

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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March 21, 2017  
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HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: DANIEL DROMM  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

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- MARK LEVINE
- HELEN K. ROSENTHAL
- VINCENT J. GENTILE
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- ALAN N. MAISEL
- ANTONIA REYNOSO
- MARK TREYGER
- RAFAEEL SALAMANCA JR.

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

Carmen Farina  
Chancellor of the New York City Department of  
Education

Raymond Orlando  
Chief Financial Officer of the Department of  
Education

Jessica Pavone  
Pre-K Team

Ursulina Ramirez  
Chief of Staff and Chief Operating Officer for  
New York City Department of Education

Jahmila Joseph  
Assistant Associate Director at District Council  
37

Donald Nesbit  
Executive Vice President for Local 372

Carmen Alvarez  
Vice President for Special Education at the  
United Federation of Teachers

Rashida Latef  
Advocacy Coordinator at the Westside Campaign  
Against Hunger

Jen Poppendieck  
CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute

Rachel Sabella  
Director of Government Relations at Food Bank for  
New York City

Liz Accles  
Executive Director of Community Food Advocates

Naftuli Moster

Founder and Executive Director of YAFFED  
A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Abigail Beatty

Mendel Vogel

Hiam

Elizabeth Adams  
Director of Government Relations at Planned  
Parenthood of New York City

Amanda Matos  
Government Relation Specialist at Girls for  
Gender Equity

Kim Sweet  
Executive Director at Advocates for Children of  
New York

Grant Cowles  
Senior Policy and Advocacy Associate for Youth  
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Allison Demus  
Volunteer with the Center for Arts Education

Santina Protopapa  
Director of Educational Partnerships at Lincoln  
Center

Deborah Levine  
Deputy Executive Director at ACRIA

William Crow  
Educator in charge of Teaching and Learning at  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Jerry James  
Director of Teaching and Learning at the Center  
For Arts Education

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

Andrea Bowen  
Policy Analyst to Neighborhood Houses

Terry Kim  
Senior Policy Analyst for the Office of Public  
Policy at the Children's Aid Society

Charles Small  
Queens Community House Program Director at the  
Young Adult Borough Center at the Learning to  
Work Program at the High School for Arts and  
Business

Andrew Buckley  
Program Director at Smith YABC

Kelly Dugan  
Division Director for Good Shepherd Services  
Transfer Schools Programs located throughout  
Brooklyn

Julio Pena  
Program Director for Good Shepherd Services  
Young Adult Borough Center Learning to Work at  
Franklin D. Roosevelt High School in Brooklyn

AnnMarie Ladlad  
Development and Communications Coordinator for  
Teachers Unite

Michael DeVito Junior  
Senior Director of Workforce Initiatives for  
New York City Center for Interpersonal  
Development

Mariel Martinez  
Senior at James Baldwin High School

Charlotte Pope  
Children's Defense Fund New York

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

Casey Foster  
Coordinator for the Urban Youth Collaborative

Christine Rodriguez  
Make the Road New York Dignities in School  
Campaign and the Urban Youth Collaborative

Pamela Stewart Martinez  
Co-President of Citywide Council on Special  
Education

Resa Fridy  
Board Certified Pediatrician and Specialist in  
The Field of Adolescent Medicine

Melody Rois  
Good Shepherd

Demon Pearson  
Program Director for Good Shepherd Services  
Community School Program at Boys and Girls High

Yanni Pearson  
Director of Youth and Community Services at  
Ramapo for Children

Cardia Dekaba  
Youth Leader at Make the Road and Urban Youth  
Collaborative

Isaih  
Youth Member with Make the Road

Rachel Pratt  
Senior Vice President of Youth Community  
Services and New York Roadrunners

Kate Terenzi  
Equal Justice Work Fellow

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

Jim Fairbanks  
Advocate for Parent Action Committee

Chelsea Gregory  
Restorative Justice Specialist with the City  
Council Initiative

Shamar Pusard  
FRW

Nicole Riley  
Member of Teachers Unite and Dean at Edward A.  
Reynold Westside High School

Martsa Witzel  
Youth Leader at Sisters and Brothers United and  
The Urban Youth Collaborative

Christine Erskin  
Youth Organizer with Community Food Advocates

Sonya Novicova  
Student at New Utrecht High School

Evan Samara Phillips  
Junior at Millennium High School

Shami Sandoo  
Junior at Fort Hamilton High School\

Johnny Zane  
Junior at Brooklyn Technical High School

Alia C. Daniels  
Student in Hunts Point area

Ashanike Palmer  
Youth Organizer with FOT and UYC

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Good morning, I'm Council Member Daniel Dromm, Chairperson of the council's Committee on Education. Welcome to the Fiscal Year 2018 Preliminary Budget hearing on the Department of Education. Today we'll... we will be hearing from the DOE's Chancellor Carmen Farina followed by testimony from Unions, parents, advocates, students and others who wish to testify in front of the council. The Department of Education's Fiscal 2018 Preliminary Budget totals 24.3 billion dollars excluding pension and debt service which represents 29 percent of the city's 84.7-billion-dollar budget. This year the DOE's budget is 1.1 billion dollars more than Fiscal 2017 adopted budget. The increase in large part funds priorities of the administration including upgrades related to technology. The Department of Education has laid out a five-year strategic technology plan in order to better integrate technology into schools. The majority of the DOE's new needs in the Fiscal 2018 Preliminary Budget are related to this technology strategy including making key upgrades and improvements to school's broadband connectivity. In

1  
2 addition to supporting the administration's  
3 technology strategy these upgrades will support key  
4 programs of this administration such as computer  
5 science for all and the Special Education Student  
6 Information System otherwise known as SESIS. In total  
7 the administration added approximately 37 million  
8 dollars in new needs to support technology in Fiscal  
9 year 2018 Preliminary Plan. While I support the  
10 technology upgrades we need to really examine how  
11 much overall is being spent on this especially when  
12 it comes to SESIS. This is a system that has never  
13 worked properly, from the beginning it was never able  
14 to function the way it was designed to. The DOE has  
15 repeatedly put more money into this faulty computer  
16 system to try and make it work. At what point do we  
17 decide it has been a failure, cut our losses and move  
18 on. Today I want to... I want to focus discussion on  
19 technology and I want honest answers about why the  
20 DOE is continuing to put a band aid on SESIS. I want  
21 to know what it will take to start over and move away  
22 from SESIS. I'm also deeply concerned about the  
23 contracting process at the DOE, the DOE has been  
24 unable to execute a contract for Teachers College to  
25 provide the Stonewalls Scholars Program in schools.

1 For two years, I worked to get this innovative  
2 program up and running. I really feel like this was  
3 not a priority for the DOE and there are real  
4 problems with this process. Today I need an  
5 explanation of what happened here, I want real  
6 answers as to what went wrong. While the overall  
7 budget of the DOE continues to grow I'm always  
8 concerned that not enough of this funding is  
9 trickling down to the classrooms. How are students  
10 gaining from these large increases in the DOE's  
11 budget? How do we ensure we are providing adequate  
12 special education services to all students who need  
13 them? Do students have the space they're entitled to  
14 so they become high achievers. How do we make classes  
15 smaller? As a former educator, I know the value of  
16 class size and what it can mean for a child's  
17 educational advancement. That brings me to my next  
18 point, state funding. The council has advocated with  
19 the Mayor for over 1.9 billion dollars in funding  
20 that the state owes New York City Schools based on  
21 the campaign for Fiscal Equity. We haven't seen this  
22 full increase yet from the state but we will continue  
23 to fight because as educators we know our students  
24 deserve it. We hope the DOE will continue to fight  
25

1 with the state to secure this funding for our  
2 schools. Until we have all schools receiving 100  
3 percent of their fair student funding budget our work  
4 is not done. In addition, the city stands to lose  
5 approximately 140 million dollars estimated at the  
6 federal... of federal education funding if President  
7 Trump's proposed budget is approved. These proposed  
8 federal cuts to education are devastating, they are  
9 irresponsible and decimate vital programs that have  
10 proven to foster equality and eliminate the education  
11 gap across the country. While New York City is  
12 working hard to ensure equity in our schools the  
13 federal government is cutting essential funding that  
14 fosters equity. We truly have a long upward battle  
15 ahead of us and we must unite to fight this together.  
16 Here in New York City we applaud the Chancellor on  
17 the DOE's efforts to improve graduation rates and  
18 working towards creating more equitable schools. As  
19 we move forward the council wants to see real  
20 tangible parental engagement for all communities, a  
21 dedicated budget line to support our LGBT student  
22 population and a true investment in making schools  
23 accessible for all especially students with  
24 disabilities. Now before I conclude I'd like to thank  
25

1 the staff of the committee; Elizabeth Hoffman and  
2 Kaitlyn O'hagan our Finance Analyst, Semita Dechsmush  
3 [sp?] our Counsel and Jan Atwell and Joan Pavoni  
4 [sp?], our Policy Analyst for this committee. I'd  
5 also like to introduce my colleagues and we've been  
6 joined by Council Member Andy King, Council Member  
7 Mark Treyger, Council Member Ben Kallos and I'm sure  
8 the others will be coming soon, there's a Parks  
9 Committee hearing right next door running at the same  
10 time and I know some of our members are in there as  
11 well. And I'd also like to thank you again for coming  
12 and we welcome the Chancellors testimony. We've also  
13 been joined... been joined by Council Member Debbie  
14 Rose and I just need to swear you in so if you would  
15 please raise your right hand. We have on our panel  
16 Chancellor Carmen Farina, Raymond Orlando with the  
17 DOE and Ursulina Ramirez also with the DOE. So, do  
18 you solemnly swear or affirm to tell the truth, the  
19 whole truth and nothing but the truth and to answer  
20 Council Member questions honestly? Okay, thank you,  
21 Chancellor would you like to begin?

22  
23 CARMEN FARINA: Good morning Chair Dromm  
24 and all members of the Education Committee here  
25 today. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on

1 Mayor De Blasio's Fiscal Year 2018 Preliminary Budget  
2 as it relates to New York City's public schools. I'm  
3 joined by Ursulina Ramirez, Chief of Staff and Chief  
4 Operating Officer for New York City Department of  
5 Education and by Ray Orlando Chief Financial Officer.  
6 I would like to thank Speaker Mark-Viverito, Chairman  
7 Dromm and all the members of the city council for  
8 your continued leadership and partnership on behalf  
9 of New York City's 1.1 million students. As we move  
10 forward it is important that we work together to  
11 fight against the proposed federal budget cuts to  
12 education, promote the good work done by public  
13 schools and to support quality public education for  
14 all students. This administration is committed to  
15 ensuring that all students have access to an  
16 excellent, equitable education and I am very proud of  
17 what we have accomplished so far on behalf of the  
18 city's students. Last year's graduation rate is the  
19 highest it has ever been with 72.6 percent of high  
20 school students graduating in four years. Our dropout  
21 rate is 8.5 percent, the lowest it's ever been. We're  
22 also pleased with the results of last year's New York  
23 State testing, ELA and math where New York City  
24 outperformed the rest of the state in ELA for the  
25

1 first time and our overall improvement outpaced the  
2 rest of the state in both ELA and math. While we are  
3 pleased with our progress we know we have a lot more  
4 work to do that's why in the Fall of 2015 Mayor De  
5 Blasio and I announced Equity and Excellence for All,  
6 an agenda that set ambitious goals for New York City  
7 schools by 2026, 80 percent of our students will  
8 graduate high school on time and two thirds of our  
9 graduates will be college ready. The initiatives that  
10 make up Equity and Excellence for all our students'  
11 academic, social, and emotional needs starting with  
12 our youngest learners and the first book they  
13 successfully read by themselves until they earn their  
14 high school diploma and receive a college acceptance  
15 letter. This school year marks the first full year of  
16 implementation of the Equity and Excellence, it will  
17 be rolled out throughout the school's city wide over  
18 the next several years. There are 800 schools in the  
19 system that already have at least one Equity and  
20 Excellence Initiative. Here are some of our  
21 highlights; as part of a Universal Literally over 100  
22 reading coaches are currently working in schools and  
23 next year we will have a total of 240 working in 14  
24 districts. These are highly trained coaches who will  
25

1  
2 be working with the K to two teachers and be working  
3 in terms of enriching the teacher's classroom  
4 experience. And in addition, all schools in New York  
5 City will be implementing a phonics program in  
6 kindergarten and first grade effective this year and  
7 next year. Teachers are strengthening their math  
8 instructions over 200 elementary, middle and high  
9 schools through our Algebra for all Initiative. We  
10 are starting this work in fifth grade and it's  
11 presently in 100 schools throughout the city and we  
12 anticipate that number to double and already we're  
13 seeing some success and getting teachers who love to  
14 teach math teaching math to the entire fifth graders  
15 rather than just having some teachers like and some  
16 teachers who don't like it and we see that's very  
17 successful. Our College Access Role Initiative is  
18 making college an achievable expectation for our  
19 students. We have eliminated the CUNY application fee  
20 for our low-income students and for the first time  
21 all high school juniors will take the SAT for free  
22 during the school day on April 5<sup>th</sup>. Many of you  
23 participated in College Awareness Day in January and  
24 I'd like, like to thank Chair's Dromm and Barron for  
25 issuing a Proclamation recognizing College Awareness

1 Day. 20,000 middle schools are visiting colleges here  
2 and we're giving families additional supports along  
3 the way. I visited Brooklyn College Campus with a  
4 group of students from Bushwick and their parents and  
5 to me the most amazing part of that visit was how few  
6 parents had ever been on a college campus and how for  
7 some of them the discussion around college is the  
8 first time they felt it was attainable for them and  
9 their families. So, getting the families involved in  
10 this particular initiative is just as crucial as  
11 getting the students involved. Last year we saw a  
12 record high number of students who took at least one  
13 AP exam, I'm pleased to say that participation and  
14 performance gains were largest of black Hispanic  
15 students with an 18 percent increase in the number of  
16 black students passing at least one AP exam and 10.8  
17 percent increase in the number of Hispanic students  
18 passing at least AP. Our AP For All Initiative which  
19 is bringing new AP courses to 63 high schools this  
20 year and many of these high schools never had even  
21 one AP course in the past will build on this  
22 progress. In our co-located campuses and for example  
23 one would be Lehman High School in the Bronx where  
24 there are seven schools, they are now sharing AP  
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1  
2 courses across schools and one student for example  
3 would have very few courses to take left in the  
4 senior year took 11 AP courses over the last two  
5 years and that to me also means it's not just about  
6 the rigor of the work what gets them ready of college  
7 but it also means they start college as sophomores or  
8 even middle sophomores which saves the families money  
9 in terms of how they get the work done. The Single  
10 Shepherd Initiative in district seven in the Bronx  
11 and district 23 in Brooklyn is showing promise. This  
12 program serves all 16,000 students in 50 schools and  
13 provides them with a dedicated counselor or social  
14 worker who... to guide them on the path to success.  
15 Guidance counselors are able to spend more time and  
16 be more productive with students and as one principal  
17 said it builds relationships. Single Shephard starts  
18 in sixth grade and moves all the way to 12<sup>th</sup> grade  
19 and works with the entire family and it also means  
20 this is not instead of guidance counselors, these are  
21 in, in addition to so you can now have a school in  
22 these districts that actually has eight to nine  
23 people working on social and emotional needs and as a  
24 prime example one of the things that happened in one  
25 of these districts is that a parent came to the

1 school asked the principal for assistance, they  
2 wanted to put their child in a residential home  
3 because they felt the child was incorrigible and the  
4 Single Shephard said give me a time to work with you  
5 over six weeks and that child is today is attending  
6 the school, good attendance and the family and the  
7 social worker meet on a regular basis. So, this is  
8 about saving lives not just about getting kids to  
9 college and I think it is really, really showing some  
10 really good success. Last but not least through the  
11 District Charter Partnership Program the district and  
12 charter schools are coming together to share best  
13 practices on specific topics such as instruction for  
14 English Language Learners, math instruction and the  
15 sharing goes in both directions. We launched an  
16 initiative to build collaborative partnerships  
17 between schools on shared campus which I just  
18 mentioned and in these shared campuses we have parent  
19 welcome centers, college office where all the college  
20 advisors share support for each other's students in  
21 each other's schools, we hired campus managers to  
22 unify systems and institutions and also in many cases  
23 were able to put extra support. George Washington  
24 Campus for example they wanted to... a dance room and  
25

1  
2 one of... actually one of your City Council Members is  
3 funding it but it has to be shared by all schools on  
4 the campus, I know City Councilman King has been very  
5 supportive of our work there and it's not about one  
6 school getting something, it's about everyone having  
7 opportunities to talk to each other. In addition,  
8 renewal schools throughout the city are making  
9 progress, the junior high school 50 in Brooklyn  
10 Principal Honoroff has leveraged the school's renewal  
11 sources including additional learning time to create  
12 a championship debate team, not a debate team that  
13 was a champion among renewal schools but a champion  
14 team that beat all other schools. The debate program  
15 has not only won citywide tournaments but also  
16 sharpen student's critical thinking skills and help  
17 them perform better on the state exams. Since 2014  
18 the school has increased its proficiency by 15 points  
19 in ELA and continues to show progress with its L  
20 students. MS-70, Sean Licata has added a flight  
21 simulator CTE course to his middle school which has  
22 not only has increased his attendance but has  
23 increased support from community members to see that  
24 these schools actually have hope and have excitement  
25 on many other levels. Urban scholars in the Bronx is

1 part of the... has been... won a book trust grant where  
2 every child in that school gets to read books and  
3 takes them home and starts building a home library.  
4 So, we have a lot of exciting things happening. Boys  
5 and girls high school has a new principal whose  
6 focused on attracting local schools... local students,  
7 growing enrollment and increasing the school's  
8 graduation rate. They recently opened a college and  
9 career center and a college advising office and a  
10 parent engagement center where current and  
11 prospective parents can learn about what the school  
12 has to offer. Across all renewal schools we've seen a  
13 seven percent graduation rate over the last two  
14 years, attendance is up, chronic absenteeism is down  
15 and teachers are developing stronger educational  
16 practices. In these schools, we have increased the  
17 number of effective and highly effective teachers as  
18 well as really working on teacher retention in what  
19 has traditionally been hard to staff schools. These  
20 schools are receiving clear guidance on the progress  
21 they need to make, have realistic goals and have  
22 added an additional five hours of expanded learning  
23 time. They're also working with CBO's that are  
24 embedded during the school day and after school  
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1  
2 programs and are offering increased professional  
3 development for teachers and other school based  
4 staff. Additionally, each renewal school is being  
5 transformed into a community school offering wrap  
6 around services to our students and their families.  
7 These schools were neglected for many years and we  
8 know making change is not easy and it takes time  
9 however we're committed to helping schools build on  
10 this progress and continue to improve. When you have  
11 a community based program that has mental health  
12 clinics, that has eyeglasses, that has dental care;  
13 this improves the entire family and makes these  
14 schools bound to be more successful. General funding  
15 from the city council has enabled us to provide  
16 Intensive Restorative Justice Program in 25 schools  
17 and we're seeing a decrease in suspension in these  
18 schools. Also with city council funding for the first  
19 time our school communities will benefit from the  
20 programming and support of a Gender Equity Liaison.  
21 We also worked with the council to supply all middle  
22 and high schools with free feminine hygiene products  
23 to expand access to physical and sports programs  
24 particularly for female students and to those who  
25 attend smaller schools and to increase civic

1 engagement and voter registration and participation  
2 among high school students. Just this week one of the  
3 advocacy groups on one of our high school campuses  
4 registered 200 high school students to vote, that's  
5 the kind of civic engagement we need more of. With  
6 regards to the work of the DOE's LGBTQ Liaison, a  
7 position also initially funded by the council. We  
8 recently worked closely with colleagues across  
9 advisory councils and other city agencies to review  
10 and release updated transgender and gender  
11 nonconforming student guidelines and to offer  
12 training and professional development to more than  
13 2,000 staff members including parent coordinators and  
14 family support specialists since August. While the  
15 Lambda Literary LGBTQ Schools Program was expanded  
16 through the council's support and we continued to  
17 work to identify, grow and support the gender  
18 sexuality alliances in our school. As I mentioned in  
19 a recent meeting with some of you, one of the major  
20 successes of this program has been working under face  
21 Yolanda Torres and how much Jerry Fox has been able  
22 to go out and talk to parents who themselves are  
23 conflicted about their children coming out and to me  
24 one of the major successes has been how we've been  
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1  
2 able to turn the conversation into, "these are all  
3 our children," and what do we do to expect... you know  
4 to support them and do the work that has to be done  
5 and that was done throughout the city. Involving  
6 parents has always been essential focus, this  
7 continues just continues each and every day across  
8 the DOE. We are pleased that our increased emphasis  
9 on parent engagement has resulted significantly more  
10 parents attending parent teacher conferences. Since  
11 we started student led conferences several of our  
12 districts are reporting in the 90 percent, one  
13 district 98 percent parent attendance of parent  
14 teacher conferences. This has been a goal since the  
15 very beginning and we're beginning to see results. We  
16 see more parents participating in parent groups and  
17 running for the community education council. we have  
18 close to 1,600 applicants, the next... for this next  
19 election, the CEC and I think that is part of our  
20 going out to town hall meetings, I think we have a  
21 town hall meeting coming up, district 22, we're in  
22 the middle of the candidate's forums that started  
23 last night and culminate with a vote later in the  
24 Spring. I also meet with CEC presidents one Saturday  
25 a month and they're in committees and the committees

1  
2 are set up to give us advice on topics that are of  
3 interest to them. I'm also particularly proud of our  
4 work to better serve students who are English  
5 Language Learners. As a former L myself this work is  
6 very personal. we currently have 434 bi-lingual  
7 programs in every borough in the city and recently  
8 announced the opening of 68 new bi-lingual programs  
9 since September including the first... the first ever  
10 bilingual program in Urdu. We are holding native  
11 language family engagement conferences in Spanish,  
12 Bengali, Arabic, and Mandarin. These conferences give  
13 parents an opportunity to take part in workshops and  
14 activities in their native language. We are working  
15 with two national experts to improve L instruction.  
16 In collaboration with Dr. Ieta Walkey [sp?] of  
17 Westend and Generation Ready we're establishing an L  
18 leadership for superintendents, principal leadership  
19 facilitators and select principals from 12 districts  
20 that explore the role of leadership in providing high  
21 quality teaching and learning for our multilingual  
22 learners. In the past, we have generally done PD at  
23 the teacher level however we know that if we don't  
24 have the heart and passion of the superintendents and  
25 the principals in this work it will really not be

1  
2 very deep work so starting by making sure that all  
3 superintendents understand the work and then they  
4 take it down to the principals and hold them  
5 accountable we'll feel we're in a much better  
6 trajectory. We're partnering with Dr. Nonie Lesaux  
7 from Harvard Graduate School to develop an institute  
8 to equip schools with tools and knowledge to deepen  
9 the work with L's. Our commitment to meeting the  
10 individual needs with our students with disability  
11 remains the focus for the DOE and is evidence by the  
12 growth of our ASD, Autism Spectrum Disorder; Nest ASD  
13 Horizon and bilingual special education programs.  
14 This school year alone we opened 28 additional Nest  
15 and Horizons in existing schools and seven new  
16 schools opened NEST or Horizon Programs. Our push  
17 this year for professional development to increase  
18 our ICT classrooms throughout the city has been very  
19 successful without professional development two  
20 teachers working in a classroom is simply two bodies  
21 but with good professional developments there are  
22 specific roles and what they're accountable for  
23 really deepens and really helps students to succeed.  
24 We also started a program called Collaborative  
25 Communities of Practice, we are... district 75 school

1 in the building and a general ed. School in the  
2 building start working together, I just went to visit  
3 one in district eight and the students are actually  
4 going back and forth and to each other's classrooms  
5 as reading partners and as mentors and this is the  
6 kind of thing we want to see, you cannot have all  
7 these silos in a school where it's those kids versus  
8 that kid and I think that's really moved us in a good  
9 direction. To ensure that all students have access to  
10 GNT Programs this year we opened the GNT classes in  
11 districts that did not have them in the past; that's  
12 district seven, 12, 16 and 23 and these programs will  
13 continue right through middle school. CT Programs are  
14 also a key part of our strategy to put students on a  
15 path to college and careers. To that end, we are  
16 investing in 40 new high quality CTE Programs opening  
17 this year and across the next two school years. We're  
18 also strengthening our numerous existing programs. In  
19 addition, city council funding has allowed us to  
20 significantly expand and strengthen work based  
21 learning opportunities including paid internships for  
22 students enrolled in CTE programs. Also, implementing  
23 several new initiatives this school year to support  
24 academic, social and, and... academic, social and  
25

1  
2 emotional needs of students living in temporary  
3 housing. We have hired attendance teachers, social  
4 workers implementing literacy programs and shelter.  
5 Recently I visited a shelter, Sheltering Arms in  
6 Bushwick where the students come after school and  
7 they get involved in literacy activities but the most  
8 important thing they are read a book and they get to  
9 keep that book and take it home and the... our  
10 encouragement is that the school... parents will start  
11 developing their own personal library so students and  
12 parents can read the same books over and over again.  
13 Additionally, the city launched a program to provide  
14 yellow bus service for students in K to six who  
15 reside in the Department of Homeless Services Shelter  
16 System. As part of the program we have created more  
17 than 360 new bus routes serving shelters and  
18 commercial hotels throughout the five boroughs  
19 providing service to more than 750 schools. None of  
20 our work would be possible without the truly  
21 excellent educators who serve our children. Teachers  
22 play a formative role in the lives of their students  
23 and we were pleased to be named the winner by the  
24 national council in teacher quality in the first ever  
25 Great Districts for Great Teachers Initiative which

1  
2 took place in Austin, Texas as part of the Southwest  
3 by Southwest conference. In particular, we were  
4 recognized for our work to foster, develop and  
5 support leadership and collaboration across the 7,000  
6 teachers in our system. Our retention rate is among  
7 the highest it's ever been and even in hard to staff  
8 schools there are really systems in place that now  
9 encourage teachers to stay there. Now I will discuss  
10 next year's budget. The 2014 Preliminary Budget  
11 includes an allocation of approximately 31 billion  
12 including 24.3 billion in operating funds and another  
13 6.7 billion of education related pension and debt  
14 service funds. Our funding is a combination of city,  
15 state and federal dollars with city tax levy dollars  
16 making up the largest share at 57 percent. State  
17 dollars at 37 percent and federal dollars at six  
18 percent. Mayor's proposed 2018 budget for our school  
19 bills on this administration's progress and continues  
20 the historic investments made in previous years to  
21 ensure that students have access to rigorous  
22 instruction and non-academic support to boost student  
23 achievement and also makes additional target  
24 investments in our schools. Last year for the first  
25 time our Summer programs served high needs second

1  
2 graders. The Preliminary Budget this year includes  
3 over 14 million to serve an additional 4,400 second  
4 graders this coming Summer. I truly feel that second  
5 grade is a game changer and getting second graders on  
6 grade level is where we put a lot of efforts so by  
7 the time they get to the high content area  
8 expectations in third grade they are ready to be  
9 successful. We are investing over 16 million to  
10 provide better and faster internet service, internet  
11 speeds will improve in all school buildings by the  
12 end of 2019, 2020 school year. Since 2009 the state  
13 has not met its court ordered obligations under the  
14 campaign for fiscal equity lawsuit. In this school  
15 year alone New York City high school students have  
16 been shortchanged 1.6 billion dollars in state  
17 education funds. Over two years we raised the  
18 citywide average fair student funding from 88 percent  
19 to 91 percent. In addition, we are funding all  
20 renewal and community schools at 100 percent of their  
21 FSF level and no school in the city is below 87  
22 percent. Next year we intend to raise the citywide  
23 average to 92.5 percent with no school below 90  
24 percent of their FSF level, a plan that is contingent  
25 on additional state funding and we're committed to

1  
2 getting 100 percent for all schools by year 2021 an  
3 accomplishment that can be realized if the state  
4 continues commitment to fulfil the CFE settlement. We  
5 are confident that we're headed in the right  
6 direction, we know there is more hard work ahead. I  
7 look forward to partnering with you and building upon  
8 this work alongside our educators and family. I thank  
9 you for your time and look forward to answering your  
10 questions and on a personal level I want to say that  
11 it really has been my pleasure to work with many of  
12 you collectively and individually because it is only  
13 together that we can really put public education on  
14 the forefront and convince the naysayers that this is  
15 the only way to go and really as a result of public  
16 education we're building better citizens and citizens  
17 who understand that a democracy is the right way to  
18 go forward and be successful. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much  
20 Chancellor and we've been proud to work with you  
21 particularly in the Equity and Excellence for all  
22 Initiatives Agenda and we feel that you have really  
23 moved the, the system in the right direction and  
24 appreciate your efforts on all of that. We do have  
25 questions obviously but before I get to the questions

1  
2 I want to announce that we've been joined by Council  
3 Member Maisel, Council Member Chin, Council Member  
4 Lander, Council Member Reynoso. Let me start off by  
5 asking some questions about renewal schools, can you  
6 give us a breakdown in terms of what you expect to  
7 spend this year on renewal schools and where that  
8 money is going.

9 CARMEN FARINA: Okay, I'm going to let  
10 the financial person answer that but let me just be  
11 very clear, the renewal schools are an investment, I  
12 really need to get this clear, it's not a charity,  
13 it's not something we're doing simply because it  
14 looks good, we have seen in many of our renewal  
15 schools a second chance for many of our students. All  
16 our renewal schools have a certain thing in common,  
17 they all have extended learning time, they all have a  
18 CBO, they all have a specialist in reading and other  
19 things assigned to the school to do what we call a  
20 DSR and they all have targeted visitations and now we  
21 started really working on something called the ISSP  
22 which is looking at the data and then making  
23 recommendations on the data in very specific ways,  
24 having said that.

1  
2 RAYMOND ORLANDO: Hi, good morning. The  
3 renewal schools... [cross-talk]

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...Mr. Orlando will you  
5 just state your name?

6 RAYMOND ORLANDO: Oh sure, I'm sorry, I'm  
7 Ray Orlando, I'm the Chief Financial Officer of the  
8 New York City Department of Education. The renewal  
9 schools budget for Fiscal Year '17, the year we're  
10 currently in is 188 million dollars. There is 40  
11 million dollars that is provided to the CBO's which  
12 are providing community school services at renewal  
13 schools. There is an additional 108 million dollars  
14 in funds directed to schools, allocated directly to  
15 them. These funds... I'd be happy to break down for you  
16 if you'd like, approximately 50... [cross-talk]

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...What's the average  
18 on that?

19 RAYMOND ORLANDO: I'm sorry?

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: The average that...  
21 allocated to schools, how is that determined?

22 RAYMOND ORLANDO: All schools are at 100  
23 percent fair student funding and then within the  
24 fair... and then there are... and there are various  
25 school allocation memos for specific services which

1  
2 are based typically on population but some of them  
3 have different thresholds and stuff, it's, it's a,  
4 it's a mixed bag.

5 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay.

6 CARMEN FARINA: [off-mic] I also want to  
7 add that all... [cross-talk]

8 RAYMOND ORLANDO: Are you on... [cross-  
9 talk]

10 CARMEN FARINA: ...Yeah, all these schools  
11 have teacher leaders, master teachers and model  
12 teachers, the goal of that was to make sure that all  
13 schools had at least some contingent of teachers that  
14 were rated effective and highly effective and of  
15 course this is an additional cost for these teachers  
16 but these teachers also open their classrooms to  
17 visitors to come in and observe their practices and  
18 they serve as coaches within the schools and we have  
19 seen this making a really big difference and we  
20 actually have teachers now who are applying to work  
21 in our renewal schools which is a real shift from  
22 what might have happened many years ago.

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And there is a  
24 differential for those mass of teachers isn't there?

25 CARMEN FARINA: Correct... [cross-talk]

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...And does... [cross-  
3 talk]

4 CARMEN FARINA: ...And for... [cross-talk]

5 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...that include...  
6 [cross-talk]

7 CARMEN FARINA: ...teach... and for teacher  
8 leaders as well.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And, and is that  
10 included in the 108 million that you allocate to the  
11 schools?

12 RAYMOND ORLANDO: Yes. So, of the 108  
13 about 42 million went for that fair student funding  
14 increase for schools that were below 100 percent that  
15 brought them to 100 percent, that money is the most  
16 flexible dollars we provide to schools so they can  
17 spend it almost any activity that's going to advance  
18 student achievement. There is another 53 million  
19 dollars that is for school improvement. Again, those  
20 are among our more flexible dollars that we provide  
21 to schools. They are required to spend those monies  
22 consistent with their school programs as reviewed by  
23 their SEEP's if you're familiar with the term but  
24 that goes for expanded learning time, academic  
25 support, tutoring, Stem enrichment, literacy,

1 leadership development, physical activities, all the  
2 sort of... all the... all the stuff you think of when you  
3 think of a school, they're very flexible dollars. In  
4 addition, there's approximately a million dollars for  
5 academic intervention services, AIS on top of all of  
6 that. There are also approximately 13 million dollars  
7 directly for the one extra hour of expanded learning  
8 time each day, also known as ELT. There is  
9 approximately nine million dollars for summer school  
10 and then... so that's... those items bring you to the 108  
11 we talked about. In addition, there's approximately  
12 30 million dollars in direct renewal school  
13 allocations, those include things like the directors  
14 of school renewal, each school is assigned a DSR.  
15 The... that's approximately seven million dollars in  
16 the current year. In addition, there are some funding  
17 for urban advantage science programs that's  
18 approximately two million. There's some funding for  
19 instructional coaching, a million and a half and then  
20 there's additional funding for both professional  
21 development of a million and a half and about a half  
22 of a million dollars for data tracking, reporting,  
23 keeping, keeping us all informed about what's going  
24 on. That, that's most of it, there's a... there's more  
25

1  
2 bits and pieces but that's kind of the jest... [cross-  
3 talk]

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So recently I've read  
5 some reports in the newspapers concerning cost for  
6 consultants, I know that you had mentioned that  
7 there's a 1.5-million-dollar budget for coaching, is  
8 that where you would find the cost related to...

9 [cross-talk]

10 RAYMOND ORLANDO: ...Yes... [cross-talk]

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...related to... [cross-  
12 talk]

13 RAYMOND ORLANDO: ...yes... [cross-talk]

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...to consultants?

15 RAYMOND ORLANDO: Yes, in the 1.5  
16 million.

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And, and, and can you  
18 describe what those consultants look like, where,  
19 where do they come from and what are... [cross-talk]

20 CARMEN FARINA: Okay, well the majority  
21 of the consultants and I just see them as former  
22 principals, these... most of them have been educators  
23 that are retirees so they're actually are cost  
24 effective but most of the support is to help schools  
25 in the beginning with programming and to make sure

1  
2 they're getting the best out of the use of the time  
3 that they have. They're also there in particular  
4 cases in elementary schools to help the principals  
5 think through some of the changes their making, I'll  
6 be very clear there's one school in the Bronx, 154  
7 that has dramatically increased the scores and it was  
8 also based and she'll give full credit to her coach,  
9 Laura Koch, who actually used to be one of my  
10 deputies and she has done a very clear job on what  
11 should a literacy program look like, you know what  
12 does it look like when you have a math program.  
13 So, almost like a second year to listen to things but  
14 also on the high school it has... they have been pretty  
15 effective in how to look at a school from the  
16 programming point of view. One of the things that we  
17 found since we replaced the vast majority of renewal  
18 principals that one of the things that many of them  
19 did not have enough knowledge on is how to program a  
20 school. So that was one of the things that coaches  
21 did, the other thing is to walk the building with the  
22 principal and be a thought partner in terms of what  
23 is happening in the classrooms, you know which  
24 teachers might need more support, which teachers  
25 might be model teachers. So, they serve on a... like

1  
2 another ear to the principal and I think they have  
3 been very successful and you have in one particular  
4 school which at one time when I was Deputy Chancellor  
5 was the bottom school in the entire district city of  
6 New York that now has moved up considerably and he  
7 gives a lot of the benefit or... of what he's done  
8 based on his coach who has really helped him rethink.  
9 Everything in that building including how does he  
10 retain his teachers and that's junior high school 22  
11 in district nine that has done a real turnaround.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So part of the  
13 criticism regarding the consultants has been the rate  
14 at which they are paid, how is that determined.

15 CARMEN FARINA: That is basically  
16 determined by contract and by the, the contract that  
17 we have with the city. A lot of these coaches come  
18 under the CSA Program and then others... and  
19 traditionally when we pay coaches it's based on their  
20 last job in the prorated comparison of what they used  
21 to earn versus what they're earning now.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay and can you  
23 provide us with the... a list of funding streams to  
24 support the renewal schools including private and  
25 public funding? Alright, let me go on to LGBT

1  
2 students which I know and I appreciate you having  
3 mentioned in your testimony or earlier as well and I  
4 know it's an issue of importance to both of us so the  
5 council provided 255,000 in Fiscal Year '17 to  
6 support the DOE's effort for the needs of LGBT youth  
7 and address the intersexuality of race, sexual  
8 orientation and gender identity through the DOE's  
9 general curriculum would you consider baselining that  
10 money?

11 CARMEN FARINA: I think in terms of the  
12 position that we have now and some support, yes. In  
13 terms of anything that has to do with contracts, I  
14 want to be clear we follow the contract process which  
15 means that all vendors need to fill out forms and  
16 they need to get paid as the services are provided,  
17 not ahead of time. So, I think we need to be very  
18 clear what that is but certainly the success we've  
19 seen this year, that Jarrod has been able to do and I  
20 don't want to say his own person but he is  
21 particularly competent person that we really want to  
22 see that progress go forth. Do you want to add  
23 anything? No, okay.

24 URSULINA RAMIREZ: I would only like to...  
25 obviously thank you so much for be... or for, you know

1  
2 providing the funding to initially bring Jarrod to  
3 just echo what the Chancellor said, we've seen a  
4 tremendous amount of work that he's done and we're  
5 also... we're always looking for ways to improve the  
6 way we're serving our LGBT students but I think he's  
7 done a tremendous amount of work in just the short  
8 period of time that he's been there.

9 CARMEN FARINA: I think also this is one  
10 of the things like with... and I don't want to compare  
11 it with another group but we need to go beyond the  
12 numbers and beyond the labels and look at the  
13 humanity of when we deal with students and their  
14 families and to me the most successful part of this  
15 has been seeing entire families do a turnaround on  
16 how they look at their own children and having been  
17 at several of these meetings I was in one in the  
18 Bronx that was done almost totally in Spanish to see  
19 parents light up all of a sudden and be able to talk  
20 about their own experience that might be very  
21 different than the way they would of felt two years  
22 ago, a real difference and we have all parts of the  
23 city including some parts that never wanted to have  
24 these discussions before really opening up and  
25 talking about it because the humanity is what matters

1  
2 and these are our kids and that is really successful  
3 and I'm also having attended more of these programs  
4 where LGBT students now come out openly and talk  
5 about their feelings. I went to one of the programs  
6 last year for graduation and listening to them talk  
7 about how in the past, you know many of them didn't  
8 come to school or had all kinds of negative thoughts  
9 about themselves, that to me is the real success,  
10 it's not a numbers game, it's a humanity's game.

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you and I think  
12 that your approach on it was correct in terms of  
13 working with parents first and think that using PFLAG  
14 in particular has been very helpful because I think  
15 parents can speak to other parents to say hey this is  
16 my child and I'd like to have my child as respected  
17 as your child is in the school system. Just.. I, I  
18 just want to go back now to the.. to the contracts  
19 because it was a bit of a problem and it was a  
20 problem for us not only with the LGBT funding but  
21 with the funding for the Restorative Justice stuff.  
22 Is there a person who oversees this who, you know is...  
23 works to ensure that council funding is used in a  
24 timely fashion, is contracted in a timely fashion and  
25

1  
2 who is that person or how is that done, what is the  
3 process... [cross-talk]

4 CARMEN FARINA: Well the person is David  
5 Ross, he reports to Ray Orlando and one of the  
6 recommendations I may make because it's something  
7 we've done for other groups is maybe a short workshop  
8 for city council members on how the contract process  
9 works so that it's not so muddied. So, you understand  
10 from the very beginning about what you might want to  
11 think about before you recommend something. I know  
12 for example one of the funding streams that you've  
13 given us that has been beyond successful is the MSQI  
14 work but getting on board early on, on what that  
15 process had to be and looked like I think made a big  
16 difference. So, do you add anything to that?

17 RAYMOND ORLANDO: Obviously committed to  
18 making the process work for you all as quickly as  
19 possible there are lots of pressure points in the  
20 system and I think Carmen's right, we'd be happy to,  
21 to have conversations with you about what... where they  
22 are and how we can resolve them but you have our  
23 commitment to, to do better.

24 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, good and I, I  
25 have made my concerns known to you individually as

1 well about the process that we didn't or did follow  
2 regarding the funding for the Teachers College thing  
3 which is now going to be hopefully done by another  
4 organization but with that being said one of the  
5 things that has become apparent to me and despite the  
6 fantastic work that Jarrod has done and, and the  
7 department's efforts is that there is no budget for  
8 his office and so a, a concern that we'd like to  
9 raise is will we see a budget for that office moving  
10 forward?  
11

12 CARMEN FARINA: Yeah, I think this is  
13 something we're going to continue to look at and this  
14 I think is something we can say pretty much yes, to  
15 what degree I can't tell you what but yes.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, so we're going  
17 to look forward to seeing hopefully seeing that in  
18 our executive budget once that comes out. Let me go  
19 to Yeshivas because that's an issue of importance to  
20 me as well. About a year and a half or so ago we  
21 began to hear allegations that many of the Yeshivas  
22 were not receiving an adequate education equivalent  
23 to what students would receive in the public-school  
24 system. I believe a year ago at the hearing or maybe,  
25 maybe last May it was if I'm not mistaken, alright

1  
2 you had told us that very soon we would get results  
3 of that investigation so far, we have not seen that,  
4 can you give us an update on what's happening with  
5 that investigation and when we can expect the  
6 results?

7 CARMEN FARINA: This an active  
8 investigation, it has several different components  
9 and we take this very, very seriously. I cannot give  
10 you an exact date but I just need you to know that  
11 we're working on this, I even see the meetings taking  
12 place on a regular basis in my office so I will keep  
13 you posted and when I have some kind of specific  
14 information I'm happy to pass it on.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Do you have a  
16 timeline in terms of when we can expect state  
17 standards to be met in these schools.

18 CARMEN FARINA: I do not at this time.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Chancellor to be  
20 honest with you we've waited now almost two years on  
21 this report and I just want to stress the importance...  
22 [cross-talk]

23 CARMEN FARINA: Yes... [cross-talk]

24 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...of, of this  
25 investigation to this committee and we hope that

1  
2 moving forward we will get further answers on that, I  
3 understand that it's under investigation and while  
4 things are under an investigation ensuring that those  
5 students... because particularly if I'm not mistaken a  
6 number of schools in several districts, seven or  
7 eight districts attested to the fact that these  
8 students were not receiving an adequate education,  
9 they did not receive any instruction other than  
10 religious instruction, they did not receive  
11 instruction in, in English, in math, social studies,  
12 or science and this is a major concern to this  
13 committee.

14 CARMEN FARINA: And to me as well.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you.

16 alright, let's go to SESIS, another difficult subject  
17 for us but we have heard reports that the DOE is  
18 looking at improving that system rather than junking  
19 the system for lack of a better word, can you update  
20 us on what's happening with SESIS... [cross-talk]

21 CARMEN FARINA: I have a SESIS expert  
22 sitting to the right of me...

23 URSULINA RAMIREZ: Oh, oh, I didn't know  
24 I was that but yes, I'll take that. My name is  
25 Ursulina Ramirez, I'm Chief Operating Officer and

1 Chief of Staff for, for the Department. So, we... you...  
2 as we, we came in three years ago, we all know SESIS,  
3 SESIS was quite a mess and we did a thorough analysis  
4 with our partners at DoITT and city hall and OMB to  
5 really identify what the next steps could be in  
6 making... and raising that question that you just  
7 raised Chair if... what should we do, is there an... is  
8 the next step looking at the current system or is,  
9 you know throw, throwing it out... [cross-talk]

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Right... [cross-talk]

12 URSULINA RAMIREZ: ...for lack of better  
13 terms and we made it... we made a... we made a call that  
14 making investments into the system made the most  
15 sense in part because we have something and we... it  
16 needs a series... a... some serious improvements but  
17 based on the analysis from DoITT and our colleagues  
18 at OMB and city hall and ourselves we thought this  
19 was the best way to move forward and so we're making  
20 a series of improvements and they include; I'll go  
21 through a handful of those. We're working on  
22 usability as we all have heard, it is a cumbersome  
23 system. We're working on reporting and analysis so  
24 that we can provide accurate reports to the council  
25 and to the state and to other colleagues in

1 government and we're really... we're, we're working on  
2 support services so that those who are using SESIS it  
3 is a friendly tool that people can both use on the...  
4 on the teacher side but also on the central side so  
5 we can do analysis and then the other piece is we  
6 have... we want to make sure that SESIS interfaces with  
7 our other legacy system for lack of better word in a  
8 clear way. So, we have a lot of antiquated IT systems  
9 and SESIS was not speaking to those systems including  
10 ATS and STARS. So, we're working on those pieces.  
11 Those are the, the critical areas that we're making  
12 improvements on and where you have a sense of urgency  
13 because we know that we really need to address all of  
14 our students needs in order to do that and we need  
15 clear and accurate information. So, we want to  
16 partner with every... you know with, with you all to  
17 really made sure that we are providing adequate  
18 services for all of our students with disabilities.

20 CARMEN FARINA: And I just want to add  
21 that this is also part, we now have a new head of  
22 information technology, Peter Quinn, whose come in  
23 with a lot of experience, whose looking at this from  
24 the bottom up and also, you know not as an excuse but  
25 this has been a problem since 15 years. So, we are

1  
2 trying... and also this is the first time I think... last  
3 year and a half... where we've invested a substantial  
4 amount of money in this so we don't see this as a  
5 band aid approach, we see this as a very serious  
6 effort to bring this all into alignment.

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So I'm glad that you  
8 mentioned SESIS being used by various employees and  
9 its lack of compatibility with different systems, you  
10 know we, we passed special education reporting  
11 legislation here and I think part of gathering the  
12 information was because the SESIS system didn't allow  
13 it to report back as required by that... by the passage  
14 of that law. So, the new... the improvements that  
15 you're going to make to it will now allow that  
16 gathering of that information to be more exact and to  
17 be more up to date?

