

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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March 30, 2015
Start: 1:32 p.m.
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HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: DANIEL DROMM
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

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

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

Vanessa Ramos
Director of Policy
Committee for Hispanic Children and Families

Camilla Carmen
BSNBCS - Bedford-Stuyvesant New Beginnings Charter School

Katherine Sprowal
Class Size Matters

Rosalie Friend
Save Our School

Dr. Anna-Maria Thomas
Retired Educator
New York City Department of Education

Natasha Capers
Coordinator and Parent Leader
Coalition for Educational Justice

Hilary Bucknell
District 18 CDC

2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, good afternoon.

3 I'm Council Member Daniel Dromm, Chair of the

4 Education Committee. Thank you all for coming today,

5 and thank you to my colleagues on the Education

6 Committee for being here. And I want to apologize

7 for being late. I had to vote in the Civil Service

8 Committee, and it took a little bit of a while to do

9 that. But, now we're here, and we're starting this.

10 Let me introduce my colleagues Council Member Mark

11 Weprin is here from Queens. Council Member Mark

12 Treyger, Council Member Steve Levin, Council Member

13 Alan Maisel both from Brooklyn or all three from

14 Brooklyn. Council Member Margaret Chin from

15 Manhattan; Council Member Mark Levine from Manhattan,

16 and Council Member Helen Rosenthal, who is the prime

17 sponsor of the legislation that we're going to be

18 hearing today.

19 At today's hearing we'll be discussing

20 several resolutions. I should say one of the pieces

21 of reso--legislation. Resolution No. 577 sponsored

22 by Council Member Rosenthal calls upon the Department

23 of Education to amend its Parents' Bill of Rights and

24 Responsibilities to include information about opting

25 out of high-stakes testing and distribute this

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2 document at the beginning of every school year to
3 every family in every grade.

4 Resolution No. 592, sponsored by Council
5 Member Levine is a resolution calling upon the New
6 York State Legislature to fully implement the
7 education funding requirements from New York City
8 resulting from the Campaign for Fiscal Equity v.
9 State of New York case. And lastly, Resolution No.
10 563 that I sponsored is a resolution calling upon the
11 New York State Legislature to reject any attempt to
12 raise the cap on the number of charter schools. We
13 had a previous hearing on this legislation on March
14 3rd.

15 While these three resolutions appear at
16 first glance to have different topics, they actually
17 all have a common element, and that is how New York
18 City schools and students are affected by decisions
19 set in Albany. Standardized testing, funding, and
20 charter school caps are all decisions that are made
21 elsewhere. I understand the respective process, but
22 I also believe we need to add our voices and concerns
23 when necessary. These children attend schools in our
24 city and are under our care, and we need to stay on
25 top of these issues. As you often hear me say

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2 proudly, I was a New York City public school teacher
3 for 25 years before I got elected to the City
4 Council. I have been--I have seen what works and
5 what doesn't. I know that when you respect and
6 engage parents, teachers, and students in the
7 decision-making process, results will be positive.

8 So today we will hear from Council members,
9 advocates, parents, and students about how these
10 decisions affect them. Thank you all again for
11 coming, and now I'd like to turn the floor over to my
12 colleague Council Member Rosenthal, and then Council
13 Member Levine to say a few words about their
14 resolutions. Council Member Rosenthal.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: [interposing]

16 Thank you--thank you so much, Chair Dromm. I'm just
17 so pleased to be given the opportunity to introduce
18 this resolution, which is a commonsense call for
19 transparency by the Department of Education. You
20 know, next week on Friday parents could, if they want
21 to, let their principals know that their child would
22 opt of testing. The tests will happen the week right
23 after they come back from Easter--the spring break.
24 And sadly, not many parents know that they have that
25 option. They can opt out from these high stakes

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2 tests, and they can pursue another very legitimate
3 path that the Department of Education has laid out
4 for them. This information is buried on the
5 Department of Education's website, but it's not
6 widely known by principals or certainly by the--
7 Sorry. It's not widely known by parents. Principals
8 can have one opinion or another about the tests and,
9 therefore, let parents know or not let parents know.
10 This is a commonsense resolution that asks the
11 Department of Education to include the information
12 about opting out of testing in the Parents' Bill of
13 Rights and Responsibilities, and to distribute that
14 document to parents at the beginning of every school
15 year for every different grade. Thank you very much.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you Council
17 Member Rosenthal, and just if I might add, parents
18 across the state are beginning to see this as a real
19 issues and a real problem. They're beginning to
20 understand that these tests are being used today for
21 purposes for which they were never intended. And
22 that is one of the main goals behind the hearing here
23 today. Teachers were never meant to be evaluated
24 with using these tests. Principals' bonuses were
25 never meant to be determined using these tests.

2 Grades for schools were never meant to be used--these
3 tests were never meant to be used to give grades to
4 schools. So, I think that having this hearing,
5 making parents more aware of this issue is really
6 very important. And, in fact, in my district we're
7 going to be having a rally soon against the testing
8 mania that has gone on in education with some of the
9 alleged reformers. And I use that word very--very
10 loosely, but anyway, I'm very--I'm very glad that we
11 were able to hear this, and now I'd like to turn it
12 over to Council Member Mark Levine.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Thank you, Chair
14 Dromm. I'm pleased to say a few words on behalf of
15 Reso 592. You know, nine years ago when the highest
16 court in New York State issued a landmark ruling,
17 mandating that our state government live up to its
18 Constitutional obligation to fund the sound base of
19 education in New York City. I think few of us could
20 have imagined or would have believed that our state
21 government would be so brazen and shameless in
22 ignoring a constitutionally mandated and court
23 reaffirmed obligation. But, here we are nine years
24 later, a year in which there is a budget surplus of
25 several billion dollars, and a one-time \$5 billion

