21 have worked to promote access to the best advocate,
22 education New York can provide for all students,
23 particularly students of color and students from
24 low income backgrounds. We strongly support the
25 city council in publically monitoring the number

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2 and distribution of guidance counsellors, social
3 workers, and psychologists in New York City schools
4 recognizing the essential nature of these roles to
5 the education of the city students. We would like
6 to see the data that is eventually collected be
7 used to expand access to academic and behavioral
8 student support services. We also support the city
9 council's call on the New York City Department of
10 Education to establish a comprehensive college
11 preparation program to improve and expand college
12 access for all students, particularly low income
13 students and students of color. And we want to be
14 sure that students with disabilities and English
15 language learners also are able to benefit from
16 what the program has to offer. The New York City
17 school justice partnership issued a groundbreaking
18 report in 2013 which set forth recommendations for
19 the mayor of New York City to stem the tide of
20 students of color and those with disabilities
21 entering the criminal and juvenile justice systems
22 each year and to help these youths stay in school
23 and obtain better academic outcomes. Notably the
24 report recommended increasing the number of
25 guidance counsellors, social workers, and school

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2 psychologists starting with high needs schools. We
3 endorse that recommendation and urge the city to
4 target additional funding for these positions to
5 schools with the highest number of suspensions,
6 summonses, arrests, emergency medical service
7 calls, and overage students. Increasing the number
8 of guidance counsellor, social workers, and school
9 psychologist has the potential to significantly
10 impact the lives of students by providing them with
11 necessary academic and mental health counselling
12 supports and services. In our work we frequently
13 see first hand the essential need for more and
14 better trained support staff. For example we see
15 instances unfortunately far too often where school
16 staff are, end up calling 9-1-1 for a student only
17 to have the police and emergency medical technician
18 arrive at the school and determine the student does
19 not require their services. We also see schools
20 call EMS only for the students to be seen by a
21 treating psychiatrist and then released on the same
22 day. And just this past Friday I met with a father
23 of a seven year old who is desperate for help in my
24 office in tears. His son's school repeatedly calls
25 EMS when his son exhibits behavioral challenges

1 that could be deescalated, managed, and even
2 prevented if the school had the appropriate student
3 support services. To better address students
4 behavioral needs the Department of Education needs
5 more guidance personnel and also needs to provide
6 training from experienced mental health
7 professionals to school staff around trauma
8 informed care, positive behavioral supports, and
9 de-escalation techniques that will enable school
10 staff to respond appropriately to students in
11 crisis and those at the highest risk of school
12 suspensions and referrals for Emergency Medical
13 Services. Additionally we see schools unable to
14 meet students' behavioral needs resort, resort to
15 exclusionary disciplinary practices and policies
16 such as suspensions and classroom removals that do
17 not address the underlying behavioral and mental
18 health issues and instead contribute to the school
19 to prison pipeline. Other students while not
20 removed from the classroom fail to receive the
21 appropriate emotional and behavioral supports they
22 need to succeed academically. To expand access to
23 support, student support services we recommend
24 partnerships between schools and community based
25

1
2 clinics and hospitals. Such partnerships already
3 exist at some specialized schools and learning
4 environments such as the transfer schools for
5 overage under credited students. There is an
6 opportunity to take the learning from existing
7 specialized schools and share it broadly with
8 mainstream schools to help them grow and develop
9 the capacity to meet all of New York City's
10 students. Finally we, we recommend strengthening
11 Intro number 403 by requiring the New York City
12 Department of Education to report additional
13 information including the following; indicating
14 whether the nature and scope of counselling
15 received by each student includes behavioral and
16 mental health counselling and positive guidance
17 interventions, number two identifying demographic
18 information for students in temporary housing,
19 number three disaggregating the numbers of guidance
20 counsellors, social workers, and school
21 psychologists in each school, and then number four
22 providing the number of part time guidance
23 counsellors, social workers, and psychologists in
24 each school including how many days per week that
25

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2 they work. Thank you very much for the opportunity
3 to testify.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. And
5 before the next speaker. This committee will also
6 be looking at the whole issue of discipline and the
7 discipline policies of the DOE and a future hearing
8 coming up at a date yet to be determined but that
9 is our intention, is to look at and review those
10 policies as well. Because I believe that they are
11 very much connected to what it is that we're
12 talking about today. Thank you.

13 DAWN YUSTER: Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Next please.

15 DAVID DEBOSE: My name is David Debose
16 and I'm a retired teacher from District 23. In
17 elementary school in Brownsville in my brief
18 testimony just backs up the separate and unequal
19 situation we have in our schools as to guidance. My
20 daughter had the good fortune of graduating from a
21 silk stocking school in lower Manhattan where she
22 had two guidance counsellors helping the 500 kids
23 in her small high school. But in Brownsville a
24 Tweed principal with six months of training, went
25 in, took over from the former principal, and began

1
2 to dislike the way the former staff worked. She
3 took the guidance counsellor, demonized him for not
4 doing jot and tittle when he was overwhelmed with
5 the elementary and the junior high responsibility
6 all at once, put him at a desk in the main office,
7 and embarrassed him as we would come in and see him
8 in shame sitting there while the guidance
9 counselling went on for naught, that nothing was
10 happening during that time. She put him through a
11 2030a and he was exonerated but now he's an ATR
12 guidance counsellor. When the assistance principal
13 supported him at his trial saying he was doing an
14 effective job even though it was overloaded she was
15 targeted with a 2030a hearing and lost her position
16 and now is back to a classroom teacher in Queens.
17 Last Monday she finally was taken out of the school
18 after two and a quarter years of damage to the
19 children at that school. This is reprehensible, it
20 should not go on unless we have effective
21 supervisory work that's doing much more than that
22 network did. Two years to remove a principal who is
23 hurting a school and children and like this is
24 outrageous. Something is wrong with the system that
25 needs to be fixed.

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2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much.
3 I want to also say that in my school our guidance
4 counsellor was lucky to have a desk and often times
5 had to conduct guidance services in the hallway of
6 the school because we had no room to put the
7 guidance counsellors. So talk about
8 confidentiality. So some of your experiences of
9 things that I've also seen happen. [cross-talk]

10 DAVID DEBOSE: Thank you so so much for
11 doing this on behalf of the children.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Max.

13 MUBASHAR AHMED: Good afternoon. Thank
14 you to the members of council and the committee
15 staff for convening this hearing and to Chairperson
16 Dromm for his continued leadership on immigrant
17 issues and for immigrant communities. My name is
18 Max Ahmed and I am a senior associate at the New
19 York Immigration Coalition. We are an umbrella
20 advocacy and policy organization with nearly 200
21 member organizations across the city and state and
22 we aim to achieve a fair and more just society that
23 values the contributions of immigrants and extends
24 opportunity to all. As part of this work... education
25 collaborative of immigrant serving organizations

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2 that fights for quality education for immigrant and
3 English language learner students. We also help
4 immigrant parents understand the college process
5 and that college is a real possibility for their
6 children. We hear regularly from immigrant
7 communities about the need for increased access to
8 quality guidance counselling. It's particularly
9 important that immigrant students have access to
10 these guidance supports because their parents are
11 usually unfamiliar with how the US education system
12 works. Parents often don't know how to advocate for
13 their children, may even think that going to high
14 school is enough to graduate or that college isn't
15 a possibility for their undocumented child.
16 Tragically we have heard reports continuously for,
17 that guidance counsellors tell undocumented
18 students that they cannot go to college. This is
19 not true. The guidance system also needs sufficient
20 capacity to go beyond programming schedules to
21 provide culturally competent emotional support for
22 immigrant students and their classmates. Given the
23 scope of these issues we strongly support Intro 403
24 requiring the DOE to map current capacity and scope
25 of services is definitely a meaningful step. In

1
2 addition the DOE should implement standards for all
3 guidance programs and also a plan to ensure the
4 quality of guidance system wide. We also encourage
5 the creation of a taskforce including students,
6 parents, and advocates to support these
7 initiatives. We thank the council for actions and
8 salute all of the youth working on this issue
9 particularly those of the Coalition for Asian
10 American Children's and Families, the Asian
11 American Student Advocacy Project that you may have
12 heard from. We agree with the urban youth
13 collaborative as well that comprehensive college
14 preparation is needed within our schools, English
15 language learners given their distinct needs and
16 assets will best served by a special, by a special
17 program tailored for them and their families. Such
18 a program should include youth leadership
19 development, college readiness, skill building,
20 workshops for parents on the college process so
21 they understand financial aid and support their
22 children in choosing the right college as well as
23 academic preparation for students. To achieve real
24 impact the program must be rooted in the community
25 and leverage deep ties and trust grass roots,

1
2 immigrant organizations have among ELLs and their
3 parents. We encourage the DOE to continue its ELL
4 college readiness work by designing such a program
5 that leverages and extends existing successful
6 models and partnerships. As you heard earlier the
7 NYIC's collaboration with the Department of
8 Language Learners and Student Support Now has
9 created this college guide titled 'Your Children
10 Can Go to College, Yes They Can' and this should be
11 implemented as the standard across the guidance
12 system. We developed this through focus groups with
13 immigrant parents and it includes key information
14 about high school graduation requirements,
15 financial aid and basics to the college process and
16 how to choose the right college. This guide has
17 been really successful because it's written at a
18 six grade reading level, it meets parents where
19 they are, it talks about the concerns that they
20 have. And we have to date done workshops. We've
21 distributed about 26 thousand guides in the
22 communities and libraries and faith institutions
23 across the city. We have trained 60 community
24 leaders, done over 30 workshops in the community,
25 and we continue to receive overwhelming demand for

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2 information in this accessible format. The DOE
3 should continue to extend the guide's reach through
4 standardizing its use among guidance counsellors
5 system wide. And we know that immigrant students
6 and English language learners are capable of great
7 success in college and beyond. We just thank you
8 for the partnership and especially Chair Dromm for
9 your leadership on these issues and the chance to
10 give input today, thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay thanks Max,
12 it's a great guide, I've read it, I've seen it and
13 I agree with you very much.

