

**New York City Council
Education Committee Hearing
1:00 p.m. Tuesday, November 22, 2016**

Re: Res. No. 890 - calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign A.329/S.554, to implement more foreign language instruction in elementary schools

Testimony from John Carlino, executive director of the New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers (NYSAFLT) and of the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (NECTFL).

Good afternoon.

It is my distinct pleasure to provide testimony to this committee today in support of New York City Council Resolution No. 890.

My name is John Carlino and I am currently the executive director of the New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers (NYSAFLT) as well as of the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (NECTFL), which includes 13 states from Maine to Virginia, and Washington, D.C. I also currently sit on the board of directors of the Joint National Committee for Languages (JNCL) in Washington. I recently left the classroom where I spent 27 years teaching German and French in Grades 7-12.

The learning and teaching of languages has been my passion since I was a child. In fact, I still recall when, for fun, our elementary school teacher would teach us simple phrases in Spanish. Sadly, I did not have the opportunity to *officially* begin language instruction until ninth grade. My eyes were opened on the very first day of French, when I suddenly had a window and path into a completely other world. The course of my existence changed that day.

My life has been enriched in so many ways for having been fluent in more than one language. Not only knowing French and German - but also having a deep understanding of the cultures and people behind and intertwined with those languages - has opened up worlds of opportunity to me, both personal and professional.

In my packet of testimony, I have included an excerpt from a publication entitled *The Complete Curriculum*, published by the National Association of State Boards of Education in October 2003. In this report, we read the following under the heading “The Benefits of the Arts and Foreign Languages in the Classroom”:

The advantages of the ability to use more than one language are many. At a minimum, as human beings, we all need to communicate, and learning another language opens a student to communication and interaction with a vastly greater number of people. Languages also provide insight into different cultures and experiences. Foreign language education today does not focus just on rules of grammar and vocabulary, but embraces culture, history, and experiences within the larger humanities context. With today’s ever-increasing diversity—in the classroom, workplace, and community—it is crucial that native-English-speaking students have a greater understanding of the cultural background of their fellow classmates; and perhaps more important, to learn respect for diverse cultures. The experience of developing insight into the language and culture of others provides an opportunity for students to reflect on their own language and culture, thus strengthening their understanding of their native language and how the cultural perspectives in this country are similar and different from those they are learning about.

The report goes on to enumerate concrete benefits to learning languages, which may include:

- Higher achievement levels in English language arts;
- Higher scores on basic skills test, regardless of race, gender, academic level, or socio-economic status;

- Development of skills essential to the learning process, creative inquiry, and critical thinking; and
- Enhanced problem-solving skills and general cognitive development.

The proposed legislation (A.329, sponsored by Assembly member Rozic, and its companion bill S.554, sponsored by Senator Parker) would be a strong step in the right direction for New York State. We are lucky to be in one of the few states with a world language mandate, which requires students to earn one high school credit and successful completion of two years of instruction before the end of ninth grade. However, because languages are not mandated at the elementary level, support of teaching languages is limited primarily to those schools and districts that are wealthy enough to be able to afford non-mandated programming. Learning languages and the benefits that students can reap from being multilingual *must* be an opportunity afforded to all of our students, regardless of socio-economic background.

Specifically, the proposed legislation would:

- Establish a foreign language education (FLES) pilot program in five high-needs districts, and would
- Provide for 100 awards of up to \$10,000 each for college students who are working towards certification in foreign language education (a critical need given the current severe shortage of world language teachers)

As we watch the news and listen to political discussions around us, it is impossible to *not* notice the voices of those who are opposed to openness to other cultures and to the more global mindset that is a natural side effect of learning another language and culture.

In a speech this weekend, Governor Cuomo said, "...we know our diversity is a strength, not a weakness." He went on to add that, "New York State is the progressive capital of the nation, and its social conscience. New York is the laboratory of the American experiment in democracy."

I would add that New York City is at the heart of New York State's strength in its diversity. The voice of the New York City Council in support of the proposed legislation would speak loudly to a future without fear of multiculturalism or multilingualism, and to a future free of xenophobia.

I would like to end with a simple quote from the German philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein:

Die Grenzen meiner Sprache bedeuten die Grenzen meiner Welt.

The limits of my language are the limits of my world.

It is our duty to expand the limits of our world and for the coming generations and I thank you for your support of world language instruction and of our students' right to a world without limits to their opportunity.

For further information I would invite you to visit the following websites:

- NYSAFLT (<http://www.nysaflt.org/advocacy/documents.shtml>)
- ACTFL (www.actfl.org)
- JNCL www.languagepolicy.org

involved with either sports/academic or community involvement programs.

In addition to the individual findings of each of the studies, researchers concluded, learning in and through the arts reaches students who are at-risk of dropping out altogether, helping to keep them in school.

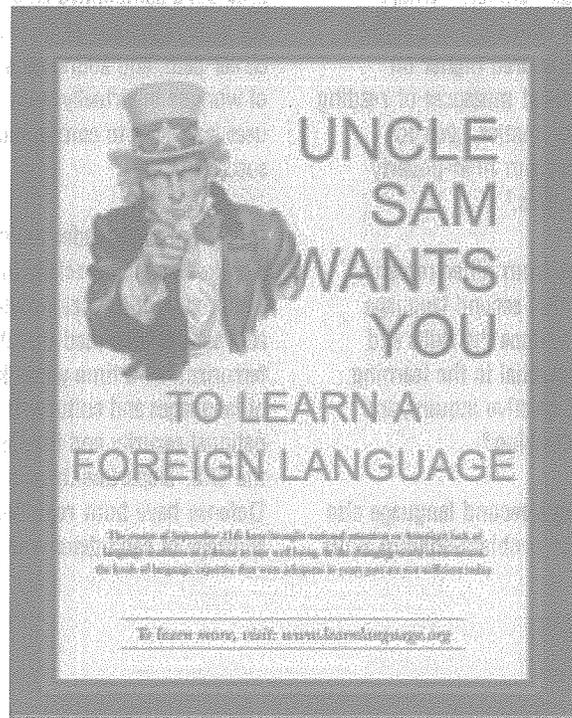
Studies have also confirmed “new brain research [that] shows not only that music is fun, but also that it improves our brain development and even enhances skills in other subjects such as reading and math . . . Music enhances creativity and promotes social development, personality adjustment, and self-worth.”⁴

Finally, one of the larger evaluations of arts programming in recent years focused on a 5-year program, Transforming Education through the Arts Challenge (TETAC), which began in 1996.⁵ The \$15 million program was implemented in 35 demographically diverse schools across the country, and was designed to encourage a comprehensive approach to arts education. Beyond teaching students to create art, TETAC helped the school community develop an understanding of the role of the arts as it relates to history and culture. The program also integrated arts instruction into other subjects. Results of the evaluation revealed that those schools that fully implemented the program saw an improvement in school culture due to increased collaboration among teachers, most prominently that teachers incorporated more critical-thinking skills into their instructional practices. (See box on page 12 for results from an evaluation of North Carolina’s A+ program.)

Foreign Languages

Similar benefits accrue to the nation and to individual students when foreign languages are a part of the curriculum. The advantages of the ability to use more than one language are many. At a minimum, as human beings, we all need to communicate, and learning another language opens a student to communication and interaction with a vastly greater number of people. Languages also provide insight into different cultures and experiences. Foreign language education today does not focus just on rules of grammar and vocabulary, but embraces culture, history, and experi-

ences within the larger humanities context. With today’s ever-increasing diversity—in the classroom, workplace, and community—it is crucial that native-English-speaking students have a greater understanding of the cultural background of their fellow classmates; and perhaps more important, to learn respect for diverse cultures. The experience of developing insight into the language and culture of others provides an opportunity for students to reflect on their own language and culture, thus strengthening their understanding of their native language and how the cultural perspectives in this country are similar and different from those they are learning about.



A poster from the Joint National Committee on Languages emphasizes the importance of foreign language training in world affairs.

There are more concrete benefits as well:

- Some studies suggest that students who begin the study of a second language early in their elementary school years attain higher achievement levels in English language arts.⁶
- One study of third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade students in Louisiana found that those who received daily instruction in a foreign language outperformed those who did not on the Louisiana Basic Skills Test, *regardless of race, gender, or academic level*. These findings were corroborated through another study of elementary students where students who studied a foreign language scored higher on standardized measures of reading and mathematics, even for students from high-poverty backgrounds.⁷
- Findings from other research suggest that second language study develops the skills and habits essential to the learning process, creative inquiry, and critical thinking.⁸
- Studying a second language also enhances problem-solving skills

and general cognitive development.⁹

In the increasingly interconnected world economy, the ultimate advantage to knowing another language may be that it provides a competitive edge. Indeed, a recent survey found that 85 percent of the public felt that the ability to speak another language was very or somewhat important to competing successfully in a global economy.¹⁰ Americans today encounter and do business with millions of people who speak languages other than English—and those same Americans are increasingly becoming aware of the importance of communicating in other languages besides English. Second language learning provides a competitive edge for *all* students regardless of their chosen career path, and addresses a shortage of workers in virtually every field that uses languages to communicate successfully.

