



**Department of  
Youth & Community  
Development**

**NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL**

**COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**OVERSIGHT HEARING: ADULT EDUCATION  
PROGRAMS AND ADULT LITERACY**

**RONG ZHANG**

**SENIOR DIRECTOR, ADULT EDUCATION**

**SEPTEMBER 20, 2017**

Good morning Chairman Dromm and members of the Committee on Education. My name is Rong Zhang, and I am the Senior Director for Adult Education at the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD). Thank you for the chance to testify today, and for the City Council's strong support of adult literacy programs over the years.

For over 30 years, DYCD has been administering adult literacy programs through community-based organizations (CBOs) across New York City. DYCD funds and supports a broad network of CBOs to ensure our City's diverse communities have access to a range of reading, writing, English-language and high school equivalency programs. With services and locations in local neighborhoods, CBOs have strong roots in local communities and have established trust with community members. Adult students and older youth who had bad experiences and struggled to succeed in traditional school settings, are attracted to academic programs in their communities. By attending neighborhood-based adult literacy classes, they take the critical next steps toward raising their literacy levels and completing their education, while becoming better positioned for employment and economic opportunities. CBO based literacy programs also offer the benefit of being located in multi-service organizations with cultural and linguistic competence, enabling them to provide services and supports in a holistic manner under one roof – this is especially attractive for immigrant New Yorkers.

In Fiscal Year 2017, 90 DYCD funded adult literacy programs served over 14,000 New Yorkers. Instructional services were offered to students:

- at least 16 years of age, and not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law
- who lacked sufficient mastery of basic educational skills, lacked a high school diploma or who were unable to speak, read, or write the English language to participate in education, training or employment.

Programs assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency and to pursue further education. Adult Basic Education (ABE) and High School Equivalency (HSE) programs provide instruction in reading, writing, and mathematics and prepare students for the HSE tests. English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs provide instruction to increase basic English language communication skills. All programs provide classes that meet a minimum of six hours per week. Classes offer flexible hours and are available in the morning, afternoon and evening to meet the needs of participants.

We thank the City Council for working with the Mayor to add \$12 million in adult literacy funding in Fiscal Year 2017. With the portion that DYCD received, we expanded adult literacy program slots and strengthened program capacity and quality, so that students can achieve better learning outcomes. Literacy Assistance Center – our literacy technical assistance provider – offered increased professional development trainings for DYCD's community based literacy providers. Due to the strong support of Council Member Menchaca and the City Council, the adopted Fiscal Year 2018 budget included again, a one year allocation of \$12 million for adult literacy programs.

Given the tremendous demand and need for adult literacy programs in New York City, it is vital to maximize existing resources. Towards this end, we work with DOE and HRA to increase access to existing adult literacy programs. For example, we have worked to connect DOE's adult literacy programs to DYCD's Beacon and Cornerstone programs. DOE's programs provide teachers, while DYCD's Beacon and Cornerstone community centers offer space to house classes. DYCD and HRA staff provided joint orientation sessions to adult literacy providers on HRA's employment services programs and their clients. Our program locations and capacity are shared with HRA programs to facilitate referral, collaboration and coordination of services.

To conclude my testimony today, I'd like to briefly address Intro 1195. While DYCD is in the process of upgrading its program databases, we are prepared to work with the Mayor's Office of Operations, Mayor's Office of Workforce Development, or another designee of the Mayor, to provide the info for this annual adult education report. However, we suggest that the release date of the annual report is pushed back from June 1, to allow for a full fiscal year to be reported on. We welcome the opportunity to meet with the City Council after today's hearing, to further discuss this bill.

Thank you again for the chance to testify today. We look forward to our continued partnership with the City Council to support adult literacy programs. I'm ready to answer any questions you may have.

**Testimony of the New York City Department of Education  
on Adult and Continuing Education and Intro No. 1195**

**Before the New York City Council Committee on Education**

September 20, 2017

Good morning Chair Dromm and Members of the City Council Committee on Education. My name is Laura Feijoo, and I am the Senior Supervising Superintendent at the New York City Department of Education (DOE). I am joined by Vernon Kellman, Director of Data and Accountability in DOE's Office of Adult Continuing Education (OACE). We are pleased to be here today to discuss our work to provide high-quality adult educational programming to City residents and Intro No. 1195. I thank the City Council for your work to support adult education, and I thank the Council's Education Committee for this opportunity.

OACE's mission is to empower adults in their roles as parents, family members, workers, and community members through a continuum of services. Last year, we offered over 700 tuition-free classes to over 50,000 adults 21 and older at over 200 sites in all five boroughs including OACE Adult Learning Centers, public schools, and many community- and faith-based organizations.

The majority of OACE programs are funded by a prescriptive New York State Employment Preparation Education (EPE) grant from the New York State Education Department (NYSED). This grant provides approximately \$30 million in annual funding. By law, the majority of EPE dollars must be used to serve students 21 years old or older who do not hold a U.S. high school credential. Students 21 years or older who have a high school diploma from another country may also be served by EPE-funded programs.

Federal funding for OACE includes a five-year Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) grant and a \$440,000 Vocational and Technical Education Act (VATEA) annual award. We also received approximately \$9 million in City funding this year to support adult education services.

We are particularly proud of the diverse student population served by OACE's programming. Last year, we served students representing more than 182 countries. The average age of an OACE student is 39 years old. 60 percent of our students are women and 80 percent are low income.

To meet the varying needs of our students, OACE offers classes weekdays in the morning, afternoon, and evening, and on Saturdays. These options are available on a year-round basis. Our adult learners can participate in classes at any of our sites regardless of borough of residence. Student admissions to most of our programs is rolling, and program applicants participate in a registration process that includes an overview session, intake interview, assessment, and orientation. Prospective students can register by visiting any of our Adult Learning Centers.

The majority of students we serve seek English as a Second Language (ESOL) support, and most enter our program performing at the lowest English proficiency levels. While ESOL instruction



teaches students basic language skills and the academic skills they will need to successfully complete higher education or job training programs, Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Adult Secondary Education (ASE) classes prepare students for the high school equivalency test. Each year, roughly one percent of OACE's students enter at or above the ninth grade math and reading level required to access the high school equivalency curriculum.

OACE also has a Career and Technical Education (CTE) program serving over 3,000 students at seven sites across the City. Our CTE program has a workforce development focus: many students complete our classes and gain industry knowledge and State certifications, allowing them to pursue meaningful employment and/or post-secondary education. Our CTE course offerings range from basic computer literacy to certified nursing assistant, automotive, and construction programs.

All OACE classes are taught by certified teachers, and use high-quality, standards-aligned curricula. OACE teachers receive ongoing, high-quality professional development through a collaboration with the New York City Regional Adult Education Network (RAEN). The RAEN is an NYSED-contracted entity funded to provide professional development, training, and other support to all federal- and State-funded adult literacy programs in the City. In addition, since 2014, we have invested in additional intensive professional development for 400 ABE and ASE teachers and hired additional math teachers to work with students and teachers.

Over the past five years, OACE has seen a steady increase in student performance. The percentage of our students showing one or more year of growth per the federal National Reporting Standards increased from 50 percent in 2012 to 71 percent in 2017.

The number of OACE students receiving their high school equivalency (HSE) since New York State introduced the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC) in 2014 has declined—as it has across the State. In fiscal year 2014, the last year of the previous assessment, 565 OACE students took the HSE exam. This number decreased to 316 test takers in fiscal year 2015, the first full year of testing under the new assessment. However, the pass rate improved in fiscal year 2015, with 95 percent of OACE test takers earning a HSE diploma as compared to 89 percent in fiscal year 2014.

To ensure that the services of OACE are widely known, OACE hired eight full-time community liaisons last year. Their primary responsibility is to engage with community leaders, elected officials, and other City agencies, and attend events throughout the city advertising class availability. Additionally, flyers advertising class availability are distributed five times per year with supermarket circulars across the city, and the DOE placed paid ads in subways, ethnic and community print outlets, and online promoting adult education programs and locations throughout the City. We also maintain Literacy Zone drop-in centers at OACE learning centers in Manhattan, the Bronx, Queens, and Brooklyn that connect students to OACE's classes and other City resources to assist them with housing, legal, medical, employment, and other needs. OACE has also established numerous collaborations with community-based and faith-based organizations.

Within the DOE itself, OACE partners with other divisions. Family engagement and collaboration are top priorities for OACE, as 44 percent of OACE students are parents, with a total of approximately 15,000 children in City public schools. OACE works regularly with the DOE's Division of Family and Community Engagement (FACE) and participates in many of the family engagement activities held across the City. For example, OACE staff presented and distributed materials to parent coordinators during their quarterly conferences and professional development workshops. Additionally, OACE staff participated in the Citywide Native Language Family Engagement conferences.

With support from the City Council, OACE is also part of the Community Schools initiative, one of the key educational initiatives of this Administration. This collaboration has enabled community schools, community-based organizations, and OACE to work in tandem to deliver free, accessible, high quality adult education services in 22 community schools across the City, serving over 400 adults. I want to thank the City Council for funding this initiative. This year we are expanding the initiative to additional schools.

At this time, I would like to briefly address the proposed legislation.

Intro. No. 1195 requires the Mayor's Office of Operations to report on adult literacy programs offered by the City or pursuant to a contract with the City. We support the goal of this legislation to ensure transparency. However, we would welcome the opportunity to meet with the City Council after the hearing to ensure that the reporting parameters the Council establishes align to existing reporting systems and those of the NYSED-funded program database, so that we have one streamlined set of reports and data systems as opposed to overlapping, duplicative systems.

We are committed to ensuring that NYC residents have access to high-quality education. We know we have more work to do and look forward to our continued partnership with the City Council.



**FOR THE RECORD**

Testimony of Dr. Leslee Oppenheim  
University Director Language and Literacy Programs  
The City University of New York

Submitted to the New York City Council Committee on Education

Wednesday, September 20, 2017

Thank you, Councilmember Daniel Dromm and members of the Council Committee on Education, for the opportunity to submit testimony about CUNY's Adult Education Programs and Adult Literacy. As a partner in the City's efforts to support adult learners, the City's University, CUNY, offers excellent educational programs and services specifically designed to respond to the needs of adult literacy students in New York City.

The CUNY Adult Literacy/High School Equivalency (HSE)/ESL Program has been in continuous operation for more than three decades, providing free classes to over 8,000 students a year in ESL, Pre-HSE/HSE and math classes. While the program operates on 14 campuses of CUNY, it is self-supporting through grant funding from the City and State—which has been level, with no increases, for decades. Since the Program's inception, more than 200,000 adults and out-of-school youth have learned to speak, read and write English, build their literacy and math skills, and last year alone, 600 students earned their high school equivalency diploma—in the CUNY Adult Literacy Program.

With English language skills and a high school equivalency credential, doors open to adults, providing access to the full range of post-secondary degree and non-degree vocational training programs at CUNY. And with improved language and literacy skills and a high school equivalency credential, adults gain access to new and improved forms of employment. Add to that the enhanced civic integration that comes with greater education, the dual-generation benefits of parents' greater capacity to support their children's education, more informed access to and utilization of health care services, greater self-advocacy in the workplace, and it becomes clear that investment in adult literacy education is a sound investment to make.

CUNY's adult literacy services, operating in the City's communities as they do, and on very limited grant resources, closely resemble CBO adult literacy programs—they are small, personal, operate on very meager funding, and are expert in responding to the needs—both academic and non-academic—of a deserving population of New York City adults. The campus-based programs have a significant impact on these individuals and serve as catalysts for change in the communities in which they are housed. It would be of great benefit if more of the City's adult literacy resources could be made available to the Adult Literacy Program at CUNY.

Through one time funding of \$4.2M from the Council three years ago, 3,500 new adult literacy students were able to be served in ESL and pre-HSE/HSE classes. The funding ended, and has not been renewed, leaving 3,500 students without a publicly-funded classroom seat. There are currently over 8,000 adults on wait lists at the fourteen campuses of CUNY that offer adult literacy services. With its long track record of providing outstanding instructional services and pathways for students to college and career training, with an influx of additional funding, the CUNY Adult Literacy Program has the capacity to serve these students well.

The location of adult literacy programming on a CUNY campus serves to provide college transition support and linkages with a wide array of credit and non-credit degree and certificate programs. Studying adult literacy at CUNY means close linkages with highly regarded next step programs such as CUNY Start and CLIP, which help students to avoid remediation; and ASAP, a national model, which leads to far higher graduation rates for students at risk of not completing their studies. CUNY's Adult Literacy Program also serves as a laboratory for the creation of innovative curricula, greatly needed instructional resources and professional development for a largely part-time instructional workforce. These materials and resources are widely recognized for their effectiveness and are available at no charge to teachers in New York City and New York State.

We are grateful to the City for the steadfast support of CUNY's Adult Literacy Program over these many years. It is support, though, that has not increased, and no longer adequately meets the great need. We are a trusted provider of adult literacy services, and it's fair to say that CUNY's campus adult literacy programs are of excellent quality. Indeed, our data show this clearly and we welcome a review of our data by the City. Were the resources available, enrollment--particularly in ESL and HSE classes--could easily double through little more than word of mouth throughout the City's communities.

The leadership of New York City government has long recognized the importance of providing educational opportunities for low-income adult learners-- immigrants and non-immigrants alike---to help them enter the labor force and move up economically. We at CUNY are proud to be an essential partner in the network of adult literacy providers and ask that the Council recognize the significant role that CUNY's Adult Literacy Program plays in the City and our need for inclusion in any increased adult literacy funding.

Thank you.

## City Council Testimony

September 20, 2017

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Good afternoon Chairman Dromm and members of the Committee on Education. I am Stacie Evans, Literacy Advisor in WKDEV, the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development. My job is to coordinate and support the integration of adult education in New York City's workforce system and to support the strengthening and expansion of adult education services. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today about the City's approach to adult education. As a former adult literacy instructor and program director with twenty-five years in the field, I thank the Council for its ongoing focus on adult literacy.

WKDEV is tasked to work with agency partners, employers, labor, education and training providers, philanthropy, and community stakeholders to reshape the City's workforce system into one that more effectively meets the education, training, and employment needs of city residents and employers. WKDEV's goals are to a) build skills employers seek, b) improve job quality, and c) increase system and policy coordination. A strong adult education system is critical to both the skill-building and coordination goals, and the goal of creating a more coordinated system is critical to the delivery of strong adult education services that meet the varied needs of adult learners and jobseekers.

The adult literacy landscape in New York City includes programs and services offered through the Department of Education, the City University of New York, the three public library systems, and the many community-based programs that contract with the Department of Youth and Community Development. Funding to support these programs comes from city, state, and federal funding streams as well as private foundations. We gratefully acknowledge the Council's long history of supporting adult education, particularly the allocation of \$6 million for adult education programming in the FY17 budget, matching the City's level of support. That funding enabled the system to serve more learners and to extend its reach to parents in Community Schools. We appreciate Council's renewed matching allocation in FY18 and look forward to continuing our partnership with Council to support adult education.

Adult literacy services offered include:

- **English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).**
- **Young Adult Literacy and Adult Basic Education (ABE)** – classes providing basic skills instruction for youth and adults with reading and math levels below 9th grade.

- **High School Equivalency (HSE)** – classes for youth and adults with 10th to 12th grade reading and math levels prepares students to earn their HSE diploma.

Adult literacy plays an important role in the City's workforce system vision. Research of middle-skill jobs in key industry sectors shows that nearly 90 percent of those jobs require a high school diploma. However, a large share of customers served by City workforce development programs lack basic literacy, numeracy, and/or English proficiency skills. Therefore, many of these New Yorkers do not qualify for the vast majority of jobs. Adult literacy programming, then, is the first step of the Career Pathways framework for these New Yorkers, providing access to the training and credentials needed to obtain good jobs.

At present, the City serves roughly 70,000 adults and older youth in its adult education programs. Adult literacy programs are a critical support, helping prepare New Yorkers for higher-wage jobs by providing education programs to jobseekers with limited levels of educational attainment, building necessary foundations skills for youth and adults who are not yet ready for college, training, or career-track jobs.

Turning to the proposed Intro 1195, we very much support the goals of the bill and we will work with the Council to align the text with the data we can capture. Our Career Pathways and Common Metrics databases will facilitate the compilation of the system-wide data needed.

In closing, thank you again for the chance to testify today. WKDEV looks forward to working with the Council on our shared goal of supporting adult education to help New Yorkers develop their skills. Once my colleagues finish their testimony, I am happy to answer any questions.



## **Testimony of the United Federation of Teachers — Sept. 20, 2017**

**Regarding a local law to amend New York City's administrative code  
to require the mayor's office of operations to report on adult literacy programs**

**Presented by PATRICIA CRISPINO, SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE, Adult Education Chapter,  
before the New York City Council Committee on Education**

Good day, Chairman Dromm and members of the Education Committee. My name is Patricia Crispino and I am a special representative for the Adult Education Chapter of the United Federation of Teachers (UFT). I want to thank you for this opportunity to offer supplemental testimony to what you've just heard from UFT Vice President Sterling Roberson on the city's adult literacy programs.

The Department of Education's Office of Adult and Continuing Education runs more than 900 tuition-free classes in adult basic education, high school equivalency preparation, English for speakers of other languages, and career and technical education for adults age 21 and above.

The Department of Education's funding stream for its adult education programs is largely dependent upon money from the state's Employment Preparation Education Program, commonly called EPE. Through EPE, the state provides funds to public school districts so they can provide adults with education opportunities leading to a high school diploma or a high school equivalency diploma.

The EPE aid formula is based on the valuation of property in a school district, meaning New York City has a much lower reimbursement rate than other localities and a cap on funding that limits services to a high-needs population. This cap negatively affects the ability of the city to serve the adults who need to earn a High School Equivalency Diploma or acquire English language skills to become contributing members of the community as taxpayers and consumers.

We urge the City Council to use its influence with the State Education Department to press for greater equity in EPE funding for the city's adult education programs.

Recently, at a UFT Executive Board meeting, one of our Adult Education Chapter members spoke passionately about providing services to adults in our community: "They need our help; they need someone who is able to help them get from point A to point B." Is there any more important mission in education than helping someone advance toward their goals regardless of their age?

We know we're all on the same page when it comes to helping our communities. With more equitable funding from the state, we can make dreams come true for our neighbors. Thank you.



## Testimony of the United Federation of Teachers — Sept. 20, 2017

Regarding a local law to amend New York City's administrative code  
to require the mayor's office of operations to report on adult literacy programs

Presented by **STERLING ROBERSON, VICE PRESIDENT, Career and Technical High Schools**  
before the **New York City Council Committee on Education**

Good morning, Chairman Dromm and members of the Education Committee. My name is Sterling Roberson and I am the vice president for career and technical education for the United Federation of Teachers. On behalf of our union's more than 200,000 members, I thank you for this opportunity to testify for the city's adult literacy programs. We are also pleased to weigh in on your bill, Int. No. 1195, requiring the mayor's office of operations to report on adult literacy programs offered by the city or before a contract is signed with the city.

First, we would like to acknowledge the New York City Council as a leading voice advocating for access and equity in our public schools. With respect to the unique class of students we're discussing today — many of whom head families with children who attend the city's public schools — your oversight is of particular importance. Motivated to achieve academically to gain the credentials to help them succeed in life, the 41,000 adult students taking courses through the Office of Adult and Continuing Education deserve all the support we can provide.

We support the mandated reporting proposed in Int. No. 1195 on the city's adult education programs. We applaud Council members Carlos Menchaca, Julissa Ferraras-Copeland and the other members of the Education Committee who have taken the lead in seeking the admissions information, intake criteria and other pertinent data on these important programs. Further, we appreciate your focus on adult students identified as speakers of other languages as well as those adults seeking basic education classes, general education classes and classes created to improve adult literacy skills.

### **Why adult education matters**

Adult students, who lack high school or general education diplomas and who, in many cases, are learning English, are classified as high-needs students. According to the Office of Adult and Continuing Education's online brochure, 60 percent of its adult students read at or below grade 6 and more than 50 percent of English-as-a-second-language students are rated as "beginning literacy." Moreover, more than 80 percent of its students are African-American or Black, and Hispanic or Latino; the vast majority was born outside the United States. To give you a fuller picture, more than 80 percent of the students are low-income; 25 percent are unemployed; the average age is 39 and two-thirds are women.



The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics revealed the strong relationship between educational attainment, earnings and employment in its 2016 *Career Outlook* profile. The median weekly pay for a worker with below a high school degree was \$493, with a high school diploma, \$678 and with an associate's degree, \$798. The UFT and the members of this committee fully understand the difficulty of living near or below the poverty level while raising families in our high cost-of-living city. Earning more money depends upon having more education and getting more training. OACE offers career and technical education leading to industry and state certification. But without the requisite literacy skills to garner at minimum a general education diploma, these adults face steep obstacles to realizing long-term earning potential.

The UFT believes that all students deserve great schools. Our advocacy is not limited to youngsters and teens matriculating in pre-school through grade 12. The union's Adult Education Chapter represents almost 200 full-time and 400 part-time educators dedicated to teaching adults enrolled in OACE classes across the city. Teaching adults is not the same as teaching children. Our members, professional and certified adult educators, have a long history serving adult learners. They are experts on this population who seek basic skills and the economic stability that comes with literacy and credentials.

### **Listening is key**

During the past three years, we've had some real differences of opinion with the DOE with respect to OACE's policy and program changes. In particular, our members questioned changes in a policy regarding low-achieving students and English-as-a-second-language students deemed non-literate who are now being counseled out of OACE courses into programs run by other adult education providers.

Our union's advocacy for our students to have access to quality education programs and services delivered by certified professionals skilled to meet their unique challenges is well known. Members of the Adult Education Chapter embody the guiding mission of OACE to educate all adults over 21 years of age, who live in New York City and register for the courses. For our members, teaching is more than a career – it's a calling. They equate their students learning conditions with their working conditions. Ultimately, shifting the characteristics of the student population, altering admissions criteria or transitioning OACE students to other programs where educators may not have equivalent certification is a matter for consultation.

### **Collaboration: A step in the right direction**

We collectively bargained a new contract in 2014 with the city for a greater educator voice, in consultation with the Department of Education as well as in schools, regarding many aspects of our practice.

Throughout the past year and during the summer, the UFT intervened with the DOE on behalf of the Adult Education Chapter and the students they serve. These negotiations are complex, and we are pleased that the Department of Education is working with us. This collaborative approach to

problem-solving simply makes sense. We all know that when we work together, looking for real solutions, our students benefit.

To that end, the UFT and the DOE have agreed to expand the Adult Education Chapter consultation committee to ensure our members' voices and expertise are heard and that issues are brought to the forefront and quickly resolved. The committee will now include officers from central UFT as well as officials from central DOE. The first committee meeting of the year will be scheduled soon. Plus, we anticipate resolving a number of personnel issues in the near future as well.

While all matters have not been resolved, we are moving in the right direction. We've won some important grievances and we believe that the Adult Education Chapter's concerns are being heard.

In closing, I just want to say that I know you are as committed as the UFT is to helping your communities become stronger, to help individuals live more fulfilling lives. Better schools provide a better future for adults and their children. Thank you for your time today.

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ON THE RECORD

## TESTIMONY: UJA-FEDERATION OF NEW YORK

NYC Council, Committee on Education  
Honorable Daniel Dromm, Chair, Committee on Education

Submitted by:  
Ariel Savransky, UJA-Federation of New York

Re: Introduction Number 1195 – A Local Law requiring the mayor’s office of  
operations to report on adult literacy programs offered by the city or pursuant to  
a contract with the city

September 20, 2017

Good morning Chairperson Dromm and members of the Committee on Education. My name is Ariel Savransky and I am an Advocacy and Policy Advisor at UJA-Federation of New York. Established 100 years ago, UJA-Federation of New York is one of the nation's largest local philanthropies. Central to our mission is to care for those in need. We identify and meet the needs of New Yorkers of all backgrounds and Jews everywhere. We connect people to their communities and respond to crises in New York, Israel and around the world. We support a network of nearly 100 nonprofit organizations serving those that are most vulnerable and in need of programs and services. On behalf of UJA, our network of nonprofit partners and those we serve, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on Introduction Number 1195, a Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, requiring the mayor's office of operations to report on adult literacy programs offered by the city.

We greatly appreciate the commitment of the New York City Council and the Administration to investing in adult literacy programs in New York City, notably for the historic \$12 million investment in educational opportunities for immigrant New Yorkers, a commitment which was renewed for Fiscal Year 2018. For the 2.2 million adults in New York City – one-third of the adult population – who lack English Language Proficiency, basic literacy skills, or a high school diploma, these programs are necessary tools in teaching these individuals how to read, write, obtain an equivalency diploma, and enter job training or post-secondary education programs. In this uncertain political climate, these services are more important than ever in ensuring that immigrant families understand their rights and know what resources are available to them, as well as in ensuring they understand how to navigate the healthcare system and the school system. By continuing the \$12 million investment, more immigrants will be able to access higher education programs as well as jobs and careers that will allow them to take care of themselves and their families.