14 MUBASHAR AHMED: Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you.

16 MUBASHAR AHMED: Great.

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Next please.

18 DARCIA READ: Great. Thank you. Good
19 afternoon. Thank you to Chair Dromm and the other
20 members of the Committee on Education for the
21 opportunity to testify today. My name is Dacia
22 Read. I am a senior public policy associate at the
23 Children's Defense Fund of New York. And the
24 mission of the Children's Defense Fund is to ensure
25 every child a healthy start, a head start, a fair

1
2 start, a safe start, and a moral start in life, and
3 successful passage to adulthood with the help of
4 caring families and communities. Through our
5 national cradle to prison pipeline campaigns CDF
6 New York works to replace school discipline
7 policies and practices that push children out of
8 schools with social and emotional supports that
9 encourage a positive school climate and improve
10 educational and social outcomes for children.
11 Guidance counsellors are absolutely critical to
12 reaching these goals. They're able to provide a
13 range of support services from academic and college
14 counselling to behavioral supports and other
15 guidance interventions. Guidance Counsellors..
16 [yawn], excuse me, as defined by Introduction 403
17 provide a wide range of skilled capacities to
18 schools to address urgent issues contributing to
19 students' wellbeing, safety, and success. The
20 development of data points on guidance counsellors
21 across the five boroughs is critical for
22 determining appropriate future investments and
23 guidance counsellor placement and training.
24 Introduction 403 represents an important first step
25 towards ensuring that guidance counsellor capacity

1 is sufficient to meet students' needs. And that is
2 why CDF New York applauds and supports the
3 introduction as well as the spirit of the
4 legislation to support college and career
5 readiness. It's in furtherance of that spirit that
6 we ask the committee to consider the following two
7 recommendations in relation to the legislation to
8 ensure that it maximizes its full potential by
9 developing data points on the critical role that
10 guidance counsellors play in managing school
11 discipline and the provision of social and
12 emotional supports in addition to traditional
13 college and career counselling. First, minding the
14 comments that were made earlier about the
15 importance of measurable goals and making
16 priorities we propose that in addition to
17 explicitly requiring reporting on academic and
18 college counselling Introduction 403 also
19 explicitly require reporting on the following two
20 types of services that are regularly provided by
21 guidance counsellors; first discipline intervention
22 including but not limited to specific guidance
23 interventions like conflict resolution and
24 restorative practice, and second transition
25

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2 services especially for youth who are transitioning
3 back to school from suspension or juvenile
4 placement and need assistance in addressing credits
5 and course selection. Both of these types of
6 services can be easily reported on and they're
7 critical to building a supportive school culture
8 for students by addressing their social emotional
9 needs in response to issues like bullying, trauma,
10 and other discipline related interruptions to
11 students' schooling. Second we propose that in
12 addition to requiring reporting on guidance
13 memorandums issue by the department Introduction
14 403 also explicitly require reporting on guidance
15 memorandums or training that's provided to guidance
16 counsellors by schools or the DOE on restorative
17 practice, positive behavior, [beeping], and
18 transition services. We are hopeful about the
19 positive impact that Introduction 403 can make on
20 schools and students. The city of New York, the
21 Department of Education and community advocates
22 including ourselves will stand in significantly
23 strengthened position if data points are collected
24 related to the numbers and types of trainings
25 provided to guidance counsellors so that we can

1
2 target efforts to supply needed supports. Thank you
3 and we look forward to working with you.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Very good.

5 Thank you. Any questions? Alright I just want to
6 thank you very much. I need to move along because
7 we're supposed to finish shortly and we have a very
8 large number of people who still want to testify.
9 But thank you all for coming in today, thank you.
10 So our next panel will be Juan Lou [sic] from the
11 Asian American Student Advocacy Project, I hope
12 that I said that right. Ying Dong [sic] from the
13 Americans, Asian American Student Advocacy Program,
14 Stan Ying Lee [sic] from the Asian American Student
15 Advocacy Project, Angie Chu [sic] from the Asian
16 American Student Advocacy Project, and Bow Ting
17 Zang [sic] from the Asian American Student Advocacy
18 Project. I see that the Asian American Student
19 Advocacy Project is well represented today. I look
20 forward to hearing their testimony. Okay I, I do
21 swear in all of my witnesses so I would like to ask
22 you to raise your right hand please. Do you
23 solemnly swear or affirm to tell the truth, the
24 whole truth, and nothing but the truth and to
25 answer council member questions honestly?

[combined affirmations]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, very good. And where should we start? Okay, very good. And just make sure mic is on, the red button should be lit. Okay, and speak directly into the mic.

KATHY XOU: Good morning my name is Kathy Xou [sp?] and I'm a youth leader from the Asian American Student Advocacy Project or ASAP under the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families, or CACF. We would like to thank Chairperson Dromm and members of the Education Committee for holding this important oversight hearing on guidance. CACF is the nation's only.. Asian children's advocacy organization and works to improve the health and wellbeing of Asian specific American children and families in New York City in three key policy areas; education, health, and child welfare. ASAP, a youth leadership program comprises of NYC public high school students from all five boroughs. It has been a program on their CACF for over ten years working to empower young people to learn to make positive changes in educations through advocacy. We're here today to represent our fellow ASAP members and to testify

1
2 and highlight some of the challenges that APA youth
3 in New York City public schools face and present
4 some recommendations focused on guidance to improve
5 college and career readiness from the work that
6 ASAP has been developing. As today's hearing is
7 focused on guidance we will also like to take this
8 opportunity to address issues within the APA
9 community and highlight our needs and concerns,
10 particularly as it connects to youth and guidance
11 that they need in schools. In a latest report from
12 the center for economic opportunity 29 percent of
13 APAs live in poverty, the highest of all racial
14 groups in New York City. And APAs have the highest
15 rate which is 42 percent of in linguistic isolation
16 meaning that no one over the age of 14 in a
17 household speaks English well. Many studies have
18 analyzed a correlation between poverty in the
19 community... education attainment and success. For
20 APA youth many face the challenges of coming from
21 low income backgrounds. In a, in addition many also
22 face the issues of being the first in their
23 families to attend schools in this country. In
24 public school one out of five Asian Pacific
25 American students is an English language learner.

1
2 As immigrants or being children of immigrants many
3 APAs faced the daunting the challenges of learning
4 how to navigate the net, education system, learn
5 English, and stay on track to graduate and to be
6 college ready. As there are certain pervasive
7 notions that Asian Americans are doing well and do
8 not need support or assistance. We are here today
9 to provide a clear understanding how to fully
10 support our community. Currently one out of four
11 Asian specific American high school students do not
12 graduate on time or at all. It is important when
13 considering the realities of these numbers to
14 notice that many in our community come from working
15 class and or immigrant, immigrant families. These
16 social circumstances impact the development of APA
17 youth which currently make up approximately 14
18 percent of the New York City public school
19 population. As one can see APA youth in New York
20 City face many challenges that impact their
21 education. In ASAP we work to identify issues in a
22 community, develop solutions, and advocate for
23 improvements. And our work we conduct research in
24 our communities and ASAP realized that the quality
25 of student support provided by guidance programs in

1
2 New York City public schools is different at every
3 school. Not all schools have the same type of
4 guidance program which impacts the types of support
5 that youth experience. At today's hearing we would
6 like to address the issue on comprehensive guidance
7 for New York City public school system. Many APA
8 youth who come from immigrant families struggle to
9 get the support they need at home to navigate high
10 school since their parents are either not home
11 working all the time or do not understand the
12 school system themselves. At this time I would like
13 to ask my fellow ASAP youth panelists to share some
14 of their experiences from the community to
15 highlight everyday occurrences that challenge
16 that's, that disengage youth in our schools. Many,
17 many of these problems we believe can be addressed
18 with the strengthening of a structured
19 comprehensive guidance system. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Oh, next.