18 URSULINA RAMIREZ: Correct, we're  
19 developing a data warehouse so we can do some more  
20 analytics on the... our current set of information and  
21 so the interfaces with STARS. the way I see the  
22 current SESIS system is somewhat of like a filing  
23 cabinet, right, it's just... it's a place where you put  
24 information but there is no way and functionally to  
25 do any kind of analytics on that information and so

1  
2 our goal is to really make sure that, you know we're  
3 using it from a management perspective but also so we  
4 can use it from a transparency perspective on how  
5 we're serving our students.

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So are all providers  
7 using SESIS, DOE employees or are some of them  
8 contracted providers?

9 URSULINA RAMIREZ: Contracted providers  
10 and DOE employees.

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: There's a  
12 combination?

13 URSULINA RAMIREZ: Uh-huh.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And can you describe  
15 the head count increases related to SESIS?

16 RAYMOND ORLANDO: Hi, the FY '17 budget  
17 includes the, the new need of... for SESIS that you saw  
18 and the '18 add of 28 heads approximately so there  
19 are seven heads for upgrading the system, the system...  
20 the system integration work we Ursulina was just  
21 talking about and there are another 21 heads to  
22 support the external facing the user acceptance  
23 testing and all of the... to solve for the... you, you  
24 know users have problems using the system, putting  
25

1  
2 aside the fact that the reporting is also a  
3 challenge.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Do you anticipate any  
5 additional funding to fix this system?

6 RAYMOND ORLANDO: I don't... I, I... [cross-  
7 talk]

8 CARMEN FARINA: Its part of our request.

9 RAYMOND ORLANDO: I mean I, I think that  
10 there is a, a... these, these are the needs as they are  
11 currently and I think we... I, I would never say no  
12 because we, we'll see what we learn as part of this  
13 work but I imagine that there... as... assuming that we  
14 learn things that need fixing as well there, there  
15 are potentially additional resources might be  
16 required but I, I don't have any information about  
17 that at this time.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: As I recall I believe  
19 originally when SESIS was put in it was around 81  
20 million dollars to implement that system, am I  
21 correct about that?

22 RAYMOND ORLANDO: I'm sorry, we didn't  
23 bring the historical but... [cross-talk]

24 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay... [cross-talk]

1  
2 RAYMOND ORLANDO: ...right, we can get that  
3 for you but it was... [cross-talk]

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright. Okay and  
5 what is it... what is the, the timeline in terms of  
6 implementation and rollout for the new system?

7 URSULINA RAMIREZ: So, we are working  
8 with a sense of urgency and you know I... as soon as  
9 possible is what... is what I would like to say, I mean  
10 we're... we have essentially weekly working groups  
11 around this and are working somewhat around the clock  
12 to make sure that we're making these improvements and  
13 I'm hoping to see... you know as the, the school year  
14 progresses that we will see system improvements, you  
15 know over the course of this next fiscal year.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay and Chancellor  
17 I'm going to wrap up with just a question on homeless  
18 students and I'll turn it over to my colleagues for  
19 questions as well but in fiscal '17 I think 10.3  
20 million dollars was put into the budget for homeless  
21 students, we don't see that in the fiscal '18 budget  
22 is there a plan to include funding for those services  
23 that you spoke about, I believe it was to add tutors  
24 and social workers to schools to provide homeless

1  
2 students with social, emotional, mental health  
3 services?

4 CARMEN FARINA: I mean I'll let Ray  
5 answer that but our expectation is to maintain  
6 everything we've done this year into next year. We  
7 have found the tutoring, the attendance people, the  
8 bus routes all successful in keeping the kids coming  
9 to school. So, our, our expectation is to maintain a...

10 RAYMOND ORLANDO: Given my long history  
11 at OMB and as you know our conversations continue  
12 throughout the year and are continuous and when  
13 funding shows up for an initiative sometimes you'd  
14 like to collect as much data as you can from an OMB  
15 type perspective before you make a call about the  
16 next year and what's working and what isn't and what...  
17 how much and yada, yada. I would expect... I don't... I  
18 believe that the lack of funding in '18 is not  
19 representative of the expectation of the level of  
20 service to be provided in '18.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, so we do hope  
22 to see... [cross-talk]

23 RAYMOND ORLANDO: ...I, I expect it'll be...  
24 [cross-talk]

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2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...it to move forward  
3 as... [cross-talk]

4 RAYMOND ORLANDO: ...a conversation...  
5 [cross-talk]

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...well... [cross-talk]

7 RAYMOND ORLANDO: ...amongst us and you and  
8 OMB and others over the next few months, yes.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...and particularly in  
10 light of the mayor's Homeless Plan this is a vital  
11 component to it, it's, it's a vitally important piece  
12 of it. Alright, we've been joined by Council Member  
13 Barron, Council Member Salamanca and I have questions  
14 starting with Council Member Kallos followed by  
15 Treyger and then Landor... Lander.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Chancellor Farina  
17 in 2014 WNYC estimated 2,118 four year olds in my  
18 district but we only had 123 pre-kindergarten seats  
19 and I'm grateful that we've been able to add some 500  
20 as of last year but my parents and I shouldn't have  
21 to fight for every seat, how many four-year-olds have  
22 applied for pre-k on the upper East side and in my  
23 district?

24 CARMEN FARINA: I do not have that  
25 specific information with me, do you have that?

1  
2 URSULINA RAMIREZ: Yes, or actually... can  
3 I have Jessica Pavone from our pre-k team speak?

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I, I had... [cross-  
5 talk]

6 URSULINA RAMIREZ: Yeah... [cross-talk]

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Just have to swear  
8 them in.

9 URSULINA RAMIREZ: Okay...

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So, would you raise  
11 your right hand and state your name.

12 JESSICA PAVONE: Jessica Pavone.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Do you solemnly swear  
14 or affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and  
15 nothing but the truth and to answer Council Member  
16 questions honestly?

17 JESSICA PAVONE: I do.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay.

19 JESSICA PAVONE: Hi Council Member, good  
20 morning. So over last year's application for round  
21 one we saw an uptake of about 153 students applying  
22 in the first round within... [cross-talk]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: So... and, and  
24 what's that total number?  
25

1  
2 JESSICA PAVONE: The total number for,  
3 for this year is about 806 students who applied in  
4 the first round.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: And how many pre-  
6 k seats do I have in my district on the upper East  
7 side?

8 JESSICA PAVONE: So right now for this  
9 year you have 511 seats available.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: So we actually  
11 went down in the number of pre-k seats that we had  
12 versus last year?

13 JESSICA PAVONE: No, I don't... I don't  
14 believe that that is the case so I can... I can verify  
15 that... [cross-talk]

16 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: ...We, we can go...  
17 [cross-talk]

18 JESSICA PAVONE: ...and get back... [cross-  
19 talk]

20 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: ...over those  
21 numbers... [cross-talk]

22 JESSICA PAVONE: ...to you... [cross-talk]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: ...but I guess the,  
24 the big question for the Chancellor is does the DOE's  
25

1  
2 promise, the Mayor's promise of pre-k for all apply  
3 to the upper East side?

4 JESSICA PAVONE: Council Member if I may  
5 we've... we have been very appreciative of your  
6 support. As you know the upper East side is a  
7 challenging real estate... [cross-talk]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: ...It is no more  
9 challenging than anywhere else and we've been trying  
10 to work with you but you... the DOE and, and we'll get  
11 to that in a moment has not really been honest and  
12 forthright in working with us so I have a... another  
13 question, how did the DOE prioritize the placement of  
14 the first 40,000 new pre-k seats and why did less  
15 than one percent go to my district at the upper East  
16 side?

17 CARMEN FARINA: Jessica, this is  
18 something that... let me do a little bit more homework  
19 on because I did not come prepared to answer specific  
20 question... [cross-talk]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: But this has  
22 been... it's been... this is my... [cross-talk]

23 CARMEN FARINA: Okay... [cross-talk]

24 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: ...this is my  
25 fourth year of asking these questions... [cross-talk]

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COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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CARMEN FARINA: ...alright... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: ...and so... [cross-talk]

CARMEN FARINA: ...but... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: ...do we need to build more seats, do we need to build more schools... [cross-talk]

CARMEN FARINA: ...I think we need to... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: ...in my district... [cross-talk]

CARMEN FARINA: ...figure out a way to make sure that all students who apply have a seat and I think also it's looking at where is there lease space, where are their schools, I know some of the schools on the upper East side are taking pre-k's for the first time that they didn't have in the past so... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: ...and, and others are giving up their pre-k seats at the same time?

URSULINA RAMIREZ: Council Member hear your concern, understanding that we're in a crunch this upcoming... [cross-talk]

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: ...it's, it's just...

3 [cross-talk]

4 URSULINA RAMIREZ: ...school year... [cross-  
5 talk]

6 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: ...that this is my  
7 fourth year of asking this question and if the mayor,  
8 deputy mayor, Glen, SCA or you had been responsible  
9 multiple large buildings with 100's of units would  
10 now have the schools we need in them and we would be  
11 done, will you agree to direct SCA to meet with every  
12 developer of new construction in my district to see  
13 if they are interested in building schools for, for  
14 public school students?

15 URSULINA RAMIREZ: Yes and I, I, I... my  
16 understanding is that SCA is currently doing that  
17 with developers in... on the upper East side... [cross-  
18 talk]

19 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: ...SCA has, has  
20 said that there is no new need, we, we just had a, a  
21 previous budget hearing and they said there is no new  
22 need on the upper East side for more schools so I  
23 now... [cross-talk]

24 URSULINA RAMIREZ: We... and we are...  
25 [cross-talk]

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: ...have you on  
3 record... [cross-talk]

4 URSULINA RAMIREZ: ...building... [cross-  
5 talk]

6 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: ...saying so, so we  
7 can share that... [cross-talk]

8 URSULINA RAMIREZ: ...and I will... [cross-  
9 talk]

10 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: ...with SCA...  
11 [cross-talk]

12 URSULINA RAMIREZ: ...confer with my  
13 colleagues at SCA, we are building... I have four  
14 additional classrooms coming in on the... in the 2018  
15 school understanding that still is a crunch for this  
16 upcoming school year but we are working diligently to  
17 find seats for four year olds in your district and  
18 across all of the districts in the city and so... but  
19 we, we want to work with you to make sure that all  
20 four year olds have a seat, it is... it is pre-k for  
21 all and we want to make sure that it's equitable for  
22 your district as well.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: And, and I do  
24 want the answer on why my district didn't get the  
25 appropriate seats for the first four years.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you.

Council Member Treyger followed by Lander and also Chin, Rose, Barron, King and Salamanca.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you Chair Dromm and welcome Chancellor and I just want to begin by just like I thanked Deputy Chancellor Rose and SCA president Grillo I want to thank you for your responsiveness and leadership and I'm proud to say that all of our schools in Coney Island now have... are free from temporary boilers and I wanted to... really, really that impacted instruction every day and I, I know you know that and I just want to begin by thanking you for that. Just a quick comment and then a question with regards to, to the renewal school program, I was initially concerned with the rollout of the program, I mean I... again just like the Chair, I'm a former educator I believe we need to, to increase support systems for our kids and in our school communities but whenever you attach a name whether it's a... it's a fancy name, a nice name, renewal or whatnot it creates a stigma whether we like it or not to these schools and it's easy for some in the media and some advocates to, to beat up on these schools when they were neglected for decades

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2 for many, many years and I said it that these schools  
3 do not become struggling overnight and they're not  
4 going to just suddenly by a snap of a finger become  
5 big success stories overnight either, progress takes  
6 time. So moving forward I, I really appreciate the  
7 fact that we're moving towards community learning  
8 schools for, for the renewal schools but why don't we  
9 even think bigger and really create a plan to really  
10 create community learning schools across the board  
11 and is there... is there... is there a vision for that,  
12 is there a cost estimate for that and is there a way  
13 to remove the stigma, remove the names of renewal or  
14 whatever they call it just to call them all community  
15 schools, I just want to hear your thoughts on that?

16 CARMEN FARINA: I agree with you about  
17 labels, I will say that however right now with the  
18 renewal schools we're actually find it is a good  
19 recruitment practice because teachers who may not  
20 become teacher leaders or master teachers in another  
21 part of the city can go to these schools, our goal is  
22 to have every school a community learning school.  
23 Here again and Chairman Dromm alluded to this if you  
24 look at the federal budget this is actually the first  
25 cut on the table and if you look at part... the, the

1  
2 140 million dollars, 40 million is to remove any  
3 schools that have after school programs and what  
4 would be a community learning school. We just found  
5 out that we are about to receive one of... a very large  
6 grant... yes, okay, that we're being awarded  
7 nationally, I, I don't even know if it's public yet  
8 but it is a lot of money and here again it's though  
9 tied in with the federal budget and part of the  
10 reason we're getting this money is because of the  
11 work that we've been demonstrating. The difference in  
12 terms to community schools now versus even four years  
13 ago is that the community learning school partners  
14 are imbedded during the school day, if you go to  
15 these, these schools you're not seeing something that  
16 starts at three o'clock, you're seeing something  
17 that's embedded during the entire day. So I would  
18 love to see all our schools become community learning  
19 schools that certainly would be a goal, it is  
20 expensive but it also saves money in the long run  
21 because again it's an investment so I, I totally  
22 agree with you some of the schools in your district  
23 have already shown results based on this and also  
24 we're encouraging middle school principals in  
25 particular who got free middle... after school programs

1  
2 across the city to start using them differently  
3 because in the past sometimes it was perceived as  
4 being a being a babysitting service, it is anything  
5 but that right now and I think moving to make it more  
6 academic, more arts filled is important so I totally  
7 agree with you, I think though right now the word  
8 renewal means just that and I think we're moving  
9 forward on that.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you, Council  
12 Member Lander?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you Chair  
14 Dromm. Chancellor it's good to see you, you know I  
15 have a 12<sup>th</sup> grader and an 8<sup>th</sup> grader in New York City  
16 public schools this year so I'm a little wistful for...  
17 and just grateful for what the school system has done  
18 for my kids and, and for so many of the kids in my...  
19 in my district and of course I just want to keep  
20 working to make sure that every kid can get as good  
21 an education as mine have been... have been lucky  
22 enough to have in our public schools. What number you  
23 cite or you didn't cite the number actually but I...  
24 you cited the fact of parent teacher conferences  
25 being up and I went back and looked at the MMR is

1  
2 because that number had dropped in the prior  
3 administration down to like 639,000, that was really...  
4 and we had, had it out with them at a budget hearing,  
5 you started at 1.4 million and you're almost to two  
6 million and this year actually the form up numbers  
7 are up over last year so that's a lot of work. I  
8 wonder do we... do we capture anything more than that  
9 from just the number like are we learning anything  
10 from those as opposed to just how many of them we  
11 had?

12 CARMEN FARINA: Yes, I think one of the  
13 things that we did is we created a model district,  
14 district 14 is the model district for student led  
15 conferences and what we found is we have to train  
16 principals to train teachers on how to have parent  
17 teacher conferences. We can't go back to the old days  
18 where a teacher came in and maybe sometimes if they  
19 were middle school, high school they said oh and who  
20 is your child, what seat does he sit in so we're  
21 training people and one of the... what is the kind of  
22 information that should be done at a parent teacher  
23 conference and by encouraging the students to be the  
24 speakers the teacher sits there as a facilitator, I  
25 sat in on one school where the student came in and

1 had all his data, a fourth grader, all his data to  
2 share with his parents and as he's talking about the  
3 data the teacher says well... you know but tell your  
4 parents about your homework problem and the child  
5 looked and he says it's not my problem, mom you see  
6 that most of my homework doesn't get done on  
7 Wednesdays that's because you're over programming me  
8 after school but the message here is parent teacher  
9 conferences should not be a parent and a teacher  
10 behind closed doors talking about a kid, it should be  
11 a child coming to the table and saying this is what  
12 I'm good, this is what I need more help in, how are  
13 you two together going to help me accomplish that and  
14 I think we changed, we actually put it in P-notes I  
15 think two months ago how principals can move in this  
16 direction. So, district 14 superintendent actually  
17 hosted three other superintendents to come in so we  
18 now have almost universal student led conferences  
19 throughout the city where the students say this is  
20 what I need, this is what I need to do better and the  
21 commitment should come from the student. We also  
22 extended the times for parent teacher conferences,  
23 you know by law you have it, you know one afternoon  
24 and one evening, we suggested because we have the  
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1  
2 Tuesday parent teacher parent in the contract that  
3 principals consider it whole month of making  
4 appointments with parents and students so they can  
5 actually meet with teachers in a more relaxed  
6 atmosphere by appointment to be able to talk about  
7 their child. We also have done workshops, one of the  
8 things that we put out are questions that parents  
9 should be encouraged to ask when they go to parent  
10 teacher conferences so we really want parents in our  
11 schools, the Tuesday parent workshops has been I  
12 would say 50 percent successful, we have to get  
13 better at it, what are the things that we offer to  
14 parents but I think the feeling that parents have  
15 about being welcomed in their building has increased  
16 dramatically and has also been increased by our  
17 translation services and our training of parent  
18 coordinators for a long time because parent  
19 coordinators what, what I used to train when I was  
20 Deputy Chancellor so we've gone back to training  
21 parent coordinators once a month and one of the  
22 things we've trained our parent coordinators is how  
23 to be better messengers to all parents about what is  
24 the advantage of coming to school to talk about your  
25 child and more workshops. We have an additional day

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2 in the calendar now where in September teachers do  
3 workshops with parents about the expectations for the  
4 grade. So... and, and I believe... have always believed  
5 in parent engagement and parent involvement so the  
6 smarter we make parents about what they should be  
7 asking I think the more likely they're going to come  
8 to school and by the way we made a big effort to get  
9 more parents to come to high schools because that was  
10 one of the areas that we found that parents would say  
11 well he's old or she's old enough so we've seen an  
12 uptick on parents coming to high schools as well.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: My, my last one  
14 is Friday so...

15 CARMEN FARINA: Awe...

16 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Can I ask one  
17 more short question Mr. Chair, thank you. On, on a  
18 different topic and we'd spoke in the school  
19 construction authority and facilities hearing about  
20 school air conditioning, you provided data and we  
21 released this report showing 10,985 classrooms  
22 without AC about 25 percent of the system, I know  
23 it's a big challenge, it's a lot of money and it's a  
24 hard-logistic challenge but just on the kind of basic

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1  
2 principle of it do you agree that we need to get air  
3 condition in every classroom?

4 CARMEN FARINA: In optimum times I would  
5 say of course, we, we, we all got used to it I'd say  
6 also there is a priority which spaces in a building  
7 should probably have priority within an existing  
8 building. To me an auditorium, any meeting place that  
9 will be used more frequently particularly over the  
10 summer should be given a priority but I'm happy to  
11 work with you on this.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you. Thank  
13 you Mr. Chair.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much,  
15 Council Member Reynoso?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Hello  
17 Chancellor, I thank you guys for being here. Just..  
18 one of my questions is what roles do superintendents  
19 play in, in determining how money is spent in  
20 districts, in school districts?

21 CARMEN FARINA: I would say the majority  
22 of how money is spent is school by school. Schools  
23 have their budget in terms of how the principals  
24 decide which specialty teachers, which programs they  
25 use it's really principal specific. On the other

1  
2 hand, superintendents should be using their power of  
3 persuasion to get certain goals that are district  
4 wide goals going so for example there is a  
5 superintendent who really strongly believed that her  
6 district needed a more cohesive and comprehensive  
7 literacy program so they asked all the principals to  
8 put in a certain amount of money in the bucket so  
9 they could have the training and I certainly  
10 encourage that. I think one of the things that I have  
11 seen over the last three years we need more  
12 consistency, we had too many people doing their own  
13 thing, nothing matched, if you were a child in this  
14 school and there was another child across the street  
15 you could be learning like you were in two different  
16 countries never mind... so I think, you know having  
17 superintendents who I'm particularly proud of I think  
18 we have some phenomenal superintendents working with  
19 their principals and encouraging them for example in  
20 district eight they're working with the New York  
21 Historical Society... [cross-talk]

22 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: ...Uh-huh... [cross-  
23 talk]

24 CARMEN FARINA: ...and the entire district  
25 is engaged in that so everybody putting some money in

1  
2 the pot, every principal, every assistant principal..  
3 every parent coordinator and every parent is going to  
4 be going through the New York Historical Society at  
5 some point.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Okay, so, so in  
7 my district I have two... district 32 and district 14  
8 and it's like a tale of two cities you want to call  
9 it what it is and those two schools when it comes to  
10 leadership it's, it's, it's very... it's, it's black  
11 and white where we have Miss Winnicki, whose doing an  
12 amazing job especially when it comes to the renewal  
13 schools and junior high school 50 and just really  
14 building leadership and having a way that all  
15 principals meet regularly, they have a discussion on  
16 how they can tie the school in together from  
17 elementary school all the way up to high school even  
18 and even working with day care centers outside of her  
19 prevue to make sure that they're doing proper  
20 developments so when the kids are coming into the  
21 first grade or kindergarten or pre-k now that they  
22 actually have an advantage and then that, that pales  
23 in comparison to what I believe is happening in  
24 Bushwick... [cross-talk]

25 CARMEN FARINA: Okay... [cross-talk]

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COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: ...and I think that the accountability structures for superintendents and leadership are almost nonexistent in the Department of Education. I would love for you to speak to me as to what accountability measures if any are, are... exist for superintendent performance?

CARMEN FARINA: Okay, I'm happy to share with that but I, I actually strongly disagree with your statement. The best and I mean the best not one of the best, the best elementary school Stem Program in the city of New York is in district 32 at 376, I have sent people from around the city to go visit that school. The best use right now... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Well I'm not saying that my schools are bad, I want to be very clear... [cross-talk]

CARMEN FARINA: ...but your... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: ...I was... [cross-talk]

CARMEN FARINA: ...schools wouldn't... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: ...the principal... [cross-talk]

CARMEN FARINA: ...be as good... [cross-talk]

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COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: ...in those...  
those... [cross-talk]

CARMEN FARINA: ...if... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: ...school  
principals are work, working very hard... [cross-talk]

CARMEN FARINA: ...and that... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: ...so that  
performance... [cross-talk]

CARMEN FARINA: ...superintendent... [cross-  
talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: ...I... [cross-talk]

CARMEN FARINA: ...has made very clear her  
expectations, your literacy... your district is one of  
the first four to have literacy coaches and that  
superintendent and her PLF have been among the most  
proactive, I just met with all their literacy coaches  
and they give high marks to both the superintendent  
and PLF for the work that's happening in those  
schools.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: So... [cross-talk]

CARMEN FARINA: ...I'm happy to meet with...  
[cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: ...so... [cross-  
talk]

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COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

CARMEN FARINA: ...you privately, this is not a personnel issue here but I stand behind all my superintendents... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: ...well I guess... [cross-talk]

CARMEN FARINA: ...strongly... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: ...we, we have measurements I guess or goals that we need to be... [cross-talk]

CARMEN FARINA: ...No, we have... we... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: ...and I'm, I'm concerned about 32 not necessarily reaching those goals and you know we could call personalities or, or... [cross-talk]

CARMEN FARINA: ...No, I'm happy to... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: ...or outbursts... [cross-talk]

CARMEN FARINA: ...discuss... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: ...but it's, it's... [cross-talk]

CARMEN FARINA: ...with you... [cross-talk]

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COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: ...about goals...

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[cross-talk]

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CARMEN FARINA: ...because we do evaluate the superintendents, I'm just finishing now, I have... I just had a one hour conversation or I'm almost finished with all the superintendents including that they have certain goals that they have to meet that they're evaluated on but let's discuss it privately but I have visited a lot of schools in that district, I've gone to principal conference in that district some districts had a lower threshold they had to work up towards but I am very pleased with that superintendent and her PLF whose now part of my Chancellors Fellows that's how good I think she is.

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COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: And then I would like a second round if I could, thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you, Council Member Chin followed by Rose.

19

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COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you Chair. Good morning Chancellor.

21

22

CARMEN FARINA: Good morning.

23

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: It's great to see you and we're all making great progress together. In your testimony, I didn't hear anything about the dual

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25

1 language program, I'm glad that you're expanding the  
2 bilingual program especially helping ELL students. So  
3 the language access is, is really a critical issue  
4 and I want to start by making sure that there's  
5 funding available to really provide translations in  
6 the school, support parents, support the staff and an  
7 example I wanted to give is I... recently when DOE, you  
8 know did the, the water testing with the lead issue  
9 and they had to send literature back... you know to the  
10 home and in one of my schools they were told, you  
11 know to the principal well if you need the translated  
12 version you have to request it, excuse me, you know  
13 like you know the school, the school predominately is  
14 Chinese families, right so that should have been  
15 automatic and the principal of course had to request  
16 it and it took a couple of more days, a week later to  
17 get the Chinese translation but it should have been  
18 available from the start, right because some of them  
19 are basic translations anyways, isn't, isn't it... same  
20 information so I just want to make sure that  
21 translation services are available to the school  
22 especially for information that is universal, right...  
23 [cross-talk]

25 CARMEN FARINA: ...I totally... [cross-talk]

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: ...for that... [cross-  
3 talk]

4 CARMEN FARINA: ...totally agree with you.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: So that... [cross-  
6 talk]

7 CARMEN FARINA: ...so I found... [cross-talk]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: ...is something that...  
9 [cross-talk]

10 CARMEN FARINA: ...my list... [cross-talk]

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: ...we really... [cross-  
12 talk]

13 CARMEN FARINA: ...and sometimes in our  
14 urgency to get something out we leave something out  
15 so this is something that I will certainly get back  
16 to my translation unit and make sure that to the  
17 degree possible sometimes we have a 24-hour deadline  
18 that we have to meet but our commitment is always to  
19 translate between eight and ten languages as  
20 necessary. I want to answer your dual language  
21 question because it is... [cross-talk]

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: ...yes... [cross-talk]

23 CARMEN FARINA: ...something I'm  
24 particularly proud of. We anticipate opening I  
25 believe 40 new dual language programs in September as

1  
2 a matter of fact right now there is a dual language  
3 training for principals who have agreed to this being  
4 held today and part of the dual language and I want  
5 to be clear because I think there's a misconception  
6 sometimes about the purpose of dual language, it is  
7 to support students who come into our schools  
8 speaking a second language and want to continue that,  
9 that's number one but it's also to enhance the  
10 culture and appreciation for a second language for  
11 those poor people who only speak English and I say  
12 that as an asset model rather than a deficit model  
13 and I think when you have so many parents in the city  
14 of New York it is our second biggest requested  
15 program. More parents who only speak English want  
16 their students in a dual language program. The  
17 challenge we have and this is something I've been  
18 meeting with actually University people for the last  
19 two weeks is where are we going to get the teachers,  
20 we've actually worked with the China Institute, the  
21 Asia Society, where are we... we're opening our first  
22 Urdu Program and we have an Urdu teacher, I won't say  
23 how hard it was to get that but how are we going to  
24 get Urdu teachers now for the next seven or eight  
25 years. So I do think where the teachers are going to

1  
2 come from is crucial also getting enough students who  
3 speak the other language for example we started a  
4 Japanese dual language and we had... we had an open  
5 enrollment to parents from all over the city in order  
6 to have enough Japanese speaking students so it's a  
7 challenge but it's a challenge I'm willing to meet  
8 because in my opinion if New York City doesn't really  
9 focus on the beauty of a second culture then we're  
10 missing out on what New York City's all about. So, I  
11 totally agree with you, this is something we're  
12 working on but we also need to start looking at the  
13 teacher, projected teacher shortage and particularly  
14 in hard to staff and ELL and special ed.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Well I think that  
16 we just have to make sure that the city continues to  
17 invest in this program and start when the kids are  
18 young, you know start them in pre-k, in kindergarten,  
19 that's how we build, you know the bilingual... [cross-  
20 talk]

21 CARMEN FARINA: ...Well the... [cross-talk]

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: ...ability... [cross-  
23 talk]

24 CARMEN FARINA: ...dual language... [cross-  
25 talk]

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: ...the language  
3 ability... [cross-talk]

4 CARMEN FARINA: ...yeah, the dual language  
5 programs right now start in kindergarten but this  
6 list... past year, this September was the first time  
7 they went all the way to high school, you now have  
8 Long Island City High School for example that has  
9 three dual language programs in that building. Our  
10 goal and our promise to parents was that if you start  
11 a dual language program in kindergarten you will be  
12 able to continue it in middle school into high school  
13 because it also means that you get a certification  
14 diploma at the end that actually gives you more  
15 access to college, I mean if you're looking at the  
16 jobs of the future, jobs of the future are going to  
17 require more technical knowledge, speaking a second,  
18 second language, I don't think I'd have this job here  
19 today if I didn't have another language, certainly  
20 give me... gave me a leg up if there were other  
21 competitors for the job and I think also when you  
22 speak a second language and you go before the public  
23 it also gives you a line back to humanity, it gives  
24 you another approach to talk to an audience. So, I'm  
25 totally on board, like I said the issue here is

1  
2 teachers and it's something we really, really have to  
3 push harder on.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you. Chair I  
5 just wanted to follow up one request, I see Jessica  
6 sitting there, I'm still waiting for the follow up  
7 because I think it's so important for us to continue  
8 to support the community based pre-k that we have in  
9 our community and to make sure everything runs  
10 smoothly so I'm still waiting for a response,  
11 response back and I hope we can meet soon, thank you.

12 URSULINA RAMIREZ: And we will... and we  
13 will get back to you quickly, we are supporting the  
14 local CBO's in your community but we'll get back to  
15 you.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Good morning  
17 Chancellor. And I'm... [cross-talk]

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Just before you start  
19 I just do want to recognize that we have been joined  
20 by Senator and former Council Member Tom Duane, my  
21 mentor, thank you Senator Duane for being here with  
22 us today.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: So good morning  
24 Chancellor and Senator Duane, how are you? I'm, I'm  
25 concerned about the loss of federal funds; Title one

1  
2 funding and, and how did you account for this in the  
3 budget and how will it impact our students...

4 CARMEN FARINA: We're going to fight it.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: ...and especially in  
6 terms of reduced services, class size, etcetera?

7 CARMEN FARINA: Well I would say first  
8 and foremost I am not accepting this as a given, I  
9 along with the mayor feel that this is something we  
10 have to fight and we have to fight very publicly. I  
11 think once again that there is a perception in the  
12 federal government that a lot of the money that goes  
13 to public education is wasted money when it's just  
14 the opposite. So, I think a campaign which we've  
15 already embarked on to fight back because remember  
16 the 140 million dollars does not include anything  
17 that has to do with Title one so we've asked our  
18 budget people to start looking very specifically on  
19 what the Title one's would mean because as of right  
20 now it's a very complicated document and we're not  
21 quite sure whether it's schools or students and  
22 whatever. As soon as we have a clear message on what  
23 this means we'll certainly come back to you to ask  
24 for more support but certainly it's not fair to take

1  
2 the money out for public school students and divert  
3 it anywhere else.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Do we know how  
5 many... how much money that is and how many schools  
6 will be impacted?

7 RAYMOND ORLANDO: The federal budget  
8 document that was published was a page and a half  
9 long and included a paragraph and a list of bullets.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: I'm sorry, I didn't  
11 hear you.

12 CARMEN FARINA: The... we... [cross-talk]

13 RAYMOND ORLANDO: ...sorry... [cross-talk]

14 CARMEN FARINA: The answer is that the  
15 federal government is not very clear on what this  
16 means so we're waiting for more... [cross-talk]

17 RAYMOND ORLANDO: We need more... [cross-  
18 talk]

19 CARMEN FARINA: ...clarification... [cross-  
20 talk]

21 RAYMOND ORLANDO: ...guidance, yes... [cross-  
22 talk]

23 CARMEN FARINA: ...we need more guidance,  
24 it's very ambiguous... [cross-talk]

25 RAYMOND ORLANDO: ...yes... [cross-talk]

1  
2 CARMEN FARINA: ...to say the least so once  
3 we get more specifics then we will fight on the  
4 specifics.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: And so... alright,  
6 I'll, I'll accept that and when will we know that?

7 RAYMOND ORLANDO: It's entirely in the  
8 hands of the federal bureaucrats when they tell us.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Do you see any way  
10 that we might compensate for any of the, the losses?

11 CARMEN FARINA: Well I think right now we  
12 have to find out exactly where the losses are, are  
13 they per student, per school, per borough, you know  
14 Title one has always been something that has been a  
15 little ambiguous in terms of where it was decided  
16 according to what numbers they put in the sand so  
17 this really is going to depend on more information  
18 and, and again really fighting back we should not  
19 assume that a projected budget is the final budget  
20 and this requires a lot of noise and a lot of people  
21 getting upset and also making people understand that  
22 what might sound good in respect when it comes to  
23 their own specific students and their own specific  
24 neighborhoods is not so good.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: But I don't think  
3 it's also... I think it's smart to have a contingency  
4 plan also.

5 CARMEN FARINA: But until we know where  
6 the money has to be placed versus where it is now  
7 it's a little bit difficult to do not that we're not  
8 watching it but it's really a little ambiguous right  
9 now.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Okay.

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So Chancellor we have  
12 about 1.7 billion dollars as funding that comes from  
13 the federal government reports have stated that about  
14 140 million would be cut is that from... if, if, if  
15 correct, if correct would that be where it would be  
16 cut from that 100... the 1.7 billion?

17 CARMEN FARINA: Yeah, correct. The most  
18 important thing to realize is that the 100 million is  
19 where our... most of our flexible money comes from. So,  
20 where you're seeing the cuts in that 100 million...  
21 [cross-talk]

22 URSULINA RAMIREZ: And that... just to be  
23 clear that's the Title 2A...

24 CARMEN FARINA: ...Right and the Title 2A  
25 is where our professional development money comes

1 from and if I have to stand by anything that I think  
2 has made a difference in the last three years is our  
3 focus on professional development, the curriculum  
4 guides that we've put out, the training for teachers,  
5 the training for principals this has been a real game  
6 changer in my opinion so for this money to be cut  
7 would be really be a sin. The other part of the 100  
8 million dollars is in teacher and principal  
9 leadership because that's the flexible money that  
10 comes out of that 100 million. So, any loss of that  
11 money is going to really change the way we've done  
12 business, the 40 million comes mostly out of after  
13 school and CBO's so that is whole other pot so... but  
14 together it is what we have based our change... school  
15 change on so I do think that this is a fight for us  
16 and then the Title one we will fight once we're more...  
17 have more information about specifically what it  
18 means. We have whole team working on it and it's  
19 going to depend whether its... carries... is carried with  
20 the child, it stays within a school, those are two  
21 different projections so once we know better we will  
22 be... in fact we will be probably asking your help on  
23 how we fight this.

1  
2 RAYMOND ORLANDO: So... and I think a large  
3 part of what we get from the feds is also used in the  
4 renewal schools particularly for professional  
5 development and so if we were to lose that at this  
6 time in our renewal schools it would be devastating  
7 to those renewal schools.

8 CARMEN FARINA: It would be devastating  
9 to the entire city, I want to be clear, to me  
10 professional development is just as needed in a high  
11 functioning district as any other district. If we  
12 don't keep the energy going one of the things I'm  
13 very proud of this year we put out for the first time  
14 a citywide curriculum on... in social studies which has  
15 a large civics engagement component and it has  
16 culture responsive classroom elements to this, we now  
17 know that in New York City every third grader will be  
18 exposed to learning about Peru, Egypt, Nigeria,  
19 whatever they choose and that curriculum goes right  
20 through eighth grade so if you move from this  
21 elementary school to this middle school there's an  
22 expectation and by the way the teacher guides are  
23 phenomenal the only complaint we got about the  
24 teacher guides is they want more and they want  
25 workbooks so we're doing that now. So, we now have

1  
2 these guides, we have guides on how to do independent  
3 reading, guides on how to develop a Stem Program.  
4 This to me is a game changer because whether you're  
5 in the zip code, you know 11201 or you're in the zip  
6 code in the Bronx your kids are having exposure to  
7 the exact same high level curriculum and that to me  
8 is really what Equity and Excellence is all about.  
9 So, to have PD we need everybody fighting for this  
10 not this cluster of people or this cluster... it's got  
11 to be everyone because both as a teacher as a  
12 principal... I live and die by professional development  
13 and I can't see an educator that would say that it's  
14 not important and it's not necessary.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Absolutely. Okay,  
16 Council Member Barron followed by Council Member  
17 King.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you Mr.  
19 Chair and thank you to the Chancellor and her team  
20 for being here and I do have some questions  
21 specifically about budget but I just want to  
22 introduce my comments with talking about curriculum,  
23 it says Pablo says there's no such thing as a neutral  
24 education process, education either functions as an  
25 instrument which is used to facilitate the

1 integration of generations into the logic of the  
2 present system and bring about conformity with it or  
3 it becomes the practice of freedom which means men  
4 and women deal critically with reality and discover  
5 how to participate in the transformation of the  
6 world. So, understanding that I think that it's  
7 incumbent that we make sure that we engage students  
8 in what their learning and that it emanates from what  
9 their culture and their history brings and we need to  
10 make sure that we respect and reflect that and in  
11 terms of the budget what percent of the budget  
12 remains at headquarters, what percent of the budget  
13 is used for personnel... is used for consultants at  
14 the... at the headquarters?

16 CARMEN FARINA: Okay, I'm going to let  
17 Ray answer the budget but I want to respond to your  
18 comment. I totally, totally agree, silent classrooms  
19 nothing gets learned, to me the reason I'm passionate  
20 about social studies it's where there needs to be  
21 real discussion. If you look at our social... and I'm  
22 happy to share our social studies curriculum with any  
23 of you who want to see it, it's all based on  
24 essential questions and classroom discussion. I grew  
25 up at a home where all my dining room table

1  
2 conversations were my father talking about politics,  
3 his version, I would come back and I'd say this is  
4 what I learned in school today and he would say well  
5 Carmen there's another side to this story and he'd  
6 give me his version, I'd go back to school the next  
7 day and give my father's version, get suspended and  
8 then I had to go back and say well what did you do  
9 this to me for... [cross-talk]

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And that's  
11 education.

12 CARMEN FARINA: Of course it is but this  
13 is something that's why social studies and this  
14 particular curriculum is so important to me. Every  
15 bit of this and when I go to schools what I look for  
16 is classroom discussion. There are not two sides to  
17 the civil war, there are four sides to the civil war,  
18 there are sides to every single issue and you great...  
19 you get your own reality based on how you talk about  
20 it and how you discuss it so I'm totally in  
21 agreement, I think if you look at our social studies  
22 curriculum you'll find that it's very comprehensive,  
23 very multiple opinions kind of thing but a social  
24 studies classroom, any classroom but certainly a  
25 social studies classroom that is a silent classroom

1  
2 is a classroom that no one is learning. So, I totally  
3 agree with you and Ray is going to answer the other  
4 question.

5 RAYMOND ORLANDO: Hi, the central admin  
6 costs at the department are approximately 500 million  
7 dollars... [cross-talk]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: What percent does  
9 that represent?

10 RAYMOND ORLANDO: That represents less  
11 than two percent of the overall... [cross-talk]

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I can't hear you.

13 RAYMOND ORLANDO: I'm sorry, that  
14 represents less than two percent of the total budget  
15 of the Department of Education.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And consultant's  
17 budget?

18 RAYMOND ORLANDO: I'll have to get back  
19 to you on that, I'm sorry I don't have it.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay, Mr. Chair  
21 if I could continue with just a few more questions.  
22 As you talk about your... part of your testimony says  
23 that the renewal schools are receiving clear guidance  
24 on the progress they need to make and resources to  
25 meet the rigorous but realistic goals including an

1 additional five hours of expanded learning time the  
2 question that I posed I think two years ago was do  
3 principals know specifically what they need to  
4 achieve to be able to move and I was told yes they  
5 know but I don't know that there's any definitive  
6 objective number that principals know they need to  
7 meet in terms of increasing the performance of their  
8 students on standardized tests in terms of improving  
9 the absentee rates and particularly talking about  
10 some of the schools in my district there are two  
11 schools that are renewal schools where they have a  
12 population that's five percent ELL, 32 percent  
13 special needs and 47 percent chronically absent  
14 students. So that's, that's unbelievable that that's  
15 what the conditions are and I wanted to know in each  
16 of these categories or in any of the categories that  
17 had been targeted did, did... do they know you've got  
18 to move it two percent, one percent and I'm saying to  
19 you that they did not have those clear targets such  
20 as what existed when the state gave annual yearly  
21 progress targets and you knew hit that target or  
22 you're in trouble.  
23

24

25

1  
2 CARMEN FARINA: Every principal knows  
3 what targets they have to hit and let me be very  
4 specific... [cross-talk]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Specific numbers  
6 of improvement?

7 CARMEN FARINA: Yes and even by  
8 necessary, by gender, and by grade level. I can tell  
9 you, I just met with one of the superintendents, she  
10 can tell me that in her renewal school she needs to  
11 move Hispanic males in eighth grade, she knows that  
12 because that's what the numbers tell you. in terms of  
13 attendance and chronic absenteeism we have people  
14 particularly with the CBO's who do nothing but that  
15 and we actually know by name who are your chronic  
16 absentees and how do we work with those families. We  
17 now have in all the renewal schools an assessment in  
18 second grade that's... we do twice a year, we do it in  
19 the beginning of the year, we do it in the middle of  
20 the year, we know which students need help in  
21 decoding versus comprehension versus fluency, this is  
22 called the Gates-MacGinitie and this is in second...

23 [cross-talk]

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Uh-huh, yes...

25 [cross-talk]

1  
2 CARMEN FARINA: ...grade early on so that  
3 we can then target the kind of work that kids need.  
4 The same thing is true in middle school, we now have  
5 something with the renewal schools called the ISSP  
6 where the principal, the DSR and the borough office  
7 go and look at all the data in that school and with  
8 the principal decide on what it is that they need to  
9 do better. If it means that these five students need  
10 special intervention for whatever the reason we  
11 target those five not a whole class. So do they know,  
12 yes, is everybody doing it, I'm not in every school  
13 at all times but the reality is every superintendent  
14 was told that this is something they have to make  
15 sure the principal... and its target... the targets needs  
16 to be met school by school that's how the state  
17 measures us, that's how we measure ourselves and the  
18 vast majority of renewal schools are working not just  
19 on the targets but improving overall education which  
20 is why and I know you understand this, why the  
21 professional development is so important. For too  
22 long many teachers without materials were creating  
23 their own curriculum, that's okay but not the best  
24 way to do it. So now we're saying your math target is  
25 this, this is the work that you need to do to get to

1  
2 that math target and that's what the DSR's are done  
3 and by the way the DSR's get training every single  
4 month and I go to all those meetings and at that  
5 meeting they go over the date, they're doing I-ready,  
6 they're doing Data Wise, we're using data a lot in  
7 the renewal schools.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you, Mr.  
9 Chair I'll reserve my questions for the next round.

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very...

11 [cross-talk]

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: ...thank you...

13 [cross-talk]

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...much and now we'll  
15 hear from Council Member King followed by Salamanca.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Good morning  
17 Chancellor and thank you, it's a delight always to  
18 have a conversation with you and I want to say thank  
19 you for your service over the years, it's good to  
20 have an educator in that seat, it makes our job that  
21 much more pleasing to talk with someone who knows  
22 what they're talking about. So, thank you again over  
23 the years and thank you to your team for helping us  
24 try to improve the school system here in the city of  
25 New York. I have two topics I just want to discuss

1  
2 the first one, when we first came in it was the talk  
3 about SSL school sports fund and I just want to get  
4 an update how that's playing out since we created  
5 that initiative, put funding in there, how many... how  
6 many students are actually participating in small  
7 school's athletic league and what kind of funding are  
8 they getting right now and then I'll go to my second,  
9 second question.

10 CARMEN FARINA: Well I'm going to let the  
11 numbers speak for themselves but I will tell you that  
12 the participation has increased dramatically and  
13 also, they're winning championships. One of our  
14 winning teams I think as of this week is one of our  
15 small school's teams. So, I do think... and again  
16 sports is not just about physical exercise it's about  
17 building school spirit, it's about getting kids to  
18 apply to certain schools because they have teams,  
19 they're also increasing teams by campuses so one  
20 campus is like... I know in the PSAL it was Thomas  
21 Jefferson against Lincoln... [cross-talk]

22 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...yes... [cross-talk]

23 CARMEN FARINA: ...and, and the enthusiasm  
24 out there to create that school spirit is really  
25 important but specifics, Ray?

1  
2 RAYMOND ORLANDO: Yes, thank you for the  
3 million dollars for the small schools, that money in  
4 the current year is supporting 109 teams and 1,500  
5 students in addition the PSAL, the larger system is  
6 at 34.1 million dollars this year and it continues  
7 to grow and expand.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Okay, do you see an  
9 increase in the years to come, more participation in  
10 small schools?

11 RAYMOND ORLANDO: I think that remains to  
12 be seen. I think it'll be... I... but that remains to be  
13 seen, I think that will continue to be a topic of  
14 conversation amongst us, you and OMB as we move to an  
15 adopted budget for fiscal year '18.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Okay, thank you for  
17 that and my second question is, a couple of weeks ago  
18 I had a public conversation in regard to a report  
19 that came home for my granddaughter that was telling  
20 me that the school she attended PS41 had elevated  
21 leads of water... lead in the water, my question is  
22 after doing research on the... on the website I've also  
23 learned this, about 123 schools, middle school, high  
24 school and elementary schools in the borough of the  
25 Bronx that also have elevated levels of lead. I would

1  
2 like to know I had a conversation with the Mayor in  
3 regards to what can be done, offering suggestions  
4 but... and he, he shared with me that his experts said  
5 that everything was okay, my problem with their  
6 experts is that the experts need to really understand  
7 what the... all the reports say and not rely on because  
8 no child has gotten sick in the past what's going to  
9 happen from today moving forward now that we know  
10 that there are lead... elevated lead, leads in the, the  
11 waters in our school. So, I'd like to know what is  
12 the plan, is there a plan to figure out how to we  
13 just... not just remove faucets because these elevated  
14 levels of lead is just because buildings are old,  
15 infrastructure is old and every time they do a test,  
16 when they do the test the right way without bleeding  
17 the pipes they find out that elevated lead levels are  
18 really high. So, there is a... there is a problem that  
19 I'm asking us the adults in the room to figure out  
20 how to fix not disguise, not be afraid to tackle  
21 because at the end of the day it's about saving our  
22 children for the most part other than being at home  
23 they spend the most... the majority of their time in  
24 school buildings so what are... what can we do, what is  
25 the DOE... what's the thought process, what's their

1  
2 plan to figure out how to rectify these issues moving  
3 forward?