While we are grateful for the restoration of this funding, New York still has a long way to go toward ensuring every individual who wants to learn to read, write and speak English and/or earn a high school diploma, has the opportunity to do so. In the face of deep proposed cuts to key Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs, it is more important than ever that New York City more effectively invests in these vital programs.

In order to more effectively serve those who need adult literacy programs, UJA-Federation of New York, as a member of the New York City Coalition for Adult Literacy, supports Introduction Number 1195 and its overall goal of providing greater information on the adult literacy system's capacity and unmet demand. However, we urge the New York City Council to ensure that additional reporting infrastructures are carefully designed in collaboration with contracted providers, and with funding to support the associated administrative requirements, so that providers are not unduly burdened.

- 1) We appreciate the commitment of the New York City Council, Council Member Menchaca and the co-sponsors of this bill to exploring ways to capture both the breadth of adult literacy programs throughout the city, as well as the demand for these programs through Introduction Number 1195. UJA supports this bill and its overall goal of providing greater information on the adult literacy system's capacity and unmet demand.**



New York City is home to over 3 million foreign-born residents, comprising over 37% of the total population, and 43% of the City's workforce. Many of these individuals are stuck in low-wage, low-skilled jobs due to both low educational attainment and limited English proficiency. Within New York City, 13% of the US-born population over the age of 19 lacks a high school diploma, but this rate is more than double for immigrants, of which 27% lack a high school diploma.<sup>1</sup> This results in lower wages for these workers. According to Census data, median income for those without a high school diploma is \$19,281, while median income for a high school graduate, including equivalency, is \$27,259. This number increases to \$36,101 with some college or an associate's degree.<sup>2</sup> In 2016, the median New York City household income for the native born was \$65,853 while the median household income for the foreign born was \$50,914.<sup>3</sup>

According to the Community Needs Assessment conducted by DYCD in 2016, which collects input from New York City residents and institutional leaders regarding service needs and gaps in their communities, education, primarily adult education/literacy classes, was one of the greatest needs and service gaps reported.<sup>4</sup> This finding was consistent throughout the city. This need is echoed by the 2016 survey conducted by the New York City Coalition for Adult Literacy (NYCCAL) of adult literacy providers, with 54 responding organizations, which found that these organizations' collective waitlist for classes exceeded 15,000 individuals.<sup>5</sup> However, this number represents an undercount on need, as not all programs were surveyed or were able to provide data regarding waitlists. Furthermore, the City's ability to offer adult literacy programs is fairly constrained. Considering all local, state, and federal investments, the City's Office of Workforce Development reports just 61,000 individuals are served annually in "basic education" programs.<sup>6</sup>

Although we know the need is there, it is imperative that we have formal measures to assess this need on an ongoing basis. By requiring the City to account for the adult literacy classes provided and the number who are turned away, we will effectively be able to establish a baseline target for need using hard data. This will allow the City to better understand the adult literacy system's capacity and unmet need, and thus work towards serving an increased number of individuals.

**2) We urge the New York City council to further consider the data to be captured in Introduction Number 1195, as the bill as written will put demands on the capacity of an already stressed system**

While we acknowledge the need to capture data to illustrate demand, and thus have the tools to show the need for increased investment, agencies currently may not collect the data required in this bill. Testing practices may differ between agencies as well, depending on capacity and time constraints. Furthermore,

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<sup>1</sup> McHugh, Margie and Morawski, Madeline. April 2016. Migration Policy Institute. *Immigrant and WIOA Services: Comparisons of Sociodemographic Characteristics of Native- and Foreign-Born Adults in New York City, New York*. <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/immigrants-and-wioa-services-comparison-sociodemographic-characteristics-native-and-foreign>.

<sup>2</sup> United States Census Bureau. *American Fact Finder*. <https://factfinder.census.gov>

<sup>3</sup> Id.

<sup>4</sup> The City of New York Department of Youth and Community Development. *Community Needs Assessment Report 2017*. [http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dycd/downloads/pdf/2017\\_CNA\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dycd/downloads/pdf/2017_CNA_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> NYCCAL survey data

<sup>6</sup> <http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/careerpathways/downloads/pdf/Career-Pathways-Progress-Update.pdf>



agencies may not have the capacity to collect this information without hiring additional employees. If not carefully designed in collaboration with contracted providers, and with funding to support the associated administrative requirements, the information required by this bill as written could result in an undue burden on providers.

We urge the New York City council to think creatively about ways to collect this data that will not burden providers such as through:

- Requiring a quarterly report on the number of people on a program's waitlist which would result in all providers beginning or continuing to keep waitlists
- Requiring a quarterly report on the number of inquiries made or applications received and the number of individuals enrolled or turned away
- Requiring a quarterly report ranking the reasons as to why individuals are most commonly turned away. This could include lack of capacity or lack of appropriate level classes among others.

**3) UJA further recommends that the city council work with the Administration to develop a Task Force on Adult Literacy**

One of the long-standing impediments to New York City having a comprehensive strategy and system of adult literacy is the fact that services are provided by so many entities with no coordinated oversight or vision. No less than a half dozen City entities provide some form of adult literacy programs, either directly, or through contracts, including DYCD, HRA, DOW, CUNY, MOIA, WKDEV and others. In addition, dozens of community based organizations, library branches, and union also provide services with a combination of city, state, federal and philanthropic dollars. A Task Force would bring all of these stakeholders to the table, in addition to advocates, researchers and other adult literacy experts, to examine the City's adult literacy system and make recommendations to improve coordination, referral and outcomes. Once established, the task force could be instrumental in assessing the adult literacy field, helping to measure capacity and demand and working to create an effective adult literacy system in New York City.

We look forward to working with the City Council and the administration to create an effective adult literacy system that has the capacity to serve the individuals who need these services. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify, as well as for the commitment of the New York City Council and the Administration to investing in adult literacy programs in New York City. Please contact Ariel Savransky at [savransky@ujafedny.org](mailto:savransky@ujafedny.org) if you have any questions.



## **Chinese-American Planning Council, Inc.**

**Testimony of the Chinese-American Planning Council, Inc.  
Before the New York City Council Committee on Education  
Honorable Daniel Dromm, Chair**

**Oversight: Adult Education Programs and Adult Literacy; Introduction 1195**

**Presented by: Amy Torres, Deputy Director of Education and Career Services  
September 20th, 2017**

Thank you Chair Dromm and members of the Committee on Education. My name is Amy Torres representing the Chinese-American Planning Council, Inc. (CPC)'s Education and Career Services. On behalf of CPC, thank you for today's invitation and thank you for hearing the importance of adult literacy programs and the Introduction 1195.

Founded in 1965, the CPC's mission is to promote social and economic empowerment of Chinese American, immigrant and low-income communities. As the largest Asian American social services agency in the United States, CPC provides culturally sensitive programs for all ages. CPC currently serves over 8,000 people daily through 50+ contracted programs in 30+ locations in Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens.

CPC serves over 800 English for Speakers for Other Languages (ESOL) students per year in our Adult Literacy Program. Adult Literacy is key to our mission's promotion of social and economic empowerment. Our students are parents and grandparents, prospective college students or on their way to gaining their high school equivalency, entering the workforce for the first time or making the next step in their career, recent immigrants and aspiring citizens. Each student enters our program with a different goal, but every student depends on adult literacy programming to achieve it. We are thrilled and grateful that the City's inclusion of \$12 million for adult literacy programs this year recognizes how integral these services are to New Yorkers achieving their dreams and we are grateful to see the introduction of a bill like 1195.

### **Introduction 1195**

Introduction 1195 would compile and report the number of adult literacy programs offered by the City, the number of people who applied for classes, and the number who were denied admission due to entrance exam score or program capacity. CPC is happy to see the introduction of a bill that recognizes the need and demand for adult literacy programs across the city, and we support Introduction 1195's broad goal of capturing, validating, and addressing that need. Each year, CPC's wait lists exceed the total number of seats we offer in a year. Last year, the number of people on our waitlist was nearly double the amount we have capacity for. The demand is so high that in the last six months, nearly all of our enrolled students have either come from our waitlist or via word-of-mouth referral from current students.

While we recognize the value and need for formally capturing the unmet demand for adult literacy programs and the number of services addressing that demand, we raise concern over the phrasing of the methods proposed. Specifically, requiring programs to report on the "methods of any literacy tests" and "number who were denied admission based on a literacy exam" seems to shift the focus of the bill's goal away from capturing unmet demand toward additional reporting from programs. Capturing "methods of literacy tests" suggests that a standardized entrance exam could further meet demand, however, programs are already required to use tests like BEST Plus or

the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) to enroll a student in a contract. Additionally, students are rarely waitlisted or turned away because of exam scores. Rather preliminary benchmark tests confirm the availability of a class at a students' appropriate level. For example, a beginner student who works nights may be looking for a morning class, but all beginner classes may be fully enrolled, or there may only be intermediate classes available at the time that they registered.

CPC is currently recruiting for fall classes, and at a recent recruitment event last Friday, we had upwards of 50 people attend an Open House. We are concerned that reporting on testing methods, or, requiring programs to use the standards like BEST Plus or TABE upon first contact with prospective students, will cause unnecessary administrative burden to programs. For standardized tests like BEST Plus, which requires one-on-one administration and at minimum 10 minutes to take, we are also concerned about setting false expectations for students who in the end are unable to enroll due to capacity or schedule.

#### **Recommendations**

CPC reiterates its support for the bill's goal of capturing the number of programs offered by the City and the number of people who applied but were unable to enroll. We have seen the demand in our own program and fully support a mechanism that captures how needs are being met across the city. To address our concerns, we would like to see the bill's language amended to exclude "denied admission based on literacy exam" and "the testing methods of any literacy test used to evaluate applicants." CPC, in coordination with other providers under the New York City Coalition for Adult Literacy (NYCCAL), is happy to consult on reporting that would be least burdensome to both program and student alike, while still accurately capturing unmet demand.

Thank you for the invitation and opportunity to testify on this important issue. I am happy to take questions and can be reached at [atorres@cpc-nyc.org](mailto:atorres@cpc-nyc.org) or (212) 941 0920 x502.





Testimony of United Neighborhood Houses  
Before the New York City Council Committee on Education  
Honorable Daniel Dromm, Chair

**Oversight: Adult Education Programs and Adult Literacy; Int. 1195**

Presented by Kevin Douglas, Co-Director of Policy & Advocacy  
September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Our Network

Good afternoon Chair Dromm and members of the Committee on Education. On behalf of United Neighborhood Houses (UNH), thank you for convening this important hearing to discuss adult literacy programs in New York City, and more specifically, Introduction 1195. Rooted in the history and values of the settlement house movement, UNH promotes and strengthens the neighborhood-based, multi-service approach to improving the lives of New Yorkers and the neighborhoods in which they live. UNH's membership is comprised of 38 nonprofit human services organizations working at over 650 sites across the five boroughs to provide high quality programs and activities to over 750,000 New Yorkers every year. Our network's educational services are offered at all ages of the lifespan, including early childhood education, afterschool programs, community schools, college access support, and adult literacy.

Currently more than 2/3 of our member organizations provide adult literacy programs to over 10,000 immigrants and adult learners annually, ranging from English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Basic Education in Native Language (BENL), to Adult Basic Education (ABE), High School Equivalency preparation (HSE) and High School Equivalency testing. In addition, UNH is a longtime leader in the New York City Coalition for Adult Literacy (NYCCAL), a coalition comprised of adult literacy teachers, managers, students, and allies from community-based organizations, settlement houses, CUNY campuses, and library programs across NYC.

NYCCAL

Through NYCCAL we advocate for an adult literacy system that provides quality, comprehensive and accessible educational services to over 2.2 million adults in NYC who need them. NYCCAL believes that being able to read and write, learn English, obtain a High School Equivalency diploma, and enter training and post-secondary education are the rights of every New Yorker, and the cornerstone to an equitable and just society. We are pleased that through your leadership as a longtime supporter of the Immigrant Opportunities Initiative, along with the leadership and support of Immigration Chair Menchaca, Speaker Mark-Viverito, Finance Chair Ferreras-Copeland and many other Council supporters, we have achieved significant growth in the City's investment in community based adult literacy programs over the last two years, including \$12m in FY2018—thank you.

However, demand for these programs continues to far outstrip supply, as anecdotally demonstrated by our survey of the adult literacy field in 2016 which revealed that at any given time an estimated 15,000

New Yorkers were on waiting lists for these services<sup>1</sup>. In addition, the Department of Youth and Community Development's (DYCD) 2016 Community Needs Assessment, which surveyed over 13,000 youth, adults, public school principals, faith based leaders, Community Board leaders, community based organizations, and elected officials, found that the greatest needs and service gaps in Education were "ESL (English for Speakers of Other Languages), adult education/literacy, and financial literacy."<sup>2</sup>

### Introduction 1195

Broadly speaking, Intro 1195 would require the City to compile and report annually to the Speaker on the number of adult literacy programs offered in the City, the number of people who applied for them, and the number who were denied admission. UNH supports Introduction 1195's goal of formalizing the capture of information regarding the scope of adult literacy services in NYC, as well as the scale of unmet need. However, UNH is concerned that though well-intentioned, the legislation, as currently written, may create the unintended effect of further stretching already-thin program infrastructures with additional unfunded administrative burdens. For instance, while it may be feasible for adult literacy programs to track the number of inquiries for services, it would be unrealistic for them to administer traditional adult literacy assessments to all such individuals.

*Best Plus*, a commonly used test for assessing listening and speaking skills in ESOL programs, is administered orally and can take between 20-30 minutes per individual. Many programs conduct a shorter pre-assessment on prospective students, and only administer this test once students are enrolled. If programs were compelled to administer *Best Plus* to all individuals that request service, it would be incredibly difficult, if not impossible, for them to comply within current staffing and funding structures. Similarly, the equivalent assessment for ABE programs, the *TABE* (while not conducted orally), takes between 1.5 to 3 hours for an individual to complete. Compelling programs to administer this test to all interested students would require a dramatic expansion in administrative capacity not currently supported by contracted budgets. Beyond this administrative capacity issue, many programs feel it would be disservice for a program to ask individuals, for whom they knew they did not have the capacity to serve, to still invest time and energy in an assessment, only to be denied a spot in the class.

Another concern with the bill language is that it proposes data be collected on the number of applicants "denied admission based on a literacy exam or due to a program's lack of capacity, and the testing methods of any literacy test used to evaluate applicants." UNH believes that the language around "literacy exams" and "literacy tests" is more narrow than may be useful to the City. While programs do test incoming students using a variety of tools to determine their literacy level — the aforementioned *Best Plus*, for example — a program's decision to deny admission to a particular student would be less a factor of the *results* of the exam, and more about whether any classes were open and available at the student's test level.

### Recommendations

In keeping with both our support for the goals of Int. 1195 as well as our concerns about the specific bill language, UNH recommends the bill be amended to eliminate the question of specific literacy tests or exams as they result to program rejection, and instead focus on a global assessment of the number of individuals denied admission to literacy programs. UNH also recommends that additional time be spent in consultation with providers to identify the least burdensome mechanism for reporting on the

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<sup>1</sup> NYCCAL administered a survey in the Spring of 2016, in which 55 adult literacy providers voluntarily took part, with roughly 2/3 of responses coming from CBOs, and 1/3 from CUNY branches. These responding organizations, which provide about 1/2 of NYC's total adult literacy classes, reported a collective waitlist of over 15,000 individuals. It is important to note that many of the providers that took this survey — as well as many that did not take the survey — either cap or do not maintain waitlists, meaning the 15,000 person estimate was conservative relative to actual demand. These results were consistent with NYCCAL's 2013 survey which found 14,000 people on waitlists.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dycd/downloads/pdf/2017\\_CNA\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dycd/downloads/pdf/2017_CNA_FINAL.pdf)

most common reasons individuals are not able to enroll in programs (classes not available at individual's skill level, classes not available at times individual is free, individual's contact information was incomplete or they missed appointment, etc.)

UNH also recommends that the City should establish, as it once had, a dedicated Mayor's Office of Adult Literacy, which would work with all stakeholders (CBOs, Advocates, CUNY, Libraries, DOE, DYCD, MOIA, HRA, WKDEV, etc.) to understand, coordinate, and champion a comprehensive system of universal adult literacy classes. Finally, UNH recommends that at a minimum, the City renew and baseline \$12 million in adult literacy services with a commitment to a new procurement that adequately reflects the true costs of providing high quality, comprehensive adult literacy classes.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am happy to take any questions or can be reached at [kdouglas@unhny.org](mailto:kdouglas@unhny.org) or 212.967.0322 x345





NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL- Committee on Education  
Honorable Daniel Dromm, Chair

**Oversight: Adult Literacy Programs; Int. 1195**

Testimony by Elaine Roberts  
Director of Programs, International Center  
Catholic Charities Community Services, Archdiocese of New York

**September 20, 2017**

Good afternoon Chair Dromm and members of the Committee on Education. My name is Elaine Roberts; I'm the director of Catholic Charities' ESOL program, the International Center. We serve as an important resource for clients from all departments of Catholic Charities; our work helps Refugee Resettlement clients obtain employment, assists Immigration Legal Services clients in becoming citizens, supports parents in Alianza Dominicana after-school programs, and provides English practice for children in the Unaccompanied Minors Program.

Our goal is to provide the language skills and confidence necessary for all English language learners to communicate effectively in their personal, professional, and academic lives in New York City. Our programming includes ESOL classes at multiple proficiency levels, citizenship preparation classes, computer skills classes, individual conversation practice, and specialized off-site programming for vulnerable communities in Manhattan and the Bronx. We are also active members of the New York City Coalition for Adult Literacy (NYCCAL).

We are honored to testify at today's hearing - alongside immigrant and refugee advocates and colleagues from other non-profits, coalitions, and city agencies – and before the New York City Committee on Education, whose commitment to adult literacy we applaud.

**The Work of Catholic Charities**

Catholic Charities serves all individuals in need, Catholic or non-Catholic, who reside in all five New York City boroughs and seven counties of the Lower Hudson Valley. Our strength is that our work is broad, diverse, and focused on responding to individual crises as well as addressing core needs that may lead to crises. Catholic Charities provides a comprehensive range of professional human services to immigrants, including: eviction prevention; case management to help people access benefits and resolve financial and family issues; emergency food; specialized assistance for the blind and visually impaired; after-school, drop-out prevention and employment programs for low-income, at-risk and/or court-involved youth; sports and recreational programs for children and youth; and supportive housing programs for adults with mental illness. Our services are provided in our community centers, parishes, regional offices, NYC public schools, NYCHA housing developments, HRA offices, and partnering community-based agencies. Each year, CCCS works with thousands of households to manage crises and to help families achieve long term stability in immigration status,





income, housing, and nutrition. The issues our clients face are often multi-faceted and complex, and it frequently takes the cooperation of several agencies to arrive at lasting solutions.

Catholic Charities' Immigrant and Refugee Services Division responds to the needs of thousands of immigrants and refugees each year, through services in five principal areas: immigration legal services, unaccompanied minors programming, English as a Second Language (ESOL) and cultural learning at our International Center, refugee resettlement services, and general informational and referral services through the New York State New Americans Hotline and the National Children's Call Center, which, together, responded to over 43,000 calls for information during the last fiscal year, and already over 23,000 calls in the first five months of this fiscal year.

### **Introduction 1195**

I first wish to say thank you to the members of the education committee and especially Council Member Menchaca for your time and attention to this issue. As you know, there is great unmet demand in the city for Adult Literacy classes. While we greatly appreciate the \$12m investment by the Council this year for adult literacy, there are still students that cannot find seats in adult literacy classes. A survey done by NYCCAL in 2015 estimated that 15,000 adult literacy students were on waiting lists. Continuing to increase support for adult literacy and baselining this funding would increase capacity and strengthen programs.

We support the goal of Introduction 1195, to more clearly show the demand and need for adult literacy services and the capacity of city-funded programs. However, we strongly feel that the reporting mechanism must include data that is easy for programs to track, especially if these new reporting requirements are not accompanied by additional funding.

### **Recommendations**

Our recommendations are to increase and most importantly, baseline, adult literacy funding and to develop the proposed adult literacy report in close collaboration with adult literacy programs. This collaboration, ideally done through a task force drawn from providers and advocates in the field, would determine which data would be most useful to include in the report, such as the numbers of students who show initial interest compared to those who actually enrolled in classes and the reasons why, as well as the frequency with which such data should be captured.

In addition, we feel that an accurate report on adult literacy must include data about students who have not yet come into contact with any program, because of lack of awareness, fear about their status, or other concerns. Information from other city agencies, such as HRA, MOIA, etc. and other resources, such as the Neighborhood Advisory Boards mentioned in DYCD's Community Needs Assessment (CAN), which showed that citywide ESOL and adult literacy classes were the highest ranked need under education, should be included.

Thank you for your time today and your support for adult literacy.

September 20, 2017

Good Afternoon Councilman Dromm and Educational Committee Members,

My name is Martha Bordman, and I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify on Adult Education in New York City. I was an ESL teacher in the New York City Office of Adult and Continuing Education until I retired in June 2014 with over 30 years of experience in the field of ESL adult education.

I am here today to testify how the mission of the OACE is being undermined under the stewardship of Rose Marie Mills, Superintendent of the NYC OACE.

OACE instructional staff understand that funds for the program are based on test score data gains, but for Superintendent Mills, the extraction of this data has little to do with improving educational outcomes. Instead, this so-called "good data" is used to embellish her profile. Superintendent Mills continuously harangues teachers and support staff to produce these data gains--in other words to basically squeeze "good data" out of students by testing them over and over again. This, of course, has demoralized students.

The principals and assistant principals are also under pressure to show test score gain, so they in turn harass teachers about test scores.

I have a 2013 email from my principal that exemplifies the kind of threats and pressure teachers received then, but have heard from my in-service colleagues that this pressure has greatly intensified.

**\*Attachment 1—June, 2013 email from principal**

At the end of the Spring 2014 term Superintendent Mills decided to cut low-level literacy Basic Education and ESL students from the program since these students contribute to so-called "bad data." As evidence, I have a memo from Superintendent Mills directing principals and assistant principals to send low-level students to adult education classes at local libraries. Never before had the OACE turned away low-level students. The administrative excuse for this decision was that library classes could better serve low-level literacy students. As an ESL low-level literacy teacher, I decided to follow up and was shocked to find out that the library where I was to refer my students did not even offer classes for ESL low-level literacy students.

On July 22, 2014, the online educational news publication, *Chalkbeat*, reported on this egregious directive in an article titled *Adult students with poor literacy getting short shrift*.

**\*Attachment 2—Chalkbeat-- Adult students with poor literacy getting short shrift, teachers say**

Superintendent Mills, and her expensive layer of elementary and middle-school administrative appointees, have tried to impose an elementary school curriculum for the teaching of adult ESL students. In fact, during the 2013-14 school year, large sums were squandered on children's textbooks with inappropriate elementary themes--for example, multiple picture books on animals! Instructional staff with a wealth of experience in ESL adult education had absolutely no input in selecting these materials, and Superintendent Mills told teachers that these elementary materials satisfied the goals of Common Core. Consequently, boxes and boxes of unused children's books were warehoused in adult education closets throughout the city that year while teachers were left with a dearth of appropriate materials.

At a 2013-14 OACE staff meeting, I attempted to ask Superintendent Mills a question about ESL materials but was shut down. Superintendent Mills said all questions concerning materials should be directed to principals. Therefore, I emailed my questions to my principal. I also cc'd Superintendent Mills. My principal never wrote back, but Superintendent Mills did. I'd like to read you her email to me.