21 BARING ZHAO: Hi my name is Baring Zhao
22 [sic]. I'm here, I'm also a youth leader from Asian
23 American advocacy project. I immigrate to the
24 United State two years ago. I'm to represent my new
25 friends from my school and neighborhood who come

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2 from similar background as I do. Like many other
3 families that suffer from language barriers both of
4 my parents do not speak English and they have no
5 idea of how the education system work in American.
6 In fact I'm the one who experience what is going on
7 in school to them. Since my parent cannot help me
8 on my education prep the guidance counsellor is the
9 only person I can ask for help. And that's where
10 the problem resides. We have feel counsellor who
11 needs to work with over 300 immigrant students who
12 came from different countries and require extra
13 support in order to succeeds in school and deal
14 with the college process. There are many times when
15 my friends need help but their counsellors are not
16 there. Also because of lack of counsellor each
17 counsellor has a big case load. So he or she
18 usually doesn't have to spend and console their
19 student. That has a big negative impact on student
20 who do not even know what they need to graduate on
21 time. For immigrant student like myself we feel a
22 lot of pressure. Many of us also need to support
23 our family. A lot of my friends told me that they
24 felt they did not receive enough support from the
25 counsellor and the school. So they would rather us

1
2 work in a restaurant than waste time in school to
3 make up missing credit. This issue is not uncommon
4 for APA student in New York City. Considering all
5 the story I witness in my community it is not
6 surprising that one out of four Asian Pacific
7 American high school student do not graduate on
8 time or at all. I strongly believe that if guidance
9 counsellor can provide comprehensive support for
10 student they will be the key resource for many of
11 my peers that do not know where to go for help and
12 feel lost. Thank you for giving me the time to
13 share my stories.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Very good. Next.

15 YING DONG: Hi name's Ying Dong [sic], I
16 currently attend Fort Hamilton as a senior. Like my
17 fellow panelists I'm here to represent the needs of
18 APA youth community. I immigrant to New York from
19 China five years ago so I started at high school
20 shortly after I arrive here. In my four year in
21 high school I see my guidance counsellor only once
22 a semester to work on my schedule. My longest
23 meeting that I ever had was 10 minutes. I never
24 felt that they were a, any real help to me or... any,
25 every semester my schedule always have something

1
2 wrong with it. For example they were giving me the
3 same class again that I took the previous semester.
4 I feel that I'm lucky because I made it through my
5 senior year. And I hope to graduate on time. But
6 for many of my friends who are ESL [sic] students I
7 see them drop out. I know many students in my
8 community that have joined gangs... dealing with
9 drugs, stealing... There is one friend of mine who
10 was a top student in China but when he came here he
11 struggle with his grades because he didn't know
12 where to find help. And his parent are never home
13 and always working. He started at, hanging out with
14 other immigrant who struggle economically, they end
15 up cutting school together. I believe that because
16 they do not know where to find help and sports they
17 find it with each other. My friend has potentials
18 and I know he cares about his future and doing well
19 in school but he at the point where he feels that
20 the school cannot connect him so engage in gang
21 activities. Thank you for giving me this
22 opportunity to share the story of my friend and the
23 many like him I see get into trouble because of the
24 lack of his, of lack of supports in his school.

1
2 STAN YING LEE: Hi my name is Stan Ying
3 Lee and I'm also a member of Asian American Student
4 Advocacy Project. I'm an immigrant student who have
5 been in New York City for about two years.
6 Currently is senior year at Fort Hamilton High
7 School in Brooklyn. After I took the ESL test I was
8 put into a regular class and my counsellor is known
9 as the best counsellor in our school. Even though
10 he's a great counsellor in most of students' eyes I
11 still feel unsatisfied. As I mentioned I am a
12 recent immigrant student which means that I barely
13 know about education system in America. However my
14 counsellor did not explain anything about a
15 education system to me. I still do not know what
16 class should I take and what it means to me. I'm
17 not familiar on what... are, besides this fact that
18 they are important tests. I'm even unfamiliar with
19 the structure of... periods. The reason that my
20 current counsellor has a reputation as the best
21 counsellor in our school is that he's really
22 patient and he would do his best to help and answer
23 our questions. But as a recent immigrant I do not
24 even know where to begin to ask my questions or
25 about any the things that I mentioned. So how can I

1
2 even ask the right questions to help me? One of our
3 recommendation is ASAP is to have a road map
4 instated for all students. Having this would help a
5 student like myself who is completely unaware of
6 most things that, in the school system. Thank you
7 for letting me share my story. Thank you.

8 YU XUAN LOU: Hi my name is Yu Xuan Lou
9 [sp?] and I'm a member from ASAP. Thank you again
10 to members of the Education Committee for providing
11 us this opportunity to testify. Speaking from my
12 own experience you may hear many reoccurring
13 themes. For one every year I will find my program
14 mess up at the beginning of every semester which is
15 something very common in my school. And when we
16 frantically run to fix our programs a long line
17 forms before guidance office. I usually could not
18 get my program fixed until the second week of
19 school which means I waste a week on attending
20 classes that are not supposed to be my schedule.
21 Normally in my school a student would not meet with
22 his counsellor more than twice a semester, one for
23 discussing next year's program and the other for
24 fixing the current program. A guidance counsellor
25 would not reach out to a student unless he or she

1
2 makes trouble and gets caught. Why must one only be
3 mandated to go see their counsellors for
4 disciplinary reasons? This situation really hurt
5 student. It makes student not want to see
6 counsellors because it means they are in trouble
7 and the other student do not know that they can ask
8 their guidance for... or emotional help. Being a new
9 immigrant I'm unable to get support from my parents
10 who cannot even speak English to graduate and
11 prepare for college I only result my school. There
12 are great number of immigrants today in my school
13 who share similar backgrounds with me and yet the
14 guidance counsellors who... advice to them with a
15 plan of graduation and feed them if information
16 about college and career opportunities spending
17 their time communicating with students and become
18 unaware of students different needs. There are also
19 times when the guidance will tell the student
20 asking for college advice to go see the college
21 advisor. And then the college advisor, college
22 advisor would tell the student to go to see the
23 guidance counsellor. I also wonder if this lack of
24 support and communication contribute to the
25 approximate 40 percent dropout rate in my school.

1
2 In my school one counsellor is assigned with 200
3 students and teach classes at the same time. There
4 should be a standard job description for guidance
5 counsellors. Many of them are overwhelmed and have
6 other responsibilities that do not fail, that do
7 not fall into the view of properly guiding and
8 supporting students. Thank you again for letting me
9 share my story and this testimony.

10 SENZITA TELUCTER: I would like to thank
11 Chair Dromm and the members of the educational
12 community.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And just state your
14 name.

15 SENZITA TELUCTER: Oh, Okay. My name is
16 Senzita Telucter [sic] and I am a junior at the
17 Bronx High School of Science. I am also a member of
18 ASAP. My fellow panelists have shared personal
19 stories and provided reasons as to why we should
20 improve the current guidance standards. Some of the
21 stories that you heard today were collected from
22 folks ASAP have interviewed as well as ASAP alone.
23 Our campaign to strengthen college and career
24 readiness through reform and guidance is a project
25 that ASAP has been working on for the past four

1 years. With the following three main
2 recommendations for the DOE to help ensure all
3 students have the guidance they need to be post
4 high school ready such as developing and
5 implementing site, citywide standards that apply to
6 all guidance programs in the New York City school
7 system. These standards should include a road map
8 plan that will help a student succeed in high
9 school, plan for the future, identify and achieve
10 their post-graduation plans. Create an independent
11 taskforce which will include representatives from
12 the school administration, school staff,
13 counsellors, students, parents, youth groups, and
14 educational advocates that will be allowed to voice
15 their opinions and assist in the development of
16 guidance program standards and to keep guidance
17 counsellors accountable. My school Bronx Science is
18 well known for its high graduation rate of
19 approximately 99 percent. The students of Bronx
20 Science are considered 'nerds' however being a nerd
21 will not simply get one into college if one isn't
22 informed of the opportunities that will allow them
23 to gain experience. Our guidance counsellors help
24 us reach our full capacity and make sure we are
25

1 well informed of all the different opportunities
2 that are out there. We have an abundant amount of
3 guidance counsellors, enough to handle the large
4 student population of about 3,000 students. Some
5 successful tactics that our guidance counsellors
6 use include making frequent visits to their offices
7 during our free periods. Our guidance counsellors
8 actually email opportunity bulletin boards to the
9 students. Other schools which have one guidance
10 counsellor about a thousand students have lower
11 graduation rates. How can one guidance counsellor
12 be expected to look after so many students. It is
13 very overwhelming for them. Many students who
14 attend less privileged schools are often youth who
15 do not receive the educational support from home
16 that they need. All public school students have the
17 same rights for a basic education. If all schools
18 give the same Regents exam then they should provide
19 a same guidance counsellor programs to help guide
20 the students. There should be a citywide standards
21 for the guidance program in New York City. Within
22 the program there should be a road map plan. This
23 is similar to what we do at Bronx Science when we
24 sign a paper every year to make sure we are on the
25

1 right track. This plan can facilitate students in
2 planning their future. And many of the experiences
3 we've heard about, guidance and college counsellors
4 don't realize the significance of their roles in a
5 student's life. All guidance counsellors must be
6 informed of their responsibilities in the school
7 and how they will help student succeed. Many
8 students are discouraged to continue further
9 education because they don't have the right support
10 or the right guidance. An improved relationship
11 between the student and guidance counsellor can
12 help reduce the dropout rates. To sum it all up my
13 fellow ASAP panelists and I are here to testify
14 today because we want to raise awareness of our
15 community and to make sure that not only Asian
16 Pacific American youth but all youth can have the
17 support and guidance that they need to graduate
18 from high school and succeed in their college and
19 careers. As we have been fighting for our
20 recommendations for the past four years we would
21 like to thank Chairperson Dromm for his never-
22 ending support and for holding this crucial
23 oversight hearing. We would also like to commend
24 members of the committee that have been so
25

1
2 considerate and invested to ensure that all New
3 York City youth have equal access to a better
4 guidance in schools. Thank you again for giving us
5 this opportunity to speak today.