There are broader national goals at stake as well, especially the growing need for multilingual individuals to address the increased threat of terrorism. At a time when knowledge of languages and cultures is vital to national security and foreign affairs, the U.S. Departments of State and Defense have both reported a shortage of candidates with foreign

language skills. In a post-September 11 article, *The New York Times* reported roughly half of the State Department's diplomatic postings were filled with people who did not have the necessary language skills.¹¹ Learning a second language not only increases an individual's ability to adapt to different environments and modes of acting and thinking, but it provides insights into America's values and an appreciation of national responsibilities in the world community—a necessity for matters of foreign affairs.¹²

Given the evidence of the benefits of both the arts and foreign language, it is perhaps surprising that they tend to receive short shrift in comparison with other core subject areas. Momentum has been building in recent years for greater inclusion of the arts and foreign languages in the classroom for students in all grades, of all socioeconomic backgrounds, and of all learning abilities. However, budget shortfalls nationwide are causing policymakers and educators to make tough decisions about what is in and what is out when it comes to curriculum. Unfortunately, the trend appears to indicate that the arts and foreign languages are perhaps at greater risk than ever of being pushed to the side as priorities are set.



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Council of School Supervisors and Administrators, New York City
Local 1: American Federation of School Administrators, AFL-CIO

MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT Res. No. 845

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The Council of School Supervisors and Administrators (CSA) which represents some 16,000 members, strongly supports Res. No. 845, which calls upon the New York State Education Department to expand the State's financial literacy and personal finance education curriculum to kindergarten through twelfth grade.

"As we recover from the worst economic crisis in generations, it is more important than ever to be knowledgeable about the consequences of our financial decisions," President Obama declared in 2011. Yet the financial skill sets of many Americans, especially those of young people, are still inadequate for what the world demands. Clearly, there is a critical need to address this shortcoming.

There is compelling research affirming the importance of early financial education. The availability of free financial literacy curriculum resources should enable the NYSED to expand personal finance education in Grades K-12 without incurring excessive costs. Therefore, CSA supports the bill and calls on the New York State Education Department to expand the State's financial literacy and personal finance education curriculum to all grades.

40 Rector Street, 12th Floor
New York, NY 10006-1729

212/ 823-2020 Tel
212/ 962-6130 Fax

www.csa-nyc.org



MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT Res. No. 890

President
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Executive Vice President
Mark Cannizzaro

First Vice President
Randi Herman, Ed.D.

Secretary
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212/ 962-6130 Fax

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The Council of School Supervisors and Administrators (CSA) which represents some 16,000 members, strongly supports Res. No. 890, calling on the NYS Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign A.329/S.554 and implement more foreign language instruction in elementary schools.

Studies have found that elementary school aged children learn languages more easily, but that this ability declines after puberty.

Today's students must compete in a global economy and work with people of diverse cultures and languages. We must help prepare our students accordingly.

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) found that beginning foreign language instruction early sets the stage for students to develop advanced levels of proficiencies in multiple languages.

We believe that establishing these pilot programs in five high needs districts is a step in the right direction.

In addition, the bill recognizes the importance of providing well trained foreign language instructors by providing awards for 100 college students who are working for certification in foreign language instruction. It is particularly important to note that the NYS currently has a severe shortage of trained and certified teachers of foreign languages.

Therefore, CSA supports this bill, calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign A.329/S.554, to implement more foreign language instruction in elementary schools.



Diwali School Holiday: Equal Protection *or* Separation of Church & State

In Support of Res. No.568 -

Testimony by Ravi Batra, Esq.,

Chair, National Advisory Council for South Asian Affairs

Thank you, Chairman Dromm,

I am happy to see so many friends serving as Council Members - great public servants all. New Yorkers are always happy when our elected leaders promote our "Better Angels" in us.

I am proud of you, Chairman Dromm, and members of the New York City Council's Education Committee for having taken up Res. No. 568 - as it is in the finest tradition of American Values that made our nation a beacon in human existence - so that Hindu, Sikh, Jain and Buddhist school kids no longer have to choose:

whether to go to school and ignore their faith, *or* stay at home to observe their faith and miss school.

This is an unfair and unjust choice forced upon our families. For purposes of brevity, I incorporate the Testimony of my dear and hardworking wife, Ranju Batra, chair of the Diwali Stamp Project, who recently made noble and peaceful American history with the issuance of the USPS Diwali Forever Stamp - history felt across the world - such that even P.M. Modi's Diwali Message had a video clip of the Diwali Stamp being unveiled in New York by Ranju Batra and others, including, yours truly.

Diwali, as you know, is universally acknowledged and celebrated. Ranju and I have attended Diwali Celebrations at the White House, Congress and among others, right here in NYC Council Chamber from Speaker Peter Vallone days - most recently, last week an event led by Council Member Rory Lancman - which included a City Council Citation presented to Ranju for getting the Diwali Stamp issued.

We hear a lot about gender equality. In our family, Ranju rules. She chose to send our kids to school for more education, rather than stay at home and learn their faith. This choice forced upon families is both illegal as it is unconstitutional.

As New Yorkers, we love everybody - which is why we are the Greatest City in the World. We celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and Eid. We are happy to be in St. Patty, any Shul, Mosque, Gurudwara, or Hindu Center or Hindu Temple. Here, Indian-Americans and Pakistani-Americans can live, work and play in peace. This is true of all origins and faiths. This is why America is the "shining city on the Hill," as we are stronger together.

We are E Pluribus Unum.

But, New York City Board of Education - which came under Mayoral control during Mayor Mike Bloomberg's campaign for his second term as I intervened and convinced then-NYS Senate Leader to drop their objection so as to enhance schools' accountability. Well, I hold Mayor de Blasio accountable for NOT having a Diwali School Holiday in BOE schools - and I am not happy about it. This is as disturbing to me, as other ongoing disturbing matters are. In addition, the BOE position is unconstitutional. Let me explain.

The Constitution has two competing clauses: Equal Protection of the Law and Separation of Church & State (Hat Tip to Thomas Becket in 1163A.D.).

New York City has two options mandated by our cherished Constitution, either:

1. Honor Equal Protection Clause and acknowledge the Diwali School Holiday with all speed, or
2. Eliminate all school religious holidays per the mandate of Separation of Church & State.

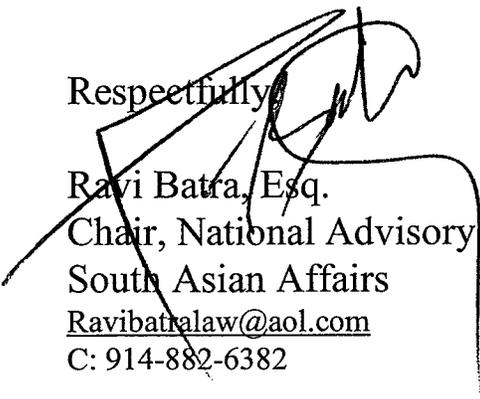
Since “In God We Trust,” and we love our Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanza and Eid, the better option is to honor the Equal Protection Clause, rather than face harsh mandate of the Separation of Church & State.

I urge you to pass a Bill, with support of the Speaker, and in the event of a mayoral veto, override the Veto, as this Council did for the Diwali Parking law. It is beneath the BOE and a New York City Mayor to play politics with our Constitution and force upon our families an unconstitutional Hobson’s Choice: Ignore School or Ignore Religion.

Thank you Mr. Chairman, and may God continue to bless these United States of America.

Dated: November 22, 2016

Respectfully


Ravi Batra, Esq.

Chair, National Advisory Council for
South Asian Affairs

Ravibatralaw@aol.com

C: 914-882-6382

Hearing on Resolution 890-2015

Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign A.329/S.554, to implement more foreign language instruction in elementary schools.

New York City Council Education Committee,

Chaired by Council Member Daniel Dromm, Council Chambers – City Hall

Tuesday, November 22, 2016

Testimony by: Teresa Arboleda

President, Citywide Council on English Language Learners (CCELL)

(ccell@schools.nyc.gov or arboledat@yahoo.com)

FOR THE RECORD

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. The CCELL was established by NYS Education Law 2590-B, 5., with the power to advise and consent on any educational or instructional policy involving bilingual or English as a Second Language Programs. The CCELL promotes second English Language Learning (ELL) by advocating on behalf of NYC public school students in bilingual, dual language, and ESL programs. The Council also encourages parent engagement in their children's language learning by providing information about public school ELL programs and services and by providing a forum for parent and community concerns about these programs and services

As stated in the above referenced resolution, the ability to communicate in more than one language is critically important in the interconnected world of the 21st century. Also, anecdotally and backed up by studies, it is found that young children are better able to learn new languages and the ability to do so declines after puberty. NYCDOE data shows that students, who have participated in bilingual programs, including dual language, attain a higher level of achievement than their counterparts who have received no other language instruction at the elementary grade level. Research also shows that immigrants arriving later in their teens are more likely to speak English, or any other language learned that late, with an accent.