2 infusion of money because of the bank settlement.
3 And we are still in the position of begging our
4 Albany leadership for the money that our kids
5 deserve. And, I have to say how disappointed I am to
6 see early reports on the budget deal that was
7 announced last night. We're still waiting on the
8 details, but it appears that we got far, far, far
9 less than the \$2 billion that our students in our
10 schools deserve. And this is kind of an abstract
11 number. It's so big, but this is real. On a per-
12 student basis, this means the loss of \$2,000 per kid
13 per year in New York City. That is the difference
14 between adequate class size and overcrowded
15 classrooms. It impacts our ability to restore arts
16 education to our schools after years of painful cuts.
17 It affects our ability to implement technology in the
18 classroom. This has real consequences for everything
19 we're fighting for as educators and leaders. And I'm
20 so proud that the City Council is going to stand up
21 and say with one voice that we demand our kids get
22 the resources that are allowed. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you, Council
24 Member Levine. Somebody had asked me if this still
25 relevant today in light of the alleged or the

2 supposed budget deal that's been reached up in
3 Albany. And, of course it is because we're going to
4 continue to fight to get those dollars for our folks
5 and our kids here in New York City. And from what I
6 understand as well that on the State level there is
7 \$1.4 billion, if I'm not mistaken. I could be off a
8 little bit on that number, but that's for the whole
9 state. That's not even just for the City, and the
10 City is owed over \$2.6 billion, and the State is over
11 \$5 billion. So, it really comes nowhere near to what
12 the minimal requirement is for this. And as you
13 stated, this is a constitutionally guaranteed right
14 that our students have that has not been fulfilled.
15 And the obligation to our students has not been met.
16 So I really want to thank you as well for sponsoring
17 this legislation. I think I've announced everybody,
18 and we will now call our first witnesses up and that
19 will be Vanessa Ramos from the Committee for Hispanic
20 Children and Families; Katherine Sprowal from Class
21 Size Matters; Rosalie Friend from Save Our Schools;
22 and Camilla Carmen, BSNBCS Pact. Okay.

23 [pause, background noise]

24 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: If I--I think I did
25 forget to announce Council Member Antonio Reynoso is

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2 here and Council Member Andy King as well who is
3 here. Thank you both for being here. And I do swear
4 everybody in, in this committee. So I do ask you all
5 to raise your right hand. Do you solemnly swear or
6 affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and
7 nothing but the truth, and to answer council member's
8 questions honestly?

9 PANEL MEMBER: Yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Thank you very
11 much, and Vanessa, do you want to start?

12 VANESSA RAMOS: Yes, sure. Good
13 afternoon. Buenas tardes. My name is Vanessa Ramos,
14 Director for Policy at the Committee for Hispanic
15 Children and Families. We thank you, the committee
16 for the opportunity to testify at this hearing, and
17 we are here to support the three Resolutions 583, 577
18 and 592. On Resolution 583, our organization is not
19 against charter schools. We think strong
20 performance, education and opportunity and parental
21 choice for New York City families are welcome
22 developments. However, charters must be held
23 accountable; must offer bilingual and dual language
24 programs and must provide transparency in their
25 financial structures and remain subject to public

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2 scrutiny. In other words, our position is that
3 charters must play by the same rules as public
4 schools. If the cap on charters is raised once
5 again, the City will have to spend millions in rent
6 payments for charter schools in private spaces.
7 Instead, those monies can be used to benefit more
8 than one million children in the City's public
9 schools by improving the infrastructure, increasing
10 the number of bilingual programs, and providing
11 professional development opportunities for teachers
12 and administrators. Even under the present cap, the
13 City will have to provide space for our regional new
14 charters as well as any existing charter wishing to
15 expand. This is already creating an undue and
16 onerous financial burden on the city.

17 On Resolution 577, our organization
18 advocates for parental choice and beliefs that
19 parents should be empowered to make informed
20 decisions regarding the education of their children.
21 Parents must have information in their home languages
22 and in print about opting out of standardized tests
23 and know the possible consequences of opting out.

24 On Resolution 592, as stated here, New
25 York City is currently owed more than \$2.5, \$2.6

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2 billion by the State. In the meantime, our public
3 classrooms are overcrowded and significant cuts have
4 been made in art, literacy, guidance counselors,
5 social workers and others. All of these cuts have
6 the greatest impact in low-income communities,
7 students living below the poverty line, English
8 language learners, and students with special needs.
9 For those reasons, we support this resolution, as a
10 step towards ensuring that the human rights for
11 education is met, and that the State complies with
12 its Constitutional obligations. Our organization
13 believes that education is the vehicle that moves
14 children and families out of poverty, and it must be
15 prioritized as an investment. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much.

17 Next, please.

18 [pause]

19 CAMILLA CARMEN: Hello, Committee and
20 thanks for the opportunity to speak before you today.
21 I'm in favor of all of the proposals on the agenda,
22 but I came here to speak about the Parents' Bill of
23 Rights. My name is Camilla Carmen and I have two
24 children in public school, one in fifth grade and one
25 in eighth grade. When my 13-year-old was in

2 kindergarten or first grade--I've lost track--I
3 attended my very first City Council hearing. I had
4 heard that the City was proposing to extend
5 standardized testing to children as young as she was,
6 and that just seemed outrageous to me. So I decided
7 to take a half day at work and come here to find out
8 more about it. I date my politicization a public
9 school parent to that hearing. I sat in the audience
10 listening to City Council Members, and they all
11 seemed to agree that it wasn't such a great idea.
12 But their hands were tied because their role was
13 really symbolic.

14 The Mayor controlled the schools. I felt
15 completely disenfranchised. It did not make sense to
16 me that my public institution was not responsive to
17 me, the taxpaying citizen whose child actually
18 attended school. I don't mean to digress and get off
19 onto the topic of school governance. I am back here
20 today because I realize that to make any progress in
21 resisting inappropriate tests, I cannot rely on my
22 elected officials even the sympathetic ones. I would
23 have to act on my own in consort with other parents.
24 So I did. Parents at my child's school formed a
25 parent action committee to fight against education

2 policies that we felt were damaging the schools, and
3 especially to the kind of progressive education we
4 wanted for our children. While we have taken up all
5 sorts of fights from budget cuts to class size, we
6 eventually focused our attention on high-stakes
7 testing because we felt that the emphasis on testing
8 was at the root of so many things that concerned us.