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well thank you all
7 for coming in. Nerds? I don't know. That was a good
8 description. You know I think probably a good
9 social studies lesson for you to, was to come down
10 here today as well and to participate in this
11 hearing and to find out how government works. And
12 actually in my opinion you are the most important
13 people here in the room because that's what we're
14 here for is to talk about our students and how our
15 decisions that we make here as policy makers affect
16 you out in the schools that you attend. It's very
17 interesting to hear too the different people from
18 different schools and not everybody identified
19 which school they go to but at least we saw at
20 Bronx Science for example that you have an
21 abundance of guidance counsellors where as in some
22 other schools it's very very very hard to get ahold
23 of guidance counsellors. And so that is one of the
24 main reasons why we wanted to have this hearing so
25 we can begin to get a feel for where those

1
2 resources are allocated and the reasons why some
3 students are successful in getting into college and
4 getting through high school and then getting into
5 college I should say. And so you have really shed a
6 lot of light on that for us and I, I really
7 appreciate you taking the time out to come down
8 here and be with us today. So yes Council Member
9 Chin.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you Chair. I
11 just want to make a comment. It's really proud to
12 see the Asian Student Advocacy Project. And thank
13 you to CACF. I think it's so important to really
14 highlight the struggle in the Asian American
15 community and immigrant community because a lot of
16 time they look at Asian American student and they
17 think that oh they're all doing well and they don't
18 have any problem. And I think it's so important to
19 really highlight the needs so that we can make sure
20 that all student get the opportunity. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well thank you very
22 much. And thank you all for coming in.

23 [combined thank you's]

24 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I'm going to call
25 the next panel. Solemey [sp?], I believe, Halma

1 [sp?] from the Future Project, Roksana Mun for
2 DRUM, Karim Abouelnag [sic] from, how do you say
3 it? Abouelnaga. Sorry about that, practice makes
4 perfect. Isn't that true for me too? Abouelnaga.
5 And Alan Sholtzman [sp?] from The Center for Study
6 and Practice of Social Studies. Okay I'm going to
7 swear you in if you just raise your right hand
8 please. Do you solemnly swear or affirm to tell the
9 truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth
10 and to answer council member questions honestly?
11 Okay and who would like to start? Roksana?

12 ROKSANA MUN: Sure. Hello everyone my
13 name is Roksana Mun. I'm the YouthPower! Campaign
14 Coordinator for DRUM, Desis Rising up and Moving.
15 We organize low income south Asian immigrant youth
16 and families around issues of education justice,
17 immigrant rights, and workers' rights. I'm here to
18 talk about while it's very important for us to talk
19 about the need for guidance counsellors to be
20 adequately supported and to have their roles be
21 enhanced and support into our school system it's
22 also equally important to pay attention to barrios
23 to the progress that we can make in this particular
24 area. And mainly I'm talking about the fact that
25

1
2 you know there's 31 hundred guidance counsellors
3 and yet there is 5,200 school security guards in
4 the public school system, and 227 million dollars
5 spent every year for school policing by the DOE to
6 the NYPD and that is money that can adequately be
7 used for our guidance counsellors and the school
8 system to enhance and enrich our students' lives.
9 And Councilman Dromm you've said this in the past
10 like imagine what that those two numbers would look
11 like if it was reversed to say the very least. We
12 have had at least 53,465 suspensions in this past
13 academic school year and that number would have
14 been greatly reduced if in the student discipline
15 code we've been able to mandate guidance
16 interventions so that guidance counsellors can feel
17 that the whole school community is involved in
18 supporting them in their work so that students
19 don't feel that when they're being sent to a
20 guidance counsellor's office it's because they're
21 quote "in trouble" but that because there's going
22 to be an approach for a transformative or
23 restorative justice practices. And so long as we're
24 making that a requirement in our New York City
25 public school system in the discipline code we're

1
2 undercutting any efforts and gains we can make in
3 comprehensive guidance, guidance resources that we
4 can make. But the bottom line that we're asking for
5 is that if we can mandate guidance interventions in
6 all the levels of the student discipline code then
7 we're telling our students in the school system
8 that we're changing the direction, that we are now
9 ready to be college prep and not prison prep.

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. And I saw
11 the article in the Times today on the mayor's
12 efforts as well to look at that discipline code.
13 And that is something, I don't know if you were
14 here when I said it earlier, we're very interested
15 in looking at more in depth a little bit further
16 down the road this committee will, will be
17 following up on those issues as well because I do
18 believe they're very much interrelated. Thank you.

19 KARIM ABOUELNAGA: Dear members of the
20 New York City Council Education Committee. My name
21 is Karim Abouelnaga. I'm the founder and CEO of
22 Practice Makes Perfect and the recent product of
23 some of New York City's most struggling public
24 schools. I was raised by a single immigrant mother
25 in Long Island City, Queens and attended Long

1
2 Island City High School. In 2013 I was the first
3 one in my family to graduate from college and did
4 so in the top 10 percent of my class from Cornell
5 University. Upon graduation I turned down my wall
6 street job offers to continue focusing my time on
7 building Practice Makes Perfect which I started in
8 2011 with five other friends at Cornell, two of
9 whom also attended large intercity public schools
10 in New York City. Practice Makes Perfect focuses on
11 eliminating the summer learning loss. We pair
12 students who are academically struggling with
13 higher achieving role models and mentors who live
14 in their same intercity neighborhoods and place
15 them under the supervision of college students and
16 certified teachers for a five week enrichment
17 program. Last year we had over 500 college students
18 across the United States apply for 20 of our
19 teaching positions. Had we employed all of the
20 college students we would have been able to
21 effectively serve more than 6,000 students during
22 the fourth year of our programs. For our mentors in
23 exchange for their mentorship and tutoring we
24 provide them with a small financial stipend and
25 PSAT, SAT, or SHSAT preparation depending on their

1
2 grade level. We're addressing one of the largest
3 reasons which hasn't been discussed today on why
4 low income students do not matriculate to great
5 colleges which is because they have never really
6 had a relationship with a college student who has
7 assured them that the path to and through college
8 is possible for them. Our first class of mentors
9 applied to college last year and the 22 of them
10 received acceptances from more than 120 different
11 colleges and universities including Brown,
12 Dartmouth, Cornell, and NYU. Over the summer our
13 high school mentors make an, make average gains of
14 110 points on their SATs. I'm excited to be here
15 today and share our summer results. Practice Makes
16 Perfect runs on about seven dollars an hour per
17 student and provides students with about 225 hours
18 of enrichment over the summer. Our model can serve
19 as a cost effective solution to supplement the
20 existing guidance services. To date we have served
21 about 550 students across New York City and D.C.
22 and have received recognition from President Bill
23 Clinton in addition to being featured in the New
24 York Times, Forbes, and USA Today to name a few.
25 However we're especially grateful for the local

1 support received from two visionary council
2 members, Council Member Levine and Council Member
3 Cabrera whose leadership will read dividends for
4 the low-income youth attending New York City public
5 schools as we continue to succeed and gain
6 traction. The good news is that we've been piloting
7 and tweaking our model for improvements over the
8 last four years. The not so good news is that we
9 have one final year of testing... capping our growth
10 to serve only 500 students next year. On the
11 positive side this provides an opportunity for
12 interested leaders to make an investment and
13 provide their advice and feedback. I'd love to meet
14 with you all or your team to speak further about
15 any opportunities to collaborate with your offices.
16 Thank you for your time and attention this
17 afternoon.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Absolutely. And
20 we'll set up that meeting. That's a very
21 interesting program. I know personally and I think
22 other educators would agree with me that loss of,
23 over the summer is a, is a great thing. And trying
24 to bridge that gap I think is important. So
25 congratulations and good luck on your work. Yes.