*From: Bordman Martha (79K755)  
Sent: Tuesday, November 05, 2013 11:28 AM  
To: (my principal)  
Cc: Mills Rose Marie  
Subject: Materials and Teacher Input*

*Dear (my principal),*

*At the opening PD session today, I made an attempt to follow up on a concern voiced by another teacher to Superintendent Mills about the issue all the OACE teachers I know have with the materials ordered for this year. This was after the superintendent mentioned it would take a collective effort by the OACE staff--teachers and administrators--to improve the program, therefore, giving the impression that there should be an exchange of information between us. However, the superintendent refused to let me speak even though I made several attempts, and said she would not take any questions or comments. Instead, she said all questions about materials should be directed to you, my principal. She also said that last year's materials did not fit into the Common Core Curriculum but the new ones did, and the principals were the ones who chose the materials.*

*As a result, I am asking you how the new materials ordered fit into the ESL Common Core Curriculum and why last year's materials didn't. I am particularly interested in finding out why Easy English News, a wonderful resource, was discontinued, especially since it is nonfiction and the kind of reading stressed by the Common Core Curriculum. In addition, I would like to know why any teacher or IF requests for materials cannot be honored because of Common Core.*

*Sincerely,  
Martha Bordman*

*From: Mills Rose Marie  
Sent: Wednesday, November 06, 2013 7:21 AM  
To: Bordman Martha (79K755) (and my principal)*

*Subject: Re: Materials and Teacher Input*

*Ms Bordman*

*It is clear that your agenda is not in the interest of the program, rather it is to ensure that the status quo continues. Please know that I am responsible for the leadership of OACE and will not tolerate anyone trying to undermine the program. Your conduct yesterday borders on unprofessionalism and I caution you to desist and focus on providing instruction to your students. You are not a leader in OACE so don't try to make leadership decisions.*

A couple of days later, my principal stopped by my room to give me a warning. She said there could be consequences for asking the Superintendent questions.

I strongly advise this committee to take a deep look at what is going on in the OACE.

# June 2013

All,

Please see info below regarding post testing.

It is imperative that our students make SUBSTANTIAL GAIN~!!!  
We must make 70% post-test rate and 55% student gain.  
We currently are at 45% p/t rate and 23% gain, these numbers must improve ASAP

Please make sure ALL of your students are post tested and are prepared to show gain.

Please note student success/data will be reflected in your observations/walkthroughs.

Thank you

**[REDACTED]**, Principal

**[REDACTED]**  
Office Of Adult & Continuing Education Region 6  
557 Pennsylvania Ave  
Brooklyn 11207  
Phone: 718 240 2772  
Fax: 718 240 2771



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## Adult students with poor literacy getting short shrift, teachers say

BY JACKIE SCHECHTER - JULY 22, 2014

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**G**uyana-born Rucawatee Autar was looking to improve her reading and writing skills when she began taking adult literacy classes at the New York Public Library.

But Autar decided that the library's four hours a week of class were not enough, and she started searching for an alternative. In early July, she thought she had found it, in the form of the city education department's Office of Adult and Continuing Education.

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Yet after completing an intake exam at the office's Mid-Manhattan Adult Learning Center, Autar says she was told to return to the library. Her scores were too low for her to enroll in the department's courses.

"I don't think it's fair," she said.

Ultimately, Autar was able to negotiate her way into a department class that was slightly above her level. But other students might end up at the library if principals at city adult education programs follow new guidance they received last month from the department.

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That guidance, which urged principals to refer low-level students to free classes at the New York Public Library, has longtime adult educators worried that the department is shortchanging the office's neediest adults. They say differences between department and library courses make the library classes less helpful for low-level students, who are either immigrants illiterate in their native languages or English speakers testing at a kindergarten or first-grade reading level.

The educators are also concerned that the department is steering low-level students away as part of a larger shift toward emphasizing test score gains over practical life skills.

The Department of Education has long sent students elsewhere when its own classes are full, according to a spokesman. He also explained that for some time the department has referred low-level students to the library or community organizations because they offer smaller classes.

"We served everybody," she said. "That was our mission."

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This past school year, the department's adult education program served approximately 29,000 students — even though New York does not require districts to provide educational services for adults over 21. Starting in the fall, the department is actually adding 20 English as a second language classes, reaching students with a range of literacy skills.

"These adult ESL classes are important and widely popular, and we look forward to serving even more adults by expanding classes citywide during the 2014-15 school year," said Marcus Liem, a department spokesman.

Regardless, some adult education employees see the library referrals as a diminishment of services by the department.

"There was always testing at intake, but the purpose of the testing was placement, not to determine whether you would be admitted or referred elsewhere," adult education teacher Marcia Biederman said.

And Biederman and her colleagues are concerned that classes at the library are not a substitute for department courses.

For starters, the classes at the library provide just four instructional hours per week, compared to up to 15 hours a week for department-run classes. Unlike the department, the library does not have classes just for immigrants who are illiterate in their native languages, although it has recently trained its teachers to work with these students.

Library instructors also don't need a master's degree or state certification, which the department requires for its teachers.

"We look to hire staff with experience in the field and then provide them with training opportunities," said Luke Swarthout, the director of adult education services at the library.

Swarthout said the Department of Education had not told him that it would start recommending students to library programs. He also said that even though the library has tripled its ESL seats in the last two years, it still attracts more students than it can serve — meaning that enrollment is not assured for students sent there by the department.

Teachers say they suspect the referrals are motivated by an office-wide shift that has taken place under Superintendent Rose-Marie Mills, who took over in 2012. According to them, Mills's leadership has brought a new emphasis on showing test score gains, which are required for the state to draw federal adult education funds that it passes along to districts. This year, the city adult education office got \$37 million from the state.

**Know something we should be covering? Send us a tip!**

“Before, the idea was to give people what they need,” O’Shaughnessy said. “They need to be able to go the doctor’s office, they need to be able to go to a school meeting for their child.”

O’Shaughnessy added that she used to take students to a subway station to teach them how to purchase MetroCards. “Now, if it doesn’t show gain on the test, you’re not supposed to do it,” she said.

And showing gains can be especially difficult for low-level students, according to teachers in the adult education office. Many of these students are attending school for the first time, and they often take more than a single year to show improvements or move up to the next course level.

Teachers also say the current assessments do not accurately reflect what the students learn. The test for immigrants in the lowest-level ESL course is oral, for example, while the class itself focuses strongly on reading and writing. And the exam for low-level English speakers asks about obscure topics, such as winterizing pipes, according to O’Shaughnessy.

Even as the scope of change at the Office of Adult and Continuing Education remains unclear, teachers say the signs are not promising, given that low-level students are being directed away. “It’s shameful,” Biederman said. “Really they are the neediest and most vulnerable of our students.”

*Correction: This article previously stated that library instructors are hourly workers. In fact, while some of the library’s adult ESL instructors are hourly, most adult education instructors at the library are full-time NYPL employees.*

By Jackie Schechter JSCHECHECTER@CHALKBEAT.ORG

IN THIS STORY: ADMISSIONS & ENROLLMENT, ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT, ADULT EDUCATION, ESL, LIFELONG LEARNERS, LITERACY, NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY, OFFICE OF ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION



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## AND ITEMS

### FREE ENGLISH CLASSES

Principals, please recommend your low level students to these Adult Education Classes at New York Public Libraries. FREE ENGLISH CLASSES are being offered at 30 locations in Manhattan, The Bronx, and Staten Island. Students must attend an information session first, between July 14 and 22. See the flyer for dates and locations:

[http://cdn-](http://cdn-prod.www.nysl.org/sites/default/files/FREE%20ENGLISH%20CLASSES%20updated%20credit%20line%20%281%29.pdf)

[prod.www.nysl.org/sites/default/files/FREE%20ENGLISH%20CLASSES%20updated%20credit%20line%20%281%29.pdf](http://cdn-prod.www.nysl.org/sites/default/files/FREE%20ENGLISH%20CLASSES%20updated%20credit%20line%20%281%29.pdf)

### POST-TESTING NEW

In the final weeks of class it is imperative to make every effort to completely post-test students, especially those students who entered in April and May and were not on Google Docs. Use the Turnaround F document to identify students and prescribe TABE tests. The priority groups should be:

- Students Without Post-tests
- Students on the cusp who have NOT made gain
- Students with 100 or more hours who have NOT made gain

It is important, particularly for BEST testing, to identify and post-test students in these priority groups, especially those without post-tests, and to test them first.

### MONITORING POST-TESTING and EDUCATIONAL GAIN NEW

Please run your Program Evaluation Reports on a daily basis. As you have entered all May students, your denominator (# of students enrolled) should remain fairly stable.

Post-Test Rate:

Department of  
Education

OFFICE OF ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION  
475 Nostrand Avenue Brooklyn, NY 11216  
P: (718) 838-2635 F: (718) 623-2080  
Rose-Marie Mills, Superintendent  
Valena Welch-Woodley, Deputy Superintendent

## OACE WEEKLY BULLETIN June 15, 2014

*Principals and Assistant Principals, please remember that this bulletin is accessible only by you and Central. To share it with others in your Region, please download and distribute.*

- [REDACTED]
- June 16: 5PM-PD for Summer School Testing Training (see schedule below)
  - June 17: 5PM-PD for Summer School Testing Training (see schedule below)
  - June 18: 5PM-PD for Summer School Testing Training (see schedule below)
  - June 18: Ratings for untenured teachers and Assistant Principals to be entered and submitted to the Superintendent
  - June 19: 5PM-PD for Summer School Testing Training (see schedule below)
  - [REDACTED]
  - June 20: Certified Nursing Assistant Ceremony @MMALC, 10:30 am
  - June 21: All-day PD for Summer School Testing Training (see schedule below)
  - June 23: 5PM-PD for Summer School Testing Training (see schedule below)
  - June 24: LPN Pinning Ceremony @MMALC, 10:30 am
  - June 25: 5PM-PD for Summer School Testing Training (see schedule below)
  - June 25: Last Day of Evening Classes
  - June 26: Last Day of Day Classes
  - June 26: Hiring Hall
  - June 30: All-day PD for Summer School Testing Training (see schedule below)
  - July 7: Summer School Classes Begin



Good morning City Council Members and Guests,

After 21+ years of teaching adults for the Office of Adult & Continuing Education, the last 16 at the Mid-Manhattan Adult Learning Center, which was a showcase for our formerly esteemed program, I decided to retire, partly due to my age, but also because I have found it demoralizing and oppressive to remain. After briefly describing my background, I will share from my perspective, the many positive aspects of our program as it used to be, which proved to be so beneficial to both teaching and learning. I will then contrast that with how our program has declined in quality, specifically over the past 5 years, and the negative impact this has had on teachers and students."

### **My background**

I have had state certification in Teaching ESOL since receiving my MS in TESL in 1991 from Queens College. I began teaching part-time in 1994 where I taught BE, GED, and ESL before getting my full time ESL appointment. I have been dedicated to the field of adult ESOL in my capacity as a member of the planning committee and website coordinator for the Consortium for Adult Basic Education, which holds a yearly conference and executive board member of NYS TESOL, where I formerly was the VP of Outreach, a role I currently hold on a temporary capacity. I am also Co-Chair of the ESL Adult Special Interest Group at NYS TESOL and Exhibitor Liaison for the November 2017 NYS TESOL Conference. I was involved in the NCSALL Health Literacy Study Circle Pilot Project coordinated by the Harvard School of Public Health and the Literacy Center of New York and subsequently co-presented with them at the 2006 TESOL Convention in Tampa, Florida. During my years at OACE, I've tried my utmost to learn innovative techniques to hone my teaching skills and become an exemplary teacher.

### **Support from both administrative and Central Office staff**

I would not have been able to accomplish all this and be a successful teacher to my intermediate ESOL students, without the support from both administration and other staff at OACE.

- In 1999, when I was a neophyte on the computer, a technology specialist from Central Office provided me with resources and some training regarding to using computers. Next, I was part of a group of OACE teachers who studied computer programs and ways to use them at the Office of Alternative Programs headed by Superintendent Richard Organisciak, whose auspices we were under at that time. Without this guidance, I don't think I would have been able to take over as ESL Clerical Pre-Vocational Teacher at Mid-Manhattan and help my numerous advanced ESL students who were seeking clerical jobs or future admission to college. Through this, I was also encouraged to attend city-wide technology conferences which were helpful as well.
- Also, at that time, I was part of the ESL Literacy Group headed by an experienced teacher Hannah Lederman in which renowned and experienced teachers shared curriculum resources and activities on a regular basis.
- I was encouraged to partake in workshops at the Literacy Assistance Center of New York where I learned so much and always was able to apply this knowledge in my classroom.

### Collaboration within and out of the program

- Previously, our entire OACE program met together for Professional Development 3 times per year which enabled us to network and share ideas with teachers across the program. We worked with other organizations through the Literacy Center of NY.
- Many teachers throughout our program were involved in the "All Write Project of Symphony Space" where actors read student writing and the "NYU Literacy Review" project where students writing is published in a yearly book and the winners are celebrated at an annual dinner.

### What has changed

- We now have non-existent or low-quality support at best. In fact, we sometimes feel like we're going alone.
- We have inadequate professional development offerings mainly focused on data given by incompetent or unlicensed professionals with no teacher involvement/involvement which used to make them so enriching.
- No encouragement to reach out of the box and collaborate with other educational groups.
- Very few teachers involved in "All Write Symphony Space" project and I was the only OACE teacher represented at "Literacy Review."
- The activities at our school became very top down. Where our assemblies and programs were truly collaborative and teachers could self-select, now the administration chooses the program agenda and the teachers and students to be selected.
- Whereas before teachers were encouraged to develop activities and flexibility based on student needs, now the administration is dictating topics as well as a pacing schedule.
- Whereas before quality of instruction and creativity were most important, now data and testing are paramount to the administration. Teachers and students alike are hounded with repetitive and excessive demands to teach to the test and retest too soon and too often, and far outside the bounds of our own state funded manual's recommended testing schedule.
- Whereas before the OACE professional community met together 3 times a year for stimulating all day workshops where there was much collegial sharing of ideas, methods, materials and experiences, now, by contrast we are divided by our 8 regions for such all-day professional development, where we are fed narrow and rigidly designed instructional mandates from the top down.
- Whereas before we had a cohesive program where teachers and students felt valued; now teachers come to school apprehensive and battle-fatigued. The students sense all of this, while not understanding what is behind this.
- Whereas before all ESL teachers were licensed by the city and/or state, now many new ones lack ESL certification

### Conclusion

In the five years since Ms. Rose Marie Mills has taken over as Superintendent, OACE has been in professional decline and deterioration. Experienced, licensed, innovative teachers have been denigrated and unsupported by the administration. What was once a stellar program, one that used innovative, forward-looking methods, is now a shell of its former self. Our students deserve more!



Luz Rojas , Make the Road New York

City Council Education Committee Hearing on Adult Education Programs and Adult Literacy & Int. 1195

September 20, 2017

Hello. I am Luz Rojas, Senior Manager of Adult Literacy at Make the Road New York. With over 20,000 members, Make the Road is the largest grassroots immigrant organization in New York City. At Make the Road we work every day to build the power of Latino and working class communities to achieve dignity and justice. Thank you to all members of the education committee for allowing me the opportunity to speak today.

**First, I want to thank you for investing \$12 million dollars toward adult literacy in this fiscal year.** Adult literacy is critical for full participation in our society. Literacy is connected to everything - to employment, school performance, health, immigration, and very important to us, to community involvement. Without enough adult literacy classes, many immigrants are unable to reach their full potential and our communities and our city suffer.

**We are grateful to you for introducing this bill which aims to measure the need for adult literacy services in NYC. We understand that in order to direct more funding toward Adult Literacy we need to demonstrate the need for our services.** In a way the DYCD has done a good job to help us with this. We were not surprised to see that the DYCD's *Community Needs Assessment* from this past June found that across the city adult literacy services were ranked as one of the areas of greatest need. Based on our experience, this is not at all a surprise.



Make the Road NY currently runs over 25 classes a week for over 500 students a cycle across 4 offices with a combination of City, State and private funding. We enroll students quarterly, and maintain waiting lists in all of our offices to try to maintain a sense of the need. At any given point we can have waiting lists between 50-400 potential students, depending on the location of the office and the kind of class. **Keeping waiting lists can be challenging for programs because we don't want to give people false hope that we will have spots for them in classes in the near future. Sometimes we just don't have a class at a level or time that works for them.**

We believe that together we can best demonstrate the need for classes by looking at existing mechanisms like DYCD's own Community Needs Assessments, as well as sampled waiting lists, recent journalistic investigations and surveys of program administrators, among other things. **We also encourage the Council to work to establish an Adult Literacy Task Force and a Mayor's Office for Adult Literacy again which could gather information on need but to also work to strengthen the adult literacy system in a long-term and strategic way.**

We are eager to work with you to come up with a simple and effective method for capturing and sharing info about the need for adult literacy classes. Our hope is to engage in a data gathering process that's limited and makes a strong case for these services but doesn't create a large additional administrative burden for programs. ( I say this because all of us in the field are working very hard with insufficient resources.. We believe however, that together with you we are moving toward changing that reality!) Thank you again, Education Committee members for your time today. We at Make the Road look forward to working together with you this year.

9/20 – Committee on Education Hearing on Adult Education and Adult Literacy  
Herbert Hodge Testimony  
ACE (Association of Community Employment Programs for the Homeless)  
Int. No. 1195

My Name is Herbert Hodge. I'm 64 years old, I'm from Newark, New Jersey. I come from what you would call a dysfunctional family. I had problems and I didn't know how to cope. I went to school until the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. By that time I was making all the wrong choices, and I paid for those choices.

I won't go into too much detail, but from the time I left school I was moving around on the streets. I was homeless a few times, sometimes by choice and sometimes because I had no where to go. Eventually, I made up my mind to get some help and give myself a break.

I've been living here in New York since the end of 2013. I came to New York to receive treatment for a drug problem. At that time, I needed some help and encouragement to continue to try and be a better person. Through the treatment center I heard about ACE. They offered me different classes, encouraged me to find employment, to save my money and get a roof over myhead.

The courses I took at ACE consisted of math, reading and computers and they brought back a lot of what I had forgotten from when I was in School. When I was in the computer classes, we were learning about punctuation and grammar to help us on our resumes. I still have a lot to learn, but I am better than I was before. Back then I didn't know what button to push to turn the computer on. Now, I use the computer everyday for work to update the sanitation tracking spreadsheet with what I did, where I was, and what I saw on the different sanitation routes.

You have to know to read in order to get around. You have to understand how to navigate the subways and the bus routes. I learned some of those basic skills at ACE, like reading a map and how to pronounce and understand words and their meanings. I use these basic skills everyday.

I'm glad that I utilized the services at ACE. They gave me the tools to be satisfied and be productive and that is what I have always wanted to do. I wanted to make an investment in myself and complete my education.

After a few months in ACE's program, I got hired by ACE to do sanitation. Working started to become natural, the right thing to do. I let my Supervisor know that I liked the work, which consists of cleaning the streets and plazas and providing maintenance. After that, I got hired full-time and I couldn't believe it.

I never thought it would be this easy. I know I have to work for everything I have, but I could never have imagined that in three years I would be in a position where I am a supervisor, working with the staff in the field and reporting to the

organization. I am helping other guys, giving them suggestions on how to do a better job and sharing my experience.

Right now, I work five days a week. Within the last three months, I have received a promotion to supervisor. I have been employed going on four years. Everything I learned in the classes, I use now everyday to some degree.

In addition to work, I continue to go to school to get my GED and I am going to get my high school diploma even if it takes me 3 times to pass the test. That will open more doors, and there is no telling how far I can go. I feel that I am on the right track and that I am going in the right direction. Don't ask me what direction that is, but I know it's the right direction.

ACE opened up a lot of doors for me. They gave me hope. They showed me that I can do it, and that I have the tools to make it. I graduated from ACE's project comeback over three years ago and now I have money in the bank and positive people in my life.

I have regrets, but I know that is what I had to go through to get where I am today. I am a better person and I am satisfied with who I am. It's a beautiful thing.

Thank you to the Council for allowing me to share this today.



Literacy Assistance Center

**New York City Council Committee on Education  
Honorable Daniel Dromm, Chair**

**Hearing Regarding Oversight of Adult Education Programs and Adult Literacy  
September 20, 2017**

**Testimony of Ira Yankwitt, Executive Director, Literacy Assistance Center**

Good afternoon, and thank you Chairperson Dromm and members of the Committee on Education for giving me the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Ira Yankwitt and I am the Executive Director of the Literacy Assistance Center (LAC), a 34-year-old nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening and expanding the adult education system, and to advancing adult literacy as a core value in our society and a foundation for equal opportunity and social justice. Since 1983, the LAC has been working to build the capacity and improve the quality of the adult literacy programs that serve New York's most educationally disadvantaged and economically marginalized communities.

As this committee is well aware, today in New York City, there are approximately 2.2 million adults who lack English language proficiency, a high school diploma, or both. Yet funding for adult literacy education is so limited that fewer than 4% of these adults are able to access basic education, high school equivalency, or English language classes in any given year. This is nothing short of a citywide crisis — and I wish to express deep appreciation to the City Council for recognizing the urgency of this crisis over the past two years and championing a significant increase in funding for programs. New York City has historically been a national leader both in its vision for adult literacy education and in its level of investment. Your commitment over these past two years and the bill before us today demonstrate that this Council,

once again, wants to place New York City at the forefront of the movement for adult literacy, and is striving to create a city that truly provides equal educational opportunity for all.

The field of adult literacy education faces two acute challenges: 1) a chronic shortage in funding, and 2) the complexity of meeting an overwhelming need. Intro 1195 is an important step in beginning to address the latter. With stronger data, we can better understand gaps in our adult literacy system, particularly how many individuals are being turned away from city-funded programs each year and why. One way to facilitate this process would be for the city to fund a citywide adult literacy hotline - as it did from the mid-1980s through the early 2000s - which could track interest and demand, make referrals to programs that have seats, and maintain a centralized waiting list that could direct potential students to programs when spaces become available.

However, without additional funding for programs, both the ability to meet the added burden of Intro 1195's data collection responsibilities as well as the ability to serve more of those adults seeking classes will be severely limited. For this reason, I would like to focus the remainder of my testimony on some of the critical funding challenges faced by the field. Understanding these challenges at the start of this process will help to inform the city's vision for strategic investments and better ensure the success of this legislation's intent.

When it comes to funding for adult literacy education, there are really three issues. The first is the paucity of the funding itself, which shuts the doors to over 95% of those adults in need. The second is the short-term and unreliable nature of the current funding streams, which pose a continuous threat to program stability, staff continuity, and the ability to fully achieve program and policy goals. The third is the inadequacy of the funding formulas and rates, which undermine programs' ability to provide the full array and levels of service that students need. It's this third issue that I'd like to discuss a bit more.

The Literacy Assistance Center is currently in the process of completing a report entitled “Investing in Quality: A Blueprint for Adult Literacy Programs and Funders”. The report was funded by the Department of Youth and Community Development as part of the LAC’s contract to provide technical assistance to the field, and it is designed to answer two questions: 1) What are the defining features of a quality community-based adult literacy program? and 2) What does it cost to run one? After reviewing the literature and engaging in extensive discussions with program leaders and other stakeholders, the report identified 14 components of a comprehensive, high-quality community-based adult literacy program as well as the resources needed to implement them. It also includes a sample budget. Based on our cost model, we found that community-based adult literacy programs would need to have their current funding rates increased by *three to six times* in order to fully implement the components and services outlined in the report. While this might sound like a big leap, we know that at the current funding rates, many of the critical program components that we identify in our report – such as full-time teachers, counseling, referral networks, workforce transition services, and in-depth data analysis - are often compromised.

The Mayor and City Council have shown a principled commitment to the children of New York City and have rightfully made necessary, substantial, and meaningful investments in our K-12 system. However, for the one in three New Yorkers in need of *adult* literacy education we need to make sure that New York City does not become a “Tale of Two Education Systems.”

At the Literacy Assistance Center, we envision a future in which every immigrant, every parent, and every adult in this city has the full range of knowledge and skills they need to secure employment, achieve economic security, access quality health care, support their children in their schooling, and actively participate in the civic life of their communities. We look forward to working with the City Council over the weeks and months ahead to secure increased funding

to serve many more of the 2.2 million New Yorkers in need, as well as to *baseline more adult literacy funding* to ensure greater program stability and continuity and to *increase the funding rates for programs* in order to guarantee that every adult who gains access to a program is given the comprehensive, high-quality services they deserve. In a city committed to equal opportunity and social justice, we can do no less.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I am happy to take any questions or can be reached for follow up at [iray@lacnyc.org](mailto:iray@lacnyc.org) or 212-803-3302.

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Testimony re: Adult Literacy/NYC DOE Office of Adult and Continuing Education  
Katie Naplatarski  
NYC Council Hearing – Committee on Education  
September 20, 2107

Dear Council Members,

Thank you for holding this hearing regarding Adult Literacy in New York City and seeking the to ensure the accountability of NYC literacy providers.

A 27-year DOE teacher, I was with OACE for 25 years, the last five as an instructional facilitator.

I transferred out of OACE two years ago and currently work with another DOE division as an academic coach/itinerant.