4                   URSULINA RAMIREZ: Thank you Council  
5 Member. So, we have a, a stringent water testing  
6 protocol that was developed by the state where we...  
7 and if there is a faucet or an outlet that has  
8 elevated levels we take that as you mentioned we take  
9 that offline, we flush it, if it continues to have  
10 elevated levels we remove it complete... we remediate  
11 in terms of either changing the faucet or we take it  
12 offline completely altogether and that is the case in  
13 PS41 where your granddaughter attends school. The,  
14 the other piece here is that we're also working with  
15 our colleagues at DEP who do a tremendous amount of  
16 work to make sure that our water is safe and they  
17 have 500,000 tests a year... in a... in, in an annual...  
18 annually to make sure that New York City continues to  
19 have... to have... continues to have high quality water.  
20 So, we're working closely with them and you know when  
21 there is a problem we take it off and we do make  
22 remediation's fairly quickly and I think that that's...  
23 continues to be the case and we will continue working  
24 with you at PS41 and with other schools in your  
25 district.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: I appreciate that  
3 answer and I thank you in the coming days or months  
4 if there is any type of report that's being put...  
5 because I'm, I'm constantly getting calls and not  
6 just from my district but beyond my district about  
7 every school is getting these letters now.

8 URSULINA RAMIREZ: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

9 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...and there hasn't  
10 been a public conversation with the... from the DOE to  
11 say that this is what we're going to do about it, we  
12 understand our buildings are 75 and 100 years old,  
13 it's not any of our faults because we weren't here  
14 when they were being built but what are we going to  
15 do about it today and that means if it costs us  
16 millions or billions of dollars then it's worth it  
17 because it's about building for tomorrow and we can't  
18 ignore because we might think financially we can't do  
19 it so I'm asking you and I'm asking the DOE... [cross-  
20 talk]

21 URSULINA RAMIREZ: ...uh-huh... [cross-talk]

22 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...to, to figure out  
23 how to ease the anxiety... [cross-talk]

24 URSULINA RAMIREZ: ...yes... [cross-talk]

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...amongst the, the..  
3 amongst the parents who keep... every other day another  
4 note goes home to a school whether you know that note  
5 is going home but require... they're required... the  
6 schools are required by law and that's how we find  
7 out because no one in the DOE has said hey we got an  
8 issue, only reason we found out because someone's  
9 kid... and if my granddaughter didn't go to a school  
10 that got a letter I probably wouldn't have known  
11 about it either so I'm saying what... the DOE has to do  
12 something to let parents know and let the public know  
13 we got a problem before it's a crisis but we've got  
14 to do something about it now.

15 URSULINA RAMIREZ: And, and I want to  
16 thank you because it, it's helpful to help ease fears  
17 and making sure that we are giving folks accurate  
18 information and so that we're not creating a panic in  
19 this... in the school system. I do think... we always  
20 have room for improvement in how we're communicating  
21 with families, we're trying to be really quick on  
22 when we get the results and how we communicate  
23 obviously we need to work on some of the... we... we're  
24 working through some of the translation issues but  
25 would love to work with you on how we improve those

1  
2 communications because we want to make sure that  
3 we're giving people timely and accurate information  
4 and that we're not creating fear in the schools  
5 because our water is safe but thank you so much  
6 Council Member.

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much,  
8 Council Member Salamanca?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Thank you Mr.  
10 Chair. Good morning Chancellor. I have a few  
11 questions, one of them has to do with the call  
12 locations of schools. There has been concerns on, on  
13 fair treatment in call located schools where Charter  
14 Schools are getting upgrades to the classrooms and  
15 school space or... and while public schools are left  
16 out, what measures is... the Board of Education doing  
17 to address this inequality that's happening in our  
18 schools?

19 CARMEN FARINA: Well I think you need to  
20 give me specific schools, the original agreement  
21 which we still follow any improvement made to a  
22 charter school has to be made equally to the public  
23 school and the buildings so if the charter school is  
24 getting air conditioning the public school has to get

1  
2 air conditioning, if they're getting upgrades to the  
3 bathrooms then we have to do it as well.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: So... [cross-  
5 talk]

6 CARMEN FARINA: If you give me specific  
7 schools we will follow up on that.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: So, so  
9 Chancellor I know I met with you about maybe two  
10 months ago and, and you informed me of this and I  
11 went back and I spoke to some of the principals and  
12 they were unaware of this policy. So, what is your  
13 office doing to ensure that all principals for public  
14 schools that have call located schools or charter  
15 schools are aware of this policy that's in place.

16 CARMEN FARINA: Well I will certainly  
17 make sure that all the superintendents are told about  
18 this policy, they can inform their principals but if  
19 you have specific information give it to me and we'll  
20 follow up on it right away. I haven't gotten any e-  
21 mails and believe me I get e-mails all the time from  
22 principals, I haven't gotten any on this issue at all  
23 so tell them not to be shy and e-mail me directly.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Alright, my  
25 other question has to do with, I have two schools in

1  
2 my council district one of them is a, a persistently  
3 struggling school that's closing, JS... JHS162 and I  
4 have a renewal school that's closing as well, 145 I  
5 would like to get an update as to what's happening no  
6 one from your office has called my office to tell me  
7 hey this is what's happening so I'm, I'm just curious  
8 as to what exactly is happening to these two  
9 different schools.

10 CARMEN FARINA: Okay, well first of all  
11 we have been very public on both of these, we've had  
12 town hall meetings, we've had all kinds of  
13 discussions but 162 is in receivership by state law  
14 and 162 is now going to have... is jointly handled  
15 because they, they didn't get taken over but the  
16 commissioner and I are working that school will be  
17 closed and it will be reorganized. We have asked the  
18 superintendent to work with a monitor that was  
19 approved by both myself and the Commissioner to help  
20 them reorganize and 162 will be reorganized in terms  
21 of what the community wanted, they want a Stem dual  
22 language program on that site and that means that  
23 that school will be totally re-staffed, it will have  
24 a new school leader and it will have new staff,  
25 people have to reapply for their jobs but our

1  
2 expectation is to start the school anew. Parents in  
3 that particular building will have a choice of four  
4 middle schools to reapply to include the new school  
5 that will be on that site. So that... there will be... it  
6 has a new number already so there will be a school in  
7 that physical building, it will be a new school with  
8 new leadership and also new theme and all the other  
9 middle schools in district seven have agreed to take  
10 other students who may want to apply to their  
11 schools.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Will students  
13 that were in that school have an opportunity to go  
14 back now that you're bringing in these new programs...  
15 [cross-talk]

16 CARMEN FARINA: Absolutely, they will  
17 apply... [cross-talk]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: ...they won't be  
19 turned away?

20 CARMEN FARINA: Excuse me?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: No one will be  
22 turned away if they were presently in that school?

23 CARMEN FARINA: They have to reapply but  
24 they can apply for that particular school, it will be  
25 their first choice, they will have a priority. If you

1  
2 are a student right now in 162 you will be able to  
3 apply to the new school on that site and, or any of  
4 the other options that we're giving you what... within  
5 district seven and our expectation is that because it  
6 is a dual... it's going to be a dual language Stem  
7 Program that there will be a lot of attraction to  
8 that particular program and we have someone on site  
9 who is actually helping be the liaison between the  
10 state and us in terms of what happens there. So, I,  
11 I'm, I feel very confident that that's going to be a  
12 very good option. At 142 the vote... [cross-talk]

13 URSULINA RAMIREZ: ...145... [cross-talk]

14 CARMEN FARINA: What?

15 URSULINA RAMIREZ: 145.

16 CARMEN FARINA: 145, oh yes I don't want  
17 to start rumors, we felt strongly as did the  
18 superintendent that that school would benefit from  
19 closing and also offering those students options in  
20 other schools, there are three middle schools in the  
21 same building plus other middle schools that are  
22 doing better than that school, that school has  
23 remained flat no matter how much support we've given  
24 it, it hasn't budged on any of their targets so we  
25 feel that giving those students better options and

1  
2 there's another school in that building that has done  
3 some really great work and they, they have advanced  
4 so our vote on that one will be tomorrow night at the  
5 PEP meeting but we feel fully confident that we can  
6 offer better options for the students in that  
7 building and that therefore the other schools will  
8 also have a cap, parents will have choices of schools  
9 they apply to and they will have I think two or three  
10 choices and we will honor those choices in the order  
11 that they make them.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Yes. Alright  
13 and my last question retention, you know I'm, I'm  
14 walking around speaking to the teachers in my  
15 district and they're complaining about parking..  
16 [cross-talk]

17 CARMEN FARINA: I knew that was coming..

18 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Parking is an..  
19 [cross-talk]

20 CARMEN FARINA: ...but... [cross-talk]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: ...issue,  
22 parking placards, there's not enough parking placards  
23 in the schools. I will be supportive in, in, in  
24 converting the, the entire radius of the schools into  
25 no parking zone only for teachers parking if they do

1  
2 not have any parking lots. I do not understand  
3 clearly why we cannot get more parking permits for  
4 teachers so that they can worry less about their cars  
5 being double parked and focus on teaching our  
6 children.

7 CARMEN FARINA: I would suggest that you  
8 make an appointment with the Commissioner of DOT but  
9 let me just give you the history of parking permits  
10 which I think that's the advantage of having been in  
11 the system for 50 years. The original parking permits  
12 were only given to itinerant teachers, they were only  
13 given to teachers who had to go to more than one  
14 school per day or had to be in different schools at  
15 every different day because the theory was that we  
16 were losing their time if it took them an hour to  
17 look for a parking spot then they would run in and  
18 they'd have to run out and so that was the original  
19 parking and having been a principal I know how  
20 important parking is, I have teachers who drove their  
21 cars to park that lived five blocks away but they're  
22 safe parking was parking in front of the school. So,  
23 I think we have to... and I get this, believe me I'm  
24 meeting today... I have a teacher advisory group on  
25 teacher retention and that's always one of the top

1  
2 three but I think we have to be very careful on how  
3 we also do this in neighborhoods because when we try  
4 to do some of this then the neighborhood gets crazy,  
5 you know I, I have no spot, I can't part my car but  
6 certainly I am not in charge of parking, I do not  
7 give out the placards, they are not controlled by the  
8 DOE so I would say lots of luck, meet with the DOT  
9 Commissioner.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Alright, thank  
11 you.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Council Member  
13 Rosenthal? I'm sorry, we've been joined by Council  
14 Member Levin and Council Member Rosenthal.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you so  
16 much Chair Dromm, thank you so much Chancellor always  
17 nice to see you and your team. I want to ask about  
18 four things so I'm just going to lay it out there  
19 quickly. The dual language funding an update on  
20 SESIS, the issue of counselors in the schools and,  
21 and lastly, you know my favorite topic, contracts  
22 procurement and what goes on with the PEP and, and  
23 whether or not and what role they play. So let's  
24 start with dual language, thank you there is a new  
25 dual language program in district three, that's great

1  
2 and you've made a commitment for funding, the, the  
3 issue that parents tell me over and over again is  
4 that the commitment is usually, you know sort of one  
5 year commitment and, and I understand that in the  
6 sense that you've got to get it off the ground but I  
7 want to hear about ongoing commitment and I'd like to  
8 hear about commitment beyond the teacher, you know or  
9 the faculty for it in the sense that, you know I have  
10 dual... I have two dual language French programs, one  
11 elementary school one middle school and the parents  
12 are always having to buy... purchase the books making  
13 sure that there's curriculum, making sure there's  
14 professional development for the dual language  
15 program and I'm just wondering what your thoughts on  
16 that are and of course thanking you for the Mandarin  
17 Program at 191 where... you know we're excited again  
18 for the... for the teacher but I want to hear about,  
19 you know how you make it a, a true program with the  
20 books and... [cross-talk]

21 CARMEN FARINA: ...Well first of all let me  
22 be very clear, all dual language commitments are  
23 right through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, we have been very clear,  
24 again I said it before you got here that our biggest  
25 struggle is finding the teachers, it, it is beyond a

1  
2 doubt, it is one of the conversations we're having  
3 with our universities and also we're looking for some  
4 more creative approaches which I'm working with the  
5 UFT on and some other people, how do we ensure that  
6 we have the teachers for some of these might be  
7 esoteric topics... subjects but the other thing about  
8 dual language we guarantee and it's the same thing  
9 you're French program at 84 is now going to continue  
10 in the new site when we move the, the middle school  
11 over so we anticipate that if you have a dual  
12 language elementary school there will be at least one  
13 middle school in that district that will continue the  
14 program and we're looking for at least one high  
15 school in a wider area to continue the program if  
16 parents... if that's what the parents wish so, so  
17 that's... [cross-talk]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...right and the  
19 middle school is up and going so... [cross-talk]

20 CARMEN FARINA: ...yes... [cross-talk]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...that's great  
22 and it's in a different building, I totally get that...  
23 [cross-talk]

24 CARMEN FARINA: ...right... [cross-talk]

25

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...they don't  
3 have the resources beyond the teacher?

4 CARMEN FARINA: Okay, the resources have  
5 been more difficult other than Spanish so we have  
6 started and this is something Deputy Chancellor Beaz  
7 has been working a lot, we met with all the  
8 conciliates, we've met with the French Council, we  
9 have... we meet with quite... the Qatar, the Qatar  
10 Foundation for the Arabic materials. I do not want to  
11 see in dual language programs American English first  
12 books translated into other languages, finding books  
13 written in the language itself is not so easy, we've  
14 been going to a lot of conferences, we've been  
15 actually asking Councils to, to send us publishers  
16 that publish in their language. So, I think we're  
17 getting a lot... [cross-talk]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...I mean if...  
19 [cross-talk]

20 CARMEN FARINA: ...better... [cross-talk]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...excuse my  
22 interrupting, it's the class thing.. [cross-talk]

23 CARMEN FARINA: ...right... [cross-talk]

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COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

111

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So I'm happy to have the schools reach out to you for the resources location... [cross-talk]

CARMEN FARINA: ...absolutely... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...but it's the money, I mean just to be clear, it's the... [cross-talk]

CARMEN FARINA: ...they have the funding, dual language programs come... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...that's... [cross-talk]

CARMEN FARINA: ...with funding... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...not what I'm hearing from parents... [cross-talk]

CARMEN FARINA: ...how do they... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...but I appreciate... [cross-talk]

CARMEN FARINA: ...know us... [cross-talk]

URSULINA RAMIREZ: And, and just a quick... last fiscal year we or I believe it was last fiscal year we added additional weights for English Language Learner students so there are additional resources

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COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

112

that come with their dual language... with, with L...  
[cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...right, it's  
not... [cross-talk]

URSULINA RAMIREZ: ...students... [cross-  
talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...English  
language learners... [cross-talk]

URSULINA RAMIREZ: ...okay... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...we're talking  
about a dual language... [cross-talk]

URSULINA RAMIREZ: ...dual language...  
[cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...where English  
speakers... [cross-talk]

URSULINA RAMIREZ: ...but the dual  
language... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay, SESIS...  
[cross-talk]

CARMEN FARINA: ...comes with books...  
[cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...which you  
know... [cross-talk]

CARMEN FARINA: ...okay... [cross-talk]

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: has been a  
3 disaster in roll out, you know parents who have  
4 children with IEP's are saying that, you know there's  
5 so much confusion with their children getting access  
6 to resources, there's been no commitment yet in terms  
7 of exact timing of when the program will be... when the  
8 computer system will be fully implemented as you know  
9 it effects the ability of the city to draw down  
10 Medicaid funding and I'm getting to the end of my  
11 time

12 URSULINA RAMIREZ: We did discuss this a  
13 little bit previously but if you can ask the question  
14 to see if it's... [cross-talk]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So the exact...  
16 [cross-talk]

17 URSULINA RAMIREZ: ...different than what  
18 we had... [cross-talk]

19 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...timing...  
20 [cross-talk]

21 URSULINA RAMIREZ: ...asked... [cross-talk]

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Chancellor of  
23 when we'll be done with full implementation?

24 URSULINA RAMIREZ: So as, as noted  
25 earlier so we're working with a sense of urgency

1  
2 understanding all of those concerns that we're  
3 hearing from parents and teachers and also our own  
4 staff and we hope to see improvements as soon as this  
5 Fall but those improvements are first steps and we  
6 are making improvements throughout the next school  
7 year... [cross-talk]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So full  
9 implementation I'm hearing September 2019?

10 URSULINA RAMIREZ: So you'll see  
11 improvements for this... for Fall of this upcoming...  
12 [cross-talk]

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...'17... [cross-  
14 talk]

15 URSULINA RAMIREZ: ...school year, you're  
16 going to start seeing... there'll be improvements made  
17 in terms of full implementation, you know I will get  
18 back to you on when you're going to see... [cross-talk]

19 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I think  
20 parents are desperate to know and their children... you  
21 already heard the issue, counselors in the schools,  
22 you know PS191 is not a community school but you... the  
23 DOE has funded and the principal has been great in  
24 finding ways to get more counselors, city council has  
25 put in money for a counselor at that school but you

1  
2 know I heard you earlier talk about how the academic  
3 work is the same quality in every school, I don't  
4 doubt that and I don't doubt the ability of the  
5 teachers to impart that information, the, the  
6 challenge is the difficulty of the students to hear  
7 it and without... you know for some of these kids they,  
8 they need the space in their head to be able to  
9 absorb the academic information and I'm wondering you  
10 know whether or not there are resources in the budget  
11 for schools that may not be community schools but for  
12 a focus school like 191 whether or not, you know  
13 there are resources for counselors.

14 CARMEN FARINA: We have increased the  
15 amount of counselors in the city dramatically. We  
16 have put in over 100 but the, the guidance counselors  
17 are part of the principals budget and that's a  
18 decision that's made... it is and let me clear on this,  
19 I get a budget, I make choices, do I hire this kind  
20 of person or do I hire... do I hire three AP's when  
21 maybe two will do and hire a guidance counselor  
22 instead, principals and this is something I've been  
23 talking with all the superintendents when I was a  
24 superintendent one of the only mandates that I put in  
25 place is that all middle schools have to have a non-

1 mandated guidance counselor. In schools with a  
2 certain amount of students the money is flexible to a  
3 degree that principals make decisions.

4  
5 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Right but to  
6 be clear they're making decisions between, you know  
7 do we have another Mandarin teacher to... for academic  
8 excellence or do we have a guidance counselor so the  
9 kids can hear what the teachers are teaching, I mean  
10 giving principals a choice on a budget that's so  
11 tight I don't think is... I hear what you're saying and  
12 I get it and I applaud the idea that principals make  
13 choices and certainly a principal in one district is  
14 confronting different issues than a principal in  
15 another district but you know the budgets are too  
16 tight to be able to sort of say well they can choose  
17 to have counselor.

18 CARMEN FARINA: I would say that the  
19 budgets for this year have actually been at a higher  
20 level than they've been for many years. We put all  
21 schools at, at least 87 percent and struggling  
22 schools we raised even higher to 100 percent so I'm  
23 happy because individual's situations but the reality  
24 is I think people have to make decisions. SLT should  
25 be part of the discussion, what is it that you need

1  
2 at this time and by the way what you need this year  
3 may not be necessarily what you need next year but  
4 that is a very school... and I know in my school and I  
5 had 900 students I made decisions every year and one  
6 year I chose not to have an assistant principal at  
7 all with 900 students... [cross-talk]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...sure... [cross-  
9 talk]

10 CARMEN FARINA: ...so that's... [cross-talk]

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...you know...  
12 [cross-talk]

13 CARMEN FARINA: ...the discussion... [cross-  
14 talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright. Thank you.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: But lets set  
17 that aside, the last thing is... [cross-talk]

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Council Member, let  
19 me... let me move on because I've been very generous  
20 with you in time...

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yes, you have...  
22 [cross-talk]

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...and if you want...  
24 [cross-talk]

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COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...I'll ask  
second... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...a second round...  
[cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...round, thank  
you very much... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...we'll, we'll let  
you... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...I appreciate  
it... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...speak on the second  
round but related to what you're saying as well can  
you give us a breakdown in terms of the  
implementation of the Restorative Justice Practices  
and the funding that we provided and I know that you  
I had matched it even at a higher amount of... [cross-  
talk]

CARMEN FARINA: ...yes... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...I think the council  
put 2.4 million in and you put in about three million  
and, and just give us a rundown of how that's going  
and particularly also are, are you working with the  
positive learning collaborative with the UFT and, and  
how that model is going?

1  
2 CARMEN FARINA: Well we're working with  
3 many different organizations but let me tell you that  
4 I think it's working beautifully if you noticed that  
5 where we have Restorative Justice Programs we've seen  
6 a down of suspensions, we've seen a better school  
7 climate. The other thing I was part of a school visit  
8 with Commissioner O'Neill where we partook in a  
9 Restorative Justice circle and I think the  
10 conversation between NYPD, myself and the students  
11 was to me very enlightening. This is a renewal  
12 school, lots of issues and the conversation we had  
13 with students was extremely enlightening but more  
14 importantly I think Restorative Justice changes the  
15 culture in a building by taking the responsibility of  
16 people writing rules and regulations and then  
17 enforcing them to the students who then decide what  
18 it is they need in their own schools in their  
19 classrooms so I'm a big supporter of this, we're  
20 working with many different organizations including  
21 Morningside Heights, I think we've seen it to be so  
22 successful that one of the things we're trying to do  
23 is build a stronger capacity in house so we can serve  
24 more schools and we have an entire department under  
25 Deputy Chancellor Rose that is actually now looking

1  
2 at different models throughout the city. So, I  
3 absolutely believe in this practice, I think also  
4 when students become very active student council  
5 members and not just, you know to sugar coat it but  
6 really do make the decisions. I had a, a group of  
7 elementary school students visit the other day and  
8 they told me they were a part of the student council  
9 so I said what are some of the things that you're  
10 dealing with this year, she said well we want to talk  
11 about bullying, I said well what happened, she was  
12 like well now when someone does something wrong they  
13 have to come to us and we decide what happens and  
14 that to me is where I think it makes a lot of sense,  
15 if you're in a school and the students are doing  
16 something let the students have input into how we do  
17 it. So, I think that's important but fund... do you  
18 have the fund... oh you have?

19                   URSULINA RAMIREZ: Yes. So, we're working  
20 with, with our colleagues at OMB to, to figure out  
21 this upcoming fiscal year but the, the Restorative  
22 Practices, the implementation is going well and we've  
23 trained our principal in I believe it was in December  
24 which was like the tier two level of the Restorative  
25 Practices. We're also making expansions on the

1  
2 warning card program which has been part of the  
3 school climate team working group which Council  
4 Member your, your team sits on and so we're, we're  
5 thinking through this upcoming year on, on what other  
6 investments we want to make to enhance the  
7 Restorative Justice Programs that kind of expands to  
8 more schools and also thinking about what are some of  
9 the cost effective ways because I think one of the  
10 issues that we have is if we... expanding these  
11 programs to a broader swath of schools is costly and  
12 trying to figure out, you know what's really working  
13 and, and what improvements do we need to make in the  
14 implementation to get it... expand it out more.

15 CARMEN FARINA: Yeah and one of the  
16 things that we found that will help is to have one  
17 person whose accountable and responsible at the  
18 borough level so that as an issue comes up a  
19 superintendent can ask the borough office to send  
20 someone to their school. So, we want to have a  
21 uniform approach to this so that we can say all  
22 schools will be trained in this by a certain year but  
23 I have nothing but good things to say about the work  
24 so far.

25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So yesterday I  
3 testified at the United States Commissioner on Civil  
4 Rights in regard to policing in our public schools  
5 and I'm a big believer as I believe the  
6 administration is as well that we can reduce the  
7 policing in our schools if we implement these  
8 Restorative Practices. One of the best that I've seen  
9 is the positive learning collaborative and that's why  
10 I'm pushing that and promoting that and the reason  
11 why I believe deeply in that is because it trains  
12 everybody in the school. So it trains the school  
13 safety agent, it trains the, the kitchen workers, it  
14 trains the custodians and everybody's on board  
15 because as a teacher what I would find is that, you  
16 know when I was in the classroom I might try to  
17 implement Restorative Practices in my classroom but  
18 come back after lunch and an aid had taken the kid to  
19 the office and sat them at the.. you know on, on  
20 bench, it was very difficult if everybody wasn't  
21 trained in that measure so are the programs that  
22 you're looking toward implementing in that framework?

23 CARMEN FARINA: Absolutely, that's what  
24 school climate is all about. School climate is from  
25 the minute you walk in the building a school safety

1 officer does not growl at you, when you go into your  
2 classroom your teacher understands where you're  
3 coming from, what your specific needs are. When you  
4 go to lunch no one's using a bull horn to tell you  
5 how to get to your seat or not get to your seat. So  
6 to me school climate is what is the ethos in a  
7 particular school and the vision of that particular  
8 school for all students and for all staff members. So  
9 that's certainly the approach we're taking and when  
10 you look at the dwindling suspension rates and even  
11 the persistently, you know... when I came onto this job  
12 we had a very large number of schools on the  
13 persistently dangerous, the list has gone down to  
14 like three to four schools and that means we're still  
15 working on them but it's about changing a school  
16 climate, it's now about changing necessarily just  
17 teacher practices and we're very, very... and I do  
18 think if any of you visit schools I see a major  
19 difference in schools and to the degree that I  
20 already said at least they should smile at me when I  
21 come in they don't know what I'm there for but they  
22 should smile when I come in and we've also trained  
23 our school safety officers in agreement with the  
24 NYPD, they've been very good about adding more  
25

1  
2 training for them because they are the first person  
3 that most people see when they walk in a building in  
4 terms of some of the, the things... the work that they  
5 do and parent coordinators are also getting training  
6 on the Restorative Justice Practices because they're  
7 the ones who then can train parents because the  
8 missing piece in our original restorative practices  
9 work was it cannot end in school if it... if you have a  
10 Restorative Practice culture in a school and then you  
11 go home to a very different kind of culture at the  
12 home there's a disconnect so we're training parents  
13 and that's part of Yolanda Torres's work on how to do  
14 more conversations at home. So, so it's got to be a  
15 whole way of looking at this.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Let me just go to  
17 school lunches at this point. I think in 2015 the  
18 council allocated 6.25 million dollars for this  
19 program, where do we stand now and what percent  
20 increase has there been in participation in school  
21 lunch since that infusion of funding?

22 CARMEN FARINA: I don't have a percentage  
23 but... [cross-talk]

24 URSULINA RAMIREZ: We've seen a, a  
25 roughly... and when we expanded free lunch for middle

1  
2 schools we saw a six percent increase in, in students  
3 eating lunch last year.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright and do you  
5 expect to expand this program any further so that it  
6 becomes universal?

7 URSULINA RAMIREZ: So just to give you  
8 some, some context so roughly 80 percent of students  
9 can eat lunch for free who qualify for free or  
10 reduced priced lunch, it's 80 percent which  
11 encompasses that number and also the schools that  
12 already have free lunch so we're, we're encouraged by  
13 the increased, increased participation but we do not  
14 have any plans for expansion at this time, our goal  
15 is to increase participation through menu tweaks and  
16 increasing marketing and really making sure that  
17 we're creating a, a better environment during the  
18 lunch period.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Can you describe for  
20 us how the implementation of the breakfast in the  
21 classroom program has gone?

22 CARMEN FARINA: Yes, I would say from a  
23 beginning reluctance on the part of many principals  
24 that we have I would say close to 90 percent  
25 enthusiastic participation. I would say... I was just

1  
2 in a school this week where the principal said I  
3 didn't think this was going to work but it has made a  
4 difference, I think our challenge right now is to  
5 make sure that in many more of our schools that the  
6 breakfast in the classroom doesn't interfere with an  
7 early lunch because it's those lunch hours that we're  
8 looking at, how do we fix some of that. So, I'm  
9 actually in conversation with several of the  
10 superintendents, how do we look at lunch time  
11 differently rather than just every school starting  
12 lunch at ten o'clock doesn't work for a lot of kids.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay and I think I'm  
14 going... well let me announce that we've been joined by  
15 Council Member Ydannis Rodriguez and if we... does... do  
16 you have... do you have questions?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: What percent  
18 is of it... New York public school that are L's?

19 URSULINA RAMIREZ: We have approximately  
20 150,000 students, I'll get the exact percentage rate  
21 now I believe it's around 14 percent.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: What  
23 percentage are Latino?

24 URSULINA RAMIREZ: Our Latino population  
25 is roughly I'd say... I should say 60 percent.

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COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Latinos?

CARMEN FARINA: In the L population.

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: In the New York... [cross-talk]

URSULINA RAMIREZ: In the L... in the L... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: In the whole New York City population for the 1.2 million what percent are Latinos? 40 percent right... [cross-talk]

URSULINA RAMIREZ: 40 percent... 40 percent... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: ...40... [cross-talk]

URSULINA RAMIREZ: 40.4 percent Latino... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: That's a huge number, right?

URSULINA RAMIREZ: Correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Do we feel that when resources are distributed because sometimes you know human beings are really comfortable in a space and even though we say we... the city is a full opportunity for all but when you look at particular school districts the best schools they are in

1  
2 particular area and they are not as threat through  
3 the whole district and that's a big challenge because  
4 they, they are our brothers and sisters, progressive  
5 brothers and sisters and, and I think that, you know  
6 I hope Chancellor that as you've been a champion  
7 moving this system, that is difficult to move that  
8 also we look at those percentages of those  
9 disadvantaged kids because, you know as a former  
10 teacher for 13 years numbers is not easy to move, you  
11 know it's not only to say that we are offering the  
12 AP, the question is what is the percent of a student  
13 that we have in particular school that they are ready  
14 to take those AP courses and, and are we building the  
15 pipeline, you know are we going from the  
16 understanding that that's where in the first four  
17 grade that we can guarantee that they... those numbers  
18 they will move when those kids are in ninth grade to  
19 say guy you know you should be taking algebra in  
20 seventh grade, you know like how are we doing, how  
21 are we investing so... and I brought the numbers of the  
22 percent of L's and the percent in the scale of the  
23 Latinos only because they are part, you said 40  
24 percent but I know that we are not moving so fast as  
25 we should like because I see everything connected for

1 the higher education, you know what is happening now  
2 when I went to city college like close to 70, 70  
3 percent of the population are, are city college who  
4 were black and Latino, today the population in senior  
5 colleges is 50 percent black and Latino. So what is  
6 the pipeline that we're building to take those kids  
7 from the early child to build slowly at the level,  
8 the higher education level?  
9

10 CARMEN FARINA: Well let me answer this  
11 one and first of all one of the things I've been  
12 encouraging people to think about is to not define L  
13 students and special interest... and special ed kids as  
14 disadvantaged or struggling, we... they have to have  
15 the same labels as everybody else. We are not selling  
16 the advantages that we have in the city and I think  
17 to say the highest poverty, the highest is already  
18 comes with a negative connotation so having said that  
19 let me say that this year we have had the largest  
20 increase in our Latino numbers both in terms of  
21 graduation rates, acceptance to college, the biggest  
22 challenge is staying in college and one of the things  
23 that we're also encouraging our parent coordinators  
24 to start thinking about how do we get Latino parents  
25 but all parents to say my child should go to college,

1  
2 I spoke at the Hispanic Summit yesterday, we have to  
3 do a better job at convincing parents that once their  
4 kids get to college the part of their job is to  
5 ensure that they stay there. We now have increased  
6 the number of fifth graders taking algebra courses  
7 including some in district six, we now say that all  
8 students will have algebra no later than 9<sup>th</sup> grade..  
9 the... 8<sup>th</sup> grade in middle school and that is going to  
10 be a big game changer, you see what we're doing at  
11 George Washington campus that the AP courses are  
12 across the campus so instead of student having no AP  
13 courses they have their own school plus other schools  
14 on the campus so I do think we're doing a tremendous  
15 amount of work. The AP courses and I'll say it again  
16 are not just about the fact that they're more  
17 rigorous, that the, the correlation between staying  
18 in college and having had an AP course is very big  
19 also once the students take a certain amount of AP  
20 courses they already have taken their freshman year  
21 of college, they're much more likely when they go to  
22 college to stay there because they have a certain  
23 amount of credits under their belt. So, I think that  
24 with Latino students we are seeing a tremendous  
25 amount of progress, there's less of a dropout in

1  
2 Latino students than there ever has been in the New  
3 York City Board of Education. So we have to work on  
4 this on many different levels including parent  
5 education and this is where we're spending a lot of  
6 energy this year.

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, now we have  
8 some follow up questions from Council Member Kallos  
9 followed by Council Member Barron, King and  
10 Rosenthal.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you Chair  
12 Dromm. So just to clarify and confirm because I  
13 thought I got very good news, do you agree that there  
14 is a new seat need on the upper East side for the  
15 school construction authority?

16 CARMEN FARINA: Yes and we will see how  
17 we can meet it.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you very  
19 much, that is incredibly, incredibly good news and so  
20 just to follow up on the Chair's questions about  
21 hunger I have trouble focusing when I'm hungry Chair...  
22 Chancellor do you have trouble focusing and doing  
23 work when you're hungry?

24 CARMEN FARINA: Since I never have lunch  
25 I, I, I have a hard time trying to figure out when

1  
2 I'm hungry and when I'm not but yes, I agree but I  
3 want to be clear... [cross-talk]

4 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: ...so... [cross-talk]

5 CARMEN FARINA: ...no child in New York  
6 City doesn't get to eat lunch for any reason, they  
7 don't and I understand your goals of universal free  
8 lunch but I want to say that everyone gets to eat  
9 lunch.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I, I, I was a  
11 public school kid who didn't eat lunch because I grew  
12 up on the East side and there was a stigma as being  
13 one of the kids who ate this free lunch and I see the  
14 look on your face and it was a bad decision that I  
15 made as a kid but it turns out that other kids make  
16 that same bad decision and then along the same lines  
17 we've seen an increase in participation, we have a  
18 federal government that wants to block grant any  
19 program there is and if we can increase participation  
20 at any level we can have a higher basis for the block  
21 corrupt that they will start cutting away at so...  
22 [cross-talk]

23 CARMEN FARINA: I, I just want to be  
24 clear that I don't totally disagree with you but I do  
25 think lunch is an environmental issue as well and one

1  
2 of the things I've asked Deputy Chancellor, what do  
3 we need to change about the environment at lunchtime  
4 that will get kids to want to eat lunch and I'll give  
5 you an example, I went to visit a high school where  
6 almost none of the kids eat lunch and they're  
7 entitled to it. So, we're doing a major restructure  
8 of the, the lunchroom, we're changing what we're  
9 serving, we're getting the kids involved in making  
10 menu choices so I think eating has a whole lot of  
11 other connotations because eating is a cultural  
12 thing... [cross-talk]

13 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I... [cross-talk]

14 CARMEN FARINA: ...as well... [cross-talk]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I, I agree with  
16 you... [cross-talk]

17 CARMEN FARINA: ...so... [cross-talk]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: ...and, and the  
19 schools in my district that have made those capital  
20 investments to the lunch program and to the area has...  
21 have been great but I guess it's just at the last  
22 budget hearing you'd indicated that the reimbursement  
23 rate for free lunch was over 80 cents on the dollar,  
24 is that still the reimbursement that we'd be looking  
25 at?

1  
2 CARMEN FARINA: I don't have... I don't  
3 have that figure.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: If, if you can  
5 provide it but I, I think we have a chance to make  
6 sure that every kid has breakfast in the classroom so  
7 that if they're late they can... they can still eat and  
8 have lunch and then the, the next thing that I'll be  
9 asking you for once we get these two done is snacks  
10 and supper because I want every kid to get their  
11 three square meals a day and not have to worry about  
12 where their next meal is coming from, would, would  
13 you agree to those goals?

14 URSULINA RAMIREZ: And, and I will say  
15 just really quickly on the afterschool programs  
16 because there are snacks provided in the afterschool  
17 programs which is one of the items that are in one of  
18 the cuts for the federal government so we should work  
19 to have that conversation.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: If, if I may ask  
21 one line of questioning just on the local law 14 and  
22 15... [cross-talk]

23 URSULINA RAMIREZ: ...I don't know about a  
24 line but a question. I don't know about a line but a  
25 question... [cross-talk]

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Fair enough. I, I  
3 was proud to be a co-primary sponsor on health  
4 education reporting requirements local law 14 and 15  
5 heard from advocates like Planned Parenthood and  
6 others that 43 percent of the 8<sup>th</sup> graders have not  
7 received health education before leaving middle  
8 school that of those who are in... educating if there's  
9 15,397 instructors but only 153 are licensed and, and  
10 even worse just along the lines of gender and  
11 sexuality in talking to middle school kids in my  
12 district they actually talk... told me that when they  
13 got their health education in seventh grade there was  
14 no education around the fact that their gender  
15 identity could be different than they were born with  
16 and that was okay and that their sexual identity  
17 might not be heterosexual and that was also okay,  
18 they're not getting that education even at the... at,  
19 at grade schools like Eastside Middle School so how  
20 can we make sure that every kid gets health education  
21 under the state law and also make sure that our  
22 public school system is welcoming folks regardless  
23 of, of gender identity or sexual identity?

24 CARMEN FARINA: Yeah. No, I, I think that  
25 moving our middle schools in particular to have these

1  
2 conversations and who we train to have these  
3 conversations is certainly a part of our agenda.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you and just as  
5 a follow up to that what success have you seen with  
6 elementary school health education pilot program that  
7 you implemented?

8 CARMEN FARINA: I think it depends on  
9 specific schools, some schools have obviously taken  
10 it on more enthusiastically than others and I think  
11 it's also at what grade do you put it in, I think  
12 it's particularly successful in fifth grades across  
13 the city from what I'm hearing more spotty on other  
14 grades.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you and I know  
16 we're going to look at this a little bit more in  
17 depth down the road so... let's go to Council Member  
18 Barron followed by King.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you Mr.  
20 Chair. I have a lot of questions so I think what I'm  
21 going to do is lay them out and then give you the  
22 opportunity to respond to them. I believe that the,  
23 the society has an obligation to educate children,  
24 we've started a pre-k for all that's great, I think  
25

1  
2 it should go through college years which is why I'm  
3 still advocating for free tuition.

4 CARMEN FARINA: Thank you.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So in that regard  
6 I, I understand that the graduation rate has  
7 increased but the number of students entering CUNY  
8 from city schools has not decreased in demonstrating  
9 that their need... that they have a great need for  
10 remedial courses and that of course eats into their...  
11 into their aid when they have to pay for these  
12 courses and the number of students black and Latino  
13 students entering the specialized schools continues  
14 to decline even though there are all kinds of  
15 programs that are being designed to help them prepare  
16 for that test. In seventh and eighth grades I believe  
17 the state requires two years of English, math, social  
18 studies, science, phys ed, one year of foreign  
19 language of arts, one year of technology and one  
20 semester of health, I wanted to know are the teachers  
21 in each of these middle schools prepared and  
22 qualified to teach those subject areas and in terms  
23 of renewal schools being closed I strongly object to  
24 the schools in my district that are targeted to be  
25 closed, I think that the agreement was that they

1  
2 would have three years in which to demonstrate that  
3 they could improve and there being closed after only  
4 two years and parents are being told that they will  
5 be able to make a choice as to where they would like  
6 their child to go, another school in the district.  
7 Some parents who are facing this school closing want  
8 their child in the top performing middle school which  
9 is quite understandable but they've been told well  
10 you may or may not get that. So if these are children  
11 who've been disadvantaged for lo these many years in  
12 terms of getting the instruction that has helped to  
13 move them forward I think that if every parent should  
14 this renewal... should this closing go forward I think  
15 that every parent should have the right to send their  
16 child to the top performing school not to another  
17 neighboring school which is doing marginally better  
18 than the school which is being closed and I've also  
19 been told that the closing of one of these schools is  
20 going to be the siting for a charter school which is  
21 what I knew from the outset because there's a pattern  
22 and even though it was said well no, no, no we don't  
23 have any grants now the plans are there and lead in  
24 the water I think is a problem that's only beginning  
25 to percolate and I don't think that the comment made

1  
2 by the Deputy Superintendent that it was only a  
3 problem for the child who got that first drink of  
4 water is a good reflection of understanding that all  
5 of our children are precious and none of our children  
6 should be subjected to any kind of poisoning no  
7 matter how small. So, I got all my questions in and  
8 hopefully... [cross-talk]

9 CARMEN FARINA: Well let's see if I can  
10 remember them all and answer... [cross-talk]

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay... [cross-  
12 talk]

13 CARMEN FARINA: ...let me be very clear, we  
14 don't close or even merge and consolidate any school  
15 without careful thought. One of the schools in your  
16 district has less than 100 students in it and there's  
17 no way no matter what we do that we can provide an  
18 appropriate education to a school with less than 100  
19 students giving those... that school an opportunity to  
20 apply to other schools means that those kids will  
21 have a better advantage and by the time September  
22 comes it'll be probably less than 70 kids because  
23 you'll have a graduating class. So, we don't do it  
24 lightly but also you have a new superintendent there  
25 who's taking very seriously the whole emphasis of

1 professional development in how he's working with  
2 those schools I think will show you a lot of good  
3 results going forward. I do agree with something you  
4 said and I want to tell you very clearly, that in  
5 terms of keeping... getting our students into college  
6 and keeping them there a lot of it has to do with  
7 mentoring so we've just entered into some programs  
8 where we're training former graduates of high schools  
9 and even high school graduates presence to mentor  
10 other students to talk about what life is like at  
11 college, what is it that you need to know, many of  
12 our students who go to college do not understand that  
13 it's a whole different set of organizational skills,  
14 that you may go to school three days a week, you have  
15 to organize your life differently. So, we're doing a  
16 lot more training of what is college and I just want  
17 to caution you about the remedial work, we're meeting  
18 with CUNY about how are we better aligned between  
19 what we do and what they do and I've been meeting  
20 with them one on one going forward and let me give  
21 you an example. One of the CUNY schools that I think  
22 is doing a marvelous job is Queens College, what are  
23 they doing differently, they have changed the  
24 structure of their courses to be more aligned with  
25

1 the kind of teaching that we do, if you're going to  
2 graduate from a high school where the students have  
3 had some ownership about their work, where they talk  
4 in class, where the teacher is more a facilitator and  
5 then you go boom, into a college class where the  
6 teacher stands in front of the room preaching at the  
7 kids, the kids sit like... there's going to be a  
8 disconnect and is it really all remedial or is that  
9 we're not aligned for the same kind of teaching  
10 practices. So that's the kind of discussions that  
11 we're having with some of our universities, we're  
12 also encouraging schools to look above and beyond the  
13 same schools that are close to home, we, we have  
14 students who actually do not take advantage of  
15 scholarships and other things because they may have  
16 to go to sleepaway College or whatever so this is a  
17 big job but it's something we're dealing with on many  
18 different levels. In terms of the diversity I do  
19 think that we're doing a lot more work, this is not  
20 by any means any apology but diversity is something  
21 we talk about on a regular basis, there isn't a  
22 meeting we have that it doesn't come on the table  
23 more of the specialized high schools are doing a  
24 three-year project including test prep but also  
25

1  
2 project based learning. So, I would say that  
3 everything you're concerned about I'm concerned about  
4 but closing schools is usually... reaches a point where  
5 we don't think... where we think there's better options  
6 for those kids and I, I got to tell you, you have  
7 some phenomenal middle schools in your district. I  
8 went to visit one recently, School of the Future and  
9 it's a small school and parents... it may be a little  
10 off the radar and we have to start also doing a  
11 better job of branding the schools that are not on  
12 people's radar because everybody thinks oh this is  
13 the best school but there are a lot of great schools  
14 that don't get on the radar just yet.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Your... you didn't  
16 comment on the lead.

17 CARMEN FARINA: What was the question?

18 URSULINA RAMIREZ: When was that remark  
19 made, sorry I just wasn't... you said there was a  
20 remark made by somebody?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Yes, at a  
22 meeting, the Brooklyn Delegation, two weeks ago  
23 across the street at 250 Broadway and I thought it  
24 was dismissive and I thought that it didn't reflect  
25 the fact that even if a child had two ounces of

1  
2 contaminated water that that was a serious issue not  
3 to say well it's only for that first drink that comes  
4 out of that fountain, I thought that was very  
5 insensitive and inappropriate.