1
2 ALLEN SHULMAN: Hi, my names Allen
3 Shulman, I'm a retired public school teacher,
4 administrator, and was the last special projects
5 coordinator at... before teaching and learning was
6 disappeared. So I just wanted to make two points.
7 One is that I, I'm on the executive committee of
8 the Association of Teachers of Social Studies of
9 the UFT. And we've sort of decided that senior high
10 school students in New York City need to be treated
11 as young adults as opposed to the continuity of K
12 through 12. All over the world we're seeing youth
13 this age and... cohort standing up and, and playing a
14 significant role in the change process and the
15 challenges with their, in their countries, and we
16 don't see that participation in New York City. I
17 appreciate what good guidance people do. There's
18 been a policy decision by the board to focus on
19 career and college readiness. Unfortunately an
20 awful lot of our students are facing all sorts of
21 challenges that have nothing to do with college and
22 career readiness. And they're about to graduate
23 into their adult lives. So our policy is is that
24 the students in high school need to be able to play
25 a role in deciding what services they really do

1
2 need and should be included in whether our student
3 governments, we believe that the student government
4 should be active in deciding how this money and
5 these policies around guidance should be, and they
6 should be at the table with the rest of the
7 professionals to decide what should be done. The
8 other thing and I think it's, it's, it's really
9 significant is that there's more to life than
10 college and career. And guidance people are like
11 elders in our schools. They're, they're, they're
12 tasked with helping young people figure out their
13 future. And there was no conversation about what
14 future we're preparing our young people for when I
15 was a Tweed. There doesn't seem to be much of a
16 conversation about what future we're preparing our
17 kids for at the present Tweed. And I'm not sure
18 that any kind of level of guidance services can
19 work unless there's some kind of an agreement about
20 what kind of society we're preparing our youth for
21 so that we can guide our students not just to
22 college and career but into their civic lives, into
23 their lives as neighbors and into their lives as
24 family people with some kind of an assurance that
25 the future is going to support what they've

1
2 studies, what they've prepared to do. So I guess
3 it's my plea to this council that you open up the
4 conversation to senior high school students about
5 what guidance services need to be improved and how
6 they can be improved. And somehow you set some kind
7 of a policy that allows for students in a school to
8 participate in the conversations that are going on
9 around guidance services, not just guidance
10 services but your, your education committee,
11 everything that impacts on the life of a kid in a
12 school.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well thank you. And
14 that was part of the reason of having the, the
15 former panel in as well so that we could hear some
16 of the voices of students. One of the frustrations
17 of this committee is often times our hearings are
18 held when students are in school. But I'm a big
19 believer in terms of trying to do more of that. So
20 we're going to look at ways of how we can bring the
21 student voice more to these hearings as well
22 including hearings in the boroughs and perhaps in
23 the evening as well so that they can participate.
24 Thank you. Okay our next panel will be Meshock
25 Brown [sic] from Boys and Girls High School,

1
2 Christine Rodriguez from Make the Road New York the
3 Urban Youth Collaborative, Jazmin Cruz from Make
4 the Road, Barbara Denham from District 3 CEC3 and
5 Nancy Northrop from Queens High School Presidents
6 Council. If you'd raise your right hand I'd like to
7 swear you in. Do you solemnly swear or affirm to
8 tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
9 the truth and to answer council member questions
10 honestly?

11 [combined affirmations]

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay very good. Who
13 would like to start.

14 CHRISTINE RODRIGUEZ: Okay, so good
15 afternoon my name is Christine Rodriguez. I am a
16 leader at Make the Road New York as well as Urban
17 Youth Collaborative. I would like to thank the
18 Education Committee of the City Council for having
19 us here and Antonio Reynoso and Danny Dromm for
20 their leadership for bringing these issues to the
21 council. We are very, really glad to be working
22 with the city council that believe young people
23 have the solutions to the issues we face. This is
24 very, is a very pressing issue in the city of New
25 York. Where only 13 percent of our black and Latino

1 students are graduating high school college ready.
2 This is a totally unacceptable especially since we
3 are the largest school district in the country and
4 people are looking to us to lead the way. I am a
5 senior at Bushwick School for Social Justice. I
6 have the, I have the great opportunity to be part
7 of my peer's path to college. The Student Success
8 Center plays a big role in our school. Although we
9 have the opportunities to meet with our guidance
10 counsellor the truth is they don't have enough time
11 to meet our needs. What I do as a youth leader at
12 the Student Success Center is very empowering [sic]
13 to my peers. Every day I have the opportunity to
14 make sure that my peers are on the right track,
15 making sure that my peers have a person to answer
16 all their questions and to be that support system
17 that a regular guidance counsellor can provide.
18 Bushwick Campus is very fortunate to have a Student
19 Success Center. We reach out to majority of the
20 students that attend all four schools within the
21 campus from freshmans [sic] to seniors exposing
22 students to the dream of going to college. I say a
23 dream because for many black and Latino students
24 from low income communities college is only a thing
25

1
2 for wealthy and fortunate kids. It's some, it's not
3 a something accessible for students in underserved
4 communities. President Obama made a pledge for
5 America to have most college, college graduates in
6 the world of 20, by 2020. Urban Youth Collaborative
7 has been fighting for New YC, in New York City to
8 lead the way. But we need the resources. We need to
9 invest in all students. All, all students need the
10 kind of programs Urban Youth Collaborative has
11 helped to put in place. We have to invest in all
12 our students. This is why Urban Youth Collaborative
13 has develop our Get Us to College Campaign. We are
14 calling on the Department of Education to create a
15 comprehensive assessment for the college support
16 programs in place across the district and how many
17 students they are reaching. In addition we are
18 asking for more guidance counsellors to support
19 students through their process. A case load of 300
20 to 400 students is too much for a guidance
21 counsellor. We are asking for a guidance counsellor
22 who has time that can identify students who get off
23 track early and to step in to help them get back on
24 track. We are asking for an increase investment in
25 student success centers. Student success centers

1
2 develop peer, the leadership and campuses to help
3 other students. Students have to be in the heart of
4 the solution to design to improve our schools where
5 we are the most important stake holders we, and to
6 support summer bridge programs to help student in
7 their transition from graduating high school to, to
8 the start of college. Once again I would like to
9 thank the city council. Chancellor Fariña for
10 supporting lead, peer led programs like student
11 success centers and for investing in college
12 preparation support for all students. Now we just
13 need to take the next step to invest enough so that
14 no students in our public school misses out on
15 college because they didn't have the support they
16 needed to get there. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much.

18 MESHACH BROWN: My name is Meshach Brown
19 and I, I forgive you advance Meshach, you said
20 Meshock [sic]

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Oh, sorry.

22 MESHACH BROWN: So I forgive you in
23 advance. But I'm, I'm a 12th grade student at Boys
24 and Girls High School. And just to briefly share
25 our goal, we're in the process right now of

1 building a student government similar to ASAP, to
2 you know address problems similar to this
3 particularly in the guidance area. And our goal is
4 to just give student representatives a voice and a
5 ear as well because a lot of times you know you
6 guys make changes and adjustments to school systems
7 and students don't really hear. We don't really get
8 the information. As Mr. Shulman said, we're working
9 with him as well to build a student government at
10 Boys and Girls, just you know have a, a student ear
11 and a student voice you know to speak out and let
12 you guys know you know what, what problems need to
13 be addressed and really what, what differences are
14 being made so students can hear as well. And you
15 know we support everything that's being said to day
16 from Bushwick High School all the way to ASAP,
17 Bronx, we support all of it. And I appreciate you
18 hearing... matter, that's all I really had to say.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank, thank you.

21 MESCHACK BROWN: You're welcome.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Next.

23 BARBARA DENHAM: Hi, my name is Barbara
24 Denham, I sit on CEC for District 3. First off I
25 want to thank you for having this hearing. And I,

1
2 Councilor [sic] Fariña actually spoke at a town
3 hall in District 3 and she expressed her support
4 for guidance counsellors and it just, it could not
5 have come at a better time because we actually set
6 up a high school admissions committee on our CEC,
7 we're one of the few CECs that actually have that.
8 And it was spurred by the expressions of
9 frustrations by parents in our district. And that
10 is because A we have a very limited number of
11 district priority high school seats in district 3,
12 much lower than other Manhattan districts. But so
13 many guidance counsellors came to our CEC committee
14 meetings expressing their frustration. They have to
15 spend so much time on the emotional and social
16 needs with the families, the English language
17 learners, these special needs families, they don't
18 have enough time to help the 8th grade families
19 navigate the high school admissions process. This
20 is a huge issue in New York City. It hasn't really
21 been addressed here. I mean I, I fully appreciate
22 the college readiness because I think it's, it's
23 very very important. But the college readiness
24 program really starts much younger than 9th grade,
25 it starts in elementary school and it's, it's, it's

1
2 very important in, in middle school that kids get
3 the understanding of all the high schools that are
4 available to them because like I said it's, the
5 high school admissions process is like college
6 admissions process, you need a guidance counsellor
7 just to help you. And these guidance counsellors
8 are so overloaded with all this, the social and
9 emotional needs they can't dedicate time to the 8th
10 grade families. I should know this because I have
11 an 8th grader myself. I'm navigating the high
12 school process as we speak and I can tell you it is
13 a lot of work. You need a lot of time and attention
14 to detail. So many of these high schools have
15 limited open houses and registrations for tours and
16 if you don't book the open houses and the tours you
17 don't get to see them. Some of them have
18 assessments, they literally require a 45 minute
19 assessment and you have to register for the
20 assessment date at that school. And if you don't
21 know this then you miss out on some of these great
22 high schools in the city. So there are some middle
23 schools that actually have a PTA supported guidance
24 counsellor just for the 8th grade families
25 navigating the high school system. And this is

1
2 great for those high schools but then again you,
3 it's creating a, a deep imbalance between the
4 middle schools that an afford these PTA funded
5 guidance counsellors and those that cannot. So
6 you're creating this disproportionate access to
7 these selective high schools both specialized and
8 non-specialized. So I cannot encourage you enough
9 to really beef up the guidance counselling staff in
10 the city. It is so well needed, especially in the
11 elementary and middle schools. And as you know CECs
12 only serve K to, K to eight so thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: What was the name of
14 that Committee that you have on the CEC?