9 Not only the curriculum, loss of play
10 time, unfair teacher evaluations and more. Our
11 committee is now in its fourth year, and last year
12 our efforts really paid off. Eighty percent of the
13 children in testing grades at Brooklyn New School
14 refused the test. This fete was widely publicized.
15 As a result, this year many schools have been
16 reaching out to about supporting their efforts to
17 start a conversation about test refusal at their
18 schools. What quickly became clear, however, was
19 that parents at our school were in the enviable
20 position of having a principal who supported our
21 efforts. This was not true at many other schools, or
22 to be more precise, I should say that sometimes the
23 principal is privately supportive, but afraid to be
24 publicly so. She or he impedes the use of school
25 lists for dissemination of information about forms or

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2 discussions about the tests, or workshops on how to
3 opt out. And I've met with parents who filled the
4 back room of a bar because they felt like they could
5 not meet at school about this issue, which is
6 absolutely related to school.

7 This morning I took part in a meeting
8 with parents from nearly six different schools at a
9 Brooklyn synagogue. Several spoke about receiving
10 heat from school administration regarding their
11 principled decisions to refuse the tests for their
12 children. Finally, about two weeks ago I met with
13 parents at two Title 1 schools. One mother told me
14 through a translator that she is afraid that if she
15 were to refuse the test, which is stacked against her
16 child as 97% of English language learners statewide
17 failed last year, the that principal would not
18 promote her daughter who is having other struggles.

19 I am hopeful that the resolution proposed
20 today would allow that mother and many more like her
21 to act on what she knows is right for her daughter.
22 The truth is that although parents are happy to learn
23 about the tests and the movement to oppose them at
24 other schools, that information still lacks the
25 official stamp of the imprimatur that would embolden

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2 them to act. The proposal to assert test refusal as
3 a right in a Parent Bill--Parents' Bill of Rights
4 would go a long way in addressing that. I would also
5 hope that the actual language and tone of the bill
6 would differ from the Parent's Guide to the State
7 Tests recently released by the NYC DOE, which is off-
8 putting, to say the least. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much.
10 Next, please.

11 KATHERINE SPROWAL: Hi. Can you hear me?

12 SERGEANT-A-ARMS: Turn it on.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Just the red light
14 has to go on.

15 KATHERINE SPROWAL: Can you hear me now?
16 Okay. All right. Thank you so much for giving us
17 the opportunity to speak here. I often feel as a
18 parent that our voices are-- You know, our opinions
19 are definitely falling on deaf ears, and it just--a
20 lot of you up there are just my champions. I'm so
21 glad to see my Council people up there to see Helen
22 and Mark and Dromm, who is out here. Okay. So my
23 name Katherine Sprowal. I'm a public school
24 parent, and I'm here today representing my middle
25 school son, and the parents of Class Size matters.

2 We support all of the resolutions on the agenda
3 today. The right of parents to be notified that they
4 can opt their children out of standardized testing
5 and also in support of keeping the cap on charter
6 schools. My child was only one of 685 children in
7 his elementary school on the Upper West Side that
8 opted out three years ago. Since that time, the opt
9 out movement is growing everyday.

10 According to the New York State Education
11 Department, more than 60,000 parents have opted out
12 of the State exams last year. Parents in New York
13 City should be notified of their rights to opt out,
14 and this right should be included in the DOE's
15 Parents Bill of Rights. Here are some of the reasons
16 why we support it. May principals, parents,
17 teachers, and students have found that the test for
18 the last three--the last three years are flawed
19 developmentally, inappropriate, too long, culturally
20 biased, and filled erroneous ambiguous phrases and
21 questions like the Pineapple and the Hare. Many of
22 these text passages have also been filled with logos,
23 trademarks and commercial product names, which I
24 think is disgusting. The former Education
25 Commissioner John King set to cut scores high at a

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2 level preordained to show that two-thirds of the
3 state students would not be college and career ready,
4 including in many districts where more than 90% of
5 the students graduate and go onto college, and o very
6 well.

7 The test scores have no diagnostic worth
8 to teachers, and they don't--and they are being used--
9 --they are being used instead of for--for high stakes
10 purposes like teachers evaluations--evaluations for
11 which they have no proven value. Many experts
12 including the National Academy of Science and
13 American Statistical Association have said evaluating
14 teachers bias students test scores not yield reliable
15 or valid results with one-third of teachers rating
16 highly one year and then poorly the next year. And
17 could force out good teachers. Testing and test
18 preparation is taking too much time and money. It
19 has a narrow curriculum driving down arts, music,
20 science and have led many students to start to detest
21 school and learning. We are also very concerned
22 about the privacy implications inherent in allowing
23 for profit companies like Pearson to access our
24 children's personal data. The Department of
25 Education has failed to protect our students'

2 privacy, and comply with the new State Privacy Laws.
3 Or, even inform parents on how vendors are getting
4 access to students' personal data.

5 I can't finish the rest, but I just want
6 to say this: The reality is that these tests cause
7 more harm than--these cause more harm than success.
8 The results are separate and unequal especially for
9 non-White students. The results are poor teacher
10 quality for non-White students. The results are
11 subpar for non-White students. The results are
12 questionable in ethics and distribution and grading,
13 violates student's rights and causes physical and
14 emotional harm. It facilitates school-to-prison
15 pipeline, and facilitates redistribution of wealth.
16 And we strongly urge you to pass these resolutions--
17 and these--all of these resolutions have affected me
18 personally in a very personal way. I had a child
19 that was in a charter school that was kicked out
20 after two days. I have child where we opted out, and
21 it did cause him harm when we went through the middle
22 school process. And then also in watching all of
23 these mandated services that are doing nothing for
24 him, when just being in a class with 15 students and

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2 a good teacher did far more. So thank you today for
3 having us. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you, Katherine
5 . Next.