Unfortunately, foreign language instruction is currently not found in most elementary schools in the USA and in New York State. An old joke asks these questions: What is someone who is trilingual? Someone who speaks three languages. What is someone who is bilingual? Someone who speaks two languages. What is someone who speaks only one language? An American. It is sad that this is so true of our country and that the recent election has shown that we are so deeply divided. Foreign language instruction not only exposes the student to another language but also to the culture of the country or countries where that language is spoken. The more people are exposed to other cultures the more understanding is created, serving to further peace rather than hatred and disrespect.

There is an opinion that a country speaking more than one language has difficulty in uniting the people and encourages division and distrust. Some point out Canada, where the province of Quebec is French/English bilingual as opposed to the rest of the English speaking country. However, Canada recently elected a very popular French speaking prime minister who is the son of a former French speaking prime minister.

The CCELL has been composed of members from various countries who speak other languages, including Spanish, French, Chinese, Russian, Arabic, Albanian, and Bengali. Somehow, the council functions because translation, training and information are provided to smooth out whatever is needed to work for all our children.

The Citywide Council on English Language Learners **fully supports** NYC Council Resolution 890-2015 calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign A.329/S.554, to implement more foreign language instruction in elementary schools.

|| ॐ || **BRAHMIN SOCIETY OF NEW YORK** || ॐ ||

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P.O.Box 40 143, Glen oaks N.Y.11004

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FOR THE RECORD

To: The NYC Council's Committee on Education,

RE: Res. 568 -- Resolution calling upon the New York City Department of Education to establish Diwali as an official holiday for New York City public school students.

Hon. Daniel Dromm , NYC Council Member , has introduced a bill to establish DIWALI as Official Holiday for New York City Public Schools . We at Brahmin Society of NY (BSNY) a non-profit organization representing a community of Brahmin members and well-wishers are writing in support of this petition.

The festival of Diwali is the most important holiday for Hindu community. I am sure you are well aware that the New York City region is home to the largest Indian American population among metropolitan areas by a significant margin, enumerating 679,173 uniraical individuals by 2014 per U.S. Census estimates. Diwali signifies our belief of victory of good over evil, light over darkness as it is also called a festival of lights. We Hindus celebrate it very peacefully with our families and friends. Most Hindu followrs try their best to take a day off for this most auspicious celebration. We will really appreciate your support on approval of the Diwali as an official holiday for New York City Public students as well. This is encourage religious awareness in our future generation as well.

Respectfully,

BSNY Trustees and Executive committee



150 Court Street, 3rd Fl
Brooklyn NY 11201
T: 718 643 8000
F: 718 797 0410

37-10 30th Street, 2nd Fl
Queens NY 11101
T: 718 937 8000
F: 347 808 8778

Family Justice Center
350 Jay Street, 15th Fl
Brooklyn, NY 11201
T: 718 250 5035

Family Justice Center
126-02 82nd Avenue
Queens, NY 11415
T: 718 575 4500

Family Justice Center
126 Stuyvesant Place
Staten Island, NY 10301
T: 718 697 4330

AAFSC Testimony in Support of Resolution 568

FOR THE RECORD

The Arab-American Family Support Center is the oldest and largest Arabic-speaking social service agency in New York City. As a settlement house, we provide culturally and linguistically competent services to Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim and South Asian, or AMEMSA, immigrant communities. At AAFSC, we celebrate how vast and vibrant our communities are in their diversity, and this is why we firmly support Resolution 568 to establish Diwali as an official holiday for New York City public school students.

Our doors are open to observers of all religions, and that includes Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, and Buddhists. New York City is home to a significant and increasing Dharmic community—particularly in Queens, where one of AAFSC’s offices is located. From 1990 to 2010, the Indian population in New York City increased by 103%. According to the Census Bureau’s 2012 American Community Survey, there were over 200,000 New York City residents who identify themselves as Asian Indian, the vast majority of whom identify as Hindu, Sikh, Jain or Buddhist. These communities are an integral and growing part of our city.

We know how diverse the Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim and South Asian communities are in their cultures, languages and religions. The AMEMSA term arose and gained traction from shared experiences of prejudice and oppression among these peoples. This was intensified as a result of September 11th, and continues to persist with the rise of Islamophobia and xenophobia. In particular, AAFSC uses this term because it strives to build collective unity and strength between these communities.

For many years, AAFSC fought for Eid to be established as a public holiday in New York City. And last year, our efforts paid off. Our children were finally able to spend these important holidays at home with their families, without worrying about missing school. We not only uphold the concept of the collective AMEMSA community in our language and services—we uphold it in our advocacy and actions. Children, of all religions, should not have to have the burden of this decision on their shoulders. For this reason, we will continue to take a stand.

Diwali signifies the victory of light over darkness. It reminds us that knowledge will overcome ignorance, compassion over hate, and hope over despair. Without a doubt, during such trying times, we all need more light in our lives. The meaning of Diwali rings true for us all.

New York City has always stood as a beacon of acceptance, tolerance, and respect for others. As proud members of the AMEMSA community, and as proud New Yorkers, we fully support Resolution 568.



Golden Age Community Inc.

12 Vineland Avenue, Staten Island, NY 10312

(718) 967-3981

mano.mishra@gmail.com

November 22, 2016

Hon. Council Member Daniel Dromm & all Respected Council Members.

Good Afternoon,

My name is Kishor Bhuta, living in Staten Island for the last 36 years. I am the President of Golden Age Community Inc. of Staten Island, a Not-for-Profit Organization, since July 6, 2006, incorporated in New York State (F060616000296) & Federal June 17, 2008 (EIN # 22-3937155).

We have 180 members. We organize educational, social, cultural, and community events such as Diwali celebration, Medical & Financial seminars, Entertainment at Senior Citizen Nursing Homes, volunteer at soup kitchens & Ping-Pong tournament with other communities for the last ten years.

Almost all children in our community attended New York City Public schools and now our grandchildren are doing the same. We feel it is important for us; our children and grandchildren share and celebrate Diwali, a very significant Indian festival popular globally, with their friends from different cultures. By celebrating Diwali with children and parents of other ethnic groups will enhance the knowledge and understanding of each other's culture and festivals and in turn help children assimilate better and create a tolerant environment.

With this vision, Golden Age Community of Staten Island strongly supports Resolution No.568 to declare Diwali as a School Holiday.

Thanks.

Kishor Bhuta,
President, Golden Age Community Inc.
Staten Island
718-967-3981 (Home)
347-838-0070 (Cell)
kbhuta7@verizon.net

The Sikh American Friendship Foundation

193-12 Foothill Ave, Hollis, NY 11423 - 4 Harbachan@gmail.com

New York, November 22, 2016

Statement to New York City Council's Committee on Education

By

Harbachan Singh President, Sikh American Friendship Foundation

Thank you, Chairperson and Committee members for an opportunity to support the Council **Res. 568 -- calling upon the New York City Department of Education to establish Diwali as an official holiday for New York City public school students**. Besides being a civic activist of the Sikh Community and the Secretary-General of the Indian National Overseas Congress, USA, I am also a member of the Queensborough President's, General Assembly which deals principally with matter relating to communities and cultures in the World's Borough of Queens.

1. Deepavali means rows of lights or lamps

The five-day celebration of good over evil is as important to Hindus & Sikhs as Christmas is to Christians, and it marks the start of a new financial year for Indian businesses worldwide

Deepawali is known as the festival of lights because of the oil lamps and electric lights that people use to decorate homes, businesses and public spaces. As a celebration of the victory of good over evil and light over darkness, light is an important physical and spiritual symbol of the holiday.

Christianity has churches, Judaism has synagogues, Islam has mosques and Hinduism has mandirs and Sikhism has Gurdwaras (Temples). On Diwali, Hindus & Sikhs living abroad gather in their places of worship for community celebrations and enjoy fireworks displays.

2. Followers of various religions observe customs related to Diwali

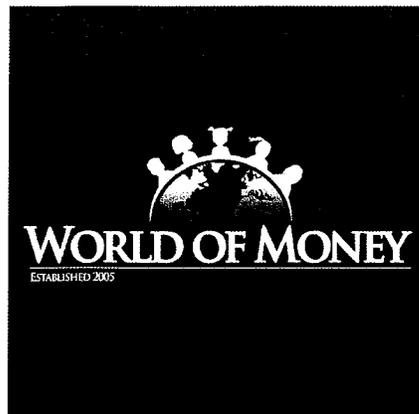
In addition to Hindus, Jains, Buddhists and Sikhs also celebrate Diwali in such countries as Nepal, Bangladesh, Malaysia and Singapore. Legends and customs accompanying Diwali celebrations vary among religions and regions. It is India's biggest and brightest national holiday. Families spend days cleaning and decorate their homes in preparation for Diwali.

3. Diwali is a big celebration in England, too

In 2014, about 30,000 people attended a "switch-on" of more than 6,000 lamps in Leicester to mark the start of Diwali. Indians are the second-largest minority in Britain, according to IBT.

