

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE JOINTLY WITH THE
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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February 28, 2017
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HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: JULISSA FERRERAS-COPELAND
Chairperson

DANIEL DROMM
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Ydanis A. Rodriguez
James G. Van Bramer
Vanessa L. Gibson
Robert E. Cornegy, Jr.
Laurie A. Cumbo
Corey D. Johnson
Mark Levine
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Steven Matteo
Vincent J. Gentile
Daniel R. Garodnick
Andy L. King
Inez D. Barron
Chaim M. Deutsch
Alan N. Maisel
Antonio Reynoso
Mark Treyger
Rafael Salamanca, Jr.

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

Lorraine Grillo, President
NYC School Construction Authority

Elizabeth Rose, Deputy Chancellor
Division of Operations
NYC Department of Education

Ashley Salcedo, Student
MS-442, Brooklyn, District 415

Alam Ahmad, Student
MS-442, Brooklyn, District 415

Monica Major, Director of Education
Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr.

Ayisha Irfan, Appearing for:
Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President

Leonie Haimson
Class Size Matters

Maggie Moroff, Special Education Policy Coordinator
Advocates for Children

Shino Tanakawa, President
City Council District 2
Co-Chair, Blue Book Working Group

Camille Cassaretti, Member
Consulting and Educational Center, District 15
Former PTA President of PS-32
School Leadership Team Member

Lori Brown Kindred, TCTS, District 5
Co-President of the PA

Nick Nyan

Naila Rosario, President
Community Education Council 15

Andrew Rosario
Student

Henry Carrier, Vice President
Community Education Council 15

Jeannine Kiely, Chair
Schools and Education Committee
Manhattan Community Board 2

Rebecca Kostuchenko

Christina Furlong

Sajing Owh

Megan Barryman

Mike Goldberg
Manhattan Community Board 5

Maria Roca

[sound check, pause]

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Good

morning and pardon the delay. The BQE should just be called the Brooklyn Queens Parking lot I think. Good morning and welcome to today's Finance Committee hearing. I'm Council Member Ferreras-Copeland. I'm the chair of the committee. This morning the committee is joining with the Committee on Education to discuss a substantial issue facing communities across cities—our city: School planning and siting for new capacity. I would like to note at the outset that I'm glad to see the Mayor has recently committed to fully fund the DOE's capacity needs of 82,811 seats, an additional \$495 million in the Ten-Year Capital Strategy for the 38,487 seats unfunded in the SCA's current Five-Year Plan bringing the total investment in new capacity to \$4.5 billion. We will be discussing the SCA's Five-Year Capital Plan in greater depth at SCA's budget hearing on March 8th. I'm sorry. At SCA's budget hearing on March 8th. So I would encourage members to hold related questions until then. At today's hearing our focus is the planning and siting procedures and processes, and how these can be redesigned to reduce overcrowding. Each

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2 day over 500,000 public school students in the city
3 attend overcrowded schools. While certain
4 neighborhoods particularly in Brooklyn and Queens
5 have especially significant capacity needs, the DOE
6 and the SCA have identified a need for seats in every
7 borough. Research shows attending overcrowded
8 schools can negatively impact students' ability to
9 learn as there is noisier and more stressful forced
10 lunch periods starting as early as 9:00 a.m. in the
11 morning leaving students hungry in the afternoon, and
12 many force schools to convert specialized spaces such
13 as science labs and music arts—music/art rooms to
14 regular classroom. We must do all that we can to
15 ensure our students are learning in an environment
16 that maximizes their opportunity to receive a
17 quality, comprehensive education. This issue is of
18 particular concern to me as my district includes some
19 of the most overcrowded schools in the city as is
20 Council Member Dromm's. My district includes School
21 District 30 and School District 40, which face over
22 utilization rates of 103 and 115% respectively. But
23 as I mentioned, this is not just a problem in our
24 district. It is a problem citywide. This we—why we
25 have pushed to strengthen efforts to improve long-

1
2 term planning and back-back it up with sufficient
3 funding for new seats as reflected in the Ten-Year
4 Capital Strategy. At the same time, even with
5 funding commitment, I am concerned that the time line
6 for meeting the identified capacity needs will not be
7 kept up with demand for new seats. Ensuring the
8 accuracy of DOE and the SCA process for planning new
9 capacity at the citywide level is essential to both
10 meeting future enrollment needs and reducing current
11 levels of overcrowding. This includes developing a
12 clear method of projecting seats needed as some
13 advocates have expressed concerns that the projected
14 needs understate the actual requirements to address
15 current over utilization and future enrollment.
16 Similarly, being able to identify sites for funded
17 projects is essential to meeting the capacity need of
18 our school system as quickly as possible. This has
19 been a continued issue for the SCA, and I would like
20 to note that approximately half of all new capacity
21 projects and seats currently funded in the Five-Year
22 Capital Plan are un-sited, and I hope to work with
23 the SCA to approve and expedite the siting process in
24 whatever way is possible. Furthermore, as Finance
25 Chair, I'm particularly interested in the costs

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2 involved in the planning and siting of schools, and
3 understand that there are many factors that are
4 affect the price of new schools, the market prices in
5 the neighborhood, the availability of space, the
6 urgency of the need, site-specific conditions and
7 efficiency of scale. However, the variability and
8 the cost per student from capacity projects is
9 concerning. I hope to learn more about the SCA's
10 internal consideration of costs in construction, what
11 is done to minimize costs and how the SCA uses per
12 seat costs, costs per square foot and other unit
13 measures when making determinations about siting.
14 Our planning for both current and future needs is a
15 crucial step in reducing overcrowding in schools, and
16 one that is important to this Council. This hearing
17 is only the beginning of ongoing collaborative
18 efforts between the Council, the Administration, SCA,
19 advocates and others. I am grateful for the support
20 of the Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito who recently
21 announced in her State of City speech the
22 coordination of a Council working group to study this
23 issue and make recommendations. Chair Dromm and I
24 are excited to lead the discussion and bring
25 stakeholders together to develop a long-term approach

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2 to reducing school overcrowding, and I look forward
3 to hearing from the Administration and advocates
4 today about how we can work together to address all
5 these issues. I want to thank Chair Dromm for
6 chairing-co-chairing this hearing with and the
7 members of the Education Committee for joining us. I
8 want to thank the Finance Committee staff Eric
9 Bernstein, Committee Counsel Elizabeth Hoffman,
10 Principal Finance Analyst Katelyn Hogan or O'Hagan-
11 sorry-and Financial Analyst. Before we hear from the
12 Administration I will turn over my mic to the co-
13 chair for his opening remarks. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much,
15 Chair Ferreras-Copeland and good morning everyone,
16 and welcome to today's oversight hearing on school
17 planning and siting for new capacity jointly
18 sponsored by the Education and Finance Committees. We
19 will also hear testimony today on a preconsidered
20 bill sponsored by Council Member Kallos. I'll talk
21 more about this, though, shortly after some opening
22 remarks. Overcrowding a critical long-standing and
23 growing problem plaguing New York City schools.
24 According to the latest Preliminary Mayor's
25 Management Report or the PMMR, 59% of elementary

1 schools, 22% of middle schools and 36% of high
2 schools exceeded capacity in Fiscal Year 2016.
3 Further, according the PMMR data, 54% of elementary
4 and middle school students and 47% of high school
5 students citywide attended an overcrowded school last
6 year. In recent years, there has also been an
7 increased need for new capacity due to the expansion
8 of Pre-K and charter schools as well as the push to
9 remove all trailers called Transportable Classroom
10 Units or CUSs from school yards. School overcrowding
11 is likely to get worse in the coming years without
12 adequate intervention. The Department of City
13 Planning estimates that New York City's population
14 will grown nine million by 2040 including significant
15 growth in the school age population. But we don't
16 have to look that far into the future to anticipate
17 growth. All you have to do is look around your
18 neighborhood because a new residential development is
19 going up everywhere across the city. In fact, the
20 city is in the midst of a residential housing boom
21 with the New York City Building Congress projecting a
22 third consecutive record breaking year in residential
23 construction with spending 47% higher than the city's
24 previous boom in 2007. Rezoning efforts underway
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2 helps facilitate the Mayor's affordable housing
3 expansion goal. While important, will also impact
4 school overcrowding in certain neighborhoods. So
5 what does overcrowding look like in schools, and what
6 does it mean for students? Overcrowded schools often
7 convert specialized spaces such as science labs,
8 libraries, music and art rooms into regular
9 classrooms negatively impacting instructions in these
10 subjects. Can you imagine a school focused on the
11 arts with no music room or dance studio? And far too
12 often in these schools instruction in services for
13 students with special needs takes place in hallways,
14 closets, stairwells, and other makeshift spaces. One
15 of the most important common features of overcrowded
16 schools at all levels is large class sizes. I taught
17 in an overcrowded school, and I sometimes had classes
18 as large 38 students, which I can tell you is not
19 conducive to learning. What is the impact of these
20 conditions on students and teachers? Research shows
21 that overcrowding has a negative impact on both.
22 Some research has linked lower student achievement
23 with overcrowding. Crowding also causes stress, and
24 it's bound to have effect on behavior, mental health
25 and motivation. As my co-chair mentioned, crowded

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schools are noisier, which can affect the children's reading ability, cognitive development and attention and cause teachers to be less patient and more fatigued leading to more teacher burnout. We just had a hearing last month on teacher recruitment and retention and learned that large class sizes and other conditions associated with school overcrowding are also contributing to the exodus of city teachers to other districts. The current level of overcrowding has persisted for too many years, and new school construction has been unable to keep pace. This is largely due to inadequate funding, but problems with school planning and siting processes also contribute to this overcrowding crisis. While not all schools are over-utilized, overcrowding disproportionately impacts some areas especially immigrant communities like those in my district and in the district of my co-chair Julissa Ferreras-Copeland. We want all children to have a quality education. None should be subjected to these overcrowded conditions. That's why I'm thrilled that Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito committed in her State of the City speech to creating a Council working group to make recommendations to improve

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school planning, siting and overcrowding. We thank her for her leadership, and support. Today, we hope to learn more about school planning and siting and begin the dialogue on how we can improve these processes. We want to hear from the DOE and SCA and work collaboratively with them to make real progress on the intractable problem of school overcrowding. We also look forward to hearing from parents and other stakeholder in the community on how to improve school planning and siting. As I mentioned earlier, we will also hear testimony on the preconsidered bill sponsored by Council Member Kallos. The bill would require the DOE to submit to the Council and post on the DOE's website an annual report by November 1st of each year with information on the number of applicants who applied for—who applied for admission, the number of offices—offers of admission granted and the number of students enrolled as well as the number of seats anticipated to be available in the following academic year, and the information will be broken out by grade level and by the dis—the coding districts where the applicants live. I would like to remind everyone who wishes to testify to today that you much fill out a witness slip, which is located on the

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2 desks of the sergeant-at-arms in the front of the
3 room, and if you wish to testify on the preconsidered
4 bill, please indicate on the witness slip whether you
5 are here to testify in favor or in opposition to the
6 bill. I also want to point out that we will not be
7 voting on the bill today as this is just the first
8 hearing. To allow as many people as possible to
9 testify, testimony will be limited to three minutes
10 per person. Because of time constraints, questions
11 from council members will also be limited to three
12 minutes and as time permits we will have a second
13 round of questions. And please note that all
14 witnesses will be sworn in before testifying today.
15 Thank you, Madam Chair. [pause] And let me announce
16 that we've been joined by Council Member Robert
17 Cornegy, Council Member Ben Kallos, Council Member
18 Chaim Deutsch, Council Member Dan Garodnick, Council
19 Member I. Daneek Miller, our Public Advocate Tish
20 James, Council Member Vincent Gentile, Council Member
21 Margaret Chin as well, and I think we've got
22 everybody. Debbie Rose. I think Council Member
23 Debbie Rose also. Alright, thank you, Chair.
24 [pause] Okay, so we're going to swear you in. Would
25 you please raise your right hand? Do you solemnly

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2 swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing
3 but the truth and to answer Council Member questions
4 honestly?

5 LORRAINE GRILLO: I do.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: I do.

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you and
8 welcome. We have been joined by Loraine Grillo, the
9 President of the School Construction Authority and by
10 Deputy Chancellor Elizabeth Rose from the Department
11 of Education. Thank you very much for coming.

12 LORRAINE GRILLO: Thank you. Good
13 morning, Chairs Dromm and Ferreras-Copeland and
14 members of the Education and Finance Committees. My
15 name is Lorraine Grillo and I am President and Chief
16 Executive Officer of the New York City School
17 Construction Authority. I am joined by Elizabeth
18 Rose, Deputy Chancellor for the Division of
19 Operations at the New York City Department of
20 Education. We are pleased to be here today to
21 discuss the important work of successful for and
22 siting of new school capacity and the proposed
23 legislation. As you know, our mission is to design
24 and construct safe, attractive and environmentally
25 sound public schools for children throughout New York

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City as well as to modernize existing school facilities. The SCA was established in December of 1988 to build new public schools and manage the design, construction and renovation of capital projects in New York City's more than 1,400 public school buildings, nearly half of which are over 60 years old. Following changes in School Governance Law in October 2002, management of DOE's Capital Program was consolidated under one agency, the SCA. An important part of our success is the partnership that we have with the City Council. With your support we are more successful in pursuing new sites. With your generous funding we are able to do more to modernize existing schools. This Administration is committed to ensuring that all students have access to a high quality education in school facilities that are safe, and foster a thriving instructional environment. Last year the City added \$868 million to the Five-Year Capital Plan to build 11,000 additional new seats in the most overcrowded and fast growing neighborhoods. This brings the total number of new seats in the Capital Plan to over 44,000, and total funding to the highest level of approximately \$15.5 billion. Since 2004, the SCA has opened

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2 130,000 new school seats in over 260 buildings across
3 the five boroughs. Our comprehensive planning
4 process includes developing and analyzing quality
5 data, creating and updating the Five-Year Capital
6 Plan and monitoring projects through completion. We
7 have sought out opportunities to strengthen and
8 refine our planned strategies including the
9 introduction of an annual amendment process. In
10 order to support our Capital Plan development, we
11 undertake an annual review of our capacity and needs
12 analysis, which includes updating our annual—our
13 enrollment projections annually. For this work we
14 solicit professional services from a reputable
15 demographic firm. These projections incorporate data
16 on birth, immigration and migration rates on various
17 city agencies. Additional agencies provide
18 statistics on housing starts, and rezoning efforts
19 whether city led or private applications. These
20 enrollment projections, which are performed on a
21 district and sub-district level help inform our need
22 for new capacity projects. When compared to actual
23 enrollment, our projections consistently take an
24 aggressive stance towards growth. Over the years,
25 our estimates have been between 1 and 2% over actual

1 enrollment figures citywide. Using a broad range of
2 sources provides a complete view of potential student
3 demand. An annual update allows us to make timely
4 adjustments when there is a sustained increase in
5 student population in one part of the city or a
6 decline in student population in another. This also
7 ensures that our projections accurately represent all
8 of New York City and its nuances. Coupled with the
9 work of or enrollment projections is a look at our
10 existing portfolio and the capacity we will be
11 bringing online. For this work, we employ the latest
12 data from the report on capacity, enrollment and
13 utilization commonly known as the Blue Book. As you
14 may know, we exclude the capacity of all mini-
15 buildings and Transportable Classroom Units from
16 existing capacity calculations. Public feedback
17 plays a crucial role in our capital planning process.
18 Each year we undertake a public review process with
19 Community Education Council, the City Council and
20 other elected officials and community groups. We
21 offer every CEC in the city the opportunity to
22 conduct a public hearing on the plan, and we partner
23 with individual council members and CEC-CECs to
24 identify local needs. Your insights in this process
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2 are essential and we look forward to our continue
3 partnership. We all know that building capacity is
4 but one piece of the puzzle. Working with our
5 colleagues at the DOE we look at all strategies
6 within our reach to address overutilization including
7 using existing resources more efficiently. This may
8 include great truncation, great expansion, rezoning
9 of elementary and middle schools, creation and
10 location of gifted and talented programs, opening new
11 schools, conversion of inefficient spaces in existing
12 school-school facilities and creative cross-district
13 siting solutions. It should be noted that new
14 capacity makes up just over a third of our overall
15 capital budget. The capita investment category of
16 our Five-Year Plan includes improvement programs and
17 school enhancement projects. The IP projects covers
18 infrastructure work in our existing buildings with
19 over 1,400 buildings and an inventory of facilities
20 that are mainly comprised of older assets including
21 nearly 200 buildings that are at least 100 years old.
22 This work is critically important to ensuring our
23 buildings are water tight and safe. Our ability to
24 site and construct new schools is critical to our
25 success. We are currently in the halfway mark in our

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2 Five-Year Capital Plan, and as of February 2107
3 Amendments we have sited over half of our funded seat
4 needs. I'm going to repeat that. We are currently
5 at the halfway mark in our Five-Year Capital Plan,
6 and as of February 2017, we have sited over half of
7 our funded seat needs. This progress towards meeting
8 our goals includes the addition of approximately
9 11,000 more funded seats last fiscal year. We
10 continue on the track of success we've had in our
11 previous Five-Year Capital Plan. In FY 2005 to 2009,
12 the SCA sited nearly 90% of the funded seats at the
13 conclusion of the plan. We continued making progress
14 towards our goal in FY 2010 to 2014 Plan where we
15 sited nearly 80% of our funded seats, and like this
16 current plan, we saw funding increase mid cycle. The
17 need for new schools is almost always linked to
18 thriving and booming neighborhoods where vacant and
19 unused spaces are uncommon, and we face the
20 tremendous challenge of finding sites that are large
21 enough and suitable for building new schools. The
22 SCA employs independent professional real estate
23 brokers in each borough who are tasked with
24 investigating listings and pursuing all opportunities
25 for new school sites. Our Real Estate Services group

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2 works with the SCA's brokers in actively and
3 constantly looking for property throughout the five
4 boroughs in areas of funded need to purchase or to
5 lease. In neighborhoods where capacity needs are
6 great, our brokers will cold call property owners in
7 an effort to identify new opportunities and create
8 new connections. In addition, we welcome suggestions
9 of potential school sites from stakeholders in the
10 community and each site was carefully investigated.
11 We are success in pursuing new sites with your
12 support. Take for example Chair Dromm who doggedly
13 pursued a site in his Council district that was
14 formerly the corporate home to White Castle.
15 Construction of a new 470-seat elementary school is
16 now underway at this site because of his unwavering
17 support. In our discussion with various stakeholder
18 we talked about the challenges in siting new schools
19 and what we look for typically. These considerations
20 are worth repeating here today as they can be driving
21 factors in whether a site moves forward or not.

22 No. 1 Size: The SCA looks for sites that
23 are at least 20,000 square feet for new elementary
24 schools. However, with larger sites being harder to
25 find in this current real estate market, we will

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2 consider smaller lots especially in the areas of
3 significant need, but they need to be at least 12,000
4 square feet.

5 Location: The SCA takes neighborhood
6 context into consideration when we're dealing with
7 potential sties. Considerations are made for factors
8 that may impact the potential school such as traffic
9 conditions or adjacent uses that are not compatible
10 to the school such as an adult use estab-
11 establishment.

12 Previous Property History: A property's
13 previous history is thoroughly investigated before
14 the SCA will move forward with acquisition relief.
15 This includes a full review of historical records as
16 well as time conditions. There may be times where
17 environmental challenges are deemed to be sufficient
18 concerns to remove a site from consideration. Yet,
19 the SCA--[coughs] excuse me--the SCA has adapted to
20 the changing landscape. Over the years we've
21 developed a deep relationship with the Archdiocese of
22 New York and the Diocese of Brooklyn. With our
23 shared mission--mission of education, we've been able
24 to transform former parochial school buildings into
25 new homes for New York City's public school children.

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2 Ove the last 12 years this has led to nearly 14,000
3 seats. Additionally, we forge partnerships with—over
4 the past decade by working with developers on large
5 scale projects that include a new public school
6 facility at the base of their mixed-use building.
7 This relatively new model of development has led to a
8 number of successful projects. Examples, which is
9 MS-313, the Dock Street School in Brooklyn. In PS-
10 397 the Spruce Street School in District in
11 Manhattan. Lastly, our engagement during largescale
12 development projects was proven to be helpful in
13 security new school siting opportunities whether it's
14 the Corona Park East, West Farms Rezoning in the—in
15 the Bronx in District 12 where we recently sited a
16 new 450-seat elementary school, or the creation of an
17 elementary school as part of the Hudson Square
18 Rezoning. However, there are times when the SCA is
19 unable to come to an agreement with a property owner.
20 There are instances when a property is available for
21 lease only and the SCA has determined that converting
22 it into state of the—into a state-of-the-arts school
23 building would be cost-prohibitive in cases when SCA
24 is alerted to a property that is already planned for
25 another community use or has—has already been sold.

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2 This makes our ability to use eminent domain in order
3 acquire sites for schools, an important part of how
4 we can move forward with new opportunities. We have
5 and will continue to use this resource appropriately
6 and judiciously. This means not displacing active
7 businesses and absolutely not displacing residents.

8 We have continued growth in neighborhoods
9 over the years—we have seen continued growth in
10 neighborhoods over the years such as part of School
11 Districts 15 and 20 in Brooklyn and 24 in Queens. We
12 see these school communities continuing to grow
13 driven in large part by high birth rates and
14 immigration rather than new housing. We know our
15 strategies have to be flexible in order to address
16 the unique challenges of neighborhoods, and we know
17 that eminent domain has a role to play. In Corona
18 we've been successful in keeping negotiations moving
19 forward with the force of eminent domain most
20 recently at IS-311 and PS-315. In School District 20
21 through the use of eminent domain we've acquired a
22 property at 59th Street and Third Avenue that will
23 become home to a 976-seat school. Siting public
24 schools is challenging, and not just in finding your
25 sites, but in securing the needed support from the

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2 public. We've seen too many good sites that don't
3 become home to schools because the support is not
4 there. We need everyone's help in determining how to
5 ensure good sites become schools. Lastly, with
6 respect to the proposed legislation, we support the
7 City Council's goal to increase transparency
8 regarding student admissions and enrollments and
9 school capacity. We would like to work with the City
10 Council to ensure that the reporting requirements
11 align with the information we currently capture in
12 our data system. We're making progress in our
13 efforts to reduce overcrowding citywide. Yet, there
14 remains pockets of overcrowding in our system. We
15 know we have more work to do, and we'll continue to
16 target these areas to bring down over utilization.
17 The support of our partners in the City Council is
18 paramount to this success whether it's through your
19 generous funding or through your support for our new
20 school sites, all our students benefit. We plan on
21 continuing our tradition of partnership and look
22 forward to your continued help. Thank you again for
23 allowing me to testify today, and we would be happy
24 to answer any questions you may have.