6 [pause]

7 ROSALIE FRIEND: Hello, my name is
8 Rosalie Friend. I'm recommend--I am representing the
9 National Grassroots Group Save Our School, and I'm
10 very proud that Katherine read a phrase from our
11 flyer, and I have more for the rest of you, if you
12 would like them. And this flyer features a
13 photograph--small, but still a photograph of
14 Katherine , which she didn't know was there. Now,
15 I've taken some of my valuable time, but I did want
16 to make this connection. My child fortunately
17 graduated from the New York City public system before
18 all this happened. And I am--have been concerned.
19 As I am an educator, I have been concerned about the
20 quality of our public schools I guess since I started
21 that career many decades ago. My organization
22 strongly, strongly supports the cap on charter
23 schools. Schools should be a public service for our
24 citizens to prepare, the young people to be active

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2 citizens in a democracy. Schools should not be a
3 revenue stream for corporations.

4 We also strongly support the Campaign for
5 Fiscal Equity. Who could quarrel with the court's
6 finding that it's not Constitutional to withhold for
7 children's schools. But I will speak primarily about
8 the need to inform parents to opt out. This is a
9 turnaround for me. As an education psychologist who
10 taught assessment at CUNY for years, I have had--I
11 had a lot of faith in standardized tests. I know how
12 they're developed. I know how they're used, but boy
13 it seems like they have been kind of distorted
14 recently. Once the politics got involved, we have
15 uses, as Councilman Dromm mentioned, that are
16 inappropriate, that are invalid. What's the point--?
17 If you want to tell how well teachers are doing,
18 what's the point in spending zillions of dollars
19 putting all that pressure on the teachers and the
20 kids to get a value added measure that the American
21 Statistical Association says can't give you accurate
22 information.

23 Now, you can't claim that the Statistical
24 Association has--is a special interest the way our
25 State officials claim that the parents are a special

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2 interest. The Statistical Association has no dog in
3 this fight. Their business is creating accurate
4 statistics, which you don't get from [bell] these
5 tests. So parents who opt out for--for reasons of
6 right and wrong are doing the right thing. Parents
7 whose kids are made anxious by all of the pressure
8 from the test. You know, what, parents have a
9 Constitutional right to do--to make decisions on
10 behalf of their children. We should be making it
11 clear to all the parents that they have that right,
12 and we should be questioning the institutionalization
13 of procedures that are not doing anybody any good
14 except the businesses that make money off of them.

15 Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much,
17 and my first observation is exactly how these tests
18 are used in election years. And I remember scores
19 going up way high in 2009 and everybody was doing
20 wonderful. And then all of a sudden everything fell
21 down to 30% because of the new Common Core, the way
22 it was implemented. And, it's just very interesting
23 to follow the trend and the pattern in which the
24 scores go up and down. So that's my observation.
25 Council Member Reynoso has a question.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Thank you,
3 Chair. Just wanted to ask, you talked about your
4 experience and your transition from elementary to
5 middle school when you opted out. And just wanted to
6 know what that transition looked like, and whether or
7 not you were aware of the consequences to opting out?
8 And also just to educate us on exactly what happens
9 after a parent opts out.

10 KATHERINE SPROWAL: Well, this was three
11 years ago. So, there wasn't a lot of people opting
12 out, but as you know I think it's the-- Is it the
13 fourth grade where they take all of the test scores
14 and use that to do the admission process for the
15 middle school. We--they did a black line master on
16 my son, and when you fill out the applications,
17 they're--they're geared towards knowing what your
18 child's testing score is. They're not--they weren't
19 set up to review the black line master. So we had
20 very, very little schools, and we were able to do--
21 we were able to apply to them and we wound up going
22 to whatever school accepted him. Which is a school
23 that's in District 3 and it's pretty much--it's a
24 choice school where everybody goes, and where you
25 don't get picked anywhere else. Something from like

2 from what I understand from like 40% of the children
3 in school have IEPs; 100% of the kids who are in one
4 school get free lunch; and this is--this is what
5 happened to us. And my son is very well able to get
6 a four on most tests. He can score a four on the
7 CUNY test. He also has ADHD so that--that can vary.
8 For anything that can happen, one day that can
9 happen. So that's why I think this is a good way of
10 testing and measuring his intelligence. So it
11 affected him, and it impacted him.

12 CAMILLA CARMEN: I could say that that is
13 actually different today. Although, it might still
14 be happening in some places. The latest NYCD OEF IQ
15 [sic] very clearly states that all--all programs
16 including screen programs--middle school and high
17 school screen programs must have a protocol to deal
18 with children who have no test scores. And one of
19 the things that we did at the Brooklyn New School
20 last year we called all the schools in our district,
21 and all the citywide schools, and some schools, our
22 schools and un-zoned schools. So we draw from several
23 districts in Brooklyn. So that also included some
24 District 13 schools and other schools. And what we
25 found actually was that most of the schools that we

2 taught including the ones that are considered the
3 most vaunted ones to go to, actually, you did not
4 need a test score. And our principal told us that
5 she had students with high scores who didn't get into
6 that, you know, that school, and children with low
7 scores who did. But there is a perception, which the
8 DOE has not really publicly dispelled that if you
9 don't have a test score that you're imperiling your
10 child, and so that dissuades opt out. And so like
11 the meeting that I was at this morning like that was
12 one of the really big factors. People feel like all
13 these other reasons to opt out are--they want to opt
14 their children out. They don't like the way the
15 tests are being used. But they're fearful not just
16 fourth grade parents, but the first--I heard this for
17 the first time, too. The fifth grade parent, well,
18 if I opt out and then I want to appeal--I mean I
19 opted out and now I want to appeal my middle school
20 placement. Could my principal use that against me,
21 and it has to be really clear. And I think one thing
22 that really could help this and I don't--this is not
23 part of this resolution. I don't know how--I'm not
24 sure how this works, but if the test scores were not
25 put on students' transcripts in schools, so the DOE

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2 now is saying we're--the schools can't discriminate
3 against your child because they do not have a test
4 score. But the truth is they still send the
5 transcript with the test score to the schools. So if
6 the test score was decoupled from the transcript,
7 then you can't say that you used the test score to
8 determine placement.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Thank you.