I would like to shed light on the following issues known to me through personal experience and keeping my ear “close to the ground” these past two years:

TASC Test Numbers:

- Only 299 diplomas were earned in 2015 out of 30,000 students (current diploma numbers are unknown and point to the need for accountability); I have taught the TASC test for my current program and the excuse that the new test is harder is not a valid reason for this low number
- In fact, last year the program I am currently with earned 1,700 diplomas out of 7000 enrolled (and also has both ESL and BE students)
- OACE severely lacks TASC focus, staff development, or a process in place or implemented in order for students to progress through the TASC process or up through the class ranks. To quote a teacher from Susan Edelman’s January 2016 Post article, ”There’s no feedback, no support, no curriculum. We are left to our own devices”.
- Case in point: In 2015 I witnessed that the principal of Brooklyn Adult Learning Center had the mandatory TASC practice tests locked in her office closet until April of the school year; she took them out only when a Saturday class threatened “mutiny”; in addition, according to current staff, the scheduling of these mandatory tests often goes by the wayside and students languish in class or leave
- Students soon learn that OACE no longer has the TASC test as a priority; if they try applying on their own, their applications are pulled by the TASC department which is run by OACE!

Standardized Testing Policy for Basic Education and ESL - OACE Out of Compliance:

- OACE is out of compliance with federal and state testing policy



- State and federal guidelines state that students should test after a minimum of 40 instructional hours (see handout A); yet program-wide, OACE systematically post-tests students at 12 hours including intake (see handout B)
- Numerous teachers have stated this has been common practice for the past few years; all one needs do is to look into ASISTS to find the evidence, clear as day

#### OACE Success is Questionable:

- The present administration in large part justifies its “leadership” practices by its success on the NYSED rating
- But the ratings are based on standardized testing
- OACE does not follow the testing guidelines (TABE and BEST Plus)
- The testing data is not legitimate; OACE’s claim of program success disputable

#### OACE Administrative Mismanagement:

- Teachers and other staff are not respected, valued, or supported; in fact, the contrary is true
- Virtually all focus is on standardized testing in order to get a good rating (which doesn’t even mean that much other than reputation); teachers teach to the test and are hounded by data trackers who daily and relentlessly order for students to be tested in the classroom during instruction
- Part time and full time teachers have left in droves, often midyear; institutional memory is gone; years to build back up
- Community building is near non-existent; retention is not a focus; since students are tested after just 12 hours there is little motive or interest in retaining students once they have “made gain”
- Students are often frustrated because they have no chance to progress to a higher level class due to OACE arbitrary testing rules; once they have tested in math and shown gain, they might not take a reading test for months and so are unable to advance even if they are ready
- Rank and file is not consulted on educational matters or materials; hundreds of thousands of dollars were wasted in the administration’s first 6 months on the purchase of useless materials which are still in the basement of the learning centers. One teacher told me the book and CD sets are still hanging around five years later and can’t even be given away.
- What was once an excellent learning institution is now a mill

- Years of complaints and cries for help have gone unheard; DOE passes the buck of blame to the state saying OACE is under the state's guidance; it has so far protected the administration, ignoring the writing on the wall and the damage being done

Leadership Style:

- The administration's style might be characterized as: Abusive, disrespectful, mean, non-collaborative, arrogant, dictatorial, tyrannical; one might say it lacks creativity, innovation, vision and one might say heart. If one is unlucky enough to be in the crosshairs of this administration, one might call it a reign of terror. Seriously. It's that bad.

Summary and Requests:

I left OACE after many years of service. Others have left too. In fact there are four others in my current program who jumped ship. Excellent staff, both teachers and administration level, have run from this broken ship to other institutions which are happy to have these excellent educators. Not to mention the students who just walk out the door... or as the word gets around, never walk in.

Council members please:

- Demand that the state, Bob Purga and Kevin Smith, and DOE investigate the testing; go into ASISTS, the story is these. This is a CITY responsibility. These are NYC STUDENTS. The students and city sorely need the best literacy services possible and the city as well as the state need to ensure that federal regulations are followed.
- Demand that OACE is accountable to the city to provide information on all aspects of the program (thank you for this proposed legislation).
- Demand that DOE looks behind the smoke and mirrors to see the real story and do something about it; we are counting on you to follow through to rectify this sad situation for the sake of the thousands of New Yorkers who so sorely need prime adult literacy services.

I sincerely and whole heartedly appreciate the time and effort the NYC Committee on Education and Council Members is taking to investigate this issue.

I am available at any time to provide further information.

Sincerely,

Katie Naplatarki  
Former OACE Teacher

**Diann Jenkins' Testimony Before The New York City Council Hearing 9/20/17**

**Thank you City Council Education Committee for allowing me to speak as the issues facing OACE are ENORMOUS!!**

**Adult Education needs true, accountable andragogic leadership of the largest adult education program in New York State. Leadership who actually brings the same type of compassion, dedication and experience to a program that its dedicated adult education teachers have demonstrated for decades.**

**WHY????**

***Because Of The Population We Serve***

***1.6 Million New York City residents DO NOT HAVE A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!***

**The average age of an OACE student is 39.**

**Over 80% of OACE students are low-income.**

**25% of OACE students are unemployed.**

**Two-thirds of OACE students are women**

**1% are American Indian or Alaskan**

**The NYC Department of Education's  
Adult Education Program  
Is Under Siege!**

This program provides **FREE** ESL, Basic Education, High School Equivalency (GED), ESL and Career and Technical Training classes to adult students in NYC

**The Superintendent of the Office of Adult and Continuing Education (OACE) is destroying our program by:**

- Closing community classes for the PARENTS of PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS
- Hiring those who know NOTHING about TEACHING ADULTS
- SUPPLYING FEW NEW MATERIALS needed by the students to learn
- Hiring Teachers Who Know NOTHING ABOUT TEACHING ADULTS
- Targeting veteran adult education teachers by giving them excessive U ratings

**ALL ADULTS DESERVE AN EDUCATION!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

**SAVE THIS PROGRAM!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

**CALL: Chancellor Fariña 212-374-0200  
Dorita Gibson 212-374-7858  
Laura Feijoo 212-374-7832**

**Tell them ALL ADULTS DESERVE A QUALITY  
EDUCATION!!!!!!!!!!**

**SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH EVERYONE YOU  
KNOW!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

**12% are Asian,  
39% are Black or African American  
42% are Hispanic or Latino  
1% are White**

**And Oh Yes!!!  
78% are born outside of the U.S.  
REMEMBER NEW YORK IS A SANCTUARY  
CITY!!!!!!**

**Parents and families are a priority for OACE**

**44% of OACE students are parents with a total of 15,000  
children in the NYC Department of Education's K-12 system.  
3,400 preschoolers  
5,800 elementary school students  
2,500 junior high school students  
3,300 high school students have parents in OACE adult  
education programs!**

**We teach the parents of NYC School Children so they can  
learn while their children learn.**

**BUT how is that possible when this narcissistically self  
indulgent administration is without qualified  
administrators with years of experience working with adults  
who are NOT CHILDREN!!!!**

**The Office of Adult and Continuing Education's  
mission is to empower adults in their roles as  
parents, family members, workers and  
community members. We promote lifelong**

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**SAVE THIS PROGRAM!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

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**Laura Feijoo 212-374-7832**

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**SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH EVERYONE YOU  
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learning and the development of problem solving skills through a continuum of services, including Adult Basic Education, English for Speakers of Other Languages, HSE Preparation, and Career and Technical Education.

**How Can We Do this Without Providing Qualified, Experienced Adult Education Administrators??**

**How Can We Do This If Our Program Consists Of Mean Spirited K – 12 Administrators Who Know Nothing About Adult Education?????**

**How can we do this when if a teacher demonstrated the kind of insensitive, selfish, narcissistic and unilateral behavior in their classroom their students would have long walked out and their**

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**rating would unquestionably be a  
"U" for unsatisfactory. This  
superintendency is beyond a "U"!**

**This time-honored program for  
40,000 NYC adults per year  
deserves far better than an  
arrogant, incompetent, dishonest  
administration!!!!!!!!!!**

**HOW DO I ABUSE THEE?? LET  
ME COUNT THE WAYS!!!!!!**

**ON MY FIRST DAY I SAID: "MY  
WAY OR THE HIGHWAY!!!!!!!!!!!"**

**I Have A Central Office made up of  
numerous administrators on  
substantive salaries WITH MANY  
OF THEM KNOWING**

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**ABSOLUTELY NOTHING ABOUT  
ADULT EDUCATION!!!!**

**An Administration who cut hours  
and classes while ordering  
Principals to give Unsatisfactory  
ratings to their teachers. Who  
Loves “U”?**

**I LOVE UUUUUUUUU’S!!!!**

**How do we do this if I make you  
cringe by having my  
administrators call your students  
“children” even though their  
average age is 39.**

**How can we do this when  
administrators are an unwelcome  
combination of inexperience,**

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**incompetence and program  
damage.**

**How can we do this when the  
meaning of andragogy is confused  
with pedagogy.**

**How can we do this when as soon  
as the new hires understand how  
they will be bullied and mistreated  
they will be out of here! I can't  
even count how many people have  
left OACE in the last 3 years. Bye,  
bye teachers, principals, Central  
staff .**

**How can we do this when the  
administration forces senior staff  
to train the new hires!!!!!!**

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**How can we do this when students are placed incorrectly in classes levels 1 through 4 by someone who does not know the difference between those levels!!!!**

**How can we do this when the K – 12 administration: FORCES non-certified staff to administer:**

- a. TABE and Best Plus tests**
- b. Do new student Intake**
- c. Score Tests**
- d. Interview and Place Students**
- e. Prescribe tests**

**All of these functions MUST be performed by certified personnel in order them to be done correctly.**

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**How can we do this when:  
A k-12 administration  
purposefully removes adult ed  
staff with seniority and replaces  
them with new staff hires**

**How can we accomplish the  
program's mission when the k – 12  
administration  
FORCES senior teachers to work  
split schedules (they must work  
mornings, nights and maybe  
Saturdays) while hiring new  
teachers and giving them a Day  
schedules (M -F 9:00 to 3:00)**

**How can we do this when the k-12  
administration Doesn't  
participate in promotional hiring  
which would allow experienced  
adult education persons to fill**

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**positions in Adult Education for which they are very well qualified**

**How do we do this when the K-12 administration indulges in favoritism and nepotism**

**How can we do this when Community Coordinators and Community Assistants are allowed to do payroll when they are not certified and lack any knowledge of payroll preparation**

**How can we do this when students are forced to wait as much as 10 days to get necessary documentation**

**How can we do this when**

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**the k-12 administration places 2  
office staff persons when 6 are  
needed**

**How can we do this when the k-12  
administration has the School  
Secretary monitoring the  
switchboard, answering all calls,  
creating unnecessary  
spreadsheets, etc..., etc...,etc...**

**How can we do this when  
Most of the staff quit! Many were  
fired! And only a few are left!!!!**

**How can we do this when The  
focus on getting EPE dollars  
instead of really caring about  
servicing the students and  
nourishing the program!!!!**

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**Please help me to understand how  
a k-12 administration can possibly  
administrate an adult education  
program as I DO NOT  
UNDERSTAND!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

**BUT Of COURSE I Could Not  
Listen As My Wisdom Is  
Infinite!!!!**

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The first thing we must understand and keep in mind about teaching adults is that it is a very different process from teaching children. Points in common do exist, but the adult learner is a formed individual with life experience, and entrenched habits and perceptions who is therefore at once easier and harder to teach. At the same time, returning to school can be a psychologically delicate and daunting process. Knowledge of all of this as well as of the material enters into the teaching of adults.

The Office of Adult and Continuing Education is a part of the Department of Education and falls under the supervision of the Chancellor. It is also part of a tradition of more than 60 years that has helped adult learners in the City of New York to develop literacy skills, or to learn English as a Second Language, or to become citizens, or to enter the middle class by learning a skilled trade. It is the largest provider of adult education in the country and one of the few unionized programs. The stated mission of the Office of Adult and Continuing Education is to provide lifelong learning to any resident of New York City who is over 21 years of age who wants to attend school. Under Superintendent Rose-Marie Mills, this program is being so badly mismanaged that one could characterize her administration as one of dismemberment.

There is mismanagement of the teaching staff; there is mismanagement of support staff. There is mismanagement of class schedules so that students are denied access to the vital service of education for which their taxes pay and so that teachers are obliged to work 12 hour split shift days. There are the continual attempts to remove lower level students from the program, though it is mandated to be open to anyone over 21 years of age living in New York City. There is the eight percent reduction in the number of classes in the last four years, when the need for adult education is increasing. There is refusal to deal with the pressing problems of immigrant students. There is the refusal to provide students with certified teachers by attempting to destroy licensure and therefore deny teachers their union protections, on which another colleague will submit testimony. There is misrepresentation of testing data possibly

suggesting fraud, which another colleague will speak to. And there is financial mismanagement that no one knows the extent of because the budget, though paid for by taxpayers, is kept secret. If the goal of the program is to serve the students, one can truthfully say it is being dismembered. If the goal of the program is to create and maintain an expanding fiefdom, then perhaps it is a success.

### **Teachers**

Ms. Mills is attempting to eliminate the professionals in adult education who have made the program the success that it is. Experienced Teachers are being hounded out of their jobs by micromanagement of their teaching, in spite of contractual prohibitions against such activity. Teachers with 20 and 30 years of experience are suddenly found, by supervisors with little to no experience in adult education, to be unsatisfactory. This past year, especially, there has been a campaign of constant nit-picking and finding fault with every least gesture, or the arrangement of the room, or the decoration of the walls. Classes are interrupted so that the teacher can be chastised in front of the students for these supposed faults. Classes are put together which lump many different levels of students together. The teacher is told to "differentiate," when what is needed is smaller classes with students of more or less the same level. The teacher is then given unsatisfactory rating after unsatisfactory rating. Though the tenured teachers cannot be fired immediately, their unsatisfactory ratings prevent them from working in the summers, adversely affecting their income and their pensions. Many find it easier to simply leave rather than to submit to the constant barrage of negativism. Other teachers, some with 20 and 30 years of experience were suddenly given unsatisfactory ratings this past spring, for the first time in their lives. Approximately 10% of the annualized teachers in the Office of Adult and Continuing Education were given unsatisfactory year end ratings this year.

Teachers are also being hounded out of their jobs by changes to their schedules which result in 12 to 15 hour days, often involving travel back and



forth across the city, and/or six day weeks. Travel time is not counted as part of the work day and teachers are paid only for the time they actually spend with the students. Teachers must use their own time to,prepare, since the paid preparation time is ten minutes a day no matter how many classes the teacher is responsible for. Class schedules are changed even when the result is a loss of the reimbursable hours which fund the program. This is mismanagement.

Teachers are assigned to teach classes outside of their license area, a blatant attempt to destroy licensure and with it, union protection.

Schedules of six hour days, as in the children's schools, do exist. After the assignment of schedules, often execrable, to senior teachers at the end of the school year, classes with better schedules are suddenly opened. New teachers, many of them teachers of children with no experience in adult education, are hired. Many of these teachers do not even have ESL certification and are illegally teaching out of license. They are therefore especially vulnerable to attacks by administration and are less likely to fight back, for themselves or for their students. Their first year, they are drawn in to the program by receiving one of the ever-decreasing number of 9:00 to 3:00 jobs. The year after that, or perhaps when they come up for tenure after a few years, they, too, are put on the chopping block.

### **Other Jobs**

Another job on the chopping block is that of the case managers. These are the people who test the students and guide them to the classes most appropriate for what they want to accomplish. Returning to school can be traumatic for an adult, and the case manager is, or has been, not only a guide, but a welcomer, a comforter, and a sounding board. Now the jobs of these professionals, an indispensable link in the program, are being phased out. As the case managers are picked off by the supervisors, either by harassment or by scheduling, as with the teachers, they are replaced by "Community Associates."

These employees may be assigned to any number of jobs, such as data entry, intake, or testing. As newcomers, they do not know the program, the population, or, often, even the job. However, whether they work in the ever expanding data department or with the students, they are paid much less than any members of the UFT whom they replace, leaving more money with which to hire more middle management who will owe their jobs to Ms. Mills. Secretaries and paraprofessionals, too, with many years of experience and a strong relationship with teachers and students are being driven out by changes to their schedules which make their lives impossible. There are fewer and fewer people left who can guide a student through the intricacies of the program.

Teachers at the Office of Adult and Continuing Education are supposed to receive aid from Instructional Facilitators. These support staff may help teachers to hone their teaching skills; they may offer new ideas, they may help a teacher in danger of an unsatisfactory rating. In the past, they have ordered appropriate materials. These past few years, some entire regions (the divisions of OACE around the city) have had no Instructional Facilitator for an entire year or more, yet the number of assistant principals in these regions has increased. The duties of these assistant principals, except for of harassment of teachers and staff, are unclear.

As teachers and support staff are eliminated, the number of administrators hired by Ms. Mills increases. Some sites have had two assistant principals to supervise three teachers. The new administrators come from the children's schools. They expect and demand that adult students be treated like children, or at least as these administrators think children should be treated and taught. Feedback from the students is not welcomed and, if it exists, is dismissed. In the words of one administrator, "They are not professionals."

Who suffers from the attacks on these workers? Obviously, the workers who lose the jobs with which they support their families, their health insurance, and even part or all of their pensions. Even more significantly, the students

who want and need to attend the program suffer from the loss of these experienced workers. And if the students suffer, so do their children and so does the City of New York, deprived of the best that the workers of OACE and their students have to offer. The destruction of the Office of Adult and Continuing Education is destroying lives across the city.

### **Immigrant students**

With the election of Mr. Trump; the Department of Education established legal resources for immigrant students. As part of District 79 of the Department of Education, the Office of Adult and Continuing Education had access to immigration experts for the students. Not only were staff of the Office of Adult and continuing Education not informed of this fact, individual principals have put obstacles in the way of teachers who tried to bring outside help, such as representatives from the New York Immigration Coalition, into their classes. The immigrant students, if they have received any advice, have received it on a catch as catch can basis, depending on their teachers. Unsurprisingly, there has been a sharp drop in attendance, starting last January. Students who had never missed a class suddenly disappeared. OACE, the Superintendent, and by extension, the Chancellor, have been unacceptably negligent towards these students and must be held accountable.

### **Finances**

The Office of Adult and Continuing Education, under the direction of Superintendent Mills, is wasting money and is trying to make it up on the backs of senior staff, hounding experienced workers out of the program and converting OACE, a part of the Department of Education, from a program with union jobs with benefits to a program in which there increasingly is only part time work. What happens to the money saved is a mystery, one that must be solved.

One clear example of Superintendent Mills' reign of financial mismanagement was evidenced as soon as she started her job at OACE: She ordered hundreds

of thousands of dollars' worth of books. She did not consult with the teachers or the instructional facilitators, who had experience in the field. The books she ordered varied from children's books (*I Am a Train*), to single copies of books with CDs, of such authors as Joseph Heller and William Faulkner. Even if students could understand Faulkner, no CD players were provided. These books, inappropriate for the students and unusable by the teachers, have now either disappeared, stolen from sites by no one knows whom, or are rotting away in the basements of the learning centers. Who was the vendor? *Cui bono?* Whoever benefited, this is evidence of mismanagement.

However, the main problem with the program's finances is that they are not transparent. We do not know how many senior teachers have left the program, willingly or not. We do not know how many new administrators have been hired. We do not know anything about the budget although this is a public program funded by our taxes. The budget must be made transparent.

### **Summary**

Many immigrants, documented and undocumented, hard workers, who have lived here and paid taxes for many years, have improved their lives and the lives of the rest of us in New York through their studies at the office of Adult and Continuing Education. Many who were not, have become citizens. All of our students, immigrants and native born, are citizens of the City of New York and deserve the best the city can give them, as they give the best of themselves to the city. They deserve classes at their level. They deserve a proper education so they can help their children with school work. They need a proper education so they can be better functioning citizens of the city. They deserve experienced teachers so they can get that education. They deserve a proper education because they are human beings who should have access to lifelong learning. And they deserve an education arising from respect for what they know and who they are. They do not deserve to be viewed and treated as ciphers who are a source of income for the program.

The failure of Superintendent Rose-Marie Mills and the Department of Education to fulfill their obligations to the students that the Office of Adult and Continuing Education supposed to serve, is egregious. Ms. Mills has demonstrated that she cares neither for her workers nor the students for whom the program is supposed to exist. This mistreatment is impermissible and it is impermissible for the Department of Education to allow such mistreatment to continue. The program must be expanded, not cut. All who desire an education must be served. Experienced staff must no be harassed and fired. We must have free adult education for all who desire it. If Ms. Mills and her superiors are unwilling to serve the people of the City of New York, they must be replaced with those who will do so.

**OACE IS SYSTEMATICALLY OUT-OF COMPLIANCE  
WITH NYSED TESTING GUIDELINES**

This MEMO FROM OACE, Region 4 2017 -2018, shows that the current post testing policy is NOT in compliance with NRS/NYSED (or Federal) guidelines.



**School 4 Post Testing Schedule  
2017-2018**

Student Population	Class	Due Date
ALL NEW STUDENTS ENROLLED IN SEPTEMBER AND RETURNING STUDENTS WITHOUT A POST TEST	DAY	9/13-9/26
	██████████	9/25-9/29
	██████████	10/7-10/14
ALL STUDENTS ENROLLED IN OCTOBER	DAY, ██████████ ██████████	10/23-10/28 11/04
ALL STUDENTS ENROLLED IN NOVEMBER	DAY, ██████████ ██████████	11/20-11/22 By 12/2
ALL STUDENTS ENROLLED IN DECEMBER	██████████ DAY, ██████████	12/16 12/18-12/21
JANUARY - ALL STUDENTS	██████████	1/6-1/26: ALL STUDENT ROLL OVER TESTS INCLUDING BEST LITERACY
	DAY, ██████████	1/22-1/27: ALL ENROLLEES MUST BE TESTED
ALL STUDENTS ENROLLED IN FEBRUARY	██████████ DAY, ██████████	2/10 2/12-2/15
ALL STUDENTS ENROLLED IN MARCH	DAY, ██████████ ██████████	3/19-3/24
ALL STUDENTS ENROLLED IN APRIL	DAY, ██████████ ██████████	4/23-4/28
ALL STUDENTS ENROLLED IN MAY	DAY, ██████████ ██████████	5/21-5/26

A student can enroll in class any day prior to the due dates and be post tested. There is no minimum waiting time.

9/13/17  
School began 9/8/17;  
Students have had only 12 hours of class time.

Here are the NYSED post test guidelines (see yellow highlight):

New York State Assessment Policy  
Revised April 2015

FY2016

**Developing an Effective Testing Schedule**

Devising an effective testing schedule is critical to program success. Being able to post-test a high percentage of students is important for two reasons. First, post-test scores determine educational gain, which is an important NRS measure. The percentage of students post-tested is

also used to measure student retention. NYS sets a performance measure of 70% meaning a minimum of 70% of students must be post tested. A low percentage indicates that a program is unable to retain its students long enough for them to be post-tested. There is no formula or universal testing schedule that can be applied to all adult education programs. Programs are encouraged to customize their testing schedules based on the average contact hours evidenced in each program area. The intensity of a program should also be considered when determining a post-testing schedule. At the very least, a program should post-test after a minimum of 40 contact hours.

When developing a testing schedule, programs should consider the following questions:

- *How long do students stay enrolled in our program?* If a program waits too long to post-test its students, it may measure a lower student retention percentage because some of its students may have left the program before they've had a chance to be post-tested. However, programs should be careful not to test students too close to the beginning of the term nor should they test students too frequently—excessive testing can be discouraging to the student in addition to costly to the program.
- *What is the intensity of our classes?* A class that is more intense—i.e., a class that offers more frequent and extensive sessions in a given time period—may be more effective in helping its students achieve educational gain than one that meets less frequently for shorter sessions.

Therefore, programs should schedule post-tests accordingly.

The table below lists minimum requirements for post-testing schedules:

Intensity of Program	Post Test Schedule
Six to Nine hours per week	Posttest every 40 - 60 instructional hours
Ten or more hours per week	Posttest every 60 - 80 instructional hours
Volunteer Tutorial Program	Posttest every 30 contact hours

### Assessment Guidelines

For assessments to serve as an effective indicator of a student's educational progress, it must be implemented with care and competence. This guide does not provide step-by-step instructions for administering the TABE, BEST Plus, or BEST Literacy. That information can be found in each test's administration manual and at required training sessions scheduled by NYSED and the

Page 2 of 4

Source: <http://www.newyorkcityraen.org/assets/nysassessmentpolicyrevisedapril2015.pdf>

### **Summary:**

- NYSED post test guidelines for day classes say to post test at a minimum of 40 instructional hours (this is also NRS Federal guidelines)
- OACE post testing practices are out of compliance with NYSED and Federal Guideline as students are systematically tested at fewer than 40 hours.