6 URSULINA RAMIREZ: And I apologize for  
7 that it may... I want you to understand it's the... it's  
8 our responsibility to be and we are very much  
9 cognitive of how parents are feeling and we want to  
10 make sure that we are being both proactive in the way  
11 we communicate with families around water testing but  
12 also being forthcoming that we... our water is safe and  
13 we really want to make sure that we're protecting our  
14 students and when we do find an issue we remediate  
15 immediately or we take an outlet offline completely.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you, Council  
18 Member King followed by Rosenthal and then Rodriguez.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: I'm back. So... two  
20 things I want to just touch on again, one is  
21 regarding the charter schools now I want to applaud  
22 you again because I realize when someone came up with  
23 the bright idea to split up schools and campuses and  
24 make all these little mini schools they thought they  
25 were doing something great to downsize schools and

1 classrooms but what was ended up happening is that it  
2 didn't always pan out the way they wanted it to pan  
3 out and I'm watching schools where there's a charter  
4 school maybe on the third floor and public school on  
5 the first floor, family members in the building not  
6 being able to communicate, I think one of the things  
7 that you did with consolidation of merging some  
8 schools back so it's not so administratively top  
9 heavy in the school not only saves us money but it,  
10 it forms comradery again because these same kids are  
11 in the neighborhood, it's not like where they're  
12 coming from any... from another borough to go to a  
13 middle school, they're the same kids in the  
14 neighborhood who play in the local parks, there's no  
15 reason why they can't share the same teachers or the  
16 same classroom experience that's how we grew up, you  
17 know so I'm grateful for that but I do have a  
18 question when it comes to some of the funding, people  
19 say charter schools and public schools they come from  
20 two different funding streams, hey if, if it's  
21 taxpayers money it's coming from the same pool. So I  
22 have to ask you is there ever a plan to figure out  
23 best practices from your charter school system if  
24 charter schools are supposed to be so great in some  
25

1  
2 people's eyes how do we merge best, best practices so  
3 parents aren't competing for public school versus a  
4 charter school especially when they all in the same  
5 building i.e. you're telling me that hey we're not  
6 going to put a charter school we're just going to  
7 improve the conditions then a charter school comes in  
8 goes back to not you but maybe some of the soldiers  
9 being real honest with people when they're asking  
10 questions of what are the real plans because if I had  
11 schools that, that... 142 was... that would close down we  
12 was told there was never going to be a charter school  
13 then yes, there's two charter schools in there now  
14 but I'm saying just be honest so everybody can be  
15 prepared for how are we supposed to be, be advocates  
16 to make sure it works for all our neighbors and our  
17 children. So that's where I am... [cross-talk]

18 CARMEN FARINA: Okay... [cross-talk]

19 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...with charter  
20 schools and trying to figure out is there... is there  
21 ever a plan to make it one so people aren't always  
22 competing against one another... [cross-talk]

23 CARMEN FARINA: Well let me say that we  
24 have started to have a lot more honest conversations  
25 with the charter school world and they... we have

1  
2 already started sharing some practices. For example,  
3 with uncommon schools there is some part of their PD  
4 that they do with relay college that we actually  
5 think is very productive which is feedback to  
6 teachers on the other hand they also feel that one of  
7 the things... and many of the charter schools are  
8 beginning to see this now that there are no excuses  
9 around discipline may be... may not be getting the  
10 students where they want to go so they would want  
11 more support from us on Restorative Justice Practices  
12 and how does that work. I just did a lesson in one of  
13 the charter schools because one of the things I noted  
14 there was that they had these fabulous resources on  
15 the arts but might not have been using it the way I  
16 think it should be used so I actually did a lesson  
17 and I think one of the things I was trying to  
18 emphasize that more talk particularly for middle  
19 school and high school kids actually gets better  
20 results, I went to visit another charter school that  
21 asked for more support in how they could work with  
22 English Language Learners being very aware that  
23 perhaps they're not taking their fair share of  
24 English Language Learners so I think we've opened a  
25 lot of the dialogue, what has been very helpful to us

1  
2 is to... we reinvigorated our charter school office and  
3 actually have hired someone to head that office who  
4 really understands that world, has been in constant  
5 communication with them. So, I think we're in a  
6 better place keeping in mind that this is the one  
7 area where the state and the federal government has a  
8 lot of input. So to some degree I think we have done  
9 a good job of trying to figure out how we could work  
10 together and understanding that some of the rules  
11 that we're given with... given are part of the state  
12 and federal... and what will be the federal guidelines.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Okay, I, I think  
14 you. Mr. Chair just one more... the projected 2018  
15 budget it looks like you're going to have probably  
16 1.9 billion from the 2018, 178 million more than last  
17 year, the governor has raised the cap so how does  
18 that play out for New York City, how do you adjust to  
19 all this, you know everybody trying to jump in and  
20 be... you know because the money's going to go... I mean  
21 you might even have more money that you might have to  
22 spend i.e. here we go again because if you don't have  
23 space how do you compete with the public schools and  
24 if charter schools are the best practices how do we  
25 figure out what's really the best practice for our

1  
2 student to, to merge to one system as of these dual  
3 systems... [cross-talk]

4 CARMEN FARINA: Okay, I'm going to say  
5 very clearly that there are many different types of  
6 school in the system and no one has the answer on  
7 everything. So, it's not charter schools are better,  
8 it's not public, it's, it's... you, you have parochial  
9 schools, you have schools that are more progressive  
10 so let's be very clear that they're not all the same  
11 and parents make choices. As far as the budget it is  
12 something we're in constant conversation about and  
13 until we have more clearer guidelines from both the  
14 state... because even the state budget is ambiguous,  
15 it's like if you read it you almost need to have more  
16 than a doctorate degree to figure out what it really  
17 means. So, once we have more information we're happy  
18 to give you more but this is definitely something  
19 that we do worry about because there are 1.1 million  
20 kids in our public schools and parents expect certain  
21 things from us and they deserve what they expect.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: I want to thank you  
23 and I'm going to ask if I can sometime meet with you  
24 and... or your staff again, I got some very disturbing  
25 reports in regard to lead in the schools as opposed

1  
2 to belaboring the point here in the hearing I'd  
3 rather sit down so it can really be addressed because  
4 I don't... you know we don't want to create a panic..  
5 [cross-talk]

6 URSULINA RAMIREZ: Yes... [cross-talk]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...but we have a... we  
8 have a situation that must be dealt with and we can't  
9 sugar... us, us adults can't sugar coat it to keep  
10 ourselves comfortable because it's about protecting  
11 our children so I look forward to that.

12 URSULINA RAMIREZ: Yeah, we look forward  
13 to meeting with you.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Okay, thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, Council Member..  
16 alright, we've been joined by Council Member Deutsch,  
17 Cohen and Gibson and we have questions from Council  
18 Member Rosenthal, Rodriguez, Cohen and Gibson.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you so  
20 much Chair. I just want to continue on sort of the  
21 last point that I had brought up which is the notion  
22 of the PEP and how they approve contracts, I've heard  
23 from PEP members that in their contracts meeting  
24 where they get, you know a... sort of pre-meeting where  
25 they get information about an upcoming contract that

1  
2 there's really not room to understand it well, there  
3 aren't enough details, there's not enough back and  
4 forth, there's... they don't get the contracts early  
5 enough, it's sort of, you know it's very top down,  
6 this is how it's going to go as opposed to a robust  
7 discussion that I think the PEP member, members would  
8 like to be a part of... [cross-talk]

9 CARMEN FARINA: Let me just start...

10 [cross-talk]

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...thought about  
12 that... [cross-talk]

13 CARMEN FARINA: Well, well let me say  
14 first that most people in this city are New Yorkers  
15 and they're never low to give me their opinion. So,  
16 this is the first time I'm hearing this. In most  
17 cases when we have been withdrawn a contract it has  
18 been based on a PEP member bringing it up for some  
19 reason, I can think at least three contracts that  
20 we've withdrawn based on PEP member input so...

21 URSULINA RAMIREZ: And, and I would just  
22 note... so we post our, our contract... VRA's, I... is it  
23 90 days...

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So you guys  
25 have improved for sure... [cross-talk]

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URSULINA RAMIREZ: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...on the  
public... [cross-talk]

URSULINA RAMIREZ: Yes... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...posting and  
we've worked together nicely on that and I appreciate  
it, you know many members of the public who focus on  
this... [cross-talk]

URSULINA RAMIREZ: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...report that  
it still gobbledygook and not anything that is  
understandable or decipherable, let's set that aside  
for one second so, so I hope you'll hear the  
feedback, right that I just talked about. Secondly  
you know I'm, I'm pleased that... I'm pretty sure it  
was 14 contracts that replaced the computer service  
specialist contract back in 2015, I was wondering if  
you could report on how each one of those is doing if  
not today another day I'd be interested in seeing how  
that's going and those expenditures and I'm really  
interested in knowing what you've done internally, I  
know what you've done externally forward facing but  
what change did you make inside the procurement  
office so that that 550 million dollar... [cross-talk]

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URSULINA RAMIREZ: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...choice that was then returned to your budget would not happen again?

URSULINA RAMIREZ: So we'd love to sit down with you and talk through some of the work that we've been doing around our procurement work including the transparency that you've talked about but I, I think it's worth a longer conversation on some of the work that we're doing and will continue to do; increasing communication in our own procurement but I think the teams made some headway but I think it's been... it's just tighter management controls that we've created internally.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yeah, I don't think the public has ever gotten a good answer... [cross-talk]

URSULINA RAMIREZ: ...uh-huh... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...to that question and yes, you're more transparent after the fact which means that watchdogs can look at it and try to figure out whether or not there's something in there that's fraud and waste which was what happened before but it shouldn't be on the public to do that,

1  
2 the public should know internally what changes you've  
3 made in order to guarantee to taxpayers that a 550-  
4 million-dollar mistake won't happen again.

5 URSULINA RAMIREZ: Alright, well I'd be  
6 happy to sit down with you and talk through what  
7 we're doing and any ideas that you may have.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I'm happy to  
9 hear about it as... [cross-talk]

10 URSULINA RAMIREZ: ...uh-huh... [cross-talk]

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...a  
12 representative of the public but I hope you're  
13 hearing... [cross-talk]

14 URSULINA RAMIREZ: ...yeah, I, I hear...  
15 [cross-talk]

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...that... [cross-  
17 talk]

18 URSULINA RAMIREZ: ...you... [cross-talk]

19 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...the public  
20 wants to know what change... how they can be assured  
21 that their taxpayer dollars are being well spent  
22 especially when... you know what's coming down the pike  
23 is, is going to cost us. Thank you.

24

25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, Council Member  
3 Rodriguez followed by Cohen and then Council Member  
4 Gibson.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you  
6 Chair. First of all, I would like to publicly  
7 acknowledge and thank my superintendents because for  
8 the first time school district six has all their  
9 schools in good standards and I know that he's been  
10 showing his leadership in this past week and we have  
11 a discussion about the parent, parental engagement,  
12 you know this was, was very committed to  
13 understanding that he want to be part of the  
14 successful but also taking responsibility if we fail  
15 and those are the leaderships that also we need for  
16 people not only to go and take fault when the student  
17 go to Harvard or CUNY but also those who say if my  
18 student fail I also fail and, and we are not here to  
19 fail and, and I... you know one area where I hoped  
20 Chancellor that we still keep pushing hard it's like  
21 taking our schools in larger number to senior  
22 colleges because when I came here in the 1980's  
23 community college were full of those individuals.  
24 Today community college is the school for most of  
25 students who go to New York City public school whose

1  
2 average is lower than 75 and as you know you inherit  
3 in the whole team a system where close to... more than  
4 90 percent of those kids going from high school to  
5 community college they need a remedial courses and we  
6 had good programs happening, you know college now and  
7 bringing a college education to the student when they  
8 are in high school and I think this is about how can  
9 we continue expanding those programs. There is a  
10 summer science program and it had like a big waiting  
11 list and I was having a conversation with him and  
12 most of the students that they are able... they are  
13 able to enroll in the program they ended doing good  
14 and getting to... into senior colleges, that's working.  
15 For me this is about how can some of your team  
16 identify and say guy what do you need so explain what  
17 you're already doing there, there's a program in  
18 Queens where also they are preparing children to take  
19 the specialized high school when they are in 4<sup>th</sup>  
20 grade, why don't we reproduce it because we would not  
21 be able to have the same impact if we just prepare  
22 those kids to take the specialized test the year  
23 before. So how early can we start preparing those  
24 kids to get into the specialized high school?

1  
2 CARMEN FARINA: Well first... first of all  
3 I agree with your assessment of your superintendent,  
4 he's also very pushy and if there's anything that  
5 comes up he wants in the double so I think that's a  
6 good thing. I want to say also that we now have every  
7 middle school in the city visiting college campuses,  
8 we want that vision to be within their framework so I  
9 know that a lot of the middle schools in your  
10 district are going to visit college campuses. I want  
11 to say that I do think that an untapped resource in  
12 the city is actually our community colleges, I have  
13 been meeting with the presidents because they're  
14 almost all new, Bronx Community College new  
15 president, new Provost and now they have a work force  
16 coordinator who's going to be working more  
17 extensively with us in our CTE Programs is also for  
18 many of our students having an associate degree two  
19 year in your pocket makes it easier for you to go on  
20 to the next level. So, we're looking at all different  
21 venues for students to be successful. I think what  
22 your superintendent and many others are doing is  
23 convincing parents that sending their... allowing their  
24 kids to go to college where not the workforce  
25 directly is going to be an investment in their future

1  
2 and that's why we've done a lot of the work on  
3 college readiness for parents not just for students.  
4 We are continuing college now, the AP courses and  
5 that... in George Washington campus will allow the  
6 students if they take enough AP courses in that... in  
7 that campus they will start college as sophomores,  
8 not freshman and that's a big difference but more  
9 importantly they'll know what college work is all  
10 about and they're much more likely to graduate, we're  
11 getting more students into college that are not  
12 necessarily completing college and that's our goal.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Can, can, can  
14 you share with... not right now but send information  
15 if, if we don't have it on how are we in this case  
16 the DOE... what is the number that we are tracking on  
17 especially black and Latino getting into senior  
18 colleges?

19 URSULINA RAMIREZ: We have that  
20 information... [cross-talk]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: ...because...  
22 [cross-talk]

23 URSULINA RAMIREZ: I'll get it... [cross-  
24 talk]

25

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: ...because for  
3 me you know I had no problem and my daughters they  
4 decided to go a technical course.. or go to community  
5 college or to go to whatever, my problem is when  
6 that's a last choice is that sometime and this is not  
7 new coming a student, the L population this is the  
8 third generation of immigrants in this city, born and  
9 raised here, going for UPK, going to a junior high  
10 school and high school and still we have to say we  
11 are not being able to be sent to college.

12 CARMEN FARINA: I will get you all that  
13 information, we have that.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you.  
15 Council Member Cohen and then Gibson.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Thank you Chair  
17 Dromm. I actually don't have a question I just want  
18 to really say thank you and how happy I am with our,  
19 superintendent, Torres-Hulla in district 10 she's  
20 been really very responsive and I feel like we're off  
21 to a very good start and obviously the, the  
22 transition there I don't think was particularly well  
23 planned so.. but she's really hit the ground running  
24 and I'm, I'm very grateful for that and, and also at  
25 PS24 my... I'd like to see 30 concluded there because I

1  
2 think that that guy also really seems to be having a  
3 handle on, on the situation there. So, I, I really do  
4 want to thank you for... it's, it's, it's been a  
5 challenge in district 10 and to try to deal through  
6 these transitions but I feel like ultimately, we're  
7 really getting on the other side of it and getting to  
8 a very good place so I just... [cross-talk]

9 CARMEN FARINA: ...and, and... [cross-talk]

10 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: ...want to say  
11 thanks... [cross-talk]

12 CARMEN FARINA: ...I also have to say that  
13 your superintendent is amazing and I just did a  
14 school visit with her not too long ago and it's the  
15 first time I'd ever seen a superintendent video tape  
16 a school visit, she literally takes her laptop with  
17 her, videotapes the best practices that she sees and  
18 then uses it at her principal's conference to  
19 highlight it to all other principals. She is getting  
20 a second PLF which is going to make a big difference  
21 I think within a week or two and I see great things  
22 in store and I think 24 is actually on the way.

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you, Council  
24 Member Gibson?

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you very  
3 much Chair Dromm and good afternoon Chancellor to you  
4 and your staff, appreciate the work you're doing.  
5 We've had a lot of great success in this city and  
6 certainly moving forward, our, our continued  
7 partnership is going to prove extremely successful  
8 and effective for so many of our children. So, I  
9 represent the Bronx, school district 9 with Leticia  
10 Rosario as our wonderful superintendent and I want to  
11 thank you for your presence in our school district,  
12 you come to district 9 quite a bit, we're going to  
13 have office space for you because it's not only  
14 necessary but district 9 has not received a lot of  
15 attention over the years and I appreciate that under  
16 this administration I don't always have to yell to  
17 get attention for district 9 so I thank you for that.  
18 We were together when we announced the graduation  
19 rates at the Bronx School of Law, Government and  
20 Justice as well as historic low dropout rates which  
21 for me is really important especially in communities  
22 of color and children with disabilities, I think it's  
23 really important to highlight those particular  
24 numbers and how we're having great success. I wanted  
25 to ask about Single Shepherd because I remember we...

1  
2 when we launched it and we focused on district seven  
3 in the Bronx and district 23 in Brooklyn I wanted to  
4 find out how it's going and do you see or envision an  
5 opportunity for expansion to other school districts  
6 that also could need... use services?

7 CARMEN FARINA: I think the Single  
8 Shephard anecedotedly has already shown great  
9 success, I told this story before but I'll, I'll tell  
10 you another one. One of the Single Shepherds went to  
11 a school and one of I think the most common concerns  
12 that they're getting in some of the schools is that  
13 parents feel that they don't have the communication  
14 skills to talk to their children. She... they actually  
15 feel that they're, they're going to have a difficult  
16 conversation, they don't know where to begin and if  
17 the child has had issues they don't know where to  
18 start. So this particular Single Shepherd happened to  
19 have on her person an Uno game, you know cards that  
20 they... so they decided with the parent and the child  
21 to play a card game and it was interesting she said  
22 this... the card game took about an hour and 20 minutes  
23 and in that time the parent and the child talked to  
24 each other with the Single Shepherd sort of in the  
25 middle there and to me the... when I got an e-mail on

1  
2 how successful it was I, I met with Yolanda Torres,  
3 again whose the head of family, I said let's start a  
4 training course for parents across the city on board  
5 games and how to have... play games, game of 24,  
6 monopoly, scrabble, chess so that we... on having  
7 competitions. I'm not being polyonish [sp?] and  
8 saying that this is going to solve all the problems  
9 of the world but I am very cognizant of the fact that  
10 many adults are so busy that they don't know how to  
11 sit and have conversations with their kids and one of  
12 the things the Single Shepherds are doing is allowing  
13 parents and students to talk to each other. So, I do  
14 think training even our existing guidance counselors  
15 on how to do more of this in their schools is  
16 important, financially this is a big lift so... but the  
17 other thing I'm hearing with Single Shepherd which  
18 again is anecdotal but in district seven the  
19 principals are telling me that they think they're  
20 going to have better teacher retention because the  
21 teachers feel that one of their biggest struggles is  
22 how do they deal with kids who have issues and then  
23 their families. If this is taken off the teacher,  
24 that's not to say the teachers not involved at all  
25 but if the Single Shepherd owns this the likelihood

1  
2 of the teacher staying in that school to deal with  
3 academic subjects is much higher. So, it's a matter  
4 of finance to some degree but also learning from them  
5 one of the best practices then we can teach all our  
6 guidance counselors anything.. one of the schools I  
7 visited actually now has eight, a combination of  
8 eight between guidance counselors and, and Single  
9 Shepherd counselors they have eight people doing  
10 nothing but supporting the families and they're going  
11 to support them for seven years, that's a big..

12 [cross-talk]

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay.. [cross-  
14 talk]

15 CARMEN FARINA: ...lift, to know that your  
16 family is going to know you over time and you're  
17 going to get the know the family is a big difference.  
18 This is not a different person every year but the  
19 same person over time.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, thank you  
21 and Chair I'm sorry I don't know how much time I had,  
22 can I ask another question.. [cross-talk]

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yes, this is maybe..  
24 if I may follow up.. [cross-talk]

25

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: ...sure... [cross-  
3 talk]

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Just how much would  
5 it cost to do Single Shepherd in another district?

6 URSULINA RAMIREZ: Let me... Ray do you  
7 have the cost... [cros-talk]

8 RAYMOND ORLANDO: I'm looking but i...  
9 [cross-talk]

10 CARMEN FARINA: Well we'll, we'll get the  
11 number to you.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, good to know.

13 CARMEN FARINA: And again the... it starts  
14 in 6<sup>th</sup> grade and goes through 12<sup>th</sup> grade and it  
15 heavily involves the entire family, you're trying to  
16 deal with the whole family because in many cases its  
17 really family dynamics and it has really... that's why  
18 we think it's being very successful.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, great and I  
20 know there was a lot of talk about students in  
21 temporary housing so district nine obviously has a  
22 high concentration, the 30 million dollar investment  
23 of attendance monitors and literacy coaches and the  
24 additional bus routes extremely helpful, I think we  
25 all agree that a student's housing status should not

1  
2 determine their academic success, I say it all the  
3 time because I mean it and I want to make sure that  
4 district nine as well as other districts that have  
5 students in temporary housing are getting the  
6 services they receive so is, is there an update, how  
7 is that going and do you see a need for more  
8 investments further working with many of our shelter  
9 providers and students in temporary housing?

10 CARMEN FARINA: I think the biggest  
11 challenge with temporary housing is the transient  
12 nature of the student so that once... [cross-talk]

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: ...Right... [cross-  
14 talk]

15 CARMEN FARINA: ...they get to a certain  
16 school and they feel comfortable and successful then  
17 if they get an apartment or something happens they go  
18 somewhere else so we're working to see what are some  
19 of the commonalities that wherever they are they will  
20 have that. The other thing is that every single Bronx  
21 district is getting literacy coaches starting in  
22 September and we think that's going to make a big  
23 difference because between the literacy coaches and  
24 also the attendance and, and keep in mind that many  
25 of our schools now that have a high homeless

1  
2 population, I just visited one down here on the lower  
3 East side have other services as well; food pantries...  
4 [cross-talk]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: ...Uh-huh... [cross-  
6 talk]

7 CARMEN FARINA: ...laundry services, we're  
8 trying to figure out almost day by day what are the  
9 next things we need to do to make sure that these  
10 families feel integrated into our schools but it's  
11 not an easy problem to solve and... [cross-talk]

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: ...right... [cross-  
13 talk]

14 CARMEN FARINA: ...again based on the  
15 federal government and the state budget there's going  
16 to be a lot of things that we're going to have to  
17 think about.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, well I know  
19 for the sake of time I, I have lots of conversations  
20 with your staff I just do have one final question  
21 about many of our L students and ESL I think  
22 traditionally the focus for my district and the Bronx  
23 itself has been students learning English as a second  
24 language that are Latino but we're seeing an emerging  
25 community of West African students and families whose

1 second language, you know obviously, they're learning  
2 English but they don't speak Spanish. So I'd like to  
3 see and I know this personally not just because of my  
4 district but just in talking to many of your staff  
5 that the focus has been on bilingual teachers that  
6 speak Spanish, we have to look at other languages  
7 because we have many students of West African and  
8 other cultural descents that just are not able to  
9 communicate and I know there's been a challenge  
10 recruiting and retaining bilingual teachers, I, I, I  
11 know there's a citywide challenges... district wide  
12 challenges but are we also looking at students that  
13 speak other languages in our efforts to serve them as  
14 well?  
15

16 CARMEN FARINA: The answer is yes  
17 absolutely but we have an additional challenge which  
18 actually your superintendent brought up to me that  
19 many of the students coming from certain parts of  
20 Africa have no prior written language, they have an  
21 oral language particularly they're coming from  
22 Nigeria or another section but they don't have a  
23 written language so one of the things we've been  
24 actually exploring is how we can communicate with  
25 more visuals and that is something that is a

1  
2 challenge to us but something we're going to  
3 undertake but that is... and every time there's an  
4 influx of immigrants from any part of the world where  
5 we do not have an existing program in that language  
6 we have to figure out a way to resolve it,  
7 absolutely.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, thank you  
9 very much, thank you Chair.

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much  
11 and I think Council Member Deutsch has a quick  
12 question.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Not so quick.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Oh okay.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Good, good  
16 afternoon Chancellor. My question is I have four  
17 schools in my district that are, are under proposed  
18 rezoning now when the rezoning takes place how does  
19 that affect the parents and student's private lives?

20 CARMEN FARINA: Private lives?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Yeah, that means  
22 if the rezoning takes place in the... in the district  
23 how would that affect the, the families?

24

25

1  
2 CARMEN FARINA: Well wherever their  
3 rezoning they go to the schools that they've been  
4 rezoned for, district 22?

5 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: District 22,  
6 yes.

7 CARMEN FARINA: Yeah, I've been in  
8 constant conversations with your superintendent Bove,  
9 who has developed a very good plan for some of the  
10 things that are happening, parents... and I met with a  
11 group of parents actually from one of your schools  
12 already and... that are going to be rezoned and the  
13 interest there is to relieve some of the overcrowding  
14 and also to make sure that all parents have good  
15 options. So, I would say if there's any specific  
16 issues by all means I'm happy to discuss it with you  
17 privately but start the conversation with your  
18 superintendent. Superintendent has really  
19 thoughtfully considered all the ramifications and you  
20 have some parents there I know particularly from two...  
21 217 who have a new principal who already making plans  
22 in terms of moving so I, I don't know the specifics  
23 of what a problem might be but I think whatever  
24 services they're getting in the school they're  
25

1  
2 presently in will be in whatever school they're being  
3 rezoned for.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: So you have... I  
5 have... this fourth school is under proposed rezoning  
6 so three schools are at over, overcapacity or at  
7 capacity and there's one school, PS197 which is not  
8 at capacity because MS381 was transferred into... was  
9 being transferred into hutia but... so we're doing a  
10 proposed rezoning could... is... will this be phased out  
11 or will it happen like in 2018?

12 CARMEN FARINA: It's going to happen  
13 whatever year it was scheduled for, I, I, I think  
14 it's 2018 and keep in mind that the rezoning for  
15 hutia is not... there's going to be two schools in  
16 Hutia, Hutia stays as it is and then the other school  
17 will be co-located in that space, so you can still...  
18 so you can still apply to either one of those  
19 schools. I just did the principals conference in your  
20 district and it was very clear that the principals  
21 are already working on how... what things they could  
22 share and how they will make sure that all the kids  
23 are welcomed but I... again have a conversation with  
24 your superintendent, she and I just met last week and  
25 we went extensively... [cross-talk]

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: So, so this  
3 happens the same year if it happens in 2018, I have  
4 like in particular in one... I have a 29 story that's  
5 going up so if this is happening in 2018 and then  
6 2018 you have a 29 story building that, that's coming  
7 up and then a year later you might have another  
8 building that comes up because the zoning in my  
9 southern part of district is, is really like for high  
10 rise and there's... not too far away there's a 42 story  
11 building which is coming up so if it's going to be  
12 done within the same year what's going to happen the  
13 next year, we're going to have to do another proposed  
14 rezoning and the following year another one so my  
15 question... [cross-talk]

16 CARMEN FARINA: I'm, I'm happy... I'm  
17 happy... [cross-talk]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: ...is that why,  
19 why would it... [cross-talk]

20 CARMEN FARINA: ...I'm happy... [cross-talk]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: ...happen the same  
22 year, why not phase it out... [cross-talk]

23 CARMEN FARINA: ...to meet with you because  
24 this is something I have to go look into but start  
25 with a conversation with your superintendent because

1  
2 I think she has really looked at this very carefully  
3 and then by all means make an appointment to see me  
4 and we'll talk about it.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Great, thank you  
6 very much. I have one other thing. Now with the rise  
7 in hate crimes throughout New York City it was also  
8 reported that since the beginning of January there  
9 were 26 swastikas that were drawn on, on our... in the  
10 train stations, talking about educating and most of  
11 the time when something like that happens it's, it's  
12 not an organized group, it's a teenager who might not  
13 know what that symbol means my parents were holocaust  
14 survivors, my father went through... survived three  
15 concentration camps and not only do I take this  
16 personal but I take any type of hate crime against  
17 anyone personal so what is the plan for DOE to  
18 educate the children more this way our, our... the  
19 future of... you know when the kids grow up they should  
20 understand what it means and how to respect each  
21 other's cultures and what the symbol... what the  
22 swastikas symbol means to... basically going around to  
23 different schools talking about the atrocities that  
24 happened during World War two and making the children  
25 understand?

1  
2 CARMEN FARINA: Well first of all this is  
3 totally unacceptable by any student for any group. I  
4 was just the guest speaker at the Holocaust Memorial  
5 Elie Wiesel at the Holocaust Museum where I read  
6 aloud from there and one of the commitments was that  
7 this is the kind of information we're going to put  
8 all our... in all our schools in terms of what is the  
9 appropriate action of students. So, we have a  
10 curriculum that deals with hate crimes, I certainly  
11 hear what you're saying in terms of more recent and  
12 we will come up with something very specific to send  
13 out to superintendents... [cross-talk]

14 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: And I'd like to  
15 be part of that conversation... [cross-talk]

16 CARMEN FARINA: Sure... [cross-talk]

17 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: ...and that'd be  
18 great, thank you.

19 CARMEN FARINA: Absolutely... [cross-talk]

20 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Thank you very  
21 much.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay and now we have  
23 finally Council Member Gibson and then we're going to  
24 let you go because I know you have an important press  
25 conference to go to... [cross-talk]

1  
2 CARMEN FARINA: Two o'clock... [cross-talk]

3 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Yes... yes, I'll be  
4 there too. Thank you once again Chancellor I just  
5 had to just bring up, I know we've talked a little  
6 bit about renewal schools and the seven percent  
7 graduation rate, attendance is up, absenteeism is  
8 down, teachers are developing stronger relationships,  
9 professional development, there's a clearer guidance  
10 on progress and while I am very supportive of the  
11 renewal schools I've been very frustrated. District  
12 nine has the highest number of renewal middle schools  
13 in the entire city of New York and so what that means  
14 for me is that it means that we give greater emphasis  
15 and resources and investment and through all that  
16 we've done and many of my renewal, renewal schools  
17 are doing well their numbers are getting better every  
18 year after year and you know you admit in your  
19 testimony that these schools have had significant  
20 underinvestment and we need time, right, time isn't  
21 always on our side and so and I say that because the  
22 panel for ed policy is facing very important  
23 decisions on the future of six schools, four in the  
24 Bronx and two in Brooklyn and so the reason I bring  
25 that up is because although we've had great success

1  
2 we still face challenges in the Bronx and Brooklyn as  
3 it relates to educating our children in many of these  
4 renewal schools and challenging schools. So my  
5 question is through all of this success the focus on  
6 teacher, students, academics, curriculum, after  
7 school, what is going wrong in some of these schools  
8 where we're still not seeing the numbers that we  
9 should, it is very frustrating for me to represent  
10 nine middle schools that are in the renewal program  
11 and unfortunately one of them is not surviving,  
12 right, they're... they need a life line and I'm hoping  
13 that we can give them a life line but what are we  
14 saying to students in Bronx and Brooklyn when through  
15 all of this success we're still facing these  
16 challenges in many of our school districts?

17 CARMEN FARINA: Well first and foremost  
18 let me say that I believe strongly that the schools  
19 that are out pacing the others have at least two  
20 things in common, they have an outstanding principal  
21 and they have a good percentage of teachers who are  
22 doing extraordinary work and where we're looking for  
23 in renewal schools, we're looking at least for some  
24 sign of progress and one of the schools that you're  
25 thinking about has been flat in terms of progress and

1  
2 my look as a Chancellor will the students in that  
3 building be better off in a different site. I went to  
4 visit that... I went to visit Bastian school, I was  
5 blown away, I've said it publicly the best ELA  
6 teacher I've seen was in that school, being able to  
7 offer other students in another school the  
8 opportunity to be there without overwhelming the  
9 school because we have the cap, the admissions and  
10 giving parent's other choices is going to make a  
11 better education for those students and I think it's  
12 really important as we go forward to say yeah it took  
13 a lot of years for this to happen but right now we're  
14 at the cusp of giving these schools the same amount  
15 of services, same amount of support, some schools  
16 have really taken it off and others haven't so the  
17 discussion on whether we merge, consolidate,  
18 truncate, we're doing a whole lot of other things...  
19 [cross-talk]

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Uh-huh... [cross-  
21 talk]

22 CARMEN FARINA: ...is to make sure that the  
23 school... that the students and their families are in  
24 the best possible place for them. I have tremendous  
25 hope for district nine, Leticia is an extraordinary

1  
2 superintendent who deserves our support in her  
3 decision making and that's where we are right now.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Right and, and I  
5 agree with that, she deserves and, and needs support  
6 but I will also say is that we need resources, we  
7 need more, I don't expect her to have to pick up the  
8 phone and always call to get support that should  
9 already be a given because of the fact that we have  
10 the most... [cross-talk]

11 CARMEN FARINA: ...yes... [cross-talk]

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: ...renewal schools  
13 it should automatically be done because it means that  
14 we need extra attention and even... [cross-talk]

15 CARMEN FARINA: ...absolutely... [cross-talk]

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: ...before she...  
17 [cross-talk]

18 CARMEN FARINA: ...and... [cross-talk]

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: ...was... when she  
20 was principal she needed the support and she got it...  
21 [cross-talk]

22 CARMEN FARINA: ...well she's... [cross-talk]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: ...so... [cross-talk]

24 CARMEN FARINA: ...received extra personnel  
25 on her team, she has two PLF's... [cross-talk]

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: ...uh-huh... [cross-  
3 talk]

4 CARMEN FARINA: ...she has extra support  
5 into DSR's so... and anything else that she has and  
6 we're really developing a plan that she will have  
7 extra support when the school is reconfigured and we  
8 already started talking what that support would look  
9 like again a challenge that we have is that we really  
10 need a lot... we don't need a lot more teachers but we  
11 need teachers to commit themselves to work in the  
12 Bronx and I think it's better than it's been but it  
13 still needs to be a lot better.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay and I commit  
15 to working with you as well.

16 URSULINA RAMIREZ: Thank you.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you Chair  
18 Dromm.

19 URSULINA RAMIREZ: I appreciate it.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much  
21 and thank you Madame Chancellor for coming in today,  
22 we appreciate all your efforts to work and to improve  
23 our city school system, thank you Miss Ramirez and  
24 Mr. Orlando as well and good luck with your press  
25 conference because the issue that you're going to

1  
2 address is one of major concern to this committee, I  
3 know it's about immigration and our immigrant  
4 students and the difficulties and challenges that  
5 they face particularly under this current  
6 administration in Washington D.C. so thank you for  
7 coming in.

8 CARMEN FARINA: No and, and again I think  
9 it's really important that every issue that comes  
10 before the DOE is looked at in terms of humanity and  
11 the potential of that humanity and even though we  
12 make hard decisions including closings and merge...  
13 it's always about the kids if we keep in front of us  
14 what's best for students we will be on the right  
15 track, thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you.

17 URSULINA RAMIREZ: Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, now we're going  
19 to call witnesses from the audience and I just want  
20 to remind everybody that if you haven't done so or if  
21 this is the first time you're attending one of these  
22 hearings we ask that if you want to speak to please  
23 fill out a witness slip which is over here with the  
24 Sergeant at Arms and we divide people up into panels  
25 and we will be limiting all of our speakers to three

1  
2 minutes and I do have to be fairly strict about that  
3 because right now we have about nine panels of four  
4 each ahead of us and that means we'll probably be  
5 here till midnight and so... but we do want to hear  
6 what you have to say but I will have to really  
7 enforce that three minute time limit. Our first panel  
8 up will be UFT Vice President for Special Education,  
9 Carmen Alvarez, Kenya Johnson from the UFT, Donald  
10 Nesbit the Vice President of Local 372 DC37, Jahmila  
11 Joseph also from DC37, Administrative Associate  
12 Director and we invite you to come up to give  
13 testimony. Miss Alvarez is Kenya Johnson here?

14 CARNEN FARINAALVEREZ: I don't know.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you.

16 Alright, so I just need to swear you in. I ask if you  
17 please raise your right hand. Do you solemnly swear  
18 or affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and  
19 nothing but the truth and to answer Council Members  
20 questions honestly?

21 [unanimous yes]

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, Miss Alvarez.

23 CARNEN FARINAALVEREZ: Thank you very  
24 much. Good afternoon, my name is Carmen Alvarez, I am  
25 the Vice President for Special Education at the

1 United Federation of Teachers. I'd like to begin by  
2 thanking Daniel Dromm, the Education... for holding the  
3 Education Committee meeting to ensure that budget  
4 issues involving our neighborhood public schools get  
5 the attention they deserve. I, I also wanted to thank  
6 Julissa Ferreras who is not here but she did a  
7 spectacular presentation on Saturday at the UFT and  
8 just let her know that she was... she moved a lot of  
9 people who are going to get more involved as a result  
10 of what she said. So today my testimony will focus on  
11 five programs that a real difference to our students.  
12 We hope you will support these initiatives in the  
13 upcoming city budget. However, before I make any  
14 specific ask for each of these initiatives I'd like  
15 to provide some context for our discussion. We are no  
16 dreading what appalling actions and policies may  
17 befall our neighborhood public schools from President  
18 Trump and Education Secretary Betsy DeVos because now  
19 they are a reality. Last week the Trump  
20 Administration took the first step to gut funding for  
21 our public schools and to promote charters and  
22 private and religious schools. U.S. Department cut  
23 9.2 billion dollars or 13.5 percent, more than 1.2  
24 billion dollars alone be cut from the federal  
25

1 governments community schools initiative, the 21<sup>st</sup>  
2 century community learning centers. They also are  
3 looking to privatize, so 168 million increase to  
4 expand charter schools, 250 million for pirate school  
5 of choice programs and one billion in Title one funds  
6 creating student base budgeting systems. Why is that  
7 a problem, because there's no transparency and  
8 there's no accountability. The one thing I do have to  
9 say personally because of Trump we are fighting for  
10 the soul of our country, the soul of our country and  
11 the pipeline to that soul is public education. it is  
12 so unfortunate that now even the New York State GOP  
13 has also taken a page out of Trump and DeVos and the  
14 New York City school system could lose 140 million  
15 dollars in federal funding plus 243 million if the  
16 New York State Senate GOP gets his way. What I'm  
17 saying to you here and everybody in the city of New  
18 York we're in this together, if we do not work  
19 together they're going to slash and burn public  
20 schools and the very young people who need us the  
21 most will lose out. So, what I'm asking city council  
22 is to look at teacher's choice, every teacher gets a  
23 certain amount to support it, you were a teacher  
24 Danny you know how much we support the schools and  
25

1  
2 that's in every classroom. So, we respectfully ask  
3 the council to fund teacher's choice for the next  
4 year level at 20 million. Community learning schools,  
5 PS65 in Ozone Park Queens has created a wonderful  
6 nutrition and cooking program, interactive kitchens  
7 that engage parents, teachers, and students, all  
8 school based. Of the 20 community learning schools  
9 that administer the, the state tested English  
10 Language Arts 80 percent exceeded the city or state  
11 gains, 50 percent exceeded the gains in math, we  
12 respectfully ask the council to invest 1.5 million to  
13 allow us to continue the good work that we're doing  
14 right now. The positive learning collaborative which  
15 I have to say you have been involved with deeply with  
16 the Department of Ed I'm sorry that Miss Gibson is  
17 not here because PS55 in the Bronx district nine is  
18 part of this initiative and I can say they use all  
19 the techniques of positive behavioral intervention  
20 including Restorative Practices. We have seen that  
21 the suspension rate has diminished significantly, the  
22 ELA proficiency level has doubled in the past two  
23 years, math proficiency saw a five percent increase.  
24 This is a program that impacts all our young people  
25 and we look at all our children's behavior, we don't

1  
2 wait till the end, we look at the beginning to make  
3 sure it does not escalate to the top. 16 schools are  
4 participating in PLC this year but dozens are waiting  
5 on a waiting list, we appreciate what you gave us  
6 this year but with 750,000 we could increase the  
7 support to 30 schools. We respectfully ask city  
8 council to include 750,000 for the positive learning  
9 collaborative. Dial a teacher once again we deal in  
10 Bengali, Chinese, Mandarin, English, French, Haitian  
11 Creole, Russian, Slovakia, Spanish Tagalong, parents  
12 call this line all the time and they are ever so  
13 grateful, we impact every building in every school  
14 again we ask for 65,000 dollars to again to upgrade  
15 our phone and internet service for Dial a Teacher for  
16 years to come. We also have the brave anti-bullying  
17 initiative and again because of Trump and you heard  
18 Mr. Deutsch and other talk about the anti-bullying  
19 issues that have increased around all our Muslims,  
20 families, our Jewish families, our LGBTQ communities,  
21 we really need to keep a vehicle open so our young  
22 people have a place to reach out to and again we're  
23 requesting 100,000 dollars to provide the support.  
24 Again we also support help and free lunch for all of  
25 course Trump doesn't, he doesn't like meals on

1 wheels, he doesn't like any of that stuff but the key  
2 here is, is that we're asking city council or anybody  
3 in this audience come visit our schools and look what  
4 a true collaborative effort looks like with the  
5 Department of Ed, with city council, with  
6 communities, with the public, we need to do this  
7 together and we need to highlight and show the Trump  
8 Administration to their face we are here, we are here  
9 for public schools. Thank you.  
10

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Who would  
12 like to go next, 372?

13 DONALD NESBIT: Yes, good afternoon. My  
14 name is Donald Nesbit, I'm the Executive Vice  
15 President for Local 372. Education Committee Chair  
16 Dromm and distinguished members of the committee we  
17 are here on behalf of the 24,000 members of Local 372  
18 of the New York City Education Employees District  
19 Council 37 at ask me. I'm under the leadership for  
20 President Shaun Fracois the first to testify on  
21 behalf of the Mayor's proposed budget. At 24,000  
22 members of Local 372 which are made up of seven  
23 titles who perform essential support services to help  
24 the 1.2 million school children of New York City be  
25 learning ready. Our school crossing guards make sure

1  
2 the children cross the street safely, our school  
3 aides are with students throughout the day, they  
4 greet the children in the morning, encourage them in  
5 numerous activities to support their education of  
6 development and help the children get to their buses  
7 at the end of the day. Our school lunch workers  
8 unload, prepare and serve food everyday including  
9 during the summer. Our parent coordinators, community  
10 titles, school neighborhood workers and, and  
11 paraprofessionals work with parents to navigate the  
12 department of education and work with the Department  
13 of Homeless Services to make sure that children get  
14 the... to school and have a safe place to sleep at  
15 night. Our Substance Abuse Counselors and  
16 Intervention Specialists work with students in mental  
17 health, anti-drug violence, anti-bullying, gang  
18 prevention and mediation in schools. Many Local 372  
19 members of the community... live in the communities  
20 where they work, they are neighbors to students,  
21 their families and some are parents to school  
22 children themselves. Our members understand and can  
23 relate firsthand to the struggles students and  
24 families face at home that impact relationships  
25 between students, teachers, principals, parents and

1  
2 others. Our school lunch employees, children need  
3 food in order to concentrate and learn in the  
4 classroom, Local 372 school lunch workers work hard  
5 every day to serve breakfasts through the breakfast  
6 and the lunch... breakfast in the classroom program and  
7 serve lunches that fit into the federal nutrition  
8 standards and guide... and guidelines. This is  
9 demanding work and a lot of times they're in kitchens  
10 that reach 150 degree temperatures so we're asking a  
11 need for AC's in, in the kitchens, our staffers who  
12 prevent kids from having drug problems or when they  
13 get on drug problems often do an intervention with  
14 them, we only have 300 of them that serve 1.1 million  
15 New York City children or one SAPIS for every five  
16 schools. With those numbers, there are simply not  
17 enough SAPIS counselors to address the needs of these  
18 children and their families. In recent years, we have  
19 been... we have had a sharp increase in drug abuse and  
20 violence in schools. The Mayor is now proposing  
21 spending upwards of 38 million a year in response to  
22 this epidemic. Investing in SAPIS now counselors will  
23 save money by preventing drug use and our youth thus  
24 reducing addictions and overdoses in the long run.  
25 Local 372 believes that one SAPIS in every school is

1  
2 imperative to prevent future lives from succumbing to  
3 these pressures and respectfully request you consider  
4 additional funding for SAPIS. Our parent  
5 coordinators, there are 1,600 parent coordinators and  
6 community associates play a key role in not only  
7 keeping parents involved but serving as a liaison  
8 between school administration and parents. They  
9 ensure... they ensure parents know how to navigate the  
10 school system and help develop leadership and family  
11 engagement with schools. In addition to, to request  
12 an, an increase in the number of PC's and community  
13 associates to allow us to serve more students and  
14 balance the ratio between our workers and 100's of  
15 children that each currently serve, I respectfully  
16 request that the council provide an implement job  
17 security and protection for our PC's. Since 2003  
18 these title workers have no job protection or  
19 seniority rights, there are... they are subject to a  
20 practice of a lot of times being fired at will. Some  
21 PC's are performing out of title work rather than  
22 risk the possibility of receiving disciplinary write  
23 ups or, or termination notice for questioning the  
24 appropriateness of their assignments. Homeless  
25 crisis, we all know that many of our city communities

1  
2 are struggling just as many as our student's parents  
3 are struggling to pay housing, food and life's daily  
4 needs so many... so many are our members. As the cost  
5 of living continues to rapidly increase wages are not  
6 rising at a comparable rate. Homelessness and working  
7 homelessness where a regular paycheck is not enough  
8 to cover the cost of living. Both in the general  
9 population and those on the city payroll have been a  
10 city-wide crisis, a crisis that affects many of our  
11 members who are forced to live day to day bouncing  
12 from shelter to shelter or on a couch to couch all  
13 while coming to work every day to serve 1.1 million  
14 school children. No one who is employed or who serves  
15 the community as our members do should have to sleep  
16 in a shelter because they cannot afford their rent.  
17 School support staffs are critical to function in  
18 schools, school... to a functioning in system, they  
19 create the space everyday where teachers can teach  
20 and students can learn. Local 372 workers who provide  
21 these services are essential to the New York City  
22 school system and as I have testified are definitely  
23 in need. Our workers come in everyday and many work  
24 extra hours without getting paid all to ensure that  
25 New York City's children are given the opportunity to

1  
2 succeed as they deserve. Local 372 recognizes that  
3 there are not enough resources to address every  
4 worthy issue and service throughout the city and  
5 those tough decisions must be made over how to  
6 allocate funds. However, our children are our lives  
7 work and in order for our important work to succeed  
8 we will need more support to increase, increase  
9 staffing, create healthy working space, pay workers a  
10 living wage, and shelter those who provide critical  
11 services to the city yet cannot afford to shelter  
12 themselves. On behalf of the 24,000 members of Local  
13 372 we thank you Councilman Dromm and committee  
14 members.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you, Miss  
16 Joseph?