10 Thank, Chair. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: That's a very
12 important point to be made, and I heard some of that
13 in your testimony as well. There are some other who
14 wanted to ask questions. But also another
15 observation that I have regarding the use of these
16 tests that a lot of people don't seem to understand
17 is that if you're a teacher in K or even Pre-K
18 through second grade, you have to share test scores
19 with teachers in other grades. If you're an art
20 teacher, you have to share test scores with teachers
21 in other grades. If you're a gym teacher, you have
22 to share scores. This is the insanity. I mean how
23 do you evaluate teachers who have never taught a
24 reading lesson? Now, in the madness that goes on in
25 the public school system, they say well the gym

2 teacher should do a little lesson and then have the
3 kids write a story about their exercise. And this
4 is--this is the point. This is absolutely
5 ridiculous. And then they hold them accountable
6 for--for the test scores. I mean I don't know if
7 people understand that. You know, that is a--these
8 teachers are being evaluated on test scores that come
9 from kids that they have no interaction with in terms
10 of reading or writing or math bizarre. Council
11 Member Reynoso. Excuse me. Council Member Rosenthal
12 followed by Council Member Treyger.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you,
14 Chair. You know, I'm just curious for the people on
15 the panel I very much appreciate your testifying
16 today. It's so great to hear about well, parents in
17 other districts and mine. I'm so I'm less aware of
18 it, but I know in my district there are parents
19 organizing like you have. So it's very helpful to
20 hear that it's happening across the city. I'm
21 wondering two things. One, your experience with
22 getting a copy of the Parent's Bill of Rights, et al,
23 or whether or not principals have ever--how it was
24 communicated to you that the Parent's Bill of Rights
25 and the responsibilities even exist? And secondly,

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2 I'm wondering your experience--what you think given
3 the answer to the first question will have to happen
4 in terms of translating to many languages?

5 VANESSA RAMOS: [off mic] You answer
6 that? [sic]

7 CAMILLA CARMEN: I can answer the first
8 part of the question pretty easily. The only reason
9 why I know about the Parent's Bill of Rights is
10 because I'm actively organizing this area. And so
11 that last year we were kind of desperately looking
12 for information about the--how the DOE would respond
13 to students who opted out. And we've looked to
14 change the stakes, which who like asked for
15 questions, and then got this. I didn't know about
16 the Bill of Rights per se, but the--the guide--it's
17 the Parent's Guide to State Testing. And to be frank
18 with you, that guide that came out under Shilpa
19 Skowronski [sp?] actually felt more friendly than the
20 one that just came out from Inya LaFrenia [sp?].

21 VANESSA RAMOS: Yes, I--

22 ROSALIE FRIEND: [interposing] Well, so-
23 Okay.

24 VANESSA RAMOS: Well, you know, following
25 this, you know what, I can tell you we have programs,

2 after school programs in the Bronx and we do have
3 programs in Brooklyn and Bronx in high schools. If
4 we don't tell parents that they have a Bill of
5 Rights, they will find out about it. You know,
6 that's--you know, that's one of those things. The
7 other matter is that our, you know, our community,
8 our Latino community they are not going to go in the
9 website. They need everything printed in their home
10 language. That's how they get information, and I
11 think, you know, more has to be done in that respect
12 by--you know, by the DOE and others.

13 ROSALIE FRIEND: Change the Stakes is a--
14 an organization of parents, educators and concerned
15 citizens. And when the first families were thinking
16 about opting out, they--they've been working against
17 the high stakes testing for the reasons that we all
18 gave you. And we have a few very eloquent members
19 who were able to get a meeting with the officials at
20 the Board of Education and a series of meetings about
21 promotions. Change the Stakes has been trying to
22 disseminate this information, and as Camilla said,
23 Shilpa Skowronski was helpful in saying on tape that
24 you could opt out, that you had a right. He was
25 videoed saying this twice, and the people at the DOE

2 agreed to post frequently asked questions on their
3 website. Which we have been trying--trying to
4 disseminate. What would be very helpful to many
5 parents would be if this body with we--there are
6 other groups working to change and mayoral control of
7 schools. But in the meantime, if the City Council
8 could help get out the word to parents all over the
9 city that the tests are not required to pass to the
10 next grade any more. And to get out word that opting
11 out is an option. Maybe not everyone wants to do it,
12 but that it can be done, and that there--that you
13 give the letter. That it's your Constitutional
14 right. You can give the principal a letter and we
15 can send out model letters. If you want, we can get
16 that information to you. And it would be very
17 helpful if the City Council could help communicate
18 that to the parents of the city, especially people
19 who may not have the sophistication of the people who
20 work the schools.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well, thank you. I
22 know you have posters here today. So hopefully it
23 will help us get the message out on this as well.
24 Thank you very much. Council Member Treyger.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you,
3 Chair, and I just want to first just say thank you to
4 the parents and advocates here. As a--as a teacher
5 myself I--I could say that the more involved the
6 parents and families or guardians are, I mean it
7 just--the greater likelihood of better--of better
8 outcomes. And so, I know that you are voice not just
9 for your own children, but for all of our kids, and I
10 truly, truly appreciate that. I just have a quick
11 question for Ms. Sprowal, I believe.

12 KATHERINE SPROWAL: Yeah.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: You mentioned in
14 your comments that your child was briefly in Success
15 Academy--

16 KATHERINE SPROWAL: [interposing] Yes.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: --Charter. Is
18 that correct?

19 KATHERINE SPROWAL: Yes.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Can you describe
21 the circumstances for why the child is no longer
22 there?