**Note: In addition, multiple teachers in other Regions report that they have been repeatedly instructed to post test at 12 hours (INCLUDING 2-3 INTAKE/NON-INSTRUCTIONAL hours).**



In contrast, this handbook dated 9/3/12 from administration previous to Superintendent Mills indicates post-test schedule of previous administration WAS in compliance with NRS and NYSED Guidelines.



OFFICE OF ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION  
Dr. Jann Coles, Superintendent



**OFFICE OF ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION**

# **OACE**

## **STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES MANUAL AND DATA HANDBOOK**



Updated: 9/3/12

**p. 42 – 43 of Handbook:**

### **XI. POST-TESTING**

**POST-TESTING SCHEDULE FOR PY 2013**

#### **FIRST ROUND OF POST-TESTING**

Document: Turnarounds F distributed to Teachers 4<sup>th</sup> week of July by EO's (together with August Sign-In and Combined Roster sheets).

Target Populations: All students attending summer school.

Due Date: Teachers return Turnarounds F by final day of summer school.

### **SECOND ROUND OF POST-TESTING**

Document: Turnarounds F distributed to Teachers 3<sup>rd</sup> week of November by EO's (together with December Sign-In and Combined Roster sheets).

Target Population: A student returning from the previous program year, a student with 30+ CH's, a summer school student who did not show gain and a student who may leave the program.

Due Date: Teachers return Turnarounds F by 3<sup>rd</sup> week of December.

### **THIRD ROUND OF POST-TESTING**

Document: Turnarounds F distributed to Teachers 4<sup>th</sup> week of January by EO's (together with February Sign-In and Combined Roster sheets).

Target Population: A student who did not show gain in the fall, a student with 30+ CH's since previous assessment and a student who may leave the program.

Due Date: Teachers return Turnarounds F by 2<sup>nd</sup> week of February.

### **FOURTH ROUND OF POST-TESTING**

Document: Turnarounds F distributed to Teachers 4<sup>th</sup> week of March by EO's (together with April Sign-In and Combined Roster sheets).

Target Population: A student who did not show gain on previous assessments, a student with 30+ CH's since previous assessment and a student who may leave the program.

Due Date: Teachers return Turnarounds F by 4<sup>th</sup> week of April.

### **FIFTH ROUND OF POST-TESTING**

Document: Turnarounds F distributed to Teachers 4<sup>th</sup> week of May by EO's (together with June Sign-In and Combined Roster sheets).

## **All students must be post-tested.**

### **POST-TESTING GUIDELINES**

- **All Students:** A student who enters the program in the fall semester should be post-tested in accordance with the OACE post-testing. There is one exception when a student should be post-tested sooner:

The teacher knows the student will be leaving the program or going on extended leave.

I am a retired teacher who left OACE in 2015, after a terribly disappointing downturn in the quality of our program that began when Rosemarie Mills took over as superintendent. The tyrannical tone she set from the beginning drove many good people away, starting with our wonderful principal Daisy Torres, our Instructional Facilitators and a host of other teachers who were either forced out through harassment and undeserved U ratings or who left in frustration with the degrading atmosphere.

I was one of those, choosing early retirement over a job that had changed from teaching and supporting students in a variety of activities, to testing, testing and more testing. The imperative to attain scores and numbers tied to our funding became paramount at the expense of all other educational goals. Teachers and case managers were told to TABE test over and over, often before the limit of hours recommended by NYS guidelines, and students had to comply in bewilderment. In the CTE program where I worked it was particularly irrelevant and disruptive to the vocational training that needed to happen.

All of us were terrorized by her threats and the students suffered for it. Many gave up and although I don't have data to prove it I believe our numbers fell significantly from the time she took over. There were veteran teachers who were forced out and new teachers who were subjected to observations from inept, unqualified supervisors and then denied tenure. The friendly family atmosphere that had attracted me to the program in the first place was destroyed as we became a testing factory, cutting back on school wide events, eliminating classes for low level ESL students, and making it nearly impossible for working students or parents of young children to attend. We were reduced to cycling through a shrinking number of students who came primarily to meet requirements for other social service programs rather than to pursue their education.

I'm attaching a document I wrote and circulated in June of 2015, after I had given up and decided to retire. It was intended originally as a press release and a call to arms. I wrote it from home after many frustrating meetings with fellow teachers and union officials that eventually led nowhere. When Ms. Mills found out I had written it she came and confiscated my computer, and for the last week of school I was unable to access any files to service students. Colleagues that I have stayed in touch with say things have gotten even worse since then.

One of the complaints I voiced in that document was about the dismantling of the LPN program. I have since learned that this was due to cuts in the federal budget and not a decision by Ms. Mills. However, even though Ms. Mills was not personally responsible for the cut, it was the way the news was delivered, bluntly at the last minute, without explanation, that was objectionable. The staff was left trying to placate hundreds of students who had studied and paid for pre-tests, re-arranged their schedules and secured childcare for the PN program. We were given no guidance as to how to redirect these students and instead of consulting with the Nursing program staff to come up with alternatives, they were dismissed and told to look for other jobs. This failure to include staff in any decision making was a hallmark of Ms. Mills' dictatorial style.

I hope you can investigate this situation further and take some action to restore OACE to it's former mission, to educate underserved adults and thereby help to uplift them and their families. It was a great program and could be again!

Thank you for your time in reading this and hearing our case.

Submitted by Sarah Safford, a retired OACE teacher with 7 years experience at OACE and 20+ years in adult education/workforce development.

June 2015

## **FREE ADULT CAREER EDUCATION - A PATH TO EMPLOYMENT - GETTING PHASED OUT AT NYCDOE?**

### ***CHANGE FOR THE WORSE AT O.A.C.E.***

While the battle cry of politicians across the country is about jobs and employment, NYC's Office of Adult and Continuing Education (O.A.C.E) is cutting successful training programs in one of the fastest growing fields in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – healthcare. Where else in the world can you get a top notch training to become a Medical Billing and Coding Specialist or a Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) for the cost of the text books and exam vouchers? What other city provides a free\* Licensed Practical Nursing (PN) training program (\*the cost for the 11 month LPN program is approximately \$2,500-\$3,000 -books, uniforms, assessment, state boards and graduation fees) to meet the growing needs of our health care system, as aging baby boomers fill nursing homes and hospitals. What other city provides free ESL, basic Education and High School Equivalency classes on the scale of over 30,000 people a year? Why would any city with these successful programs that help get people off of public assistance, want to phase them out?

According to OACE officials, funding streams for OACE's Practical Nursing (PN) program have been cut by the NY State legislature and OACE can no longer afford to maintain the training program. Over the past 5 years approximately 600 people have been trained and 85-95% pass the state boards, find employment and go on to become Registered Nurses. These are great outcomes yet now there is no more funding?

The demand for the free CNA and LPN classes is huge - hundreds of inquiries come in each week - and in the past five years over 500 OACE students have been able to complete their CNA and sometimes their High School Equivalency simultaneously, going on to find living wage employment or enter the LPN program. Now, with new State requirements for class size and budgetary concerns, the Brooklyn CNA program has had to cancel classes twice in the last year, and has a waiting list of over 130 people hoping to get into the next cycle. The PN program has hundreds of applicants waiting for interviews and the next step in their application process, and none of them are being called in. The city needs more nurses and aides, and the students are there, waiting and willing to work hard. Where is the disconnect?

Most of the funding for OACE's programs come from the federal government's Workforce Investment Act funneled through the state's Employment Preparation Education (EPE) funds, which are then paid to OACE based on mainly on student contact hours. EPE dollars are also paid in accordance to post-test rate and rate of "educational gain" (measured only by a grade level increase in their weaker subject on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) administered to each student several times a year – no credit for advancing a grade level in Reading if Reading was your strength to begin with). This year the State legislature voted to limit EPE funding only to students who are "educationally disadvantaged", scoring below 9<sup>th</sup> grade level on either the Reading or Math section of the TABE.

Students who have HS diplomas or equivalencies (required for the PN and other CTE certification programs) are not eligible for EPE funding if they score too high on both subjects and are no longer admitted to the program, even if they are unemployed and/or on public assistance. The PN program which requires higher scoring, gets absolutely no reimbursement from EPE even though the employment rate of its graduates is higher than those of other Voc Ed programs.

Staff at the BALC PN program are extremely dismayed about the situation and have offered to work on raising outside funds to help keep the program going. However, these suggestions have been dismissed by administration. Other OACE classes too have been closed due to waning attendance – many of the adult students have complicated lives juggling various appointments and childcare responsibilities, and the attrition rate is high. Teachers are held accountable for their Average Daily Attendance and testing rate and “educational gain” benchmarks. Case Managers are supposed to help with these issues and many other duties but with caseloads of over 400 students, sometimes in multiple locations, they have their hands full.

### ***HOW THE PROGRAM IS BEING DISMANTLED***

The new Superintendent of OACE, Rose-Marie Mills, a former middle school administrator, has been charged with bringing the program back from a serious budget deficit. She has brought in her own staff, many of whom have similar backgrounds in early childhood or P-12 education and little or no experience working with adults. Her approach has been one of micro management, focused on data, test scores and disciplinary actions with no emphasis on community building or collaboration, previous hallmarks of this program. Staff and students alike have been disappointed by the change in tone and the culture of negativity that has replaced what used to be a joyful learning center with many school wide activities and cultural celebrations.

In addition to phasing out community events, partnerships and the PN program, OACE also seems to be trying another strategy to manage its funding deficits. Several of the senior staff as well as new untenured teachers have been given U ratings this year for the first time in their careers and in the history of the program. Three U ratings can lead to dismissal or disqualify a teacher from future salary increases. Since salaries make up a large part of the school budget it seems that there is a concerted effort to get rid of teachers as a way of saving money.

Beyond the injury these U ratings cause to good teachers, there is the insult that they are being handed out by two of our administrators who it seems do not have valid teaching certificates (have not passed the content portion of teacher licensing exams) according to SED records. Also, there is no rubric or criteria for evaluating a teacher's performance, and these evaluations and ratings are being handled in a completely arbitrary and unjust manner. Supervisors can and do judge one even minor aspect as weak and grade the whole lesson as “unsatisfactory”. This is an outrage and a shame.

At BALC several teachers have resigned or retired and others are planning to leave soon. The sudden increase in U ratings seem to be based on some type of quota, like the tickets that Transit Police give out more liberally at the end of the month. Morale is at an all time low as teachers watch their colleagues humiliated, veteran teachers

unjustly rated, and a program that they proudly championed up until this new administration took over, quietly go down.

### ***A CALL FOR ACTION***

Managing large scale public programs is not easy but NYC can take pride in its adult education program and what it has offered the city's low income adults, dislocated workers and largely immigrant population for so many years – a ticket out of poverty through education. These same adults that are losing out are the struggling single parents of the pre-schoolers that are benefitting from our new Pre-K initiative. Helping them can only fortify their children. The educators and nurses who dedicated their lives to build this program are being forced out to cut costs, but the costs to the city will be much greater in the loss of this valuable public service. Should we let this program die out due to poor management and lack of vision? Come on city leaders – time to step in and show the DOE how important adult education is to the heart and soul of NYC!

Submitted by Sarah Safford, a retired OACE teacher with 7 years experience at OACE and 20+ years in adult education/workforce development.

Dear Speaker and Council members,

**FOR THE RECORD**

Thank you for accepting my testimony on Adult Education in NYC., specifically the mismanagement and destruction of the DOE's Office of Adult and Continuing Ed Dept.(OACE)

I am a teacher/case manager at the Office of Adult and Continuing Education. In addition, I have had many years of experience in adult education. I have never in my work life experienced as much toxicity, ill will and incompetence on the part of the administration as I have in the last 5 years at the OACE.

I would like to focus on 3 areas of concern: the reduction of classes in OACE, the lack of accountability and transparency and the mismanagement of funds, and the toxic work environment which has gone unchecked under Superintendent Mills' tenure.

### **The Reduction of Classes in OACE**

At a time when immigration in NYC is on the rise, our program is cutting classes. It is worrisome and points to mismanagement. There is such a great need for our services. Why then, according to the OACE's Directory of Classes, did we have 725 classes in 2012-13; whereas, in 2016-17 we only provided 663 classes. This is 62 fewer classes. In 2014, OACE served 29,000 students. However, in 2016, OACE only served 27,000 students. While the need for adult educational services is great, the OACE served 2,000 fewer students in the last 2 years. The number should be increasing not decreasing.

Many of our immigrant students are mothers of elementary school students. It is convenient for them to drop off their children at school and then attend ESL classes in the same school. We used to have morning and afternoon classes in addition to evening classes for working people. Since Superintendent Mills came to OACE she has systematically closed all the afternoon classes making it difficult for some of our mothers to get the education they need from us. This is discriminatory against women with children who can only attend classes during the day. This has adversely affected not only immigrant mothers but also many people who work in the evening. Without these much needed afternoon classes they have to seek classes elsewhere. This is just an example of how little awareness and compassion Superintendent Mills has for the students we serve in OACE.

### **The Lack of Accountability and Mismanagement of Funds**

OACE receives \$38 million dollars a year from NYS through EPE funds and \$83 million from the Federal government for WIOA funds. Where is all this money going? We do not know what the budget is for OACE and how the monies are being spent. We have asked the UFT for this



information and have been told that OACE does not even have to show the UFT its budget. This lack of transparency is of grave concern for us. Money is certainly not going to opening viable classes in the community or hiring experienced adult education teachers, paras and case managers. Rather, many of our experienced teachers have been fired or "discontinued" and then replaced by teachers with no adult education experience.

In 2013, the year after Superintendent Mills came to OACE, baby books were bought for our ESL classes. It was a travesty. Mills spent at least \$300,000 for each school (there are 8 schools) on useless books. This is at least \$240,000 spent on materials which are now gathering dust in basement storage rooms all around the city. These books were being used in k-2 classes in the public schools but they were completely inappropriate for adults. Our adult students may not be able to speak English but they come to this country with years of experience and knowledge. Infantilizing them with books about The Red Fire Truck is a disgrace! Novels with accompanying CDs were also ordered that were equally inappropriate since the levels were too high for our students' comprehension. These audio books were not usable either since teachers had no CD players at their sites. In 2014 and 2015 no new classroom instructional books were purchased for ESL classes. The only Basic Ed books were common core books. No Spanish HSE books were purchased or distributed. In the spring of 2016, finally, one ESL series was ordered for 2017 with no input from our ESL educators. This lack of competence and professionalism has not gone unnoticed by our students. I have heard students say, "I am going to another school where they give us books to use."

Why was there such a huge misappropriation of funds? This is because Superintendent Mills did not ask for input from any of the experienced Instructional facilitators at OACE who previously ordered excellent ESL teaching materials. On the contrary, all of her central administrators were from the K-12 world with no knowledge or experience in adult education.

Another travesty was the expenditure of huge amounts of money on the ever expanding Central office at OACE, with positions filled by mid management level administrators, staff, and data people. Therefore, there was no money left over for much needed additional frontline staff such as teachers, paras, and case managers. (please see the attached OACE Organizational Charts from 2012 and 2015). Thousands of dollars were needlessly spent on this bloated bureaucracy in the OACE Central Office. I was told that there was no money for additional frontline staff such as teachers and paras and materials were not provided for the classes.

Another huge failure occurred in June 2014 when OACE received a grant to create a curriculum. In the OACE Spotlight Newsletter dated July 2014, it stated, "OACE began a Curriculum Mapping project funded by the American Council on Education." The article in Spotlight described the project as "Curriculum Maps will be created in Atlas Rubicon, an online Curriculum Mapping repository with a template based on Grant Wiggins' Understanding by Design. This work is aligned to the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult learners, the Next Generation Science Standards, and the McGraw Hill pacing guides. These maps will be shared with OACE teachers during September PD." It is a tragedy to say but three years later no curriculum was ever produced or provided to the OACE teachers.

The OACE took over the RAEN (Regional Adult Education Network) in 2014. The trainings for RAEN were conducted by many OACE teachers who were asked to volunteer their time. Some of the trainers were working for RAEN but paid by DOE. This crossover of staff is problematic. OACE teachers were not allowed to attend the RAEN Professional Development trainings even though some were leading the workshops for OACE. Were OACE funds being used or RAEN funds?

In addition, in 2015-16, a consultant was hired called REACH to train administrators on how to observe teachers and write up observations. Some of the participants were Case Managers and Instructional Facilitators, neither of whom are administrators so they didn't need training in how to do classroom observations. How much this cost is also of interest.

### **The Toxic Work Environment**

Harassment and intimidation is the way this Superintendent and her Principals at OACE work.

It was apparent from day one that Superintendent Mills came into the OACE in 2012 with a plan to give OACE teachers unsatisfactory evaluations. In a meeting that I attended in Sept. of 2012, a principal said, "She wants us to give more U ratings." It was also reported that Superintendent Mills yelled in a meeting of principals, "I want blood!" Some principals quit because Superintendent Mills told them they had to U rate certain teachers and they disagreed. Other principals were punished until they stepped down or retired.

These are the numbers of U rated teachers since 2012 when Superintendent Mills came to OACE:

2011-2012 = <b>2% U rated</b>	4 teachers U Rated (this is before Ms. Mills' arrival)
2012-2013= <b>4% U rated</b>	7 teachers U Rated
2013-14 = <b>7% U rated</b>	FOIL data: 13 teachers U Rated
2014-15 = <b>9% U rated</b>	FOIL data: 17 teachers U Rated
2015-16 = <b>unknown</b>	FOIL pending
2016-17 = <b>15% U rated</b>	27 teachers

Since 2012 there has been a systematic and steady increase in the number of U rated teachers at OACE. These numbers are extraordinary compared to the k-12 numbers of ineffective teachers which are at a rate of 1%. OACE is at 15%! This year we were also able to establish that all of the U rated teachers were over 40 years old and at least half were in their 50's and 60's. This indicates age discrimination as far as we are concerned.

Principals, Assistant Principals, IFs, payroll secretaries, data people, Community Associates, and Central Staff have all been intimidated and forced to leave OACE. The OACE has an extraordinarily high turnover rate. An investigation of personnel in OACE would show this.

The emphasis of the Adult Ed program is on data and collecting test scores of students. Overtesting is a big problem. The reason teachers, paras and case managers are told to test so much is to get money from the state. Our EPE guidelines suggest that students be given a pre test within the first 12 hours of attending class. A post test should be given after 40-60 hours of attendance. Those EPE guidelines are no longer followed at OACE. We are now mandated to pre test students during intake followed by a post test when the student has 12 hours of attendance. That is usually within the first week of class. If the student hasn't made gain in the first week (obviously) then the student and teacher are hounded weekly by the data team to continue to test the student for "gain". According to the state guidelines, our post test rate should be 70% and our test gain rate should be 51%. This is not adequate for Superintendent Mills. She stated she wants 100% post test rate and over 70% educational gain rate. Teachers, paras, case managers and students are continually harassed about the test scores. If a low level ESL student has not made gain in the first few months the teacher, para and case manager are continually told to post test again until the student makes educational gain. It is no longer the teacher's decision to test the student when s/he feels the student is ready to make gain, it is now the EO's or the data team's decision. The students always complain about being tested over and over again. They must be pulled out of class and miss valuable classroom instruction time. Students have left our program because they say they are sick of being tested all the time. All of this obsession over testing and retesting and testing again creates an overabundance of anxiety for everyone, including students.

We are requesting that the City Council investigate the mismanagement of the OACE program under Superintendent Mills. Our program is shrinking rather than expanding. Money is spent on mid management level staff rather than on materials and books for students. So many people have been harassed and left the OACE unwillingly because of the toxic environment. We remember when we loved to come to work to be with our students and colleagues. Now many people refer to our workplace as "The reign of terror." Over the last 5 years many complaint letters have been sent to Chancellor Farina, Dorita Gibson and Laura Feijoo with no response. We are asking the city council to step in and investigate the mismanagement of OACE under Superintendent Mills. We urge that she be replaced so we can rebuild our program for the benefit of the adult students in NYC who deserve better.

Thank you.

I cannot sign my name for fear of retaliation but I am one of many teachers at OACE who has suffered long enough.

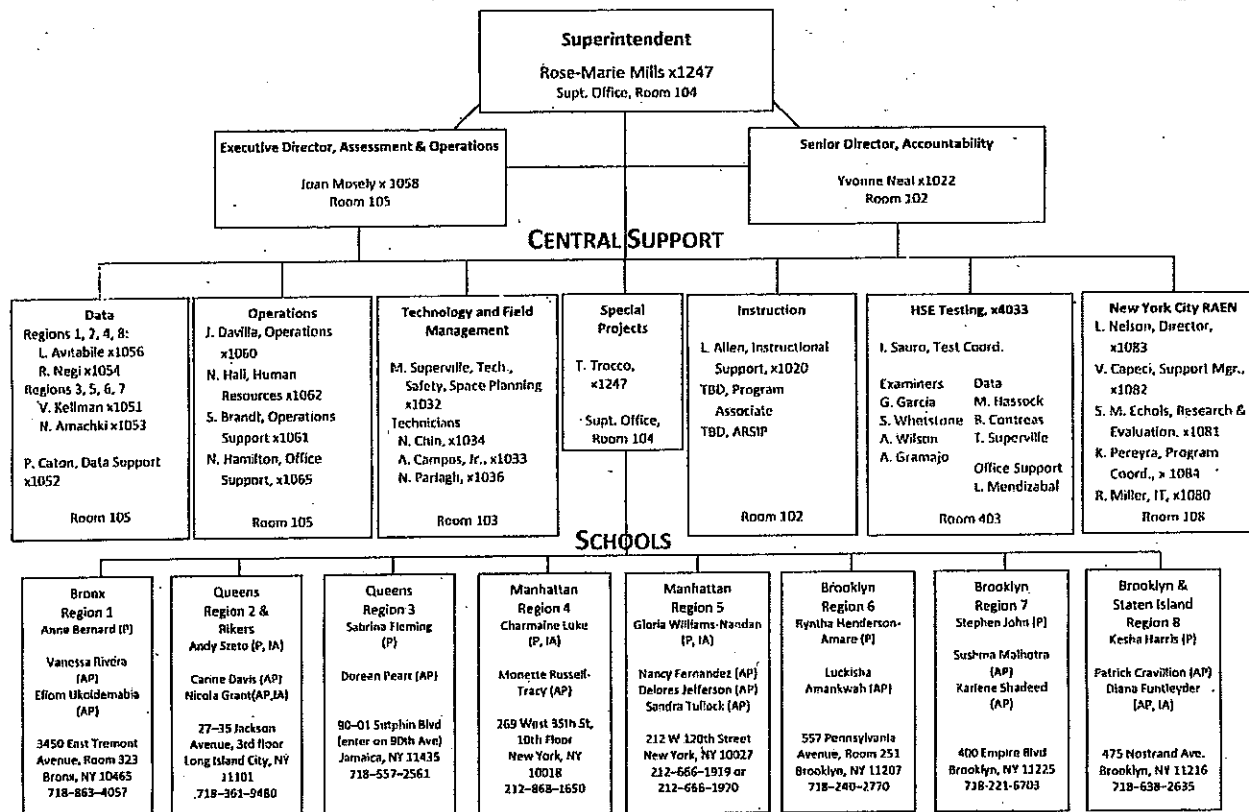
Please see below and attachments:

Organizational chart of OACE Central Office 2012

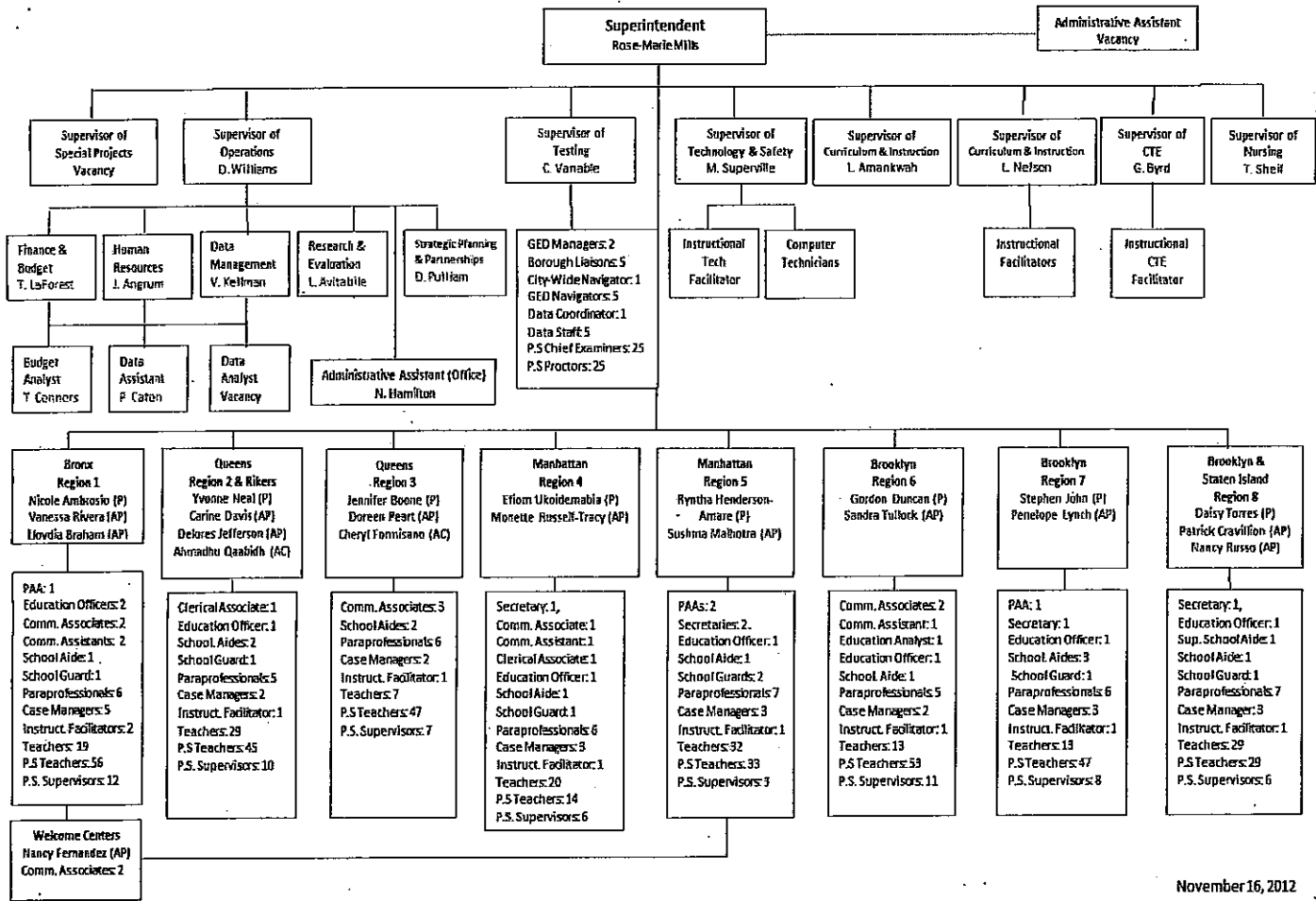
Organizational chart of OACE Central Office 2015

# Office of Adult & Continuing Education Organization Chart

475 Nostrand Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11216 • Tel. 718-638-2635



August 31, 2015



November 16, 2012

## FOR THE RECORD

To the City Council, Education Committee & Chairman Dromm:

From the NYC Dept. of Education's Adult Education web site: "The Office of Adult and Continuing Education's mission is to empower adults in their roles as parents, family members, workers and community members. We promote lifelong learning and the development of problem solving skills through a continuum of services, including Adult Basic Education, English for Speakers of Other Languages, HSE Preparation, and Career and Technical Education."