17 JAHMILA JOSEPH: Hi, good afternoon, I'll  
18 just start by... sorry, good afternoon. I'll start by  
19 saying it's nice to be sitting on the other side even  
20 thought I love and respect my former colleagues from  
21 DOE. Good afternoon, my name is Jahmila Joseph and  
22 I'm the Assistant Associate Director of District  
23 Council 37, New York City's largest Public Labor  
24 Union representing 51 active locals and 50,000  
25 retirees. Today I'd like to speak to you about

1 universal free lunch. We were again delighted to see  
2 the Speaker included in her State of the City Address  
3 but we still need your help, I'm here representing  
4 our members, their families and all of our children.  
5 Since the implementation of free lunch in standalone  
6 middle schools in September 2014 it has yielded only  
7 positive results with thousands of additional middle  
8 school students participating in the program. We  
9 believe the time has come to expand and fully  
10 implement this program to make it available to all  
11 public-school students in New York City. Universal  
12 free lunch is already being offered in major cities  
13 such as Chicago, Boston, Detroit, Dallas, and D.C.  
14 We're looking to make New York City the next large  
15 city. In a city such as ours where the great income  
16 despair... where there is great income disparity we  
17 feel this will help to close a gap and alleviate the  
18 burden on many working families who struggle  
19 financially every day. We estimate that for a family  
20 to provide a complete and nutritious lunch for their  
21 children they would spend roughly 1,000 dollars per  
22 student per year to cover lunch costs. By  
23 implementing universal free lunch for all this will  
24 bring about transformative change to the lives of  
25

1  
2 thousands of students who suffer from poverty and  
3 hunger while simultaneously alleviating a financial  
4 burden on the middle-class families. As a city, we  
5 should be doing everything in our power to remove  
6 barriers to participation and meet basic needs of our  
7 students so that they are able to thrive. If children  
8 are not well nourished educational initiatives that  
9 seek to level the playing field for our city's  
10 students simply fall flat. Hundreds of thousands of  
11 income eligible students in New York City public  
12 schools do not participate in the school lunch  
13 program due to the poverty stigma associated with  
14 traditional feed based school lunch. Many of these  
15 students as well as others whose parents are not  
16 income eligible for free lunch yet cannot afford to  
17 pay school lunch fees, struggle through lessons on an  
18 empty stomach. In addition, despite, despite the  
19 urgent need many immigrant families are reluctant to  
20 fill out school lunch forms for fear of government  
21 reprisal and the pursuit of lunch fees from parents  
22 who cannot afford it both put, put principals in the  
23 uncomfortable role of bill collector and directly  
24 undermines your efforts to increase parent  
25 engagement. This is not just good public policy, it

1  
2 is a wise investment, 90 percent of all school lunch  
3 costs are covered by federal and state  
4 reimbursements, the remaining cost to the city is  
5 modest especially in light of the program's  
6 tremendous impact and reach. In one fall swoop,  
7 universal free lunch significantly eases  
8 administrative burdens on schools, provides families  
9 with much needed financial relief and ensures that  
10 all students enjoy access to school lunch free from  
11 the stigma of poverty.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much  
13 and thank you to the panel, thank you Miss Alverez  
14 for reminding us about the effects of what's going on  
15 in Washington and the appointment of Betsy DeVos as  
16 Education Secretary and how she's the antitheist of  
17 what it is that we believe education, public  
18 education should look like in the United States; our  
19 support for vouchers and other schemes are really  
20 very disappointing and would withdraw, you know much  
21 needed funding away from our public schools as we are  
22 beginning to witness now is happening unfortunately  
23 in the public school system. Let me thank also the  
24 UFT for the contributions that you make in terms of  
25 the large number of programs that you offer, I was a

1  
2 former UFT Chapter Leader, proud one and am aware of,  
3 of the many programs from the Brave Program to the  
4 Teachers Choice Program to the Community Schools, to  
5 the Positive Learning Collaborative Programs that you  
6 provide often times at your own expense with some  
7 council funding as well to our system and we look  
8 forward to continuing as a council to continue to  
9 support those and to continue to advocate for those.  
10 Can you tell me though, I believe that with Teachers  
11 Choice today we're at about 13 million what was the  
12 check for each individual teacher, approximately how  
13 much did they get, I know at the historic high when  
14 it was at 20 million teachers were getting about 250  
15 dollars but my understanding and then from my own  
16 personal experience as well is that teachers spend  
17 minimally double that and sometimes four times that  
18 amount to, you know stock their classroom with things  
19 like certificates, stars, stickers just to give kids  
20 little rewards and bringing pencils, sometimes as  
21 basic as bringing pencils and notebooks, what, what  
22 are they getting now per each child and would it go  
23 up to 250... [cross-talk]

24 JAHMILA JOSEPH: It's not each... [cross-  
25 talk]

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...again... [cross-talk]

JAHMILA JOSEPH: ...child, it's each class.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I mean each teacher,  
exactly... [cross-talk]

JAHMILA JOSEPH: So again if the average  
is between, you know it depends on how it gets  
distributed to 175 to 250 dollars and depending on  
your title like a speech teacher would get less so it  
depends on who... what your case load is or your  
classroom but again if you got 250 years ago with all  
inflation you could imagine how much more is really  
needed and this is beyond... and you know all of us who  
have grandchildren and children you got that  
classroom list and all that stuff that's got to come  
in you still need a classroom where you have the  
borders in the room, that you have to have your basic  
layout in your room that's not part of that. So, yes,  
we could use more but we would be appreciative of  
what you do support us in because every penny counts  
for each of our classrooms.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So last year we were  
able to secure about 250,000 dollars in council  
funding for the positive learning collaborative how  
did that help your program, were you able to get into

1 additional schools or what were you able to use that  
2 funding for.

3  
4 JAHMILA JOSEPH: What we were able to do  
5 is actually begin to hire another person which  
6 actually doubles how many schools we can add on. So,  
7 for example we get six schools per behavior  
8 specialist who goes into the building and I wanted to  
9 share again with Miss Gibson that PS55 is in district  
10 nine and had great, great outcomes. So, once we pay  
11 for one position the money that other schools  
12 contribute pay for another five positions so you get  
13 double for the amount of one behavior specialist. So,  
14 we're going to hopefully increase it by another 10 to  
15 15 schools this year just with your 250 and the other  
16 situation. If we get 750 we can double it or even  
17 triple it.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: 750 to triple it,  
19 okay. Alright, thank you. And Miss Joseph in regard  
20 to the DOE's certain unwillingness I think to move  
21 forward with universal school lunches, what I heard  
22 from the Chancellor today was that they were not  
23 looking at it, I don't understand what their  
24 opposition is to it actually because to me it seems  
25 like it cost neutral, benefit to the students, do you

1  
2 know of any reason why we have not been successful  
3 in, in getting the DOE to come on board with this?

4 JAHMILA JOSEPH: I, I think there are  
5 some concerns about the federal budget and where  
6 Trump goes next... [cross-talk]

7 CARNEN FARINAALVEREZ: That's right...  
8 [cross-talk]

9 JAHMILA JOSEPH: ...and, and that, that is  
10 a scary reality but right now we haven't seen those  
11 funds taken away and so we're... we believe that this  
12 is a reasonable proposal particularly using the  
13 eligibility option that would alleviate the burden of  
14 collecting these actual forms which may actually  
15 benefit the immigrant families that we work with  
16 significantly because they won't feel the pressure or  
17 the scariness let's say of filling out those forms  
18 and what retributions they have.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you and  
20 Mr. Nesbit, I recently met with borough President  
21 Oddo because Staten Island in particular as are some  
22 of the other boroughs I think in the Bronx as well  
23 facing a opioid crisis at this point in terms of the  
24 SAPSIS workers, I know the mayor made an announcement  
25 to combat the, the issue of, of opioid abuse, you

1  
2 mentioned I think 138 million dollars in your  
3 testimony, how much of that is going to go toward  
4 additional SAPIS workers?

5 DONALD NESBIT: Well we thank the city  
6 council the last two years you guys have provided the  
7 two million dollars to equal what the state has put  
8 into it and to add an additional 100 SAPIS but with  
9 the rise, the increase of, of drug use we, we ask  
10 that two million is put in the budget this year but  
11 the 38 million that the mayor is proposing unless  
12 it's allocated to SAPIS counselors it can go to  
13 various different other programs and not come to us  
14 so we're just ensuring that we get SAPIS counselors  
15 actually in the school, they live in the communities  
16 a lot of times you know the parents, the uncles, you  
17 went to school with them and you can reach the  
18 family.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So we... the... I'm  
20 sorry, I think I had said 138 million, it's 38  
21 million, right?

22 DONALD NESBIT: Yes, we wish it was 138  
23 million.

24

25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yes and we don't know  
3 yet how many... how much of that is going to be used  
4 for SAPIS workers if any?

5 DONALD NESBIT: Yes, we're not sure.

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright, thank you.  
7 I, I want to thank the panel and there's a million  
8 and one, one more questions but as we go through the  
9 budget process we'll, we'll be following up with you  
10 and again thank you members for the work they do for  
11 New York City every single day. Thank you... [cross-  
12 talk]

13 JAHMILA JOSEPH: Thank you very much...  
14 [cross-talk]

15 DONALD NESBIT: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I'm going to ask  
17 Council Member King if he'll take over for a few  
18 minutes while I use the facilities so to speak and  
19 with that we're going to call up Liz Accles from  
20 Lunch for Learning, Rachel Sabella from the Food Bank  
21 for New York City and Janet Poppendieck from CUNY  
22 Urban Food Policy Institute and Rashida Latef from  
23 Lunch for Learning as well and I will be back in two  
24 seconds.  
25

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Okay, thank you  
3 again. We're going to get started but we have to ask  
4 you to take a quick oath of telling the truth. So, do  
5 you affirm to tell the truth and nothing but the  
6 truth and answer all council member's questions  
7 honestly and truthfully?

8 [panel affirms]

9 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Okay, so let's,  
10 let's start from your right and my left and.. [cross-  
11 talk

12 RASHIDA LATEF: Hello.. [cross-talk]

13 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: When you start  
14 speaking please announce your name and if there's a  
15 title behind it for the record please.

16 RASHIDA LATEF: Sure, good afternoon. My  
17 name is Rashida Latef, I'm the Advocacy Coordinator  
18 at the Westside Campaign Against Hunger. Westside  
19 Campaign Against Hunger would like to thank Council  
20 Member Danny Dromm, Chair of the Education Committee  
21 for the opportunity to submit testimony for the  
22 Fiscal Year 2018 Preliminary New York City Budget and  
23 the urgency to expand Universal Free School Lunch to  
24 provide healthy, affordable and freshly prepared  
25 meals to all New York City public school students.

1  
2 Founded in 1979 WISCA is the country's first  
3 supermarket style food pantry and one of the largest  
4 emergency food providers in New York City. In the  
5 last year, we provided over 1.6 million pounds of  
6 food which included over 280,000 pounds of fresh  
7 fruits and, and vegetables to over 33,000 people but  
8 our customers come to us for more than groceries.  
9 WISCA combines access to healthy food with support  
10 services, job training and policy advocacy to work in  
11 partnership with our customers by emphasizing their  
12 right to self-determination and dignity. The  
13 supermarket style motto we innovated which allows  
14 customers to choose what's best for their families,  
15 combat the stigma of poverty among adults in the same  
16 way universal free school lunch would combat if not  
17 eliminate entirely the stigma of poverty among school  
18 age youth. In addition to the stigma of poverty these  
19 customers are living in fear. WISCA serves a diverse  
20 population of low income New York City residents a  
21 majority of whom are immigrants, in fact only 24  
22 percent of WISCA customers were born in the United  
23 States. More and more every day we receive requests  
24 from our customers to remove information from our  
25 database, some customers have stopped showing up

1  
2 entirely, rather than consume healthy food and access  
3 social services instead our customers are consumed by  
4 fear. 58 percent of our customers are women, a  
5 majority of whom are mothers to the 26 percent of  
6 children who rely on the fresh food and wraparound  
7 services we provide to our customers not only to  
8 survive but thrive. There's no guesswork to the  
9 social conditions that require people to require  
10 people to rely on emergency food providers when those  
11 same people who all have significant barriers to  
12 overcome begin to turn down the social services on  
13 which they so heavily depend because they would  
14 rather go hungry than risk being deported and  
15 separated from their families. The urgency to expand  
16 universal free school lunch becomes resoundingly  
17 clear. Universal free school lunch which does not  
18 require verification of citizenship is more critical  
19 now than it ever was. The expansion of universal free  
20 school lunch is also cost effective, it's  
21 implementation would cost only 8.7 million to feed  
22 New York City's 1.1 million public school students  
23 after state and federal funds are reimbursed.  
24 Expanding universal free school lunch would not only  
25 help to close the 242 million meal gap that persist

1  
2 in our city even after anti-hunger benefits have been  
3 secured and emergency food providers have been  
4 accessed but it is a necessary step in providing  
5 sanctuary as we promised. We are now not only  
6 fighting hunger, we are now also fighting fear. Once  
7 again Westside Campaign Against Hunger would like to  
8 thank City Council Education Committee for its  
9 continued support of this issue and the opportunity  
10 to testify about the need to expand universal free  
11 school lunch to provide health, affordable and  
12 freshly prepared meals. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you and thank  
14 you for being under the bell. Next?

15 JEN POPPENDIECK: Dr. Jen Poppendieck for  
16 the CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute also speaking in  
17 favor of Universal Free School Meals in New York City  
18 and I really want to pick up where my colleague left  
19 off with the tremendous urgency of addressing this,  
20 this year. Not only are immigrant families in New  
21 York City withdrawing from voluntary services like  
22 those provided by WISCA but they are beginning to ask  
23 to be dis-enrolled from SNAP, from what we used to  
24 call food stamps. We are going to face a hunger  
25 crisis of dramatic proportions and in this context, I

1 think the single most important thing we could do to  
2 give meaning to our claim to be a sanctuary city  
3 would be to remove the necessity to file paperwork  
4 applications to get free school meals. There are many  
5 other benefits, I know I'm preaching to the choir in  
6 this room, the council has been consistent in its  
7 support for universal free school meals for a number  
8 of years but somehow or other when it comes to the  
9 budget negotiating process at the end of this our  
10 priority has never made it in. This is the year that  
11 you must insist that the budget make room for  
12 universal free school meals because we are facing an  
13 assault on our immigrant communities, you know I have  
14 a, a minute left and I'm going to also talk about the  
15 fact that the way the, the free school meal structure  
16 is created in the United States has a uniform income  
17 eligibility guideline across the nation but I don't  
18 have to tell New Yorkers the costs of living are not  
19 uniform. The threshold might work in Manhattan,  
20 Kansas where the cost of living index stands at 95  
21 but in our Manhattan where it's well above 200 it  
22 doesn't work so we have many, many students in our  
23 schools who are not income eligible for free meals  
24 but who need the meals free in order to get through  
25

1  
2 the day, through the week. There's probably nothing  
3 else you could do that would more assist families in  
4 our community to, to make ends meet than to implement  
5 this sane, common sense universal free school meal  
6 policy. This is the year.

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you Doctor, I  
8 appreciate it. Next?

9 RACHEL SABELLA: [off-mic] Thank you...  
10 Sorry, let's put this on. Thank you, my name is  
11 Rachel Sabella and I'm the Director of Government  
12 Relations at Food Bank for New York City. I want to  
13 thank the council for the opportunity to testify  
14 today and also for continuing to prioritize every  
15 issue related to hunger. We are grateful to be your  
16 partners in this work. I have a long written formal  
17 testimony for you but I really just want to summarize  
18 here and really talk about childhood hunger and two  
19 things in the budget that can help make a difference  
20 for families. 16 percent of New York City's  
21 population struggles with food insecurity. One in  
22 four children are food insecure, that's a really big  
23 number and shows how important these changes are.  
24 While federal uncertainty is intensified the  
25 challenge policy and budget options well within the

1 authority and discretion of the New York City.. well  
2 within the discretion of the New York City government  
3 can.. considerably improved the lives of New Yorkers  
4 who struggle to afford food in their children. Our  
5 two big issues are number one, universal school  
6 meals, despite their eligibility many low-income  
7 children and teens do not participate in free school  
8 meals. Families can find the application process  
9 difficult or confusing. Some students skip meals to  
10 avoid the stigma, something we're all aware of.  
11 Maximizing participation in school meals through the  
12 expansion of universal school meals will provide  
13 hundreds of thousands of New York City children with  
14 access to nutritious lunch. Food Bank for New York  
15 City is a proud member of the Lunch for Learning  
16 Campaign and we ask that the FY 2018 New York City  
17 budget expand universal school meals to all students.  
18 The second area I want to talk about today is campus  
19 pantries, Food Bank for New York City has a campus  
20 pantry program that enables children to access  
21 emergency food in their school buildings. This year  
22 we were thrilled to partner with the city council on  
23 an initiative that created 16 new campus pantries at  
24 all five boroughs. They provide families with shelf  
25

1  
2 stable food, personal hygiene products, menstrual  
3 products, household goods. We're able to meet  
4 families where they are and to support them, this  
5 would not happen without the council's support. We  
6 ask that in the FY 2018 New York City budget that  
7 there's funding to continue the... these 16 pantries  
8 and an expansion of the program and we urge the  
9 administration to baseline those dollars. We heard  
10 the Chancellor talk about the importance of food  
11 pantries in schools and I was thrilled to hear that  
12 message. Childhood hunger faces communities across  
13 the five boroughs, we want to thank the council for  
14 continuing to prioritize these programs. Schools are  
15 at the frontlines of our fight against hunger and we  
16 urge the administration to present an executive  
17 budget proposal that looks to address those issues  
18 and expand services. We look forward to working with  
19 the city council as we work to close the meal gap and  
20 ensure no child goes to bed hungry. Thank you for you  
21 continued support.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you, next?

23 LIZ ACCLES: Yep. I'm Liz Accles,  
24 Executive Director of Community Food Advocates and I  
25 want to thank the council for the opportunity to be

1  
2 here and for the ongoing support of universal free  
3 school lunch and just to echo my colleagues, this is  
4 the year this needs to get done, it's urgent for so  
5 many reasons, fourth year of this mayor's term. This  
6 has been a priority of the council for three years  
7 already without movement forward after middle schools  
8 and the, the impact on immigrant students and their  
9 families have a particular push but I'm, I'm here to  
10 say I want to just point out a few things. We've  
11 heard over and over again from this administration  
12 about a tale of two cities, about an unaffordability  
13 crisis, about health and education inequities. I, I  
14 think there's almost not one thing else that could  
15 kind of capture all of those things in one policy  
16 move and budget item as universal free school lunch.  
17 We know children despite the Chancellors testimony we  
18 know because we have support from all of the school  
19 based unions, parent... public school parents,  
20 students, public health officials, all the anti-  
21 hunger groups know that stigma is a big issue when,  
22 when it comes to children participating in the, the  
23 school lunch program. We also know equally that there  
24 are many families who just simply can't afford the  
25 fees who are not income eligible. Universal free

1 school lunch will, will solve that, one sweeping  
2 thing. So, I'm going to address just a point of the  
3 Chancellor's and then just provide some information.  
4 While we support changes to the menu and  
5 infrastructure changes in cafeterias, those are  
6 important things, there is nothing.. without the  
7 foundation of universal free school lunch as the most  
8 sweeping, full scale thing that could happen in the  
9 city, cost effective, reach every child immediately,  
10 nothing else does that, changes in the menu take  
11 time, capital improvements in cafeterias we support,  
12 all part of our agenda but the first thing that must  
13 happen is universal free school lunch get rid of the  
14 stigma because without it the other money is wasted  
15 so I will say that. Also, we know that universal free  
16 school lunch works, we did an analysis of last year's  
17 participation of students with universal and students  
18 without universal and this is in all different grade  
19 levels, there are about 582 schools right now in  
20 universal free school lunch, mostly middle schools  
21 but some elementary and some high schools, there's a  
22 significant difference in participation. For middle  
23 school students, there's about 20 percent difference  
24 in participation, 60 percent of middle school  
25

1  
2 students... over 60 percent of middle school students  
3 with universal participate in school lunch, 40  
4 percent for those who don't have it. In high schools,  
5 there is a 30 percent participation for the high  
6 school students without universal free school lunch  
7 and 45 percent participation for those with it and  
8 even in elementary schools where the numbers... the  
9 participation is the highest, there's a ten percent  
10 difference with 80 percent of elementary school  
11 students participating who have universal free school  
12 lunch and only 70 percent of those same elementary  
13 school students who don't have it. So, the numbers  
14 are clear and you know we, we know you are our  
15 champions and we are counting on you to make sure  
16 that this happens and that the budget doesn't get  
17 done without this being included and we know this is,  
18 is a priority for the council and I'm over time so I  
19 thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well I thank all of  
21 you. Sister Rashida I want to thank you for pointing  
22 out the fear of what people go through, Dr. PJ I want  
23 to thank you for laying it out that if we just remove  
24 the paperwork for everyone, you know everyone's on  
25 the equal playing field by the time they walk into

1  
2 the door and Rachel I want to thank you for being in  
3 sync with the whole conversation and for you laying  
4 it out at the end for us Liz in regards to how we put  
5 it all together, we are your allies here in education  
6 committee. I, I know firsthand how it is to... you know  
7 I rather eat a bag of Doritos when I was in high  
8 school... [cross-talk]

9 RASHIDA LATEF: Right... [cross-talk]

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...than try to eat what  
11 was... [cross-talk]

12 RASHIDA LATEF: Exactly... [cross-talk]

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...being fed just  
14 because of the presentation of the food and how you  
15 got labeled whether you brought your food in or if  
16 you didn't bring your food in so... alright, we get it,  
17 we're going to do all that we can to make sure that  
18 the mayor and administration understands that, you  
19 know if you're talking about preparing for the next  
20 generation well if the next generation can't keep  
21 their eyes open because their stomach is hurting then  
22 how are they going to take in fractions and  
23 everything else they're supposed to learn in the  
24 school building. So, you, you, you have allies here  
25 in the education committee and we'll do all that we

1  
2 can and as a member of the budget and negotiation  
3 team I will make sure this is a priority conversation  
4 any time it comes to funding and it comes to  
5 education. So, you can count on us here in the...  
6 education committee to do all we can to deliver  
7 universal lunch for everyone. So, with that being  
8 said my colleague Helen Rosenthal would, would like  
9 to share a word so Helen and we're going to turn it  
10 back over, here's Danny.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you so  
12 much. Council Member King thank you, Council Member  
13 Dromm. I really just wanted to use this opportunity  
14 to thank the advocates here, the advocates who are in  
15 the audience for continue, continuing to step up for  
16 our kids. It's remarkable the work that you do and  
17 the... and to echo Council Member King's points the way  
18 you lay it out is strategic and helpful to us when  
19 we're in the room advocating for these things and  
20 Council Member King I've seen him when he gives his  
21 word he, he means it so Rashida and Janet and Rachel  
22 and Liz thank you so much for your help of course I  
23 have to give a special shout out to Rashida because  
24 Westside Campaign Against Hunger is in my district  
25 and you know no doubt the best food pantry in the

1  
2 city if I may say so but thank you so much... [cross-  
3 talk]

4 LIZ ACCLES: Thank you... [cross-talk]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...for all your  
6 hard work.

7 RASHIDA LATEF: Thank you.

8 DONALD NESBIT: Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much,  
10 a lot has been said, you know my support is there, we  
11 look forward to continuing to work with you as you  
12 move down the path of, of the budget process, thank  
13 you.

14 DONALD NESBIT: Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much.  
16 Alright, our next panel who is Hiam Fishman from  
17 YAFFED, Mendel Vogel from YAFFED and Naftuli Moster  
18 from YAFFED... from, from YAFFED, excuse me and Abigail  
19 Beatty from YAFFED as well.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, can I swear you  
21 in if you would just raise your right hand and do you  
22 solemnly swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole  
23 truth and nothing but the truth and to answer council  
24 member questions honestly?

25 [panel affirms]

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, who would like  
3 to start Naftuli?

4 NAFTULI MOSTER: Thank you. Good  
5 afternoon, my name is Naftuli Moster and I'm the  
6 Founder and Executive Director of YAFFED, Young  
7 Advocates for Fair Education. I was hoping the  
8 Chancellor would be here so that we could address her  
9 so we're still going to address her... [cross-talk]

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: We have a DOE rep  
11 here though, am I right? Yep.

12 NAFTULI MOSTER: Okay, so I hope you'll  
13 pass on the message. At this very moment, there are  
14 tens of thousands of ultra-Orthodox and Hasidic  
15 children attending schools where they're being denied  
16 a basic education. Hasidic boys, boys ages 13 and  
17 under receive just 90 minutes of instruction only in  
18 English and math and only four days a week, that is a  
19 total of six hours of secular instruction per week.  
20 Boys ages 13 and older receive no secular education  
21 at all, that's right, they attend yeshivas for as  
22 many as 14 hours a day from 6:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.  
23 but study exclusively Judaic studies, no English, no  
24 math, no science, no social studies, nothing. This is  
25 in blatant violation of New York State education law,

1 article 65, section 3204 which states that  
2 instructions given to a minor elsewhere than within a  
3 public school shall be at least substantially  
4 equivalent to the instruction given to minors of like  
5 age and attainment at the public schools of the city  
6 or district where the minor resides. New York State  
7 education guidelines are very explicit that non-  
8 public schools must teach English, math, science,  
9 history, geography and music, art, physical  
10 education, health education, and more. In 2014, we  
11 formally informed the Chancellor about this in a  
12 letter but she did nothing claiming not to know where  
13 to begin since we didn't name any specific yeshivas.  
14 So, in July of 2015 we sent a follow up letter, this  
15 time it was signed by 52 yeshiva graduates and  
16 parents of current students and naming 39 yeshivas  
17 that do not meet state standards. The Chancellor  
18 finally announced there... that the DOE's conducting an  
19 investigation. Since then there have been few signs  
20 that a real investigation is taking place.  
21 Furthermore, on several occasions the DOE and the  
22 Chancellor herself said that a report of the  
23 investigation will be produced at the end of Spring  
24 or beginning of Summer of 2016. We're nine months

1  
2 past that point, if there's no report and possibly  
3 not even an investigation, anyone who heard the, the  
4 Chair, Council Member Daniel Dromm ask the Chancellor  
5 before and her response I, I didn't go away confident  
6 that there's an actual investigation taking place let  
7 alone that there's going to be a report. In fact, on  
8 my... on, on the Chancellors way out I confronted her  
9 and asked her when there will be a report she said  
10 you'll just continue getting the same response over  
11 and over again, I said for how long, 20 years, there  
12 was no response to that. So, who knows, it seems like  
13 this investigation can take forever. This is an  
14 outrageous violation of the law and a callous  
15 disregard for the human rights and educational  
16 wellbeing of tens of thousands of children attending  
17 schools in this city. I urge the education committee  
18 to investigate the reluctance of the Chancellor to  
19 properly investigate these allegations and I also  
20 urge you to set a seven date... a seven-day deadline  
21 for her to produce a report. If she fails to do so I  
22 urge this committee to discipline the Chancellor or  
23 urge the mayor to replace her immediately for the  
24 sake of the helpless children who need a voice not an  
25 enabler. Thank you.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very, who  
3 would like to go next?

4 ABIGAIL BEATTY: Hello, unlike my  
5 colleague I had the privilege of completing  
6 kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade... [cross-talk]

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Would you state your  
8 name... [cross-talk]

9 ABIGAIL BEATTY: ...in New York City...  
10 [cross-talk]

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...for the record...  
12 [cross-talk]

13 ABIGAIL BEATTY: ...yeah, sorry. My name  
14 is Abigail Beatty. I had the privilege of completing  
15 kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade in New York City  
16 public schools. I think many people here had a  
17 similar experience and I want us to think about the  
18 wealth of opportunities which our early schooling  
19 afforded us. For example, in sixth grade my class  
20 began learning to write five paragraph essays, by the  
21 time I was accepted to college I had seven years of  
22 experience with structured academic writing, this  
23 allowed me and many of you to succeed in higher  
24 education and to then secure gainful employment but  
25 just blocks away from me and my public-school peers

1  
2 were Hasidic yeshivas where boys finished high school  
3 having never heard the word essay. Think about that,  
4 what will be their earning capacity, how will they  
5 complete job applications or even send e-mails for  
6 their businesses, what sustainable life paths lay  
7 ahead for them. Further outside of work and of school  
8 ask yourself could you engage in civic life without a  
9 basic knowledge of American history, what would it be  
10 like to have never heard of Martin Luther King or of  
11 the Revolutionary War or could you understand a  
12 medical diagnosis if you did not know what a cell  
13 was. Tens of thousands of intelligent able children  
14 are crippled each year by an absence of secular  
15 instruction, are these children not worthy of the  
16 same opportunities we had? Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much.  
18 If the red light is on then you're on.

19 MENDEL VOGEL: Thank you. Good afternoon,  
20 my name is Mendel Vogel and I attended a Hasidic  
21 yeshiva called Ohelei Torah for elementary and high  
22 school. I spent 14 years in that school yet when I  
23 completed I still hadn't learned the months of the  
24 calendar year. In the yeshiva we didn't learn  
25 English, math, science, history, social studies,

1 nothing not even in elementary school. I left yeshiva  
2 with no skills, with zero preparation for the work  
3 force or for... or to, to pursue a higher education in  
4 fact I'm currently pursuing my high school  
5 equivalency on my own and I'm struggling immensely.  
6 I'm not an exception, I did not skip class or behave  
7 poorly and the same is true for thousands of children  
8 attending other Hasidic yeshivas across the city.  
9 They are all being denied a basic education and it  
10 boggles my mind, how can this happen in this  
11 progressive city? How is it fair to be depriving  
12 thousands of young boys of a base... of the basic tools  
13 they need to succeed in life? And this is no secret,  
14 I myself have told the Department of Education about  
15 this eight months ago and it's my understanding that  
16 many others have done the same. This is a clear  
17 violation of the New York State law and it... and it...  
18 and it does not take a genius to under... to know this.  
19 Yet the Chancellor is refusing to properly  
20 investigate this... to investigate this and to, to  
21 produce a report. She keeps talking about  
22 investigating, I'm here to tell her and others have  
23 told her too that there's a specific yeshiva in Crown  
24 Heights in Brooklyn called Ohelei Torah that is not  
25

1  
2 produce... providing any secular education at all, why  
3 can't she just go and enforce the law and... in that  
4 school even while continuing to investigate the  
5 others. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much.

7 HIAM: Good afternoon. Hi, my name is  
8 Hiam and I'm also here to talk about important rights  
9 issue of the lack of secular education in Hasidic  
10 yeshivas. As a teenager, I grew up in the Hasidic  
11 community of Williamsburg to me this issue is  
12 extremely personal. At Hasidic elementary and middle  
13 school we had only an hour and a half of very low  
14 level English and arithmetic, the most advanced math  
15 I was ever taught was division, never even fractions.  
16 In my Hasidic high school during my 13 hours in  
17 yeshiva daily we only studied religious text such as  
18 Talmud and Torah and no secular studies whatsoever.  
19 Throughout all my years in Hasidic school we never  
20 learned any science, history, social studies, art,  
21 literature, health, or any math beyond arithmetic.  
22 The vast majority of my Hasidic friends have never  
23 even heard of words such as algebra, atom, or  
24 biology. Despite most of them already being the third  
25 generation living in New York City they can barely

1  
2 communicate in English. I had to sacrifice so much to  
3 be where I am now. When I decided, I wanted to  
4 receive a secular education at age 15 I immediately  
5 realized that the only schools available are ones  
6 outside of the community. In, in addition to losing  
7 almost all my child, childhood friends and being an  
8 outcast in my community when I finally left my  
9 Hasidic yeshiva I also faced legal challenges, I was  
10 told that as a minor I legally couldn't even change  
11 schools without my parent's consent. I was shocked to  
12 learn that the legal system would require me to stay  
13 in that school that teaches absolutely no secular  
14 studies and violates the state education  
15 requirements. Although after a long difficult  
16 struggle I was eventually able to attend a school  
17 outside of the community. Most children in the  
18 community are not as fortunate. A few of my Hasidic  
19 friends have secretly shared with me their dreams to  
20 learn math, science, or English but for them  
21 attending a school outside of the community is not  
22 even an option, they are afraid of losing... of losing  
23 their friends, afraid, afraid it's too late and they  
24 won't be able to catch up with their studies, afraid  
25 of the culture shock they will face and most

1  
2 importantly they are afraid of not having their  
3 parent's permission and being esterized by their  
4 family and their community for wanting a secular  
5 education. they want a secular education but they are  
6 denied one. The only way they... or at least the ones  
7 younger than them could receive the education they  
8 deserved is by having those subjects that are already  
9 required by law taught within their community  
10 schools. I plead with the Chancellor and this panel  
11 to think about those children, imagine where you  
12 would now be had you been deprived of basic skills  
13 needed for your future that those children are  
14 currently being denied. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well thank you very  
16 much for coming in and I have met with Mr. Moster in  
17 the past on this issue, I'd say we probably met  
18 almost two years ago, I think it was July of '15 if  
19 I'm not mistaken. It took us several months of work  
20 to get the Department of Education to even to begin  
21 to investigate or look into this matter and we are  
22 deeply concerned as a committee that we have not yet  
23 received any report from them and we have met with  
24 them on other occasions as well on this issue to try  
25 to push it. I want to state that your testimony, this

1  
2 panel's testimony is very compelling as were your  
3 letters to the DOE documenting the lack of a secular  
4 education in some of these yeshivas. I want to  
5 commend your courage for coming in and for speaking  
6 out on this issue because by doing so you're saving  
7 lives and I want to reiterate that, that that is  
8 probably the most important thing here because from  
9 the discussions that I've had with Naftuli I was  
10 shocked to learn of the lack of a secular education  
11 or an education equivalent to what students are  
12 receiving the public-school system and it's not even  
13 minimal. When I met with Mr. Moster, with Naftuli he  
14 told me that he basically left school not even  
15 speaking English well and that much of the English  
16 that he knows now was learned outside of the yeshiva  
17 system... outside of yeshiva schools that he attended.  
18 This is unacceptable and there are particular  
19 religious and cultural concerns that enter into this  
20 as well and we want to be respectful of that and Mr.  
21 Moster has told me that his... not his intention to  
22 knock down or to destroy those religious traditions  
23 or those cultures but just to provide students with a  
24 secular education or equivalent to what the public-  
25 school students are receiving as well. So, with that

1  
2 being said I'm wondering Mr. Moster if you could tell  
3 us a little bit about the differences between the  
4 Hasidic and the ultra-Orthodox communities why they  
5 are doing differently than other yeshivas because  
6 it's not every yeshiva that we're talking about and  
7 how education is different for boys and for girls in  
8 the yeshiva system?

9           NAFTULI MOSTER: Sure, thank you. So,  
10 you're right, the, the ultra-Orthodox community is a  
11 pretty wide spectrum, there are two major groups  
12 under the ultra-Orthodox umbrella. One is called  
13 Hasidic and one is the Lipfiesh [sp?], the Lipfiesh  
14 community which is probably half the size of a  
15 Hasidic community in New York at least, they tend to  
16 provide a better education to both boys and girls  
17 although that is beginning to shift which is  
18 problematic as well. With, within the Hasidic  
19 community which is skyrocketing, the Hasidic  
20 community is probably the fastest growing in New York  
21 State... in New York State, definitely New York City,  
22 we're projecting that by 2030 30 percent of  
23 Brooklyn's youth might be Hasidic and, and getting  
24 the kind of education we're describing. So, within  
25 the Hasidic community the problem tends to be mostly

1  
2 with the Hasidic boys, girls tend to get a better  
3 education mainly because they're expected to become  
4 homemakers, housewives and, and even earners while  
5 the men continue to pursue Rabbinical studies. So  
6 that is the key difference just so that we all  
7 understand but what is happening with the Hasidic  
8 boys is, is probably... a lot of people have heard  
9 about, you know failing public schools, we always  
10 hear about that but even failing public schools  
11 provide an education, maybe kids aren't performing as  
12 well as we'd like, maybe they're not graduating at  
13 the rates that we'd like. Here we're talking about a  
14 system where the yeshivas simply aren't teaching it,  
15 they're not teaching what the law requires them to  
16 teach and the city and state actually are not  
17 bothering to enforce it. An interesting thing for  
18 people to know is that nearly 100 percent of Hasidic  
19 boys do not graduate with a high school diploma, they  
20 just finish yeshiva not having learned any of the  
21 required subjects so there's no high school diploma  
22 and as you've heard from my colleagues it takes a lot  
23 of time and effort to actually go and pursue one on  
24 your own because they're not... they don't even have  
25 the tools necessary to, to just go out there and get

1  
2 a GED. As you may know Hasidic boys don't grow up  
3 with t.v. movies, radio or even secular newspapers so  
4 they don't even learn much outside of the classroom  
5 especially when they spend 12 to 14 hours a day in  
6 the yeshiva. when you mentioned that I've English I  
7 picked up a little bit from my sisters, I have quite  
8 a few sisters and they communicated in English as  
9 well as after I... after I left yeshiva which was about  
10 ten years ago so over the past ten years I managed to  
11 catch up a little bit.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: This hear... this is a  
13 hearing basically on the budget as well and I didn't  
14 get around to asking the department but maybe you  
15 could help me understand a little bit better as well.  
16 I believe that many of the yeshivas in question and I  
17 think when you wrote the letter you identified, I  
18 forget the number of schools... [cross-talk]

19 NAFTULI MOSTER: ...39.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: 39 schools across  
21 eight districts?

22 NAFTULI MOSTER: Seven districts.

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Seven districts that  
24 you have received complaints or forwarded complaints  
25 to the Department of Education on this issue but I

1  
2 believe that of those schools most, most of those  
3 schools do receive NYSTL money, New York State  
4 textbook loan money, how is that money used in the  
5 schools?

6           NAFTULI MOSTER: Honestly, I don't know,  
7 this has been a, a big problem for us to try to  
8 gather data on, on, on the money, on the levels of  
9 education some of which we believe the city  
10 Department of Education has but we've done full  
11 requests and we haven't gotten any responses. What we  
12 do know is that yeshivas get... from what I understand  
13 a disproportionate amount of Title one, Title three  
14 and keep in mind Title three is a... is a... an ESL kind  
15 of program and we're talking about Hasidic boys who  
16 are third generation Americans, they don't... they  
17 wouldn't need it if the yeshivas provided a proper  
18 education. Another thing about Title one is that it  
19 has the stipulation that it's supposed to supplement  
20 an existing program, it's not supposed to supplant it  
21 but in many Hasidic yeshivas that's exactly what it's  
22 doing because there's only 90 minutes and that's  
23 where the Title one money goes for but you're right  
24 they also get a lot of state funding for, you know  
25 bussing, lunch, textbooks and so forth as well as

1  
2 child care vouchers. So, so we're talking about  
3 hundreds of millions of dollars that are going to  
4 these non-public schools, I should say hundreds of  
5 millions taxpayer dollars and, and it's one thing..  
6 [cross-talk]

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And, and very soon  
8 the council is going to be providing if they haven't  
9 already started, security guards in, in these..  
10 [cross-talk]

11 NAFTULI MOSTER: ...right... [cross-talk]

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...schools.

13 NAFTULI MOSTER: Right, so, so just  
14 adding all of that up including I, I should also  
15 mention non-public schools still do charge tuition  
16 and they also get private charity contributions. So,  
17 if you add it all up yeshivas do have a lot of money  
18 so... I know some, some leaders in the community try to  
19 say well we don't have the money to provide a proper  
20 education, that is bogus in several ways because  
21 first of all the girls schools, the segregated  
22 schools, the girls' schools operate on the same  
23 budget yet they manage to provide a much better  
24 secular education but also, they do have a lot of

1  
2 money and they're just not using it... not using it  
3 correctly so there's a problem with prioritization.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well I, I, I have  
5 other panels coming up so I'm going to have to kind  
6 of end it here but let me just say as well every  
7 Jewish leader that I have spoken to without exception  
8 has told me that we're on the right track to continue  
9 to pursue this issue although many of them fear  
10 actually speaking out on this issue themselves and  
11 that's why I admire your courage for coming in today  
12 and exposing this issue for us and we look to... we  
13 look forward to continuing to work with you on  
14 shining the light on this subject again in the  
15 future.

16 NAFTULI MOSTER: Thank you very much.

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much.  
18 Our next panel will be Grant Cowles I believe from  
19 Citizens Committee for Children. Kim Sweet from  
20 Advocates for Children, Amanda Matos from Sex Ed  
21 Alliance and Girls for Gender Equity, and Elizabeth  
22 Adams from Planned Parenthood of New York City. Okay,  
23 I'd like to swear you in if you could just raise your  
24 right hand. Do you solemnly swear or affirm to tell  
25 the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth

1 and to answer council member questions honestly?

2 Okay, who'd like to start?

3  
4 ELIZABETH ADAMS: Good afternoon, my name  
5 is Elizabeth Adams, I'm the Director of Government  
6 Relations at Planned Parenthood of New York City.

7 Thank you to the Committee, the Council Member,

8 Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito and the entire council

9 for their continuing commitment and support of

10 comprehensive education. PPNYC offers education,

11 training, and outreach to more than 25,000 youth,

12 adults and professionals annually. Our education

13 programs are committed to reaching young people and

14 caring adults in the communities they live and by

15 those they can trust and identify with. PPNYC's youth

16 health promoters are adult role models and provide

17 inclusive nonjudgmental health information and

18 resources to all New Yorkers. Our experience as a

19 sexual health education provider shows us firsthand

20 the gaps that remain in New York's health education.

21 The DOE currently requires a semester of health in

22 middle school and one in high school and calls for a

23 portion of these semesters to cover sexuality

24 education however due to a lack of accountability,

25 adequate resources and enforcement student's

1 experiences vary widely when it comes to health...  
2 sexual health learning. The city DOE recently  
3 released two reports on health education and found  
4 that many middle and high school students are either  
5 not receiving sexual health education at all or being  
6 taught by unlicensed and untrained educators. Almost  
7 half of 2016 graduated eight graders did not receive  
8 a single semester of health during middle school  
9 which is in violation of the state law and while  
10 there are 15,000 instructors that are assigned to  
11 teach health in New York City public schools only 153  
12 are licensed health educators and only seven percent  
13 have attended any training on sexual health education  
14 in the last two years. As a trusted sexuality  
15 education provider, Planned Parenthood finds it  
16 deeply concerning that so few instructors are  
17 teaching health have that... have received sexual  
18 health training and that even fewer are licensed as  
19 required by both the state and the city of New York.  
20 Schools need to be adequately resourced to ensure  
21 that all students can receive accurate and trusted  
22 health information. The DOE's finding reveal a  
23 glaring need for dedicated funding to hire more  
24 health educators, to train current teachers in sexual  
25

1 health and to implement concrete accountability  
2 measures so that schools can provide the health  
3 education that schools deserve and that is state  
4 mandated. The need for comprehensive sexuality  
5 education in New York City is more important than  
6 ever, rates of STD's are, are increasing dramatically  
7 among young people and LGBT youth are significantly  
8 more likely to face sexual assault and bullying than  
9 their peers. PPNYC commends the Speaker for her call  
10 to enact K through 12 sexuality education in her  
11 State of the City address recently and we look  
12 forward to making this a reality citywide and we  
13 thank you for the council member support as well.  
14 PPNYC is a proud member of the Sexuality Education  
15 Alliance of New York City which is a broad coalition  
16 that advocates for age appropriate medically accurate  
17 gender inclusive and culturally responsive K through  
18 12 sex ed. In our current political landscape, New  
19 York City has a responsibility to serve as a national  
20 health leader on inclusive health education. We  
21 respectfully request the council's support in new  
22 funding allocation to implement and enhance sexuality  
23 education in all schools and all grades, thank you.  
24

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank, thank you,  
3 next please?

4 AMANDA MATOS: Good afternoon. My name is  
5 Amanda Matos, I am the Government Relation Specialist  
6 at Girls for Gender Equity and I work directly with  
7 the Young Women's Advisory Council and partnership  
8 with the Speakers Young Women's Initiative. So, thank  
9 you again Education Committee Chair, Daniel Dromm for  
10 convening this hearing, the Speaker and the entire  
11 committee for their continued support of Education in  
12 New York City. Today the need for funding for  
13 comprehensive sexual health education in New York  
14 City public schools is very urgent. GGE is a member  
15 of Sexuality Education Alliance of New York City,  
16 SEANYC and as Elizabeth mentioned it's a broad  
17 coalition that advocates for comprehensive K through  
18 12 sex ed that meets the national sexuality education  
19 standards for all New York City youth. At SEANYC we  
20 aim to foster safe learning environments where  
21 students can access information and skills they need  
22 to make healthy decisions as a fulfil meaningful and  
23 productive lives. As an antiviolence and education  
24 organization Girls for Gender Equity is committed to  
25 enacting comprehensive sexuality education in New

1  
2 York City schools. Through our programming and  
3 advocacy, we are committed to the physical,  
4 psychological, social, and economic development of  
5 girls and women. Through education, organizing and  
6 physical fitness GGE encourages communities to remove  
7 the barriers and create opportunities for girls and  
8 women to live self-determined lives. Comprehensive  
9 sex ed not only improves health outcomes of young  
10 people by equipping them with medically accurate  
11 information on their reproductive health but it also  
12 decreases sexual violence and harassment that  
13 disproportionately impacts transgender girls of color  
14 and gender non-conforming youth of color. Stated in  
15 the Young Women's Initiative report that we co-  
16 created with city council in May 2016, 40 percent of  
17 black and Latino girls in New York City do not have  
18 access to support systems that would enable them to  
19 successfully complete high school. Six out of ten  
20 pregnancies in New York City are unplanned and teen  
21 pregnancy rates are highest in the Bronx and as we  
22 know this is where some of the country's poorest  
23 districts are located. The correlation between race,  
24 class and gender and education standards cannot go  
25 unnoticed with this issue. The Bronx also has

1  
2 experienced a steep increase in new HIV diagnosis  
3 among women specifically black women and women of  
4 color. Sex ed is not the only solution to these  
5 problems but it can educate young people at an  
6 earlier age about consent, by standard intervention  
7 and safe sex while also destigmatizing these  
8 experiences and holding educators accountable and  
9 creating support systems for students beyond  
10 academia. There are only 153 licensed health  
11 educators in New York City public schools and this  
12 number as we all know is unacceptable. A clear policy  
13 that is sufficiently funded and includes of course an  
14 achievable time line in implementation of K through  
15 12 standards and accountability measures for  
16 enforcement and evaluation will ensure that every  
17 school has the ability to provide supportive and  
18 inclusive sex education to all of its students. We  
19 respectfully request the council's support for Fiscal  
20 Year '18 funding to implement and enhance sex ed in  
21 all New York City public schools. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much.

23 KIM SWEET: Thank you for the opportunity  
24 to testify today. My name's Kim Sweet, I'm the  
25 Executive Director at Advocates for Children of New

1  
2 York. We are encouraged to see that the preliminary  
3 budget includes a significant investment in upgrading  
4 SESIS, skepticism is very understandable but it  
5 really is imperative that New York City be able to  
6 track with accuracy whether and when mandated  
7 programs and services are being provided to students  
8 who need them. We're also very pleased that the  
9 preliminary budget continues to fund the Mayor's  
10 Universal Literacy Program to double the number of  
11 literacy coaches to be trained in strategies that  
12 have been proven effective of struggling readers,  
13 this is a necessary program and we're happy to see it  
14 continue. With respect to areas where more funding is  
15 needed I'm going to focus today on students in  
16 temporary housing and on school discipline. For  
17 students in temporary housing we were extremely  
18 dismayed that in the preliminary budget the  
19 administration cut the 10.3 million dollars in  
20 support for students living in shelters that they had  
21 added in FY '17. Given the extraordinarily high  
22 numbers of students in temporary housing, we are  
23 urging the administration to baseline that 10.3  
24 million dollars and to add in baseline an additional  
25 7.3 million for students living in shelters. The

1  
2 additional funding would provide 67 more DOE social  
3 workers for students living in shelters for a total  
4 of at least 100 bridging the gap of social workers.  
5 The 10.3 million dollars in this year's budget  
6 included 3.6 million to hire 33 such social workers  
7 although this program has been in place only a short  
8 time we've already seen anecdotal evidence of  
9 promising results. At one school for example teachers  
10 are telling us very appreciatively that through the  
11 individual and group counseling that these social  
12 workers provide they've been able to address the high  
13 level of stress that many of these students face with  
14 the result that the students are more available to  
15 learn and to interact positively with their peers.  
16 During 2015-16 school year 34,268 New York City  
17 school district students lived in shelters, that's an  
18 increase of 24 percent since 2010, 2011 yet the only  
19 increase in DOE staff devoted to this population was  
20 through that 10.3 million dollars. With record  
21 numbers of students living in shelters now is the  
22 time for the city to increase its support definitely  
23 not pull it away. And I want to thank Chairman Dromm  
24 for speaking out on the issue earlier. It is also  
25 important that the budget include additional

1  
2 resources to address school climate. Although we have  
3 seen a very positive drop in numbers of suspensions  
4 as well as school based summons and arrests we still  
5 have far to go and I'm going to jump through... very  
6 specifically we'd like to ask that the executive  
7 budget include funding for the following  
8 recommendations of the mayoral leadership team on  
9 school time... on school climate and discipline. Number  
10 one, pilot and mental health support continuum in 20  
11 high needs schools. Two, expand Restorative Practices  
12 in two ways; one we ask to continue expansion  
13 district by district, the administration provided  
14 funding for district 18 this year we ask that another  
15 high need district be selected for next year so for  
16 those two districts it would be 1.4 million dollars  
17 in the FY 2018 budget and second we ask that the  
18 administration allocate five millions dollars to  
19 adopt and expand the city council's Restorative  
20 Practices Initiative. So that would mean with that  
21 money they would continue the Restorative Practices  
22 in the 25 schools now funded by the council and add  
23 another 25 schools this year. I have a lot more  
24 details in my testimony that we've handed in.  
25 Finally, I just want to express our support for the

1  
2 positive learning collaborative which has been talked  
3 about today.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Just, just on that...  
5 [cross-talk]

6 KIM SWEET: Thank you... [cross-talk]

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...I, I, I was just...  
8 [cross-talk]

9 KIM SWEET: ...yeah... [cross-talk]

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...showing it to my  
11 policy analyst here, budget analyst...