23 KATHERINE SPROWAL: Yeah, after--actually
24 on his first day of attending there, he was held
25 behind. When I went to go pick him up, he didn't

2 come down with the rest of the kids, and I asked
3 where he was. They had him upstairs doing drill
4 walks. They said he had to learn how to walk through
5 the hall quietly. And this is when I every single
6 day--every single day he was being punished for
7 something. And then finally, by the fifth day, they
8 told us that something is wrong with your child. We
9 don't know what it is, but you need to find another
10 school. And my thing was like wait a minute. This
11 is--don't you get public dollars? Is this a public
12 school. He won the Lottery. He took a picture with
13 Governor Patterson. How can he be--how can he even
14 go, you know. And so I said, Well, can you at least
15 tell me what's wrong with him, because he just spent
16 two years in day care, and he did fine. He thrived
17 and he did fine. No one has ever told me anything is
18 wrong with him, and they just--everyday just gave me
19 names of schools in District 3. I'm sorry, in
20 District 6 and told me that I needed to take him to
21 this school. So then I started recording everything,
22 and then we did an exchange, and it wound up being a
23 New York Times story that Michael Winerip did two
24 years ago.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: So how long was
3 he actually in the school for?

4 KATHERINE SPROWAL: He was actually there
5 for 12 days, and there were--there were--were five
6 kids in his class that within the first day they
7 identified these were children that were going to be
8 problematic. And everyday one of those children were
9 gone, and I was like the holdout. So I stayed for
10 like 12 days, and that was only after I realized that
11 it was causing more damage to my son to keep him
12 there. And that was more important than the
13 principal fighting them. But he went on to a public
14 school and I said nothing to them because I actually
15 thought something was wrong with my son, and they
16 weren't going to take him, and he thrived and did
17 well. In fact, they told me midway through school,
18 they said your son is gifted. He has this really
19 high IQ and he did fine. And how I got into advocacy
20 is that I saw as he was thriving and doing fine in
21 this place--in this public school that I didn't have
22 a problem with him. I saw teachers teaching in the
23 hallway, and, you know, those kinds of things and in
24 classes with 32 kids. And that's when I started
25 getting involved trying to do anything that I can to

2 ensure that, you know, that we maintain the integrity
3 of public school because they had took him and he
4 thrived. Whereas, in the charter school, after two
5 days, they said something is wrong with him. You
6 need to leave.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Now, if I could
8 just quick follow-up. There was a lottery at the
9 Success Academy, correct?

10 KATHERINE SPROWAL: Yes.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: And you had to
12 show up with your child.

13 KATHERINE SPROWAL: Yes, it's like at the
14 Armory. It was a big thing. It was when Patterson
15 was the Governor and my son had won and took a
16 picture with him. [laughs]

17 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: And what kind of
18 screening did you have to go through? Did they ask
19 you questions? Did they ask your son questions?
20 What type of screening did you go through?

21 KATHERINE SPROWAL: No, we filled out an
22 application and it went into the lottery. This was--
23 mind you, this was 2008.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Right.

25

2 KATHERINE SPROWAL: So this was before
3 they perfected the lack of transparency about a lot
4 of things. So, you know, so we filled out an
5 application. He went to the Armory. There were I
6 think 200 slots and they invited 5,000 parents there
7 with all of the news. And my son was one of the
8 winners. So I couldn't understand like after a
9 couple of days them coming to me and saying, you
10 know, something is wrong with your child. You've got
11 to leave. He's not focused. He was five years old.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Well, I tell you
13 this story--your story that something is wrong with
14 your child would never--never fly in traditional
15 public--

16 KATHERINE SPROWAL: [interposing] No.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: --school.
18 Because we have to serve all of our children, and we
19 don't just simply say leave. And so I--I just, you
20 know, your testimony is very powerful, and then I
21 hope, you know, certainly we do more than just
22 sitting in the state to making sure that we're
23 addressing the needs of all of our kids and not just
24 something. Thank you very much.

2 KATHERINE SPROWAL: Absolutely. Thank
3 you.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Thank you, and
5 we're going to call the next panel and I really
6 appreciate you all coming in.

7 KATHERINE SPROWAL: Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very, very
9 much.

10 [background comments]

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Next Anna-
12 Maria Thomas. I'm sorry. I've got to put the
13 glasses on. Hilary Bucknell, District 18 CDC and
14 Natasha Capers from CEJ.

15 [pause, background noise]

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. I'm going to
17 ask you all to raise your right hands so I can swear
18 you in. Do you solemnly swear or affirm to tell the
19 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,
20 and to answer council member questions honestly?

21 NATASHA CAPERS: Yes.

22 HILARY BUCKNELL: Yes.

23 DR. ANNA-MARIA THOMAS: I do.

24 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Would you
25 like to begin over here on the left?

2 DR. ANNA-MARIA THOMAS: Thank you. Our
3 schools, our voices. My name is Dr. Anna-Maria
4 Thomas. I'm a 39-years veteran retired educator of
5 the New York City Department of Education. I want to
6 thank Councilman Dromm for the resolution developed
7 to encourage more parent's participation in the
8 policies, which will affect their children. But the
9 real questions are: (1) Why are the parents and the
10 community being shut out of the decision-making of
11 these polices? And (2) Why is there such a big push
12 by all our elected officials to continue mayoral
13 control? As a result of the Bloomberg
14 Administration, the New York City Public School
15 System was destroyed in favor of charter schools.
16 Our taxes are used to fund these private charter
17 schools. We have no libraries, no science
18 laboratories, no guidance counselors in our high
19 schools. Our elementary school curriculum does not
20 teach (1) Phonics, which our English language
21 learning students need the most in order to learn to
22 read and speak English. (2) Grammar, which all
23 students need to write a sentence; and (3)
24 Penmanship is no longer taught. Thus all students do
25 not learn script or cursive writing.