In New York City, a very large South Asian population celebrate this Day with processions and festivals such as the at the South street seaport.

We sincerely appreciate the Council's efforts and prevail upon our legislators to move City Hall to accelerate more community festivities. The proposal to declare Diwali as one of the School holidays is in harmony with the existing communities, totally fair and merits your strong support. Thank you.



Res. 845-2015 - Resolution calling upon the New York State Education Department to expand the State's financial literacy and personal finance education curriculum to all grades K through 12.

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Sabrina Lamb, CEO, WorldofMoney.org

Before the Education Committee of the New York City Council

November 22, 2016

“Financial Education for Children and Youth”

1414 Broadway, 5th Floor, PMB 5084
New York, New York 10018
(O): 888-945-8333
(F): 212 659-0684
(E): info@worldofmoney.org
(U): www.worldofmoney.org

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Ruth McLeod

Chairman Daniel Dromm and Education Committee Members of the New York City Council, I am Sabrina Lamb, Founding CEO of the WorldofMoney.org. On behalf of nearly 4,000 WorldofMoney.org children and their families, I thank you for the opportunity to testify at today's hearing. We wholeheartedly support personal finance being provided in New York City for children and youth.

Supported by Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, and founded in 2005, the WorldofMoney.org is a New York City based 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to empower youth with a sound financial foundation. The World of Money is the leading provider of immersive 40 classroom hours of financial education for ages 7 – 18. Now more than ever this organization is needed to break a generational cycle and to change the way youth, view money by equipping them with five tenets for a financially responsible and philanthropic life: learn, earn, save, invest and donate.

The organization was selected as a **Promise Place by America's Promise Alliance** and by **AOL Impact** as one of ten top social good organizations in America. WorldofMoney.org is acknowledged in **President Obama's Advisory Council on Financial Capability Report**. Our mission is to challenge the way youth, ages 7 - 18, engage with and manage money by equipping them with a robust curriculum, taught by Wall Street professionals, so that they can live a financially secure and philanthropic life.

How can the WorldofMoney organization financially educate more than the 4,000 children and youth, that we have already served?

Targeting five million underserved youth, the WorldofMoney has created an accessible mobile financial education app offering 60 free,

self-paced videos. The mobile video app is designed for youth-to-youth dialogue, which encourages their peers to increase their financial capability. Users range between ages 7 – 25, and teaches financial concepts that will catalyze workforce admittance and long-term financial capability. Twenty national and regional organizations including Harlem School District 5, The Eagle Academy Foundation, Executive Preparatory Academy of Finance, A Better Chance, Memphis Challenge, YWCA of New York City, National Cares Mentoring, Save Our Girls/Save Our World, the Brooklyn Brownstone School and the NAACP Youth and College Division are early World of Money mobile app coalition partners. Four videos modules are translated in Spanish, French, Portuguese, and Swahili. Users receive daily wealthy affirmations and personal finance flash study cards are also embedded in the app. For maximum appeal, the World of Money mobile application reflects the cultural and racial diversity of New York City youth.

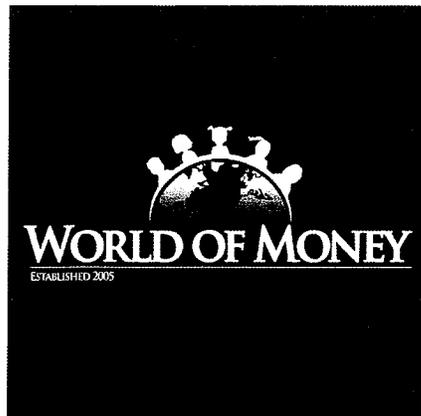
World of Money mobile app videos are formatted for Android, IOS and iPad. Videos on the app include *Flash Cards, Daily Wealth Affirmations, Money Mindsets, Mastering Your Card, Payment Technology, Mobile Payments, Budgeting, Banking, ATMs, Insurance, Safe Teen Driving, Money Drainers, Introduction to Credit, Entrepreneurship, Banking/Credit Union, Budgeting, History of Money, Insurance, Stock Market, Mutual Funds, Taxes, Living On Your Own, Growing Your Money, Your Legal Rights* et al.

Historically, girls and boys served by our coalition partners reside in education deserts, have low reading and math test scores, and lack savings accounts along with a financial safety net. These young people are generational victims of toxic financial products and their families possess high levels of debt. According to the Organization for Economic and Cooperative Development, America's youth rank 17th among developed nations in financial education. The lack of financial knowledge contributes to the generational wealth gap, especially in underserved communities, and will not improve on its own.

The World of Money youth financial education mobile app provides a solution. I welcome partnering with each of you in making sure that children and youth develop strong financial capability skills so that they can become responsible adults, capable of investing money to accumulate wealth, building financial security and becoming philanthropists, which will benefit their families and the generations and communities that follow.

Learn. Save. Invest. Donate. The WorldofMoney.org. Developing financially responsible adults. One child at a time.

Thank you!



Res. 845-2015 - Resolution calling upon the New York State Education Department to expand the State's financial literacy and personal finance education curriculum to all grades K through 12.

Sponsors:

Rafael L. Espinal, Jr., Mark Levine, Inez D. Barron, Costa G. Constantinides, Mathieu Eugene, Vincent J. Gentile, Vanessa L. Gibson, Rosie Mendez, Deborah L. Rose, Andrew Cohen, Helen K. Rosenthal

Sabrina Lamb, CEO, WorldofMoney.org

Before the Education Committee of the New York City Council

November 22, 2016

“Financial Education for Children and Youth”

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1414 Broadway, 5th Floor, PMB 5084
New York, New York 10018
(O): 888-945-8333
(F): 212 659-0684
(E): info@worldofmoney.org
(U): www.worldofmoney.org

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Thank you!



Council for Economic Education
Testimony to the City Council's Education Committee
Nan J. Morrison
President and CEO

November 22, 2016

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony regarding Resolution 845, calling upon the New York State Education Department to expand the State's financial literacy and personal finance education curriculum to all graders K through 12. The Council for Economic Education (CEE) welcomes this resolution and stands alongside the City Council in making this call to our colleagues in Albany.

There is broad agreement that a basic understanding of the financial world is crucial to success in modern society. Yet, even as our global economy is becoming more complex, the gap between what people know and what they need to know is widening every day. To give but one example, nearly 20% of American teenagers failed to reach the baseline level of proficiency on the first international test of financial literacy conducted by the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA); among the 18 participating countries, America fell squarely in the middle of the pack, just behind Latvia and just ahead of Russia.

As noted in CEE's 2016 *Survey of the States*, New York State requires financial education as a part of the economics curriculum, which is usually taught in 12th grade. However, this course is typically taught by unprepared teachers. A recent survey of New York economics teachers conducted by CEE found that only 24% said that it was their choice to teach this course – they were assigned to teach the course, not because they had any background or expertise, but because someone was required to teach it and their administrators selected them.

And those teachers are not receiving meaningful support from their schools to help prepare them to teach the course. Forty-five percent of teachers indicated that their schools offered no content specific professional development and another 45% said that the quality of professional development they were provided was either poor or, at best, decent.

We know from years of research that young people from kindergarten to high school seniors, can and do learn financial concepts when taught by teachers who know the material and know how to teach it. Research also tells us that a well-implemented financial literacy requirement can result in such positive behavioral outcomes as lower credit delinquency rates and higher credit scores.

Essentially, we in New York are graduating students at a distinct disadvantage – the world is requiring more economic decision-making from them and they are receiving marginal, at best, instruction – when they have one foot out the door of their high school career – in how to face meet this challenge head-on. If we are going to develop a next generation prepared to succeed and to lead we must do better.

With this as a backdrop CEE strongly recommends that the New York State Department of Education implement the following:

1. Expand the State's in financial literacy requirement to include all grades, starting in kindergarten and culminating with a semester long course in high school
2. Include grade appropriate standards and benchmarks, also starting in kindergarten and culminating in high school, that align to the *National Standards for Financial Literacy*
3. Provide resources to support teacher professional development so that educators can acquire the necessary knowledge and pedagogical tools to teach financial literacy well

CEE stands ready to support New York State, New York City, and others in the business and non-profit sectors in implementing a more robust and meaningful program of K-12 financial literacy and personal finance education curriculum.

THE NEED FOR MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION IN NEW YORK CITY SCHOOLS

By Fabrice Jaumont, PhD

I moved to New York City right before 9/11 to become an Education Attaché for the Embassy of France and a Program Officer for the French-American Cultural Exchange Foundation, a position which I still hold today. My work includes collaboration with numerous school leaders, teachers, parent groups, and community organizations. Together, we formed an initiative that led to the creation of New York City's first dual language programs in French, Japanese, Italian, Russian, and German. Our story caught the attention of numerous media outlets including the *New York Times*, who published an article on the rise of dual language programs in New York in 2014—highlighting the positive impacts these programs could have on public schools and their communities. After publication, an interesting debate ensued regarding the relevance of learning languages today in the United States and the validity of early language acquisition. This debate, and the questions that it raised among parents within several linguistic communities, pushed me to speak today. As the father of two bilingual and bicultural girls who attend a French dual language program in a public school in Brooklyn, I am also deeply attached to the concept of dual language education as a way to both sustain a cultural heritage or acquire a second language.