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CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank

you, President Grillo. We will hear a state from our
Public Advocate and being our questions.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: [coughs] I just

want to thank the chairs Council members Copeland as

well as Council Member Dromm, and their staff for

holding this oversight hearing on this critical issue

of school siting. I also want to welcome and thank

SCA, particularly the range and for all that you have

done. Nearly half a million New York City public

school students attend schools that are severely

overcrowded and the situation unfortunately is only

getting worse. [coughs] By 2013, the city's school

age population will increase by 87,000 or 7%. In a

report by Class Size Matters, estimates that 100,000

seats are needed to adequately address overcrowding

in public schools. In June of 2015, I wrote a letter

which was joined by 22 Council Members, advocates and

numerous CEC leaders calling for more school seats

and a better formula and while the DOE has increased—

increased its need assessment to a more realistic

83,000 seats since that time, the estimate still

falls shorts of reality. Moreover, the realities on

the ground still have not changed. Thousands of

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2 children are still assigned to lunch as early as
3 10:00 a.m. and thousands more have no access to the
4 gym. Special need students are still forced to
5 receive their services in hallways or closets rather
6 than dedicated spaces. And although improvements
7 have been made, school capacity formula enrollment
8 projections are still based on outdated data. We can
9 zone and rezone but there's—but until there is a seat
10 for every child, this is little better than high
11 stakes shell game where kids are the guaranteed
12 losers. In East New York for example, the recent
13 rezoning will need an addition shortfall of 200 must
14 sets by 2030–2030 and with planned rezonings across
15 the city we cannot afford to undercount and
16 underfund. Yet, the latest capital plan does that.
17 We need a system that deals realistically with
18 population growth, uses every tool in the toolbox and
19 asks developers to pay their fair share, and I am so
20 happy that inter-interested in learning more about
21 the use of eminent domain to achieve this objective.
22 In other jurisdictions developers have had to pay an
23 impact fee to help pay for new infrastructure,
24 including schools, but that is not the case here. We
25 need to look at these problems holistically and do

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2 everything in our power to stem the tide of
3 overcrowding—crowding. The Mayor has taken a strong
4 positive step with the allocation of funds for the
5 School Capacity Project, and I thank him for that,
6 but obviously we all need to be doing even more. I
7 look forward to hearing more about what we can do
8 ensure that we do not short change our future. I
9 thank the Chairs for allowing me to say a few words,
10 and I thank the School Construction Authority for
11 their testimony this morning. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you
13 Public Advocate. So I'm—I have several questions,
14 and I'm going to obviously get some of you—some of
15 these questions to you after because I want to give
16 every Council Member an opportunity to ask their
17 questions. I know we've been joined by Minority
18 Leader Matteo Matteo, Council Members Johnson,
19 Salamanca, Maisel, Treyger and Cohen and yes. So,
20 and we will have members coming in and out today
21 because it's a bigger hearing day. So, President
22 Grillo, I want to talk—for you to help walk me
23 through the process and feasibility. So I know that
24 we have certain neighborhoods that are more
25 challenging, as you mentioned, to site--

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LORRAINE GRILLO: [interposing] Uh-huh.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: --and while you said that we need to partner with council members can you just for the record let us know what that partnership looks like. Like what is it that you're necessarily looking for partners? Is it through community board after you find the site, identifying potential sites? Can you just walk us through that process?

LORRAINE GRILLO: Actually certainly, Council Member. I think I-I would like to say all of the above. Certainly, often times members of the Council or the local community really can identify a site that maybe has not hit the public market yet. You know your neighborhoods better than anyone and when, in fact, we begin to see a-a particular establishment begin to go out of business and, you know, these may be things that we at the SCA or our brokers are not-don't know yet. So with that kind of tipoff we can keep an eye on that particular site, and-and just watch and see, and maybe go call the owner, and see if, in fact, there's a possibility that it-it becomes a site that we can go after. On the opposite side of that, we've seen far too often

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2 when we go to site a school in a particular
3 neighborhood often times there is community
4 opposition, and with your strength and your—and your
5 support in the Council we can address all of the
6 concerns and we're always happy to do that, but we
7 really need the City Council to support our efforts.

8 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Is here
9 opposition for a particular grade. Like is—is there
10 more opposition to a high school as opposed to an
11 elementary school? I know in my neighborhood we have
12 opposition to a elementary school. So I think—I know
13 this because it was close to a firehouse and we were
14 able to overcome that.

15 LORRAINE GRILLO: Right.

16 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: But, you
17 know, do you see a high school verse junior high
18 verse an elementary school.

19 LORRAINE GRILLO: Sure.

20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: What is
21 your experience?

22 LORRAINE GRILLO: Sure, typically high
23 schools are more difficult to site. I guess the kids
24 are older and they're usually larger facilities, and
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2 in—mostly in a, you know, low-rise residential
3 neighborhood it is of concern.

4 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: I think
5 there is—I believe that there's an opportunity and
6 the SCA could probably work with the Council to
7 highlight the benefits of having a high school in a
8 neighborhood. I don't think that we've necessarily
9 partnered in that way. The benefits that it could it
10 be for small businesses perhaps for an area that's
11 normally isn't active. So it's probably something
12 that we can work together with both committees on.
13 When you have sited or looked at schools that may
14 have been challenging, what triggers a lease versus a
15 buy? Are there—are there opportunities for leasing
16 that you just walk away from because it isn't
17 feasible or what is your process for deciding between
18 buying and leasing?

19 LORRAINE GRILLO: Well, absolutely.
20 First of all, if a—if an owner is offering a building
21 for lease, we will certainly look at that building.
22 If it's structurally conducive to putting in a school
23 meaning that it doesn't require a complete gut
24 renovation, because again there's going to be limits
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1
2 about how much capital we want to put into that
3 building that we do not own. Okay, so--

4 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Are those
5 statutory? Are those limits by state--

6 LORRAINE GRILLO: [interposing] No.

7 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: --law or
8 just you're just--?

9 LORRAINE GRILLO: --no, no, it's just
10 reasonableness. No. If there is a site for example
11 that's in a location that we don't feel that the
12 building that exists would be suitable we will
13 certainly try to acquire the property rather than
14 lease the property, and if the owner is willing to
15 engage in those negotiations, that's great. If, in
16 fact, he begins to pull back because we're not
17 offering, you know, the correct amount of money, then
18 we'll turn to our ability to use eminent domain.

19 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And how
20 often in these new--more recently have you had to use
21 eminent domain?

22 LORRAINE GRILLO: Well, as I mentioned,
23 most recently the site in Brooklyn at 59th Street we
24 did use eminent domain in the two sites that I-I

1
2 mentioned in Queen, just the thought of eminent
3 domain was enough to bring the owner to the table.

4 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And a
5 good conversation from the local Council Member, too.

6 LORRAINE GRILLO: That, too.

7 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Yes.

8 LORRAINE GRILLO: Yes. [laughter]

9 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: How many
10 overcrowded schools have you found? So, I guess walk
11 me through this process, and I just have two more
12 questions--

13 LORRAINE GRILLO: [interposing] Sure.

14 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: --before
15 we open it up to my colleagues, and help me
16 understand this. So when we into a room, usually
17 there is a certificate of occupancy for a building,
18 and I would think that a school building would have
19 the same certificate of occupancy from the Buildings
20 Department or as we tried to site some schools for
21 let's say UPK, and I know the rules are different,
22 but the Health Department triggers some requirements
23 of UPK.

24 LORRAINE GRILLO: Sure.

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CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So, why is it that in schools that are overcrowded the Building Department isn't trigger by the pop-overpopulation of the-of the building? Because if there's let's say, you know, and I hate to compare it to this, but I'm thinking a restaurant or a night club if the Fire Department walked in and the place was packed---

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LORRAINE GRILLO: [interposing] Right.

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CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: --they say everybody has to clear out. So why is it that we haven't had this issue of overcrowded schools?

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LORRAINE GRILLO: Well, I-I would answer that by saying that our description and our overcrowding it could be a rebuilding and so on. It's a different definition from the Buildings Department's definition of how a building is overcrowded. So I-I don't have those numbers in front of me, but I certainly can tell you that I know that the Building Department would not allow for a building that was unsafe to be occupied. But our-- again, our definition is different from what the Building Department considers to be overcrowded.

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CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So, can you share your definition and if you have a definition with the committee? I know you might not have it today, but your definition on the definition of the Buildings Department.

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LORRAINE GRILLO: Sure. Absolutely.

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CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Especially when we've seen some come converted spaces, I would think, you know, would seem or deemed especially ones-- In-in some of my local schools graduations have to be split into three different graduations because there's so many people, and lunch is served at 10 o'clock in the morning from 10:00 to 1:00 and again, I know that that is not your decision, but that is the reality of accommodating space.

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LORRAINE GRILLO: Right.

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CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So if the auditorium only fits 300 people it would seem that when this facility was built the intention was to have a certain capacity, and now we've--you know, sometimes three times the capacity as originally thought of for that space. My second--my final question before we open it up to the chair and the

1
2 rest of my colleagues, are while the overall number
3 of TCUs have continued to decline, and I wanted to
4 publicly acknowledge that you've worked very closely
5 with the PSM (sic) team. We're creating a new wing,
6 and that's been like decades in the making. So I'm
7 very happy to see that. We also have this new
8 challenge. So we were eliminating TCUs in one area
9 of the district, and now we're increasing TCUs and
10 I've got to believe that that might be the reality of
11 other parts of our city. So, how many TCUs have been
12 added in recent years for Pre-K seats and how long
13 with the TCUs be used, and what are their plans for
14 their removal?

15 LORRAINE GRILLO: I'm—I'm sorry. Could
16 you repeat the last part of that questions?

17 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So I just
18 wanted to know how many Pre-K seats are being housed
19 in TCUs and how long will—are they expected to be
20 used because the point of TCUs they're temporary, and
21 what are their plans for the removal of those TCUs.

22 LORRAINE GRILLO: If I'm correct, we have
23 eight TCUs that we're—we're—are currently be used for
24 Pre-K. One of them will be eliminated this year.
25 The additional seven are in actually the Council—the

1
2 Council Member's district, and we have plans to build
3 a ground-up Pre-K in order to eliminate those TCUs as
4 well.

5 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay. I
6 thought it was a citywide problem. This is my
7 problem. Got it. Okay, well, thank you for putting
8 that on the record, and hopefully we will have no
9 other need for Pre-K seats in TCUs very soon. Chair
10 Dromm.

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much,
12 Chair Ferreras-Copeland. We've been joined by
13 Council Member Barron as well before I get to my
14 question, but I do want to follow up a little bit on
15 what you're talking about in terms of I guess
16 occupancy and—and square footage in classrooms
17 because that's something that I was most affected by.
18 I remember times when I was teaching in the
19 portables, and I had 34 or more fourth graders, the
20 big kids in the school, and I could barely get around
21 the room without bumping into them as they're sitting
22 in their desk seats. Is there any type of
23 requirement for square footage per student especially
24 as it relates to the portables and/or to the real
25 classrooms?

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2 LORRAINE GRILLO: We have standards for a
3 typical classroom, and our typical classroom usually
4 750 square feet if we're doing the build.

5 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: For how
6 many students?

7 LORRAINE GRILLO: 430.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: [off mic] But
9 the capacity—the target capacity--

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] Can you
11 turn the mic transfer (sic) on?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: The target
13 capacity is based on the grade level of the child.
14 So for kindergarten through third grade the target
15 capacity is 20 students in those classrooms. For
16 fourth through eight, it's 28, for high school it's
17 30.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Does the DOH,
19 Department of Health have different regulations for
20 square footage in the lower grade classrooms? For
21 example, in UPK versus kindergarten versus first
22 grade up to fourth and then then into high school?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: I believe the
24 Department of Health's requirement is higher for
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1
2 kindergarten only, and then it's consistent for all
3 of the grades.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And not to UPK?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: I-I don't
6 know.

7 LORRAINE GRILLO: Our UPK classrooms are
8 typically 18 students, and if we are building we
9 build somewhere between 800 square feet and 1,000
10 square feet for UPK classrooms.

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So-so it seems to me
12 that from my experiences when we have students
13 stuffed into these classrooms and it's very difficult
14 to get it around. It's very difficult to get around
15 in a regular classroom when you have 34 kids as well,
16 that those space requirements are not meeting the
17 needs. It seems to me that we need to reduce the
18 number of students that are allowed to sit in those
19 seat in a classroom in order to get a real picture of
20 what is going on in-in schools. No?

21 LORRAINE GRILLO: Well, I-I think that
22 again we bill to a particular standard, and in the
23 cases where I-I-I would imagine and-and the DOE can
24 answer the question where there are limited
25 possibilities those classrooms are filled to-to what

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2 they are. I mean certainly the Deputy Chancellor
3 tell you.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I mean, Chancellor--

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: Well--well, we
6 particularly like to add--

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Chancellor, just
8 before--just before we go to the Deputy Chancellor
9 Rose, because to me what I'm hearing is that we don't
10 square foot footage per individual student.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: The Blue Book
12 does, in fact, take the square footage of a classroom
13 into account in determining the capacity of that
14 classroom. So when we calculate--when the Blue Book
15 calculates the capacity of a building, the actual
16 square footage of each classroom is a factor. And
17 who while a target class size may be 28 students, if
18 the classroom is not a sufficient size to accommodate
19 28 students the Blue Book capacity for that room
20 would be lower.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay so--

22 LORRAINE GRILLO: [interposing] Okay.

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: --let me go--let me go
24 to something related a little bit on is when we take
25 classrooms and when take special rooms, cluster rooms

1
2 let's say, and they're turned into classrooms, how
3 does that impact the capacity in a school? Are they
4 then--is it--in order to have a good school, you need
5 to have a science room and a lab, and you need to
6 have a social studies room and an art room. What we
7 find happening often times is that when we convert
8 those into classrooms then it--the capacity of the
9 school doesn't rise. The--the number of--the amount of
10 overcrowding doesn't go up, but yet we don't those
11 rooms for our students.

12 LORRAINE GRILLO: Well, actually in the
13 Blue Book as--as the Deputy Chancellor just mentioned,
14 those things are taken into consideration. As a
15 matter of fact--

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And that's been a
17 change, right?

18 LORRAINE GRILLO: Yes, there certainly
19 has been a change. We work very closely with both
20 the City Council staff as well as other advocates to
21 make changes in that Blue Book calculation to account
22 for clustering, those types of clusterings that you
23 are--you are talking about. So that it's--we believe
24 that it's much more balance.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So when principals are working on information to—or supply you with—for the Blue Book--

LORRAINE GRILLO: [interposing] Uh-huh.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: --they are supposed to take into consideration the misuse of rooms originally designated for those specialty rooms.

LORRAINE GRILLO: That's correct.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And how do they know the history of those rooms? Is there a way to figure that out?

LORRAINE GRILLO: Well--

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] Or is that just done by--

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: [interposing] Well, we can--

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: --teachers in schools who remember when a room was a science room?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: The—the Blue Book formula doesn't only depend upon a principal identifying that used to be an art room. If a school an elementary school is not showing the appropriate number of cluster rooms, and how they use the space, the Blue Book formula deducts from the capacity

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2 because it recognizes that there should be cluster
3 rooms in that building.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So when I was a
5 cluster, I had a windowsill literally no wider than
6 the windows here, in which to place my stuff. I did
7 not have a desk and I did not have a computer, and it
8 was in the hallway between a classroom and a staff
9 room. Is that taken into account when you draw up the
10 Blue Book?

11

LORRAINE GRILLO: Again, as-as the-

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] Cluster
13 desks.

14

LORRAINE GRILLO: As-as the Deputy
15 Chancellor mentioned, in-in the new version of the
16 Blue Book there is allocations for every school
17 level, and-and how many clusters they should have
18 within that building

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Because I believe
20 that every-every teacher contractually is supposed to
21 have minimally a desk to work from, but often times
22 that doesn't happen.

23

LORRAINE GRILLO: To the extent. (sic)

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: In many of them.

25

Okay. Let me go to--

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DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: [interposing]

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But it actually reminds me of one of the improvements

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that was recently made to the Blue Book through the

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Blue Book Working Group there at the middle school

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level we now allocate space for teacher work space to

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ensure that there is an opportunity for teachers to

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have a space to go when they are in between classes.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So in terms of the

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class size again does the DOE or the SCA plan to

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consider including recommendations from the Blue Book

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Working Group in changing the capacity calculations

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in the Blue Book. Most notably their suggestions

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that the target class sizes be brought in line with

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the Contracts for Excellence.

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LORRAINE GRILLO: Well, either one of us

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can take this. We—we—all of those things are things

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that we would love to be able to do, but as you know

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the Contract for Excellence is not funded.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So that depends of

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CFE funding?

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LORRAINE GRILLO: Well, that is—First of

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all, that's a global decision that we will make with

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the Department of Education, but again, the issues

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are really the current overcrowding situation that

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2 have, and how we address that. Those are
3 aspirational goals I would imagine. I'm going to
4 going--

5 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing]
6 Chancellor Rose, just to get a handle on that, what
7 are the aspirational goals with Contract for
8 Excellent in terms of let's say a kindergarten class
9 versus a third-grade class versus an eighth grade
10 class?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: So the
12 Department of Education's target class size is very
13 aligned to the C4E in the early elementary grades. I
14 believe aspirational target class size for
15 kindergarten to third grade is 20 students in a
16 classroom. The Department of Education--

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] And
18 even by that measure, Chancellor, wouldn't that be
19 higher than say the surrounding school districts in
20 Long Island and Westchester and other school
21 districts?

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: I don't have
23 specific class size information for those other
24 districts.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: For someone who has that viewpoint I think that they are probably still a little higher, but I'm sorry to interrupt you.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: Then our target class size for middle school grades is for fourth grade through eighth grade is 28 students in a class. I believe C4E targets are around the 23 range. I'm sorry. I'm unable to find the specific page. Could I have this information? Thank you, Mary. And then for middle—for high school grades, our target class size is 30 for all instructional rooms and the C4E targets are 23 students for electives and 25 students for—for classes.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you for that information. I think also that's something that I would like to ask the working group that was going to be formed at the Speaker's request to look at how our numbers compare to surrounding districts as well. I think that that is really something that is—is vitally important that we consider. Let me just to sitings. I have some siting questions, and then I will go to my colleagues who are here. How many staff does SCA have in the real estate division, and

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2 do they all work on sitings, and do you believe that
3 this is a sufficient level to accomplish our goals?

4 LORRAINE GRILLO: Right. As I mentioned
5 earlier we—in addition to SCA staff we have brokers
6 assigned to each of the boroughs, and in—in the
7 office itself we have like—I'm going to say seven—
8 seven staff working in Real Estate Services Division.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And how do they
10 search for sites? Do they—I know you mentioned in
11 your testimony they do some cold calling.

12 LORRAINE GRILLO: Correct.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: How long has that
14 been going on? Has that been traditional one of the
15 ways in which they do it?

16 LORRAINE GRILLO: We've been doing it I'm
17 going to say at least as long as I have—was Senior
18 Director of Real Estate Services. That was about ten
19 years ago. So since that time

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: My curiosity with
21 this question is—because, you know, I—I see even in
22 Jackson Heights let's just say for example a site on
23 Roosevelt Avenue and 71st Street, which at one point
24 I had identified through the previous administration
25 for a site as a possible immigration-immigrant

1
2 center, and it's a fairly large site, but then it was
3 sold to a private developer.

4 LORRAINE GRILLO: Uh-huh.

5 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: But these real estate
6 folks need—they must know that these sites are up.
7 Do they report those sites to you?

8 LORRAINE GRILLO: Absolutely. They do it
9 based upon the areas of funding. You know, it—
10 perhaps in the previous administration there were not
11 sufficient funding to—to buy a site in that area. So
12 I—I don't know the circumstances, but certainly they
13 are very, very familiar with our capital needs, and
14 when they see something in those areas, they will
15 immediately the next day.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So do the brokers
17 specialize in leasing property also? Do they—they
18 identify sites there for possible resources?

19 LORRAINE GRILLO: Both.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And how do you
21 measure the effectiveness of your brokers?

22 LORRAINE GRILLO: Our brokers work on
23 commission only. So they don't get paid unless they
24 find sites for us and those sites come to fruition.

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2 So, that incentive alone makes sure that they work
3 very, very hard on every deal.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And do you work with
5 other city agencies or cross over with them? Because
6 I know there are competing interests like with
7 Housing, Preservation and Development, for example
8 where we're looking for affordable housing--

9 LORRAINE GRILLO: Right.

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: --that could have
11 potentially been a school site, but how do we
12 coordinate what the city does in terms of the use for
13 certain sites?

14 LORRAINE GRILLO: Sure. We--we work very
15 closely with all of the city agencies, and the
16 administration in making those determinations.
17 Again, the--particularly in the area of the--the major
18 rezoning. We are at the table from the very
19 beginning and for example in East New York we have
20 allocated city property for a 1,000-seat school as
21 part of that major rezoning. So this is something
22 that we do on a regular basis. We meet regularly
23 with all of the different agencies, HPD, DCAS.
24 Again, DCAS with the city properties that they--they
25

1
2 may have that might be suitable. So we're constantly
3 working with these folks.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And Chair Grillo,
5 President Grillo, I should say, I know we're very
6 grateful that we were able to get the \$868 million
7 put into the budget last year. I think they're
8 putting in another \$400 million or so this year in
9 new seat capacity. But the Mayor himself has said
10 that we would need an additional \$4 billion to site
11 the current seat needs that we—that we have
12 identified or that you have identified about 83,000
13 seats that other groups like Class Size they even
14 actually pose it to 100,000 new seats. When are our
15 plans moving forward to procure the funding for those
16 other needed seats?

17 LORRAINE GRILLO: Well, I think if you
18 look at the City's Ten-Year Capital Plan, you will
19 see that that funding has been allocated for—for just
20 that and so we work very hard to get that information
21 into the budget.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Alright, I'm
23 going to stop here and then I'm going to go to
24 questions. We have questions from—we've been joined
25 by Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer as well, and I'm

1
2 going to go questions from Council Member Cornegy
3 followed by Kallos, Rose and Gentile. Oh, okay,
4 Council Member Kallos. Yes, you're up.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Good morning.
6 Thank you for your testimony and your work. There
7 are about 7,700 public school seats in the Council
8 District 5. How many more seats does SCA plan on
9 building in this portion of School District 2 that I
10 represent?

11 LORRAINE GRILLO: I think that the major
12 effort right now is for Pre-K seats, and we are in
13 the process of looking at several sites for those
14 Pre-K seats. I cannot give you--

15 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: [interposing]
16 Sure.

17 LORRAINE GRILLO: --more than that.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: So, in terms of
19 the big picture, how many schools seats does SCA
20 believe are needed to serve the Upper East Side
21 residents and neighborhood?

22 LORRAINE GRILLO: We have no funded need
23 in that particular area.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: And so those
25 7,700 seats are those according to SCA designated to

1
2 serve that neighborhood, or it's only a portion of
3 those seats designated for the neighborhood by SCA?
4 My questions are for SCA and then I'll switch over to
5 DOE.

6 LORRAINE GRILLO: Well, I-I believe that
7 in our calculations you have sufficient seats in that
8 particular area of the neighborhood.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Okay, and so-so
10 you built 7,700 seats on the Upper East Side. That's
11 to serve the Upper East Side and then who decides
12 where those seats actually go?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: So the School
14 Construction Authority working in partnerships with
15 the DOE identifies where seats are needed, and the
16 Department of Education identifies what schools would
17 be in those buildings and what the admissions
18 processes and priorities for those schools would be.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: So would you
20 believe in just a guess until this bill is passed and
21 we get an official report? It seems like something
22 like 3,000 out of those 7,700 don't actually serve
23 the local neighborhood. So, just one staggering
24 example is I have PS-183, which is 14.5% Black and
25 Hispanic, and it's right across the street for PS-

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2 225, which is 55% Black and Hispanic. Why do we
3 think that—why—why is this happening right across the
4 street from each other?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: Well, first of
6 all I'm not—I—I don't want to agree that only 3,000
7 seats in that neighborhood are used by neighborhood
8 students. I don't think that that is an accurate
9 representation of the Upper East Side. I believe
10 that that 7,700 students that you—seats that you
11 identified also includes high schools and it includes
12 some choice schools that are in that area. The seats
13 on the Upper East Side by and larger overwhelming
14 serve the local zone students particularly at the
15 elementary level. PS-183 serves a local catchment
16 zone. The school that you are referencing is part of
17 the Julia Richmond Complex. Naturally P-225 is in
18 District 75 program. So District 75 programs may
19 draw students from a wide area range based on their
20 programmatic needs, and their academic needs. The
21 Julia Richmond Complex all of the schools in that
22 building other than the District 75 program are
23 choice schools, and are open to students citywide.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: So just in—in
25 closing, I—we're happy to educate kids from all over

1
2 the city on the Upper East Side. It appears to be a
3 natural destination, but I think my concern is just
4 that we do need to assess the seats, and make sure
5 that we are building enough seats to accommodate all
6 the kids who want to go to school on the East Side
7 especially within keeping in mind that we'd like to
8 have integrated schools, and if kids from all over
9 the city are already coming, let's make sure that PS-
10 183 is just as integrated as PS-225 is.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: Well, I think
12 it's important to recognize that none of the schools
13 on the Upper West—on the Upper East Side have waiting
14 lists. They are all able to serve all of their zoned
15 students, and there certainly are some limitations to
16 diversity in an area that is among the most expensive
17 real estate markets in the city.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you.
19 Council Member Rose followed by Gentile and then
20 Treyger.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Good morning.
22 [bell] I'd like to know what is the plan regarding
23 leased spaces? Are they included in the schools'
24 seat count, and what's your plan to accommodate these
25 seats when these terms—when these leases terminate?