15 BARBARA DENHAM: It's the High School
16 Admissions Committee.

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Very interesting
18 idea.

19 BARBARA DENHAM: Yeah.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you.

21 LAMAR ROBLES: Hello, my name's Lamar
22 Robles. And I'll speaking on behalf of Ashley
23 Poryano [sic]. Says, good morning everyone my name
24 is Ashley Poryano. I've been a youth leader with
25 Sisters and Brothers United and Youth, Urban Youth

1 Collaborative for some years now. I recently
2 started my first year at a college in Queens
3 however the journey to here wasn't easy. My
4 struggle wasn't an isolated one. The lack of
5 academic guidance and support for New York City
6 students is a struggle. Many students and I know it
7 too well. I arrived at my former high school as a
8 transfer student, my sophomore year only five
9 credits. I immediately, I immediately was placed in
10 classes at a lower grade level. I didn't understand
11 the severity of being this far off track but I took
12 the steps to gain clarification and reached out. I
13 spent the year chasing down my guidance
14 counsellors, counsellor with hopes to be able to
15 start my junior year with credits necessary and a
16 path to graduation and college enrollment.
17 Unfortunately me I can literally count the amount
18 of times I had a chance to meet with my guidance
19 counsellor that year, just once. I spent my senior
20 year anxious and over, and overwhelmed that I would
21 be able to prepare, that I would not be able to
22 prepare for college since I did not have the access
23 to my guidance counsellors or the supports
24 necessary to get back on track. I sought outside
25

1 support from sources such as the Urban Youth
2 Collaborative, Sisters and Brothers United, and the
3 very roots to Get Us to College Campaign. Despite
4 this setback I, I graduated on time and enrolled in
5 college. The conversation we are having today has
6 been a goal for several years and, but the city
7 council members to introduce a bill that
8 acknowledges the change, the challenges is a
9 victory. So I want to thank the city council for
10 believing in the Urban Youth Collaborative and, and
11 our young people for believing in the possibility
12 that the solution to our changes lied in the
13 innovative and progressive minds of our students
14 affected by the issue the most. It's crucial that
15 these are, that these are the minds that we invest
16 because they hold the future to the city. So let's
17 ensure that the youth are not chasing busy guidance
18 counsellors and secure that college prep programs
19 accessible for New York City students. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Where are you going
22 to college.

23 LEMAR ROBLES: Well me personally I go
24 to BMCC right now but I wanted to go to different
25 colleges... [cross-talk]

1
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay well good luck
3 with it. It's, it's a great start and you're doing
4 the right thing and that's fantastic.

5 LEMAR ROBLES: Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Has anybody, did you
7 want to testify, yeah?

8 NANCY NORTHROP: Yeah.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay.

10 NANCY NORTHROP: Hi. Good afternoon. My
11 name is Nancy Northrop. I'm the president of the
12 Queens High School President's Council which
13 represents all the high school PAs and PTs in
14 Queens. I also serve on the Chancellor's Parent
15 Advisory Council's executive board and CPAC
16 represents all President's Councils in New York
17 City. I have come today to speak in support of
18 resolution number 166 which calls on the DOE to
19 establish a comprehensive college preparation
20 program. I currently have a senior in high school
21 so I'm experiencing personally the complicated
22 process of navigating the college application
23 process. Complicated, even though I went through it
24 myself. Providing additional support for all
25 students but in particular the children of parents

1
2 who are new to this country or never went through
3 the college application process themselves would
4 help more students successfully transition to
5 college. A major part of this initiative should
6 involve basic communication with parents, informing
7 parents that their children need to take college
8 prep classes, that they need to take SAT and or ACT
9 tests and SAT subject test, how to sign up for
10 these tests, and the deadlines for registration. We
11 also support DOE efforts currently under discussion
12 to make SATS more accessible to all students. This
13 resolution focuses on providing important and
14 necessary supports for students applying to
15 college. But, but, but we believe that there is
16 another important consideration that needs to be
17 added to this resolution. We need to ensure that
18 all high schools offer the curriculum colleges are
19 expecting from graduating high school students. And
20 students need to be encouraged to take this
21 curriculum. These courses include offering students
22 AP classes, three to four years of foreign
23 language, physics, and calculus. We should note
24 that the ability of students to take calculus their
25 senior year of high school requires that students

1
2 take algebra in 8th grade. So the students, so the,
3 the need, so there needs to, so students need to,
4 and parents need to begin to think about college
5 preparation starts in middle school. While New York
6 state has embraced the common core learning
7 standards to prepare students for college Queens
8 High School President's Council finds it ironic
9 that so many Queens high schools are either cutting
10 back on courses students need for college, offering
11 them in limited numbers, or for limited numbers of
12 students, or not offering them at all. This is true
13 of small schools, new schools, and schools under
14 budget constraints. We believe part of the problem
15 is that principals as well as senior managers at
16 the DOE who make decisions on coursework need to
17 receive additional training on college admission
18 requirements and their responsibility to prepare
19 students adequately for admission to the strongest
20 college possible. Earlier this month in a meeting
21 with the DOE focusing on foreign language
22 instruction and high schools a DOE executive noted
23 that it was important to begin with a budget. I
24 responded that in fact it is vital to start with
25 college admissions requirements. The minimum

1 requirements necessary to receive high school
2 diploma are not sufficient for students to gain
3 admission to competitive colleges and it is
4 incumbent on all principals and the DOE to provide...
5 [beeping] Oh, New York City students with the
6 rigorous course work that signals to admissions
7 officers that students are capable of college level
8 work. To be successful this coursework must be
9 taught by qualified teachers using high quality
10 programs. Just one more paragraph? The high school
11 directory needs to state explicitly what courses
12 are offered at the schools and how many years to
13 make clear whether students can make college and
14 career, can be made college and career ready. And I
15 provided what the New York Council, sorry, the
16 National Association of College Admission
17 Counselling says is the minimum requirements and a
18 lot of our schools are not offering these minimal
19 requirements. And that's it. Thank you so much. I,
20 and I have my testimony here... [cross-talk]

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I was going to say
23 you know because we like to follow it. So can you
24 give it to the Sergeant and then he'll... So a

1
2 Regents diploma is not required for college
3 admission?

4 BARBARA DENHAM: No it's, I mean that's
5 a, that's a minimal requirement but for example the
6 National Association of College and, College
7 Admission Counselling suggest that students have
8 two to four years of a foreign language yet many
9 schools are cutting that out entirely as a big
10 issues at some of our Queens high schools, four
11 years of math, three to four years of a laboratory
12 science, and they said they'd explicitly biology
13 chemistry and physics, and four years of English.
14 So you can, you can take the Regents, I mean some
15 kids start to take the Regents it, I know it's as
16 early as like 7th grade some schools, but certainly
17 in 8th. And if you're on a college and career path
18 that's fantastic but just because you finished your
19 Regents that doesn't mean that you're college ready
20 yet. And I think we have to look very carefully at
21 what high schools are actually offering. And
22 unfortunately there's no real way to do it right
23 now. The, the directory itself doesn't, they may
24 list courses, you don't know how many years those
25 courses are taught, you don't know whether you know

1 every student who wants to take an AP class is
2 allowed into the AP class. We had an incident in
3 Queens this year where there were 44 kids put in an
4 English AP course, 10 kids were turned away at the
5 door. That's unacceptable. All 44 kids need to be
6 admitted, you need to make another class, it's that
7 simple. So we need to provide students with what
8 they need to be competitive in college. A minimum
9 high school requirement is really, I mean it's
10 great if that's all the student can achieve but I
11 believe most students can achieve far more than
12 that. And we should provide them with the courses
13 that will allow that. And, and, and make sure,
14 going back to guidance counsellors, the guidance
15 counsellors are where these requirements, and make
16 sure the kids stay on the path that will get them
17 to the best possible school that they can get into.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Mm-hmm. Okay Council
20 Member Barron.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you Mr.
22 Chair. Thank you for all of you who've come and
23 given testimony. I'm particularly interested in
24 your testimony about the requirements, the minimal
25 requirements for admission to college. Years and

1
2 decades ago when I went to school we had academic
3 high schools, we had vocational, we had technical.
4 So if you went to the academic high school and
5 follow the curriculum which was pretty well
6 structured and pretty much the same throughout. You
7 pretty much knew that if you met those requirements
8 you would be able to go. Today we have a cacophony
9 of schools, small size, big size... focused on a
10 particular area and it's not as apparent what's
11 needed. So what would you say to those persons who
12 said we want to be able to have our specialized
13 schools that focus on a particular area, particular
14 arts, and still be able to have our students be
15 admitted? What would you say to those persons?