Through my research, as well as my professional and personal experiences, I have found that children who have had a bilingual upbringing enjoy numerous benefits beyond the acquisition of another language, including a better appreciation for other cultures, other individuals, and even oneself. Additionally, I have come to believe that the cognitive, emotional, and social advantages of being multilingual and multicultural should simply not be limited to private schools and those who can afford to attend them. In my opinion, multilingual education is a great public good that ought to be developed everywhere, as it can positively transform a child, a school, a community, and even a country. It is with this belief and with the conviction that early language acquisition can make a difference that I speak today.

Many of the advantages of multilingualism are very intuitive. For instance, multilinguals are able to communicate with far more people in multiple countries, and have access to far more literary, academic, artistic works, as well as professional and social networks, than monolinguals. Multilinguals also learn other languages more easily than their monolingual peers; after mastering a second language, students are able to call upon the strategies they employed to acquire a third or fourth language. Finally, multilingualism fosters multiculturalism and open-mindedness.

Our world becomes more stable when we have the ability to respect and embrace the worldview of our neighbors—who no longer are separated from us by geographical or cultural borders. Language is one way to accomplish that. The complex identity of the multilingual is more relevant today than it has ever been, and will only continue to become even more important in the future. As one might expect, a multilingual life is incommensurably richer, more diverse, and full of possibility.

There are also many practical benefits to being multilingual. Research indicates that high school students in dual language programs have lower dropout rates than those following

monolingual curriculums.¹ Moreover, being multilingual at an early age can lead to many more opportunities to study and work abroad. Companies that employ multilingual people benefit materially with translation and interpretation services, and communicate with a larger clientele. In addition to obvious assets of cultural and linguistic competencies, multilingual candidates are often preferred in the work force as they have the ability to quickly adapt to new environments. These cutting edge advantages can lead, subsequently, to higher salaries and more comprehensive access to the global job market.

There are also a great number of non-cognitive advantages to being multilingual. Learners of multiple languages often benefit from an increased emotional intelligence. Researchers, such as Daniel Goleman, describe this phenomenon as a better self-awareness and awareness of others; a capacity to transport yourself into the shoes of other people through the cultural window of language; and an ability to experience a kind of empathy that is linguistically rooted but ultimately culturally experienced. Emotions are naturally an intrinsic part of language. The ability to change emotions as you switch languages is an incredible experience that goes beyond everyday life. In the same vein, to have the ability to look at the same event or idea through a different perspective is enormously helpful in developing interpersonal relationships and navigating interactions with people of different backgrounds from either the same society or around the world. Multilingualism is an investment that reaps astonishing dividends. Speakers of two or more languages can easily be called upon when asked to create a new approach, try a new idea, or understand a differing position from their own. These tools help multilinguals navigate through the complex globalized world more easily, and allow them to operate on a more sophisticated level of understanding.

To these advantages, we should add a sense of accrued creativity observed in multilingual children, or— in more scientific terms—the concept of divergent thinking. Many studies have compared how many answers monolinguals are able to give to a random set of questions, as compared to multilinguals, and the consensus is clear: multilingual people do better at creative thinking and problem solving. This is easily explained, as being multilingual is another expression of meaning-making—the process in which we make sense of life events, relationships, and one’s self. As multilinguals are adept at juggling multiple expressions of similar feelings, objects, or experiences, it is also easier for them to utilize those skills inversely when creating new ways of expressing ideas in the form of creativity and divergent thinking.

When one considers the richness of this country’s linguistic heritage, and the number of linguistic communities that could benefit from these programs, one cannot but see a gigantic potential for social change and collective advancement in the United States through the implementation of language education programs. Simply put, there are not enough language programs being offered—particularly when one acknowledges the advantages of multilingual education, and the growing interest in multilingualism across the nation.

fabrice.jaumont@nyu.edu

¹ For more on this topic, read Wayne Thomas & Virginia Collier (2004) *The Astounding Effectiveness of Dual Language Education for All*



Diwali Stamp Project Ranju Batra, Chair

Diwali School Holiday, Now!

In Support of Res. No.568 -

Testimony by Ranju Batra, Chair of Diwali Stamp Project,
who succeeded after a 7 year journey to get USPS to issue a Diwali Stamp

Thank you, Chairman Daniel Dromm,

I am happy to personally acknowledge each Council Member present here today - most are our friends, and all are friends to the Community at large.

Let me start by acknowledging how grateful I am that New York City Council's Education Committee has taken up Res. No. 568 - so that Hindu, Sikh, Jain and Buddhist school kids no longer have to choose: whether to go to school and ignore their faith, or stay at home to observe their faith and miss school. This is an improper and unfair choice forced upon our families. Diwali, as you know, is universally acknowledged and celebrated. We have attended Diwali Celebrations at the White House, Congress and among others, right here in NYC Council Chamber from Speaker Peter Vallone days - most recently, last week an event led by Council Member Rory Lancman - who I thank and his co-organizers - for the Citation presented to me for getting the Diwali Stamp issued by the United States Postal Service.

While my kids were in school, we celebrated Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and Eid. But there was no school holiday for Diwali. So, I made the choice to send my kids to school at the cost of celebrating our most important religious holiday. This is wrong, even if another family made the opposite choice. Having to choose between learning and religion is an unfair and harmful choice, as other faiths' most important holidays are observed in school. A benefit of observing Diwali as a School Holiday is that all other students will

learn and appreciate what Pope Francis has suggested to the world: treat every religion with respect. In a world full of much too much hate, respect for another human being's faith - especially when they are kids - is an important lesson to be learned in school with the benefit of such tolerance flowing to society forever in reduced hate crimes and a more civil society.

I can share with you - that we had personally supported the NYC Diwali Parking Holiday - led by then-Transportation Chairman John Liu and then-Finance Chairman David Weprin.

In 2010 I embarked on my journey to our Diwali Stamp - which succeeded after almost seven years with USPS unveiling the Diwali Stamp on October 5, 2016 at the Indian Consulate with an official and elaborate ceremony. In that effort, I got tens of thousands of paper petitions in support of the Diwali Stamp, while celebrating that other religions had their own stamps. I partnered with Congresswoman Maloney, and helped get support from other members of Congress including, Eliot Engel, Greg Meeks, Yvette Clarke, Jerry Nadler, Nita Lowey and Civil Rights giant John Lewis for House Res. 47 in the 113th Congress and then House Res. 32 in the 114th Congress - each calling for the Diwali Stamp.

My journey to *our* Diwali Stamp is successfully completed thanks to Post Master General Megan Brennan. Now, Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists have an American stamp to call their own. While my journey may have taken seven years, our Diwali Stamp is Forever. With support of Air India and its Regional Manager Vandana Sharma - who backed up my dream of making our Diwali Stamp enjoy the biggest First Day sales in USPS' history - and it did - as I personally sold through the Diwali Stamp Project over 170,000 Diwali stamps. As a result, our Diwali Stamp is now the #1 Bestseller in USPS history.

While Diwali is known for "Light over Darkness" or "Good over Evil," nobody ever said that to make it so was going to be easy. Our Diwali Stamp will be a matter of pride for generations to come.

In fact, I can share with you that there will be a celebration of the Diwali Stamp and my journey at the United Nations on December 5, 2016 at 6:30pm, an event led by the country missions of Belarus and India, with support of other member states.

I have with me copies of the First Day Cover and Stamp Dedication Program, which I would like to include as part of my Testimony.

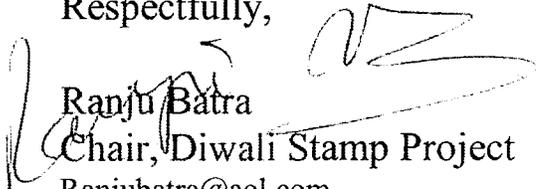
I note that Res. No. 568 calling for a Diwali School Holiday understates the affected population in the United States. There are over 3 million Indian-Americans in the United States and close to 500,000 Asian Indians, and many, many more from the Carribean countries in the West Indies.

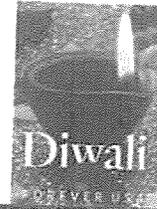
The time has come for NYC Borad of Education to make Diwali a school holiday and end its improper opposition to respect of all faiths that splits families from either school or their faith.

I thank you Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity to share with you my views of why Diwali School Holiday must become a reality now!

Dated: November 22, 2016

Respectfully,


Ranju Batra
Chair, Diwali Stamp Project
Ranjubatra@aol.com
C: 914-882-5670



FIRST DAY OF ISSUE

FIRST-DAY-OF-ISSUE
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PROGRAM



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Ravi Batra, Esq.