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2 LORRAINE GRILLO: Right. Yes, they are,
3 Council Member, included in the--the capacity. For
4 our leasing program really we, for the most part, our
5 average lease is approximately 30 years. We do have
6 some as little as I would say 10 years, but over--
7 overwhelmingly we have 30 years and above. So it's
8 not something--right now, I think as--as everyone here
9 has said, we're catching up on the need that--that is
10 out there. So we're not thinking of the replacement
11 of these lease sites at this particular member.
12 Very, very often when we lease a particular property
13 if it's up for renewal we will variously (sic) renew
14 that lease from the--

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: [interposing] Is
16 the--aren't the leases with the Archdiocese about 12
17 years though?

18 LORRAINE GRILLO: No, not for the most
19 part. We are at least 20.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Okay, and what
21 course of action does SCA employ when a community
22 opposes the siting of a school?

23 LORRAINE GRILLO: Again, and--and I think
24 I mentioned this earlier that the most important
25 thing that we can ask of the Council is their strong

1
2 support for these schools. Often times, we do—we
3 always have public a hearing at the request of the
4 community board and the CEC. If there is op-
5 opposition, if there is very specific opposition
6 we'll work with the community to try to allay their
7 fears, but without the support of the Council these
8 projects won't go.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: [interposing] What—
10 what would trigger SCA to take a site by eminent
11 domain?

12 LORRAINE GRILLO: An example would be
13 someone, a landlord who has offered to sell a piece
14 of property, and is asking an exorbitant amount of
15 money. We will do a market analysis, and if it
16 doesn't fall anywhere within that range of the
17 current market, we may go towards eminent domain, but
18 keep in mind this is something we do very, very
19 carefully. We must in order for us to forward with
20 eminent domain get approval from our trustees, and
21 then we—we bring it to the Council for their
22 approval. And in some cases over the years there
23 have been examples of Council people who do not agree
24 with using eminent domain. So where we can, and in
25 very special circumstances, we will use that.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: And I just-it's a
3 comment. SCA should not be building schools without
4 common spaces, gyms, lunchrooms and auditoriums and-
5 and-and in so doing, you create a-a culture in a
6 building and-and that not only includes new
7 buildings, but shared co-located spaces and I think
8 that you should rethink that-that building that-that
9 system. Thank you.

10 LORRAINE GRILLO: Well, Council Member,
11 I-just in response to that, we-we always build
12 buildings with lunch rooms, and-

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: [off mic]

14 LORRAINE GRILLO: Correct.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: [off mic]

16 LORRAINE GRILLO: Correct, correct and-

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: [off mic]

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Debbie-Debbie can
19 you--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: [off mic]

21 LORRAINE GRILLO: Right.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Council Member please
23 use mic. [laughter]

24 COUNCIL MEMBER: Debbie hold it.
25

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2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I-I need to get it on
3 record, yeah. [pause] Thank you very much, and now
4 we'll have Council Member Gentile followed by Council
5 Member Treyger and then Chin, Barron and Cohen.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Thank you, Mr.
7 Chair and good morning to both of you and President
8 Grillo. We have worked many, many years together in
9 my 20 years of an elected official, and the siting
10 you-you mentioned in your-your remarks that one of
11 the districts in my-in my Council District is one of
12 the most overcrowded in Brooklyn, District 20. And
13 so I-my question to you is that with locations, site-
14 siting of locations so difficult particularly in
15 District 20, I'm-I'm curious as to why there has not
16 been more use of additions to existing buildings, of
17 permanent additions to existing buildings as at least
18 a temporary measure until more sites can be found?

19 LORRAINE GRILLO: Actually, Council
20 Member, we've built many additions in particular in
21 District 20, but again everything is a trade-off
22 because as you build those additions in such an
23 overcrowded area, you really are taking away play
24 space, and so there is, you know, a trade-off
25 basically, and I think almost-I'm going to say at

1
2 least 50% of the schools in your district have
3 additions that we've built.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Now, does that
5 include TCUs or--

6 LORRAINE GRILLO: [interposing] No.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: --or permanent
8 use?

9 LORRAINE GRILLO: No, it's ground-up
10 additions.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: I'm sorry?

12 LORRAINE GRILLO: Ground-up--

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Ground-up--
14 ground-up additions.

15 LORRAINE GRILLO: Yes.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: And isn't it in
17 that case sometimes you--you use some roof space as--
18 as--as an enclosed play space?

19 LORRAINE GRILLO: We do and often do
20 rooftop playgrounds, but it really doesn't make up
21 for the amounts of space you're--you're using for the
22 city addition. Remember when you build a rooftop
23 play space, you're building an elevator that goes up
24 to that roof. You're putting into some of your
25 mechanical equipment as well. So you really don't

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have that whole entire roof as play space, but we do
it where we can.

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Now, let me ask
you about TCUs then. How often do they become
permanent structures? I know for example in the high
school situation at Fort Hamilton High School TCUs
were supposed to be there for maybe ten years. It's
been 30 years and they're still there--

LORRAINE GRILLO: [interposing] That--

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: --and--and so how
does that work?

LORRAINE GRILLO: That particular
building was not really TCUs. That building was I
believe a mini-building, and I-I do recall, and this
is years ago that the SCA did some reinforcement to
that building to allow it to be permanent, but it was
not a transportable classroom we required.

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: So it was never
intended to be removed?

LORRAINE GRILLO: I don't know what he
original intent was, but I will tell you that we-we
put a great of funding into that building to make it
[bell] a-a viable permanent building.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: And—and is that
3 something that happens often that these where at
4 least we thought was temporary, but were permanent?

5 LORRAINE GRILLO: No, actually I'll give
6 you another example. In PS-19 that the chair-
7 Chairperson spoke about earlier. There was a
8 combination of TCUs and a mini-building. We were
9 able to build an addition to that school because it
10 was funded—funded seats and we took down both the
11 mini building and the TUCs as well. In the area in
12 Brooklyn, there is no funded high school seats at the
13 present time.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: There lies—
15 therein lies the problem with overcrowding in high
16 schools at least in Brooklyn that I know of. Thank
17 you.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Council Member
19 Treyger.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you, Chair
21 Dromm and welcome to President Grillo and Deputy
22 Chancellor Rose. Just to quickly add to Council
23 Member Gentile's remarks with regard to District 20.
24 Prior to the arrival of this administration, this—
25 this is why I've vehemently opposed the—the

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2 colocation of IS-96 because that school like many in
3 District 21 are on the border of District 20, and
4 rather than co-locate them, we could help accommodate
5 and help provide added seats to our District 20
6 brothers and sisters, and—and so I would hope that we
7 get more creative in helping deal with overcrowding
8 rather than just co-locating schools. But I just
9 want to also begin by acknowledging your work and
10 leadership and thanking both of you for finally I—I
11 could say that in Coney Island all of our temporary
12 boilers are gone. It took over four years, but they
13 are gone, and I appreciate that. I also appreciate
14 your recent visit Deputy Chancellor Rose to one of
15 our schools, Cavallaro with regards to some issues
16 with co-location. But I do want to ask a question
17 with regards to—I mean certainly I want to add my
18 voice to the Chairs' and to others with regards—I
19 think that we're making investments to add more
20 school seats, but I think that—I think you would
21 agree that we are still woefully not there and, you
22 know, the message to Albany is that we--you need to
23 step up and do your fair share, your legally
24 obligated fair share to help New York deal with this
25 crisis with regards to overcrowding. But having said

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2 that, with regards to school infrastructure, you've
3 heard me say this, and I will continue to harp on
4 this. Is there money in--in the capital plan to fund
5 wiring in schools to provide assistance with adequate
6 air ventilation like air conditioning in our schools.
7 So is there money in the budget for that?

8 LORRAINE GRILLO: Yes. Actually, yes in
9 the--in the areas--with the two areas that you talked
10 about, particular in the area of technology, and
11 wiring there is funding in the budget. I believe
12 that--

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: [interposing]
14 \$100 million.

15 LORRAINE GRILLO: Well, I'm talking about
16 the--that's the real commission. (sic)

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: Right.

18 LORRAINE GRILLO: Right, the technology
19 has a large funding. I think it's \$600--

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: [interposing]
21 It's about \$650 million for technology.

22 LORRAINE GRILLO: [interposing] \$650
23 million, right for that kind of wiring, and there's
24 \$100 million right now in the current budget for
25 wiring for air conditioners.

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2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Just on that note, I
3 just want to say we're really trying to focus here on
4 the siting issues, and we're going to have another
5 capital budget hearing in about a week and half or so
6 or two weeks. Can you hold those questions, Council
7 Member Treyger, for that hearing because we really
8 want to focus on the issues of siting today.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Sure, I-I
10 absolutely will with your site. (sic) I will just
11 quickly add that this is major issues for-for
12 existing schools. We just can't ignore the fact
13 that, you know, one of the learning evaluations for
14 educators in the schools is a learning environment
15 and this is a major issue. But just to-I'll wrap up
16 by-by saying I will continue to be an advocate for
17 this issue because I think it's a major issue both in
18 terms of labor and-and just basic human conditions
19 and inside. I do believe that-I'm going to go back
20 to my original point with regards to District 21 and
21 District 20. I-I think for example there's a school
22 in-in Southern Brooklyn, PS-248. It used to be a
23 school. Excuse me.

24 LORRAINE GRILLO: [interposing] Uh-huh.
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COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: PS-248 that is now with—that was taken over by the MTA. I don't know if you're familiar with this school. The MTA many years ago purchased it from the DOE, acquired it from the DOE, but we're willing to step up and work with -with the DOE and the SCA to find those spaces in the—in our Southern Brooklyn community to deal with the overcrowding crisis in District 20. I believe over 10,000 seats that are in need somewhere in that area there's around 10,000 seats in District 20. It is one of the most overcrowded school districts we have in New York, and I'll close by saying thank you.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you very much. Council Member Chin followed by Barron and then Crowley.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you, Chair. Good morning, but first I wanted to, you know, thank you I mean Lorraine to really work with us on the overcrowding task force and also with DOE. It's been many, many years ever since I got to this Council and we're playing, you know, we're almost caught up, but in Lower Manhattan, and we've got a new school bill, and I think that's a—it's a very cooperative effort

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2 in the overcrowded task force, but we have every
3 elected official in Lower Manhattan in the principal,
4 or it's the community board, and assets hearings, and
5 it's—it's been going great. And I think coming up
6 we're still anticipating three is going to be mover
7 overcrowding because all these new buildings that are
8 going up and a lot of them are humungous high-rises
9 and—and so I think the—the that questions down is
10 that we—we still feel like we're still debating an
11 old issue like how do we look at the population data,
12 and do, you know, you look at the data and really
13 aggregate by neighborhood and to really see because
14 in the last overcrowding task force, we heard about
15 this competition that SCA was talking about in terms
16 of dealing with how to look at new data models to
17 accurately project future public school population.

18 LORRAINE GRILLO: Uh-huh.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: So I think we were,
20 you know, requesting really discussion with the group
21 especially, you know, Eric Green. He's been sort of
22 helping us and been doing pretty good projection, and
23 we're anticipating there's going to be more needs
24 even though we have one additional school that's
25 being sited. So I think one of the things, one of

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the questions I have is is DOE and SCA really looking at ways to disaggregate the population data by specific neighborhoods. That's one question. The other question is that I've introduced a resolution three years ago looking for a School Impact Tax or fees because we've got all these buildings going up, and a lot of times, you know, they are marketing the schools. I mean, we're blessed with really great schools down here. So all these new developers that converting all these old buildings they're publicizing we actually can just bring schools down Low Manhattan. They're not contributing anything, and right now in the State Assembly, and right now in the State Assembly Assemblywoman Deborah Glick has introduced legislation again, Legislation A-3378 talking about a school impacting-impact tax. So I wanted to also see if, you know, SCA and DOE was supportive in that effort because of things that this way we can at least guarantee that [bell] it's official funding for a new schools that's-that's going to be needed.

LORRAINE GRILLO: I think my job as a- well, first of all, thank you for the task force. We've been working really, really well together over

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2 the last several years, and I think we've done some
3 really good work and we always appreciate agreements
4 work, the route. I think my job right now and the
5 job of the SCA is to site and build as many schools
6 as we-we possibly can. The Impact Tax-Tax issue is
7 something that we would certainly be willing to
8 discuss but I'm not in a position right now. I don't
9 know enough about it, and I'm not in a position now
10 to say whether I support it or not. My job again--
11 I'm going to say it again and again and again I need
12 to find sites. I need to acquire sites and I need to
13 build new schools. That's my job. So, certainly we
14 would be willing to have that conversation.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: What about the-the-
16 the data, the population data that relating I think
17 relating to specific neighborhoods so that you focus
18 on the specific need on the area, and not just--

19 LORRAINE GRILLO: [interposing] Right

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: --the-not just the
21 school district.

22 LORRAINE GRILLO: Well, we do our
23 demographics by sub-districts. We don't just do by
24 district. So we now are broken down by sub-
25 districts, and again, I will say we have been within

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2 1 and 2% accuracy over the last—at least as long as I
3 can remember before the SCA has been dealing with
4 statistics. [pause]

5 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you,
6 Council Member Chin. Now, we have Council Member
7 Barron followed by Council Member Cohen.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you to the
9 Chairs for holding this committee meeting, and thank
10 you to the panel for coming, and I'll be very brief.
11 Can you please put into the record what the status is
12 for construction of a new school to accommodate the
13 East New York Family Academy in terms of where it
14 will be placed in the Capital Plan, when it will be
15 on the PEP calendar, what is the total cost that's
16 anticipated and the time table for construction?

17 LORRAINE GRILLO: Okay.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Where the
19 children will be during—relocated during the
20 construction time, total square footage, and will it
21 have--as my colleague has addressed a very important
22 issue—dedicated space, a dedicated auditorium, a
23 dedicated cafeteria, a dedicated gym. Having been a
24 principal, I know the challenges that you face when
25 have one area that has to be shared in terms of

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2 programming and have an effective curriculum that
3 addresses all those needs, and you've got one space
4 that has to accommodate several different areas of
5 construction.

6 LORRAINE GRILLO: Okay. Happy to answer
7 as best as I can, Council Member. The project we're
8 very excited about it. It's currently in design as
9 we speak. We expect that the construction will begin
10 I think by next year, and with the completion of it
11 by September 2021. The new school as I understand
12 the design so far will have a cafeteria, will have a
13 dedicated gym, and in addition to that will have a
14 swimming pool. I don't know and I'm not absolutely
15 sure the status of the auditoriums. I don't want to
16 say that, but I certainly can get you as much as that
17 information as possible. I don't believe except for
18 rezoning issues, I don't believe that that school has
19 to go to the panel at all.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: [interposing]
21 It--so yes it will be going--

22 LORRAINE GRILLO: [interposing] Oh, I'm
23 sorry.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: --to the
25 panel.

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COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Oh, it does,
okay.

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DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: It will be
going--the school, the new school itself will not be
going to the panel, but since we will need to
relocate the school that's currently in the building
and the TCUs, during the construction period that
relocation of students will go to the panel. It will
be proposed for a panel vote this spring either our
May or June panel meetings. The students will be
relocated to the Maxwell High School Campus for the
duration of the construction. They will relocate as
of the September 2018 school year, and they will have
dedicate space in that complex for--for their use.

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COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So the entire
school population, which is now in the portable side
of the building that entire school population will be
located at the other schools so they both can stay
together as a unit.

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DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: That is
correct.

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COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And the pool that
we would---DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: And we heard
very loud and clear from the school community--

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COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Right.

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DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: --is that they
wanted to stay together during the construction
period, and we have come up with a solution for that.

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COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And the pool that
will be a part of the new school is that existing
[bell] pool or will it be expanded to--

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LORRAINE GRILLO: Right. We're--we're
currently designing so we don't absolutely know, but
we will let you know as the design progresses.

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COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And lastly, there
have been instances where School Construction
Authority has promised a particular grade siting for
a new building, and at the end--at the time that the
building is open, it changed. What kinds of
guarantees do we have? What kind of guarantees do we
have that the East New York Family Academy will
return to that building, not some other entity trying
to use that building?

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DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: [interposing]
So that information? That information will be
included in the proposal that will be voted upon by
the panel for educational policy.

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COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you and just lastly, Mr. Chair, if I could ask you for indulgence. What steps is being taken to address the issue of lead in the school's water?

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Just like if I can interrupt because Council Member Barron--

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing]
Yes.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: --we're going to have the--the budget hearings moving forward--

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing]
Yes.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: --we're going to have the--the budget hearings moving forward, and I think--

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing]
Okay.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: --it's probably more of an appropriate question for there because we really wanted to keep the focus today on the siting and planning.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: But thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I'll ask you that question next time I see you.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much,

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COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Council Member
5 Cohen.

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COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Thank you Chair
7 Dromm. I—I would really be remiss if didn't sing
8 your praises about the tremendous work that's being
9 done in my district and District 10 about—in regards
10 to PS-56. I brag about PS-77 all the time what a
11 beautiful new school it is, and you know how excited
12 I am about the—the prospect of an addition at PS-19.
13 So I mean I—I really want everyone to know the great
14 work that is being done in my district. I am
15 concerned, though, about in terms of siting. You
16 know, I scratch my head when, you know, I have real
17 estate developers who somehow are finding sites
18 everywhere, and I have housing sprouting up out of
19 control, and we perpetually have this problem where
20 SCA can't find sites. So I don't know if it's the—
21 it's the real estate brokers or—or what is going on,
22 but there really is a disconnect. I--I guess the
23 developers are finding sites, and we need that same
24 kind of enthusiasm and creativity just for SCA to try
25 to find sites, too. And the other question I had is,

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2 you know, I believe that I have a problem, you know,
3 my district borders the Westchester County, and—and I
4 do believe that I have at a couple of schools that
5 have real problems with—with students in Yonkers and
6 people from outside of the zone coming into the
7 elementary schools. I'm curious what the protocol is
8 for verifying the addresses of students that they do
9 live in New York City and specifically in the zone?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: So, all this
11 verification is handled at the school level and—and,
12 of course, we are very concerned about students
13 coming from outside of New York City boundaries into
14 our schools. As part of registration for schools,
15 students are required to provide verification of
16 address. There is a, you know, there are very clear
17 state guidelines as to the number and types of
18 address verification documents that can and be should
19 be accepted at schools. And we work—our
20 superintendents work with their principals and work
21 with the staff at schools to ensure that they are
22 following proper procedures.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Do—do you think
24 those procedures are adequate, sufficient that
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2 they're actually catching the population. So I would
3 say from outside the city or outside the zone?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: So schools do
5 have additional procedures where if they suspect that
6 a student does not live where they have demonstrated
7 through those--those address information and address
8 verification where they live, that they can request
9 an attendant teacher to do a verification, and so we
10 are sometimes successful in identifying students who
11 are not living where they say they are.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: And that's at the
13 discretion of the principal?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: It is
15 initiated at the school level, yes.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Thank you very
17 much.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Our Chair Ferreras-
19 Copeland.

20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
21 you, Chair. I wanted to just get on the record
22 timeline. So can you walk us through, you know, and
23 I think you--you definitely need to get credit and we
24 say this in this public hearings all the time
25 especially to the Parks Department or DDC [laughter]

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2 why can't you build faster? However, we are—I don't
3 think we're still building as fast as the private
4 sector, and I'd like you to walk us through what some
5 of the challenges either we can expect or what the—
6 why can't we build even faster, and I know that
7 you're doing better than the average city agency.

8 And I think that there are hurdles that you may have
9 eliminated, but are there additional hurdles that
10 perhaps we can help you eliminate in this process?

11 LORRAINE GRILLO: Thank you, Chair. It's
12 interesting because I have heard that you have
13 mentioned that to other city agencies.

14 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Yes.

15 LORRAINE GRILLO: It's—it's not making my
16 colleagues very happy, but that's okay. [laughter] I
17 think that there are a couple of things that we do a
18 little bit differently. First of all, our designs
19 are—are—are normal timing and design, and an average
20 school takes approximately a year. When we see
21 construction going up, developers' construction, the
22 truth is we don't how long their design has taken.
23 All we're seeing is a shovel in the ground. So
24 that's one issue. The second issue has to do with
25 the condition, the environmental condition of the

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2 site and how we address that. We—our standards are
3 very, very high. These are our children and so we
4 put protections in that another developer would not
5 do. Okay. We do sub-slab depressurization systems
6 to make sure that any issues with regard to the
7 groundwater or anything in the ground would—would not
8 affect the school building. Things like that, which
9 are really bulging with children (sic) and—and belt
10 and suspenders, are things that we do because they—
11 these schools will serve our children, and we want to
12 make sure that they are safe. So, that's something
13 our typical project will take 24 to 30 months. A
14 typical school new build say 700 to 800 students will
15 take approximately 30 to 36 months. These are not
16 outrageous numbers, but keep in mind that we could
17 finish a school for example in February, but it's not
18 going to open until September because obviously you
19 have to start to hire staff and all those other
20 things. So our schedule—again, while it may be a
21 little extended, it's not outrageous, and our
22 schedule, our deadlines we don't have the—the luxury
23 of being a week late on a project or a month late on
24 the a project. Our deadline is our deadline. So I

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think that we can compare to almost anybody with the things that we do. Like if we do a great job.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And can you just walk me through the timeline prior to design to affirm--

LORRAINE GRILLO: [interposing] Prior?

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: --like, you know, you found a site--

LORRAINE GRILLO: Uh-huh.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: --but the timeline.

LORRAINE GRILLO: Sure. Sure, Well, certainly if we find a site, the--the first thing we do is contact the owner or the owner's representative and do negotiations. Okay, with that said, if we reach agreements on a negotiation, we do the environment assessments, right. Then we have a public process, which you are aware of, and there is a 45-day comment period. As a result of that, we then come to the City Council Land Use Subcommittee, then the full committee and then obviously the vote of the entire Council. I'm going to say that could average if everything went perfectly I'm going to say three to six months as--as something that would be

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2 great. Often times in negotiation when we're going
3 through those things there might be some delay. The
4 use of eminent domain may have to be part of the
5 conversation. There are a variety of things that can
6 happen, but, you know, if everything worked perfect,
7 you know, three to six months would be a great time-
8 time period.

9 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So, on
10 average you would think it's three to six months?

11 LORRAINE GRILLO: Every site is
12 different. I would love to say that, but I really
13 wouldn't be honest if I said that.

14 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And can
15 tell me the timeline if the site is owned by let's
16 say another agency as opposed to a landlord, but
17 those owned by, you know, DOT or--

18 LORRAINE GRILLO: Uh-huh.

19 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: --what's
20 the timeline look like there, or what are the
21 negotiations like from city agencies with this.