This used to be the mission. The mission has evolved over the past five years into an obsessive and relentless directive to improve testing and data statistics that reflect appearance and perception over real substance. While the statistical perception of success has climbed every year, the experience of students, the morale of teachers and support personnel has plummeted to an abysmal, all-time low. Literally an entire workforce under siege, taking health sabbaticals, taking early retirements, fleeing to other programs, or best-case scenario, just stumbling through a daily, year-long grind in an irrational and hostile workplace environment governed now by K-12 administrators. These administrators have no experience in adult education and have steadily replaced just about every adult education principal and assistant principal that have served this program. It is fair to say that these outside administrators have demonstrated contempt for adult education and adult educators. You might even want to interview students as to their opinion about the arrogant, condescending atmosphere. This is a situation crying out for accountability. Where is the oversight and accountability in the hiring process?

It is the perception of success at the expense of substance that is at the heart of the widespread discontent with the current policies and practices of this program. At the heart of the perception of success are two testing outcomes: post-test rate, and "educational gain". Whereas State Education funding benchmarks for decades has looked for post test rates of 70% and educational gain rates of 51%, the primary and predominant message delivered in lock-step by principals and assistant principals has ratcheted up now to a blatantly unrealistic demand for 100% post test rate and 75% educational gain rate. Teachers are directed to post-test all students after 12 hours of classroom instruction before re-assessing the students' progress, just to capture a post test score. This is a result of the frenzied, single-minded, program-wide, ever-increasing administrative directives that have little to do with teaching and learning, but have everything to do with the narrow goal of attaining data that gives the appearance of success. While the State Education Dept. understands that an urban adult population, with any number of learning and life challenges is going to struggle with attendance and persistence issues, its benchmark is more realistically set at about 70% of students actually getting post-tested at some point, with 51% attaining educational gain. Many of our students are transient, have housing issues, financial issues, family stresses, may return to their country of origin, may find a job or have work schedule changes, and have traditionally struggled maintaining, continuing, and/or completing their goals after entering adult education programs. Statistical results should honestly reflect this.

This slavish devotion to glossy statistics wastes countless thousands of hours as teachers must not only teach to the test, and provide one-on-one tutoring, and individually tailor student assignments to increase their score on the TABE test, but must also keep up with ever-increasing data forms, paperwork, redundant digital files, email correspondence, all of this in the service of post test rates and gain rates, period. **And to who's benefit?** It is worth noting that adult education teachers have no prep time whatsoever, and are asked to teach 3, 4 and 5-hour classes.

It is also worth noting the ever-increasing expenditures to hire data input and analysis personnel that dedicate untold human hours in service of the relentless mantra of data glorification. The data departments at all the city-wide regions have grown dramatically. The result is hordes of OACE employees tearing their hair out, an abundance of errors, and a lot of wasted energy. The destruction of morale is pervasive and at this point, stunning, in its daily damage. If you were to manage to gather all the teachers, support staff, and data entry personnel into a large room, you would get a sense of the simmering outrage. Is this the kind of accountability and oversight the city council and the Department of Education can be proud of?

Not only are these testing practices pedagogically unsound, they are significantly out of alignment with the State Education department's own recommended funding guidelines, which can be found in the Employment and Preparation Guidelines published by State Ed. How do these recommendations compare with the policies and practices of this program's administration? Shouldn't this be of concern to the Department of Education and to the City Council Education Committee? Shouldn't there be a genuine attempt at accountability?

There have been untold letters, comments, emails, newspaper articles, blog communication directed to the highest officers of the Department of Education, for years indicating that there are a slew of serious concerns and rampant dissatisfaction within the Office of Adult & Continuing Education. All to no avail. Where is the accountability?

This program has since the 1960's annually served tens of thousands of this city's disadvantaged, marginalized adults hopeful for a better future. Would it be wildly unreasonable to ask for and expect an accountability and oversight that brings us a return to compassion, common sense, and collaborative spirit in the management of this program? Would it be such a radical approach to treat OACE teachers and support staff with the same respect they regularly extend to their students, day in and day out. Year in and year out?

Thank you.

September 19, 2017

Dear Councilman Dromm and Colleagues:

I have been a teacher in the NYC Office of Adult and Continuing Education (OACE) for over twenty-five years. While there has been no shortage of adversity over this time that we teachers and our students have had to overcome, the past several school years have brought levels and forms of adversity that neither I, my fellow OACE teachers (including those who've been in the program even longer than I), nor our students have ever experienced; furthermore, these are levels and forms of adversity no student or teacher should have to experience. That the precipitous decline of our program began five school years ago is no accident, for the 2012-2013 school year marked the first full year since a completely new administrative staff was put in place, led by the new superintendent Rose Marie Mills.

I can unequivocally say that Ms. Mills' tenure has been tremendously damaging to our program's staff and students, and that in numerous meetings and interactions with these colleagues and students **not one has had a positive word to say about Ms. Mills or the administrators she has put in place.** This is an administration that is inept, overly rigid and tremendously arrogant. Even worse, this is an **utterly unethical** administration. Due to the fact that you'll receive quite a bit more testimony on the generally poor quality of the administration of this program and the poor character of the vast majority of individuals who make up the administrative staff; and, due to time/space considerations, I'd like to focus on this administration's poor educational practices and management of the classes.

When Ms. Mills and the other administrators she hired began working in this program, they had **absolutely no experience in adult education.** They have bombarded OACE teachers and staff with inappropriate K-12 based policies, most notably an obsessive preoccupation with standardized test scores. The amount of



consideration given and respect that has been shown to the vastly experienced adult education teachers, instructional facilitators, and incumbent administrators by Ms. Mills and her administrative staff has been virtually nonexistent; consequently, she has utterly squandered a veritable goldmine of experience in effectively organizing this program and providing quality instruction to our students.

The space required to go into detail here is limited, so I'll simply give one example: These new administrators, slavishly devoted to the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) pretest scores, radically altered the process by which students are placed in Basic Ed./H.S.E. classes. Instead of placing new students in classes based on their reading scores, as had been done for decades, they instituted a policy whereby new students are placed in classes based on the lower of their two TABE scores (math and reading). A cascade of negative consequences followed this arrogantly conceived, foolish change in policy: Many students in the program under the previous administration (students who therefore had been attending for a longer period of time) understandably became very dissatisfied with their classes because they now had to spend lots of class time being taught topics that would not "get them over the hump" to pass the H.S.E. test; rather, they'd be forced to focus a tremendous amount of valuable class time improving in skill areas where they and their classmates were deemed to be deficient according to the TABE results.

These practices have been followed despite the fact that any adult ed. teacher with even a modicum of experience knows very well that these TABE test scores are not worth very much in determining an adult student's true aptitude for the H.S.E. and college curricula. On top of this, this change in the method of deciding how to place new basic ed./H.S.E. students in classes (basing the placement on the lower of their two TABE scores, reading or math), led to the almost laughable (if it weren't so sad) composition of classes which had students who couldn't decode the simplest of words in the same classes with students who could

read highly sophisticated texts, a sorry condition which prevails in basic ed. classrooms to this day.

Furthermore, this administration's obsession with, and "over-prioritization" of, post-testing and students raising their post-test scores has, in my opinion, had a profoundly negative effect on our program. So arrogant are Ms. Mills and her subordinate supervisors where post-testing is concerned that they have utterly disregarded their own superiors' guidelines, namely the N.Y. State Ed. Department. (Please see highlighted segments of the attached pages.) My co-workers and I have been explicitly instructed, repeatedly, by this administration, to—

- Post-test students *within the same week* they first attend class. This has become so extreme that I was instructed by an administrator to post-test a student who had attended **only one class session!**
- "Teach to the test." (violating an educational principle I always understood to be universally held, which says that one should teach curricula which enrich students intellectually and academically, not to conduct classes which amount to mere test preparation.)

One administrator has placed such a high priority on the results of these post-tests that we've been instructed: "*Once you get the student to make gain, you can teach them crocheting, for all I care!*"

Even though the focus of this statement has been to focus on this administration's poor educational practices and management of the classes, I feel compelled to share one anecdote on a somewhat different topic which I think encapsulates the poor, unethical, administration of the NYC OACE program.

In the Bronx, during the 2012-2013 school year, the first full year of Mills and her full staff of administrators' tenure, there were four teachers whose prior cumulative seniority was one hundred two years. **These four teachers had received one hundred two out of one hundred two satisfactory annual ratings.** At the end of the 2012-2013 year? **All four received**

**unsatisfactory ratings for the first time since they began working in this program.** Even if one were to grant that previous administrations were somewhat lenient in terms of the ratings they gave teachers, the facts in this case--that such inconsistent ratings cropped up so suddenly in this administrations' first full year in their positions, combined with some simple inference-making ability should cause anyone with any objectivity to question the integrity of these unsatisfactory ratings.

As a worker, citizens, and taxpayer, and most of all a teacher who has devoted my entire adult working life to this adult education program, I urge you, our elected officials, to investigate, in depth, the issues raised in this statement and my colleagues' statements. I hope and trust that you will take whatever action is necessary to see to it that the lamentable conditions the students and staff are suffering under the administration of Rose Marie Mills will be rectified.

Sincerely,  
A Concerned Adult Educator

Assessment refers to the collection of information using specially designed instruments regarding a student's initial skill level and the development of his or her literacy and language skills as a result of instruction. The Federal *NRS Implementation Guidelines* state:

- At intake, an individual learner's educational functioning level is determined within the functioning level descriptors, using a uniform, standardized assessment procedure approved by the state and OVAE. The assessment procedure must include standardized scoring protocols.
- To determine gain, the learner should be assessed again at least once **after a standard instructional period**, at the end of the class or at the end of the program year, as determined by state policy.

As part of its effort to comply with federal National Reporting System (NRS) guidelines, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) mandates that adult education programs use standardized tests to determine students' initial skill levels, as well as the educational gain they achieve as a result of their participation in a program.

NYSED's assessment policies were developed to provide guidance to local programs while adhering to Federal assessment requirements. All programs funded through NYS Adult Education are required to administer state approved assessments to report results according to NRS guidelines; therefore, programs should use these policies as the sole basis for assessment. However, programs are free to administer additional forms of assessment as they see fit in response to the needs of their students.

### **The Rationale for Standardized Assessment**

Standardized tests are used to:

- Determine the student's skill level at intake. Assessments administered during the student intake process helps determine the instructional setting in which a student will be placed. As a result of the assessment process, the student is placed into an Educational Functioning Level as determined by the Federal guidelines and then referred for appropriate level instruction.
- Determine educational gain; the intake assessment provides the basis for determining educational gain, which is calculated by comparing students' future skill levels to those ascertained during the initial intake.
- Assess educational gain. Students should be tested at regular intervals to determine if their reading, math, or English skills are improving. For Adult Basic Education students, the lower of the two scores (reading or math) will determine the student's placement of educational functioning level. The NRS guidelines mandate that the only way a program can report educational gain is by demonstrating that a student has moved from one NRS level to the next based on his or her standardized assessment scores.
- To guide instruction, NYS requires all programs to employ the diagnostic tools associated with each standardized assessment. These tools determine a student's strengths and skill gaps.



### **Mandated Tests in New York State**

The instrument used to assess educational skill levels should correspond to the instruction a student receives. The NYSED-approved tests for adult education programs in New York State are as follows:

#### **Adult Basic Education Students:**

##### Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE)

- TABE Reading (complete battery only) forms 9/10
- TABE Math (complete battery only) forms 9/10
- TABE Reading and Math (level L) for levels 1 & 2 (optional)

#### **English as a Second Language Students:**

##### Basic English Skills Test (BEST)

- BEST Plus
- BEST Literacy (for students who score above 540 on the BEST Plus as pre-test)

#### **Please note the following policies regarding assessment:**

- When using the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), programs may administer ONLY the complete battery
- When using TABE Math, programs must administer both sub tests (Computation and Applied) and both scores must be entered into the electronic management information system.
- Administration of the TABE Language and Spelling are not required for NRS purposes, however, agencies may wish to use them for diagnostic purposes.

### **Educational Functioning Levels**

The NRS defines six functioning levels each for ABE and ESL. During the intake process, programs will use the aforementioned standardized tests to place students in one of these levels. Students will be assessed periodically during the course of their participation in a program to determine whether they have acquired enough literacy or English skills to advance to the next NRS level. The percentage of students who complete one level and move on to the next level is an important NRS measure. The NRS levels and associated assessments are summarized below.

#### **Instruction Type – Grade Equivalents – ABE – TABE Testing**

ABE Beginning Literacy	0 – 1.9 Grade Equivalent
ABE Beginning Basic Education	2 – 3.9 Grade Equivalent
ABE Intermediate Low	4 – 5.9 Grade Equivalent
ABE Intermediate High	6 – 8.9 Grade Equivalent
ASE Low	9 – 10.9 Grade Equivalent
ASE High	11 – 12.9 Grade Equivalent



will be compared to their highest post-test score (post test score must be within the confines of the fiscal year) in order to measure gain.

- A pre-test score used as the basis for educational gain in one fiscal year cannot be used again as a pre-test in any subsequent fiscal year.
- Students whose pre-test places them in the ASE High level (NRS level 6) in both Math and Reading, must obtain a NYS High School Equivalency Diploma or NYS High School Diploma in order to complete that level.
- Students whose pre-test places them in ESL High Advanced (NRS level 6) must obtain the maximum score (or higher) on the BEST Plus in order to complete that level.

### Developing an Effective Testing Schedule

Devising an effective testing schedule is critical to program success. Being able to post-test a high percentage of students is important for two reasons. First, post-test scores determine educational gain, which is an important NRS measure. The percentage of students post-tested is also used to measure student retention. NYS sets a performance measure of 70% meaning a minimum of 70% of students must be post tested. A low percentage indicates that a program is unable to retain its students long enough for them to be post-tested. There is no formula or universal testing schedule that can be applied to all adult education programs. Programs are encouraged to customize their testing schedules based on the average contact hours evidenced in each program area. The intensity of a program should also be considered when determining a post-testing schedule. At the very least, a program should post-test after a minimum of 40 contact hours.

When developing a testing schedule, programs should consider the following questions:

- *How long do students stay enrolled in our program?* If a program waits too long to post-test its students, it may measure a lower student retention percentage because some of its students may have left the program before they've had a chance to be post-tested. However, programs should be careful not to test students too close to the beginning of the term nor should they test students too frequently—excessive testing can be discouraging to the student in addition to costly to the program.

- *What is the intensity of our classes?* A class that is more intense—i.e., a class that offers more frequent and extensive sessions in a given time period—may be more effective in helping its students achieve educational gain than one that meets less frequently for shorter sessions.

Therefore, programs should schedule post-tests accordingly.

The table below lists minimum requirements for post-testing schedules:

Intensity of Program	Post Test Schedule
Six to Nine hours per week	Posttest every 40 - 60 instructional hours
Ten or more hours per week	Posttest every 60 - 80 instructional hours
Volunteer Tutorial Program	Posttest every 30 contact hours

### Assessment Guidelines

For assessments to serve as an effective indicator of a student's educational progress, it must be implemented with care and competence. This guide does not provide step-by-step instructions for administering the TABE, BEST Plus, or BEST Literacy. That information can be found in each test's administration manual and at required training sessions scheduled by NYSED and the

Excessive Unsatisfactory Ratings for OACE Teachers

I am a recently retired teacher who worked for the NYC Department of Education for many years. I taught ESL in the adult education program, OACE, for the latter half of my career. It was truly a stimulating and pleasurable experience, teaching this subject to these students.

I will be focusing on teachers here, but that always implies students. At the very core of this mammoth educational system is the teacher-student relationship. Without this duo, there is nothing to which the rest can be attached. Given that teachers are half of this core, I have to ask, why are they treated so badly under Superintendent Mills' leadership?

I am at this hearing to speak to the alarming and demoralizing increase in "Unsatisfactory" annual ratings that have been unfairly dealt to too many experienced and effective teachers, which began when Ms. Mills became the superintendent of OACE in 2012. These Unsatisfactory, or "U-ratings," have risen far beyond past norms. They have also far exceeded the Ineffective Ratings given to our teacher counterparts in the PK-12th grade system.

The following is a comparison of the ratings for these two groups of teachers, for the school years 2013-14 through 2016-17.

First, the annual ratings of PK-12th grade teachers are taken from a N.Y. State Education Department report (copy attached/link). The report shows that 1% of New York City teachers received an Ineffective rating for the 2013-14 through 2015-16 school years. The 2016-17 ratings are not yet available, but I have heard that Ineffective ratings seem to have diminished. Therefore, I've estimated an across the board **Ineffective rating of 1% for the past four years for PK-12th grade teachers.**

<http://usny.nysed.gov/rttt/teachers-leaders/docs/2016-Statewide-Evaluation-Results.pdf>

Unfortunately, data on OACE teachers' Unsatisfactory ratings is more difficult to obtain. The numbers for 2013-14 and 2014-15 were finally obtained by a Freedom of Information Letter (FOIL) request to the NYC DOE. Oddly, a FOIL request for the same information for 2015-16 was denied, but there is a new request pending. However, our understanding of the 2016-17 number is well informed. At the end of June, most of the U-rated teachers attended an emergency meeting at the UFT to file their appeals. Word got around of the high number of U-ratings because it was so shocking.

To get the percentage, I took a count of full time, or non per session, OACE teachers, based on last year's Class Directory, adding in all full time "teacher line personnel" (case managers and instructional facilitators). This came to a total of 189 teachers. This number should closely approximate the previous 3 years, so it is used to calculate the percentages of U-rated teachers for all of the given years.

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**The percentages of OACE teachers rated Unsatisfactory (U-rated) are as follows:**

**2013-14 school year (FOIL result) 13 teachers U rated = 7% of teachers U-rated**

**2014-15 school year (FOIL result) 17 teachers U rated = 9% of teachers U-rated**

**2015-16 school year (FOIL pending) Not Available**

**2016-17 school year (Unofficial Count) 27 teachers U rated = 14% of teachers U-rated**

These numbers, especially last year's, are in stark contrast to 1% Ineffective ratings for non-OACE teachers.

What these numbers do not tell are the many stressful and painful experiences endured by individuals throughout the year in such a hostile work environment. Although the negative impact is probably felt most by those who were given an Unsatisfactory rating, it is certainly not limited to them.

Along with the annual U-ratings, there have been an excessive number of observations that are rated Unsatisfactory throughout the year, given both to teachers who end up with Unsatisfactory and Satisfactory ratings. The harsh and sometimes absurd critiques that follow often seem to have no rhyme or reason and do not reflect the reality experienced by the teacher and students - not the enthusiastic participation in learning activities or the students' demonstrable achievements.

I will close by saying that I hope these words, and those of others on this topic, will have a meaningful impact. Such poor treatment of teachers is not healthy for the teachers, the students, or anyone working in the program. OACE leadership truly needs change!

**Nancy Simon**

**Attachments:**

1. New York State Education Department: 2015-2016 Statewide Evaluation Results (March 2017)
2. FOIL (NYC DOE) Response: U-Ratings for OACE teachers: 2013-14 and 2014-15
3. FOIL (NYC DOE) Response: U-Ratings for OACE teachers: 2015-16 - REQUEST DENIED



Good morning, Chairman Dromm and Committee Members.

My name is Marcia Biederman, and I retired one year ago from teaching English as a Second Language for the Office of Adult and Continuing Education. Many of my ESL students had never gone to school in their native countries. I taught them not only English but also how to read and write.

In June 2014, my colleagues and I became aware of a new policy that would have shunted these students away from the OACE sites to classes in the public libraries. [SEE EXHIBIT 1] I contacted the Brooklyn Public library, where the director of adult education programs told me that no one at the DOE had discussed this seismic shift with him. Moreover, he pointed out that although the Brooklyn Public Library offers learn-to-read classes, they're designed for native speakers or those with native-like English proficiency. They're not for students struggling with the English language as well as basic literacy.

Hence, the students were not so much being referred as being rejected.

How are nonliterate ESL students identified? In some cases, their low skills become evident as soon as the teacher writes on the board. Others request ABC classes, or struggle to sign their names. Intake workers ask about years of school attended. In the case of my students, the answer was often zero.

In the past, OACE teachers would find a way to work with them, ideally in a specialized class. Now they were being shown the door.

In correspondence with Chancellor Carmen Fariña's office [SEE EXHIBITS 2 AND 3] and discussions with OACE superintendent Rose Marie Mills, we were told that state funding requires non-literate students to be served not by our program but by the libraries, which receive ALE, or Adult Literacy Education, funding. However, annual reports issued by the New York State Education Department, indicate that the New York and Brooklyn libraries, in fact, do *not* receive ALE funding. [EXHIBIT 4]

Eventually, Ms. Mills agreed to let me continue with my existing nonliterate students, provided they were making educational gain. Sympathetic intake staffers enrolled additional new students. But access to education should be a matter of policy, not empathy. Even as all this was happening, the OACE stated on its website that the classes were open to anyone over age 21, with no other requirements. [EXHIBIT 5]

If you'll permit me one more minute, I'll conclude with a video of my students speaking for themselves.

Thank you,

Marcia Biederman, Brooklyn

# EXHIBIT 1

AND ITEMS

## FREE ENGLISH CLASSES

Principals, please recommend your low level students to these Adult Education Classes at New York Public Libraries. FREE ENGLISH CLASSES are being offered at 30 locations in Manhattan, The Bronx, and Staten Island. Students must attend an information session first, between July 14 and 22. See the flyer for dates and locations: <http://cdn-prod.www.aws.nypl.org/sites/default/files/FREE%20ENGLISH%20CLASSES%20updated%20credit%20line%20%281%29.pdf>

## POST-TESTING NEW

In the final weeks of class it is imperative to make every effort to completely post-test students, especially those students who entered in April and May and were not on Google Docs. Use the Turnaround F document to identify students and prescribe TABE tests. The priority groups should be:

- Students Without Post-tests
- Students on the cusp who have NOT made gain
- Students with 100 or more hours who have NOT made gain

It is important, particularly for BEST testing, to identify and post-test students in these priority groups, especially those without post-tests, and to test them first.