Chair, National Advisory Council
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REMARKS

Ranju Batra

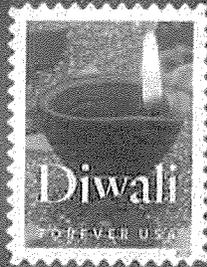
Chair, Diwali Stamp Project

Congresswoman Carolyn B. Maloney

U.S. House Of Representatives,
12th Congressional District, New York

CLOSING REMARKS

Ravi Batra, Esq.



DIWALI

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FIRST-DAY-OF-ISSUE DEDICATION CEREMONY

Consulate General of India • 3 East 64th Street • New York, NY • Oct. 5, 2016



Testimony of

Chad H. Gholizadeh
Senior Policy and Advocacy Associate for
Economic and Housing Stability

Submitted to the

New York City Council
Committee on Education

**Re Res. No. 845-2015 calling upon the New York State Education Department to expand
the State's financial literacy and personal finance education curriculum to all grades K
through 12**

**Re Res. No. 451-2015 calling upon the New York City Department of Education to mandate
school uniforms**

November 22, 2016

Good morning. My name is Chad H. Gholizadeh and I am the Senior Policy and Advocacy Associate for Economic and Housing Stability at Citizens' Committee for Children (CCC). CCC is a 73-year-old independent, multi-issue child advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring every New York child is healthy, housed, educated and safe.

We would like to thank City Council Education Committee Chair Daniel Dromm and the members of the Committee on Education for holding today's hearing and introducing several resolutions aimed at improving educational outcomes and experiences for New York city's 1.1 million public school children.

We are pleased to submit comments on two of the proposed resolutions: (1) Res. No. 845-15 which would call on the New York State Education Department (NYSED) to expand the State's financial literacy and personal finance education curriculum to all grades K through 12 and (2) Res. No. 451-2014 which calls on the New York City Department of Education (DOE) to mandate school uniforms.

CCC submits the following comments on these two resolutions:

1. Res. No. 845-2015: Calling upon the New York State Education Department to expand the State's financial literacy and personal finance education curriculum to all grades K through 12

CCC supports Res. No. 845-2015. Providing New York City's children with a solid financial education would help them learn how to make well-informed financial choices throughout their life.

It is an unfortunate fact that many young people are not equipped with the basic financial knowledge that they need to navigate a world of student loans, credit cards, and retirement savings.¹ Among American fifteen year olds, 18% were not able to understand basic concepts related to financial literacy.² The failure to prepare students in this area sets them up for failure as they enter the workforce and adulthood. On the other hand, research indicates that classroom-based financial education and financial literacy results in greater knowledge of financial concepts and improved attitudes towards savings amongst students.³ These improvements persist over time, and students are able to reap the benefits of financial education in the future.⁴

In light of this research, CCC strongly supports this resolution calling on NYSED to expand financial literacy training in grades K-12. To protect the financial well-being of all New Yorkers we must begin providing financial education at a young age. This will teach students to make wise financial decisions in the future.

¹ Financial Literacy among the Young: Evidence and Implications for Consumer Policy, p. 21 (available at <http://www.finrafoundation.org/web/groups/foundation/@foundation/documents/foundation/p122326.pdf>).

² Students and Money: Financial Literacy Skills for the 21st Century, p. 61 (available at <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/keyfindings/PISA-2012-results-volume-vi.pdf>).

³ Financial Education and Account Access Among Elementary Students, p. 2 (available at http://cfed.org/assets/pdfs/AFCO_youth_brief.pdf).

⁴ Id. at 4.

2. Res. No. 451-2014: Calling upon the New York City Department of Education to mandate school uniforms

CCC is not taking a position on Res. No. 451-2014 at this time. That said, we ask that if the City Council supports mandatory school uniforms that the Res. No. 451-2014 be amended to call for a single city-wide uniform in light of the significant challenges low-income families face in purchasing clothing. Notably, homeless children too often change schools and could not afford new school uniforms each time. Furthermore, if the NYC Department of Education does institute a mandate for school uniforms, we would be urging DOE to implement and for the City Council to pass legislation mandating a single city-side uniform.

Almost 83,000 children in New York's public schools lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, a 25% increase since the 2010-2011 school year.⁵ These unstably housed students are over three times, and students in homeless shelters are over five times, as likely to attend two or more schools than permanently housed students.⁶ Many of these students switch schools when their shelter or in other unstable housing moves them far from their current schools, forcing a parent to choose between a long commute to maintain enrollment in their current school, or uprooting the student to begin in a new school.⁷ In addition to the challenges posted by frequent transfers, many of these children are facing financial hardship and lack access to basic facilities such as laundry.⁸ In fact, 76.5% of public school children are eligible for free or reduced price lunch.⁹

In light of this, if DOE adopts mandatory uniforms CCC urges that consideration be given to adopting a single city-wide uniform. A single city-wide uniform would permit temporarily housed students to comply with the dress code even in the event of a mid-year transfer and would also ease the financial burden faced by all low-income families. Families would not be required to purchase additional uniforms, families that moved or enrolled their children in a new school would not need new uniforms, and younger siblings would be able to use the school uniforms of their older siblings. The single city-wide uniform would be able also lessen economic distinctions between children's clothing, lessening stigma. Furthermore, additional sets of the city-wide uniform could be provided free of charge by DOE to low-income families.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

⁵ Not Reaching the Door: Homeless Students Face Many Hurdles on the Way to School, p. 1 (available at <http://www.ibo.nyc.ny.us/iboreports/not-reaching-the-door-homeless-students-face-many-hurdles-on-the-way-to-school.pdf>).

⁶ Id. at 11.

⁷ Id.

⁸ Id. at 17.

⁹ DOE Demographic Snapshots (available at <http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/schools/data/default.htm>).

The New York City Department of Education should mandate school uniforms. I am Jarienn James¹, a third-year law student of New York Law School, writing to support Resolution 451-2014. As a law student, in the Caribbean and the USA, I focused primarily on children's rights and education. As a student who wore uniforms from Grade 1-12, I believe making uniforms compulsory will promote unity, discipline, savvy spending practices and enhance the learning environment. I will discuss each of these arguments and address some of the likely concerns of opponents to mandatory uniforms.

Unity

Children are taught to distinguish people by class and race at a tender age. Wearing a uniform promotes the message that everyone is equal and will be held to the same standard. A child's socio-economic status will not be readily identifiable. Further, wearing uniforms can promote school pride.

Discipline

Wearing a uniform promotes discipline and self-awareness. Students will have to follow certain requirements to comply with the uniform rules. It will be easier for children to see and understand when they do not comply with the dress code. Also, being in uniform readily identifies children as belonging to a particular school. This should motivate students to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner because they will be seen as ambassadors for the particular school. Therefore, it is likely that children will act in a manner to create a good reputation for their school.

Also, being in uniform makes it easier for children to understand the authoritative chain within school. School uniforms "positively influence the perception of school-related behavior by both peers and teachers."² Wearing uniforms creates a defining line between the student and the teacher in the classroom. Students will more likely perceive the teacher as someone of authority and respond appropriately.

Savvy Spending

Parents will save money. They will only need to buy a few uniforms for the school year as opposed to several expensive clothes. There is a lot of peer pressure in school and children often pressure their parents to buy the latest trends. Most parents don't want their child to be bullied and many succumb to the pressure believing it's one less thing for their child to worry about.

¹Jarienn James, Juris Doctor Candidate 2016, Two -Year Honors Program, Legislative Advocacy Clinic, JariennJames@gmail.com.

²Dorothy Bahling, School Uniforms and Person's Perception, Perceptual and Motor Skills, SAGE (1994), available at <http://pms.sagepub.com/content/79/2/723.full.pdf+html>.

Enhanced Learning Environment

Being in uniform will help students focus more on academics. There will be fewer distractions in the classroom. Students will worry less about what they will wear on the next day, if a classmate has the same top or skirt as them, how short or low their clothes can be or if their pants are too high, baggy or skinny. Being in uniform is also likely to reduce profiling of students because of the clothes they wear.

Opponents' Arguments

The biggest argument by opponents is mandatory uniforms are a violation of a student's First Amendment rights. Opponents cleverly use Tinker v. Des Moines Indep. Comm. School District, 393 U.S. 503 (1969) as support for their claim. In that case, the court held that a regulation suspending students for wearing dark armbands in protest of Vietnam War was improper unless it would "materially and substantially interfere with the requirements of appropriate discipline in the operation of the school." However, opponents to mandatory uniforms ignore the fact that the court expressly stated that this case does not address "regulation of ...the type of clothing..."; the decision only "involves direct, primary First Amendment rights akin to pure speech." The Tinker test is only used when schools attempt to restrict a student's particular message. Jacobs v. Clark County Sch. Dist., 526 F.3d 419 (2008).

Mandatory uniforms will only restrict speech on a content-neutral basis and the Supreme court only requires the school's policy to pass intermediate scrutiny, meaning the policy must further an important or substantial government interest; that government interest must be unrelated to the suppression of free expression; and any incidental restriction on First Amendment freedoms is no greater than is essential to the furtherance of that interest. Turner Broad. Sys. v. FCC, 512 U.S. at 661-62.