22 LORRAINE GRILLO: Yeah, it depends upon
23 if there is something located on the site right now.
24 For example, a site in Lower Manhattan that actually
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1
2 may have MTA equipment on it. That has to be
3 relocated.

4 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.

5 LORRAINE GRILLO: So that period of time
6 we don't have any ability to—to change. Yeah, there—
7 there are so many variables, so many variables.

8 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay. So
9 we can say on average that that prior to design can
10 be anywhere between three months to maybe a year in
11 the worst--

12 LORRAINE GRILLO: [interposing] Correct.

13 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: --case
14 scenario?

15 LORRAINE GRILLO: That's absolutely
16 right.

17 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Now are
18 there specifics on your specs like the needs that you
19 have for this—this type of building that makes the
20 plan to be delayed, a location?

21 LORRAINE GRILLO: No, it's really about
22 the size of—of the sites. Again, 20,000—a footprint
23 of 20,000 square feet is ideal, but we've gone as low
24 12,000. So you have to make those adjustments so
25 that you have the proper amount of classrooms, the

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2 proper spaces for bathrooms or proper size of
3 hallways so children can pass in the hallways. All
4 of those things factor into it.

5 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay,
6 thank you very much, Chair.

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much,
8 and [coughs] I have a few questions on--

9 LORRAINE GRILLO: [interposing] Sure.

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: --demographers.

11 LORRAINE GRILLO: Sure.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So the SCA uses two
13 independent demographers to project future enrollment
14 through your partnership and statistical forecasting.
15 We understand that you're in the process of replacing
16 Greer Partnership with another demographer. Can you
17 tell us how far along in that process you are, and do
18 you plan to ensure that the concerns with prior
19 projects are addressed by new demographer?

20 LORRAINE GRILLO: Greer partnership has
21 been a terrific consultants for well over 20 years,
22 and the surviving Greer is somewhere in the 90s-96 to
23 97 years old, and she has served us well, and decided
24 to retire on her own. This Cisco Forecasting, which
25 we took on several years ago has been doing an

1
2 extraordinary job, and we're working with our
3 partners from City Planning right now to develop
4 projections as an alternative to contracting another
5 demographer.

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So the SCA's website
7 says that statistical demographic projections take
8 into account birth, enrollment and migration trends
9 for five and ten years into the future, and combined
10 it with housing growth to derive the total projected
11 enrollment. However, the Statistical Forecasting
12 Report section on methodology does not mention using
13 migration trends or housing data and Greer
14 Partnership's report does not have a methodology
15 section. Can you explain how these enrollment
16 projections are calculated?

17 LORRAINE GRILLO: Right. The SCA gets
18 new housing information and it's provided by the
19 Department of Buildings, HPD, and we work with City
20 Planning and these agencies to provide future housing
21 starts, which is rezoning and things like that. But
22 we take advantage of the expertise of other agencies
23 as well.

24 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: The statistical
25 forecasting also excludes students from District 75,

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the citywide special education program. Why—why are these students excluded?

LORRAINE GRILLO: District 75's programs exist citywide as you know, and it's not really—they're not really geographic in that you may have a particular program in School District 30 for example that serves the particular element of the 75. Those students could come as far as the District 24, you know, another district in Queens. So it really would be impossible to track that.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: I'd like add that we work very closely with Deputy Chancellor Rella Ansami (sp?) who leads the organization that includes District 75 to identify where geographically students are located, which districts have more seats for District 75 students, but may not have that many students in the district and the opposite, which districts have more District 75 students who live in the area than there are District 75 seats to serve. And so we work very closely with them to—and then with SCA. They build. As part of all new construction they look at where are the sites sufficiently large that they add a facility specifically for District 75 in the program, and we

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2 look for District 75 programs to be at least eight
3 class sections to create an appropriate school
4 environment for the students, and we'd like for them
5 to be in the same building and sharing space with a
6 district school of the same age levels so that
7 students can have opportunities for inclusion with
8 their non-disabled peers.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Is the enrollment for
10 District 75 schools increasing, and I ask that
11 question because if that's increasing then how are we
12 planning for the additional students into the future?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: So District 75
14 is increasing. We, as I said, SCA has been building
15 additional District 75 locations in their new
16 buildings that they're developing, and we have also
17 been able to identify locations in existing buildings
18 where we can add a District 75 programs.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So there's—I think
20 there's a special education program, District 75
21 program and it's PS 151, and it's the layer that's in
22 trailers. What are the plans there? What's going
23 on? What's happening with that? You knew I was
24 leading up to that right?

25 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: Thank you.

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2 LORRAINE GRILLO: Thank you so much for
3 asking that question. [laughter] That's actually
4 under you (sic) so please.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: We will be
6 posting a proposal by end of this week that will
7 relocate those students out of trailers and into a
8 permanent structure. We're very excited about that.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, good.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: [interposing]
11 And it is thanks to space that the SCA found and
12 acquired.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Very good. I-I want
14 to go into a little bit on how charter schools affect
15 our numbers as well. In 2014, a state law was passed
16 that required the City to provide new and expanding
17 charter schools with free space in public schools or
18 pay rental costs, and I know that's partially an
19 expense question, but it also doesn't pass the use-
20 usage in existing schools. So, what impact has this
21 had on overcrowding issues in DOE schools, and how
22 much of this new requirement is the cost to the city
23 to date?

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: So, charter
25 schools currently enroll about 100,000 students. A

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2 little more than half of those students are located
3 in the Department of Education under controlled
4 facilities, and about 45% of them are in facilities
5 that are leased or owned by the charter schools. TO
6 the extent that there are charter schools in
7 Department of Education buildings, we focus on
8 providing space to students where we have available
9 space, where we have underutilized capacity. And, in
10 fact, about two-thirds of our over-utilized buildings
11 are single organization buildings. So there is no
12 colocation in those buildings. There is only a
13 department—a single Department of Education school,
14 only about a third of over-utilized buildings include
15 co-locations, and some of those are co-locations with
16 other district schools or with District 75 programs,
17 and not with a charter school. Currently, there's a-
18 a sizeable number of charter schools that have
19 received the right to receive rental assistance in
20 accordance with that state law, and the Department of
21 Education is meeting its obligations accordingly.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So some of the
23 arguments that I've heard around charters is that
24 they're saying some of the the—some of the operators
25 of charter schools, not all but some, are saying that

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the statistics that have come forth in a hearing like this and—and other hearings as well are not true, and that there is additional space in our schools. How—how is that disconnect happening?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: So that's actually one of the things that my—I--my team will be looking at a great deal this spring. I think it—it tends to happen in some of our larger high school campuses where the rebooked capacity will show a certain number of seats, and yet when we go visit the school and before we make any sort of a proposal to co-locate a charter school in a building we physically go visit the school, we walk the building, we inventory all of the space, and we understand how the space is used. We do try to ensure that all of our schools have what we call continuous—contiguous and autonomous space. We want a school to have a—a unit, a piece of space that is that school and that can lift up that school's culture. Sometimes that means that a school will naturally have some excess classrooms so that they have an entire hallway, or an entire wing of a building. So some of that excess space is when you break up a building into different parts, there may be excess space, but not space that

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2 you can easily aggregate into a single contiguous
3 unit that would be appropriate to add an additional
4 organization in the building.

5 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And I would think
6 that some of that space that they're talking about is
7 in districts that are not overcrowded. So that, you
8 know, they put there--there are accumulations of-of
9 schools in 24, 30, 20 and maybe 15. I'm forgetting
10 off the top of my head, but are--seem to be the most
11 overcrowded districts, but that's not--we don't have
12 space in those schools. So like if somebody is
13 opening--wanting to open a charter in District 24, we
14 don't have space in a District 24 school or even in a
15 District 30 school--I know from personal experience--
16 to house that charter.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: That's--that
18 correct. In our more overcrowded districts like 24,
19 you know, pretty much every building is used to its
20 fullest capacity, and if it isn't, we are looking for
21 ways for how can we help meet the need of the
22 district in those buildings, and that can sometimes
23 be special programs like a Gifted and Talented
24 program that may help draw students from outside of
25 an overcrowded area to an under-utilized building or

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2 that may be a perfect example of where a District 75
3 program might make sense.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright. Council
5 Member Kallos has some questions, and I'll finish up
6 with a couple of more, though. Overcrowding can a
7 disproportionate impact on students with special
8 needs. To what extent does the DOE consider the lack
9 of fully accessible options in certain districts when
10 deciding where to build new schools?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: So we actually
12 have an Accessibility Committee, and I'm extremely
13 proud of the work that the team has been doing on
14 addressing accessibility issues of the DOE. Our-our
15 Accessibility Committee includes representatives from
16 the School Construction Authority, from the Division
17 of School Facilities, from the Office of Student
18 Enrollment, from District 75, from the Office of
19 Space Management, and they have taken a very
20 systematic approach to assessing the level of
21 accessibility on a district-by-district basis. And
22 then also on a grade level by grade level basis, and
23 so they are trying to create equity across
24 geographies so that the school-the districts that may
25 have the lowest percentage of accessible buildings at

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the elementary school level that's the first place where went to identify how can we increase the number of accessible buildings in this district? In some cases the demand for new seats will take care of that for new build, new construction for the SCA, but there are also other areas of the city where we don't have additional seat units, but we have an imbalance or a lack of equity in—in the accessibility of our buildings. So the current Capital Plan has actually invested \$100 million and including accessibility and—and we were very proud of that—what we're doing. We've also, if I can just give a plug, we are now doing extremely detailed assessments of the accessibility at high school buildings. So that this information, very detailed specifically for our partial accessible buildings, not just that they are partially accessible, but what aspects of the building are or are not accessible so parents can have much more informed choice of what buildings would be appropriate for their students for high school.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: When did that committee—when was that formed?

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2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: [background
3 comments] I'd say it-it-it-it existed and-and it went
4 into disuse for a period of time and we resurrected
5 it I want to say about two years ago, two to three
6 years ago and they've been making tremendous
7 progress.

8 LORRAINE GRILLO: And-and just to add to
9 that effort because we're all very involved in it.
10 The SCA has recently hired a Director for Compliance,
11 ADA Compliance, and we're working very closely with
12 it.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well, it's an issue
14 of importance to myself and to

15 LORRAINE GRILLO: [interposing] Right.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: --and to Council
17 Member Cohen as well. We had done that with several
18 advocates on this issue as well. So that's-that's
19 good to hear that.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: The-the basis
21 of the survey that we're using for that Incremental
22 Information and High School Directory was actually
23 developed in conjunction with several parent
24 advocates from throughout the city, and they came and
25 did a walk-through with us with their proposed survey

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2 so that we could really see what they were seeing
3 and—and looking for, and we've used that very
4 sensical.

5 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. What is the
6 methodology for projecting Pre-K capacity needs, and
7 is this only done year to year? Is there any long-
8 term planning for Pre-K capacity akin to planning for
9 the K to 12 capacity?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: So Pre-K
11 capacity we have been looking very closely at the
12 application trends, and we now have a couple of years
13 under our belts where we are able to see where
14 families live, where they are applying and where we
15 have seen gaps. The—the UPK team has reached out to
16 the FDA to help some in the breach. We also, of
17 course, annually conduct a request for proposals from
18 external UPK providers from the—the NY Seats (sic) to
19 help us fill in that gap, and actually over 50% of
20 our student enrollment, our UPK enrollment is in
21 these Early Childhood centers. So they are an
22 incredibly important partner in meeting that need.

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And what are we at
24 73,000 UPK seats at this point?

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2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: Yeah, we're
3 just a little over 70-at October 31st I think we were
4 about 70,000 students.

5 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. According to
6 state law, the City can consider changes to school
7 district lines every ten years. Why hasn't the city
8 chosen to redistrict schools in recent years
9 especially given dramatically different enrollment
10 numbers and utilization rates across districts?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: Well, as you
12 know, redistricting is a very formidable undertaking
13 and there are certainly some limitations in what we
14 are and are not allowed to do in terms of
15 redistricting. So, I'd just like to use the example
16 of District 10, which is one of our most overcrowded
17 districts on where we constantly have challenges in
18 siting additional seats. The State Law actually
19 requires that we may not change the boundaries of the
20 District 10 so--

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [background comments]
22 Why is that. I'm sorry. Did I miss that?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: I-I certainly
24 can't give the insight into why that particular
25 district may not have its boundaries changed, but it

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is, in fact, part of the State Law around
redistricting.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Alright, the
most recent enrollment projections available on SCA's
website are from May 2015. Can you tell us when
we'll get the updated enrollment numbers? [background
comments]

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: I'm sorry.
Can you repeat the question?

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yes, on the SCA
Website the most recent enrollment projections are
from May of 2015. When can--does the SCA--

LORRAINE GRILLO: [interposing] Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: --expect to update
these enrollments?

LORRAINE GRILLO: Yes, you're correct,
and we expect to be able to post that later this
week.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, good. Alright,
so that's it for me. I want to announce that we've
been joined by Council Members Rodriguez and Lander
and Council Member Lander has questions, then
followed by Council Member Kallos for his second
round.

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COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you very much, Chair Dromm for convening this hearing and as always for your leadership on these issues and thanks to Chair Ferreras-Copeland and, of course, to the Speaker for the announcement of the Planning Commission, and I want to say thank you also to the SCA for your work and, you know, first I do need to acknowledge in my district, in my time in office you have helped deliver a lot of new schools and I think credit where it's due is important before going onto my pushing. So, [laughter] you know, I do want to just, you know, recognize and be grateful for like, you know, it's the new PS-133, the new PS-118, K-437, which houses the 130 Upper School in A-39 taking significantly more space in District 4 first for Pre-K but for middle schools as well, the PS-32 Annex, which we're getting set for into new construction on the new Pre-K center on 9th Street just in my district and that's a lot of capacity that we've added, all of which we need, and we need more, and that's just sort of my half of the District 15. Obviously, Council Member Menchaca's half has its own significant and dramatic needs, which—which you know well. So, that's significant progress. That said,

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2 you know, we still have a lot of unsited funded
3 seats, and a lot of unfunded, but identified need. I
4 guess one thing I do want to kind of ask about and
5 call your attention and maybe-in your testimony you
6 refer to immigration and birth rates rather than new
7 housing as drivers of growth. Certainly Sunset Park
8 has seen a lot of immigration, but in-in my part of
9 District 15 it's not mostly birth rates and
10 immigration. It is new housing construction. It is
11 more families with kids sending their kids to public
12 schools, which is great, but we are also embarking on
13 the Gowanus places study and rezoning, and we can't
14 move forward confidently toward considering any new
15 residential development unless we really have a
16 commitment that SCA and DOE are our partners in
17 seeing that and in working with us to continue to
18 identify funds located in the capacity there so-

19 LORRAINE GRILLO: Absolutely, and-and
20 what I was referencing in my testimony really was in
21 the areas of Sunset Park. That has been something
22 that we've done very specifically. So you're
23 absolutely correct and again on all of the major re-
24 zonings we are working very closely with the city
25 agencies and with your office to come up with a plan.

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COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Which we

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appreciate, and I just—you know, we can't underline--

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LORRAINE GRILLO: [interposing] Yes.

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COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: --them because

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those of us that recognize the need to accommodate

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the growth we're seeing and who are willing to work

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with the administration on potentially new resident

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development to seek, you know, growing populations.

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The first things we'll hear at least in my district

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is our schools are already crowded. How could we

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allow one additional building to be built, and so we

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just have to be in partnership. So I appreciate that

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commitment. And then my only other question is about

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what work you are doing to think about the

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relationship of new capacity and new school growth

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and development to our diversity goals? That is a

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topic for another whole hearing, and I don't want to

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get into the issue broadly, but just on its

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intersection with new school sitings, that can often

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be an opportunity. It is not easy to achieve a

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rezoning or have folks who already have an

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expectation. That is hard. Sometimes we have to do

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it, but it is hard, but when we're siting and

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developing new schools, that is a strong opportunity

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2 to right the wrongs of segregation in the city, and
3 that has happened some, and I'll give you credit on
4 PS-130, and I know that DOE does the--the--this. But we
5 have to do a little better to think about planning,
6 and the relationship between existing lines,
7 districts and school lines [bell] and use new
8 capacity creation as an opportunity to do better on
9 confronting segregation, and getting us a more
10 diverse and more integrated school system. So I'd
11 just like to know what you're doing about school
12 construction.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: So I say the
14 challenge for the SCA is to site schools, and
15 certainly sometimes that means there are
16 opportunities to site that are sort of in between
17 neighborhood around the margin of a particular
18 neighborhood, and that can be very help, and it may
19 be that there is greater availability in some of
20 those opportunities. But regardless of where the
21 building is, once it's been identified and the SCA is
22 constructing it we work with the community on
23 planning around enrollment, and we are very conscious
24 in that process of looking at and incorporating
25 information about diversity into the rezoning

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2 process. So we always look at [bell] the percentage
3 of the students eligible for free or reduced price
4 lunch in the immediate neighborhood and surrounding
5 schools. We look at the ethnic diversity in the
6 area, and so new capacity is probably the primary
7 driver of when we do rezonings. We also do rezonings
8 when we overcrowded buildings adjacent to under-
9 crowded buildings, but we try in that rezoning effort
10 to create as much balance as we can across buildings.
11 I some cases, such as PS-133 in Brooklyn, you know,
12 siting a building at-across district lines but
13 allowing and-and creating an enrollment plan that
14 includes students from both districts is an approach
15 that the main goal is to get to some greater
16 diversity.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you for
18 that answer, and I would just say in the task force
19 and also in the DOE's forthcoming diversity plan it
20 will be great to continue to see forward motion on-on
21 the strategies that we just alluded to. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Council
23 Member Kallos.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you. In
25 2016 in School District 2 expanding from the

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2 Financial District where we're sitting right now to
3 the Upper East Side, 1,696 pre-schoolers took the GMT
4 exam. 883-838 were eligible, 652 applied and only 346
5 received offers turning away 47% of the applicants a
6 total of 306 pre-schoolers. Are you able to track
7 how many children found their other seats in the
8 public school system and how many left the public
9 school system?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: We certainly
11 have the ability to look at how many of those
12 students ultimately enrolled in the public school
13 versus not, but we don't know whether they remained
14 in the city, whether they chose a private school or-
15 or made other choices.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Would you support
17 a residential zoning change that set aside one FAR
18 for community facilities like schools in residential
19 districts?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: I don't know
21 enough about that proposal, but we're always happy to
22 have a conversation with you, and with other
23 government agencies.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Sure, we-we have
25 a zoning application that is filed with Council

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2 Member Garodnick and Borough President Brewer to do
3 just that, and it would bring thousands and thousands
4 of community facility FAR online in East Midtown.
5 Now, on a separate note, you've mentioned having to
6 find siting. I've highlighted numerous construction
7 sites to the Mayor's Office, to DOE to SCA. There's
8 an Excel site at Third Avenue between 95th and 94th
9 and next up at 86th Street between First Avenue and
10 Second Avenue absolutely massive with hundreds if not
11 millions of FAR. I have icon sites on First Avenue
12 at 80th Street and at 81st Street. I have an Excel
13 site now at First Avenue between 79th and 80th
14 Street. I have Free Child' (sic) at First Avenue and
15 77th Street. That's been an empty lot for as long as
16 I can remember. We've sent this before. We can send
17 it again. Would you consider building on one of
18 those sites or other sites that I've notified the
19 Mayor and DOI and DOE and now you [laughter] because
20 not only can they serve my district, but the could
21 serve the city and we could have integration and it
22 could be great, and I know we need--

23 LORRAINE GRILLO: [interposing] Right.
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COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: --future Pre-K

and I think we need seat for all this overcrowding

I'm hearing about today.

LORRAINE GRILLO: Right. Again, we have

to look at our Capital Plan and our capital planning

needs, and as I mentioned earlier, District 2 has no

funded need at the present time. However, we are

actively engaged in discussions with several

landlords on Pre-K seats. We've talked about that,

but currently there is no funding for those seats.

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I just outlined

five major--sorry six major development sites that are

going to bring thousands and thousands of units to my

neighborhood.

LORRAINE GRILLO: Right.

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Do you believe

any of those units will have parents with children in

them that will need to send their kids to private-

public schools?

LORRAINE GRILLO: And again, we do our

demographics every year. As we see this development,

we will incorporate whatever our findings are into-

if-if, in fact, changes need to be we will do it. We

do an update every single year.

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COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Okay, thank and
the span of the work you do I just want more of it.
Thank you.

4

5

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright, well thank
you very, very much, and we appreciate your time
coming in, and explaining a number of these issues to
us. We look forward to seeing you again in March for
the capital hearing for the expense budget as well.
Thank you very much.

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LORRAINE GRILLO: Thank you.

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DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROSE: Thank you.

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LORRAINE GRILLO: Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Let me call up our
next panel. These are students are from MS-442 in
Brooklyn, District 415 who are here with their
teacher Ms. Motto, and they are students from the
Debate Team who want to testify, and I believe I have
their names: Ashley Salcedo and Alam Ahmad(sp?).
Would you come up, please? [pause] Come right over
here and sit down. If-if you have testimony to pass
out, give it to the sergeant-at-arms. [background
comments] I'm sorry. [background comments, pause] So
I'm just going to ask you because I have to swear you
in. Would you raise your right hand? Do you

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solemnly swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole

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truth, and nothing but the truth and to answer

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Council Member questions honestly? You do? Okay.

5

So I don't know who would like to start, but we can

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start right now, and state your name first. [pause]

7

And just turn that mic on. The little red light

8

should be on.

9

ASHLEY SALCEDO: Hi. Okay. [laughs]

10

Hi, my name is Ashley Salcedo, and I'm going to be

11

saying my story of how I was going to an elementary

12

school that was overcrowded. When I was younger I

13

went to PS-82. My most overcrowded class in

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elementary school was the fourth grade. In fourth

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grade there were a lot of students in my class, about

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30 kids, and during our class periods not all of the

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kids in my class are able to sit on the rug when it

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came to learning time. Some kids had to get chairs

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from the table and sit on the side of the rug because

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the teachers didn't want to sit them on the bare

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floor and this took time away from learning. The

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hallways were the worst. All of the fourth grade

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classrooms are one side of the hallway. There were

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the two classrooms, two home classrooms and our

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history classroom. When the bell would ring, and we

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2 had to go to the line to lunch or history, the whole
3 fourth grade would be transitioning in the small
4 hallway, and this made kids upset from the very small
5 personal space they had. There were accidents at
6 times and kids would fall or trip over other
7 students. During lunch time we had to exit
8 downstairs to the cafeteria room by room meaning the
9 kids who were in history would go first. Then class
10 41 would exit, then class 42. This meant that if you
11 if you were in one of the last classes to be called,
12 you would be a good chunk of your lunch period, and
13 would be forced to eat quickly. I did not realize at
14 this time how crowded my school was, but reflecting
15 back on this now, I realize it was definitely a
16 problem. [pause]

17 ALAM AHMAD: My name is Alam Ahmad. I'm
18 going to be speaking more generally about the issue.
19 At the high enrollment district of a middle-school
20 student I have noticed that overcrowding not only
21 affects schools that are over capacity, it also
22 affects our community. My school shares a building
23 with an elementary school that is overcrowded and
24 continues to gain more students. It just caused my
25 school to have—to have to share some of our

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2 classrooms, which has an—has had an impact on our
3 experiences, and experiences they can have if they're
4 a student in middle school. If my teachers want to
5 break up the class for a small group hands-on
6 experiment, they are not able to due to the shortage
7 of classroom space available. For example, my school
8 had to turn our science lab into a classroom because
9 there is need for more space in elementary school.