## MONITORING POST-TESTING and EDUCATIONAL GAIN NEW

Please run your Program Evaluation Reports on a daily basis. As you have entered all May students, your denominator (# of students enrolled) should remain fairly stable.

## Post-Test Rate:

You should be seeing the % Post-Tested increase as tests are entered. If you are NOT seeing an increase every

# EXHIBIT 2

Dear Ms. Korol:

*[Undated; in response to letter of July 21, 2014]*

Thank you for your recent email to the Chancellor regarding the Office of Adult and Community Education (OACE). We appreciate you sharing your concerns with us.

For adults who speak a language other than English, the New York City Department of Education's (DOE) English as a Second Language (ESL) program provides essential skills that help New Yorkers move their lives forward. These adult ESL classes are important and widely popular, and we are looking forward to serving even more adults by expanding these classes throughout the City during the 2014-2015 school year from 347 classes to 367 classes.

As you may know, many Community Based Organizations (CBO) and libraries received Adult Literacy Education (ALE) funding from New York State. This funding requires that 50 percent of their students are lower level literacy students, and we have referred students to these programs in the past when our classes were full. Additionally, these ALE programs often have smaller class sizes, which can greatly benefit these students. Given the State's ALE funding requirements for CBOs and libraries, and given that our Employment Preparation Education funding from the State requires that students in OACE programs must show gains after five years or be moved into another program, we have maintained partnerships with our fellow educators in CBOs and libraries with our students' best interests in mind. If you have specific concerns regarding these programs, I recommend that you speak with OACE Superintendent Rose Marie Mills or with another supervisor, as they will be in the best position to address them.

I hope this information has been helpful. Thank you again for writing to the Chancellor, and I wish you and your families a safe and relaxing summer.

Sincerely,

Michael W. Morrisey  
Communications Associate  
Chancellor's Strategic Response Group  
52 Chambers Street | New York, NY 10007

[mmorrisey@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:mmorrisey@schools.nyc.gov)

# EXHIBIT 3

To: Carmen Farina, Chancellor  
New York City Department of Education  
52 Chambers Street  
New York, NY 10007  
07/21/14

From: Ad Hoc Committee for Equal Access  
Teachers at the Office of Adult and Continuing Education, NYC Dept. of Ed.

We are writing to you on behalf of our students. They are adult, English as a Second Language and Basic Education learners, many of whom are parents with children in our schools. We have been serving this population for more than 40 years, teaching basic reading and writing skills and survival English while helping these mothers and fathers raise their children in our local schools.

We are very concerned that we may no longer be allowed to work with this population. We've learned recently that our administration plans to limit the admission of students who cannot read and write.

The plan is to refer these students to outside agencies, who may or may not have the expertise and the know-how to work with non-literate adults.

We hope you will look into this matter and intervene on behalf of our students. Public school educators have a moral obligation to teach any student who wants to learn to read and write.

Thank you for your immediate attention.

Sincerely,

[ABOUT A DOZEN TEACHERS AND CASE MANAGERS SIGNED. NAMES NOT SHOWN HERE FOR REASONS FOR ANONYMITY]

# EXHIBIT 4

 NYSED.gov

## ACCES

Adult Career and Continuing Education Services

Data Represents FY '16  
July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016

### New York State Report Card for Adult Education Providers

Program Name: New York Public Library

2016 Enrollment (NRS criteria): 1433

Funding Received: WIOA No WIOA Corrections No EPE No EL Civics Yes Literacy Zone No ALE No

 NYSED.gov

## ACCES

Adult Career and Continuing Education Services

Data Represents FY '15  
July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015

### New York State Report Card for Adult Education Providers

Program Name: Brooklyn Public Library

2015 Enrollment (NRS criteria): 974

Funding Received: WIOA Yes WIOA Corrections No EPE No EL Civics Yes Literacy Zone No ALE No

 NYSED.gov

## ACCES

Adult Career and Continuing Education Services

Data Represents FY '16  
July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016

### New York State Report Card for Adult Education Providers

Program Name: Brooklyn Public Library

2016 Enrollment (NRS criteria): 969

Funding Received: WIOA Yes WIOA Corrections No EPE No EL Civics Yes Literacy Zone No ALE No

Frequently Asked Questions

**1. Who is eligible to access the Office of Adult and Continuing Education's (OACE) classes and services?**  
Anyone over the age of 21 who lives in New York City may register for classes. There are no other requirements.

**2. Is there a fee for OACE classes?**

There are no fees for ESL, HSE, and ABE classes. However, some of the career and technical education classes require students to purchase textbooks and supplies.

**3. If a student works, receives financial assistance, or does not have documentation of their immigration status, will this prevent them from accessing OACE's free services?**

No.

**4. If I have a high school diploma or college degree from another country, can I take OACE classes?**

Yes.

**5. Where are the classes held and when are the classes offered?**

Classes are offered throughout the five boroughs. There are morning, afternoon, evening and Saturday classes to meet the scheduling needs of all students.

**6. What classes are offered through the Office of Adult and Continuing Education?**

- English as a Second Language (ESL): Beginning to Advanced levels
- Basic Education (BE): Basic Literacy through preparation for the High School Equivalency Assessment (HSE) test
- Career and Technical Education (CTE): computer literacy, health careers, technology, auto mechanics, carpentry, plumbing and electrical training. These are year-round programs.

**7. If a principal, parent coordinator, or parent is interested in offering an OACE class at their K-12 school site, who should they contact?**

Each region has an Adult Education principal. Please refer to the OACE brochure, our website, or the contact sheet on page 3 for school contact information.

**8. What is the process for students to enroll in OACE classes?**

Each borough has a Literacy Zone where students can register for classes. Registration is also available at offsite locations. Every student must go through an intake interview where they will be given a description of the program offerings available based on the interview.

Each student will go through an assessment session with a case manager. Upon completion of the assessment the student is placed accordingly.

# UFT backs adult literacy programs

By JIM CALLAGHAN

Members of the Grassroots Literacy Coalition, including the UFT, presented City Councilman Robert Jackson with a petition on Feb. 1 seeking a Council hearing on a resolution calling on the state Legislature to establish a New York Student Bill of Rights focusing on adult literacy.

The Council resolution, sponsored by 18 members, would "preserve and enhance the variety of adult literacy programs administered by community-based organizations, public libraries, educational institutions and other organizations."

Jackson promised the group that, as chair of the Council's Education Committee, he would hold a hearing this school year.

David Greene, a teacher in the Department of Education's adult literacy program, said that the DOE was not publicizing its adult education classes. "We are teaching only about 65,000 students out of a pool of 2 to 3 million," Greene said. He urged DOE to spend money on publicizing the program in subways, print, and radio and television advertisements. "Every time we ask for more funding," Greene said, "DOE says we have to prove that we are doing well with the resources they give us." That answer, Greene added, is a "standard DOE dodge."

Greene told Jackson that the lack of literacy programs should be publicly discussed to get large amounts of funding. "We believe that the issue of illiteracy is connected to the problems of racism, poverty and inequality in the city," Greene said. "The mayor's office, the State Education Department and the U.S. Department of Education all admit this is a serious crisis, but little is being done to meet this critical need."

Calvin Miles, who works for the Grassroots Literacy Coalition, said he was one of the beneficiaries of the adult literacy program. He said that adult literacy was "low on the totem pole" for DOE.

"Too many people think there is something wrong with



Adult education literacy teacher David Greene (left) and UFT Assistant Secretary Robert Astrowsky flank City Councilman Robert Jackson as they deliver petitions with other coalition members.

going back to school as an adult," Miles said. "We should be encouraging adults to become more literate. It helped me become more involved in the community. I had more confidence."

Miles also pointed out that the current program serves only 2 percent of those who need it.

Robert Astrowsky, the UFT assistant secretary, said the

union would do "work with the coalition members to publicize this need for additional funding. This is an important program that works well and should be expanded."

In addition to the UFT, other groups that are part of the coalition are the New York Immigration Coalition, the Literacy Assistance Center and Students of Adult Literacy United.

# ***New York Bill of Rights for Adult Education***

We believe that a sound basic education is necessary for all people, to enable them to participate to their potential as workers, family members, and citizens. We therefore believe that all people, regardless of their age, have the right to a quality basic education.

To ensure that right,

- **An effective delivery system of adult basic education shall be instituted and maintained in the State. This system shall meet professional standards for high quality.**
- **This system shall deliver instruction customized to the needs and interests of the adults it serves. Services will include basic literacy, English as a second language, adult secondary education, basic education in native language, computer training, and vocational education.**
- **Adult learners shall be included in decisions related to their education. This shall include goal setting and program evaluation.**
- **These educational services shall be free and accessible in terms of scheduling and location.**
- **Adult learners shall have access to testing, evaluation and accommodation for learning and/or other disabilities.**
- **Adult learners shall be informed about the education choices available to them.**
- **Adult learning sites shall be safe and healthy locations**
- **Adult learners who do not speak English shall be provided with quality translation/interpretation services.**
- **Adult education students shall have access to high quality child care, transportation, and social services, so that they may take full advantage of these learning opportunities.**
- **The Department of Education, employers, unions, libraries, universities, community organizations, social service agencies, and other institutions shall be encouraged to implement adult education services.**
- **The First Amendment rights of adult students shall not be abridged, but instead encouraged and developed.**
- **The leadership development and organization of adult students shall be promoted in the interest of greater participation in civic society.**
- **Public funds shall be appropriated to support that delivery system and thereby fulfill the constitutional mandate.**
- **The New York Bill of Rights for Adult Education shall be read to and given to all new and enrolled students in literacy and adult education programs.**

The New York Bill of Rights for Adult Education is endorsed by The Grassroots Literacy Coalition, The New York Immigration Coalition, the United Federation of Teachers-Adult Education Chapter, UFT Consortium for Workers Education Chapter, VALUE - Voice for Adult Literacy United for Education, The Literacy Assistance Center, Students of Adult Literacy United, and The Diocese of Brooklyn. For more information, please contact the GLC team at 212-803-3336 or visit [www.glcny.org](http://www.glcny.org) or email us at [glcnyinfo@yahoo.com](mailto:glcnyinfo@yahoo.com)



09/20/17

Good Morning Chairman Dromm and members of the Educational Committee.

My name is Donna Korol. I have been teaching for the Office of Adult and Continuing Education for 30 years. I have been a master teacher, a curriculum developer, an instructional coach providing professional development to teachers and administrators, and lately I have represented teachers as their chapter leader in our program.

Thank you for allowing me to speak to you today and to bring some of my concerns regarding administrative decisions made by OACE leadership.

Did you know that our current principals, all of the newly hired Assistant Principals, and instructional coaches, none of them have had any experience working with adult learners?

It is their responsibility to make decisions that impact our students and the quality of classroom instruction they receive.

For example, a decision to eliminate low level literacy students out of our program is particularly disturbing.

Such a decision could have only been made by those who never had to look in the eyes of a desperate, scared adult student, one who knows this is his or her last chance to learn to read and write.

No teacher should ever have to say to their student, "Sorry, but you cannot stay in my classroom. My boss doesn't allow me to teach you."

I implore you, do not accept our administration's argument that the state doesn't provide the funds for non literate students, or that there just isn't enough money or time, that a less expensive adult ed program in the city can serve this population.

Demand that OACE redirect its funds from a top-heavy administrative staff back to the students who need us, the teachers, the most.

When I started working in School 7, a large region in Brooklyn, we did not have any Assistant Principals, we didn't have night supervisors, or Saturday supervisors. We only had one Coordinator/Principal and a much larger program.

It is a moral responsibility of the Department of Education to educate, to provide the expertise and the know-how, to EVERY student, young and old who comes through its door, and finally make good on its promise to teach them to read and write.

My name is Betty Gottfried. I cofounded the Adult Chapter nearly fifty years ago, and I served as its Chapter Leader for over forty years. My statement aims give some historical perspective to the testimony you are about to hear today.

OACE evolved from a group of Great Society programs that were formed in the Sixties and seventies in response to the demands of the civil rights movement. The mission of these programs was to educate the disenfranchised: African Americans, Latinos, immigrants, school dropouts, and the poor.

Working In conjunction with the Teachers Union (Uft), these programs merged to form an Adult education Program that provides teachers with a salary, licensure and benefits commensurate with that of the K-12 teachers

Licensure and benefits stabilized the program with qualified personnel and enabled the teachers to develop curriculum, fight for their students' rights and expand its full time teaching staff.

OACE 's doors were open to all NYC adults age 21 and above: non-readers, new language learners, HSE candidates, and those seeking technical career training. Teachers, administrators, state Ed officials, and LAC worked together to

create curricula that were suitable to the diverse populations OACE serves. Today, all of these projects have been scrapped by the current administration. (To be discussed by a colleague)

To create an effective literacy program, OACE set a policy, with the approval of the union, of interviewing teachers from its certified staff to be assigned to the lowest level readers. Our Certification, which is determined by our employer, not by our funding, operated to ensure these students the best teachers. Because state law protects the seniority rights of certified teachers, the director could not use these interviews to protect teachers he favored from layoff. Conversely, these protections discouraged teachers from applying for these assignments in order to bypass seniority. Certification is a protection against cronyism and patronage.

The current administration's position that ÉPÉ funding does not require a license and hiring is open to supervisory whim has set the clock back fifty years. It is not only an unfair labor practice; it sends a disgraceful message to the students: You are not worthy of a qualified teacher.

In a more Pernicious move the administration decided to move the lowest level out of the program to the libraries because their

gains were not advantageous to the program. What a message to the population of this city: the DOE is more interested in statistics than in people.

At the other end of the spectrum is the HSE diploma. The GED exam, replaced by the TASC, has its origins in the 2nd World War.

It was instituted to educate African American who were victims of the Jim Crow laws, so that they could help in the War effort. When there is a will educate a disenfranchised population, it gets results. Today access to the TASC is limited. The adult community believes that free access to the exam should be open to all.

Finally, this body has a history of working with the Union to support Adult Ed students. In 2006, the former chair of this committee, Robert Jackson, a recipient of the UFT's John Dewey award, and a strong supporter of Adult education, worked with the Former teacher David Greene and Calvin Miles, and, I say with a heavy heart the late Bob Astrowsky of the Uft, to pass a resolution that entered "The Adult

Education Bill of Rights" into the permanent record of the City Council." I put it before you today (the items speak for themselves) and ask you to reaffirm your support for the rights of these students.

## FOR THE RECORD

The Office of Adult and Continuing Education is an innovative program tailored to provide a second chance to those adults who realize that without a formal education their future is grossly limited. Like many of my colleagues I've worked with the adults for close to 30 years and have been honored to be a part of our students' success.

These students are serious about education! They enter from all parts of the globe with the hope of attaining the American Dream, or to learn just enough to gain employment, help their children with their homework, or urgently learn to read the English language. It is our belief that if you educate an adult, you educate the whole family.

Many of our students come with challenges that require understanding, sensitivity, structure, reliability, and diversity, all skills that are offered by our veteran teaching staff who have been methodically/brutally expelled from their positions.

These adults attend classes willingly regardless of the personal obstacles they face. Their desire to be educated, whether it is ESL or ABE, keeps Adult Ed teacher's motivated. We are so motivated that we offer a plethora of educational asides to imbue in their spirit a love for learning.

Currently, the new/old administrators have lost sight of why this program exists and the intensity of the power it conveys to this underserved, albeit, underground population. The administrators are determined to staff the program with instructors who are unaware of the sensitive nature of our students and the fallacy of student success. It has been my observation that the new teachers are colleagues of the new principals and administrators, which, in itself, fosters an arena of ineptitude, in a conspiratorial educational domain. This rhythmic pattern of routing out the practiced professionals will, eventually, cause the program to crash and burn. Economically, the failure of the Adult Educational System, because of mediocracy, will have a domino effect on our economy.

Our Program needs sound, just, honest leadership. Our Program needs to stop the eviseration of veteran teachers who have devoted their lives to the elevation and success of the adult student. To the detriment of our students the administration continues to sabotage the program and its veteran teaching staff. It has been two years since I have been routed out by method of "character assassination." I have been unjustly mauled by the principal, Ms. Harris and still feel the taint of her deception. I hurt deeply to this day recalling the circumstances for my departure. I, like many others loved helping our beloved adults become successful. To this day many of them are in contact with me and they lovingly call me Mom or Momma Ward.

Please use your influence to help those teachers who are still experiencing a carbon copy of my situation.

Sincerely, Jewel Ward

September 2017

**FOR THE RECORD**

To the Educational Committee of the NYC City Council

Attn: Chairman Dromm

With respect to the Office of Adult & Continuing Education, as a reflection of the longstanding destruction of morale in this program, we want you to know that letters have been sent to Ms. Mills' superiors at Dept. of Education going back to 2013, barely a year into the superintendent's tenure. Quite a few letters and reams of comments from hundreds of educators in this program have been sent to these offices every year since. So far, to little avail.

It would not be hard to produce a thick folder of letters, documents, and newspaper articles with this committee in case a visual carries more weight than individual testimony. Suffice it to say, you would not see such a voluminous, persistent, and yes, desperate effort on behalf of students and teachers in this program for so long if the climate had not evolved into one of hostility, intimidation, misguided policies out of alignment with the mission of this program. It would not be hard to make a case for the incompetence by newly brought in principals and assistant principals who have not one day's experience in the teaching of adults. Moreover, they are hostile and/or indifferent to the historical legacy, institutional memory, and the wisdom, experience, and dedication of the adult educators that they are rapidly forcing out of the program and out of the profession.

Many thanks for listening.

**FOR THE RECORD**

"Superintendent Mills has placed inordinate pressure on her principals and assistant principals to require patently unrealistic and ever-increasing demands on teachers to meet testing targets that are significantly out-of-touch and out-of-line with State Education Dept. EPE and WIOA benchmark requirements for these adult education programs. Specifically, the State expectations for these programs has for years now been at 51% of students with more than 12 instructional hours to achieve "gain" in their respective subject area (ESL, math, or reading) annually. Also, an expectation that approximately 70% of the same student pool receive an entry test and then a "post test" after an educationally sound number of instructional hours. As of this past summer, principals are forcefully demanding that their school and all classes in all sites now achieve a post test rate of 95% (and even 100%) and gain rate of 75%. Ask any teacher who has ever taught in this program what they think of these practices. There is now a frenzied administrative competition among principals to outperform each other, at the ongoing expense of students and teachers. This pervasive mentality flies in the face of any rational pedagogical policy and practice, especially with adult students who, for very real-life reasons, have always had many barriers to attendance, longevity in the program, and in many cases, rapid learning growth. This is NOT a case of setting the bar high and instilling high expectations for students... this is purely about the cynical use of statistical data to create a perception of success for the principals, and by extension the superintendent, that is totally divorced from the reality on the ground for students and teachers.

In the past several years Ms. Mills has unilaterally demanded higher and higher data results which have little to do with the real needs and goals of the students and much more to do with the perception of her performance as superintendent. These demands are out of line with any realistic results students can be expected to achieve, and any teacher will tell you so. It has resulted in "teaching to the test" at its absolute worst. It also drives excessive testing which dilutes the teaching environment and is counterproductive to student motivation and retention. Professional development activities have largely been reduced to endless discussions about data and a narrow focus on "targeted instruction" and "analysis of data", which is little more than pressure to teach to the test and requires teachers to act as tutors for each individual student in their class. Mind you, adult education teachers have ZERO prep time to prepare for three, four, and five-hour classes.

We call upon the Department of Education, the City Council, and the State Department of Education to restore sane, rational, and realistic pedagogical policies and practices in the Office of Adult & Continuing Education.

Save adult education



I have been asked by former OACE DOE employees to write to you in regard to the mismanagement of the adult education program led by Superintendent Rosemary Mills. I was a Central Instructional Facilitator at the time Ms. Mills was hired to take over as superintendent from September 2012 to June 2013. My position before the arrival of Ms. Mills included coordinating partnerships, ordering materials, training teachers on testing as well as developing and implementing professional learning. During my tenure I created a lending library stacked with literature appropriate for ESL and Basic Education adult students. Teachers found these materials extremely useful and motivating in increasing student literacy skills. Students' interest in reading developed through book clubs and whole class literature studies. I ordered numerous non-fiction civics books to address the needs of our immigrant students who were eager to gain citizenship.

Ms. Mills hired an early childhood educator to be in charge of ordering materials. Although she was considered my direct supervisor, she did not reach out to me for advice on what to order for adults. Therefore, early childhood books were ordered as well as inappropriate books on tape that were geared toward young children. My lending library was dismantled. I noted when I left my position with OACE, the basement at the Brooklyn Adult Center was filled with boxes of materials scattered in a dusty room.

In addition to wasteful spending on inappropriate resources, Ms. Mills did not allow the Regional Instructional Facilitators to implement effective professional learning for the staff. Instead she hired outside consultants and used her early childhood hirees.

I was subsequently hired by the Office of Teacher Effectiveness to train Principals and Assistant Principals on how to use the Danielson Framework for Learning as part of the ADVANCE system adopted by New York State. However, I missed Adult Education, so I applied for a per session position to supervise an evening program. I was hired by the Regional Principal and then told a week later that I was ineligible for the position although I had an administrative license (SBL) and was working as an Education Administrator. Each time I applied for an AP opening in adult education, my application was rejected.

I am happy I had the opportunity to move on to other positions within the Department of Education including working with Superintendent Altschul in District 3 as well as an Assistant Principal at IS 254. However, I feel saddened that Ms. Mills has been allowed to destroy a system serving over 40,000 adults across the city with very little oversight. All the elements of The Framework for Great Schools were ignored. There were no systems in place to encourage collaboration among teachers. The environment was distrustful and unsupportive. I was told at the first meeting with Ms. Mills that I should not ask questions or express opinions. The only opinion is the opinion of the Department of Education, and yet she was allowed to disregard every element of The Framework for Great Schools.

Very truly yours,

Rhonda Naidich



**GOD'S LOVE WE DELIVER**  
**TESTIMONY FOR NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL'S COMMITTEE ON AGING**  
**MARGARET S. CHIN, CHAIR**  
**SEPTEMBER 20, 2017**

**God's Love We Deliver is New York City's leading not-for-profit provider of medically tailored home-delivered meals and nutritional counseling for people living with life-threatening illnesses.** Over 30 years ago God's Love began with one person's simple, compassionate response to hunger. From the humble beginning of delivering one meal to one dying man, we will celebrate a significant milestone next month with the delivery of our 20 millionth meal. God's Love provides services to the most underserved and isolated populations in our City: those who are sick and unable to take care of their most basic need – the need for food and nutrition. God's Love is an integral part of the City's safety net. As a key service agency within the local care continuum, we maintain relationships with over 200 community organizations to reach those in need. God's Love has a network, a reach and a program that greatly benefits coordination of care for the elderly.

**We believe that being sick and hungry is a crisis that demands an urgent response.** When someone calls us for help, we deliver their first meal on the next delivery day, we never charge clients for their meals and we have never had a waiting list. Staying true to these principles has led to tremendous growth in our program. In just the last 10 years, we have seen a 150% increase in demand for our services and this last year, we delivered over 1.7 million meals to 7,000 men, women and children living with severe illness throughout the NYC metropolitan area. As NYC's population ages, senior New Yorkers are increasingly turning to God's Love We Deliver for meals to meet their specific medical needs. In addition, **the seniors we serve live with complex illnesses that can only be addressed by the tailored nutritious meals that are not available from DFTA-contracted meal providers. As a result, seniors are regularly referred to God's Love from DFTA-contracted meal providers who cannot address the clients' complicated nutritional needs. These factors have contributed to an enormous increase in demand for our services for seniors. Over the last 5 years, we have seen a 50% growth in our senior clients (60+) and currently, 63% of the people we serve are seniors (60+).**

**At God's Love, nutrition is our signature difference.** Although some seniors are able to tolerate regular food, aging and illness can lead to a variety of complications that require a specialized diet. We are able to meet this need as part of our commitment to food as medicine. God's Love clients receive services from our 7 Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs) who tailor each meal to meet each client's specific medical needs. All of our meals are well-balanced: low in sodium, free of highly allergenic foods such as nuts and shellfish, and immune supporting. Our menu allows for individualization of meals according to dietary needs, including texture restrictions such as minced and pureed diets, and renal diets. Based on a client's nutrition assessment with an RDN, additional restrictions may be added to the client's diet for medical, nutritional, or cultural reasons. Our goal is to provide clients with the least restrictive meals possible that meet their medical needs and nutritional requirements.