Promoting safety, unity and a better learning environment for students are substantial government interests and are all unrelated to the suppression of free expression. Finally, mandatory uniforms are a minor restriction on students' free expression. Students can express themselves through many other avenues, including verbal communication with their peers, publishing articles, and they can wear whatever they like outside of the school. In addition, as set forth in the Tinker case, students have the right to augment their uniforms for political expression so long as their doing so does not materially and substantially disrupt the school environment.

Therefore, I firmly support the call for the New York City Department of Education to mandate school uniforms. It is likely to result in a better learning environment for students and teachers, promote discipline as well as unity and relieve parents from some of their financial burdens. Resolution 451-2014 should be the new policy of the New York City Department of Education.

From: Rachel Pincu-Singer

Subject: Testimony on Res. 568-2015

Dear Council Member Dromm,

I am writing to ask that you reconsider and DO NOT pass Res. 568-2015 - Resolution calling upon the New York City Department of Education to establish Diwali as an official holiday for New York City public school students. Please know that days off from school are extremely disruptive and difficult for working parents. This disruption falls particularly hard on less-affluent parents, who cannot afford to miss work to stay home and care for their school-age children, and who cannot afford to pay someone else to watch them.

Further, we choose for our children to attend a PUBLIC school system, and as such we expect that our schools not give preference to any one religion. For this reason, rather than adding days off for each of the numerous religions observed in our extremely diverse city, I respectfully request that instead, you eliminate ALL religious days off and replace them with a system similar to corporations, where each public-school student is entitled to two or three floating excused absences which can be used for the religious holiday(s) of his/her choice. (You could do the same for teachers, who I assume already are entitled to a certain number of paid days off.) Alternatively, or in addition, you could perhaps allow individual schools the discretion to occasionally close for a holiday that is relevant to a majority of its students based on the community it serves. Please do not add any more holidays to the school calendar.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Rachel Pincu-Singer

Rachel Pincu-Singer

President

Know and Tell LLC

571.338.6169

rpsinger@know-and-tell.com

From: Peggy Heenev

Subject: proposed resolutions

I have some comments on the proposed resolution from the City Council's Education Committee:

Mandated uniforms: I think overall is a good idea, as most kids do not look like they are dressed appropriately for school.

While I like the idea of honoring everyone's holiday, the kids already have so many disruptions and breaks from school. The DOE is raising the standards kids must meet, but there seem to be fewer days of education. If this holiday is added, there will be more down the road. Somewhere something will have to give, a shorter holiday for Christmas, earlier start dates, etc.

Personal finance education is great. Maybe the next generation won't get into as much financial trouble as the last.

Foreign languages, especially other than Spanish. My child attends a school with over a 60% Hispanic population, yet the only language offered is Spanish, which most of the kids already speak (and therefore have an advantage over the other kids)

Thank you.

From: Davida Weber

Subject: Proposed ideas

I like all the ideas except the school uniforms because I am afraid that buying them would place a financial burden on their parents.

From: Susan Hibdon

Subject: Proposed resolutions: foreign language and financial literacy

Please take note of my SUPPORT for the resolutions to increase foreign language and financial literacy instruction.

Both of these are necessary for students to succeed in "real life" in an international city and will open windows of opportunity to all students.

Thank you,
Susan Hibdon

From: Kirsten Denker

Subject: Mandatory school uniforms

I'd like to register my opposition to the idea of mandatory school uniforms across DOE schools. I think pursuing this aim will waste a huge amount of time and effort as it will prompt a huge outcry from parents who don't want their kids to wear a uniform. I can't see what the possible upside of all that time and effort will be, even if it passes. I wore a school uniform as a child, and I realize there are benefits - but there are also disadvantages (imposing conformity and discouraging free expression) and I have no desire for my daughter to wear one.

Yours

Kirsten Denker

Parent at PS9 Brooklyn

From: Jim Kerwin

Subject: Please vote no on Resolution 451-2014 - calling for a centralized mandate requiring school uniforms at all schools

This is a ridiculous idea. There does not need to be centralized control over what should be a local decision based on the conditions at a particular school. Perhaps the city counsel could work on something more important like getting more funding for the schools.

Jim Kerwin

Brooklyn, NY 11238

Subject: FW: Testimony In Support Of Res.568 To Establish Diwali As An Official Holiday For NYC Public School Students , Hearing On November 22 , 2016

Honorable Council Members , Ladies & Gentlemen ,

I am Mr. Vasantrai M. Gandhi , a businessman and a social activist , living in Queens since 1978 .Both of my sons studied in New York City public schools . I am a member of the Community Board , # 3 ,Queens for more than 25 years and was its Chairman for three years during 2006 to 2008 . I am bestowed with many awards for community service by New York City , New York State and federal legislators as well as numerous non profit organisations.

U.S.A. is the oldest democracy and India , with its population of more than a billion people , is the largest democracy in the world . U.S.A. and India have enjoyed cordial relations. Diwali is the most celebrated festival in India . Over 82 % of India`s population follow Hinduism . To state it simply , India`s population of Hindus is more than the total population of U,S.A. , Canada , U.K. and Scandinavian countries put to gather . Hinduism is also widely followed in Nepal , Bangladesh, Sri Lanka , Caribbean Islands , etc . It is also practiced in large numbers by people of Indian descent in South East African countries , Middle East and Europe. New York city is the home of thousands of Hindus . They are in different professions like medical doctors , engineers , architects , accountants ,information technologists, diamond dealers, garment importers and retail trade in New York City .

Diwali is the last day of the Hindu calendar year . It also signifies success of GOOD over EVIL . It is the beginning of the harvest season in India . Indians celebrate Diwali by lighting up a flame in a small pot made of earth .. In X`mas we light up candle . The theme is the same , Light up our understanding, knowledge and respect for each other .

My children , who study in New York City public schools, often asked us one question . How come we - Hindus - do NOT have a holiday for our most celebrated festival of Diwali where as there are holidays for festivals of OTHER religions followed by their school mates ? We have no logical answer .It is high time that New York City removes this disparity and ESTABLISHES Diwali as an official holiday.It will improve understanding of different religions ,cultures and heritage among students of different religions ..

You are aware that U.S. Post office - a Federal agency - has recognized the importance of this festival and recently issued a special DIWALI stamp that too in FOREVER category . New York City is the world`s biggest city and it should be a pioneer in the U.S.A.in recognizing the most important festival of India . In India , both X`mas and New Year are public holidays at the city , state and federal level .

I will be out of town on the day of hearing , so I am sending my testimony by email .Thank you for your understanding .God bless America .

Vasantrai M. Gandhi ,
Jackson Heights , New York 11372

From: Rohita Land
Subject: Diwali - Testimony

Good Day,

My name is Rohita Land, formerly Rohita Shivanarain. I'm a Hindu American-Indian woman who was raised in the Rockaways, this is where I attended Elementary and Junior High School. At the time the Rockaways were predominantly white, in fact I was the only Indian person in my Elementary School! It is said that children don't see one another by the color of their skin and as a brown girl, I can tell you this is true. I didn't feel or know that I was any different from my peers; in fact the day I found out that I wasn't white was the day I was talking to a friend who was jealous that I was brown and that no matter how much she tanned she wouldn't get to be my color, only she would turn red.

Color wise I realized I was a little different but culturally I didn't know otherwise. Until a Thanksgiving inspired lesson when a teacher asked about traditions around the table and if we say a prayer before the meal, if we say thanks, etc. Students raised their hands to share their stories and I raised my hand to share a prayer in Hindi. This prayer is the Hindu equivalent to "Our Father." I said my prayer and saw that my peers were looking at me differently. They were shocked. I realized at this moment that they didn't know about this prayer and I was definitely a lot more different than I originally thought.

My parents were adamant that their children learn about their religion and be immersed in it so we went to Mandir (Church) every weekend and participated in community events. It was great but it wasn't the same celebrating events with church people when all you wanted to do was celebrate with your friends at school. My parents were inclusive of all religions and taught us about them to ensure that we were raised with an open mind. In fact my parents sent us to Catholic School for a few years so; there I joined the choir, attended First Friday Mass and was the first one ready at home for Midnight Mass on Christmas Day. These are memories that have shaped the woman I am today and wouldn't change it for the world.

At home we celebrated Christmas and Easter. We were just like the other kids but the other kids were not like us. It always seemed unfair that we were prepping for these holidays at school but MY holidays were ignored and I only prepared for them at home. They were not acknowledged at all. In fact I was penalized for a pop quiz that I missed as a result of my parents allowing us to stay home one holiday, never mind the fact that it was a religious day for my family and I. My father worked tirelessly to petition and gain support so that the NYC Board of Education would recognize two popular Hindu Holidays, Holi and Diwali. After all of his work, our holidays were recognized and we were allowed to be excused those days without penalization. This was such a success!