12 KIM SWEET: Yeah.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Why that program, why  
14 are you highlighting... [cross-talk]

15 KIM SWEET: Why which program... [cross-  
16 talk]

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...yeah, why are you  
18 highlighting that program and I did earlier but I'm  
19 just curious... [cross-talk]

20 KIM SWEET: Yeah, so... [cross-talk]

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...it's in your  
22 testimony.

23 KIM SWEET: We really like the direct on  
24 sight support and the coaching that it provides in  
25 the schools, we also like the collaborative aspect of

1  
2 the model, we've seen it work in the schools that  
3 it's in, it's currently in 15 schools with the  
4 750,000 dollars they could expand it to 30. We think  
5 it's thoughtfully done and effectively executed so we  
6 would support expanding that program.

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay.

8 GRANT COWLES: Good afternoon, my name is  
9 Grant Cowles and the Senior Policy and Advocacy  
10 Associate for Youth Justice at Citizens Committee for  
11 Children. CCC is a 73-year-old independent multi-  
12 issue child advocacy organization dedicated to  
13 ensuring every New York child is health, housed,  
14 educated and safe. Thank you Chairman Dromm and thank  
15 you to the education committee for holding today's  
16 hearing. CCC is grateful for the city council's  
17 longstanding commitment to education in New York City  
18 students. We appreciate the administration's efforts  
19 to shrink the New York City's public schools  
20 particularly through the renewal school's initiative  
21 and the Equity in Excellence Agenda. CCC welcomes the  
22 proposed investments for education in the FY '18  
23 Preliminary Budget including the 14 million for  
24 Summer in the City Programs for at risk second  
25 graders and expanding Stem Programming in summer

1 school and the 14.83 million for SESIS upgrades as  
2 was discussed here today. In addition, CCC was  
3 pleased to see the administration's plans for a 495  
4 million capital investment from FY '20 through '24 to  
5 create 38,487 new school seats and now I will turn to  
6 the areas where we also have recommendations and  
7 we'll go through quick because they echo a lot of  
8 what's been said. First, we want to urge the  
9 administration to complete the mayor De Blasio's  
10 campaign promise to implement universal free school  
11 lunch for all public-school students as has been  
12 mentioned many times today. We also urge the  
13 administration to maintain all funding for community  
14 schools and ensure that the 13 community school is  
15 funded through the state community schools grant  
16 initiative receive the third year funding on  
17 specifically the state budget currently being  
18 negotiating eliminates the funding for CSGI, if the  
19 state funding is not restored we urge the  
20 administration and the DOE to ensure that funding is  
21 distributed to these 13 community schools in the  
22 amount currently allocated by the CSGI Program which  
23 is approximately 167,000 per school. Echoing what was  
24 just mentioned we urge the administration to help  
25

1  
2 homeless students through a restoring and baselining  
3 the 10.3 million for guidance counselors and then add  
4 an additional 7.3 million to the executive budget to  
5 fund a total of 100 DOE social workers at schools  
6 with high numbers of homeless students. Next we also  
7 echo what was just mentioned about around school  
8 climate and discipline specifically we urge the  
9 administration to fund and implement the first... the  
10 2.7... 57 million to launch and sustain a mental health  
11 support continuum pilot in 20 high needs school  
12 districts, five million to adopt and expand the city  
13 council Restorative Practices Initiatives in 100 high  
14 needs schools and finally 1.4 million to expand  
15 Restorative Practices to four high needs school  
16 districts one district at a time as was just  
17 mentioned. We also recommend that the learning to  
18 work contracts should be funded at a higher level,  
19 the 10.8 million needed to maintain work is need..  
20 needed to maintain the work but there really needs to  
21 be much more in total and finally we ask that the... as  
22 always that they restore and baseline the great  
23 program sponsored by the city council's initiatives.  
24 Thank you very much.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much  
3 and I just want to go to SESIS, I think I used the  
4 junk it, to junk it. Are you confident that the  
5 improvements that they're talking about are going to  
6 live up to the promise?

7 GRANT COWLES: I'll be honest, not 100  
8 percent but I think given the alternatives right now  
9 it's the way to go, I mean we've been part of a lot  
10 of conversations with them, they have a, a much  
11 better team, they brought in DoITT this time, you  
12 know than when they did last time. I'm not an expert  
13 in IT so I could never say that it's 100 percent  
14 going to work but it needs to be done, I mean they  
15 can't possibly be accountable for services if they  
16 don't know who they're serving when. So, I think  
17 they're, they're going at it in a more intelligent  
18 way than they've gone at it before so we support it,  
19 we think it needs to be done. If we just, you know...  
20 you'll never know that it's going to be... that it's  
21 going to definitely work but it's necessary.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I just hope it  
23 doesn't turn out like City Time where we kept pouring  
24 money... [cross-talk]

25

1  
2 GRANT COWLES: I know, I know... [cross-  
3 talk]

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...in and money and  
5 money in and money in and nothing came out. Thank  
6 you, I also want to just say you know we've worked  
7 very closely with Planned Parenthood and other  
8 organizations on the sex education curriculum as well  
9 we look forward to continuing to press for that and  
10 push forward for that and I thank the Citizens  
11 Committee for Children for coming in as well, thank  
12 you very much to this panel. Okay, well now we're  
13 going to have Allison Demus the Center for Arts  
14 Education, Dr. Jerry James, the Center for Arts  
15 Education, Dr. William Crowe I believe, the  
16 Metropolitan Museum of Art, Deborah Levine from  
17 ACRIA, Santina Protopapa from Lincoln Center  
18 Education and Sharon Counts I think from the New York  
19 City Center. Okay, may I ask you all to raise your  
20 right hand please so I can swear you in. Do you  
21 solemnly swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole  
22 truth and nothing but the truth and to answer council  
23 member questions honestly?

24 [panel affirms]  
25

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you.

Would you like to start over here, the lady in white shirt, yes.

ALLISON ADEMUS: Thank you. My name is Allison Demus. Thank you for having me testify today as a volunteer with the Center for Arts Education. I'm a resident of Brooklyn and for the past 31 years I have been teacher of Early Childhood grades in Sunset Park Brooklyn. As I learned about my students and researched how they learned best my teaching practices evolved. When I discovered how an arts education supported the cognitive abilities of children I began to include the arts in all forms into my classroom curriculum. Sometimes through my practice and sometimes through collaboration with the art teachers and sometimes with organizations outside of my school. It is my firm belief that the arts need to be a fundamental part of every child's education. if we doubt the... a desire to create art and communicate through it is innate just give any young child a crayon and watch them begin to compose on a wall, hand them a cardboard tube and in short order they will turn it into a musical instrument. I observed firsthand how exploration and

1  
2 experimentation in the visual and performing arts can  
3 support the development to their fine and gross motor  
4 control as well as their problem-solving abilities.  
5 The rhythmic pattern of music becomes the rhythmic  
6 pattern of speech and then that leads to the written  
7 word. I observed them transfer these abilities to  
8 their academic pursuits. I watched them take the  
9 skills that they learned through observational  
10 drawing, look closely, draw what you see not what you  
11 think you see and apply them to decoding and reading  
12 strategies, look closely, read what you see not what  
13 you think you see. Sorry. I listened as they created  
14 songs from favorite books and processed the sequence  
15 of the story as they sang to a troll to let them  
16 cross the bridge. I watched them write stories that  
17 developed in complex... complexity, creativity, and  
18 organization as their illustrations became more  
19 involved and expressive. I watched this happen every  
20 school year. Without funding for arts education none  
21 of this would be possible. Thank you for your time  
22 and support.

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much,  
24 next please.

25

1  
2                   SANTINA PROTOPAPA: My name is Santina  
3 Protopapa and I am the Director of Educational  
4 Partnerships at Lincoln Center Education, the  
5 educational arm of Lincoln Center. I'm honored to be  
6 here to discuss some of the ways that Lincoln Center  
7 Education serves students in underserved communities  
8 throughout the five boroughs. At Lincoln Center  
9 Education, we know that deep engagement with the arts  
10 can transform schools and communities. This was  
11 proven by the University of Pennsylvania's recently  
12 released social impact study which revealed that the  
13 clustering of cultural assets in New York City's  
14 neighborhoods significantly improves quality of life  
15 for New Yorkers. The study showed that in lower  
16 income neighborhoods cultural resources are  
17 significantly linked to better health, schooling and  
18 security. For example, students with increased access  
19 to cultural resources demonstrated an 18 percent  
20 increase in scores on English and math exams. Many of  
21 Lincoln Center Education school programs help  
22 communities realize these important social benefits.  
23 Our programs are designed to help students build  
24 critical thinking skills that can be applied across  
25 all school subjects and in the modern work place. Our

1  
2 approach centers on a teaching method that uses the  
3 study of works of art and rich learning experiences  
4 both on our campus and in the classroom serving over  
5 25,000 students at over 200 schools citywide. Through  
6 our work, we prepare students to think like an  
7 artist, equipping them with critical thinking,  
8 problem solving and imagination that they need to  
9 perform in our evolving world. Our Arts in the Middle  
10 Program is one of the many examples of this work as  
11 you may know. A few years ago, after learning that 22  
12 percent of New York City middle schools had little to  
13 no arts programming many of which were located in low  
14 income communities. Lincoln Center partnered with the  
15 Department of Education to bring our Arts in the  
16 Middle Program to more under, underperforming middle  
17 schools. This program provides critical access to the  
18 arts for approximately 4,100 middle schoolers  
19 citywide. Our partnership with each school is  
20 catalyzing positive change for not only students but  
21 educators in the communities surrounding each school.  
22 In addition Lincoln Center Education is preparing the  
23 next generation of arts educators to serve in the  
24 neediest public schools citywide and partnership with  
25 CUNY's Hunter College School of Education, the

1 Department of Education and the United Federation of  
2 Teachers our Lincoln Center scholars alternative  
3 certification program fast tracks placement of high  
4 quality arts teachers in public schools with little  
5 or no arts programming. To date this fully subsidized  
6 graduate degree program has placed 45 certified arts  
7 teachers who serve over 12,000 public school students  
8 citywide. We want to thank the council for its  
9 support of this important work with that in mind we  
10 urge the education committee to support the CIG's  
11 request for a 40 million increase to the Department  
12 of Culture, Cultural Affairs budget. We also ask that  
13 the committee support Lincoln Center's FY '18 request  
14 for more funding to enhance our education and  
15 community programs. This funding would be leveraged  
16 by Lincoln Center into significant private dollars  
17 and thereby enhance our ongoing efforts to improve  
18 education and quality of life for students citywide.  
19 On behalf of Lincoln Center thank you for this  
20 opportunity, we look forward to continuing to partner  
21 with the council to make high quality arts education  
22 more accessible citywide.

24 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you and next  
25 please.

1  
2 DEBORAH LEVINE: Good afternoon, I'm  
3 Deborah Levine, Deputy Executive Director at ACRIA.  
4 Thank you for the education committee and the Chair  
5 for convening this very important meeting along with  
6 the Speaker and the entire committee for their  
7 continued support of comprehensive education. the New  
8 York City council and the Department of Education  
9 have long shown their commitment to funding public  
10 education. today the need for funding for  
11 comprehensive sexual health education in New York  
12 City public schools is even more urgent than ever.  
13 ACRIA and its Love Heals Youth Education Programs are  
14 members of the Sexual Education Alliance for New York  
15 City, a broad coalition the advocates for  
16 comprehensive K through 12<sup>th</sup> sexual education that  
17 strives to meet the national sexual education  
18 standards for all New York City youth. We aim to ask  
19 that all youth have a safe environment to learn about  
20 sexual health education. the Love Heals Youth  
21 Education Program works across the five boroughs  
22 through strategic partnerships with the Department of  
23 Health and Human Services along with the New York  
24 City Department of Education in over 700 schools and  
25 community groups to provide the most urgent often

1 unmet HIV prevention and health promotion needs for  
2 underserved and under resourced communities  
3 especially among our youth. Love Heals was founded in  
4 1992 as an independent organization in the memory of  
5 Alison Gertz who died of AIDS the same year. ACRIA  
6 acquired Love Heals in 2016 as its fourth program and  
7 in its 25-year history Love Heals has reached over  
8 700,000 young people, parents, guardians, community  
9 groups and other youth allies through sexual health  
10 education, HIV prevention, leadership development,  
11 trainings, and presentations. ACRIA is committed to  
12 continuing and bolstering Love Heals history of  
13 providing comprehensive sexuality education in New  
14 York schools. The New York City DOE currently  
15 requires one semester of health education in middle  
16 school and one semester in high school and the Office  
17 of School Wellness Programs calls for a portion of  
18 each of these semesters to cover sexuality education  
19 however due to a lack of accountability, adequate  
20 resources and enforcement student's experiences vary  
21 when it comes to sexual health learning. The DOE  
22 recently released reports revealing that many  
23 students are not receiving even the bare minimum of  
24 recommended sexual health education. Among half of  
25

1  
2 the 2016 graduate eight graders did not receive a  
3 full semester in this curriculum development. Cutting  
4 to the chase we are simply asking that a clear public  
5 policy that is sufficiently funded include an  
6 achievable timeline for implementation of K through  
7 12 standard and accountability measures enforcement  
8 and evaluation which will help ensure that every  
9 school has the ability to provide and support a  
10 comprehensive sexual health education as mandated by  
11 city and state. We ask that you include this in your  
12 budget for the 2018, thank you on behalf of  
13 all the students.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you, next  
15 please.

16 WILLIAM CROW: Hi, good afternoon  
17 Chairman Dromm. I'm William Crow, Educator in charge  
18 of Teaching and Learning at the Metropolitan Museum  
19 of Art, thank you for hearing our testimony today.  
20 I'm honored to present testimony how the MET and  
21 cultural organizations strengthen education for all  
22 New Yorkers especially school children and families.  
23 The museum offers some 28,000 programs each year to  
24 an audience of 700,000 through our programs. Last  
25 year we welcomed over 136,000 students from New York

1 City through school visits. We offered professional  
2 learning programs for over 5,000 educators,  
3 principals and superintendents. I'm sure you'll agree  
4 that these are impressive numbers but I stress to you  
5 and the education committee the deep impact and the  
6 even life changing transformation that occurs with  
7 each and every individual when cultural institutions,  
8 school communities and young people work together to  
9 achieve our shared goal of student achievement. While  
10 in the past some people might have considered a visit  
11 to the museum as a field trip or a perk in the  
12 Spring, today we know that museums and cultural  
13 organizations are critical partners as we aim for  
14 young people to grow into thoughtful, critical,  
15 engaged and participatory citizens. Recent empirical  
16 studies show that visits to cultural institutions can  
17 influence students content knowledge, their critical  
18 thinking and even their ability to take the  
19 perspectives of others which is a topic that's been  
20 coming up earlier today. National organizations such  
21 as the National Art Education Association is forming  
22 a research agenda that examines the role of museums  
23 as they partner with schools and the development of  
24 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. At the MET, we offer a wide  
25

1  
2 range of opportunities for young people and families  
3 from drop in career nights, to our bi-annual teen  
4 nights, to casa programs, to after school programs,  
5 internships, and mentorships. I know that I speak for  
6 many of my museum colleagues in the city when I say  
7 that we celebrate and we support the vision proposed  
8 by school's Chancellor Carmen Farina to tap the  
9 city's cultural institutions as partners in student  
10 achievement. Museums and cultural organizations are  
11 uniquely positioned to provide professional learning  
12 opportunities, drop in programs for teens, in school  
13 services to students, family engagement activities  
14 and resources for learners of all ages and abilities  
15 but to do that our schools need the resources and  
16 support from the city to take advantage of these  
17 opportunities. At the MET, we work very closely with  
18 the Chancellor, with the New York City Offices and  
19 the Department of Education such as Office of the  
20 Arts and Special Projects, the Social Studies Team  
21 that Chancellor Farina mentioned earlier today, the  
22 borough field offices, the Curriculum and  
23 Professional Learning Division, Family and Community  
24 Engagement, district 75, district 79 and many others.  
25 So, as we plan programs or we create opportunities

1  
2 for educators, principals and superintendents we need  
3 to align our goals and work together. So, to conclude  
4 as I urge you to consider the financial resources  
5 that are allocated to our city's cultural  
6 institutions please keep this in mind as we are  
7 essential partners, we truly value the council's  
8 support and thank you for your time.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you, next  
10 please.

11 JERRY JAMES: [off-mic] I'm Jerry... I'm  
12 Jerry James, Director of Teaching and Learning at the  
13 Center for Arts Education. I'm happy to be here with  
14 a teacher and my colleagues with whom I work a lot  
15 and thank you Chair Dromm and, and council members  
16 and staff for inviting us to testify. Our team works  
17 every day to ensure that public school students  
18 receive a well-rounded education that includes the  
19 arts. We're... just celebrated our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and  
20 as Director of Teaching and Learning I oversee all of  
21 our instructional programs and our research projects.  
22 Now there are two ways to empty a room, one is to  
23 yell fire and the others to start talking about your  
24 research. So, I'm going to be brief about research  
25 but I do want to point out that arts are... have a very

1 positive impact on schools and on people's lives and  
2 that the city council has been very wise to add 23  
3 million dollars beginning in 2014 to, to the budget  
4 and that... this past year it became 32,000... 32 million  
5 dollars as individual schools and culture added money  
6 to that investment. Consequently, there are 298 new  
7 arts teachers and 50 percent more eighth grade  
8 students have completed the arts courses that we are  
9 required by state law and cultural partnerships  
10 continue to grow. We know that research... we know from  
11 research that when schools provide quality arts  
12 instruction it's not business as usual, in fact  
13 students are three times more likely to have  
14 exemplary attendance, four times more likely to do  
15 well in school and to give one example from one of  
16 our federally funded longitudinal studies that I've  
17 seen in an arts integrational program raise ELA  
18 scores by 20 percent. Consequently, students are more  
19 likely to get higher SAT scores and more likely to  
20 graduate on time. We also know that when... in, in art  
21 trade schools that families are more likely to get  
22 involved in their children's education, more likely  
23 to support the arts at home and more likely to  
24 support policies that strengthen arts education.  
25

1  
2 Furthermore, as my colleagues had mentioned we know  
3 that the arts prepare students for the future by  
4 developing 21<sup>st</sup> century skills or what we're now  
5 calling global competencies, I'm talking about  
6 communication, collaboration, critical thinking and  
7 last but not least creativity which is the most  
8 valued human, human capacity in today's economy. Now  
9 my friend sometimes say well that's great Jerry but  
10 how do the arts do it, well it's because they're  
11 actually four basic dimension to... dimensions to arts  
12 education that invite us to one, make something new,  
13 that's called creativity, present it to others, which  
14 is called exhibiting and performing. The arts also  
15 prepare us to respond to the arts in a fully engaged  
16 way and they really compel us to connect our  
17 understanding across other content areas at schools.  
18 So, I want to end by just saying that we strongly  
19 support the continued 23 million per year investment  
20 in arts education, the 40 million investment in the  
21 Department of Cultural Affairs and we're very... and  
22 we're thrilled that the cultural plan includes arts  
23 education. this inclusion shows our communities that  
24 New York City cares about the arts for everyone

1  
2 especially young people, people who are discovering  
3 that the arts transform individuals and communities.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well thank you very  
5 much, I'm proud to say that anytime we were lucky  
6 enough to get an arts program in my school when I was  
7 teaching they gave it to Danny, you know and... [cross-  
8 talk]

9 JERRY JAMES: Good... [cross-talk]

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...so I was able to  
11 participate at Lincoln Center, I did the ballet, I  
12 did the opera, I did Carnegie Hall, I did a number of  
13 the other institutions as well and also I have to say  
14 to the teachers credit we used to go on weekends, you  
15 know on our own time for the education before  
16 implementing many of the programs in our classrooms  
17 and didn't get paid for it so... but teachers do love  
18 the arts and it is the one thing that I think  
19 students remember the most. I have students who are  
20 coming back to me now who are 40 years old and tell  
21 me oh Mr. Dromm remember when we did such and such a  
22 thing and it's always related to the arts. So, we, we  
23 really see and value the arts in our schools and the  
24 23-million-dollar investment is well worth it, we  
25 were very glad to see that happen in 2014 and I think

1  
2 I've already spoken on the sex education piece but we  
3 will continue to advocate for that and I do agree  
4 with you on the issue of accountability. We do need  
5 to have more information about how and how often and  
6 who are... is teaching those classes. So, thank you for  
7 coming in and we look forward to continuing to work  
8 with all of you in the future.

9 JERRY JAMES: Likewise, thank you...

10 [cross-talk]

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very...

12 [cross-talk]

13 JERRY JAMES: ...very much... [cross-talk]

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...much, thank you.

15 Okay, our next panel; Terry Kim, Senior Policy  
16 Analyst at Children's Aid Society, Andrea Bowen I  
17 believe United Neighborhood Houses, Andrew Buckley,  
18 Eastside House Settlement, Charles Small, Queens  
19 Community House, Reser Fridy [sp?] I believe MD,  
20 Lunch for Learning and Pamela Stewart Martinez, Lunch  
21 for Learning as well. Okay, there's a chair here on  
22 this side over here, yep, a little more comfortable.  
23 Okay, thanks and I need to swear you all in so can I  
24 ask if you'd raise your right hand please. Do you  
25 solemnly swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole

1  
2 truth and nothing but the truth and to answer council  
3 member's questions honestly? Okay, would you like to  
4 start?

5           RESA FRIDY: Good afternoon. Thank you  
6 Councilman Dromm and the committee members for  
7 providing me with this opportunity to testify on this  
8 very important issue. My name is Resa Fridy, I'm a  
9 board-certified pediatrician and a specialist in the  
10 field of adolescent medicine at the Children's  
11 hospital at Montefiore in the Bronx, New York. As a  
12 physician in the Bronx I see firsthand every day the  
13 impact that poverty has on the health and wellbeing  
14 of my pediatric and adolescent patients. There are  
15 simple necessities in life that all people should be  
16 provided regardless of their socioeconomic status;  
17 food is just one of the many and will be the focus of  
18 my testimony today. Food and security is a known  
19 injustice afflicting millions and unfortunately many  
20 of my patients in the Bronx are the rule rather than  
21 the exception. Even for families not living in  
22 poverty the cost of basic living expenses in New York  
23 City are astronomical and many of my patient's  
24 parents have little left to spend on food let alone  
25 nutritious food. Priorities placed on what's

1  
2 affordable and available which unfortunately often  
3 amounts to foods deficient in adequate nutrients.  
4 I've gone to medical school, I've studied the  
5 detrimental impact of not just undernutrition but  
6 malnutrition on brain development and organ  
7 functioning and in practice as a pediatrician and  
8 adolescent medicine specialist I encounter patients  
9 with medical problem attributable to or exacerbated  
10 by lack of access to nutritious, nutritious food. Let  
11 me paint you a picture, approximately one third of my  
12 adolescent patients are obese and many more are  
13 overweight, you might think therefore that they more  
14 than adequate access to food, the truth is however  
15 that high caloric intake does not necessarily equal  
16 good nutrition. Many of my obese patients have  
17 vitamin and mineral deficiencies due to diets heavy  
18 in carbohydrates and sugar both of which are found in  
19 low priced easily accessible foods but they are  
20 deficient in micronutrients which are obtained from  
21 fresh fruits and vegetables and healthy proteins  
22 which are harder to come by. For example, many of my  
23 patients suffer from iron deficiency related to lack  
24 of iron rich foods such as meat products and green  
25 leafy vegetables. Iron deficiency is a prime example

1  
2 of a mineral deficiency which directly interferes  
3 with cognitive functioning and learning. Boys and  
4 girls have greater needs for iron intake during their  
5 pubertal growth spurts especially boys and adolescent  
6 girls of increased iron loss once they begin  
7 menstruating. These iron deficient adolescents are  
8 middle and high school aged students and we certainly  
9 want them to be able to perform at their highest  
10 academic potential in order to achieve their life  
11 goals no matter what food is stocked in their kitchen  
12 cabinets. We know that foods provided to them at home  
13 have inadequate nutrients therefore it is our civic  
14 responsibility to provide them with well-balanced  
15 nutrient lunch while at school. More importantly this  
16 lunch should be free. I have seen all too frequently  
17 what happens when patients are embarrassed or ashamed  
18 of their poverty, it's not surprising that children  
19 and adolescents might skip lunch to avoid the stigma  
20 of being unable to afford the meal. We need to level  
21 the playing field so that all children have access to  
22 healthy nutritious school lunches. There's simply no  
23 excuse for our New York City children to be  
24 malnourished or for pediatricians like myself to have  
25 to treat children with preventable illnesses due to

1  
2 inadequate nutrition. In my medical opinion, New York  
3 City should provide free school lunches to all  
4 children and adolescents. Thank you for your time.

5 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you doctor and  
6 I'm going to ask Pamela Stewart Martinez to go next.

7 PAMELA STEWART MARTINEZ: Hello, thank  
8 you so much Council Member Dromm and the other  
9 members of the education council. My name is Pam  
10 Stewart Martinez, I'm Co-president of the Citywide  
11 Council on Special Education. I'm also one of the  
12 founding members of the Lunch for Learning Parent  
13 Caucus. I have to tell you that I am somewhat  
14 disappointed in our school's Chancellor for her... it  
15 appears to be her being out of touch with the needs  
16 of our children as far as universal free lunch goes.  
17 I'm speaking to you today as a former student of the  
18 New York City public school system, I attended  
19 elementary school at PS144 in Harlem grades 1 through  
20 6<sup>th</sup>, I went to Wadleigh Junior High School also in  
21 Harlem, grades 7 through 9 and I remember when school  
22 lunch was free and I also remember the day that it  
23 was no longer free and I had to fill out an  
24 application and I remember bringing home the  
25 application to my mother, my mother that raised me

1  
2 and her telling me, you know Kim we can't fill out  
3 this application, legally I was not supposed to be  
4 living with her, legally she was not my mother. So we  
5 were afraid of red flags so there were many days that  
6 I did not have school lunch and I pretended like I  
7 didn't want to eat it, like no, no, no I'm not hungry  
8 while I watched other people eat and so to hear that  
9 the Chancellor says that it isn't an issue for them  
10 yet, they're more concerned with the aesthetics of  
11 the lunch room concerns me because I do not feel that  
12 I was an isolated individual at that moment in my  
13 life and I don't feel today in the current climate  
14 that we live in with the current fear that's going on  
15 in my community and other communities. When I hear  
16 stories of families being afraid to walk down the  
17 street because of ICE asking for ID's, these same  
18 parents are afraid to fill out lunch forms and the  
19 very reason that the Board of Education or the  
20 Department of Education says these needs these lunch  
21 forms filled out for Title one funding is the very  
22 reason that these same parents are afraid to fill out  
23 the application because they feel that somehow these  
24 applications are going to wind up in the hands of the  
25 federal government and someone's going to come

1  
2 knocking on their door. So, I feel personally  
3 affected and I feel affected for the people in my  
4 community that this is isn't considered a priority to  
5 our school's Chancellor and I, I do thank you for  
6 your support in universal free lunch and I hope that  
7 it will take wings and sprout for the upcoming school  
8 year, thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much,  
10 do you want to go back over here?

11 ANDREA BOWEN: Thank you Chair Dromm,  
12 committee staff and council finance for, for being  
13 with us today. I am Andrea Bowen, Policy Analyst to  
14 Neighborhood Houses, New York City's Federation of  
15 Settlement Houses and Community Centers, you know our  
16 members provide a wide variety of services everything  
17 from early childhood education through legal services  
18 and work force services and programs in schools. And  
19 today I'm primarily going to talk about a... the  
20 program Learning to Work, which my colleague from  
21 Citizens Committee for Children previously spoke  
22 about. Before I get into that I just want to say I  
23 support the asks of my colleagues around community  
24 schools, my colleagues from Children's Aid Society  
25 will be speaking, Good Shepherd Services and Citizens

1  
2 Committee for Children so just what they say I co-  
3 sign. Going to Learning to Work this is a program for  
4 people who are over aged but under accredited or  
5 under credited in high schools, Learning to Work  
6 exists both in transfer schools which are small  
7 schools that serve exclusively, exclusively youth who  
8 have fallen behind in credit in young adult boroughs  
9 centers which are evening academic programs for, for  
10 youth in that category. So, Learning to Work is a... is  
11 a program where community based organizations come  
12 into these schools and they provide social, emotional  
13 learning supports like counseling, career and  
14 education exploration such as internships and other  
15 intensive supports that help people get to high  
16 school degrees or post high school planning, college,  
17 you name it. The program has remarkable outcomes, at  
18 Bushwick Community High School for example those  
19 receiving intensive LTW services... of those receiving  
20 intensive LTW services 86 percent graduated and those  
21 who did not receive the services only 14 percent  
22 graduated. So, like the program has a pretty intense  
23 impact. There are currently 18 existing or planned  
24 LTW Programs, funding all of these would cost over  
25 10.8 million dollars. Right now LTW stakeholders are

1  
2 working together to determine the funding level  
3 necessary to ensure that the programs have the  
4 resources they need but the one thing that we know  
5 for sure is that LTW has been cut in previous budgets  
6 with costs like minimum wages for the internships  
7 have increased and the combination of reduced rates  
8 and increased costs had led to the programs operating  
9 with staff working with higher caseloads than they  
10 should, this is a program that should have, you know  
11 low case... you know case worker to student caseloads  
12 so that we can devote more and more time to, to young  
13 people. So, we look forward to working with you  
14 through the course of this budget season and, and  
15 further to, to bring funding to these programs that's  
16 commensurate with the level of services needed.

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you, next  
18 please.

19 TERRY KIM: Good afternoon, my name is  
20 Terry Kim and I'm the Senior Policy Analyst for the  
21 Office of Public Policy at the Children's Aid  
22 Society. I would like to thank Chair Daniel Dromm and  
23 members of the Education Committee for the  
24 opportunity to give testimony on the Mayor's  
25 Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2018 and its

1 effect on the state of education in our city. For  
2 more than 160 years Children's Aid has been committed  
3 to ensuring that there are no boundaries to the  
4 aspirations of young people and no limits to their  
5 potential. For 25 years Children's Aid has operated  
6 community schools in partnership with the New York  
7 City Department of Education. We believe that  
8 community schools are a strategy to remove the  
9 barriers to learning that get in the way of children  
10 and youth being able to succeed academically in  
11 school. We integrate expanded learning programs,  
12 comprehensive health services and family engagement  
13 strategies into a school building leading to improved  
14 academic outcomes. Currently Children's Aid partners  
15 with 22 community schools, seven of which are under  
16 the citywide community school initiative. Within  
17 these community schools we have implemented the  
18 Children's Aid Society Success Mentor Initiative.  
19 Success mentors work with chronically absent students  
20 who miss school two or more days a month to address  
21 the barriers keeping them from going to school every  
22 day and to help them reach their educational  
23 outcomes. Due to the targeted outreach of our success  
24 mentors over 50 percent of chronically absent K  
25

1 through 8<sup>th</sup> grade mentees improve their attendance  
2 therefor we recommend the continuation of existing  
3 funding to continue the progress schools like ours  
4 are making. We are extremely pleased that advocacy  
5 efforts statewide resulted in increased state  
6 investments for community schools through the  
7 Foundation Aid Community School set aside in the  
8 governor's executive budget with New York City  
9 expected to receive 60 million. Beginning in 2013 two  
10 cohorts of three year grants through the community  
11 schools grant initiative also referred to as CSGI we  
12 have 25 grantees in New York City that currently  
13 operate the community schools and Children's Aid  
14 partners with six community schools through CSGI and  
15 through this grant we have successfully implemented  
16 city connects providing each child a tailored set of  
17 supports and opportunities to address out of school  
18 factors and we see students are on track for long  
19 term positive outcomes. So CSGI schools are sources  
20 of learning and of developed strategies and best  
21 practices from which other schools and community  
22 partners can learn. Last year New York City merged 12  
23 cohort one CSGI grantees in the citywide initiative  
24 and at the end of June this year 13 cohort two CSGI

1  
2 grantees will lose their community schools funding  
3 therefor we recommend 4.2 million of the expected 60  
4 million in state foundation aid community school set  
5 aside committed to New York City be, be directed  
6 towards renewing 12 cohort one CSGI grantees as well  
7 as integrating 13 cohort two community school grant  
8 initiative schools who will lose their funding in  
9 June, each school being funded at 167,000 dollars.  
10 So, I just want to thank you for the opportunity to  
11 testify today, it is essential that our children and  
12 families have the best opportunity available to reach  
13 their full potential. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much,  
15 next please.

16 CHARLES SMALL: Good evening... good  
17 afternoon everyone. My name is Charles Small and I'm  
18 the current Queens Community House Program Director  
19 at the Young Adult Borough Center at the Learning to  
20 Work Program at the high school for Arts and Business  
21 in Corona Queens. Thank you Council Members for your  
22 time today. Queens Community House respectfully  
23 submits the following testimony to the honorable  
24 Daniel Dromm Chair and the members of the New York  
25 City Committee on Education regarding the funding for

1  
2 our Learning to Work programs across New York City.  
3 Queens Community House is a multi-site, multi service  
4 settlement house, we serve over 20,000 individuals  
5 annually from the most diverse neighborhoods in the  
6 city. Our mission is to provide individuals and  
7 families with the tools to enrich their lives and  
8 build healthy inclusive communities. Through a broad  
9 network of programs operated out of our 25 sites we  
10 offer Queens residents a needed support system at  
11 every stage of life. Helping, helping them to develop  
12 knowledge, confidence and skills to change their  
13 lives for the better and become active participants  
14 in our larger community. Queens Community House  
15 currently runs four Learning to Work Programs located  
16 in the high schools in the neighborhoods of Elmhurst,  
17 Corona, Jamaica and South Ozone Park. Our Learning to  
18 Work Programs offer academic and emotional support,  
19 counseling, career and college exploration and  
20 preparation, opportunities and paid internships to  
21 help students earn income, gain professional  
22 experience and test out potential career interests.  
23 These programs are essential to the progress and  
24 empowerment of many young people throughout Queens.  
25 Collectively during Fiscal Year '16 our Learning to

1  
2 Work Programs work with over 1,000 students. We have  
3 helped 283 interns find meaningful work and gain the  
4 skills needed to be productive members of the city's  
5 workforce. However most importantly we have guided  
6 nearly 450 formally disengaged young people toward  
7 earning their high school diploma and becoming New  
8 York City high school graduates. This is just a small  
9 portion of the important work being done by our  
10 Learning to Work Programs across the city. Queens  
11 Community House has found that the current funding  
12 levels provided for Learning to Work Programs is  
13 insufficient to run these programs with full fidelity  
14 and to truly meet the needs within our communities.  
15 There are currently 18 existing or planned LTW  
16 Programs and maintaining these programs without  
17 addressing the pre-program rate will cost 10.8  
18 million dollars citywide. Even this amount is not  
19 fully sufficient however as LTW has been cut in  
20 previous budgets while costs have increased including  
21 an increase in the minimum wage and increase in  
22 fringe rates for youth and internships. Cell phone,  
23 internet and program supply cost have gone up  
24 extensively over the last few years without... with  
25 contracts providing no increases to cover these

1 necessities. The combination of reduced rates and  
2 increased costs has led to LTW Programs operating  
3 with staff with higher caseloads and less resources  
4 than the program model calls for. Staff are therefore  
5 unable to devote the needed time and attention to  
6 each young person in the program. Queens Community  
7 House recommends that the following to reference in  
8 funding for our LTW programs, Learning to Work  
9 contracts should be funded at a higher level, there  
10 should be a 12 percent increase on all New York City  
11 human services contracts. The investment is needed to  
12 solidify New York City's community's infrastructure  
13 and to ensure our city can be the sanctuary it needs  
14 to protect New Yorkers against harmful policies in  
15 our communities. We echo United Neighborhood House  
16 sentiment that contracts or CBO's in community  
17 schools as well as programs serving vulnerable  
18 populations and older adults, adult learners,  
19 immigrants and young children are struggling to meet  
20 expenses where contract rates that have stayed  
21 stagnant for years and expenses that have risen. This  
22 concludes my testimony on behalf of Queens Community  
23 House, thank you Council Members for your time and  
24 service, I appreciate it.  
25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you and Charles  
3 I know you were an intern in my office..  
4 CHARLES SMALL: Yes, I was back... [cross-  
5 talk]  
6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...but were you..  
7 [cross-talk]  
8 CHARLES SMALL: ...when I was in... [cross-  
9 talk]  
10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...a Learning to Work..  
11 [cross-talk]  
12 CHARLES SMALL: ...college... [cross-talk]  
13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...intern? Were you a  
14 Learning to Work intern in my office?  
15 CHARLES SMALL: No, I wasn't.  
16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So you just came on  
17 your own?  
18 CHARLES SMALL: Yes, I did.  
19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Very good and  
20 I, I know I've seen you at Queens Community House  
21 before in the past so.. thank you, thank you for your..  
22 [cross-talk]  
23 CHARLES SMALL: Thank you Council..  
24 [cross-talk]  
25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...testimony... [cross-  
3 talk]

4 CHARLES SMALL: Member Dromm, appreciate  
5 it.

6 ANDREW BUCKLEY: Good afternoon  
7 everybody. My name is Andrew Buckley, I am the  
8 Program Director at Smith YABC, I am representing  
9 Eastside House Settlement which is located at 337  
10 Alexander Avenue located in the South Bronx. Eastside  
11 House Settlement has been in full operation since  
12 1891. At Smith YABC currently we are located at 151<sup>st</sup>  
13 Street in the South Bronx as well too and have been  
14 in full operation since 2011. I, Andrew Buckley as,  
15 as I mentioned before having been the Program  
16 Director there since 2015. Currently for Eastside  
17 House we have three YABC's and two transfer schools  
18 and which have been in operation since 2008.  
19 Considering of news of budget cuts being done to all  
20 LTW Programs within the city this will be a serious  
21 impact for the staff, for the students, the families  
22 and the communities as well too. Learning to Work as  
23 we can all definitely come up with our own definition  
24 of that is definitely ties into mentorship for all of  
25 our young adults that are under credited. To envision

1  
2 our students not being able to meet with their  
3 primary counselor due to the vast amount of students  
4 on the advisory's case load is a bit of nightmare to  
5 envision. Us at Eastside House Settlement as well  
6 YABC's across the network would definitely like to  
7 see funding at a higher level, 10.8 million actually  
8 will be required to fund all LTW contracts at their  
9 current level in which a 12 percent increase on city  
10 human services contract is very vital to all of us. I  
11 myself since being a part of the program cannot  
12 envision our young adults in low income housing not  
13 being able to have any type of mentorship if these  
14 budget cuts do happen. So, council members I do  
15 appreciate the time, I definitely feel very  
16 privileged to come up here and definitely speak to  
17 you guys I just hope that you guys can definitely put  
18 our considerations into matter.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well thank you, let  
20 me just start off by saying thank you to the lunch  
21 folks who came in again for your testimony and I've  
22 spoken on that as well, we're going to continue to  
23 fight for that and then Andrea the Learning to Work  
24 Program that's funded in... through the DOE, the money  
25 comes... goes directly to DOE?

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ANDREA BOWEN: Correct.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay because I was just... and, and I'm a little unfamiliar with that funding line so maybe we'll just... we'll follow up with you on that.

ANDREA BOWEN: Yeah, yeah and thank you to Charles and Andrew for your amazing testimony and everybody else who's maybe speaking on Learning to Work. Yeah, you know just to echo their concerns, you know just, just to fund contracts at their current rate would be 10.8 million, we know it's more than that, the model is more than that to be able to achieve the level of services and fidelity to the model which is deeply personalized one on one interaction with youth and so yeah, we look forward to working with your office and the council finance further and committee council.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay and thank you to all of you for coming in, I really appreciate it, thank you very much.

ANDREA BOWEN: Thank you Council Member.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Alright, our next panel is Julio Pena from Good Shepherd Services, Kelly Dugan from Good Shepherd, Demon Pearson [sp?]

1  
2 Good Shepherd as well, and Melody Rois, Good  
3 Shepherd. Okay, if you'd raise your right hand I'll,  
4 I'll swear you in. Do you solemnly swear or affirm to  
5 tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the  
6 truth and to answer council member questions  
7 honestly? Okay, good would you like to start over  
8 here? Down this end, okay. I'm sorry I couldn't hear  
9 you? Oh okay. Is your mic on, is... the red light has  
10 to be on.

11 KELLY DUGAN: Hello.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yeah.

13 KELLY DUGAN: Good morning, my name is  
14 Kelly Dugan, I'm Division Director for Good Shepherd  
15 Services Transfer Schools Program located throughout  
16 Brooklyn. I've been working with Good Shepherd for  
17 eight and a half years in the transfer school  
18 setting, I currently oversee four transfer high  
19 schools; Brooklyn Frontiers High School, West  
20 Brooklyn Community High School, Research and Service  
21 High School and South Brooklyn Community High School  
22 which is the original model for partnership high  
23 schools funded by Learning to Work funding. When I  
24 joined Good Shepherd my role was to help replicate  
25 South Brooklyn's mode with SCO and Jewish Childcare

1 Association and their principal partners at East  
2 Brooklyn Community High School and Brooklyn Democracy  
3 Academy. I want to thank the committee for holding  
4 this hearing and for the opportunity to share a  
5 testimony on my experience. As you know there are  
6 currently 52 transfer high schools in New York City,  
7 31 of which have CBO partners funded by the Learning  
8 to Work contracts. All 31 of these schools were  
9 created with the express intent of serving overaged,  
10 under credited young people who have not been  
11 successful in their previous schools. As CBO's we  
12 work with our DOE partners with a whole school  
13 approach that serves every student and the community  
14 as a whole. Our schools are ungraded, serve students  
15 typically 16 to 21 years old, students take courses  
16 based on academic needs in completion of credit areas  
17 needed for a diploma, our students have to pass all  
18 the regents just like any other high school student  
19 and at the end of their coursework receive a high  
20 school diploma. We connect with perspective students  
21 through guidance counselors, community stakeholders  
22 in area schools that's how they find us. Good  
23 Shepherd's four schools serve a population 75 percent  
24 of which receives free lunch and 40 percent of which  
25

1  
2 has IEP's. The transfer school model provides school  
3 staff with a philosophy that allows the culture of  
4 the school to be oriented towards the needs of the  
5 young people we serve and specifically meeting them  
6 exactly where they are. My... our... the previous people  
7 who testified spoke to the one on one very  
8 personalized approach and that is part of the whole  
9 structure of the school. It helps inform discipline,  
10 youth performance is aligned with... performance and it  
11 is aligned with therapeutic crisis intervention which  
12 is part of the DOE's direction and also Restorative  
13 Practices another direction that the DOE is taking  
14 with regard to discipline. Our schools function  
15 holistically and while we're accountable the DOE and  
16 Good Shepherd to different outcomes we work with all  
17 young people and we want to be consistent and work  
18 together to ensure their success. Every student we  
19 serve has experienced obstacles in addition... academic  
20 obstacles in addition to nonacademic obstacles that  
21 have effected their ability to be in school, to learn  
22 and to have a positive association with schools, most  
23 start experiencing social and economic issues or  
24 mental health issues which we are particularly well  
25 equipped to respond to in our role. Our job at our

1  
2 transfer schools is to identify the outside factors  
3 impeding youth from succeeding and providing them and  
4 their families with resources to address issues such  
5 as homelessness, undiagnosed mental illness or family  
6 conflicts as well as helping them build healthy and  
7 productive relationships with peers and adults in the  
8 school and by doing group work, mediation, crisis  
9 intervention, academic counseling and work in college  
10 readiness. Good Shepherds role... just two more  
11 seconds... Good Shepherds role in our four transfer  
12 schools is made possible through the Learning to Work  
13 contracts which were created to reengage the young  
14 people most at risk of leaving school without a  
15 diploma. We do... we do that by providing outreach  
16 support for families, internships, counseling and  
17 commitment to the goals of our DOE partners. Thank  
18 you very much for the opportunity to testify.

19 DEMON PEARSON: Good afternoon. My name  
20 is Demon Pearson, I'm the Program Director for Good  
21 Shepherd Services Community School Program at Boys  
22 and Girls High School located in Council Member  
23 Robert Cornegy's council district. I've been working  
24 with Good Shepherd Services for 18 years in the  
25 school setting where I have worked in the YABC and

1  
2 now in the community school. I want to thank the  
3 committee for holding this hearing and for the  
4 opportunity to share my testimony and experiences. As  
5 community school director I am a member of the SLT,  
6 the PTA and the School Engagement Team where we also  
7 hold workshops for families, students, staff and  
8 other faculty in the building. Good Shepherd Services  
9 goes with children and youth and families face great  
10 challenges and build on their strengths to help them  
11 gain skills for success. Good Shepherd currently  
12 operates community schools in Essence Middle School,  
13 Boys and Girls High School, Clinton High School,  
14 Bushwick High School and PS297. Good Shepherd has  
15 been funded through both New York City and state.. and  
16 New York State Education to provide services at Boys  
17 and Girls School but unfortunately the funding from  
18 New York State Department of Education ended last  
19 June. Without the funds, Good Shepherd will need to  
20 cut some of the services we provide to schools. We're  
21 grateful that the New York City Department of  
22 Education is willing to cover the cost previously  
23 paid by the New York State Education Department for a  
24 one year period. With these funds the Good Shepherd  
25 can... the Good Shepherd can continue to provide school

1 students, families and all the... and all the services  
2 previously, previously provided. We have seen  
3 successful... success around chronically absenteeism  
4 and post-secondary planning which includes the  
5 percentage of students who are chronically absent  
6 missing ten percent of school days or more has gone  
7 down by more than 20 percent... 20 percent since 2014.  
8 Four-year graduation rates have gone up 15 percent  
9 since 2014. The percentage of students enrolled in  
10 post-secondary education within six months of  
11 graduation rose from 20 percent in 2014 to 34 percent  
12 in 2016. Good Shepherd is eager to continue to  
13 provide, provide our array of services to Boys and  
14 Girls High School where we have been in partnership  
15 with the school since 2011 and together with the  
16 coalition of community school of excellence is  
17 requesting that the council ensure that DOE funds  
18 both cohort one and cohort two schools for another  
19 year. Thank you for this opportunity to testify about  
20 community schools, I look forward to answering any  
21 questions you might have about my testimony again  
22 thank you for our time and dedication to, to, to this  
23 very important issue.  
24  
25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you, next  
3 please.