2 The disappearing Black and Latino
3 educators from our New York City classrooms have
4 drastically declined under Bloomberg tenure. To add
5 insult to this injury already being suffered by our
6 public school system, Governor Cuomo continues to
7 withhold school funds necessary for our public
8 schools even after the courts have ordered New York
9 City's school funds be released. The removal of
10 funding from our schools is the most violent action
11 perpetrated against our children. These funds are
12 our taxes we pay to fund our schools, and pay our
13 elected officials' salaries. Our voices are not
14 being heard when we say loud and clear "End mayoral
15 control." All of the above facts validate [bell]
16 politicians are not equipped to run our public
17 schools equitably for all our students. A last
18 interesting question: Why is the New York Public
19 School System the only school districts in the entire
20 New York State under mayoral control? Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much.
22 Ms. Capers.

23 NATASHA CAPERS: Good afternoon to the
24 Council and thank you for having me today. I'm
25 Natasha Capers, Coordinator and Parent Leader for the

2 Coalition for Educational Justice, and I'm also
3 representing our coalition partners the Alliance for
4 Quality Education. Zakia Ansari [sp?] and Maria
5 Batista are busy at our office working with a
6 pushback to our governor, and they regrettably cannot
7 be here today. But briefly I want to speak to why
8 it is so important that we receive the funding from
9 the Campaign for Fiscal Equity. A lot of times we
10 hear that you can't just throw money at a problem.
11 We often hear that from people with money, but
12 whatever. But in this case, money can help to solve
13 several of these problems. For one, as we just
14 heard, schools are lacking basic necessities such as
15 libraries, book, facilities, science labs, in which
16 we test fourth and eighth graders. And so,
17 therefore, we know that this money can be used
18 wisely. Secondly, we know that the governor, as well
19 as our Mayor have this big push for community
20 schools. Community schools while yes it helps to
21 align funding, especially on the state and city
22 level, it is not a free endeavor. And without the
23 proper money, and without the proper funding to
24 ensure that all of our schools have the opportunity
25 to have--to become community schools, full-service

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2	community schools that allows students to have a rich	
3	dynamic culturally relevant curriculum that allows	
4	parents within its realm. It allows them that	
5	decision-making implementation design and evaluation.	
6	That it speaks to the needs of the community. It	
7	views communities and parents and students as assets.	
8	Not just deficits or problems to be solved. We know	
9	that with this necessary funding, with this	
10	Constitutional funding and quite frankly with the	
11	money that has been over and over and over again	
12	confirmed to be ours, we can transform the lives of	
13	students. Students don't get a second chance to be	
14	students again. My 8 and 10-year old wont be 8 and	
15	10 again. They won't have a second chance to be	
16	third and fifth graders, God willing. They won't	
17	have an opportunity to have a rich educational	
18	experience ever again. And so, it is our moral	
19	imperative to make sure that we educate each and	
20	every 1.1 million students within our realm. It is	
21	our moral, on this high holy week. It is our moral	
22	imperative that we educate them all, and we must have	
23	the proper funding to do that. Thank you.	
24	CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Ms.	
25	Bucknell.	

2 HILARY BUCKNELL: Good afternoon,

3 Council. My name is Hilary Bucknell, as you can see,

4 and I am here on a philosophical statement. So I'm

5 either for or against what the politicians have put

6 in place. But I am going to say this: Our children

7 and from the words of Shakespeare's Socrates are--I'm

8 saying this--Are we educating or corrupting them?

9 Teaches are placed between a rock and a hard place

10 supporting their families while teaching our children

11 while the administrators bicker over what the budget

12 is missing. *Brown v. Wade* on the Board of Education

13 gave over \$5 million. Councilman Maisel, I was in

14 your office when Betty and Betty Zorr [sp?] and that

15 whole crew was there trying to find out where the

16 money is. My son is now 19 and still doesn't have a

17 high school education completed, but we won't discuss

18 that. [laughs] Now, those children that went to

19 court to get the Board of Education to pay that \$5

20 million I think they're grandparents now, and their

21 children is still waiting for the education that they

22 fought for. The Education Department is almost non-

23 functioning, and we've learned through transparency

24 the more we learn, the less our children get.

25 Please, I'm asking weigh the cost of the un-unified

2 effort of teaching our children, and recognize the
3 real dilemma: Where it falls. Because it's squarely
4 on the shoulders of our children, and there is no
5 excuse for such travesty. In these 2000s we have
6 come too far to return to the past more arrogant than
7 we were during the age when there was no court system
8 to guide the masses. Please pay attention to what
9 we're doing to ourselves. Because this is our future
10 that we're shaping. Education is not measured by
11 tests, and in one quote from Martin Luther King says,
12 The contents of one's character is important.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much
14 for that testimony from all three of you. I really
15 do appreciate it. I'm very proud to say that this
16 Council is taking some affirmative steps in regard to
17 some of the Governor's agenda in Albany. And it's a
18 pretty progressive step forward we're going to be
19 voting on, and I know we'll be passing a resolution
20 to say not to increase the cap on charter schools.
21 We're going to be voting and passing on a resolution
22 to declare opposition to the misuse of tests, and to
23 inform parents of their right to opt out, and to
24 protect their children from that type of testing. We
25 going to be passing a resolution in support of the

2 Campaign for Fiscal Equity, and we're going to vote
3 on those resolutions here today. I urge my
4 colleagues to vote in favor on that. We'll be voting
5 on this at the full Council Stated Meeting tomorrow.
6 And in addition at a previous hearing, we already
7 heard and voted on a resolution urging the state
8 elected officials not to put the city into
9 receivership. So we have come up with a package to
10 address all of these issues. Plus, we have dome up
11 with a package of ideas and suggestions, which are
12 proactive and things that the state government should
13 be doing for our city schools, which is to provide
14 that adequate funding. Which is to provide support
15 for our failing schools, and I use that word failing
16 very, very hesitantly because none of our schools are
17 really failing. None of our students are failures
18 either, but I'm very proud of what it is that this
19 Council is about to do. And I want to thank you for
20 coming in and giving testimony. Hearing from our
21 parents, those who are affected, whose children are
22 affected by the schools is very, very important to
23 me. So I think without further ado, what we're going
24 to do--

25 [background comment]

2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Anybody else that
3 wants to testify? Okay. Seeing none, I am going to
4 ask the Clerk to call the vote. By the way, members,
5 the vote will be coupled. We're going to be voting
6 charter cap, testing, and CFE funding today.
7 Receivership was already passed, and that will be--
8 the package will be taken care of tomorrow. Clerk,
9 would you please call the vote.