16 BARBARA DUNHAM: You know I think that
17 answer's pretty clear. You can provide the... but you
18 need to provide the basic education as well. You
19 know it became a big issue at Frank Sinatra High
20 School last year where they were saying we don't
21 need to offer foreign language because our kids...
22 [cross-talk]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Mm-hmm.

24

25

1
2 BARBARA DUNHAM: ...are all art students.
3 But the fact was 70 percent of the kids were going
4 onto regular liberal art schools so... [cross-talk]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Mm-hmm.

6 BARBARA DUNHAM: ...and you have to keep
7 in mind you're competing not only against kids in
8 New York City but all up and down the east coast
9 let alone kids from other parts of the country.
10 Every slot in, in college is very very competitive.
11 And if you're not meeting the basic minimum
12 requirements you have to really ask you know is the
13 college going to give you that really good fair
14 look when there may be a lot of other kids who have
15 the same arts background that you have but they
16 also have... [cross-talk]

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: They also...

18 [cross-talk]

19 BARBARA DUNHAM: ...they also have
20 everything else that they need. I think it's, I
21 think it's really important and, and it also gets
22 back to the question of well what is an educated
23 adult? And you know the, I think this, this is like
24 the first step. But mind you this is even their
25 minimal.

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COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Right.

BARBARA DUNHAM: This isn't their maximum.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Right.

BARBARA DUNHAM: This is their minimum requirements so... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I think it's an issue that DOE has to address... [cross-talk]

BARBARA DUNHAM: Absolutely.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: ...in terms of having what they say is college ready but yet not in, yet and still not having these classes indicated that they are available, how often as you said are you guaranteed that all of these classes are offered each semester that you're in school, or will you have to wait and be pushed further back because it's not offered in your senior year because they couldn't find a teacher. So I think it's incumbent on the DOE to look in that regard and I thank you very much for your testimony.

BARBARA DUNHAM: Oh and please please support this effort.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Yes I will.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright. Thank you
3 to this panel. Oh yes of course.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Yes, just want
5 to say... [static] to... [static] all the members that
6 are part of the Urban Youth Collaborative you guys
7 introduced me to this entire idea. Before you I, I
8 only experience positive guidance counsellor
9 experiences I guess if that's a, a word, or if
10 that's a phrase. But she's a teacher, they're all
11 teachers, it's very tough to be surrounded BY THEM.
12 But it, it was when I heard the 1,000 to one the
13 600 to one, the 500 to one ratio, when I
14 experienced a 125 to one ratio that I started
15 noticing that there was a big issue. So I just want
16 to thank you guys because this legislation is as
17 much yours as it ours. So congratulations and keep
18 up the good work. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay a little power
20 surge there but we made it. Alright next Carol
21 Dehir from NYIT I believe, Shereese Mullings from
22 Island Voice Staten Island, Michael Martinez from
23 Students for Protection, T. Roberts a parent, and
24 Al Kurland from PAC, Al Kurland I believe it is.

25 [background conversations]

1
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright. Okay I'd
3 like to swear you in. If you could all raise your
4 right hand please. Do you Solemnly swear or affirm
5 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
6 the truth and to answer council member questions
7 honestly?

8 [combined affirmations]

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you. And
10 should we start here.

11 CAROL DEHIR: Thank you. I'm Carol
12 Dehir. I'm a professor of School Counsellor
13 Education at the New York Institute of Technology.
14 Just a little bit of background. I have worked as a
15 school counsellor for years, very last century,
16 last century under the old New York state
17 regulations. I worked as a supervisor and I did
18 that for 15 years. And for the last 14 years I've
19 been training what we consider to be the next
20 generation of school counsellors who need to do the
21 job that we need them to do to work with our kids
22 who have significantly different needs then when I
23 was trained to be a school counsellor. I want to
24 thank you Chair Dromm and members of the City
25 Council Committee for this opportunity. Many of us

1
2 when we heard about this we wanted to jump on the
3 opportunity immediately. I want to bring a couple
4 of things to point and not read to you what you can
5 read later. We are in an amazing time in the
6 profession of school counselling, the stars have
7 aligned, maybe that's a metaphor. Right now we have
8 a national initiative chaired and led by Michelle
9 Obama and Department of Education. We have our
10 representatives here from the New York State
11 Education Department who have led us through a
12 summit to really revisit and review credentialing
13 in New York state and practice of school
14 counsellors. And now we have the initiative thanks
15 to our chancellor and the new office that she's
16 created. So this is the perfect time to start
17 looking at some key issues. First there are
18 similarities and differences among roles,
19 counsellors, psychologists, and social workers,
20 that requires clarity. There are principals who are
21 confused, am I hiring a counsellor, am I hiring a
22 social worker under the title of guidance. So that
23 does create a lot of confusion in the schools.
24 Personally I, I have the experience when my
25 students go out into schools as interns. Sometimes

1 principals know, don't even know what they're
2 representing. The second is we have to deal with
3 the issue of supplant versus supplement. Way back
4 in 1991 when I was president of the New York State
5 School Counsellor Association we filed a
6 commissioner's appeal with... from the related
7 organizations. There were issues at that time of
8 who was being hired in the schools to do what is
9 regulated in our part 100. So that needs, the
10 situation with CBOs supplementing is wonderful but
11 supplanting in some of our schools, that can be an
12 issue. The other points that I wanted to bring up
13 is that without supervision in the schools
14 counsellors are at the behest of administration and
15 what administrators need. I prepared for you
16 outlines of what the vision is, what the reality
17 could be if we allowed our counsellors in our
18 schools to do the job that they are trained for. A
19 computer does the schedule, usually an
20 administrator makes that schedule. But
21 unfortunately it is the school counsellor who will
22 spend an inordinate amount of time trying to undo
23 or redo situations that have created havoc. The
24 other point I want to bring to your... professional
25

1 development is critical, the changes in
2 certification that the state ed department is
3 looking at. And most important to hold school
4 counsellors accountable for effective practice and
5 appropriate outcomes for our kids, we heard from
6 our kids today. They need good school counsellors.
7 We want to provide the best and we want to do the
8 best job possible. Thank you.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Next
11 please.

12 SHEREESE MULLINGS: I want to thank the
13 members of the council and also the remaining
14 guests here. My name is Shereese Mullings. I'm the
15 Assistant Executive Director of a Staten Island
16 Based non-for-profit called Island Voice. We focus
17 a lot on youth, economic empowerment, and culture.
18 And this is very very important. I work directly
19 with the youth on Staten Island and one of the
20 things that we've developed because of the lack of
21 guidance in the high schools, middle schools is a
22 mentoring program. And this was built because we
23 were finding that a lot of our youth needed some
24 sort of support emotionally. As you may know this
25 summer the youth are very sort of fired up because

1 we had this Eric Garner situation. We have a lot of
2 changes going on in Staten Island right now and the
3 youth, the youth's only outlet is really these
4 community organization, or the events that we put
5 together that directly affect them. But we wonder
6 where is this conversation going when it comes to
7 the high schools, when it comes to schooling. Are
8 they talking about these topics, are they
9 supporting them? A lot of the youth are confused,
10 where do they stand when these things happen. And
11 so we're very concerned about that and we often
12 times play a critical role in that conversation and
13 we're not certified to do that. But as a community
14 we understand the community, we understand youth
15 and so we've made a proactive role to do that.
16 However we want to see if there's any way that we
17 can collaborate with the Education Committee as to
18 ways that we can better facilitate along with the
19 guidance counsellors for the future hopefully, we
20 want this to be passed as well, we still want to
21 play a critical role as to where we stand with the
22 students as well. I also want to say that we work
23 very closely with ASAP. They've come to our events
24 in the past. We work along with other youth
25

1
2 organizations in the city. We bring them to Staten
3 Island, we expose them to what's happening on the
4 island because we tend to be the forgotten borough.
5 And we also want to make sure that people
6 understand what's happening. We also work with
7 Wagner College, we have a Wagner College intern
8 that came along with us today. And we're just very
9 concerned that as this passes that the community
10 organizations do have a say. We do know the youth
11 personally and we want to work alongside with the
12 guidance counsellors. So we hope that will be
13 included as well. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay thank you. Next
15 please?