4 JULIO PENA: Good afternoon. My name is  
5 Julio Pena, I'm the Program Director for Good  
6 Shepherd Services Young Adult Borough Center Learning  
7 to Work Program at Franklin D. Roosevelt High School  
8 in Brooklyn located in Council Member David  
9 Greenfield's council district. I want to thank the  
10 committee for holding this hearing and for the  
11 opportunity to share a testimony of my experience.  
12 I've been working with Good Shepherd for nine and a  
13 half years in a YABC setting where I've served in  
14 several roles including as a tutor, advocate  
15 counselor, internship coordinator, and now the  
16 program director. I have dedicated my career to youth  
17 and family development because it has allowed me to  
18 give back to the population that has been  
19 historically disadvantaged and who if given the right  
20 supports can succeed and obtain a high school  
21 diploma. The YABC model is unique in the amount of  
22 support each student receives. We know that creating  
23 caring relationships with adults in a school building  
24 can go a long... a long way students. If you were to  
25 visit out campus students will tell you that they

1 value the relationships they had forged with their  
2 counselors and social workers who are there to greet  
3 them when they arrive and wish them well at the end  
4 of their day. Our approach is to work... our approach  
5 to the work is holistic, Good Shepherd provides an  
6 array of student support services, youth and  
7 leadership development, post-secondary college and  
8 career planning, enhanced work readiness skills  
9 development and work based experience opportunities.  
10 The internship component is critical to engagement  
11 because this allows our youth to work while they are  
12 in school and financially contribute to their  
13 families. The social services referrals we are doing  
14 as part of our work is addressing undiagnosed  
15 learning disabilities and mental health illnesses  
16 that require more specialized expertise. Good  
17 Shepherd operates 12 YABC LTW Programs located  
18 throughout the Bronx and Brooklyn and began providing  
19 the services for YABC's ten years ago. Good Shepherd  
20 is the largest provider of New York City Department  
21 of Education in multiple popular programs which  
22 serves overage and under credited high school  
23 students ages 17 and a half to 21 years old who have  
24 earned at least 17 credits, are in their fifth year  
25

1  
2 or more of high school. YABC's are non-diploma  
3 granting programs, once a student meets the academic  
4 requirements to graduate the student returns to their  
5 home school for graduation. The students who attend  
6 FDR YABC come from five local area high schools which  
7 include Fort Hamilton High School, New Utrecht High  
8 School, Sunset Park High School and the High School  
9 of Telecommunication Arts and Technology. Some of our  
10 success at Good Shepherd are as follows. GSSYABC's  
11 have graduated over 11,000 students since the  
12 initiative began ten years ago. Last year our  
13 internship coordinators across our YABC's arranged  
14 for more than 1,000 internship placements. At FDR  
15 YABC alone almost half of our students are enrolled  
16 in college within a year of graduating and many are  
17 connected to LifeLink, a GSS college bridge program  
18 that supports them through college. FDRYABC  
19 graduation rate was 70 percent in 2016 exceeding many  
20 high schools across the city despite serving high  
21 need population. This year I am proud to announce  
22 that FDRYABC will likely have our 1,000<sup>th</sup> graduate  
23 this June. I kindly request that the council help  
24 ensure that the Learning to Work contracts be funded  
25 at a higher level. The citywide LTW coalition has

1  
2 determined that an investment of 10.8 million dollars  
3 is necessary to fund the current LTW contract at  
4 their current funding levels. Thank you for the  
5 opportunity to testify about the LTW component of the  
6 YABC model, I look forward to answering any questions  
7 you might have about my testimony again thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you and next  
9 please.

10 MELODY ROIS: Good afternoon, my name is  
11 Melody Rois, I'm the Senior Youth Internship  
12 Coordinator for Good Shepherd Services Young Adult  
13 Borough Center the Learning to Work Program within  
14 Stevenson Educational Campus in the Bronx located in  
15 Council Member Annabella Palma's council district.  
16 And I want to thank the committee for holding this  
17 hearing and for the opportunity to share my testimony  
18 on my experience. I've been working with Good  
19 Shepherd for about eight and a half years. When I  
20 first started as a career, career development  
21 facilitator at Monroe YABC High School in 2008 and  
22 moved to Stevenson YABC where I was an internship  
23 coordinator since 2010 and was recently promoted to  
24 senior career and internship coordinator. There are  
25 no typical days in this work. On average my case load

1  
2 ranges from 12 to 24 youth, my work hours range from  
3 about 35 to 40 hours a week which also includes  
4 weekend volunteer events for youth to complete  
5 community service hours. Now in this role I'm  
6 responsible for working with interns on their work  
7 portfolios consisting of their resume, cover letter,  
8 thank you letters and references. Meeting with  
9 students to discuss their internship placement as  
10 well as their academic performance, speaking with  
11 site supervisors regarding the performance of  
12 interns, outreach to community stakeholders and  
13 business partners to increase the work site pool and  
14 facilitating work readiness seminars for the LTW  
15 interns. It is also my role to help youth understand  
16 the real world of work and to provide them with the  
17 tools they need to reach their full potential. The  
18 greatest challenge many of my students center around  
19 is a financial need as many of them are breadwinners  
20 for their family. I kindly request that the council  
21 help ensure that the Learning to Work contracts be  
22 funded at a higher level. Thank you for the  
23 opportunity to testify about the LTW component for  
24 the YABC model, I would look forward to answering any  
25

1  
2 questions that you might have about my testimony and  
3 thank you again for your time and dedication.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you, what does  
5 the Good Shepherd's model look like in the... in the  
6 community schools, is it one person who coordinates  
7 all of the CBO's or is it just your CBO that provides  
8 all the services?

9 MELODY ROIS: Well currently at, at Boys  
10 and Girls... I'll just speak on Boys and Girls,  
11 currently the lead CBO in the building we bring in  
12 the other partners, right now we currently... we team  
13 up with... we have Lutheran NYU Medical Center, we  
14 reached out to Vespa Restoration, they do a lot of  
15 work with... they actually sit on our community  
16 engagement team other people like the Brooklyn  
17 Brownstone is... ladies have been around probably like  
18 40 years, they're part of it so we bring in other  
19 outside sources and CBO's to, to come inside the  
20 building to perform services for the students and  
21 their families and for the faculty.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And what about the  
23 coordination with the principal and the school, how  
24 does that work?

1  
2 MELODY ROIS: The principal and I we meet  
3 daily, weekly, weekly... almost every day and we  
4 coordinate a lot of the services around this... around  
5 the, the school and, and services for instance we  
6 just opened together a, wellness center together, we  
7 put together that for mental health for the students  
8 and faculty and the families.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So you work with the  
10 principal in terms of selection of the CBO's that  
11 work with you?

12 MELODY ROIS: Well we haven't... the, the  
13 CBO's usually they come to me first and then I'll  
14 bring it right... relay it to the principal like hey  
15 these people have an idea they want to come in and  
16 they provide something with us and we'll sit down and  
17 we'll meet with them.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, good, good.  
19 Alright, well thank you very much I appreciate the  
20 panel coming in. we are very grateful for the  
21 services that you provide and we're aware of the  
22 other work that you do in terms of dropout prevention  
23 and things like that as well so... thank you very, very  
24 much.

25 MELODY ROIS: Thank you.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, Charlotte Pope,  
3 Children's Defense Fund; Priscilla Curiol [sp?] from  
4 Dignity in Schools; Yanni Pearson, Ramapo for  
5 Children; Annmarie Ladlad, Teachers Unite; Mariel  
6 Martinez, James Baldwin School and Michael DeVito  
7 Junior from NYSID. Okay, could I ask you all to raise  
8 your right hand. Do you solemnly swear or affirm to  
9 tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the  
10 truth and to answer council member questions  
11 honestly? Okay, would you like to start. Yeah, well  
12 no you're, you're on the left for you and... oh you're  
13 on my left and their right so...

14 YANNI PEARSON: Okay, thank you. Good  
15 afternoon Chairman Dromm, it's... and city council  
16 members, it's an honor to be here. My name is Yanni  
17 Pearson, I'm the Director of Youth and Community  
18 Services at Ramapo for Children, Ramapo for Children  
19 has been around almost for 100 years, we've worked  
20 with 100's of schools in the... around the city of New  
21 York and as well as a lot of after school and out of  
22 school sites. My... I'm very passionate about the  
23 Restorative Justice work that we're doing and it's a...  
24 in direct alignment to my own life mission. I've  
25 worked with young people, worked with a lot of young

1  
2 people who had actually dropped out of school, the  
3 school... they failed in school or maybe schools failed  
4 them and Restorative Justice was always a process  
5 that we used in terms of developing their leadership.  
6 I'm not reading my statement, I've passed it on to  
7 you, in determining their leadership. Restorative  
8 Justice I believe is one of the most powerful  
9 transformative possibilities that could be happening  
10 in schools right now. It pushes all... it pushes  
11 everyone to grow, it's an initiative that can't  
12 really work well if it's just an approach to... if it's  
13 just an alternative to discipline because it requires  
14 more than a dean or more than a guidance counselor,  
15 more than principal support to be effective. It is a...  
16 an approach that where everyone in the schools  
17 including parents, students, other members in the  
18 community are familiar with punitive approaches. If  
19 something bad happens I want someone excluded and we  
20 have parents that come to school saying she or he  
21 needs to be suspended because they got into an  
22 altercation with my child. So, what happens in this  
23 particular program is we have to educate parents, we  
24 have to go out into the community, we have to be  
25 involved with parents and get them involved. In our

1  
2 approach, in Ramapo's approach we've had a  
3 Restorative Justice action committee that started  
4 last year, we're part of the 15-school pilot program  
5 that city council is sponsoring and we had a parent  
6 involved on that particular program. I want to just  
7 take a moment, Restorative, Restorative Practices is  
8 really about storytelling, the circles that people do  
9 is about storytelling and so I present it at a parent  
10 meeting and one of those parents after we had... we had  
11 young people from... there was a four-year-old at the  
12 meeting, this is a middle school that I work at and  
13 there was probably the oldest person besides myself  
14 was about 50, it was an Afghani father. At the end of  
15 this circle where I just used it to introduce  
16 Restorative Justice I asked everyone there how they  
17 felt, the fourth grader had already started to go and  
18 play, the seventh grader said that he felt heard,  
19 that he... this... he had felt heard, the... wow, am I out  
20 of time, okay. The parent, the Afghani father he said  
21 that he felt for the first time not so isolated and  
22 so involving everyone in this work is very important  
23 and we really appreciate your support and hope that  
24 you will continue to support it at the level or  
25 higher than what it's doing now.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you, you know  
3 yesterday I don't know if you were here when I  
4 mentioned I testified before the US Commission on  
5 Civil Rights and that was one of the questions from  
6 the commissioner was how do we get parents to  
7 understand that Restorative Practices are better than  
8 zero tolerance practices because I think because of  
9 media or whatever there is this thinking that, you  
10 know my child, you know needs to be protected from,  
11 you know these other children or whatever but I think  
12 that work that you're doing in terms of educating the  
13 parents is really important in terms of getting them  
14 to understand why Restorative Practices are better  
15 than zero tolerance practices so thank you

16 YANNI PEARSON: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Next please.

18 MARIEL MARTINEZ: Good afternoon. My name  
19 is Mariel Martinez and I'm a senior in James Baldwin  
20 School and I'm here because I definitely support the  
21 budget need Restorative Justice Practices in school  
22 well honestly two years ago when I was 16 my... I had  
23 like... everything was horrible, I had lack of support  
24 at home and lack of... a negative environment and lack  
25 of support at my past school and that actually led me

1  
2 to feel really alone and really lost which actually  
3 led me to get into a bad path and I almost even faced  
4 two years in jail luckily when I was like 17, almost  
5 18 I decided I wanted to obtain my high school  
6 diploma and just change my path and do the right  
7 thing and I found a magnificent transfer school which  
8 is James Baldwin School and they didn't only gave me  
9 the academic support that I needed to make up the  
10 credits because I dropped out a year ago but they  
11 actually gave me the support as a family that I  
12 didn't have at home too which actually helped me a  
13 lot and in this school, the James Baldwin school is a  
14 Restorative Justice school that help me find myself  
15 achieve my best potential as a scholar, it's a... it's  
16 a really caring school and it, it cares about your  
17 education not only that but it also cares about you  
18 progressing as a human being not only as a scholar. I  
19 went from not really caring about my education at  
20 all, I didn't care about school, I just cut class, I  
21 was into like a negative environment, I went from all  
22 that from a 60 average student to a 85 percent  
23 average scholar with honor roll and academic  
24 certificates and even got a scholarship. Restorative  
25 Justice works in many ways and from my perspective in

1  
2 my school we have intensives which is we have circles  
3 for circles for the first week of my school where we  
4 meet each other as a community first as peers then  
5 students and not only with students but with staff  
6 too. The second thing that I love about Restorative  
7 Justice in my school is that instead of teachers we  
8 have crew advisors, each student gets assigned a crew  
9 advisor that is there to support you throughout your  
10 whole adventure until you finish and even... it, it..  
11 isn't unconditional support like even after you  
12 graduate, you know it sucks that I'm going to have to  
13 leave this year but you know even after you graduate  
14 they're still there for you, you can still come back  
15 and... with any type of problems. The third thing that  
16 I love about my school is that you have equality, you  
17 don't feel like you're just a number you actually  
18 feel equal, you don't feel like nobody is superior  
19 than you, you can communicate about anything, you can  
20 say... we, we have something called fairness committee,  
21 it's like to stop problems, arguments and fights and..  
22 not only within students and teachers, I can take a  
23 teacher, I can take a staff member if I felt offended  
24 and we're going to have a type of way to agreement.  
25 Well my school makes you feel like you fit in, your

1  
2 part of family, you won't ever feel alone or unsafe,  
3 you won't ever feel like you're just a number.  
4 Restorative Justice schools are better for all  
5 students especially minority youth from low income  
6 families. Our human connection is what will help us  
7 become better scholars, communities and members and  
8 stronger families as a part of the dignity in  
9 school's campaign New York and we're asking you to  
10 continue the Restorative Justice Initiative. I  
11 thankfully thank you for having this this past year  
12 because it made me be better person, it... you know I,  
13 I don't know where I would have been at and honestly,  
14 I just want you to help us push the mayor and the  
15 city to also fund more Restorative Justice in the  
16 next five years. Thank you for your time.

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well thank you very  
18 much and... [cross-talk]

19 MARIEL MARTINEZ: Oh my gosh... [cross-  
20 talk]

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: That's a very  
22 compelling testimony... [cross-talk]

23 MARIEL MARTINEZ: Oh my gosh...

24 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I think you've been  
25 heard.

1  
2 MARIEL MARTINEZ: Oh my gosh... [cross-  
3 talk]

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: What... and by the way  
5 James Baldwin is one of my favorites as well so I  
6 think James Baldwin himself would approve of  
7 everything that you said here today. Do you know who  
8 the provider is for the Restorative Program at your  
9 school?

10 MARIEL MARTINEZ: In my school her name  
11 is Tyler.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Which one?

13 MARIEL MARTINEZ: Her name is Tyler.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Do you know the  
15 organization?

16 MARIEL MARTINEZ: Honestly, I don't.

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, so it's a model  
18 school, very good. So, it's really great to hear that  
19 testimony and... [cross-talk]

20 MARIEL MARTINEZ: Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And to hear what you  
22 had to say so I think you made the right decision.

23 MARIEL MARTINEZ: Thank you.  
24  
25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: By staying and, and,  
3 and you know working it out so that's great, really  
4 good to... good to hear. Thank you, next please.

5 MICHAEL DE VITO JUNIOR: My name is  
6 Michael De Vito Junior and I am the Senior Director  
7 of Workforce Initiatives for New York Center for  
8 Interpersonal Development. I am speaking to you today  
9 on behalf of NYSID and the Learning to Work coalition  
10 and I'm grateful for your time and your attention as  
11 I seek to illustrate the value of the LTW Programs  
12 across the city. My colleagues who have come before  
13 me today have so thoroughly illustrated the scope and  
14 the depth of the work that we do every day that I  
15 wish to start from here. Since 2005, excuse me, since  
16 2005 the Learning to Work Programs as a model have  
17 created thousands of success stories across our city.  
18 Per the Department of Education's own explanation of  
19 our work CBO's are an integral component of these  
20 programs and schools. The goal of the LTW is to  
21 assist students in overcoming obstacles that impede  
22 their progress towards a high school diploma and lead  
23 them toward rewarding employment and educational  
24 experiences after graduation. In my opinion CBO's are  
25 the original single shepherd. As a long time service

1 provider of the Learning to Work at Staten Island  
2 YABC and the Olympus Academy transfer school in  
3 Canarsie Brooklyn, NYSID is elated to hear that the  
4 Department of Education is now committing through the  
5 Chancellor's Equity and Excellence Initiative to  
6 ensure that all of our city's transfer schools have a  
7 LTW Program. Over the next 18 months the initiatives  
8 goal is to open 18 new LTW Programs across the city,  
9 what we find exceptionally challenging is that only  
10 3.7 million dollars is being allocated for this  
11 expansion that will require more than 10.8 million  
12 dollars. This means that some LTW Program budgets  
13 will be cut, in fact nearly 308,000 dollars per  
14 budget. Our LTW teams have been doing more with less  
15 since 2010 when our successes had first been  
16 documented. We have strived to keep our student to  
17 staff ratios of 50 students to one advocate counselor  
18 as per our contractual obligations and have taken  
19 pains to continue successful engagement, attention,  
20 and quality with fewer and fewer resources. We are  
21 sensitive to the difficult choices that budget  
22 realities induce and yet the human capital benefit of  
23 the LTW Initiative cannot be understated. Council  
24 members there is a figure that you've been given in  
25

1 previous testimony, it is 325,000 dollars and that's  
2 the aggregated figure presented by North Eastern  
3 University and the Community Service Society, it  
4 stated in lifetime budgetary terms each individual  
5 without a high school diploma represents a net cost  
6 to New York City of 134,000 dollars whereas each New  
7 Yorker with a high school diploma or GED yields a net  
8 benefit of 192,000, a swing of more than 325,000  
9 dollars per person. Thus, the aggregated simple...  
10 simply helping of one low skilled New Yorker earn a  
11 high school degree or equivalent is worth more to our  
12 city than 325,000 dollars. Through this unique  
13 service model which promotes the building of  
14 community and strengthening relationships between our  
15 program we have helped more than 10,000 New Yorkers  
16 obtain a high school diploma since 2005, that's 3.25  
17 billion dollars of net benefit to our city. The DOE  
18 school report of 2014-15 shows that YABC's have a  
19 high school persistence rate of 86 percent. This  
20 means that YABC students graduate, earn a high school  
21 equivalency, earn an alternative commencement  
22 credential or remain enrolled and attending school,  
23 the comparison group was 56 percent and then there's  
24 also the ty-test. Tyrone Deshard is a 21 year old  
25

1 student who will graduate from the Staten Island YABC  
2 this June, last night in our civil service and trades  
3 class among his peers at around 8:30 we had a  
4 discussion around problem solving by working with  
5 young people as we dissect work place issues and  
6 decide together to best ways... the best ways to  
7 resolve those problems. Tyrone shared with us how he  
8 often tests new friends with what he calls the ty-  
9 test. In short Tyrone asks a series of questions  
10 related to a person's generosity, respect, trust, and  
11 kindness. While it was hard to get through the class  
12 without busting a gut the teacher and I showed Ty how  
13 his willingness to invest in finding a good friend is  
14 identical to how a company will interview for the  
15 best employee. Our students remain engaged and  
16 forward looking into their futures and we always meet  
17 them where they are. In closing I would like to  
18 reemphasize that earlier figure, more than 10,000 at  
19 risk youth have achieved a high school diploma or GED  
20 since 2005, that is 10,000 potential fire fighters,  
21 court reporters, carpenters, and future council  
22 members. Since that time our collective impact on  
23 this population has only increased and our referrals  
24 are continuing to grow. We thank you for your ongoing  
25

1 support and we hope that you'll find as much value in  
2 growing this program as we and our young adult  
3 participants and their families do. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much,  
5 next please.

6 ANNEMARIE LADLAD: Hi, my name is  
7 AnnMarie Ladlad and I am the Development and  
8 Communications Coordinator for Teachers Unite. I'm  
9 also here to represent Indian schools. Teachers Unite  
10 is a member led nonprofit that organizes public  
11 school educators across the city to work with  
12 students and parents to create schools that are  
13 restorative, inclusive, and democratic. Teachers  
14 Unite staff and members are grateful that the city  
15 council invested 2.4 million to begin implementation  
16 of the Restorative Justice Initiative for 25 New York  
17 City public schools for the 2016 Fiscal Year. I am  
18 here to ask you to increase the Restorative Justice  
19 Initiative to five million dollars to fund a second  
20 year and to ensure initiative sustainability and to  
21 expand the number of participating schools beyond the  
22 current 25. I'm also here to share parts of three  
23 different testimonies from some of our educator  
24 members who are unable to be here today. So, first  
25

1 from E.M. Marklewitz, a New York City public school  
2 educator whose in her 11<sup>th</sup> year of teaching shares,  
3 at the school I worked at for seven years the Bronx  
4 Academy of Letters we used DOE funding for a  
5 Restorative Practice training for ten staff members  
6 every Summer for three years by the following school  
7 year only four to six of those teachers returned and  
8 we'd be back at the beginning. Meaningful change only  
9 happened in our school when our UFT chapter voted to  
10 develop two release time positions for myself and one  
11 other classroom teacher to work as part time  
12 restorative co-coordinators. The two of us didn't do  
13 all the restorative interventions, conferences, group  
14 asses mediations, etcetera because we had other  
15 teachers, social workers, parents and students who  
16 could but we coordinated when, where, and how they'd  
17 happen and we connected people to ongoing trainings  
18 and PD. We also connected people at times and places  
19 that made sense for our school day and we followed  
20 up. Had I been a classroom teacher with a full  
21 teaching load I would not have had the time, energy,  
22 or resources for this kind of coordination and  
23 connection. This kind of position is vital in  
24 sustaining Restorative Justice work in schools and it  
25

1  
2 can only function meaningfully as a school based rule  
3 fully integrated into the school community over  
4 several school years. From Sara Marklewitz at MS324  
5 which is in district six and as a tier two  
6 Restorative Justice school as part of the initiative  
7 wrote, in the three years since official Restorative  
8 Justice frameworks and practices were brought to  
9 MS324 we implemented tier one circles in all of our  
10 morning advisory classes across 17 home rooms.  
11 Teachers who previously had little or no experience  
12 with this process have been supported by our school  
13 based RJ committee as well as outside help from  
14 Morningside Center consultants and training and our  
15 liaison from Dream. I am currently working with  
16 students themselves to become ambassadors for their  
17 peers. We have an RJ action team of about eight  
18 committed students who are training to go into  
19 advisory classroom and lead circles themselves to  
20 address aspects of community such as kindness,  
21 empathy and anti-bullying. The next step will be to  
22 create a peer mediation program so that those student  
23 leaders can become resources for their peers and  
24 monitor conflict that arise among them. lastly from  
25 Megan Moscop who is also from MS324 writes, with

1  
2 funding from the city council we've been able to  
3 expand our programs and help students take leadership  
4 of them but there is still so much work to do and we  
5 need more time and more funding to do this work.  
6 Building community and implementing Restorative  
7 Practice takes time and thoughtful adult attention  
8 especially when our neighborhoods face difficult  
9 social and political circumstances. With a school  
10 safety budget nearly... nearing half a billion dollars  
11 we have the funds to do this crucial work. We must  
12 divest from police in schools and invest in  
13 Restorative Justice work, work that builds strong  
14 school communities and really makes schools safer for  
15 students and families. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much,  
17 next please.

18 CHARLOTTE POPE: Good afternoon, my name  
19 is Charlotte Pope and I'm with the Children's Defense  
20 Fund New York. At the root of our advocacy is the  
21 understanding that exclusionary disciplinary  
22 practices such as suspensions and police  
23 interventions undermine positive relationships and  
24 trust between students and teachers, fall short in  
25 preventing or reducing conflict from happening and

1  
2 lead to students missing the class time they need to  
3 experience a meaningful education. we see that the  
4 DOE has projected to pay a total of 285 million to  
5 the NYPD an increase of five million since the  
6 adopted budget and we urge the city to shift  
7 resources towards positive and preventative  
8 approaches. Our testimony today speaks to the need to  
9 restore and expand funding to five million for the  
10 council's Restorative Justice Initiative. In our  
11 conversations with those participating we have  
12 learned that many of the 15 schools involved are  
13 dramatically reducing their reliance on suspension  
14 something the Chancellor mentioned twice today and  
15 schools are pursuing different projects according to  
16 need like peer mediation programs, advisory courses  
17 and parent groups. Last year the Mayor's budget  
18 included two... included new investments to support  
19 school climate reforms and we want to note that those  
20 pilot projects were allocated funding for four years.  
21 While we believe in the importance of those projects  
22 and hope to work with the counselor... council to  
23 encourage the city to invest in Restorative Justice.  
24 We urge the council to continue and increase the  
25 investment in the council's initiative in particular

1  
2 as it is less than two years old and is a whole  
3 school of Restorative Justice model that includes  
4 school based staff, youth and parent leadership and  
5 continuing professional development opportunities.  
6 The Children's Defense Funds beat the odds college  
7 scholarship and counseling program has had several  
8 high school student participants who also happen to  
9 attend schools involved in the council's initiative.  
10 I'd like to share brief comments from one of the  
11 students who shared with me what they see in their  
12 school. So, quote, "today if a student acts out in  
13 the classroom the teacher will send the student to  
14 the Restorative Coordinator and they have a  
15 conversation about what happened and the student is  
16 brought right back to class before the student would  
17 be kicked out of class and they would miss the work  
18 for that day and fall behind. I know that teachers  
19 don't feel right about kicking students out of class  
20 and they know that they would just end up roaming the  
21 halls without support. I spoke to my principal  
22 recently and she was telling me that suspension rates  
23 decreased substantially because a lot of the past  
24 suspensions were caused by just disrupting the  
25 classroom. This program is giving students the chance

1  
2 to get their education. a lot of the times students  
3 disrupt because there's something going on with them  
4 that you can't see and with this you get to see  
5 what's going on and allow students a say in the  
6 process. I'll stop there, there's plenty more in my  
7 written comments. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you, do you  
9 know what the five million dollar increase in the  
10 safe... school safety agent budget was?

11 CHARLOTTE POPE: Personnel mostly and  
12 overtime.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Mostly overtime,  
14 okay. Alright. Thank you. Alright, thank you to the  
15 whole panel, we really appreciate you coming in. We  
16 still have four or five more panels to go so thank  
17 you all.

18 CHARLOTTE POPE: Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, Casey Foster,  
20 Urban Youth Collaborative, Codyada Cava [sp?], Make  
21 the Road; Christine Rodriguez, Make the Road;  
22 Stephanie Valeria Make the Road, and Isiah Conyonus  
23 [sp?], Make the Road. Okay, good I have to swear you  
24 all in, would you raise your right hand. Do you  
25 solemnly swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole

1  
2 truth and nothing but the truth and to answer council  
3 member questions honestly?

4 [panel affirms]

5 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, Casey do you  
6 want to start?

7 CASEY FOSTER: Yeah, I'll start us off,  
8 thank you. First, we'd like to start by thanking  
9 Council Member Dromm for being the tireless advocate  
10 you are and being and sticking with this all day, we  
11 know we've been here since ten a.m. so thank you very  
12 much. Hello, my name is Casey Foster and I'm the  
13 Coordinator for Urban Youth Collaborative. We are a  
14 coalition of organizations led by high school youth  
15 that come together to fight for racial justice in our  
16 public-school system. For 13 years, we have been  
17 fighting to end the criminalization of black and  
18 Latino youth, youth with disabilities, youth that  
19 identify as LGBTQ, gender nonconforming youth and all  
20 youth that may be marginalized systemic biases and  
21 discrimination. During our time, we have seen the  
22 previous administration call for broken windows type  
23 policing in New York City schools and bring down the  
24 full force of NYPD and the words of our former mayor  
25 whether a student chronically misbehaves or commits a

1  
2 serious crime they will be dealt with swiftly,  
3 appropriately and removed from school. It has always  
4 been true that dealing appropriately with black and  
5 Latino youth, LGBTQ youth has been isolating them and  
6 too often tearing them away from families and  
7 communities as if they are disposable. The results of  
8 this reproach... approach was predictable, black and  
9 Latino youth made up over 90 percent of all arrests  
10 and summons and every day interactions outside of  
11 their schools at the... close to subway stops and at  
12 the metal detectors in schools creating an  
13 environment where school became sites of oppression  
14 and repression of youth of color. Our new  
15 administration has talked about changing approaches  
16 to school discipline and they have started to put in  
17 place reforms that are beginning to embrace a more  
18 restorative approach and we are seeing reductions  
19 across the board in suspensions, summons, and arrests  
20 but as we have begun to examine the data over the  
21 last four years we realize racial disparities and  
22 arrests, summons, and suspensions have not changed.  
23 Black and Latino youth still make up nearly all  
24 interactions with police and now we have data thanks  
25 to city council for passing amendments to the student

1  
2 safety act about local precinct officers in our  
3 schools and we see precinct officers are carrying out  
4 the majority of all criminal consequences in schools.  
5 Unfortunately, we still lack data about LGBTQ youth  
6 some of the most marginalized youth in our schools  
7 and communities and it's still leaving a picture  
8 unclear. We have heard policy makers acknowledge that  
9 inherent racial biases and discrimination still  
10 plagues many aspects of our lives and communities but  
11 we are concerned if we don't do more than acknowledge  
12 racism exists in our city our seats will be filled..  
13 these seats that we sit in now today will be filled  
14 by a next generation of youth and then the next  
15 generation of youth and then the next demanding the  
16 change... demanding the same changes we are fighting  
17 for while hoping to avoid stepping on the systemic  
18 landmines that could lead them to joining past  
19 generations that have been lost to systems designed  
20 to put them away in cages. The city council has been  
21 instrumental in creating space for the city to change  
22 its practices and help us amplify the voices of youth  
23 who have the solutions for the challenges they face.  
24 We are here today to ask you to join us in creating a  
25 vision that doesn't lead to reforms but radically

1  
2 transforms schools to make nurturing and inclusive  
3 supportive environments for all young people. To wrap  
4 up we share the same priorities that were shared by  
5 Advocates for Children and Dignity in Schools in  
6 terms of next year's Restorative Practice and Mental  
7 Health Continuum Priorities in schools. We are also  
8 looking forward to today to begin the work with the  
9 city council to begin to build a bolder more  
10 ambitious vision for how we can radically transfer...  
11 transform school funding. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Casey you mentioned  
13 in your testimony the lack of data for LGBT youth why  
14 is that?

15 CASEY FOSTER: So right now there's no  
16 way for the school system to identify youth that  
17 identifies LGBTQ and it's, it's still very much a  
18 challenge on whether or not schools are equipped to  
19 safely ask young people about their identity.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you.

21 CHRISTINE RODRIGUEZ: Good afternoon. My  
22 name is Christine Rodriguez, I'm representing Make  
23 the Road New York, Dignities in Schools Campaign and  
24 the Urban Youth Collaborative. I present before you  
25 today because we know more than... more... we know now

1  
2 more than ever there's urgency, a political crisis  
3 and our funding has, has to address it. Given our  
4 political climate where Trump's budget proposed...  
5 proposal deems to... deems the need of our everyday  
6 people insignificant, there I a call on our city to  
7 make a bolder statement, one that uplifts and values  
8 New Yorkers and our students. Yearly about 400  
9 million dollars are spent to criminalize our youth in  
10 schools, money that makes school policing, metal  
11 detectors, arrests, and suspensions possible. Placing  
12 students in alternative schools is a moral decision  
13 the city needs to reflect on. When we speak about the  
14 system that criminalizes our students we also  
15 acknowledge the high racial disparities in schools  
16 policing and discipline that unfairly targets black  
17 and Latino students. Black and Latino students make  
18 up 91 percent of all students arrested and 90 percent  
19 of all students receiving summonses. 70 percent of  
20 all criminal consequences are for non-criminal  
21 violations and misdemeanors. New York City does not  
22 have a problem with so called criminals school crime,  
23 it has a problem criminalizing black and Latino  
24 students. Normal youth, youthful behavior should be  
25 addressed in schools and not in criminal courts.

1 Youth, youthful color in New York City schools are  
2 still caught between a too harsh school system and an  
3 unforgiving criminal justice system. Research shows  
4 policing schools... police, policing students in  
5 schools does not do anything to make schools safer  
6 but it leads to students being more likely to be  
7 arrested. We are talking about schools here, a place  
8 where students are supposed to be nurtured, supported  
9 and included. This would never be achieved with  
10 police in our schools. So, here's what I ask from  
11 you, let's restructure our priorities and create a  
12 budget that invests in the well beings of our  
13 students, let's strive for a genuine, safe and  
14 supportive learning environment, invest in creating  
15 strong relationships between schools, students,  
16 staff, teachers and guidance counselors by aligning  
17 just and fair approaches to discipline... to discipline  
18 easier and sustainable. By investing in Restorative  
19 Justice, guidance counselors, social workers and  
20 mental health supports and in the same and divest  
21 from the pool of money used to criminalize us, from  
22 the system that harms young people we see... we will  
23 definitely see a drastic change in the success and  
24 health in any school community. Lastly this process  
25

1  
2 is often hard for high school students to participate  
3 like everyone else, they cannot afford to miss school  
4 time which is why I share this testimony today. Your  
5 youth voices have been historically and  
6 systematically silenced so please think of us  
7 throughout this process and we thank the Chair for  
8 working with us. We have a new bold vision that...  
9 vision not just for today but for the future that  
10 includes 50 million dollars for student centers in  
11 every large high schools and 66 million dollars for  
12 Restorative Justice in our... in all schools and I also  
13 have a quote from MLK which says, "a nation that  
14 continues year after year to spend more money on  
15 military defense than on programs for social uplift  
16 is approaching spiritual death".

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much,  
18 very moving.

19 CHRISTINE RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

20 CARDIA DEKABA: Good afternoon, my name  
21 is Cardia Dakaba and I am a youth leader at Make the  
22 Road and Urban Youth Collaborative. For 13 years, we  
23 have been fighting to end policies that  
24 disproportionately target black and brown students.  
25 Racial disparities in all discipline and policing

1 categories are too high and makes it evident that  
2 even with progress we still have so much farther to  
3 go and to address racism in our schools. It is time  
4 that New York City begin to divest to end the school  
5 to prison and deportation pipeline once and for all.  
6 We cannot continue to fund systems that harm us  
7 whether intentionally or unintentionally. I graduated  
8 from a high school where we only had one guidance  
9 counselor in the whole school but we had school  
10 safety agents all throughout the building. These  
11 disparities reflect the values of the city and the  
12 value and worth of all of us that went to schools  
13 without enough guidance counselors, social workers  
14 and mental health support. It was hard to get in  
15 contact with my guidance counselor because she was  
16 always busy. I had to go out to another program  
17 outside of my school just to get help during the  
18 college process. We don't have the same access as  
19 other students for the support we need because we  
20 have yet to reprioritize the right kind of support we  
21 need to thrive. We have a vision for creating  
22 nurturing, supportive, and inclusive schools for all  
23 young people. Supportive schools would have  
24 Restorative Justice, guidance counselors, social  
25

1  
2 workers, mental health supports and treats us all  
3 with compassion, care, and understanding. Somehow  
4 there is always more funding for security measures  
5 for public and private schools but we are told the...  
6 there isn't enough money for staff members and  
7 programs that more privileged students have. We know  
8 we have a long road ahead of us but today we are  
9 starting the work to get us where we need to go. To  
10 bring the capacity for Restorative Justice to 550  
11 schools across the New York... across New York City we  
12 need 66 million and until we get there we need the  
13 council to continue to be committed to their  
14 initiative this year to work with us, to baseline 15  
15 million over the next three years in the executive  
16 budget. We need 60 million for all large high schools  
17 to have students success centers. We need 15 million...  
18 no, I'm sorry, we need 15 million for Student Success  
19 Centers and to meet our mental health programs in  
20 schools we need the city to invest 7.7 million. We  
21 know the city council, council shares a similar  
22 vision with everything we are fighting for and we  
23 know it won't happen overnight but despite the fear  
24 and concerns spreading in our communities we

25

1  
2 understand it's the courage of young people that can  
3 get us through this and move us forward. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you, next  
5 please. Yeah, just use the button and push that red  
6 light on.

7 STEPHANIE: I didn't even notice. Good  
8 afternoon, my name is Stephanie and I'm youth leader  
9 at Make the Road New York and the Urban Youth  
10 Collaborative. I'm 16 years old and a junior at the  
11 Bushwick School for Social Justice which is a  
12 community school. I would like to thank the Education  
13 Committee Chair Daniel Dromm, the city council  
14 education committee and the city council for the  
15 opportunity to speak for young people across New York  
16 City but especially for low income black and Latino  
17 youth attending underserved schools. Restorative  
18 Justice is a more holistic and humane way of  
19 interacting with young people and building a positive  
20 school climate. Restorative Justice is an effective  
21 way of bringing back peace and harmony after harm has  
22 been done and creating a more supportive school  
23 environment for all young people. As a young person  
24 who has been a part of Restorative Justice circles I  
25 am able to say that I've seen it work and it

1 encourages more positive discipline strategies across  
2 the school. Suspending students especially for minor  
3 things does not work, all suspending students does is  
4 remove a student from class leading them to fall  
5 behind in their studies. A school should be able to  
6 promote a positive message of getting students to  
7 succeed without using harsh punishments and long  
8 suspensions. Students that participate in Restorative  
9 Justice workshops or in... or in circles strengthen  
10 skills like social communication and these have  
11 positive long term effects. There should be more  
12 preparation for students to learn how to address  
13 issues rather than being punished for them. With  
14 Restorative Justice, they are able to discuss the  
15 issue, why it happened and how it can be prevented  
16 from happening again in a space that feels safe. The  
17 Department of Education should mandate the use of  
18 Restorative Justice and alternatives to suspension  
19 before removing students from school. There are 1,800  
20 schools and only a small number of them are using  
21 Restorative Justice. Last year students lost 316,104  
22 days of school in the 2015 to 2016 school year, the  
23 equivalent of 1,756 school years. Most of those  
24 students were black and Latino. It's no surprise  
25

1  
2 graduation rates for black and Latino students are  
3 far behind white students when we make them stay away  
4 from school. If we are going to make a difference we  
5 need systemic changes, we should start by making sure  
6 every school does all it can to keep us in school  
7 before pushing us out. We have a vision for schools  
8 that are welcoming for all young people. Schools  
9 where LGBTQ and non-gender conforming, students with  
10 disabilities, Muslim youth, immigrant youth, Latino  
11 youth, and black youth all feel supported and valued.  
12 The city council's continued commitment to  
13 Restorative Justice is helping to bring us closer to  
14 a vision of justice and, and compassion in school  
15 disciplinary approaches. The funding for systems that  
16 harm us by policing us and pushing us out of school  
17 is a barrier we have to knock down. We are asking the  
18 city today to divest from the 400 million dollars a  
19 year on the school, school to prison pipeline and  
20 invest 66 million to expand Restorative Justice  
21 across all New York City schools. We urge the city  
22 council to continue investing in the Restorative  
23 Justice Initiative and work with us to push the city  
24 to commit to funding Restorative Justice citywide in  
25 the next three years.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Go ahead.

ISAIH: Hello, I wanted to thank you for staying here to allow young people to share our experiences and vision for our schools. My name is Isaiah. I am 17 years old and I'm a senior, I'm a youth member with Make the Road and the Urban Youth Collaborative. I'm here today to share not only my personal story with criminalization in the schools but also insight into a reality of injustice that occurs daily and a new path forward to ensure young people don't have to keep going through what I went through. I was suspended and given a summons for disorderly conduct while in school, why you may ask because I chose to speak up alongside 50 other students in a peaceful manner with... against policies we did not agree with, the end result I was removed from class and taken to the school's safety agents room. During my detainment and questioning I was constantly mis-gendered by safety agents and precinct officers, I was threatened with being charged with inciting a riot and held for over an hour. During that time, I was held no one got in contact with my mother and I wasn't allowed to get in contact with her either. The NYPD gave me a criminal summons for

1  
2 disorderly conduct while my school suspended me  
3 basically using two ineffective and harsh so called  
4 tools to punish me twice. Why is NYC still sending  
5 students to criminal court for non-criminal  
6 violations when students are four times more likely  
7 to drop out if they go to court during a school day.  
8 What did these punishments achieve, nothing it  
9 admitted to a statistic of over 90 percent of arrests  
10 and criminal summons being given in schools are to  
11 black and Latino students. It showed me that white  
12 students in selective high schools can walk out  
13 against presidential election results and be praised  
14 while I am criminalized for similar actions because  
15 of my skin. It saddened and angered me because the  
16 stress they put upon on my mother's physical and  
17 mental health caused by the trip my mother had to  
18 endure in a wheelchair in order to take me to court.  
19 My experience isn't unique, it isn't an anomaly, it  
20 is a daily occurrence for black and Latino students.  
21 So here in lies the problem if my criminalization did  
22 nothing to benefit me, to provide me the issues  
23 within my school community what does the  
24 criminalization of hundreds, thousands of black and  
25 brown students in schools mean for our great cities

1  
2 community. if you're wondering what can be done to  
3 end this injustice we must divest from school  
4 policing, remove police officers and increase the  
5 number of guidance counselors and end arrest and  
6 criminal summonses in schools. We can't call schools  
7 a safe haven... we can't call schools safe havens if we  
8 have to go through metal detectors and deal with the  
9 present policing every day. No longer can arrest and  
10 criminal summons for any youth of our great city be  
11 an option if we are to maintain our values and  
12 integrity in the face of this new administration DC.  
13 It cost the city at least 2.4 million dollars a year  
14 to carry out these arrests and it forever cuts off  
15 the future of young people we shouldn't give up on.  
16 No longer can pushing students out into prisons and  
17 onto the streets be a way of thinking of healing and  
18 preventing problems of any magnitude while we know  
19 the factual and powerful effects of Restorative  
20 Justice. The reality is that there are 5,551 school  
21 safety personnel and 2,800 full time guidance  
22 counselors. The number of guidance counselors has  
23 increased over the last year but what does this say  
24 to young people that our schools employ almost half  
25 as many guidance as police officers. No longer can we

1  
2 believe in simply decreasing the amount of arrests  
3 and summons as justice. We hope to city council  
4 continues to work with us until every student has  
5 access to a guidance counselor or social worker whose  
6 able to provide us with the support we need to  
7 thrive. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much.  
9 What was it that they charge... what, what did you do  
10 that got them mad?

11 ISAIH: I was a part of, of, of a  
12 peaceful protest we were... it was planned to be a  
13 walkout against policies we did not agree with in the  
14 school but the, the school safety agents did not  
15 allow us to do any such actions and so it dispersed  
16 within less than four minutes.

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And you were the  
18 leader of that?

19 ISAIH: No, I was someone who they just  
20 recognized as being a part of there and so their  
21 reasoning was because I was recognizable that, that  
22 was the reason to punish me.

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Are you still in  
24 school now?

25 ISAIH: Yes.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, Casey I also  
3 wanted to ask you, you know I, I went to the hearing  
4 yesterday as well... [cross-talk]

5 CASEY FOSTER: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...from the United  
7 States Commissioner on Civil Rights and I spoke out  
8 and I said I really feel that the school safety  
9 agents should be under the auspices of the Department  
10 of Education again rather than under the NYPD, do you  
11 guys have a position on that?

12 CASEY FOSTER: Yeah, we can talk much  
13 further about that, I think... yes, so it's not... it's,  
14 its, it's not healthy for schools that principals and  
15 administrators and teachers are not the ones that are  
16 managing discipline in schools and as long as the  
17 school safety agents are under the NYPD we've taken  
18 away from people that are trained to work with  
19 children the authority to provide the right response  
20 in situations in schools and so it's very problematic  
21 that they're under... [cross-talk]

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So does that happen  
23 because of the memo of understanding MOU?

24 CASEY FOSTER: My, my understanding is  
25 the memorandum of understanding is only designed to

1  
2 provide guidance for the... between the NYPD and DOE  
3 and it actually happened because in 1998 the city  
4 created legislation that transferred the power from  
5 the DOE to the NYPD for school safety. So, it's, it's  
6 outside the purview of MOU.

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Uh-huh, so what's  
8 interesting I think a fact came out in the previous  
9 panel was that there was a five dollar... five million  
10 dollar increase in overtime mostly, we think  
11 overtime, we're going to look at it a little bit more  
12 carefully... [cross-talk]

13 CASEY FOSTER: ...uh-huh... [cross-talk]

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...but that five  
15 million dollars could have probably been better spent  
16 putting it into Restorative Practices because I think  
17 the overall budget for Restorative Practices is only  
18 about five million dollars.

19 CASEY FOSTER: Absolutely, we'll, we'll...  
20 we are working on analyzing the... there are a lot of  
21 investments not just in school safety personnel but  
22 other suspension hearing trials and, and... so there's  
23 a lot of investments I think that we are starting to  
24 begin to analyze and realize that those investments  
25 are not helping young people thrive and there are

1  
2 better ways to prioritize that money even as we think  
3 about ways in which the city has found in the past,  
4 20 million dollars for securing funding to go to  
5 private schools. We are really... need to work towards  
6 fundamentally changing the way we approach safety in  
7 schools as first providing young people with the  
8 supports that they need.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well you know where I  
10 stand on that issue and we've spoken to the, the, the  
11 young people here as well and I want to thank you all  
12 for coming in and giving testimony again and we, we  
13 deeply appreciate it, thank you very much.