10 CLERK: William Martin, Committee Clerk.

11 Roll call vote Committee on Education. Chair Dromm.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I vote aye.

13 CLERK: Chin.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: I vote aye on all.

15 CLERK: Rose.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Aye.

17 CLERK: Weprin.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: I vote aye.

19 CLERK: King.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Aye on all.

21 CLERK: Deutsch.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Aye.

23 CLERK: Levine.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Permission to
25 explain my vote, Mr. Chair.

2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [off mic] Yes.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Okay. I'm going
4 to be--

5 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] [on
6 mic] Yes.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: I'm going to be
8 voting aye on Resos 592 and 577. I want to say a
9 couple words about Reso 583, which is that I believe
10 there are some good charters and some bad charters.
11 The Chair I know has good feelings towards some of
12 the mom and pop charters that are out there. I think
13 as policymakers we have an obligation to ensure more
14 transparency and accountability in this sector. And
15 that means holding them accountable on things like
16 attrition as Ms. Sprowal mentioned, and backfilling.
17 And I have Bill 613, which would mandate this kind of
18 reporting. Most importantly, we have an obligation
19 to make sure that charters serve a representative
20 sample of students in their district. Including
21 special ed and English language learners, and not all
22 of them are doing that, and that's critical. Those
23 points weren't present in this Reso. So I'm going to
24 be abstaining from on voting on Reso 590--excuse 583.
25 Thank you.

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2 [pause]

3 CLERK: Williams.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Abstain on 563
5 and aye on all the rest.

6 CLERK: Maisel.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MAISEL: [off mic] Aye on
8 all.

9 CLERK: Reynoso.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Aye on all.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: This is 563.

12 [background comments]

13 CLERK: Treyger.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Aye on all.

15 CLERK: By a vote of 11 in the
16 affirmative, 0-- Council Member Levin.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Permission to
18 explain my vote?

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [off mic]

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Mr. Chairman, I
21 just want to speak for a second about 563. I'm going
22 to vote--be voting aye on all of these resolutions.
23 I want to say about 563 it's been something that I've
24 followed on this committee for the last five years.
25 The increase in the cost in terms of the outpatient

2 of the Department of Education budget on charters,
3 which has increased many fold. And one thing that
4 has in particular irked me year after year is--is how
5 the Charter budget increases with a lack of
6 transparency. So for example we would see a certain
7 amount of increase year over year reflecting the
8 Preliminary Budget. That would usually be about \$50
9 million reflecting the Preliminary Budget increase
10 from the prior year's Adopted Budget. What would
11 then happen is we would come back to the Executive
12 Budget. This is going to happen again this year, by
13 the way, so keep your eye out for it. The increase
14 in the Charter budget will go up to something either
15 \$100 million, \$200 million. Those charter increases
16 that are not reflected in the Preliminary Budget.
17 They're then put into the Executive Budget, and it
18 is--it does not allow for a full airing of how those
19 costs are arrived at. Now, I think that the previous
20 administration did not have-- In fact, they were--
21 they cultivated this I believe or they found--they
22 were eager to do this in a way that was not
23 transparent. I believe that the current
24 administration does not address it in a similar
25 fashion. But it has its hands tied, if you will,

2 because they have to provide the funding either for a
3 private location, or allow for the charter school to
4 be located in a current public school facility. And
5 so, for that reason just strictly from a fiscal
6 perspective I do not believe that the charter cap
7 should be raised this year. I think that it is a--it
8 is increasingly becoming a larger and larger part of
9 the New York Department of Education budget. And
10 that's why I want to vote aye on Resolution 563, and
11 I'm proud to co-sponsor it. Thank you and aye on
12 all.

13 CLERK: By a vote of 12 in the
14 affirmative, 0 in the negative and no abstentions,
15 Resolutions 577 and 592 have been adopted. And, by a
16 vote of 10 in the affirmative, 0 in the negative and
17 2 abstentions, Reso 563 has also been adopted.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much,
19 and I just wanted to re-hone [sic] my comment in
20 regard to Council Member Levin's remarks. As well, I
21 support wholeheartedly what it is that your saying.
22 At some point during the budget hearing last week, I
23 mentioned that some of the estimates that I've spoken
24 to people informally have raised a--have spoken about
25 of upwards of \$200 million if charter schools were

2 allowed to expand. And that includes existing
3 charters that can create more graves and then would
4 have to rent space from private--in private
5 buildings, et cetera. So we definitely need to have
6 that figure, and I think we can make any type of
7 informed decision about the affects financially on
8 our system until we have those numbers. So thank you
9 for bringing that up. I think it's a very important
10 point, and at this point I'm going to hold the vote
11 open for another 10 minutes so that those who were
12 not able to be with us can come in and still vote.
13 But I would like to thank everybody for coming in.
14 You don't have to stay, but you're more than welcome
15 to if you want to. Thank you every much everybody.
16 [off mic] Thanks Steve.

17 [pause, background comments]

18 CLERK: Continuation of roll call

19 Committee on Education. Council Member Barron.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I vote aye on
21 all.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [off mic] Final
23 vote?

24 CLERK: Yep, final vote Committee on
25 Education on Resolutions 577 and Resolution 590--592

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2 are now adopted by a vote of 13 in the affirmative, 0
3 in the negative and no abstentions. And Reso 563,
4 which is adopted now by a vote of 11 in the
5 affirmative, 0 in the negative, and two abstentions.
6 Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Thank
8 you, Mr. Clerk, and with that, this meeting is
9 adjourned at 2:50--2:57.

10 [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 April 13, 2015