Today here we are with the Board of Education considering Diwali as a Holiday on the school calendar. It brings joy to my heart that this has finally reached the table.

My husband is a teacher and he strives, like my parents did for us, to make his students well rounded. He exposes them to new words, talks about his travels, encourages them to use their imagination and be silly; all in hopes to ensure that our students are well rounded little people that learn, are open to learning and know that there is a great big world around them that they need to learn about. Making Diwali part of the school calendar is a great step in helping round out our students. Sure, I am happy as a Hindu woman in NY to see that our holiday is recognized but frankly that's not a Hindu thing to say. Hindus believe in inclusion, we are not a religion of individuality in fact its very community based. Diwali is called the festival of lights but really it's a time of reflection to allow goodness into your heart and home, it's a time to reflect on your years past and your years ahead, it's a time for realization. That's what all religions teach and it's something that our students, not just Hindu students, should understand and embrace.

With all of this said, I am so proud to see the very NYC schools that I was raised in, finally considering this inclusion. It's a great step and it's a great lesson to teach our children. I hope that Diwali is approved as an official holiday, it would really be a win for us all!

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti!

The above is a Hindu saying, usually something we say at the end of a prayer and it simply means "peace, peace, peace!"

--

-Rohita Land

From: Randy Singh
Subject: Diwali Holiday

To Whom it may concern,

My name is Randy Singh. I believe Diwali should be a holiday, because we are a diverse city and many cultures and religions co exist. We have celebrated other religious holidays besides the ones from Catholic and Christian descent. We have made strides as a nation and share multiple religious and cultural events, and have allowed families to teach their children about their cultures by giving them the day of the holiday to learn about the culture. As Hindu born American, I have celebrated Diwali after school for many years, all the way into me joining the work force. I know enough about my culture to know why Diwali is a important holiday. But as a child I would see my mother stay home from work and prepare for the holiday's events. I would have loved to help my mother and learned more about why the house needed to be spotless for Diwali, but I couldn't stay home because I had school. I wouldn't want todays children to miss out on learning about the traditions their families have kept for years.

Thank you,

Randy

From: Erica Nofi

Subject: Res 0451-2014 Comment

Hi Jan,

I received a notice about today's hearing on a resolution to ask DOE to implement mandatory school uniforms, and wanted to submit a comment. This strikes me as a policy that would not only be deeply unpopular with many parents--myself included--but that would also represent an unreasonable burden for many schools and parents, as well as a poor use of DOE resources to implement.

Thank you!!

Erica Nofi

PS9 parent

From: Susan Hibdon

Subject: Proposed resolutions: mandatory uniforms

Please take note of my OPPOSITION to the resolution to make uniforms mandatory for all NYC public school students.

As a teacher, I have taught in both uniform and non-uniform schools, and enforcing a uniform policy detracts from the school environment without adding any benefits. Particularly at the high school level, students need to learn how to dress themselves appropriately for the situation, and when we force them to wear a uniform, they do not learn how to make those decisions for themselves.

As a parent, uniforms are nothing more than an annoyance. Contrary to the usual argument, they do not save money. My children have clothes already, so going out to buy a uniform costs me extra.

Please note: I am not opposed to an *optional* uniform.

Thank you,

Susan Hibdon

From: Jennifer Thomson

Subject: opposition to mandatory school uniforms

I would like to express my opposition to the proposal to institute mandatory school uniforms across all NYC public schools. My son attends PS9 in Brooklyn (Kindeargarten).

Best Regards,

Jennifer Thomson

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 845

in favor in opposition

Date: 11/22/16

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chris Caltebiano

Address: 122 E 42 ST. NY NY

I represent: Council for Economic Education

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 451

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Maliah Penny

Address: 3516 De Rarmer Ave 10475

I represent: CASA middle school

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 451

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sydney Brooks

Address: Will Dugstey Ave

I represent: CASA Middle School

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 4551

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Layaan Roufai

Address: 3475 Bivona Street

I represent: CASA Middle School

Address: _____

School uniform

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: D'Angelo Ennis

Address: 1215 East 223rd Street Bronx, New York 10466

I represent: Faith Christian Academy

Address: 1137 East 223rd Street Bronx, NY, 10466

School uniform

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: November 22, 2016

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Zaria Whyte - Davis

Address: 1124 East 212 Street

I represent: Faith Christian Academy

Address: 1137 East 223 Street

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

School uniform

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 11/22/16

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Camila Boque

Address: 50 West 182nd St Apt 6E

I represent: Academy for Scholarship & Entrepreneurship

Address: 921 East 228th St 10466

School uniform

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 11/22/16

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Celine Samuda

Address: 3739 Willett Ave Bronx NY 10467

I represent: Academy for Scholarship and Entrepreneurship

Address: 921 east 228 Street 10466

School uniform

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: November 22, 2016

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kishan-Kai Powell

Address: 179 Audbon Ave.

I represent: Faith Christian academy

Address: 1137 east 223 Street

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

School
Uniforms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ashanti Dixon

Address: 1037 E 227

I represent: ~~Lead~~ Leaders of Tomorrow

Address: 3710 Barnes Av.

School
Uniforms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 11/12/16

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nia Thomas

Address: Grand Concourse (70th)

I represent: Leaders of Tomorrow

Address: 2171 York Ave

School uniforms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Yehuda Rogers

Address: 809 Adeo Avenue

I represent: Faith Christian Academy

Address: 1137 East 223rd Street

Brooklyn N.Y 11466

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 568

in favor in opposition

Date: 11/22

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Cesar Cardenas

Address: _____

I represent: Arab American Family Support Center

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 890

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Manuel Casanova

Address: 475 W 95th St

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 568

in favor in opposition

Date: 11/22/16

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: RANJU BATRA

Address: 149 LEXINGTON AVE

I represent: Chair, Diwali Stamp Project

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 568

in favor in opposition

Date: 11/12/2016

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: KISHOR BHOTA

Address: 12 Vineland Ave. S.I. NY 10312

I represent: Golden Age Community Inc

Address: 12 Vineland Ave. S.I. NY. 10312

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 568

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: RAVI BATRA

Address: 142 LEX AVE, NY NY 10016

I represent: CHAM. NAT'L ADVISORY COUNCIL SOUTH

Address: ASIAN AFFAIRS

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 451

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nanakofi Boadu

Address: 3740 Baychester Ave. Bronx NY

I represent: Bronx Charter School for Better Learning

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 451
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dilisima Vickers
Address: 3740 Baychester Avenue, Bronx
NY 10466
I represent: Bronx Charter School for Better Learning
Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 568 Res. No. 568
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Harbachan Singh
Address: 193-12 Foot Hill Ave, Hollis, NY 11423
I represent: Sikh American Friendship Foundation
Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 890
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: John Carlino
Address: 28 Pillowlawn St Buffalo, NY 14214
I represent: NYS AFLT NYS Assoc. of Foreign Language Teachers
Address: 2400 Main St Buffalo, NY

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 890

in favor in opposition

Date: 11/22

Name: Lucas Liu (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 222 W 83rd St

I represent: CEC3 Multilingual Committee

Address: 154 W 93rd St

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 0890-2015

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Fatoumata Waggen (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 127 West 127 Street

I represent: African Communities Together

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 845

in favor in opposition

Date: 11/22/16

Name: Ryan Adams (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 66-22 Fleet Street, Forest Hills NY

I represent: New York State Education Initiative

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 845-2015

in favor in opposition

Date: 11/22/2016

Name: SABINA LAMB, CEO (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: World of Money, LLC

Address: 1441 Broadway, 5th FL, Pa 10018, NYC

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 890

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Fabrice JAUMONT (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 146 Norman Avenue

I represent: self

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL School Uniforms
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 451

in favor in opposition

Date: 11/22/16

Name: Amya McKain (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 801 Bartholdi St.

I represent: The Learning Tree Cultural Preparatory School

Address: 801 Bartholdi St.

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

Andy King

THE COUNCIL School uniforms
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

[Empty box]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 451
 in favor in opposition

Date: 11/22/16

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Marcus Martinez

Address: 801 Bartholdi

I represent: The Learning Tree Cultural Preparatory School

Address: 801 Bartholdi St.

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆

Andy King

THE COUNCIL School uniforms
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

[Empty box]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 451
 in favor in opposition

Date: 11/22/2016

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Abiri Franklyn

Address: _____

I represent: The Learning Tree Cultural Preparatory School

Address: 801 Bartholdi Street

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆

Andy King

THE COUNCIL School Uniforms
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card



I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 451

in favor in opposition

Date: 11/22/16

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Zowie Trent

Address: _____

I represent: The Learning Tree Cultural Preparatory School

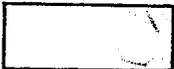
Address: 801 Bartholdi Street Bronx, NY

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆

Andy King

THE COUNCIL School uniforms
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card



I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 451

in favor in opposition

Date: 11/22/2016

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Laura Francis

Address: _____

I represent: The Learning Tree Cultural Prep School

Address: 801 Bartholdi St Bronx, NY

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