14 CASEY FOSTER: Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, is Rachel Pratt  
16 here? Okay, come on up, New York Roadrunners;  
17 Catherine Terenzi, the Center for Popular Democracy;  
18 Teach for America, is she here, yeah, okay Dr. James  
19 Fairbanks, is he here, yeah, okay, good and Dejohn  
20 Jones, Parent Action Committee, okay. Okay, so we  
21 still have a few panels left and we will be here to  
22 hear everybody out but I do want to swear this panel  
23 in so if I could ask you to raise your right hand. Do  
24 you solemnly swear or affirm to tell the truth, the  
25 whole truth and nothing but the truth and to answer

1  
2 council member questions honestly? Very good, thank  
3 you. Would you like to start?

4 KATE TERENZI: Thank you for the  
5 opportunity to testify before you today. My name is  
6 Kate Terenzi and I'm an Equal Justice Works Fellow  
7 sponsored by Proskauer Rose at the Center for Popular  
8 Democracy. The Center for Popular Democracy and CPD  
9 Action is a high impact national organization that  
10 builds organizing power to transform local and state  
11 policy landscapes through partnerships with leading  
12 community based organizations and with deep ties to  
13 immigrant and low income communities. We welcome the  
14 opportunity to provide testimony to the education  
15 committee today on New York City's Preliminary Budget  
16 and we will follow with written testimony. There are  
17 several important programs that are funded through  
18 the preliminary budget but to best utilize our short  
19 time we'll focus on those areas in which we believe  
20 could be improved. As part of CPD's racial justice  
21 and education work we pursue and invest divest  
22 framework which urges local and state governments to  
23 invest in education and other programs which support  
24 communities instead of investing in the  
25 criminalization of them. Investments should target

1  
2 programs which communities themselves and in this  
3 context of education, young people determine are most  
4 important. For New York City schools, we urge deep  
5 investments in a series of supportive programs which  
6 will provide true safety in schools and provide  
7 opportunities for students to thrive rather than  
8 entrench harsh policing practices. In the preliminary  
9 budget, there are deep investments in New York Police  
10 Department School Safety Division as you've heard  
11 recently. In all the school safety division is  
12 projected to receive 367.8 million dollars, an  
13 additional 10.6 million from last fiscal year. In  
14 2016, there were over 1,300 arrests, over 900  
15 summonses, over 900 juvenile reports and as folks  
16 have spoken about the racial disparities are deep, 90  
17 percent of all students given summonses were black  
18 and Latino and 91 percent of all students arrested  
19 were. There is no serious evidentiary support for the  
20 proposition that police presence in schools create  
21 safer learning environments, in fact studies have  
22 shown that schools are no safer even after years of  
23 punitive policing than before such policies are  
24 implemented. These funds can be better used to invest  
25 in New York City's young people on programs which

1  
2 create true safety. I will focus on two such  
3 possibilities: Restorative Practices and mental  
4 health services. We'd like to thank the council for  
5 its investment in Restorative Practices and are  
6 heartened by the comments from... this afternoon from  
7 Chancellor Farina. Restorative Justice must be  
8 expanded beyond the pilot to instead be a citywide  
9 approach of community accountability and supporting  
10 students learning. Community members have reported  
11 success in the schools which have them and we need to  
12 see this program and the philosophy expand citywide.  
13 New York City should also take up the recommendation  
14 from the climate leadership task force to implement a  
15 mental health service continuum. This continuum would  
16 connect in school services with more intensive  
17 external services including exist... existing hospital  
18 base mental health services. To begin the budget  
19 should include 7.7 million dollars to start the  
20 continuum program. We look forward to working with  
21 the city council and the administration on the budget  
22 process moving forward and if you have any questions  
23 please don't hesitate to contact us.

24 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you very  
25 much, next please.

1  
2 CHRISTINE ERSKIN: Hi, good afternoon  
3 council members and Chairman Daniel Dromm. Before I,  
4 I read this I just want to say thank you today for  
5 our, our students who gave such lovely testimonies.  
6 I'm only hear today because they gave me... they gave  
7 me an opportunity, they gave me and provided a  
8 platform so I just wanted to say thank you for this  
9 opportunity to speak on your behalf. I've just got  
10 engulfed in this work over the past two and a half  
11 years but I have to speak from a parent's  
12 perspective. I could truly say that I don't think I  
13 did such a great job, I have two 21 year olds, a 19,  
14 a six-year-old... a 16-year-old and as a parent I can  
15 see through this work that I could have done so much  
16 better and had I been given an opportunity earlier in  
17 life I think that my children would have really  
18 appreciated me as a mother throughout the years. This  
19 model teaches me not to be such a dictator but to  
20 listen to my... to my kids and just hearing how  
21 important it is for our students to be heard it gives  
22 me the passion and, and the drive to continue to  
23 fight for this, this initiative, excuse me. So, you  
24 already know my name, I'm with the New Settlement  
25 Parent Action Committee and Dignity in Schools

1 Campaign to Advocate for Restorative Justice

2 Initiative. Thank you in advance for your attention.

3 Restorative Practices should be the right of our

4 public-school students, it is not as the daily news

5 would have you think a mean of getting away with

6 wrongdoing but rather giving these students a chance

7 to learn how to work through conflict by finding a

8 healthier side to resolve their own problems. We

9 forget that our public-school students are going to

10 be adults one day, leaders in their own lives if we

11 continue to program them to think... excuse me, not to

12 think but only react we will be creating a generation

13 of people with little hope, little chances and few

14 opportunities. This approach harms children every

15 day, the system is rich and the belly of those who

16 operates it is full. Restorative Justice is the

17 anecdote to the school to prison pipeline. In NYC's

18 Department of Education should be expanding this

19 initiative to make it the framework within which we

20 handle conflict and harm in spaces of learning. This

21 is why I am asking you to sustain the current

22 initiative of 2.4 million and double it to include

23 another 25 schools, a total of five million. I would

24 want to see the schools in my neighborhood included

25

1  
2 in this initiative and this can happen if you expand  
3 this initiative, excuse me. I'm asking you to take  
4 the power back from these greedy people in the system  
5 and give it back to both our students and parents. In  
6 addition, I urge the council to work with us parents,  
7 advocates, and youth to push the mayor and the city  
8 to invest in Restorative Justice in the next five  
9 years. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much,  
11 next please.

12 JIM FAIRBANKS: Hi, Jim Fairbanks and I'm  
13 here advocating for the Parent Action Committee of  
14 the New Settlement Apartments and the Restorative  
15 Justice Program. From Council Member Gibson down to  
16 the administrators, the police, the student and the  
17 parent it's something positive that's been working  
18 and I learned from... as a minister visiting the  
19 punitive segregation unit of teenagers at Rykers  
20 Island but zero tolerance, forget that let's have  
21 some compassion and get everyone together. My main  
22 concern though is for the council and you're going to  
23 defend yourself against the new presidential  
24 administration and I just have one solution I've  
25 always had, I'm from a multicultural family, I've

1  
2 lived in the South Bronx 50 years, I've raised three  
3 black sons and a white son and now because of  
4 grandchildren my family is white, black, Puerto Rican  
5 and Chinese. As Chief of Staff for Reverend Wendel  
6 Foster for 25 years and Helen Diane Foster for  
7 another 12 years I've learned not only through my  
8 children but from them but the only way that black  
9 children are going to make it through society is to  
10 immerse them fully in their history and their culture  
11 so that they will know who they are, learn about  
12 other cultures so that they begin to survive, defend  
13 themselves and even thrive in a white power dominated  
14 system of the education department and America. I  
15 remember versus... after Brown versus the Board of  
16 Education white schools closed down, Prince Edward  
17 County closed their schools down for five years  
18 because of prejudice. What's coming out of Washington  
19 now, we better prepare our kids to defend themselves  
20 by who they are and we better look at who we have in  
21 our city budget and what programs we have so that  
22 multiculturalism is a way for children to defend  
23 themselves and good luck defending the city because  
24 he's done what he said he's going to do and he's  
25 going to go after public education and we better be

1  
2 able to prepare our kids to defend themselves and  
3 thrive. Thank you very much.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: How did you get onto  
5 Rykers to see the... well did you just go to the...  
6 [cross-talk]

7 JIM FAIRBANKS: Oh actually when Vallone,  
8 not the senior Vallone but the first son that became  
9 a council member his committee went out there and  
10 that was such a terrifying experience, I looked at  
11 one 16 year old youth and he looked me in the eyes  
12 he's like looking through me, they had destroyed his  
13 spirit, his soul, his mind and they said oh well we  
14 also have a group program, they brought me in where  
15 there was a teacher and a half dozen students, okay,  
16 a little bit better but then there was... you know how  
17 when we expressed ourselves sometimes we use our  
18 hands and our body there was one youth that only  
19 expressed himself when he could move his arms but his  
20 arms were chained to the wall. We could do better  
21 than that as a society, we can show that compassion  
22 and working together works. Thank you very much.

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you, it's an  
24 issue of importance to me as well, thank you. Yes.

1  
2 RACHEL PRATT: [off-mic] Good afternoon  
3 Chair... the button I should know by now. Good  
4 afternoon Chairman Dromm. My name is Rachel Pratt and  
5 I serve as Senior Vice President of Youth and  
6 Community Services and New York Roadrunners where our  
7 mission is to help and to inspire people through  
8 running, feels like a little bit of a nonreceptor  
9 here but... we want to thank you for this opportunity  
10 to testify before the Education Committee in the  
11 Fiscal '18 Preliminary Budget. I'm here to talk about  
12 physical education in New York City which as you know  
13 falls short of serving New York City's children  
14 particularly those in low income communities and it  
15 all falls short in meeting New York State standards  
16 leaving our students in danger of becoming obese or  
17 severely obese and remaining habitually inactive  
18 throughout their lives. While New York Roadrunners is  
19 best known for producing the TCS New York City  
20 marathon and other adult races our organization is  
21 also the largest nonprofit provider of free youth  
22 fitness programs in New York City. In the 2015-16  
23 school year, our school based programs served day in  
24 and day out 115,000 New York City youth at 663  
25 schools and community centers that includes 5,200

1 youth in 117 sites who require adaptive physical  
2 education. 66 percent of the schools New York  
3 Roadrunners served meet Title one requirements and  
4 our program serves students in neighborhoods with  
5 high health disparities and high enrollment in free  
6 or reduced price lunch. As large as our service  
7 numbers were last year we've already surpassed these  
8 figures for the current school year and we hope to in  
9 future years serve every child in New York City from  
10 daycare through completion of high school with our  
11 fitness... physical fitness programming. There is a  
12 crisis in New York City and nationwide in health and  
13 obesity, physical activities in schools lays the  
14 groundwork for a healthy life, it's not an extra,  
15 it's a critical service. P.E. in schools need support  
16 and New York Roadrunners provide that support though  
17 a partnership with the Department of Education on a  
18 large scale. New York Roadrunners is asking the city  
19 council to consider a funding request in the amount  
20 of the 500,000 dollars for its Fiscal Year 2018  
21 budget. New York Roadrunners itself invests well over  
22 four million dollars in New York City youth programs  
23 so this is an excellent return on investment for the  
24 city. New York Roadrunners will use this 500,000  
25

1  
2 dollars in support of our school based youth fitness  
3 programs under the physical education and fitness  
4 initiative. For seven years New York Roadrunners  
5 received generous funding through the city council in  
6 the amount of 250,000 through the speaker's obesity  
7 prevention initiative which was not funded in fiscal  
8 year '17 instead we've been working with the  
9 Department of Education as M-Tac Process which is  
10 uncertain and it limits our, our planning for growth.  
11 With our fiscal year '18 request New York Roadrunners  
12 is hoping to restore and increase funding as our  
13 physical fitness programs have more than doubled  
14 their service numbers to New York City students since  
15 our initial funding in 2010. I would also like to  
16 share that New York Roadrunners has recently  
17 redesigned our youth programs to incorporate the  
18 latest research on physical literacy and to reach a  
19 full spectrum of student's pre-k through 12.  
20 Providing robust physical education to 1.1 million  
21 students in a city as large as New York is a  
22 significant challenge although many New York City  
23 schools lack professional fitness spaces such as  
24 gyms, the presence of even one full time P.E. teacher  
25 or any access to outdoor school yards or nearby parks

1 we are overcoming these challenges to provide  
2 children with meaningful programs that meet state and  
3 city standards and inspire children to be healthy for  
4 life. Thank you for allowing me to testify today, I'd  
5 be happy to answer any questions about New York  
6 Roadrunners school based programs and I urge you to  
7 prioritize the funding of physical education and  
8 fitness programs for all New York City children.  
9

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: How, how many schools  
11 are you in now?

12 RACHEL PRATT: We're in over 700 schools.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And there... it's the  
14 same program in every school or...

15 RACHEL PRATT: We have several different  
16 programs now with our new program design for next  
17 year we'll be having one program model. So, we'll  
18 have one program serving kids from pre-k next year  
19 through grade 12.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And 700 schools even  
21 though you were cut last year you, you... [cross-talk]

22 RACHEL PRATT: We maintained our program  
23 and... [cross-talk]

24 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...you maintained...  
25 [cross-talk]

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RACHEL PRATT: ...and grew... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...the programs...

[cross-talk]

RACHEL PRATT: ...in fact.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, so it's well,  
well worth looking at, thank you.

RACHEL PRATT: Great, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright, thank you to  
the panel, we appreciate you for coming in, thank  
you. Okay, Chelsea Gregory from the Academy for Young  
Writers; Chamar Prosad, Academy for Writers; Nicole  
Riley Teachers Unite, is she here... yep... Niaga Castro  
[sp?], the Point and Alia Daniels, the Point still  
here... nope... Tashanik Palmer, Future of Tomorrow; nope  
and Mark Tahitsal, Sisters and Brothers United, okay.  
Alright, so I want to swear you in and would you  
raise your right hand please and do you solemnly  
swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth  
and nothing but the truth and to answer council  
member questions honestly?

[panel affirms]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, very good,  
would you like to start? Okay.

1  
2 CHELSEA GREGORY: My name is Chelsea..  
3 [cross-talk]

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yeah, just hit the  
5 button.

6 CHELSEA GREGORY: Okay, can you hear me?

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: There you go.

8 CHELSEA GREGORY: My name is Chelsea  
9 Gregory, I am a Restorative Justice Specialist with  
10 the city council initiative. So, I want to thank you  
11 all again for funding that very, very important  
12 initiative. I've been working as a youth organizer  
13 and educator for over 15 years and having been a  
14 long-time practitioner of Restorative Justice to have  
15 the opportunity to practice it in the Department of  
16 Education has been so amazing and important. So, I  
17 want to start just by saying that I've actually  
18 worked with Academy for Young Writers for three years  
19 and for half of that time, about a year and a half  
20 now I've been able to work at that school in the  
21 capacity of Restorative Justice Specialist so I've  
22 been able to see transformation from the time that  
23 there was support... that there was not support to now  
24 when there is support. I want to say first and  
25 foremost that I have seen how the Restorative Justice

1 Initiative has literally transformed relationships  
2 within the school between students and staff members  
3 who otherwise never had an opportunity to really  
4 understand each other understand where each other was  
5 coming from, create more healthy environments for  
6 learning together and, and to move beyond the  
7 adversarial relationships that are created by zero  
8 tolerance policies and by more traditional  
9 disciplinary measures. I want to also touch on what  
10 many, many panelists have already said today that  
11 just this reality that most of the behavioral  
12 challenges and if not all of the behavioral  
13 challenges that arise within the schools are due to  
14 the stress... stresses and traumas that students are  
15 experiencing both within and, and outside of school  
16 and so Restorative Justice creates space for healing  
17 and creates space for learning rather than  
18 perpetuating those traumas through the zero tolerance  
19 policies. Excuse me. Further Restorative Justice  
20 creates opportunities for us to have structure, have  
21 understanding, have safe spaces for learning without  
22 perpetuating the school to prison pipeline and  
23 alienating students even further, disrupting their  
24 education even further. At AFYW the RJ Initiative has  
25

1  
2 actually cut suspensions drastically, in the Fall of  
3 2015 before the Restorative Justice Initiative was  
4 there in that school there were 53 suspensions, fall  
5 of 2016, this past Fall there were 13 suspensions.  
6 So, the numbers really speak for themselves in that  
7 regard. The direct... the direct onsite support and  
8 coaching around RJ that I've been able to provide  
9 though the city council funding has allowed me to  
10 support the staff and administration through  
11 professional development workshops, one, one on one  
12 and small group coaching, modeling circles,  
13 coordinating Restorative Processes, also helping to  
14 develop and maintain systems for tracking Restorative  
15 Process and I've also had the honor of coordinating  
16 our RJ ambassador's program. They are working on  
17 many, many projects to... they're facilitating..  
18 actively facilitating community building circles  
19 already in the school. They are already part of  
20 facilitating harm circles as well, reentry circles  
21 and we are now working to create a fairness committee  
22 and to develop a multimedia campaign to message the  
23 school's community agreements. So, there are many,  
24 many, many projects that are in the works that would  
25 not be sustainable without this funding so I really

1  
2 encourage you all to consider renewing and also  
3 expanding this funding so that Restorative Justice as  
4 we said before which is not a quick fix, it takes  
5 time to really be... to transform the culture so...  
6 please continue to fund and expand that funding.

7 Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you, next  
9 please.

10 SHAMAR PUSARD: Good afternoon, my name  
11 is Shamar Pusard. I'd like to thank you for the  
12 opportunity to testify on behalf of students from  
13 FRW. We need Restorative Justice funding because  
14 teachers need to focus on worse students who are  
15 struggling academically and additional funding for  
16 Restorative Justice provides staff members that can  
17 focus on Restorative Justice instead of spend...  
18 suspending students which causes students to miss  
19 class effecting their grades students can stay in  
20 school, restore the, the harm they caused and do  
21 community service while still getting their  
22 education. From Restorative Justice students develop  
23 skills that will be useful in our adult lives such as  
24 community building, conflict mediation and bringing  
25 positivity where there's negativity. Restorative

1  
2 Justice have taught students at my school to, to stop  
3 the, the blaming game and take accountability for  
4 your actions while on the other hand suspensions  
5 don't give students the opportunity to reflect on... in  
6 a structured and supportive way. Restorative Justice  
7 have helped my school become a safe community for  
8 students who don't feel safe anywhere else. Students  
9 have to repress... students don't have to repress who  
10 they are, they can express themselves without and  
11 worries. Restorative Justice has also given me a lot  
12 of leadership opportunities such as being a teacher's  
13 assistant for a 9<sup>th</sup> grade class that was struggling  
14 with behavioral issues, leading different circles and  
15 being a mentor for students in different grade  
16 levels. I'd like to ask you to continue to fund  
17 Restorative Justice because the youth of New York  
18 City deserves the opportunity to learn and grow from  
19 the mistakes they made.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much,  
21 thank you for coming in and giving that testimony.  
22 Thank you, next please.

23 NICOLE RILEY: Good afternoon. My name is  
24 Nicole Riley and I'm a member of Teachers Unite and a  
25 Dean at Edward A. Reynolds Westside High School, an

1  
2 alternative transfer school on the upper West side. I  
3 am testifying today on behalf of Teachers Unite  
4 Westside High School Dignity in Schools Campaign, New  
5 York City Educators and most importantly New York  
6 City students. I want to start by thanking the city  
7 council for the 2.4 million dollars they allocated  
8 for the Restorative Practices pilot initiative in  
9 2016. The city council and its members have  
10 historically been a good friend to Westside and other  
11 schools across the city. We want to thank you for all  
12 of your vital initiatives that you have funded. The  
13 most recent 2.4 million dollars for Restorative  
14 Justice has given 25 schools the opportunity to  
15 collaborate and develop restorative justice  
16 structures in their school. So far, we've been able  
17 to reduce suspensions in 80 percent of the pilot  
18 schools, provide trainings to principals and staff,  
19 establish advisory classes and peer mediation groups,  
20 host mentor school visits and create restorative  
21 justice action teams. The list goes on but I only  
22 have three minutes. So, our accomplishments are quite  
23 astounding for the first half of the school year and  
24 we believe that all schools can see similar results  
25 if they are given the resources and the support.

1  
2 However, in order for this happen we have to be  
3 committed to the practice over the long term. As we  
4 know it takes years to shift the culture inside  
5 institutions, it could take up to three to four years  
6 to build meaningful and, and sustainable programs  
7 within our schools. I am asking for the city council  
8 to please continue their support and give five  
9 million to the Restorative Justice project for the  
10 upcoming fiscal school year this way we can build and  
11 expand on the work that we've started. All too often  
12 our school system criminalizes students and suspends  
13 them when they make a bad choice, lose control of  
14 their emotions or get into conflict. What is more  
15 troubling that New York City and schools across the  
16 country disproportionately suspend and criminalize  
17 brown, black youth, special ed students and LGBTQ  
18 youth. Students deserve the opportunity to grow and  
19 learn from mistakes while staying in school.  
20 Restorative Practices provides the structures to make  
21 this happen. Recently we had a graduate come back to  
22 visit at Westside which often happens, this young man  
23 was telling us how great he was doing, he got... he's a  
24 DJ living in Nashville, he went to Brooklyn College,  
25 his show is being syndicated throughout the United

1 States and throughout Canada and this student thanked  
2 myself and my colleagues for dealing with all of his  
3 outbursts and his tantrums when he was a young 17  
4 year old man and he told us that if it weren't for us  
5 and, and the way we worked with him he wouldn't be  
6 there today. There are hundreds of student's stories  
7 like that because kids were treated humanely and not  
8 pushed out of school, if we would of suspended this  
9 student for all of his outbursts he would not have  
10 graduated high school and would not be where he was.  
11 So, in addition to the five million dollars I'm  
12 asking that you continue to fund and expand in the  
13 city council's Restorative Justice Initiative, please  
14 ask the mayor and the city to invest in Restorative  
15 Practices for the next five years as they work to  
16 finalize the city budget.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Just still want to  
19 ask you were... said you were a dean in your school?

20 NICOLE RILEY: Uh-huh.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: It's a little off  
22 topic but it's related to it, have things gotten  
23 better in your school because I don't often get an  
24 opportunity to ask teachers actually out there, have  
25 things gotten better in the schools for gay kids?

1  
2 NICOLE RILEY: I would say yes, I'm  
3 actually gay myself and I'm out at my school but just  
4 in the five years, I mean I just have from my  
5 school's perspective even the kid's tolerance of each  
6 other, they're much more open, I've been there for 12  
7 years and I remember in the beginning, you know we  
8 were... we've always been a safe but trying to be  
9 emotional safe and it... and it wasn't as accepted gay  
10 youth. So it seems like just the peers are much more  
11 accepting, we, we even have open staff, we even have  
12 a trans student and we have trans staff and, and at  
13 Westside we've been able to, to really be supportive  
14 of each other.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Do you use circles in  
16 your Restorative Practices?

17 NICOLE RILEY: Yes.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So do those circles  
19 help with I guess either facilitating the coming out  
20 process or the understanding of what it means to  
21 LGBT, have you seen issues like that come to the  
22 circles?

23 NICOLE RILEY: Yes, I've seen... well the  
24 circle process is it really allow... it, it creates a  
25 space for people to really listen to one another and

1  
2 it gives democracy because even the shy kid has a  
3 moment in that moment to pass... to have their voice  
4 heard or not and so it has created space for those  
5 kind of conversations and for other conversations.

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Have students ever  
7 brought issues about parental acceptance to the  
8 circles?

9 NICOLE RILEY: Oh yeah, for sure.

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Does that remain a  
11 big issue?

12 NICOLE RILEY: For some students, yeah, I  
13 mean for some students it does... there... you know the  
14 parents... some parents, you know we have... we actually  
15 have parents that are queer themselves but then we  
16 also have parents who are like oh no, not my kid and  
17 so each case is different but yeah that's definitely  
18 an issue with kids being pushed out of their homes  
19 and living with aunts or other people.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you.

21 NICOLE RILEY: Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright, next please.

23 MARTSA WITZEL: Hello, my name is Martsa  
24 Witzel. I want to thank the members of the city  
25 council to... for working with the youth to help us

1  
2 improve our schools. I currently attend the high  
3 school of... for Energy and Technology within the Dodge  
4 Campus in the Bronx and I am a Youth Leader at  
5 Sisters and Brothers United and the Urban Youth  
6 Collaborative. I'm here today to urge the city  
7 council to work with us and to get New York City fund  
8 programs and support in schools that will actually  
9 support our needs instead of moving away from the  
10 criminalizing us and pushing us out of school.  
11 Pushing students out of school through suspensions  
12 can cause students to miss out on important time...  
13 class time. Many of the students who are often  
14 suspended are students with disabilities and are in  
15 need of more support and aren't having their needs  
16 met. With... students with disabilities make up 18.7  
17 percent of the student population, they are the 42.7  
18 percent of students that receive long term  
19 suspensions. Currently long term suspension are  
20 served in alternative learning centers taking  
21 students out of their home schools, how many students  
22 who go to alternative learning centers graduate? If  
23 we fully invested, invested in mental health support  
24 for... so students had the support they needed in their  
25 regular school we could divest from the 30 million

1  
2 dollars spent on alternative learning centers each  
3 year. We want more funding for mental health services  
4 to build citywide plans to increase mental health  
5 support for all students. We need the city to invest  
6 7.5 million dollars for... over the next three years.  
7 Thank you for your time and I hope you will consider  
8 this in your next budget.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much  
10 and I think you've heard some of the testimony that's  
11 going on here today, this committee is very  
12 supportive of Restorative Practices in the schools  
13 and we look forward to continuing to be supportive  
14 and, and, and as we move down the budget road  
15 hopefully to fight for additional funding. So, thank  
16 you, thank you very much for coming in.

17 MARTSA WITZEL: Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, if there's  
19 anybody who has not signed up and who wants to speak  
20 you need to get one of these little forms and hand it  
21 in to the Sergeant at Arms but otherwise this is our  
22 last panel. Lucky number 13, 13 panels today.  
23 Alright, we have Johnny Zang from Lunch for Learning,  
24 is Johnny here, okay come on up; Christina Erskin,  
25 Lunch for Learning; Sonya Novicova, Lunch for

1 Learning; Evan Phillips Lunch for Learning; and Shami  
2 Sandoo, Lunch for Learning. Okay and I'd like to  
3 swear you all in so if you'd raise your right hand.  
4 Do you solemnly swear or affirm to tell the truth,  
5 the whole truth and nothing but the truth and to  
6 answer council member questions honestly?  
7

8 [panel affirms]

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, who'd like to  
10 start?

11 CHRISTINA ERSKIN: I'll start.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright.

13 CHRISTINA ERSKIN: So, I'm Christina  
14 Erskin, I'm the Youth Organizer with Community Food  
15 Advocates and I have been advocating for Universal  
16 Free School lunch since I was a senior in high school  
17 and I am now a junior in college but I'm here today  
18 to just present testimony from a young person who  
19 wasn't able to make it today but they testified last  
20 year so I will start. She says, hello, my name is  
21 Jenny Thomas and I'm a student at George Westinghouse  
22 High School. I am also a youth leader, I'm here again  
23 to testify and give my support for universal free  
24 school lunch for all New York City public school  
25 students. A while back I was unaware of the origin of

1  
2 the term called free, free, the word has more meaning  
3 than it seems better yet more impact. Last year when  
4 we were allowed to have cell phones in our school's  
5 students would go out of their way just to take  
6 pictures of people eating school lunch. I happened to  
7 be a victim of the situation and I must admit it got  
8 me highly upset to know that later that night I would  
9 be made fun of on social media. This caused me a lot  
10 of mental stress and it made me not want to show my  
11 face in school, I have a lot of friends and I'm lucky  
12 enough to say that I do not have to depend on school  
13 lunch but this was happening to almost everyone so I  
14 can only imagine what it did to those who knew free  
15 school lunch would be their only meal. I wondered,  
16 did the bullies make the pain unbearable and  
17 overwhelming enough for them to sacrifice health and  
18 cause starvation. I think when it comes to school  
19 lunch the first approach should be to make all school  
20 lunches universally free and soon enough the factors  
21 behind students not eating school lunch will become  
22 obsolete. I'm asking you city council members to  
23 continue to make universal free school lunch a  
24 priority, we need to stop the stigma and get better  
25 access to food in our schools. Thank you for your

1  
2 time and your support on this issue. Thank you so  
3 much.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you, sorry to  
5 hear that you're a junior in college and we still  
6 haven't gotten universal free lunch yet but we're  
7 working on it, we're working on it. Who'd like to go  
8 next? Okay.

9 SONYA NOVICOVA: Hello, my name is Sonya  
10 Novicova and I am a student at New Utrecht High  
11 School in Brooklyn, New York. Thank you everyone for  
12 giving me the opportunity to testify here today. In  
13 my written testimony, I discuss some of the  
14 detrimental effects of the existing school lunch  
15 system but today I will talk specifically about the  
16 school lunch forms. The tedious and intrusive school  
17 lunch forms are a major problem and are often not  
18 filled out. Lunch forms are something we tend to  
19 ignore but when many immigrants come to America they  
20 often flee terror, regimes and horrible circumstances  
21 in their home countries. Therefor when filling out  
22 this information on their financial situation they  
23 often feel paranoid that this will somehow hurt them.  
24 my mother was born in the Soviet Union, she fled a  
25 horrific regime where she had little to no freedoms,

1  
2 in America she had to become accustomed to life here  
3 however that mindset and feeling that she was being  
4 watched and the government knew everything about her  
5 has never left her. These forms may not seem  
6 intrusive to some people but to my family and many  
7 others they are. As a low-income student who stays in  
8 school until five sometimes for extracurricular  
9 activities free school lunch is a necessity however  
10 when my mother's paranoid and frightened to fill out  
11 this form because of her past experience it is  
12 difficult to receive free school lunch. My mother's  
13 terrible experience in an oppressive regime should  
14 not impact me eating school lunch but yet it does. We  
15 must not let bullying happen in the cafeteria, we  
16 must not let these forms get in the way of students  
17 receiving school lunch, we must not let anything get  
18 in the way of learning. Thank you all for giving me  
19 the chance to speak here today on an issue that is so  
20 incredibly important to me and many other students.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much,  
22 next please.

23 EVAN SAMARA PHILLIPS: Hello, my name's  
24 Evan Samara Phillips and I'm currently a junior at  
25 Millennium High School. As a public-school student

1  
2 who doesn't receive school lunch I know that I am in  
3 a very fortunate position. I see myself as an  
4 observer in the lunchroom of the relationships  
5 between students. Often, I have noticed that students  
6 segregate and separate themselves based on who  
7 receives free school lunch and who doesn't. Not  
8 offering free school lunch to all students creates a  
9 lunchroom where students are divided, a lunchroom  
10 where students cannot only loudly but also silently  
11 judge others who get lunch for free. Students without  
12 noticing judge each other because... based on who  
13 receives school lunch and who doesn't, they do this  
14 by staring at them and thinking about why these  
15 differences exist. As a younger student, I was one of  
16 those who judged, I did not judge loudly by calling  
17 other students names but I did judge silently by  
18 gravitating towards students like me and questioning  
19 why some students received school lunch for free.  
20 This silent judgement is just as harmful as the name  
21 calling and verbal insults you hear because it  
22 creates a psychological barrier between those who  
23 receive free school lunch and those who don't. like  
24 many people, I'm approached and chose... I approached  
25 and chose to interact with students, students who had

1  
2 similar traits as me and one of these traits that  
3 stands out in the lunchroom is who eats school versus  
4 who brings school lunch from home... brings lunch from  
5 home. As children, we know no better than to group  
6 with people who are like us, if someone got lunch for  
7 free then he or she was different from me and we  
8 couldn't be friends, we shared nothing in common and  
9 he or she was not from the same background as I was.  
10 There is a reason why they received school lunch and  
11 I didn't and although I may not have been sure of  
12 this reason it was what kept me from exploring the  
13 different cultures and personalities in the  
14 lunchroom. Our schools should not be a place that  
15 encourages students to segregate. Our schools should  
16 be a place where all students are equal and where  
17 students are encouraged to bond regardless of our  
18 differences and whether someone can afford to bring  
19 school lunch from home or not. Universal free school  
20 lunch is one important step towards providing  
21 equality within our schools. Education does not only  
22 happen in the classroom, it happens in places like  
23 the lunch, lunchroom as well. Thank you for taking  
24 the time to listen to my concerns and I hope that we  
25 can work together to create a lunchroom where all

1  
2 students receive free, free school lunch and are  
3 treated equally without regard to their family  
4 income. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you, next  
6 please.

7 SHAMI SANDOO: Good morning, my name is  
8 Shami Sandoo and I'm a junior at Fort Hamilton High  
9 School. I would like to take this opportunity to  
10 speak about the, the effects that the current school  
11 system has on students and how we think about race.  
12 Personally, for me the lunch line in 6<sup>th</sup> grade was  
13 the first time I became of my family's financial  
14 status and later I learned to associate race with  
15 that concept and like myself many students, the lunch  
16 lines are the first time where students become  
17 conscious of the concept of social status and they  
18 begin to associate race with financial status.  
19 Standing in line every day for five days a week for  
20 nine months for many, many years can have quite a  
21 significant impact on you and I, I used to think that  
22 dark skin was associated with a lower financial  
23 status and white skin was considered with being rich  
24 and unfortunately... fortunately I grew out of this  
25 toxic idea however many, many students that I know

1 hold on to those notions for the rest of their lives  
2 and, and... excuse me... it's not their fault because we  
3 are partially responsible for the system for failing  
4 them and the school does reinforce racial stereotypes  
5 when students see the ethnicities of the people who  
6 go up to receive free lunch it causes students even  
7 the ones that are standing on the line to sublimely  
8 form preconceived notions and toxic stereotypes about  
9 those specific races and this is important because  
10 school is where students learn to socialize and where  
11 they form many notions and among these notions may be  
12 stereotypes and the, the students who do form these  
13 stereotypes grow up to be members of society and as  
14 adults they may spread intolerance and hate and when  
15 they come of the age to vote they may vote against...  
16 they may... they may vote for the wrong things and vote  
17 against the lower class, the, the best interest of  
18 the lower class and this contributes to the racial  
19 tension that we have in this country and the cycle of  
20 racism that is prominent in this country and it feeds  
21 into the division of people rather than working  
22 towards unity. If young people are truly the future  
23 of the country then why are we exposing them to such  
24 toxic ideas about race that contributes to racial  
25

1  
2 division. If you want students to live in a more  
3 unified America than we do then we shouldn't maintain  
4 the current system of lunch that divides students up.  
5 Ultimately the current system of lunch is toxic to  
6 the mental and moral development of students and I  
7 believe that New York should catch up to cities like  
8 Washington D.C. and Boston who already have universal  
9 free lunch implemented and please help us and  
10 exposing youth to this toxic class system and prevent  
11 young people from forming prejudicial notions that  
12 will feed into the cycle of racism. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much,  
14 would you like to speak?

15 JOHNNY ZANE: So my name is Johnny Zane,  
16 junior at Brooklyn Technical High School. I'm here  
17 today as a speaker of teenagetic as well as the Youth  
18 Justice League. To give a little background I never  
19 had to pay for my school lunch as my dad is a truck  
20 driver, so he has a pretty low income. The only way I  
21 can mess this up is if I don't fill out my lunch form  
22 before the deadline but it's intimidating with all  
23 the blanks and technical terms and things happen and  
24 so I forgot but because of this I got to experience  
25 what it's like not to be eligible for free lunch. It

1  
2 was not a pleasant experience since I wake up to an  
3 hour commute every day I don't really have time for  
4 breakfast. My first meal should be lunch but as I  
5 mentioned before I didn't fill out the lunch form  
6 before... I didn't fill out the lunch form last year,  
7 so how do I get lunch and it's simple, I didn't. this  
8 caused a lot of problems for me, the most important  
9 of which being the amount of energy I have in school  
10 or rather the lack of it as I found myself nodding  
11 off during tests in chemistry and even during my  
12 favorite class that year, digital electronics and you  
13 know it's bad when you fall asleep in your favorite  
14 class and to think all this happened because I forgot  
15 to fill out a lunch form. You may fault me for this  
16 and I fault myself too but ladies and, and gentlemen  
17 let me ask you this, can you fault the people who  
18 aren't eligible for free lunch, is it their fault  
19 that their parents made slightly above the  
20 eligibility cut off, can you punish... really punish  
21 these children for having parents that work hard to  
22 give their kids a better future to make sure that  
23 kids don't ever have to drive loud trucks around  
24 every day making barely enough to get their family  
25 through life, no, however isn't that exactly what the

1  
2 school is doing, we're blaming students and parents  
3 when the... when the school lunch system is unfair and  
4 unequal. Not having universal free school lunch is  
5 detrimental for students not just physically, not  
6 just emotionally but mentally as well. Its harming  
7 our futures, it's putting more obstacles than would  
8 otherwise be existent so with that said ladies and  
9 gentlemen, city councilors I thank you for your  
10 support and I hope you continue to fight for  
11 universally free school lunch and better everyone's  
12 future and beyond as the students are our future.  
13 Again, thank you very much for your time.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you again and  
15 let me ask very bright and persuasive group of lunch...  
16 free lunch advocates, how did you get involved in  
17 Lunch for Learning?

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yeah, anybody.

19 ALIA C. DANIELS: Anybody... [cross-talk]

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: How did you find out  
21 about the issue and get involved and know to come to  
22 City Hall because I don't... you know we... most young  
23 people wouldn't know how to go about advocating for  
24 this.

25

1  
2 JOHNNY ZANE: Well actually last year as  
3 I mentioned before I did actually forget to fill out  
4 the lunch form so I actually got to experience like  
5 not having any energy and, and the way I got involved  
6 in this was my friend actually wanted to start a club  
7 about that which introduced me to the Youth Justice  
8 League and teenagenics and that's how I got involved  
9 in, in this campaign.

10 SHAMI SANDOO: I got involved as a  
11 student in high school because I attended the Academy  
12 for Environmental Leadership where we were looking at  
13 different food justice issues and young people wanted  
14 to focus on issues that directly impacted them and we  
15 began to look at the different issues around school  
16 lunch and how access is the first like fundamental  
17 step that it will take to really equalize everything.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: That's great, anybody  
19 else?

20 SONYA NOVICOVA: Yeah, so I found the  
21 application through... like through people pass where  
22 like the school sends you information and stuff and  
23 it was like an issue that I definitely... I didn't  
24 really give much thought into but it was always there  
25 and then when like... when I read about the campaign

1  
2 and everything I... like everything kind of clicked and  
3 I realized that this is such a major issue but I  
4 really never gave much thought into it.

5 MARTSA WITZEL: Well I actually start off  
6 working at a soup kitchen near my house on the upper  
7 Westside and I really wanted to have a bigger role in  
8 my community advocating for students my age so I was  
9 referred to this group and that's how.

10 NICOLE RILEY: I, I am the president of  
11 the Human Rights Activist Club at my school and the  
12 teacher in charge of that club, the club advisor sent  
13 me an application and he recommended me to Youth  
14 Justice League and that's how I got to be here.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Its great and it's  
16 great to see so many young people here in the  
17 audience today. Now I, I hope everybody knows also  
18 that you can be members of your community boards, 16  
19 years old and above can become members of the  
20 community board by going to their council member and  
21 asking for the council member to nominate you for the  
22 community board and because I have this opportunity  
23 to speak to so many involved people I would urge you  
24 to do that and to bring these issues to the community  
25 boards as well to build the political power, to push

1  
2 the powers that be in the right direction in terms of  
3 school lunches as well. So, thank you for coming in,  
4 we do have two other people who are going to give  
5 testimony, I thought we would have 13 lucky panels  
6 but it looks like we have 14 lucky panels. So, I'm  
7 going to ask them to come up but thank you all for  
8 coming in.

9 JOHNNY ZANE: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Alright, Alia  
11 Daniels, you here, okay; Oshan, Oshanique Palmer.  
12 Alright. Is that everybody, anybody else want to  
13 testify? If you do you just come up here and the  
14 Sergeant at Arms will give you a form. Okay and Alia,  
15 am I saying your name right? Alright, Alia go ahead.  
16 Oh, let me swear you in, I'm sorry, I have to swear  
17 everybody in. Would you raise your right hand, do you  
18 solemnly swear or affirm... oh we have a... is that... are  
19 you Ashanike, oh great, okay. would you both raise  
20 your right hand then, yeah, okay. Do you solemnly  
21 swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth  
22 and nothing but the truth and to answer council  
23 member questions honestly? Okay, Alia would you  
24 start.

1  
2 ALIA C. DANIELS: Hello, my name is Alia  
3 C. Daniels. I am a high school student the Hunts  
4 point area who is a part of a teen activist group  
5 called Action in a local community organization known  
6 as the Point CDC. Recently we're... and I have recently  
7 worked with the Urban Youth Collaborative. As a  
8 young... as a young person living in New York City who  
9 actively advocates for positive changes in our  
10 community I along with my fellow peers believe it is  
11 crucial to share what we believe our city council  
12 should invest this money in if we are to create a  
13 more just educational system for all NYC youth. A  
14 year ago, I went through a string of depression due  
15 to personal family issues and it effected my mood and  
16 academic performance but there was no one to talk to  
17 in my school but always the school safety agent to  
18 monitor my movement and deem my depressive state as  
19 insubordination or suspicion in order to give me an  
20 extra pat down of the day or look through my book  
21 bag. And I could personally speak this did not help  
22 my depressive state it only made it worse. How come  
23 my school has 23 safety agents to police my movements  
24 and one guidance counselor to help, help me aid and  
25 mental issues for 2,000 youth. The Department of

1  
2 Education spent 400 million every year for the NYPD  
3 to police us for funding, discipline childs or  
4 arresting students for minor infractions and placing  
5 us in alternative schools but not enough to hire  
6 guidance counselors, mental health professionals and  
7 institute Restorative Justice Practices. We ask you  
8 that you invest 66 million dollars in, in Restorative  
9 Justice Practices and seven million in Mental Health  
10 supports in our public school and divest from NYPD  
11 safety to pay for these investments. I... if you  
12 believe as I do that the youth of the city are worth  
13 the investment we kindly ask that you add this to the  
14 city budget, budget of this year. Thank you for...  
15 thank you for the opportunity to testify and we look  
16 forward to work... to working with you and making this  
17 happen very soon.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much,  
19 next please.

20 ASHANIKE PALMER: So I know it's not part  
21 of the education budget but I feel like it will be...  
22 able to cover it so. Good afternoon, my name is  
23 Ashanike Palmer, I am a youth leader... youth organizer  
24 with FOT, Future of Tomorrow and UYC, Urban Youth  
25 Collaborative. I am a senior at Academy of Innovative

1  
2 Technology. Over the past year my school started an  
3 employment program for students. School... sorry.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Just go right ahead,  
5 listen... [cross-talk]

6 ASHANIKE PALMER: Sorry... [cross-talk]

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I'm glad to have you  
8 here because I want to hear from the students, this  
9 is the first time we've ever had this many students  
10 here... [cross-talk]

11 ASHANIKE PALMER: Okay... [cross-talk]

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...so we'll stay here  
13 till midnight if you want to talk.

14 ASHANIKE PALMER: Okay. School  
15 administration work alongside with students in the  
16 school office, libraries, labs, etcetera. I witnessed  
17 students connect more with each other and in... with  
18 each other and in school community. A lot of my peers  
19 were able to receive their first job from this  
20 program. Students had their chance... students had the  
21 chance to gain their education and employment in the  
22 same place which lead to... which led to an increase  
23 in... which led to an increase in attendance and  
24 students academics and possible increase graduation  
25 rate. Thousands of students apply each year yet only

1 a few get accepted. Students do not graduate..  
2 students... sorry, students do not complete school  
3 because they feel the need to get a job which brings  
4 the graduation rate down. Universal... universal youth  
5 employment allows students across the city to work on  
6 building life skills, help them to get ready for  
7 future employment and future opportunities. The city  
8 benefit when we start paying taxes. When the city..  
9 when the city invests in youths especially in  
10 communities serve low income family those families  
11 can become financial stable. The city council support  
12 universals and.. universal youth employment in which  
13 we highly thankful. This program can be successful,  
14 increase the youth employment but there are many more  
15 opportunities that we could take for advantage. This  
16 was the first time my school offered this opportunity  
17 and it was a great experience. We're asking the city  
18 to continue funding universal job opportunity for  
19 students across the city. Thank you.  
20

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: That's great. Where  
22 are you, where... were you... you were in the program,  
23 right?

24 ASHANIKE PALMER: Yes.

25 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Where did you work?

1  
2 ASHANIKE PALMER: I worked with Future  
3 of... well I first started off working in Staples and  
4 then I transfer in the school year to Future of  
5 Tomorrow.

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: That's great, so you  
7 know and you started off I think by saying you  
8 weren't sure if it was part of this committee's  
9 prevue but anything that goes on in schools is  
10 something we want to know about so it's really  
11 important that we hear about it and I think that the  
12 program you're talking about is a program that the  
13 city council funded to keep youth employed throughout  
14 the year. So it's a very important program to us, so  
15 I want to say thank you for coming down, I remember  
16 when I first came to the city council to give  
17 testimony I think I was about 45 or something like  
18 that, many moons ago and... but I sat over there and I  
19 gave testimony on a street renaming for a young gay  
20 kid that was killed and I was wondering like, you  
21 know why all this whole process was like very  
22 unfamiliar to me but eventually I grew into it and  
23 now look at me, you know I'm, I'm chairing the, the  
24 hearing. So, I want you to keep at it, keep, you know  
25 talking truth to power so to speak, I don't think I'm

1  
2 so powerful but I, I do have the chairpersonship at  
3 this committee and I just want to encourage you all  
4 to keep coming back and, and to providing that type  
5 of testimony, it means an awful lot to... especially to  
6 the education committee because before I was elected  
7 to the council I was a public-school teacher for 25  
8 years. So, I do want to hear the stories of our  
9 students and that being said this group over here, is  
10 this Urban Youth Collaborative, raise your hand Urban  
11 Youth Collaborative, alright hands down. Make the  
12 Road New York, alright hands down. Lunch for  
13 Learning... Lunch for Learning is it, alright hands  
14 down. What group is over here, you can shout it out,  
15 anybody organize group. What is it?

16 [off-mic]

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: All of... all of you  
18 are Urban Youth Collaborative, alright, let's give  
19 them a round of applause, we can do that too.

20 [applause]

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And I guess with that  
22 this meeting is adjourned at 5:02 p.m. in the  
23 afternoon. Thank you all for coming in.

24 [gavel]

25

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date

April 10, 2017