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you both very
11 much, and I really appreciate you sharing your
12 experiences. I had similar experiences because
13 before being elected to the New York City Council I
14 was a public school teacher for 25 years at PS-1992
15 in Sunnyside, and as—as a fourth grade teacher as a
16 matter of fact, and I heard your testimony about
17 being in a fourth grade classroom, and some of the
18 students were out in the trailers, and I brought this
19 up a little bit earlier with some of the folks in the
20 SCA and the DOE. But it was very difficult to get
21 around the room even because all the kids were bigger
22 and the classes were small. The rooms themselves were
23 small, but then they had hooks that you had to hook
24 your coat on your book bag was there. So that even
25 took away space. It was very, very difficult, and

1
2 then I do remember as a teacher one time I was
3 sitting in the staff, and I was looking out the door
4 and the maintenance men came up, and they opened the
5 door for a maintenance closet, and they took the
6 pitch fork out, they took the rake, they took the
7 shovel and I jokingly said to some of the teachers in
8 the staff room, Watch, they're going to turn that
9 closet into a classroom, and guess what? That's
10 exactly what they did. I couldn't believe it. All
11 they did was put in a round table and a couple of
12 chairs. There were no windows or anything like that,
13 and that became the speech classroom. So I find
14 these conditions to be intolerable. We used every
15 other available space in my school. We used the two
16 locker rooms. We used the dressing rooms next to the
17 stages. We used the science rooms. The only place
18 we didn't use was the roof, and I thought maybe one
19 day that would be next, but it's really important for
20 us to hear your testimonies because ultimately this
21 is what it's all about is having students like you
22 have a good education in our city school system, and
23 part of a good education is having a good classroom
24 to be in that's not overcrowded, that's kept up, that
25 is attractive. So I'm very grateful to both of you

1
2 for coming in and providing testimony today. Thank
3 you.

4 ALAM AHMAD: Thank you.

5 ASHLEY SALCEDO: Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much.

7 Now, we're going to call up our next panel and we
8 have Victor Ring-Ring-I'm sorry-from the Bronx
9 Borough President's Office, Ruben Diaz, Jr.'s office;
10 Ayisha Irfan from the Manhattan Borough President's
11 Office, Gale Brewer, and Monica Major again from the
12 Bronx Borough President's Office. [pause] Okay, could
13 I ask you to raise your right hand, please. Do you
14 solemnly swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole
15 truth, and nothing but the truth and to answer
16 Council Member questions honestly?

17 PANEL MEMBER: I do.

18 PANEL MEMBER: I do.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you.

20 MONICA MAJOR: So, good-good afternoon.

21 I am Monica Major. I am the Director of Education
22 for Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr. and I am
23 here to offer testimony on behalf of the Borough
24 President. We have give you a copy of the testimony.
25 So I won't read it ver-verbatim. I will just

1
2 summarize it. We are here today to testify on behalf
3 of school planning and siting. The February 2017
4 Proposed Capital Plan does not fund a sufficient
5 number of seats and this is a problem for both the
6 Bronx and New York City. There are thousands of
7 unfunded seats in the Bronx alone. Not only does the
8 number of funded seats not meet the Department of
9 Education's own states needs, the method—the method
10 for assessing needs, as well as the school siting
11 process must be rectified. The current school
12 planning and siting process is denying our students
13 the opportunity for success they deserve.
14 Overcrowding and too large class sizes demonstrates
15 the failure of the current system. School
16 overcrowding is a rampant problem. The School
17 Construction Authority has acknowledged that school
18 overcrowding is a pervasive and ongoing problem and
19 that we need to fund substantially more seats.
20 Students are crammed into large classes throughout
21 the city. Notably, an analysis by Class Size Matters
22 found that more than 55,000 Bronx students were
23 sitting in classes of 30 or more students. We know
24 that smaller class sizes that allow for more
25 individualized attention and participation and more

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2 physical space to provide resources make a difference
3 in educating students. To address the issue arising
4 from new development triggers for a requirement to
5 build more seats in a given district should better
6 account for the proximity to capacity for which the
7 school already stands. Currently when rezoning
8 occurs, building a new school in a community only has
9 to be—only has to be considered when the project is
10 both predicted to increase school overcrowding by at
11 least 5% and when the utilization rate is at or over
12 100%. A better approach that should be explored is
13 that when a school has already exceeded capacity, any
14 incremental increase should trigger further review.
15 In other words, thresholds must better account for
16 where a school with regards to capacity prior to
17 rezoning. New construction is like—is likely to
18 exacerbate both school overcrowding to even more
19 critical levels especially without a concurrent
20 strategy to address the need to build schools along
21 with new housing. The current policies and practices
22 with regard to school planning and siting are faulty.
23 According to the analysis, the SCA has only three
24 people on staff citywide looking for sites, and only
25 one real—real estate firm on retainer per borough to—

1
2 and fails to cold call. This low staffing level and
3 deviation from common real estate practice [bell] may
4 be a cause of the lack of speed with which they site
5 and build schools. Multiple recent amendments of the
6 Five-of the Five-Year Capital Plan were-were months
7 overdue, and further evidence of dysfunction is that
8 the February 2014 SCA allocated \$490 million to--\$490
9 million to create an additional 4,900 seats under a
10 new class size reduction program, and took two years
11 to identify any projects for the program. Still,
12 this program has only identified three school
13 expansions, and we must include these practices of
14 the SCA to promote efficiency. So we were pleased to
15 hear today that the Speaker has announced [bell] a
16 school siting working group, and we hope that that
17 school siting working group will be-will allow for
18 parents and advocates and-and experts in the area of
19 school planning and construction to better serve the
20 City of New York and the students in the Bronx.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: It is our intention
22 to include parents and advocates on that task force-
23 on that task force as well. Thank you. Next,
24 please.
25

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2 AYISHA IRFAN: Hi and good afternoon. My
3 name Ayisha Irfan. I'm speaking on behalf of the
4 Manhattan Borough President. Thank you to the
5 Committees on Education and Finance and Chairs Dromm
6 and Ferreras-Copeland for allowing me to speak today
7 on school planning—on the school planning and siting
8 process for new capacity. I am particularly
9 concerned about both the inaccurate class sizes the
10 Department of Education uses to calculate current
11 utilization in schools and the dated process the DOE
12 and SCA use to project future needs. First, the
13 DOE's school capacity formula that determines current
14 school utilization spots. I commend the Blue Book
15 Working Group for their continuing advocacy on
16 revising this formula, but despite the Blue Book
17 Working Group's recommendations, the DOE is still
18 failing to use class size parameters dictated by the
19 Contracts for Excellence lawsuits where the state's
20 highest court concluded New York City students were
21 denied their constitutional rights to an adequate
22 education in part because of lack—large class sizes.
23 Without grounding class sizes in the mandate set
24 forth by C4E, we cannot possibly get an accurate
25 assessment of the overcrowding in our schools looks

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like or what the needs for new capacity is. Further, in my over 15 years as an elected official, first as a Council Member on the Upper West Side and now as Borough President, I have consistently seen the DOE claim that there is no district need for additional school capacity, and time and time again parent school leaders and advocates have pushed back, and said these claims do not match the reality on the ground and in our classrooms. These relentless advocates have taken it upon themselves to go from classroom to classroom and residential buildings to residential building to personally gather data on the need for additional school seats. As we sit here today, I see that the DOE Capital Plan yet again does not again take into consideration the on-the-ground realities and school space needs in my borough. I'll give two key examples. In Lower Manhattan Community District 2, I along with the local elected officials co-chair the Lower Manhattan School Overcrowding Task Force. The task force is comprised of parents, community members, the DOE and SCA and was formed to address the chronic overcrowding in Lower Manhattan. The Task Force members have been integral in doing their own community driven research on population

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2 growth in the—in the area and the need for additional
3 school seats. Over the past few years, Community
4 Board 1 and NYU Professor Eric Greenleaf conducted a
5 population study and found that since June 2013,
6 plans for over 5,000 new apartments have filed with
7 the Department of Buildings, 80% of which are south
8 of Ful—Fulton Street. If we apply the DOE's standard
9 of allotting 0.12 new elementary school seats per new
10 apartment, then these apartments create a need for
11 634 new elementary school seats. Yet, the latest
12 proposed amendment to the DOE's Capital Plan does not
13 indicate any need for school seats in the Lower East
14 sub-district of Manhattan. This is unacceptable.
15 Additionally, in District 5, the Teacher's College
16 Community School—the community has imminent space
17 needs. The St. Joseph Building where TCCS is
18 currently housed cannot accommodate the school
19 population any more. [bell] This year as fifth
20 graders phased in, TCCS had to move the specialty
21 rooms and art and music rooms into the gymnasium.
22 This coming September TCCS will be expanding into the
23 middle-school grades. The DOE has known TCCS will
24 need additional space for its middle school for the
25 past six years, yet again there's no acknowledgement

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2 of this in the DOE's [bell] and SCA's Capital Plan
3 Amendments. This indicates the DOE fully intended to
4 co-locate TCCS into a current DOE building instead of
5 creating new capacity. I know that finding space is
6 challenging, but the solution here cannot be to
7 displace other schools or to pit parents and students
8 against each other to engage in turf wars. It is
9 irresponsible to put our district schools in a
10 position where they have to fight proactive for basic
11 resources. Funding co-locations only exacerbates
12 these resources deficiencies. We must do better by
13 our children. I thank you all for the opportunity to
14 testify.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. I visited
16 the Teachers College Community Schools as well, and I
17 hope that we can find space for them so that they can
18 continue to do the excellent job that they're doing.
19 Thank you. Okay, thank you very much. Our next
20 panel, Leonie Haimson from Class Size Matters; Maggie
21 Morroff from Advocates for Children; and Shino
22 Takawat-Tanakawa--excuse me--from CEC District 2 and
23 the Chair of the Blue Book Working Group. [pause]

24 Alright, so I do ask everybody to raise
25 your right hand, please. Do you solemnly swear or

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2 affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and
3 nothing but the truth and to answer Council Member
4 questions honestly?

5 LEONIE HAIMSON: I do.

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright. Laney, do
7 you want to start.

8 LEONIE HAIMSON: Yeah. Thank you, Chair
9 Dromm for holding these hearings and continuing to
10 pay attention to this critical issue, which obviously
11 affects the quality of education in this city.
12 According to the latest Blue Book figures, which are
13 those recently released for the prior school year,
14 the overcrowding problem is getting worse. 580,000
15 students or 62% of the total are enrolled—were
16 enrolled in overcrowded schools, about 40,000 more
17 than the year before, and that some 42% of the
18 schools or organizations are overcrowded. Yet, our
19 February Capital Plan funds fewer than 45,000 seats
20 and only 29% are in scope and design compared to the
21 DOE's estimate of the need, and then I have some
22 charts showing you that there's a wide variety of
23 funded seats, and also compared to the DOE's estimate
24 of need, across the city. Our projections—our—our
25 estimates are that the Bronx is the most underserved

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2 in terms of percentage of funded seats compared to
3 the DOE's estimate of need, and Queens is the most
4 under-funded in terms of the number of seats needed.
5 Yet, we don't even trust the DOE's estimates. We
6 think that the need is much larger, and I go into a
7 lot of detail in this Power Point in my testimony
8 about why. As we've heard, it's an unreliable scope
9 of capacity formula and you've heard about the class
10 sizes and lack of cluster spaces in many—in many
11 cases. They're also based upon unreliable estimates
12 from housing starts using a City Planning formula
13 that has not been updated in nearly 20 years. They
14 are based upon widely divergent and often inaccurate
15 enrollment projections from two separate consultants.
16 The methodology that the DOE uses to put all this
17 together is totally non-transparent, and when we try
18 to replicate their methods we come out with
19 completely different numbers. I just wanted to give
20 you an example. For the Greer Partnership, the
21 latest projections online show a decrease of 59,000
22 students over the next ten years. The statistical
23 forecasting says it's an increase of 28,000 students,
24 but by using the housing start methodology, using the
25 City Planning ratio, it shows there'll be an increase

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2 of 63,000 students. So, and from year to year the
3 consultants' projections go up dramatically and go
4 down dramatically from year to year. There's no
5 consistency or reliability to their forecast. I was
6 interested to hear that they apparently are—are now
7 going to use—work more closely with City Planning,
8 but I'm not sure how that would work considering that
9 the city planning formula used is—is completely
10 reliable as well. I wanted to mention also the—the—
11 the ratio that City Planning used to—to forecast the
12 numbers of seats needed has not changed since Pre-K
13 expansion has happened, and I've looked back over the
14 years, and so not to include Pre-K or change the
15 formula when you have thousands of new Pre-K students
16 makes no sense, and the housing start data for 13
17 districts has not changed for five and year—ten-year
18 projections, which makes no sense. Because obviously
19 there are going to be additional housing units over
20 the course of the sixth to the tenth year. I have a
21 lot of other issues that I address in my testimony
22 including the threshold issue, which you just heard
23 mentioned needs to be lower especially in overcrowded
24 districts. You need to build schools even if the
25 ratio does not project the 5% increase, and the Needs

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Assessments do not differentiate between [bell] elementary and middle school seats, and there's— basically we have a lot of problems, which I mention in identifying in my testimony, but I just want to under this issue about the working group. We think it's great that the Council is taking this seriously and wants to come up with new proposals, but it needs to be a transparent open process that really does elicit the best ideas of planners and advocates and experts from around the country. We suggest in our testimony that there be a website, that there be contact information for proposing ideas, and that there be a series of forums around the city, and that professional organizations including planners and architects be elicited for their best ideas. This is a problem that has existed for over 100 years. We need to start really addressing it, but we need all the best minds available in order to do a really good job. So thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you Leonie, and your suggestions in terms of the makeup of the task force whenever we can call those is well taken, and we've been working with the Land Use Committee here at the City Council in preparation for the Speaker's

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2 announcement, which occurred during her State of City
3 Address, and so we do want to use these forces (sic)
4 and have that type of expertise in the task force or
5 on the task force as well, and also continue to make
6 an open and transparent process. I just wanted to
7 ask you briefly before we go to the other folks on
8 the panel, where do you see the increase in housing
9 going up the most according to--?

10 LEONIE HAIMSON: Right now in Manhattan
11 there's an incredible boom and--

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] Where
13 in Manhattan?

14 LEONIE HAIMSON: Throughout Manhattan. I
15 haven't looked exactly where, but just looking at the
16 housing units, the--there's--there's, as they
17 mentioned, they--they say that there are no unfunded
18 need for seats in District 2 where they're creating a
19 little bit more than 3,000 seats and maybe Shino will
20 talk about this, but the--the housing units show an
21 additional 7,500 new seats needed from housing starts
22 alone. So, how--however they're--they're gauging it,
23 they're not doing it accurately. The--the comments by
24 Lorraine Grillo that their enrollment projections
25 have been nearly correct year after year is frankly

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2 unbelievable. If you're in any community you know
3 that they've been completely off, as the Lower
4 Manhattan task force people will tell you, and I
5 think there are just so many methodological problems
6 with them that it's even hard to figure out what's
7 going wrong exactly because they want to tell us how
8 they come to those estimates.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well, I think you're
10 hitting on—the nail on the head to a certain extent.
11 I think we have to look at the Demographics unit, and
12 the Real Estate unit in the SCA, and try to figure
13 out a better way to work more closely with them on
14 these issues. So thank you. Maggie.

15 MAGGIE MOROFF: Good afternoon. Thank
16 you so much. As you know, I work as the Special
17 Education Policy Coordinator at Advocates for
18 Children. I want to talk about something today that
19 we haven't talked a lot about except in response to a
20 question of yours, accessibility of the schools, and
21 as the Council considers the capacity of the school
22 system to meet the needs of all students around the
23 city, they also need to consider the needs of those
24 who have accessibility needs. New York City lacks a
25 sufficient number of accessible schools at every

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2 level. Last the Department of Justice found that 83%
3 of the city's elementary schools are not fully
4 accessible. That represents—actually that doesn't.
5 That means that there are 6 of the 32 community
6 school districts that don't a fully accessible
7 elementary school in them. The Department of Justice
8 focused on elementary schools, but when you look at
9 the numbers for middle schools and high schools it's
10 even more compelling. In 13 of New York City's 32
11 districts there isn't a single fully accessible
12 secondary or high school. In 11 of those districts
13 there wasn't a fully accessible middle school or K
14 through 8 program, and in four of the city's
15 districts there are no fully accessible schools
16 whatsoever. Obviously, that's unacceptable. Any—so
17 as I said before, any planning that's done around
18 siting of new school buildings need to consider the
19 needs of those—those families who have accessibility
20 needs. I'm going to veer a little bit off of siting
21 with your—with your permission. So, while newly
22 built school facilities need to be fully accessible
23 under the law, the City also needs to undertake some
24 of those current renovations at existing school
25 buildings in order to up the number of fully

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2 accessible options given the dearth of options.
3 Families seeking schools for their children with
4 accessibility needs in elementary in middle and in
5 high school, reach out to us often to complain and
6 worry over the lack of realistic options for their
7 children. As the Department of Justice recognized
8 that's definitely true for the elementary schools.
9 It's also true and a bit more complicated for those
10 at the middle and high school levels where families
11 need to consider all kinds of factors as they look at
12 transitioning to the next level. So they're looking
13 at geography and program type and school size and
14 specialized curricula focus. Those families with
15 accessibility needs need to look at all of that plus
16 whether or not the school is going to be accessible.
17 Even in districts that appear to have more options,
18 there are problems. So District 2, for example,
19 which does have more fully accessible high schools
20 than many of the other districts excused. So the
21 only fully accessible high schools there are
22 Stuyvesant School of Art and Design and Clinton and
23 Beacon and a number of District 75 programs. So all
24 of those programs are either highly [bell]
25 specialized or District 75 because of the more

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2 profound special ed needs. But there's nothing for
3 the majority of students that fall in between those
4 two. Full accessibility is obviously the ultimate
5 goal, but in the meantime the DOE relies on something
6 they call partially accessible school buildings to
7 serve those students. I want to talk about those
8 really briefly. In schools that the DOE considers
9 partially accessible, we hear from families that
10 they—that those include buildings with no elevators
11 or broken elevators, bathrooms that are too small to
12 accommodate the students. Those using wheelchairs
13 inaccessible spaces in rooms like the nurse's
14 offices, back entries (sic), art rooms, the
15 cafeterias and the auditoriums. So, getting into the
16 first floor of the building even if it's through the
17 front door isn't enough, but the buildings need to be
18 able to—to allow those students to participate in all
19 that goes on both academically and socially. We have
20 been working, both AFC and the Arise Coalition,
21 [bell] which we coordinate—have been working with the
22 City and with the Department of Education to try to
23 breathe some new life into this, and we've been
24 advocating for increased options for students with
25 acceptability needs and improving information for

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2 families. Elizabeth Rose talked a little bit about
3 the surveys that the department is doing now. I
4 think that those came very much out of our
5 conversations. So, sorry—the DOE really needs to
6 [bell] identify the geographic areas with limited
7 options across a range of programs, and not just
8 elementary school and middle-school and high school,
9 but specialized schools and schools with an arts
10 focus, schools with a focus on math and science, et
11 cetera. And they need to then do the renovations
12 necessary, but then also add new construction—this is
13 where we tie in—to address the overcrowding in all of
14 the schools and the need for accessibility. So, if I
15 can really briefly on Council Member Kallos' bill,
16 I'd like to just say that to enable the city to plan
17 appropriately for where to site new schools and to
18 embark on renovations of current buildings, there's a
19 whole to be gained by collecting and reviewing data.
20 To that end we support the legislation that's been
21 proposed. We'd like to make it a little bit
22 stronger. So we—we suggest that it be expanded to
23 require that the DOE further disaggregate together--
24 because I always ask for disaggregation—by special
25 education status, by the need for accessible sites,

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2 which doesn't just go—it doesn't go to special ed
3 necessarily because there are plenty of students who
4 need accessible types [bell] who don't have other
5 special ed needs by English language learner status,
6 disaggregated by language, and by students living in
7 temporary housing. I'll have more to say next week,
8 but I'll stop there for now.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Maggie, are you on
10 that committee that they referenced as the--

11 MAGGIE MOROFF: So it's not exactly a
12 committee. The Arise Coalition reached out to the
13 departments in the city a while—about a year and a
14 half ago, and we've had a number of conversations
15 with them. I think they're advocating--

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] Right
17 after the meeting that we had with Councilman Cohen?

18 MAGGIE MOROFF: No.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Are you aware of that?

20 MAGGIE MOROFF: No.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. About a year
22 or a year and a half ago we had a meeting with some
23 advocates, and specifically on some of the issues
24 that that you've well addressed in your testimony
25 today.

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MAGGIE MOROFF: Right.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So, I was just wondering if that was an outcome of that discussion or had this been ongoing, or have they been aware of this for a long period of time? You've been working on it.

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MAGGIE MOROFF: Right. We're not the only people focused on it for sure. We've been—we have been for some time. We were not at that meeting, but—but we—one of the things that we are doing is reaching out across the city and trying to bring in all the people that are in the conversation, and make sure that we're working towards the same goal.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And my understanding is that when you talk about partial accessibility is that—that means basically the first floor is accessible because they can get a ground floor.

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MAGGIE MOROFF: Basically, I mean it it—it is true that in some schools with elevators it's still partial accessibility, but if it's not fully ADA compliant, it's—it's—it's got to go to compliance.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] So the bathrooms and ADA?

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2 MAGGIE MOROFF: The—the problem is—is
3 that, and I do think that the DOE's surveys that they
4 are conducting right now, although they are going to
5 teak a while to get through, they're going to—they're
6 going to move us a long way towards figuring that
7 out. But partial accessible accessibility is a
8 really broad term, and what is partially accessible
9 for one person may not be for another person
10 depending on their needs.

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, alright. Shino.