16 T. ROBERTS: Thank you. Good morning,
17 sorry good afternoon, I've been here since this
18 morning. Council members thank you for affording me
19 this opportunity to speak and to the remaining
20 people in the audience. I am a parent and I have a
21 student. He's now in 11th grade. Something.. can you
22 hear me? One, one thing that concerns me about the
23 resolution 166, I am for the resolution, but I'd
24 wanted the, the committee and everyone to consider
25 is the parents. Because often times parents are

1
2 left out of this major major factor. And we are
3 number one. It's the parents, the students in the
4 middle then being supported by the teachers so..
5 [cross-talk]

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And just for the
7 record can I ask for your name... [cross-talk]

8 T. ROBERTS: Yes, I'm so sorry. [cross-
9 talk]

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: That's okay.

11 T. ROBERTS: My name is Toliba [sp?] and
12 my last name is Roberts. And I have a student
13 who's, he's in the 11th grade at Theatre Arts
14 Production Company High School in the Bronx. And
15 one, someone had, I heard someone say that the, the
16 guidance counsellors are a one man show but to me
17 that, that, that, that does represent a disconnect
18 from the parents wholeheartedly. We cannot always
19 assume that the students because they're in the
20 school that they would even be interested in going
21 to see the guidance counsellor. Not every student
22 does that. So what I was concerned about, one
23 students who are asthmatic, when you have one who,
24 in 13 students in the city who are asthmatics they
25 have a very high absenteeism rate, they're often

1
2 times in the hospital, under home instruction, and
3 the students who fall under home instruction they
4 are taken off the roster sometimes throughout the
5 duration of their illness and then often times
6 they're not put back. So I, I, I'm just appealing
7 and asking one for two things that you consider
8 parents in this equation very much so, that you
9 look out for the students that falls through the
10 cracks, students that are not in the building due
11 to home instruction, the chronically ill students,
12 and students who are in the shelters, and most
13 importantly the students who are apathetic. And
14 the, some of them who have a particular learning
15 disability really don't know how to process what is
16 happening. Those students, they need additional
17 support because they, they're there in the building
18 but they just don't have the ability to help
19 themselves. So I just wanted you to consider, to
20 consider that. And that would be all today for me.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. All
22 points well made. Thank you.

23 T. ROBERTS: Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Next please.
25

1
2 MICHAEL MARTINEZ: Thank you Mr. Dromm
3 and the committee and those involved with this
4 legislation. My name is Michael Martinez and I am
5 the executive director of Students for Protection.
6 We are a student led statewide initiative against
7 bullying. We're like a student led, student run
8 coalition against bullying. My group and myself
9 personally we rejoiced when we heard about this
10 bill. And we were happy for it because we needed
11 you know the guidance as much as we can for us to
12 get on throughout high school and into college as
13 well. This past summer we did a survey for guidance
14 counsellors and also parents and we also found that
15 two out of third guidance counsellors surveyed did
16 not know their schools uniformed or any planned
17 action against bullying. We also found that two of
18 three counsellors agreed that the DOE need to
19 change its status quo on the anti-bullying actions.
20 And one out of third counsellors believed that the
21 DOE did not do anything about bullying at all. As
22 for the parents as well. Parents two out of three
23 agree that the DOE needed to change something about
24 bullying. This bill will allow effective action if
25 we find out how much the DOE has its efforts for

1
2 us. And we believe that guidance counsellors are
3 very vital to any school function or any school
4 event, any school career. And we believe that
5 bullying interrupts the academic and college
6 process for both the victim and the bully. And we,
7 I myself am like Mr. Reynoso said that, I mean I
8 have never, I had no problems with my guidance
9 counsellors but I see my friends or you know some
10 students that would come up to me say hey I don't
11 know how to deal with this because my guidance
12 counsellor did not give me any clearance. And I, I
13 agree that this bill needs to be passed. And I even
14 found with the report here that it says from a 2005
15 survey that high school youth show that 66 percent
16 students large schools 50 percent of small schools
17 said that they never, rarely, or sometimes able to
18 get help at school. And I think this legislation is
19 one of the most best examples we could be as a
20 city. Because this city is a global city and we
21 lead by example. And it'll be a shame for us that
22 our schools are not functioning as it should be if
23 we're a global city. And I really thank you Mr.
24 Dromm and Mr. Reynoso for the bill and everyone
25 else in the committee and... [beeping] oh, and I'm,

1
2 I'm a senior at La Salle Academy and I see this
3 bill is very important. Thank you.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: So I, so I went
5 to La Salle Academy for high school so we would go,
6 we went to the same school and like I said we're
7 extremely lucky and extremely privileged and we
8 just got to continue to work to make what we have a
9 standard across the city of New York and I'm, I'm
10 proud of you and it's... [cross-talk]

11 MICHAEL MARTINEZ: Thank you.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: ...it's great to
13 see you with the red tie on. [cross-talk]

14 MICHAEL MARTINEZ: Thank you.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: That Le Moyne
16 College is a great option. You should talk to your
17 advisors. They gave me that, that advice to go to
18 Le Moyne College so you should consider it as well
19 but it's a pleasure to, to meet you and have you
20 here. Thank you and to... [cross-talk]

21 MICHAEL MARTINEZ: Thank you.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: ...the panel
23 thank you guys.

24

25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I just hope he
3 doesn't live in your district council member you
4 know.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Where do you
6 live?

7 MICHAEL MARTINEZ: Oh me?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Yes.

9 MICHAEL MARTINEZ: I'm originally from
10 the Upper East Side but I live now in the East
11 Village.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Okay... [cross-
13 talk]

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: You're safe.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: ...no he's safe,
16 no.

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: You're safe.

18 [laughter]

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I just wanted to ask
20 Dr. Dehir one of the big questions that came out
21 about in this hearing today is the ratio of
22 guidance counsellors to students. Is, I know you
23 mentioned the State Education Department as well
24 and I know you're not representing them but you may
25 know, is the, is there a state regulation on, in

1
2 regards to the ratio for guidance counsellors per
3 student?

4 CAROL DEHIR: There is no state
5 regulation. And, and the critical issue here is
6 when you have a ratio what should the counsellors
7 be doing. So to me ratio is predicated upon the
8 scope and the role and the function. And if you
9 have a reasonable ratio, and I worked on Long
10 Island before I worked in New York City 300
11 counsellors 200, I'm sorry 300 students, 250
12 students can be very reasonable to deliver a
13 comprehensive school counselling program where
14 students receive what they need but every student
15 benefits whether it's classroom lessons, whether
16 it's small group, whether it's individual, whether
17 it's assemblies, whether it's parent meetings, the
18 whole myriad of services. I think the ratio needs
19 to reflect, if there will be a ratio in New York
20 what should the scope of the program be, what are
21 the priorities under academic career social
22 emotional development, college and career
23 readiness. And how do we hold the administration
24 and the counsellor accountable to deliver those
25 services in a way that all students are going to be

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2 beneficial, benefit. It really is an equity issue.
3 So we could have a small ratio and the counsellor
4 is not doing what we need them to do, we could have
5 a large school of three or 400 and the counsellor
6 is going above and beyond the call of duty. So I
7 would hate to say it should be a fixed number..

8 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Mm-hmm.

9 CAROL DEHIR: ...I think we need to look
10 at the practice.

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Right. And I'm also
12 thinking, I'm thinking aloud as well.

13 CAROL DEHIR: Mm-hmm.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: In terms of ratio
15 you know the ratio should also probably be looked
16 at in terms of how many IEP mandated services a
17 guidance counsellor is required to provide versus
18 additional guidance services in the school. And
19 maybe there's some type of a way that we can come
20 up with a formula for that. Because from my
21 experience in my school where I taught for 25 years
22 is that the guidance counsellor basically all she
23 could do was meet with IEP mandated students. And
24 when the emergency arose where a kid was screaming,
25 yelling, crying in the office the principal kind of

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2 threw, for lack of a better word, that kid at her
3 and said here take care of this issue because the
4 principal had a million and one other things that
5 they were also required to do often times not
6 meeting the mandated service requirement for that
7 student with the IEP. And so that also is very
8 disturbing to me that that is what actually really
9 often times happens in the field.

10 CAROL DEHIR: Yeah. May I just add a
11 comment to that? Many of our elementary schools the
12 only counselling services are mandated IEP. And
13 there are not, there's not another counsellor
14 providing to the general ed population. So an
15 elementary school may have a counsellor dedicated
16 specifically to IEP counselling. To me it's about
17 organization. I, as a supervisor, I made sure that
18 all of my counsellors worked with mandated
19 children, that it just wasn't one, and then
20 everybody else did general ed, and then somebody
21 did college. I, I think it's critical if a student
22 is going to be with a counsellor for three years in
23 middle school or four years in high school that we
24 all benefit from the continuity. And the ability
25 the gain from a scope of sequences and not have one

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2 person just do this. And I think the specialization
3 is what is created in inequity and ratio. And I
4 actually had to do the job in a way that all kids
5 are going to benefit.

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright well thank
7 you. I... [cross-talk]

8 CAROL DEHIR: Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...this will be our
10 last panel. Okay. Alright I will just want to say
11 thank you to everybody for coming out today. And
12 this meeting at 1:35 p.m. is adjourned.

13 [gavel]

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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 _____ October 2, 2014 _____