12 SHINO TANAKAWA: Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you.

14 SHINO TANAKAWA: Thank you so much for
15 having me here today. I really appreciate the
16 opportunity to share some of my thoughts as the co-
17 chair of the Blue Book Working Group as well as the
18 Vice President of the Community Education Council for
19 District 2. I want to start with something that
20 Lorraine kept saying, which is the SCA is in the
21 business of siting schools and they're constantly
22 looking for sites, and they are always on the
23 lookout. I do have to say in District 2 we have a
24 track record of the SCA missing a few good
25 opportunities. One of them is the newest elementary

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2 school, which is sited in this Community Board 1, the
3 Trinity School we call it. It was a Simms Retail
4 Store that a Community Board 1 member identified
5 several years ago as a potential for a school site.
6 We didn't act on it until last year. Another one at
7 75 Norton Street. Advocates identified with Assembly
8 Member Glick as a potential for a middle-school, and
9 it took several years after that first identification
10 to of the site until it became a reality. So I think
11 the School Construction Authority needs to start
12 making a better database of potential sites, and
13 figure out a way to grab some of those sites before
14 they agree that there are needs. So one of the
15 problems with the SCA's methods right now is
16 geographical units for planning. It matters what
17 geographic unit we use to do the planning when it
18 comes down to elementary schools and somewhat some of
19 those schools as well. Right now the School
20 Construction Authority uses what's called the
21 Planning Sub-district, which is a planning unit that
22 doesn't align with anything else. It does not align
23 with the school attendance zone. It dose not align
24 with community districts. It's somewhat arbitrary
25 dividing of the borough into these units, and they

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2 tend to be too large. So if you do the analysis and
3 projections based on that large geographic unit, you
4 can actually show that there are no needs for extra
5 capacity because one neighborhood might be under-
6 enrolled while the other one is being overcrowded to
7 death, and they even out at that scale. So it's
8 important for the SCA to start looking at capacity
9 planning at the level that actually makes a
10 difference, which is at the neighborhood scale. And
11 the other problem is enough dollars. As we all know,
12 it's a SEQR. The formula is too coarse. Again, it's
13 the wrong application of the geographic units. We
14 cannot be using the coefficient that applies to the
15 entirety of Manhattan at the neighborhood level. The
16 proportionate students who attend public school out
17 of a particular neighborhood is very different from
18 another neighborhood in Manhattan. To use one
19 coefficient is not accurate enough, and that's one of
20 the problems that is leading to localized
21 overcrowding without any solution in sight. Some of
22 the other problems we—we see is naturally funding,
23 but to that Assembly Member Glick introduced a
24 fantastic bill that imposes fees on the developer.
25 It is time that these residential developers are held

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2 accountable. They sell the units based on the
3 quality of the local schools, [bell] yet families who
4 move into those units don't realize that they may not
5 be able to get into their own—their own school
6 because there are no seat, and for the developers to
7 get away with that kind of marketing and not give
8 back to the community is a huge problem. And that
9 also gives—goes to the SEQR requirement if you don't
10 trigger a minimum number of units from your
11 development then they have nothing they have to
12 provide to the community. So those are things that I
13 think we can actually change to make things much
14 better. And finally and most importantly, the Blue
15 Book Formula, as you mentioned, we need to switch to
16 the Campaign for Fiscal Equity Class Sizes. Until we
17 do that, we do not know the actual extent of over-
18 overcrowding in our schools. If we don't know what
19 the current situation is, we are not going to be able
20 to plan appropriately to address all the problems.
21 And one final thought that is a complication to all
22 this school planning process is the fact that we have
23 a school funding formula based on the number of
24 students. With the student based funding what that
25 means is schools have the incentives to enroll more

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students than there might be space available. Once we build capacity and the enrollment starts declining in that school that has had to accommodate overcrowding, what they're faced is—with is a downsizing of the school. That means cutting programs, potentially cutting staff, and that is an unseen effect of poor planning on the part of the City, and this could actually mean somebody's job might be at stake because we didn't plan appropriately to build capacity. With that, I thank you again for the opportunity, and I hope to keep working with you on this issue.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you and I've seen the issue of neighborhoods overcrowding versus district wide overcrowding as well on a first time basis because even within District 24 or 30 there are pockets and different levels of overcrowding by neighborhoods. So, I'd say Jackson Heights for example is probably the most overcrowded schools. It varies, but you know, you've got Astoria and it's little bit less for the year. So I think that's a very good suggestion in terms of looking at—how we look at overcrowding in the first place. So thank you.

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SHINO TANAKAWA: Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright, thank you
everybody for being willing to testify.

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MAGGIE MOROFF: I just wanted to add the
Housing Start Data, which is online shows District 14
as second to District 2 in terms of the housing
starts and then District 30 where you're seeing a
huge development there. But these numbers do not
seem to be taken into account in DOE's needs
assessments, and we have to know why.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And District 30 falls
where in that?

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MAGGIE MOROFF: It's the third most
number of new housing units that are going to be
created in the next five years.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Oh, I see. Uh-huh,
yeah. Okay, thank you. Alright our next panel is
Nick Nyhan. Actually, excuse me, Ryan from Brooklyn
District 15 PTA; Laurie Kindred, Parents of District
5; Fay Filemon (sp?) CEC 6; Camillo Cassaretti, (sp?)
CEC 15. [background comments, pause] Okay, I just
want to say we've—we've been joined by Council Member
Helen Rosenthal as well, and I'm going to ask each of
you to raise your right hand so I can swear you in.

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2 Do you solemnly swear or affirm to tell the truth,
3 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth and to
4 answer Council Member questions honestly?

5 PANEL MEMBERS: [off mic] I do.

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. You're
7 starting down here? Go ahead.

8 FAY FILEMON: My name is Fay Filemon.

9 (sp?) I am the—the borough person appointed to be at
10 CEC in District 6 where I serve as the President for
11 the Council and I also chair the Youth and Education
12 Committee for Community Board 12. First and
13 foremost, I would like to thank you Chairs Dromm and
14 also all the—for joining here for—of your colleagues
15 as well for the Finance and Education committees for
16 this so much needed and wonderful initiative. I
17 would like to say my statement, which I also want to
18 thank you for the opportunity to speak for this.
19 There are three things that I wanted to emphasize,
20 which just goes on the rest of my statement, and one
21 of the things in consort with this effort is that
22 class size is still increased and—and—and is on the
23 loose in—in these districts that is 906 in District 6
24 in the Capital Plan and, of course, the Capital Plan
25 needs to be improved, which is the reason for why we

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2 are here. So I wanted to start my statement by
3 saying that District 6, as you know, was the home of
4 to the Campaign for Fiscal Equity Lots 2 (sic) in
5 which class size and the school overcrowding were
6 needed for this—of the lawsuit and the court
7 decisions. This led to the Contract for Excellence
8 Law in which the city was obligated to reduce class
9 size and to align the Capital Plan to its Class Size
10 Reduction Plan. Yet, class size increased after the
11 law was passed, and many of our schools including the
12 schools with enlarged numbers of English Language
13 Learns have class size as large as 30 or more. Our
14 renewal schools have class size as large as 29. Also
15 the city never aligned any school—its school capacity
16 formula with the small classes despite the—the
17 contract for—for accessing regulations in the
18 recommendation of the Blue Book Working Group to do
19 so. The capacity formula is aligned to class size of
20 28 in grades 4 to 8 and 34 in high schools, which
21 will change to force class size higher. There are no
22 new seats in District 6 in the Capital Plan even
23 though one-third of the schools in the district are
24 overcrowded according to the DOE data. [bell] They
25 are sure go get 34 cluster rooms in our 63 schools

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2 according to the DOE Blue Book. So, I wanted to-to-
3 to also bring to your attention, which is part of my
4 understanding when the DOE was testifying this
5 morning that they had stated that for the last ten
6 years funding has been allocated for the purpose to-
7 for the purpose-excuse me-to reduce class size or
8 planning and seating for new capacity, but the fact
9 is that-that because they had been allocated, this
10 funding is not necessarily has been used purposely
11 for that purpose I will say. So, and this is the
12 reason why we are here. So while I-I guess what I'm
13 trying to say alright is the conclusion that although
14 they've been receiving funding and allocating
15 funding, I'm not sure that those funding has been
16 improperly and last, yes, I would like to urge this
17 Council and now that you took this and I'm taking
18 this initiative to create an open process in coming
19 up with a proposal to improve capital planning in the
20 school's CD, which are needed more than every before
21 with the-with the boom of residential construction
22 throughout the city. So, this is my statement, and I
23 just wanted to leave one question to this Council,
24 and my question is: Why DOE is still affording to-I
25 mean failing to adopt the nature-the nature of those

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facts. These facts aren't recommended by the—or
provided by the Contract for Excellence. So in
sentence and one—I will say then one part they
incessantly and consistently are saying that they are
basically working to improve the problem that for
years or decades we—we—we keep on witnessing that the
problem is getting worse. I want to thank you again
very much for your time and I hope that this
initiative, great initiative is so much needed. You
know, the outcome will come or turn into the best.
Thank you so very much.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. You know
as a teacher, too, with the class size reduction
money that was supposed to come in, you know,
sometimes there's no place to put the kids. What
they do is they put a second teacher part-time into
the room, but it really did not good for me. I mean,
you know, because I still had 38 kids, you now. So
what am I going to do, and I had the primary
responsibility of educating all 38. The other
teacher would just push in every so often, and when
there was no substitute she would have to go to the
other classrooms or whatever, you know. So but thank

1
2 you. Thank you for bringing up all the points that
3 you addressed.

4 FAY FILEMON: So you have our concrete
5 statement so it's--

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] Oh,
7 yeah.

8 FAY FILEMON: --typically what we are all
9 proposing (sic) to the committee. Yes, and thank you
10 again.

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Absolutely. Thank
12 you. [background comments]

13 CAMILLE CASSARETTI: Thank you very much
14 for allowing me the opportunity to speak. My name is
15 Camille Cassaretti, and I am a CEC Member from
16 District 15 and also the former PTA President of PS-
17 32, and I am currently sit on the School Leadership
18 Team. Thank you to the Education Committee, Chair
19 Dromm and the Finance Committee for holding this
20 hearing. I just want to talk about PS-32's
21 overcrowding experience. Besides my personal
22 experience at the school I also represent them in the
23 district. We are co-co-located with MS-432, and col-
24 location can be a great experience if you're blessed
25 with adequate amounts of space. There is so much we

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2 can learn from one another. At PS-32 we have a
3 friendly and happy relationship with our co-located
4 middle-school MS-432, but there's no denying how
5 difficult scheduling and sharing the build has been.
6 We share our auditorium, gymnasium, school yard and
7 its cafeteria. During the school day we have three
8 lunch periods with some children eating as early as
9 10:55 a.m. and others eating at late as 1:30 p.m.
10 Due to the lack of space some of our children are
11 scheduled to eat in their classrooms, and they are
12 not able to experience the standard lunch time
13 experience with their fellow students. Recess and
14 physical fitness time is also compromised due to the
15 sharing of outdoor and indoor recreation spaces. In
16 addition, our dance classes, performance times and
17 family events are also complicated because of the
18 shared auditorium space. Over the last couple of
19 years, due to increased admissions at PS-32, we lost
20 our ESL and Social Studies room to full-time
21 classrooms. MS-442 staff has had to make extreme
22 space sacrifices sharing offices with PS-32 staff and
23 this year MS-442 had to give up two of their
24 classrooms to accommodate the growth of our
25 elementary school. The two fifth grade classrooms

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2 that are on the middle-school floor are not connected
3 to PA system at PS-32, and then, therefore, do not
4 hear any of the PS-32 school day announcements.
5 They're basically just disconnected from the majority
6 of their fellow students. We have 14 classes in TCU
7 units that are in terrible condition. I myself was
8 involved in a gigantic spreadsheet assessing problems
9 that existed in the TCUs. The children in these 14
10 classroom units are also somewhat disconnected from
11 the PS-32 community. In addition, our teachers and
12 staff do not have respective lounge areas. They
13 currently use a former bathroom as the staff
14 lunchroom and lounge. The lavatory tiles and some of
15 the plumbing are still present and visible in the
16 room. This room is also frequently used as a meeting
17 room for [bell] PTA Committee and Board members. The
18 room that was previously used for our parent
19 coordinator and served as a parent lounge and
20 workshop meeting room for parents throughout the day
21 and children during recess was taken away last year.
22 This now easily accessible storage area for the PTA
23 to keep any necessary items. Our PTA space is housed
24 in the Guidance Counselor's Office, and is not easily
25 accessible. When necessary the PTA can only meet in

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the cafeteria after breakfast and before the 10:55 a.m. lunch. Hosting parent workshops has become impossible due to space and time limitations, and although we've made every effort to continue our parent workshops, which typically are three hours, they often have to move locations halfway through the workshop, and although we're going to miss MS-442 when they move to the Bishop Ford Complex this summer, it will be a big relief to know that we'll have full-time access to the entire building and grounds. Over the course of the next three years, plans are in place for our TCU units to be removed. An extension will be added to our main building, and we'll be acquiring space for another 436 children in the new addition. So in closing, I just want to say thank you to the SCA for allowing us this new [bell] annex, and our founding principal Samuel Mills Sprole will be proud to have known that the PS-32 community will come together as one solid unit again. So thank you so much for your time and the opportunity to speak.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you and thank you for very clearly describing the situation as it affects everything in the schools. You know, and all

1
2 the ripple effects, and in particular colocation,
3 which we didn't really get to much today. So when do
4 a co-location, you have to also have administrative
5 offices for the second school and that also takes
6 away space from the existing school. So a good
7 point. Thank you very much.

8 CAMILLE CASSARETTI: Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Next, please.

10 LORI BROWN KINDRED: Thank you. My name
11 is Lori Brown Kindred. I'm the mom of twins at TCTS
12 in District 5. I'm also serving a second term as the
13 co-president of the PA. Our need for space need for
14 space for our middle school is set to open next
15 school year, has been known by the DOE for the past
16 ten years since the accepted proposal by the then
17 Chancellor Jill Cline. Yet we are currently under
18 the wire literally with the Panel for Education and
19 Policy's vote tonight in Brooklyn on a proposal by
20 the Office of Space and Planning to split our school
21 up and co-locate our Pre-K to second grade to a
22 neighboring school. Rather than the DOE being held
23 accountable for providing space to a school they
24 approved years ago, they are set to put the
25 responsibility on a neighboring struggling school.

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Since TCTS has opened, we have helped shape and give hope to District 5 and 6 residents. We are one of the most culturally and economically diverse schools in both districts. With more and more twisted(sic) school options becoming available in the past 5 to 10 years, it is known that most families choose to have their kids go out of district for school especially middle and high school rather than keep them in a district that is continuously underserviced and undervalued. But our problem of lack of space, is by no means a new topic of frustration to schools in our district. With 30 public schools in our district, two-thirds are co-located. Some with three to four schools in a single building. In most cases they were told that it would be temporary. Yet years later for some it's been decades and they still remain. Most starting lunch at 9:30 in the morning and some even without a library, which for middle school and high school is a violation against the State Mandates. At the Community Forum on February 15th, Deputy Chancellor Rose stated that there were more seats available in District 5 than the students need to fill them. However, she also admitted that the DOE asked TCTS several years ago to lower our

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2 enrollment in order to keep the same building and not
3 expand to the middle school that we were promised.
4 This calculation of students comes from the Blue
5 Book—Blue book, which even Chancellor Farina has
6 stated is out of date. Then there is just basic
7 infrastructure needs. The DOE building on Amsterdam
8 and 138th Street, home to three schools has students,
9 the majority of which are Title 1, who rather not eat
10 lunch at all for three to four months out of the
11 year. For some, most likely their only meal of the
12 day, than sit in a sweltering hot cafeteria. The
13 solution is simply to fix the windows so that they
14 can open. Work orders have been in three years, but
15 they are currently steel—the up---still sealed shut.
16 Even at PS-36 where we're proposed to co-locate,
17 classrooms have desks that are more than 30 years
18 old, books and supplies are stacked in milk crates
19 and boxes because they aren't even given proper
20 shelving. How do public leaders think that this is
21 okay for one school let alone for two, three or even
22 four. A 19-page report in June 2014 by Teachers'
23 College at Columbia University stated the impact of
24 co-location in New York City's—students on New York
25 City's--students on New York City's Students'

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2 Educational Rights and opportunities include:
3 Violations of students' rights to a sound basic
4 education, violations in access to facilities,
5 oversized classes and instructional groupings,
6 violations in access to curriculum and supports for
7 struggling students; violations in the provision of
8 special education services, and the diversion of
9 scarce resources. The report states that many small
10 co-located New York City public schools suffer from
11 inadequate facilities, over sized classes and
12 instructional groupings, inadequate course offerings,
13 insufficient student support and in many cases
14 violates state statutory, regulatory and
15 constitutional requirements. Some problems stem from
16 the inadequacy of current funding for schools, but
17 was exacerbated by the fact that small schools in
18 general and co-located schools in particular require
19 additional resources as well as attention to the
20 strains on already limited resources that are created
21 when basic school facilities need to be shared among
22 different entities. If we are seeing that co-
23 location affects schools in a negative way, why does
24 the DOE insist on making that change? Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Where was it going to
co-locate the-the schools? Did you say 36?

LORI BROWN KINDRED: PS-36.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: That's on Amsterdam?

LORI BROWN KINDRED: Amsterdam and 123rd.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: That's the zone given
to obviously contact (sic) schools?

LORI BROWN KINDRED: It's meant--yes,
correct. Current, which-which was originally I
should say built for Pre-K to 2 students. So all of
the bathrooms are built for an early development.
Several years ago t was expanded to a fifth grade. So
not only do they have 30-year old desks and milk
crates for bookshelves, but their fourth and fifth
grades are oversized for bathrooms built for four and
five-year-olds. And I should also say, have had
playgrounds at that school unusable for the past five
to six years.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you.

LORI BROWN KINDRED: Thank you.

I'm going to build off that comment
because you can't really top these stories, and we've
been hearing amazing stories and facts all day. I've
been sitting here since 10:00. I'm going to not shy

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2 to state the problem again because you've heard that
3 many, many times. I just want to (1) acknowledge
4 that there's a big group from B-15 from Brooklyn
5 here, and I really appreciate them coming, the CEC,
6 the PTA President sitting here all day. I really
7 wish the SCA were here for this part of the
8 presentation. [applause] I'm kind of--heart broken
9 is a strong word, but we came all day out of our jobs
10 to talk to them and they--this is their job and they
11 can't stay here in overtime to hear what we have to
12 say. I don't get that.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And usually that's a
14 requirement from me for my hearings. So I don't know
15 where they've gone, but--Oh, you're here? DOE? Oh,
16 they're here.

17 NICK NYAN: Thank--thank you very much,
18 and we appreciate you're here, but there were about
19 30 of them here that took off after they testified.

20 FEMALE SPEAKER: Right after their
21 statement.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: can you identify
23 yourself?

24 NICK NYAN: [off mic]

25 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Ms. What?

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FEMALE SPEAKER: [off mic]

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. We can allow
you. (sic) Okay. Alright, alright. I do ask for
that minimally that we have representation so that
they know the testimony going back so--

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NICK NYAN: Yeah. So in the little time I
have I'm not going to throw more value--

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And Nick, can you
state your name for the record?

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NICK NYAN: I'm sorry. My name is Nick
Nyan, and I am a parent of four who go to public
school in Brooklyn's B-15. So what I want to talk
about is what I've heard today, not more facts.
There's been a lot of facts. I mean the problem is
well documented. What I want to talk about is that I
came into this meeting thinking that I wanted to help
the SCA. I really did. I was like they want to help
me, I want to help them. After four hours I'm a
little bit worried that I think there's—I still want
to help the SCA succeed, but I'm a little bit worried
that there's a perception reality gap having heard
from the leadership. When Ms. James says 50% of our
schools are overcrowded, and you hear a parent saying
this has happened for years—years. The SCA leadership

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2 says we do a great job. Our schedule is extended
3 but not outrageous. We see that buildings are going
4 up faster than the SCA can keep in terms of private
5 development. She says we can do things in three to
6 six months, but then when the chairwoman asked her
7 well how long does it take on average to go on the
8 timeline from the time you find a site to the time
9 it's built? She says well, there's so many
10 variables. Well, what is the answer, and why do we
11 let that slide? Who grades the SCA? All of our
12 students get graded, all of our teachers get graded,
13 all of our schools get graded. Who grades the SCA and
14 what is the formula for that grade, and if a timeline
15 is not established as part of that formula for their
16 success, then we're not serving anybody, and we're
17 not able to help the SCA because the answer is always
18 vague. So she says they want to continue on their
19 track of success, which is what I heard her say
20 today. I would say if we do that, the problem gets
21 worse not better. That's not success, not how I
22 define success in-in my-the resting (sic) my way. So
23 how do we grade the SCA and how do we help them
24 because they don't think this needs to be
25 adversarial. They have money. They have people.

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They need help. You know, we submit sites. You know the story. So something needs to change, and I'm a little bit worried that their attitude is we're good, we're working at, but nothing changes. So what would I like to see just as a parent and constituent? I'd like to see that there are parents, part of this working group so that we're not just talking when the SCA has left the room? I'd like to see more transparency on the site pipeline so when sites are submitted, they always say tell us about the sites. Tell us about the sites. We had the people who had file Freedom of Information Act to find out about the sites. I'm not asking for every deal term, every conversation, every email, but just like where are you in the process, and is there pipeline, and is there a timeline and where are you in that stage?

(3) A better way to grade the SCA. We spent so much time talking about grading students and grading teachers. We need a better way to grade the SCA on their speed and their progress, and lastly for the areas that are acutely affected like the ones you were just speaking to [bell] or Sunset Park, can we please consider some sort of fast track designation?

So as we're trying to fix the whole process, which

1
2 takes a while, can we at least have some way to
3 accelerate for the red zones where it's just super
4 hot for a long time, and whether it's eminent domain
5 or some other City Council emergency session, get
6 those things through the pipe faster while we fix the
7 overall solution. Thank you very much. [applause]

8 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much,
9 and, you know, you brought up an interesting thing
10 that I would often bring up when we have what they
11 used to call I think past reviews, and they would
12 come in and they would rate the school, and they
13 would rate the principal and they rate the teachers
14 and, you know, they'd go through every little fine
15 piece of paper that they could find, you know, in
16 terms of rating the school. But I would say to them
17 well, what about overcrowding? Well, we have
18 teachers that are working in locker rooms and
19 bathrooms and closets. How come you're not being
20 held accountable to the same level that teachers and
21 administrators are being held accountable in the
22 school system? And it's—it's just so true and—and
23 part of the reason that we wanted to have this task
24 force is to begin to hold their feet to the fire in
25 that sense so absolutely.

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NICK NYAN: And thank you for being a

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teacher.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I'm sorry?

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NICK NYAN: Thank you for being a

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teacher--

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Oh.

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NICK NYAN: --and now being in this

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position to help teachers.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well, thank you. You

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can imagine that now I have oversight over the DOE

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so. [laughs] Tables can turn sometime so--

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NICK NYAN: Yes.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: --thank you. Thank

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you for being here. Thank you to the whole panel.

16

[background comments. pause] Alright, next Naila

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Rosario from CEC 13 or it's 15. Right. It looks

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like 3, though. Alright, Andrew Rosario

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representing himself. That was fun. Okay. Jeannine

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Kiely from CB2 in Manhattan, and we've been joined

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again by Council Member and Chair Julissa Ferreras

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and Henry Carit--

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HENRY CARRIER: [off mic] Carrier.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Carrier. Okay, very good from CEC 15. Thank you. [background comments, pause]

NAILA ROSARIO: Hi.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Let me swear you in now because I have to do that, you know.

NAILA ROSARIO: Okay. [laughs]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: We have a history here [laughter] in the Education Committee. So can you all raise your right hands. Do you solemnly swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, and to answer Council Member's questions honestly?

NAILA ROSARIO: Yes, I do.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Naila.

NAILA ROSARIO: Thank you. I have it- here in my phone. Hi, I just first just want to thank the Chair of the Education Committee Council Member Dromm for putting this together, and also Council Member Julissa Ferreras. Thank you so much for giving us the opportunity to do this today. My name is Naila Rosario. I'm President of the Community Education Council 15, and I'm a parent of two public school children, Angie, who you'll hear

1
2 from in a little bit and Andrew Rosario. Due to poor
3 school planning and overcrowding in my district, I
4 had to travel over an hour and a half to get Andrew
5 to Pre-K over five-year window. And for five years
6 also we've been submitting potential school sites to
7 the SCA to no avail. It was not until about a year
8 or a year and a half ago that parents in my districts
9 began to get organized, and come together and really-
10 and really ask questions of the SCA that we were able
11 to start finally the process of obtaining sites.
12 Fortunately for our district a site that was rejected
13 twice is-is now has been approved for a school site
14 in our district. The current School Construction
15 Capital Plan there are only 3,800 seats, which meets
16 less than half of the needs and this is with the
17 DOE's own data and their own enroll-enrollment
18 projections. New York City has, as we all know,
19 especially Brooklyn is one of the fastest growing
20 cities in the country, and yet the city has no
21 realistic proposal to address the growing student
22 population. The City's failure to plan, site and
23 build sufficient school space has been a problem for
24 too long. In District 15 there are 50 elementary and
25 middle-school buildings that are overcrowded with

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more than 4,600 seats needed to lower the utilization rates to 100%. It does not help matters that there are 3,840 seats planned for the—for the five year—the yearly Five-Year Capital Plan. These seats only meet about 51% of the identified needs for the district according to the DOE given the enrollment projections and the existing overcrowding. The new rezoning propels that we see proposed by the Mayor will accelerate the construction and the affordable market rate housing and school overcrowding as already a critical level in District 15. It's probably going to get even—even worse. While I was very happy to see that the City Council is convening a task force that's going to help solve this problem, I really do hope that parents, advocates, and planning experts are also at the table. The CEC recently passed a resolution calling the DOE to form an independent commission to improve planning—the planning process and the efficiency in siting these schools, which now lags far behind public and private development efforts. In our district alone in the last three years, we've seen over ten hotels just go up all over Fourth Avenue. [bell] My son who couldn't get a seat at a local Pre-K over five years ago, is—and his

1
2 sister now have more than 30 classmates in their
3 class. They have to have—Lena has ELA and math prep
4 in hallways. Andrew had to have lunch as early as
5 10:40 a.m. last year. Their dance and art classes
6 are held in the cafeteria. I really hope that—I
7 really hope that we stop [bell] the move from parked
8 to action, and that we really identify and try to
9 solve the problem. I do look forward to working with
10 the SCA and the Council to discuss this beyond this
11 hearing, and I think everyone has said before we do
12 want to help the SCA and this is not about
13 antagonizing the SCA or the DOE for that matter. It's
14 about working together and just being transparent and
15 having an honest conversation. So thank you so much
16 for your time.

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much.
18 Is your son going to speak? [background comments]

19 ANDREW ROSARIO: [off mic]

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Turn your mic on.

21 ANDREW ROSARIO: Hello, my name is Andrew
22 Rosario and I am 11 years old and go to MS-39, a new
23 two-year-old school at 3627 (sic), and everyone needs
24 to look at the overcrowding today and we live in
25 Sunset Park, one of the most diverse communities in

1
2 the Brooklyn area and one of most popular communities
3 in Brooklyn, but there is one problem: There are
4 enough schools to match the population. For example,
5 my old school PS-172 it was an amazing school It was
6 a 2000—a 2011 Blue Ribbon School, which is an award
7 for schools that perform very well, but it's sounds
8 good, right? But it was overcrowded. More than 500
9 kids on three floors. I and I remember having to sit
10 behind the tables just to get enough space and read
11 aloud for—for math—to reading (sic) and having to
12 work in the hallways for ELA, Math and Social
13 Studies. I also needed extra teachers in the class
14 to—to help—to help out all the kids in my classroom.
15 There was about 25 to 35 kids in each class. In my
16 opinion it was very uncomfortable, and I think that
17 that's not good. And another thing about schools—
18 school overcrowding is that it is really annoying and
19 bad for education because it's really aggravating
20 because when you have a question and your teacher
21 won't get to you, you have to go out for lunch, which
22 is the only time you can eat out with your friends,
23 and another example is that you—you might eat—I have
24 been unable to go to lunch in the same table with my
25 friends because there was not enough space, but even

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when there was space I was really squished. It was

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very uncomfortable, and I think that DOE and also the

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Council (sic) can help me finish with this school and

5

believe that this building needs a lot of help.

6

Okay. Thank you. [applause]

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Andrew, you said that

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your school is already overcrowded?

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ANDREW ROSARIO: No, my old school.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Oh, your old school

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and how is your new school now?

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ANDREW ROSARIO: It's 200 kids.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I'm sorry?

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ANDREW ROSARIO: It's almost 200 kids.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay and that's a

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little bit better now?

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ANDREW ROSARIO: Uh-huh.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, when you--when

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you were in the other school it was it very hard for

20

people to get around the school?

21

ANDREW ROSARIO: Now, it depends what

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time you do it, yes.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Uh-huh. Okay very

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good. Thank you. Next. Okay.

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HENRY CARRIER: It's going to be a tough
act to follow. [laughter]

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: You know, actually, I
have one other thought. You know, that I was saying
before sometimes they, you know, with the—the money
to reduce class size, right, so their solution is to
put an extra person in the room, which only increases
the number of people in the room to begin with so
[laughs] anyway it just is a thought that hit me
while Andrew was speaking. Thank you. Sir.

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HENRY CARRIER: Hi, my name is Henry
Carrier. I'm the Vice President of CEC 15 in
Brooklyn. We serve 30,000 students and it's quite a
big—big area. So one is there in Sunset Park, Park
Slope, Red Hook, Cobble Hill, Burn Hill, Carroll
Gardens in Gowanus. So it's very big, it's very
diverse economically, ethnically and so forth. We
advocate for 41 traditional public elementary and
middle schools. I have three children, two in high
school and one in the 8th grade, and I've been a
public school parent for 15 years. Like many other
schools that are—school districts in the city,
District 15 is severely overcrowded and the problem
is only getting worse. Twenty-four schools in the

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2 district exceed built capacity with a number of
3 schools exceeding 150% of capacity. The problem is
4 particularly acute in the elementary schools. PS-169
5 in Sunset Park, for example, now has 500 more
6 students than the building was designed for. 500.
7 That's a school by itself, just the number of excess
8 students. I don't like the word excess student
9 because no student is excess, if you will. A list of
10 the overcrowded schools in the district based on the
11 DOE reports and the SCA report I supposed is attached
12 to my remarks. Unfortunately, the School
13 Construction Authority is really incapable of meeting
14 the current and growing demand for seats in District
15 15. I can't speak for any other district, but I'm
16 sure some people from other districts might agree
17 with me. At the same time commercial and residential
18 construction proceeds at really a fever pace in
19 Brooklyn and probably throughout the city.
20 Essentially the SCA is an inadequate property
21 developer that cannot compete effectively in the New
22 York property market. According to the most recent
23 amendment to the 2015 to 2019 SCA Capital Plan our
24 district is in need of an additional 7,500 seats, yet
25 only half of this requirement was funded. More

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2 troubling, though, because the SCA cannot find
3 suitable sites for the new—the new schools,
4 construction is under—underway currently for only 900
5 seats. That's about 12% of the overall required
6 capability. To put these 900 seats in context, the
7 excess student population of only two schools in the
8 district combined PS-169 and PS-94. I say here close
9 to 1,000 but I actually looked up the number more
10 recently. It's actually more than 1,000 now. So in
11 the entire district we're building 900 seats, yet
12 two—only two schools out of 41 schools [bell] the
13 excess capacity—the excess number of students is
14 beyond that already. In addition, most of the
15 capacity that is scheduled these 900 seats to be
16 built will not occupied until 2020. So consequently
17 new school construction currently scheduled in the
18 district will provide little relief to the
19 overcrowding crisis. So by the time they build it,
20 we're probably going to grow that much anyways, and
21 it's not going to make much of a dent. So it's
22 really just too little and too late. So we have a
23 difficult situation here with seemingly no remedy in
24 sight. The estimate of 7,500 new seats really is
25 probably inadequate given the robust growth in the

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2 population, the residential buildings in-in the area
3 and so forth. Only half of this under-estimated
4 requirement has been funded. So we have a low
5 estimate, only half of have been funded, and the most
6 stressing part even at this under-under-estimated and
7 under-funded level, the SCA is unable to spend its
8 allocated budget. There are currently four projects
9 in the district, and it keeps getting rolled over
10 year to year to year where the site location has not
11 yet been determined. In a community that experienced
12 robust commercial and residential property
13 development, the SCA is a property development that
14 just can't compete with the private developers. They
15 cannot do it. So why is that? You know, I-I do
16 think they have good intentions, and when they build
17 something they build it well. They have a lot of-and
18 so I don't-I don't-I don't' suspect their motive.
19 It's just something is going on that prevents them
20 from competing in this market, and maybe their
21 processes are built-have been put together for 1990s.
22 It doesn't work today, and the numbers just-just show
23 that. So while the CEC is not privy to the internal
24 processes of the SCA, it is clear that the SCA is not
25 aggressive or innovative enough in it's property

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2 acquisition activities to meet the growing demand of
3 school construction. As an example, the current
4 property acquisition policy prohibits the SCA from
5 pursuing occupied properties and offering relocation
6 assistance and cash incentives to encourage tenants
7 whether they be commercial tenants or residential
8 tenants to move. Now, the CEC understands this is a
9 very sensitive thing, you know, a sensitive—the
10 sensitive nature of displacing businesses and
11 residents in a community, and that any such decision
12 is a very difficult one to do. You don't want to
13 really, you know, get rid of the supermarket, the
14 laundromat or move people out their homes. We
15 understand that. However, it's also true that
16 private developers don't have such qualms, and
17 they're going to go in and offer cash and incentives
18 for business and residents to move. So unless the
19 SCA is able to use the same tools [bell] that private
20 developers utilize, the SCA will not be able to
21 compete and increasingly the available property in
22 the district for school construction will become
23 unavailable. That's just a fact of life. The SCA
24 will say optimally they like 40,000 square feet to
25 60,000 square feet. You know you can't find a parcel

1
2 like that. It's very difficult, and a private
3 developer is going to go after it, and if there
4 happens to be a business there they're going to find
5 a way to pay folks to move, and the SCA will not do
6 that. They told us they will not do that. It's
7 their policy. Now maybe in 1990 when it wasn't a big
8 real estate, you know, you could—you could—you could
9 be choosey like this, but you really can't. So we—so
10 this is just one example. We also heard--and I'm
11 sorry the SC isn't here—I heard that they have one
12 real estate broker for all of Brooklyn. Not just
13 District 15, but all of Brooklyn. It's just not
14 going to work. So we hope the SCA and the Council
15 can work together to streamline the property
16 acquisition process to ensure that the SCA meets its
17 mission and build the re—the required capacity in a
18 timely manner. Thank you very much.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Next
20 please.

21 JEANNINE KIELY: Hi, good afternoon Mr.
22 Chair. My name is Jeannine Kiely. I Chair the
23 Schools and Education Committee for Manhattan
24 Community Board 2, and I'm here to share
25 recommendations that CB2 approved in February 2017

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2 just specifically for reforming the SEQR methodology
3 to more adequately forecast public school seats. We
4 identified a number of flaws in the current planning
5 process. In 2014, the State passes legislation to
6 require that the DOE and SCA use local data. We want
7 to ensure that this translate to local planning that
8 our youngest children have the option to attend the
9 neighborhood elementary schools and not be required
10 to commute to a school in an artificially defined
11 sub-district in our expansive school district. As I'm
12 sure you've heard earlier, the SEQR formulas are
13 outdated, and they're based on assumptions and in
14 time when families generally chose not to live
15 specifically in Manhattan, and that multiplier has
16 not changed. In our community we did an analysis
17 based on the actual number of new residential units
18 from Pluto (sic) and the actual enrollment from the
19 DOE's Blue Book, and the historical inside SEQR
20 multiple in the Greenwich Village Chelsea areas
21 closer to 0.16 for elementary school seats, not 0.12.
22 Furthermore, in accordance with the SEQR technical
23 manual the City only requires a detailed
24 environmental impact analysis when the project—
25 residential project will add 310 or more units even

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2 though only residential construction and conversions
3 have the potential to add children to our schools.
4 Multiple projects that individually do not trigger an
5 EIS will certainly have a collective impact on the
6 school population, and that needs to be factored in.
7 This—now I’m going to get a little technical and I
8 have provided a written copy. EIS Analysis is
9 extremely flawed because it permits 100% of the
10 capacity for schools to be included even when some or
11 all of the relevant school zone is outside the study
12 area for the analysis. Basically it allows the—the
13 people preparing the EIS to cook the numbers to get
14 the answer they want. This occurred recently for the
15 rezoning for 550 Washington Street and resulted in
16 the city’s approval of 14–1,408 new units of non-
17 senior housing that ultimately—that was without any
18 public funding for new school seats, and this new
19 demand could cost the city and taxpayers in excess of
20 \$30 million. Also, under the EIS Analysis, the
21 formula for calculating the change in utilization is
22 a pretty straightforward formula. So the number of
23 new students divided by the capacity would be the
24 change in utilization, but as the—the population in
25 the study area expands using the math that you

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2 learned in school and more capacity is built, the
3 threshold for any residential project to actually
4 impact utilization increases even though the cost of
5 building school seats continue to rise. And finally,
6 the SEQOR policy is based on capacity as defined in
7 the Blue Book, which continues to be based on class
8 sizes of 28 students for grades 4 through 8 and
9 [bell] and 30 for high school despite the Contract
10 for Excellence of lower levels. So CB2's
11 recommendations is to ask the Department of City
12 Planning to develop better formulas that takes this
13 into account, institute a policy to comply with the
14 2014 law, and urge our elected officials to develop a
15 mechanism that would require developers of all new
16 residential buildings to contribute to a capital fund
17 for public schools to include new seats within their
18 projects. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much
20 and that's good suggestions in the back there. I
21 will take a look at those more closely with our task
22 force as well. Thank you to this panel very much to
23 coming in today. So I have two panels left, but I'm
24 going to have move everybody along because we need to
25 be out of here soon, and out of the room because

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2 they're to prepare for an event for the season. So
3 let me bring up this panel starting with Rebecca
4 Kostuchenko (sp?) Alright, representing herself and
5 Megan Barryman. Yes? Christina Furlong, my
6 constituent, and Sajing Owh, I think from PS-169.
7 [pause, background comments] Just to confirm the
8 next panel is here, Maria Roca. Is she here? Okay.
9 Norma McCauley. Is Norma here? No, okay. Rita
10 [background comments] Is that here? Yeah and Michael
11 Goldberg. Okay, so you'll be on the next panel.
12 Very good. Can you raise your right hand, please?
13 Do you solemnly swear or affirm to tell the truth,
14 the whole truth and nothing but the truth and to
15 answer Council Member's questions honestly? Okay.

16 REBECCA KOSTUCHENKO: Did I turn it up.
17 Okay. I'm not just representing myself actually. I
18 am a parent of a public school student in District 15
19 in Brooklyn. She's a middle school student, and I
20 was not surprised but disappointed that until you
21 raised it I didn't hear anything about accessibility
22 from the SCA today. My daughter uses a wheelchair.
23 So when we talk about overcrowding, just imagine
24 being in an overcrowded school in a wheelchair. How
25 challenging that is, but unfortunately we can't get

1
2 our kids into most of the schools in New York City to
3 even be in a overcrowded classroom. The Department
4 of Justice is investigating this, as I'm sure you
5 know, and I think the bit of pride that the SCA
6 expressed today about the \$100 million that they're
7 putting towards this problem was very much motivated
8 by that, and I would suggest that they also mentioned
9 they \$15 budget--\$15 billion budget. So that's like
10 half a percentage towards 83% of our schools not
11 being accessible to children with physical
12 disabilities. I often like to put it in context for
13 people that they should suggest--they should think of
14 that sentence 83% of our schools are not accessible
15 to children's rank, and put in any other minority
16 that they care about, and think if our city would
17 accept that because I don't think that would work,
18 but somehow we do with children with wheelchairs. I
19 don't get that. You may recognize me, maybe not,
20 from a New York Times article last year that came
21 out. I am the parent that carries her child up the
22 steps multiple times a day to access her second grade
23 classroom for an entire year. Not because we weren't
24 give accessible choice. We first we couldn't go to a
25 zoned classed school. Then we were given a choice--we

1
2 live in Park Slope—to go to an accessible classroom
3 in Greenpoint. That’s really not going to work for
4 my commute to there. Children with physical
5 disabilities have very tough lives outside of school.
6 There’s a lot going on. There’s a lot of physical
7 and medical issues. To expect them to travel to get
8 to accessible schools is putting an incredible burden
9 on lives on lives that are incredibly burdened
10 already. I now have her in functionally accessible
11 by DOE’s description of middle school. Our middle
12 school was incredibly limited compared to her peers.
13 The two schools that I thought would have been based
14 for her that were choices to other kids in other kids
15 in our district, or in the city, neither was
16 accessible to her. She doesn’t know that, but she’s
17 going to know that when high school admission rolls
18 around, and the numbers that we have so far from the
19 DOJ are about elementary schools, and I can guarantee
20 you the middle school and high school information
21 that’s coming out is going to be worse. It’s going
22 to be worse and it’s also going to involve choice and
23 specialized admissions, which makes it even more
24 difficult. Elementary schools are meant to serve
25 everyone. The Shared Path to Success has suggested

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that. I don't think the Shared Path to Success ever envisioned kids with physical disabilities unfortunately or we would be having a lot more funding for more accessible schools. So what I'm here to say is just that any planning and siting that takes place needs to have this as a first principle. We are 27 years past ADA and New York City is in flagrant violation on a daily basis, and it's just unacceptable and it's unjust, and I tried the city scan for so many important things, and I don't get why we accept this. I just don't. When I hear sanctuary city, I'm so happy and then I think it's not a sanctuary city for everyone because my daughter doesn't have any accessible subway, she doesn't have accessible schools. She does not have enough accessible recreation programs. I could go on and on, but I can say that the schools is where we should be starting, and every child in this city should be going to school with kids in wheelchairs or else we're going to continue to just perpetrate this again and again and again, because they don't know each other. Not okay. So please put people on your panel that care about this, and please let's get more than .67% of our budget to change this. It's no enough,

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2 and lease of parochial schools often don't have all
3 leaders. (sic) There should not be a single new seat
4 made that is not accessible any more. I understand
5 we have existing historical problems, but there are
6 new seats being created. A new elementary school was
7 created to create—to solve overcrowding in District
8 15 in my zone that was inaccessible in 2015. That's
9 not okay.

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you and I just
11 want to state that the issue of accessibility is an
12 issue that this committee in particular has begun to
13 tackle. We've had a number of meetings now with
14 parents on that whole issue, and what it means to
15 have a school that's fully accessible. We also passed
16 legislation to track special education privileges in
17 provisional work services, which would somewhat
18 include how we go about placing kids in classrooms as
19 well, and some of the results of that have found
20 interesting things like 50% of kids are not getting—
21 are getting the—the full services. Thirty-five
22 percent are not getting—are getting partial services.
23 Five percent are not getting any services at all. So
24 that issues is also of particular importance to us,
25 and at a very basic human level as well, and as a

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former teacher I know how important it is for kids

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especially in elementary school to be able to go to

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an elementary school in the neighborhood--

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REBECCA KOSTUCHENKO: [interposing] Yes.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: --just for

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socialization reasons.

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REBECCA KOSTUCHENKO: That's why kids

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have success.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Because that's where

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they meet their friends.

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REBECCA KOSTUCHENKO: That's exactly

13

right and those are her friends now, but they didn't

14

know her until I carried her up the steps.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well, good.

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REBECCA KOSTUCHENKO: I would just say I

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do think all the issues in the room are important,

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and I don't think they are mutually exclusive. I

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don't think that the answer to overcrowding has to

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exclude accessibility or vice versa.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yes, absolutely.

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Yes.

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REBECCA KOSTUCHENKO: And just wanted to

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add--

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Can you state your
name for the record also just for--

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REBECCA KOSTUCHENKO: Rebecca
Kostuchenko.

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CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay. In
both our--both of our committees this has been a very
big issue in particular with schools, but also for
adults--for--for women in wheelchairs to gain access
to--

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REBECCA KOSTUCHENKO: [interposing] Yes.

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CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: --medical
care right--

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REBECCA KOSTUCHENKO: [interposing] Yes.

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CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: --in our--
in our public hospitals, which was a conversation was
taken very unseriously and--and I think if your--your
testimony today is really important to remind us that
we need to--we need to engage and make sure we have
the voice in the task force but also, you know, a
reminder for all of us was, and I think this is maybe
six years ago now, but the aggressive move by the
Board of Elections to move poll sites out of schools
so were not accessible, and that was for one day,
right?

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REBECCA KOSTUCHENKO: Yes, exactly.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And immediately and—and no one really thought of it. People were going to poll sites for years in inaccessible schools, and now we had to—the—the Board of Election went in frantic tirade to find accessible spaces in our communities.

REBECCA KOSTUCHENKO: But they make their lives non-accessible for that day.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Yes.

REBECCA KOSTUCHENKO: Suddenly ramps come out in schools all over the city--.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: [interposing] Exactly, and that's my point. So I think that, you know, and I worked—I worked out PS-18 when I ran a Beacon Program there and, you know, sometimes it's just about that. It's about access more than some of the buildings not being accessible.

REBECCA KOSTUCHENKO: [interposing] Absolutely.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: I remember that our ramp was exactly where the custodians had put the garbage. So it was the

1
2 entrance where the garbage was come—came in and out
3 because it was easy to route garbage--

4 REBECCA KOSTUCHENKO: [interposing] I
5 walk—I—I walk through those exits and I'm there all
6 the time with daughter.

7 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So I--

8 REBECCA KOSTUCHENKO: [interposing] But,
9 you know, I'll take that. I will take that to get
10 more access to be honest with you because the access
11 is so poor in New York City right now.

12 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.

13 REBECCA KOSTUCHENKO: Right now in my
14 daughter's school I'm trying to get her access to the
15 music room, which is in space—it was—it was the only
16 inaccessible space in that school, which we were told
17 when we applied we'd be able to go through the
18 basement. There's a path, a safe path through the
19 basement, and now the custodials don't want her to go
20 through. They had the Commissioner—the—the new—
21 there's now a newly planned accessibility coordinated
22 in every agency. There was a local law last year
23 passed for that, and he came and he's basically
24 trying to do the right thing and making the high
25 school that is co-located move their entire music

1
2 room so my daughter can go to music. But really I-
3 kids with disabilities don't need to disrupt two
4 entire schools. That's really not good for making
5 principals want us in their schools also because
6 that's also an issue, but they just won't let us walk
7 through the basement. Like there's really sensible
8 little things that we're happy to walk through the
9 basement if-if, just to get us access to that music
10 classroom, but we don't need to wait a year and miss
11 music for a year until they can rearrange rooms.
12 Like there are just tiny senseless things that
13 happen, but yes we prefer not to walk through past
14 the trash, but we really just need to get in. We
15 need to get in right now. 83% of schools. Thank
16 you.

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Christina.

18 CHRISTINA FURLONG: [off mic] I'm
19 Christina Furlong-[on mic] Yes, I'm Christina
20 Furlong. I represent PS-89Q in Elmhurst, Queens and
21 I am school leadership team member and form PTA
22 president. I would just like to say thank you,
23 Council members who are my local Council members in
24 Jackson Heights, Elmhurst, Corona for holding this
25 hearing. It's been really impressive to see members

1
2 of CECs, PTAs even the Bronx Borough President's
3 office represented here today and District 15, which
4 must be the fourth most crowded district in the city.
5 I know District 2, which is represented here today is
6 number one, and the whole entire borough of Staten
7 Island is number two, and then our district 24 is an
8 extremely crowded school. If not for Megan and
9 myself, we are not represented in this room, which is
10 part of the larger problem of overcrowding in our
11 community. Our school is supposed to have
12 approximately 1,300 students. It currently has
13 roughly 2,000 students with the number of 2,036 last
14 year in a K through 5. It doesn't have a generous
15 school yard. We have a fantastic principal,
16 assistant principal, teachers and staff some who have
17 been there well over 20 years and seen our community
18 change. It is now 86% Spanish Speaking, 48% English
19 Language Learners school. So, 16% special ed. It is
20 a school that needs a lot of attention for those
21 students. Some of the ways that overcrowding impacts
22 our school everyday is that recess is once a week.
23 Lunch periods are only about 20 minutes starting at
24 9:30 in the morning, which his what got PS-19 its
25 attention. There have been many headlines about 9:30

1
2 a.m. lunches, and that's where we're at now. We
3 Breakfast in the classroom at 8:00 and kids go to
4 lunch at 9:30. Only 13% of our students can
5 participate in our city funded after school program,
6 only 270 kids. Our auditorium seats 300 people.
7 However, each grade has 350 to 400 students. So it's
8 not possible for our school to have grade like
9 assemblies or to have any kind of parent involvement
10 given that we don't have a gym either. The gym was
11 converted to classrooms about ten years ago. That
12 was when there were 400 fewer students than there are
13 now. Now, the gym consists of kids doing hula hoops
14 in a 30 x 20 space, which is often cited by the Fire
15 Department as unsafe. Our principal is constantly
16 negotiating with the Fire Department as being unsafe,
17 and it was mentioned earlier today how-how does that
18 work? [bell] We have, you know, and it works. She
19 is making deals with them, and does it reflect her
20 because it shouldn't reflect her, you know. That's
21 very frustrating. Then State testing comes around
22 and in our school with the stakes so high for our
23 kids to perform, which they do, the testing means
24 there is no library, there is no gym, there's no
25 music. The classroom standards, the numbers of

1
2 students per classroom changed for testing. So our
3 kids are sitting on the floor of their makeshift gym
4 space doing course work for, you know, days on end.
5 [pause] We need more schools to be part of District.
6 As we all know, that will directly impact our zone
7 [bell] and relieve crowding and this can't happen
8 soon enough. So new schools have been built. None
9 have ever affected our zoning leaving it steadily
10 growing while other schools such as 19 have
11 decreased. Elmhurst. Okay, we've heard a lot of
12 people say that they're the fastest neighborhood in
13 the city, and everything, but in a New York Times
14 article about four months ago, North Corona, Elmhurst
15 was listed behind the Financial District in Hudson
16 Yard's growing neighborhood. The Financial District
17 and Hudson Yards do not represent our situation in
18 Elmhurst, and that—that can't be stressed enough. If
19 we're growing at the pace of these multi-million
20 developments on waterfronts, we need to be recognized
21 for what-what we're dealing with and it's multi-
22 family buildings, replacements and real families with
23 two buildings that are being— [pause] We don't—our
24 school borders District 30 we have fewer transfer
25 options because of that. Despite less crowded

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2 schools being blocks away from our zones, we can't go
3 to them. District 2 in Manhattan serves roughly
4 62,000 students, which is more than District 24's
5 66,000 students, but it has doubled the number of
6 schools that we have. On average we have 12 schools
7 with over 1,000 students. Say District 2 has schools
8 that you average 600 students per school. We average
9 1,000 students per school. It's just a gross-gross
10 oversight. I've been told at CEC, which is not here,
11 to march people out on the street to bring them to
12 meetings, to go out and raise my flag everywhere and
13 find locations myself and submit them to the School
14 Construction Authority. We've all said it, and they
15 should be here. It's a gross oversight, too, that
16 they didn't stick around to hear this testimony, but
17 there are many people employed in every capacity to
18 do this job, and I don't see them, and as a parent
19 he's spend the whole day her with everyone else. I
20 have to go out and walk the streets and send them-
21 send them an email a good system. It's insulting to
22 working parents for a huge agency. For two years
23 I've attempted to secure a location the Jackson
24 Height Music-Movie Theater without ever receiving a
25 response from at least 20 emails I've written.

1
2 Sometimes even from you guys yourself, which is I
3 need your support, I need your support and it is a
4 massive thing to do when Megan and I are the only the
5 ones that have been running District 24. So we need
6 your support. Every-three parents before me have
7 tried and given up and either moved or lied about
8 their addresses rather than fight this battle for new
9 schools and rezoning. One of the things that need to
10 consider is a new district. From Queens Boulevard to
11 Northern Boulevard, from 114th Street to Broadway a
12 completely new district. District 24 serves 439,000
13 residents and encompasses 14.2 miles. This is
14 approximately 71,000 more people in three more square
15 miles than adjoining District 30. It is nearly
16 double the residents served in square miles as
17 adjacent District 14 and District 28. Why is it
18 people who are tapped and employed are elected
19 manage? (sic) This district has become so unruly and
20 large is a question that keeps me awake at night.
21 The growth is happening on the Brooklyn border. We
22 share the district with the Brooklyn border of
23 Bridgewood and that's where the schools are going,
24 and that's where the attention of the growth is. It
25 doesn't make any sense on side our Queens Boulevard

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to be going to those meetings. They don't care about

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us as was recognized by the staff that nobody is here

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so--

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Just wrap up a little

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bit because we--

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CHRISTINA FURLONG: Yeah, I am.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: --yeah.

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CHRISTINA FURLONG: This is the last

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paragraph. So creating a new school district can

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serve Jackson Height, Elmhurst, Corona with

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development and better support for the needs of our

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students. In addition, there's a new school

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district. We need immediate attention at PS 89 and

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surround schools for an additional parent coordinator

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community coordinator, and safe for student

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recreation events and storage for school supplies,

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and that is--should be a--a call for all of our

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overcrowded schools that one of the things we need to

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do is in lieu of waiting for SCA to build new schools

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is to accommodate overcrowded schools. Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. I just

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want to assure you that both Council Member Ferreras

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and I definitely although there may not be other

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people here from District 24 today, really are trying

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2 to look out for 24. I taught in 24 for those 25
3 years plus I represented a good portion of District
4 24 and 30. So, and they are on the top of the list
5 of overcrowded districts in the whole city. So
6 that's really in many ways what's motivating the
7 creation of this task force. So I just want to
8 assure you that I'm here.

9 CHRISTINA FURLONG: We can use you out
10 there. (sic)

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So I also
13 wanted to add that as part of every conversation that
14 I have it just happens to be that I'm the Finance
15 Chair and he's the Education Chair, and it's where
16 they have the biggest problem in the city right? So
17 we are going to continue to put pressure on. But I-I
18 think when we were questioning the SCA on conflicts
19 of priorities between agencies one of the prime
20 example is the movie theater on 82nd Street. Right?
21 So the proposals that I'm hearing is about affordable
22 housing, and they're competing with the SCA
23 considering that as space, and that is our biggest
24 challenge when these agencies have priorities that
25 are conflicting. Both of us understanding that our

1
2 priorities are schools. But it is a—it is an
3 interesting time when, you know, the agencies all
4 have their own interests, and how do we kind of merge
5 all that?

6 CHRISTINA FURLONG: We've watched a lot
7 go by like St. John's Hospitals. This year's building
8 on Queens Boulevard they decided it was too
9 dangerous to build a school there, and then just—
10 they've—they've refused charter schools, they've—
11 they're—they're not working. I think our district's
12 leadership outside of the superintendent who I have a
13 lot respect for, is not working on this issue.

14 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay. So
15 we'll follow up. Thank you, Christina.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Next, please.

17 SAJING OWH: Good afternoon everyone. My
18 name is Sajing Owh. I have two daughters. They—they
19 are attending the institute the French Court, ISP-169
20 and ISP-516. I am at PTA in the French (sic) Court.
21 Today I just would—I would like to talk about how—how
22 does overcrowding happen in my kids' school. When my
23 oldest boy kept coming to PS-169 I was surprised when
24 she told me that she didn't have—just step out to
25 lunch. She couldn't walk or run. All three fresh

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2 air is worst than school for her digestion or for her
3 thinking. She is a child that my youngest daughter
4 was sent to a new school, and where she has better
5 environment than my oldest daughter, but the one-one
6 daughter has no manners, why should any child have
7 any respect? Why should some children if at time
8 still 5:00 a.m. and the honor at 1:30 p.m. That is
9 my perfect space. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So thank you very
11 much for coming in and giving your testimony, and we
12 look forward at some point to hear what you have to
13 say. So thank you very, very much. Next, please.

14 MEGAN BARRYMAN: Good afternoon. I want
15 to thank Council Member Dromm and also Council Member
16 Ferreras-Copeland for holding this very important
17 hearing today. My name is Megan Barryman and I have
18 two children at PS-89 Elmhurst, which as you know is
19 the most overcrowded school in the entire city as far
20 as I can tell with 700 students more than capacity.
21 We have an emergency at our school. This is just not
22 sustainable. I can't stress to you how important it
23 is that our zone gets some relief for the
24 overcrowding that we are experiencing. The
25 principal, teachers and staff at PS-89 do an

1
2 incredible job within the limits of what they have to
3 work with, but it can't go on like this. I'm sure I
4 don't have to say, but I will for the record, that
5 every classroom is at capacity with 32 students,
6 which is far too high. In addition as other people
7 have stated over and over again overcrowding severely
8 limits basic activities like lunch and recess. As a
9 result, time for children to get to know each other
10 and play is extremely limited, depriving them of
11 physical activity and opportunities to practice
12 social skills. Activities research has shown are
13 just as important to their success as what they are
14 learning in the classroom. For a child with learning
15 challenges, the situation is even more problematic.
16 One of my children has Attention Deficit
17 Hyperactivity Disorder, also known as ADHD. Over the
18 last few years of navigating this health issue, my
19 family has learned many things about helping our son.
20 One is that in his particular case ADHD is difficult
21 to manage even with medication. Another is that
22 physical activity and exercise help him a great deal.
23 In fact, multiple studies have shown that exercise
24 greatly helps children with ADHD with their symptoms.
25 Given the lack of daily recess at PS-89 due to

1
2 overcrowding, last June we attempted to have our son
3 transferred to a school near our job that provides
4 daily recess to help get him through his school days.
5 We discovered that there is no transfer options for
6 students out of crowded schools into schools that are
7 not at capacity nor can we use a medical transfer. I
8 want you to understand the deep sadness that comes
9 with having your child receive a diagnosis that so
10 greatly impacts their academic success and watch them
11 struggle with the side effects of medication that is
12 used to treat it. I also want to convey [bell] the
13 frustration and anger that come with trying to
14 navigate a bureaucracy like the DOE to get what your
15 child needs from the school day and to fail. It's
16 incredible to me that the DOE essentially forces
17 thousands upon thousands of students to attend
18 overcrowding schools when there is room to
19 accommodate in other schools. I also find it very
20 hard to believe, as others have said, that the SCA
21 cannot find land to build new schools. I just don't
22 believe it. With the pace of development taking
23 place in Jackson Heights and Elmhurst and Corona,
24 it's absolutely essential that solutions be found and
25 implemented quickly not in five years, but right now.

1
2 Whatever processes the SCA is currently using to
3 identify and acquire land, they need to change them
4 to become more nimble and responsive to current
5 conditions. Today, I am begging you. I am begging
6 the City Council and the DOE to prioritize figuring
7 out how more schools and seats can be added to
8 relieve overcrowding specifically for PS-89 in the
9 Elmhurst zone, and I am asking the Council and the
10 DOE to create a transfer process specifically for
11 students in the city's most overcrowded schools. The
12 current situation is indefensible but it is not
13 inevitable. Our community needs the DOE, the Council
14 and the SCA to find the will to make the changes
15 necessary to solve this problem. In the current
16 political climate that vilifies immigrants that make
17 up the vast majority of PS-89, a sanctuary city like
18 New York City needs to show the world that our
19 schools are governed by principles of equity and are
20 responsive to students and families in need. Thank
21 you very much.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well, thank you also
23 and I just want to clarify. One of my frustrations in
24 terms of being the chair of the Education Committee
25 is that I can't tell the DOE exactly what to do or

1
2 how to do it, but what we can do is to hold hearings
3 like this so that we can shine the light on certain
4 situations, and certainly you have done that here
5 today with the—with the situation specifically at 89.
6 And as you probably know, 89 is a school that I kind
7 of inherited when the district line from my Council
8 seat was—was redrawn. And so I've been trying to
9 work with the school, and I visited the school on a
10 number of occasions, and tried to infuse some
11 additional programs, but I am very aware of the
12 horrible conditions of places like gymnasium, the
13 auditorium, traffic conditions around the school as
14 well, and—and, you know, we've been able to work
15 together on a number of these issues. But much, much
16 more work needs to be done there, and I want to
17 continue to work with you on improving that
18 situation.

19 MEGAN BARRYMAN: And we greatly
20 appreciate your support. Thank you very much.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thankyou as well.
22 Thank you for coming here, and thank you very much.
23 Okay, our last panel. Maria Roca [background
24 comments, pause] Serena Rosario (sp?) [background
25 comments] Okay and Michael Goldberg. [pause]

1
2 Alright, can I ask you to raise your right hand. Do
3 you solemnly swear or affirm to tell the truth, the
4 whole truth and nothing but the truth and to answer
5 Council Member's questions honestly? Okay, start
6 with—where's the start? Would you like to start?

7 MIKE GOLDBERG: So, yes, I'll bring it.
8 Good afternoon. My name is Mike Goldberg and I am a
9 member of Manhattan Community Board 5. As early as
10 2008, CB5 called for better planning in school siting
11 to alleviate school overcrowding. I refer you to our
12 resolution entitled School Capacity Issues in
13 Community Board 5, February 2008. Nearly 10 years
14 later many schools in the city remain overcrowded
15 including those serving CB5 school aged populations
16 while new residential units continue to be built at a
17 fast pace in our district. The November 2016
18 amendments to the 2015 through 2019 Five-Year Capital
19 Plan estimates District 2 elementary and middle
20 school capacity needs to be 3,232 seats with 3,150
21 seats funded in the plan. Housing data used to
22 project enrollment provided by the Department of City
23 Planning projects more than 7,500 additional K
24 through 8 seats will be needed in School District 2
25 by 2024. The SEQR manual does not assess nor mitigate

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2 for the cumulative impact of developments, which
3 means that developers are rarely required to create
4 additional school capacity because their developments
5 almost always fall under the impact threshold while
6 schools become severely overcrowded because of the
7 influx of multiple developments. Furthermore, the
8 enrollment projections for the Capital Plan are
9 flawed utilizing the SEQOR formula that is not
10 appropriate at a neighborhood scale, and does not
11 take into consideration sizes of residential units.
12 Inadequate planning has caused undue hardships not
13 only on families, but also on schools by creating
14 large fluctuations in enrollment. The city has an
15 obligation to the citizens of New York City to have
16 sufficient school seats for its children and to match
17 school capacity to our growing population. Therefore,
18 Manhattan Community Board 5 recommends the Department
19 of Education and the SCA better assess school
20 enrollment and population growth in our district.
21 CB5 urges the City Council to update the SEQOR Manual
22 formula to better reflect school enrollment and to
23 provide mitigation measures for the cumulative impact
24 of development. For example, in the form of a school
25 to which developers would contribute. Further, CB5

1
2 believes that the City Council's Speaker's Initiative
3 to create a working group while a step in the right
4 direction needs to include a formal community input
5 whether from the CEC or the Community Boards or both.
6 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this
7 critical issue facing our city.

8 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much.
9 Could you just give me the numbers again? You said
10 3,000 seats were--?

11 MIKE GOLDBERG: [interposing] Sure.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: --middle school the
13 name how many are needed.

14 MIKE GOLDBERG: Sure. The 3,000--it needs
15 3,232 seats, 3,100--3,150 of those are funded in the
16 plan, but there will be an additional need for 7,500
17 additional seats by 2024, seven years from now.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So right now you're
19 100 something seats short?

20 MIKE GOLDBERG: Correct.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you.

22 MIKE GOLDBERG: Thank you.

23 SERENA ROSARIO: Good afternoon. My name
24 is Serena Rosario. (sic) I'm a PTA President for the
25 new school in District 15, as MS-839, and also I am

1
2 part of the SOT Team. I want to thank you for your
3 support of the committee, and I want to express that
4 you guys did weigh in every--current over the
5 situation because even though we are a new school, we
6 confirm the same problems. And also the immigrant
7 area (sic) in the MS-839 is not open to full
8 capacity, and right now we--we are expecting this year
9 100--100 more students because we're going to be
10 opening the eighth grade. Where are we going to put
11 those students? Because right now even the area
12 that's designated from the new building for the PTA
13 is being used as classroom, the lab. The--the lowest--
14 the--the official lunch room is over the library, and
15 also those kids they have the ISPs and need some
16 special needs in this program. They move us to the
17 library and some areas they need that to happen to in
18 privacy today. So it's a--it's the biggest issue.
19 One of the recommendations is to go out (sic)
20 everybody thus formalizing use and we calculate about
21 the square feet per--per student because it's
22 accurate. It's not accurate. The numbers they put
23 it in it's not. So they--our building is now provided
24 in PS-130. So they relieved a little bit the PS-130
25 situation. They have the--the Pre-K and also we have

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DC-75 students, too, and even the lunch, in the lunch time our lunch area and lunch time is at 1 o'clock in the afternoon. So it's very, very long period in the morning, and also it's part of the middle-school-the- I'm sorry-the elementary students they also take lunch at the same time with our middle school students. So it's something in reality being-to be re-evaluated again, because this is a new building. They create a new building that's going to be relieve problem and it's not. The problem is carrying over. Thank you for the opportunity.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you so in the eighth grade that's-the eighth grade is not in the building now?

SERENA ROSARIO: No, it's only sixth and seventh, and they're expecting--

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] And they were going to--they were supposed to grow and include the eighth.

SERENA ROSARIO: It's-were expecting right now we have 219 students, and we are expecting 100 more, but what is the space precedent on those-on those new STAs (sic) or that package?

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And it's a new school
you said?

SERENA ROSARIO: Yeah, it's a new-new
school in District 15.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Is it—but it's in the
new building?

SERENA ROSARIO: A new building,
completely new building uh-huh.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright thank you.

SERENA ROSARIO: Thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Next please.

MARIA ROCA: Good afternoon. Thank you
to all for being here and staying to those who have
stayed. I am—I'm hoping that this is being recorded.
I assume that the SCA will catch up and the DOE will
catch up, and get to listen to everyone's side.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And it's—and it's
streamed live as a matter of fact as well usually.
Yes, yes, it is today, yes.

MARIA ROCA: I'm Maria Roca. I'm here
representing the—Sunset Park and the many, many
parents who would have loved to have been here today,
but whose personal responsibilities forbid them from
being here, and because of the—of the climate in the

1
2 city of fear for whatever may be out there. It
3 really makes them think twice and not want to be in
4 front of a camera and tell their own story. But their
5 stories have been told by many of the people who—who
6 are here. I have long roots in the—in Sunset Park.
7 My family arrived in 1964, and while I came in and
8 out of the neighborhood as growing up and finding my
9 own way in life necessitated I went to back
10 permanently 21 years ago with a nine-year-old.
11 Fortunately, I did not have to find a school too far
12 in because we were settled in—in another district
13 that was suitable and I made whatever sacrifices I
14 needed—I needed to be secure from there. I also work
15 very closely with the Campaign to build public
16 schools for all children in Sunset Park. I'm not
17 going to repeat everything. You know, there are
18 spaces where—there's a book to be written just by
19 over 30 years today. But many, many children in
20 Sunset Park, if not most, have not had—are not and
21 have not received a quality education priming them to
22 not reach their potential, but to participate in the
23 school district and the schools to underachievement
24 cycle. That has been documented beyond documentation
25 but—but there's a growing budget for after market

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2 workforce developments. So we always find money for
3 these after markets. How do we fix the broken tile?
4 Well, I would have hoped to see the day in my
5 lifetime where we present broken children from being-
6 from being built. We need student centers to add to
7 this overcrowded district right now. (sic) They
8 don't need to subscribe to the 20,000 square foot-
9 footprint. Centers that are shared for the children
10 that are in schools right now that are going without
11 science, technology, art, and that's why I say steam-
12 -STEM is good but steam is better. So, the-the-
13 robotics already, which is the old shop-shops that my
14 generation went to. Well, now they're called
15 robotics and where they'll--it's the creative
16 technology part of the brain. These centers can be
17 opened not only during the school day, but they can
18 be almost double as community centers. But for the
19 child who doesn't get it as an interim, they are-they
20 can be open after school. They can be open weekends,
21 and still in that what's lacking. We have three
22 generations of Sunset Park children that have been
23 totally thrown-be thrown under the bus, and we're
24 still doing it. My institutional memory remembers
25 1970, 1980, 1990, and we're still here talking about

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2 this, and that is criminal. That is not bad, it is
3 absolutely criminal, and it should be illegal for our
4 children. We cannot expect to be the world class
5 city that we claim to be with this situation. We
6 cannot continue to import doctors, lawyers, when we
7 have children right in our neighborhoods that could
8 be those lawyer and those doctors and those
9 technicians and those coders, and those whatever that
10 we're creating jobs for, to—to tell a child that is
11 in front of us I am sorry, but I don't have a square
12 inch of ground for you, but I can bring them here
13 from wherever they may come. But, to—just to
14 finished, there are tools that are available to
15 anyone who knows anything about the land use, and
16 those tools are time honored. I mean one tool and
17 I'm going to speak to Sunset Park in particular right
18 now, is the idea of a land swap. We give millions
19 and millions and millions of taxpayer dollars to
20 developers to bring in jobs to do this to do that.
21 Well, that money should be available to help a—like
22 in Sunset Park in the uplands with East of Third
23 Avenue those light industrial businesses that are
24 often down 39th Street where you can build a hot
25 sheet hotel, but because of the way the zoning sets

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2 it wouldn't, and not even going to go there. But to
3 help them without even threat of eminent domain to
4 relocate west of Third Avenue where the industrial
5 area--which we love, we love our industrial zones--to
6 relocate without--for their advantage to green their
7 industry, upgrade their industry, to keep themselves
8 and add new jobs to their industries while opening up
9 land. Huge lots on 39th alone. You could build
10 three new schools. That would take care of thousands
11 of seats. For the life of me, I cannot imagine--if
12 this is brought--brought up to the attention of the
13 SCA, the DOE and everybody--everybody who I can tell
14 this to, and yet, it is like far from the--this is and
15 I for the life of me cannot understand it. And we
16 have Lillian Rashkis School on Fourth Avenue between
17 36th and 30th. Under--under--underdeveloped sites that
18 is sitting there for children that are not even
19 anywhere near Sunset Park, our own 75 District
20 children need to be put on buses at 7 o'clock in the
21 morning. A little tight, in rain and snow--

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] Ms.
23 Roca, I do know that some of the--some of the folks in
24 Sunset Park don't want the schools in the industrial
25 area.

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MARIA ROCA: And not because we don't want them. Why would you put a school right under the BQE with the fine particulates from the diesel engines and, you know--

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] And-- and--

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MARIA ROCA: --anyone with, and, you know, anyone would say oh, no, that can't be. You must be. You must be telling me a lie.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Didn't they find a site in a residential area?

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MARIA ROCA: Well, they claimed there, you know, one site, but they're sitting on this seats that were--which we the people--

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] One site they have there?

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MARIA ROCA: --we the people were the ones who got that to become a reality. That--that came from the bottom up and--

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: How many seats will be in that school?

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MARIA ROCA: 300 seats--

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] 300.

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MARIA ROCA: --which is barely, barely--
it's 169 and--and 94, which are the nearest seats
were--are still going to be overcrowded even if, you
know, as--as those children--some of those children
become part of the new schools.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay.

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MARIA ROCA: So I mean there are--there's
land, there's money, there are tools, there are land
use tools. Why there isn't that collaboration? I'm
not going to sit here and say I have my own ideas,
and I--you've heard me sit--talk about some of those
ideas and people who are sitting here why just--why
not--where is the will? Where is the will of civil
service? Because when you become a civil servant,
whether you're elected or you're hired, that should
be your first and foremost responsibility is to serve
the citizenry. And I don't see it. I--I don't know.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright, well thank
you again--

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MARIA ROCA: [interposing] Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: --for coming in and
for participating in this hearing. We really
appreciate it. We've heard a lot from people today
about the situation we find ourselves in. You're

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2 right. I was talking about, you know, overcrowding
3 when I first started teaching over 30 years ago, and
4 we're hoping that our task force will come up with
5 some ideas about how we can finally get ahead of this
6 situation, and create more seats for our public
7 school students. So, I thank everybody for coming
8 out to the hearing, and I see we always have such a
9 good crowd here at the Education Committee. You
10 know, even after what? Four hours of testimony,
11 we've still got all these people here. Look at this.
12 So, give yourselves a round of applause, and thank
13 you very, very much. Alright. [applause] Yes, and
14 with that, this I will say this meeting is adjourned
15 at 2:30 in the afternoon. Thank you. [gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date March 9, 2017