**The DFTA Annual Plan Summary acknowledges the important role good nutrition plays in maintaining health for seniors and the plan goes as far as to call for "greater availability of nutritional services" for seniors. In addition, DFTA's website lists God's Love We Deliver as a**

meal delivery resource for seniors living with illnesses. However despite this acknowledgement of the importance of services like ours, God's Love does not have a contractual relationship with DFTA and does not receive funding support from the Administration for its services. To date, the New York City Council and Borough President's offices have been responsible for any City funding to support our work. While we greatly appreciate their support, the cost of meeting the need for our services for seniors far exceeds discretionary funding available from these resources. Last year, 4,329 New York City seniors received over 1 million meals from God's Love. Over 70% of these services were supported with private funding. For certain populations this percent is higher. For seniors with end stage renal disease, which disqualifies individuals from eating meals from DFTA-funded agencies, over 93% of the meals we deliver to this population (over 90,000 last year) are funded through private donations. There is a service gap in the DFTA model for severely ill seniors who need customized nutrition. **In fact, 92% of seniors in the United States are living with at least one chronic illness, 72% are living with more than one chronic illness<sup>i</sup>.** To date, we have met with DFTA and their consultants about a possible collaboration but have yet to establish a contractual relationship to serve their senior population living with illness.

God's Love We Deliver supports Int. 1684, which would establish an interagency program coordinator within DFTA and require the coordinator to issue an annual report on all City agency programs, services and resources for New York City's seniors. The Council's proposed legislation would mandate that the coordinator's annual report include information that would clearly provide valuable insight and help the City to better meet the needs of seniors throughout the five boroughs. **However, this annual report would be further strengthened if Int. 1684 were amended to require the interagency program coordinator to identify opportunities to advance broader City objectives through cross agency collaboration on existing programs, services and resources for City seniors. Specifically, we ask that Council ensure the interagency program coordinator works with DOHMH to review DFTA's current home delivered meal program model. There is a demonstrated unmet need for medically tailored meals for seniors who are living with debilitating illness and if this gap in service is addressed, DFTA's home delivered meal program would better serve seniors while advancing the City's broader goals for improving health outcomes for vulnerable populations and achieving healthcare savings<sup>1</sup>.**

**Research has shown that food and nutrition services are key to accomplishing better health outcomes, lower cost of care and improved patient satisfaction, especially for the elderly.** When people get access to medically-tailored meals like those provided by God's Love We Deliver, they are more likely to stay in care, manage their medications successfully and remain in their homes and out of institutions, resulting in significant cost savings to the healthcare system.

Nationally, 1 in 3 people are admitted to the hospital malnourished;<sup>ii</sup> and, research shows that the elderly are more at risk for malnutrition than other demographic groups. A number of studies show that nutritional risk is a significant predictor of hospitalization, re-hospitalization and increased length of stay for the elderly.<sup>iii</sup> In a recent report by Hunger Free America researchers found an average of 171,197 New York City senior's lived in food insecure households between 2013 and 2015, this number was a 30 percent increase from 2008-2011.<sup>iv</sup>

A study in *Health Affairs* demonstrated that if all states had increased by 1% the number of adults age 65 or over who had received home-delivered meals under Title III of the Older Americans Act, total annual savings to states' Medicaid programs could have exceeded \$109M. The projected savings

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<sup>1</sup> The City of New York Executive Budget 2018, Message of the Mayor, <http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/mm4-17.pdf>

primarily reflect decreased Medicaid spending for older adults with low care needs who would no longer require nursing home care – instead they could remain at home, sustained by home-delivered meals.<sup>v</sup>

Furthermore, providing medically-tailored meals makes good fiscal sense. Meals are a relatively inexpensive way to address the risk factors of costly interventions. By saving one night in a hospital, you can feed a person a medically-tailored diet for half a year. We also maintain a key link in the safety net for people over the age of 60 by providing meals for the senior caregivers of our clients.

**We thank you for your consideration of our request that Int. 1684 be amended to mandated that the DFTA interagency program coordinator’s annual report identify opportunities to advance broader City objectives through existing programs, services and resources that are relevant to aging and to ensure the coordinator work with DOHMH to assess how DFTA’s home delivered meals program could better meet the health needs of New York City seniors living with debilitating illnesses.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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<sup>i</sup> According to the National Council on Aging. Available at <https://www.ncoa.org/news/resources-for-reporters/get-the-facts/healthy-aging-facts/>. Accessed July 24, 2017).

<sup>ii</sup> Coats KG et al.. *J Am Diet Assoc* 1993; 93: 27-33. Giner M et al. *Nutrition* 1996; 12: 23-29. Thomas DR et al. *Am J Clin Nutr* 2002; 75: 308-313.

<sup>iii</sup> Visvanathan R, Macintosh C, Callary M, Penhall R, Horowitz M, Chapman I. The nutritional status of 250 older Australian recipients of domiciliary care services and its association with outcomes at 12 months. *J Am Geriatr Soc.* 2003;51(7):1007-11.

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<sup>iv</sup> According to New York City & State Hunger Report. Available at <https://www.hungervolunteer.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/2016%20Annual%20Hunger%20Survey%20Report%20Final.pdf>. Accessed September 18, 2017.

<sup>v</sup> Thomas KS, Mor V. "Providing More Home-Delivered Meals Is One Way To Keep Older Adults With Low Care Needs Out Of Nursing Homes." *Health Affairs* 32, No. 10, October 2013

In September 2012 Superintendent Rose Marie Mills took over the responsibility of cleaning the Office of Adult and Continuing Education, that was a hidden secret of NYC Department of Education.

It all started with harassment, bullying, intimidation, and discrimination.

She threatened people verbally standing in the auditorium and in the conference rooms.

She did not try to understand how the adult program runs rather she tried finding faults. The easiest approach to clean the OACE was to remove the staff with experience. OACE is a citywide program and has 8 schools.

The first step was to get rid of all the principals;

School one in the Bronx-principal was terminated.

School two in Queens- hired a new principal who left in less than two years.

School three in Queens principal was forced to retire and a new principal has been hired.

School four- the principal was demoted as an assistant principal and now terminated.

School five in Manhattan principal and assistant principal both were transferred to Brooklyn in separate schools.

School six First Principal was forced to retire, the second one was forced to become the principal and then to resign. Now the third principal was brought in to bully the staff.

School Seven: Experienced principal was forced to retire and the new principal was hired to bully the staff.

School eight: Experienced principal was forced to retire and the new principal was hired. Within less than five years all eight principals were changed.

Then-Superintendent turns to the assistant principals.

This year all schools assistant principals either received an Unsatisfactory rating by the inexperienced principals or got terminated or found another position.

All new principals and assistant principals have been hired by the superintendent Rose Marie Mills who follow her guidelines and directions.

New inexperienced principals forced assistant principals to rate teachers with unsatisfactory or punished for insubordination.

Superintendent never worked towards creating any curriculum. Therefore, there is no data-driven instruction in OACE.

The main purpose of collecting data is to get State and Federal money to run the program at her wishes. Superintendent Mills is in the news for the data that is at the cost of many tortured souls who have been suffering under her dictatorship.

Anonymous Administrator

I am writing this because I believe there is a professional ethic that I am bound to. I was the OACE Principal for the borough of the Bronx from June 1, 2010 to April 23, 2013. I was the first to be discontinued by Ms. Mills. I had nothing but satisfactory reviews from my superintendents up to that point and I had no letters to file. The Bronx under my supervision was finally making money for the program, we expanded our class offerings and I also believe the Bronx had the most GED's at one point. All of what I just said can be proven through data that New York State keeps on OACE.

In order to understand the hostile environment and deteriorating program that is now OACE, you need to know what OACE was when I joined the team under Dr. Jann Coles, former OACE superintendent. I was one of 8 Principals hired to serve our adult population of 40,000+ students. Dr. Coles had brought up the program from deficient to proficient and was intent on always making the program better. She centered her energies on leadership professional development for her principals and assistant principals - she made us a collaborative team that was passionate about serving our clientele. I cannot stress enough the importance of the word *team* and how incredible it was to have colleagues who were not in competition with you but supported your efforts and gave you advice to see you improve. We were a family under Dr. Coles; we were respected, we were listened to, we were helped when we needed it, and most of all we trusted each other. We brought our servant leadership styles back to our schools and our students, and our efforts were rewarded as the data shows. I had classes in over thirty sites throughout the Bronx that I would visit regularly, and Dr. Coles would come with me on a monthly basis to observe the learning that was going on throughout the Bronx. She would ride with me in my car from place to place, and our discussions from one place to another were always insightful and helpful, and they always made me a better principal which was her goal. Dr. Coles was instrumental in increasing our classroom space at our Bronx Adult Learning Center on East Tremont Avenue, which we so desperately needed; this was done through her connections with Dr. Laura Feijhoo and Dr. Dorita Gibson, both of whom visited our Bronx facility and who, at that time, were impressed with what was happening there.

Ms. Mills never went with me to see the learning that was taking place throughout the Bronx. She never gave me any help or advice to improve my program. She did come to visit our East Tremont site on December 3rd, two months after she took over the superintendency of OACE where she paused in the doorway of each classroom and condescendingly looked over our students and nodded to them as she was being introduced by me. Then she would turn abruptly and walk to the next class; my teachers in those classrooms will support my claim of her behavior. Our private debriefing afterward consisted of her asking me when I was going to retire and I told her I would like to continue working for at least 3 to 5 years more; we discussed nothing educational. A month after that meeting, I received an email from Ms. Mills warning me that I was in danger of being discontinued if our data did not improve. This surprised me because in August of 2012, our OACE data was brought up at a principals' meeting and I was praised, along with the two other Queens principals as having made money for the program (which can only happen through improved student attendance and student performance). How could my data in the Bronx change within such a short period of time (August 2012 to October 2012)? It couldn't. We had our classes all lined up and were ready and excited about a new school year. The OACE central office was constantly in touch with me about my data and supporting me before Ms. Mills came, but once she came, things changed; the heretofore Central Office Data team became antagonistic and no longer helpful. Ms. Mills did not replace

personnel that had left my Bronx data team, so there was more work for less people. Whenever personnel in the Bronx left, they were not replaced; we were being set up for failure which is one of Ms. Mills' strategies. When we did my Principal's Review in March, she used data for attendance from the November/December data during Hurricane Sandy. Fortunately, I printed out the daily data sheets I had for the Bronx that day which showed greatly improved data since the storm. She had access to the same data as did the two Central Office Data people who were with her (one of whom was Vernon Kellman who testified at the adult education hearing on 9/20/17). They could not look me in the eye that day, nor could they answer my questions about my data. That was the first time I was threatened by Ms. Mills. At the end of my meeting, Ms. Mills threw back her chair and lunged forward from her side of the table towards mine. Her face grew redder and her eyes bulged as she screamed out the words, "I WANT BLOOD!" She then proceeded to yell that she would set up an office at my office on East Tremont and fire people if I couldn't do it. She did not like the fact that our teacher and staff observations in the Bronx were satisfactory. She wanted people fired, a fact that she told all teachers when she had her first OACE general conference day when she first came. I knew my teachers, I enjoyed their instruction when I went to observe them, and I could tangibly see student learning taking place. Ms. Mills never came with me to witness that. I would not give a teacher a "U" rating unless it was deserved, and I didn't, which had dire consequences for me. My assistant principal was also with me at that meeting, so there were witnesses with me that day. Needless to say I was told that I was not being recommended for tenure.

The second time Ms. Mills threatened me was in March when we had the State overseers come down to give us new information, go over our data, and answer our questions. Ms. Mills was not in attendance at the meeting, but her minions were. They reported back to Mills that I had asked the State a question about how could the Bronx enter more data into the system with fewer employees in my data department. It was a fair question and I received a good suggestion on how to proceed. There was a luncheon that day with the State people, all the principals, and Central Office personnel. At that luncheon, Ms. Mills sent word that I was to meet her in one of the vacant rooms on that floor. The door was unlocked for me and she entered yelling at me about my question to the State. I was not allowed to speak to explain my question. After about 5 minutes of listening to her rant, I stood up and said, "I will not stay in this hostile environment, I want my union representative". At that, she screamed, "I will affect your pension!!!" I walked out of the room to the luncheon as she continued screaming at me in the hall that she would "affect my pension;" and she did. I was due to retire in May but she had me discontinued 30 days later (April 22, 2013). She did affect my pension.

There are so many more examples of the harassment I received on a daily basis from her and the hostile regime she promulgated. You have only to ask me to come and testify and I will gladly come and do so. I knew what advocating for my teachers and students would do to my career and I chose my path. My union was useless in helping me. When I had the appeals hearing, it was a sham, Mills didn't show - instead she lied about things over the phone at the hearing. I asked if the hearing was going to be recorded and the man in charge said that it wasn't and that he was taking notes. It should have been recorded. The judgement letter I received from the appeals hearing was fraught with mistakes. I wrote to my union, but nothing came of it.

I want you to know what I am most disappointed in and I fervently hope that you will pursue looking into data as only you can request which will prove my points:

## Program:

- **The program has greatly diminished in size** - (look at October 31st NYS data for each school/region in OACE for the years 2009 through 2013. Also please note that the 2013 data will include the summer of 2013 which I had nothing to do with since I was retired and it was an abysmal failure because of the schedule Mills imposed upon the summer program)
- **ESL literacy classes were greatly diminished** - (You can look at class offerings in each school over the years at OACE to prove this point) Please note that we taught all non-English speakers who wanted to learn English, even those who were illiterate in their language. Our teachers did an outstanding job working with these students. Take a look at ESL literacy and ESL 1 classes especially, since they return a lower increase in progress than other ESL classes due to illiteracy and new language acquisition.
- **GED's/new TASC high school equivalency exams have decreased substantially** - (look at the data over time- you can FOIL it) I believe that at one point the Bronx had the most GED's earned. We had a wonderful end of year graduation (robes and all) for all of our GED students in the Bronx so that they could experience walking across the stage in front of their family and friends. I took individual pictures of my students when they would run into my office with the GED certificate they had just received in the mail so they could be added to the display for all to see. The Bronx was very proud.
- If you need information from OACE about student enrollment, educational gain, average student contact hours, or NYS targets, ask to look at their *Program Evaluation Reports* which can be printed on a daily basis by all administrators in OACE.

## Curriculum and books:

- There was a good question about books at the hearing. The ability for the principals to choose their own books was taken away from the principals. There was a principals' meeting when a book company was invited to show us their books; the owner of the company and Ms. Mills hugged and kissed upon seeing each other. The books that were purchased were elementary books from that company and not suitable for adults, Many of the principals complained to no avail.
- We had a good curriculum called EFF (Equipped for the Future) designed to work with adults, their interests, and their needs. We spent a great deal of time giving professional development to teachers and administrators on the EFF program. We had good results.

## Discrimination:

- **Diverse workforce is disappearing** - PLEASE access the HR records for OACE. I believe that there is *racial discrimination* going on. Whites, African-Americans, and Hispanics have been harassed and rated "Unsatisfactory". Personnel from the Caribbean are favored. I have the name of someone who can help with this who still works for the DOE, but that person needs to know that his/her job would be secure if he/she came forward. There is an instance in the Bronx of a worker who did not show up to work for a year and was found medically fit to return to work by the DOE medical office. She



was ordered by the DOE to return to work but she refused and was finally taken off the payroll. She was given an "Unsatisfactory" end of year review, yet she was rehired by Mills after I left. This person is from the Caribbean. I mention this because Mills has denied many people per-session or regular employment if they have had a "U" rating in their past- usually from OACE which has caused many hardships for teachers. Yet, this worker who refused to come back to work was rehired.

- *Age discrimination* - I believe there is overwhelming proof in the HR records that people close to retirement have been targeted for harassment so that they will retire even though they weren't planning to. This has happened through discontinuance, denial of tenure, or simply being fired. Take a look at full time teachers whose schedules have been altered so that they no longer have a morning and afternoon class in one building, but instead are sent to different parts of the boroughs. This is definitely a harassment strategy.

#### Hostile Environment:

- **Stress related illness and sick leave threats:** I know several people who had operations for cancer and were threatened with a "U" rating because they took off more than the allotted 10 sick days from the DOE, which is permitted if they have time in their CAR (sick day bank). They had to go through appeals to get the "U's" undone. There are many people who are so stressed out because of Mills and the principals she has hired and the harassment and humiliation they have endured that they have become sick. I myself used to have to go and throw up in the bathroom when I was at principals' meetings run by Mills when she provided us lunch. I now suffer from insomnia that I started with when Mills became superintendent. I have seen people literally start to shake when Mills enters a room unexpectedly.
- **Denial of vacation time and trying to destroy a person's career:** I know of more than one instance that vacation time was denied by Mills when by all rights it should have been granted according to the DOE. There are also instances where changes in paperwork at the very last minute would have caused people to lose their DOE jobs. Fortunately, for the cases I know of, the department at the DOE that was to hire the OACE people came through for them and rescued them from OACE. An email was forwarded to me by Mills from someone in the DOE stating that I could continue working in my last appointed position. Mills made sure to wait to send me that information until well after I submitted my retirement papers - thus, again, carrying out her threat to "affect" my pension.
- **Reworking schedules to encourage people to leave:** OACE has full-time and part-time teachers. When I was there, we had a mission to have a full-time teacher have a morning and afternoon class in one location. It was important to do this so that teachers could claim a classroom as their own and students could have school atmosphere. It was important for the administrator because of observations and the responsibility we had to that teacher instead of sharing administrative responsibilities with another principal. Now, those people who are close to retirement have schedules that can span different boroughs both morning and afternoon classes with hours in between and also Saturday classes so their weekends are also messed up. This is shameful administrative behavior and educationally unsound.

- **Warnings to others:** The above instances are spread through the ranks as warning to others to keep quiet. What was a family under Dr. Jann Coles has now become a paranoid workplace where no one knows who can be trusted. That is why people are not coming forward with complaints or going to OEO (Office of Equal Opportunity). Hundreds of people have signed on to Blogs and Websites dedicated to getting rid of Mills and their stories are anonymous because of fear of retribution which, in reality, is swift and final. I wish there were a way that people could come forward without fear of retribution to share their stories with you. I am not afraid to sign my name or step forward if needed. I did hire a lawyer to sue Ms. Mills, but when I thought about calling in witnesses to testify, I couldn't go through with it because they would all lose their jobs and I couldn't do that to them.
- We were told by people in the technology department at OACE that our emails were being read by the Central Office. This increased everyone's paranoia. In the Bronx, we even went so far as to put paper over the camera on our computer screen.

NYCDOE:

- **Dr. Gibson, Dr. Feijhoo, Dr. Farina:** My greatest disappointment is in these three people who should prevent all of the above from happening. They were sent letters alerting them to what has been going on at OACE for years. Before Mills came, the principals were called in to Brooklyn to meet with Dr. Gibson and Dr. Feijhoo. Both women told us about Ms. Mills and how wonderful she would be to work with. They told us that in the interim before she came that they would be there to help us with whatever we needed. They were there for us. My disappointment in the two ladies I highly respected overwhelms me to this day. I wrote an email to Dr. Feijhoo asking to see her privately to discuss Ms. Mills and her harassment. I never received a response from her, but I am sure that she forwarded my email to Mills since her harassment of me and my school became more acute after I sent the email for help. You have my permission to open my DOE account. I know that email does not disappear in the DOE and that this has been done before in court cases.
- I did submit a complaint to OEO (Office of Equal Opportunity) according to the Chancellor's Regulation which focused on ageism, discrimination, and retaliation. What a joke. OEO didn't close my complaint for over a year even though it should have been done in three months. I spent 5 hours telling my story to OEO and gave them a 3" three-ringed binder filled with proof of my statements.
- You should also know that at another principals' meeting, Ms. Mills had a DOE lawyer on hand to tell the principals not to worry about giving "U's" to teachers because it was futile for teachers to appeal the "U" since the DOE will find in favor of the administration.

I miss my work and my colleagues - administrators, staff, and teachers alike. I would gladly come out of retirement to go back to OACE and back to the Bronx if Ms. Mills were not there. I get calls from my former teachers and staff all the time. I listen intently to their stories filled with heartfelt angst at being humiliated and tortured at work. I know there are principals and

assistant principals who had to give "unsatisfactory" observations to teachers because they were ordered to do so by Mills, and I hope those principals will come forward and testify for you. I know that there are Assistant Principals that were threatened with denial of tenure if they didn't agree to work a certain schedule. It is time we all speak up for those who can't because they need their job and value their career. It is time for those of us who are no longer associated with OACE to stand together unafraid and speak the truth about the horrors of the OACE school culture under Rose Marie Mills and the deteriorating adult program which at one time was the largest in our nation.

Let me know if there is more that I can do for you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Nicole Ambrosio  
former OACE Principal - Region One, Schools 1 & 2

Thank you to Chairman Dromm for the opportunity to provide written testimony to the Committee on Education in this hearing about adult literacy.

My name is Matthew Kennis and I am the Program Director at the Libertas Center for Human Rights, located at NYC Health + Hospitals/Elmhurst in Queens, New York. The Libertas Center helps address the multifaceted needs of primarily asylum seeking immigrants in Queens and throughout New York City who have survived torture and persecution in their home countries.

We aid survivor's rehabilitation by providing a combination of medical, mental health, social and legal services to address clients' tightly interwoven needs, with improvements or setbacks in one area impacting the others. This is why our program and the over 30 colleague torture treatment centers nationally have designed a comprehensive service approach to holistically meet the needs of our clients.

The stress of survivors' legal proceedings, and separation from and anxiety about the safety of their families profoundly affects their already fragile mental health status. Additionally, most wait at least 9 months, if not longer, for work authorization after filing for asylum and are unable to access safe housing, healthy food, weather appropriate clothing, transportation, and other basic needs. Once they have employment authorization, many struggle to find employment due to language barriers, or undervalued work experience, and difficulties accessing affordable childcare. These challenges create incredible amounts of stress and frequently intensify symptoms.

Our client's success in advocating for themselves and their families (including meeting with their children's teachers during parent-teacher conferences), reducing social isolation, and increasing their likelihood of getting a job is significantly improved by their ability to read, write, and speak English.

New York City has invested admirably in providing ESL courses through the Library system for those seeking to learn English. However I'd like to offer a few reflections on where our clients continue to face difficulties in accessing ESL courses in their communities.

These practical challenges in accessing ESL courses include:

- 1) Enrollment/registration periods are publicized with limited time before the periods close.
- 2) Confusion around in-person and lottery based registrations.
- 3) Different enrollment instructions and procedures by Borough.
- 4) Long waiting lists and wait times for enrollment.
- 5) Long commutes to find an appropriate level course that works with their schedules.
- 6) Not enough beginner and intermediate courses offered.
- 7) For parent's caring for children, the need for childcare concurrent with ESL courses.

I've included a few suggestions for how the above challenges could be addressed:

- 1) Offer additional beginner and intermediate ESL courses, including additional courses in the evenings and weekends.
- 2) Offer childcare on-site at ESL course locations concurrent with ESL courses.
- 3) Add ESL courses at different locations, such as public hospitals and schools.
- 4) Harmonize city-wide ESL enrollment and registration instructions, and publicize the enrollment/registration periods well in advance of the deadlines.

I would like to thank Chairman Dromm and distinguished City Council Members for your interest in this issue.

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9/18/17

Although I am not going to testify in public at the September 20, 2017 hearing on adult education, I want to share my views with you, Councilman Dromm, and others who share our concern for adult education in New York City and New York State. I am a retired teacher with 23 of experience in the Office of Adult Education (OACE). I currently teach at Touro College Lifelong Learning in Brooklyn.

First, I am concerned about the terrible administration of high school equivalency (HSE) testing in New York City (NYC) and New York State (NYS). (Note that I am enclosing detailed information on HSE testing in an attached letter which has three additional attachments).

1) The New York State Education Department (NYSED) is about to choose which HSE test will be used in New York State beginning in 2018. From 2014 through 2017, New York State has been using the Test Assessing Secondary Education (TASC). During that time, New York State has had dismal testing results. It is important that NYSED choose the HSET Test from ETS instead of the TASC. A full explanation for changing the HSE Test from TASC to HSET is in the attachments.

a) I strongly suggest that you or the Councilman contact Kevin Smith of NYSED about changing the HSE Test. To my knowledge, he is the person who will make the decision on which HSE test will be used statewide for the next several years. I have already contacted him and others in Albany to advocate for changing the HSE Test in NYS. The decision is expected soon if it hasn't already been made.

a) From 35,708 HSE diplomas in 2013 (the last year of the old GED), NYS dropped to 12,823 diplomas in 2014, and 11,114 diplomas in 2015. I don't have numbers for 2016 or 2017, but I suspect they continue to trend in a downward direction. (See the numbers in Attachment 1)

b) As detailed in the enclosed letter and attachments, getting a diploma on the TASC is more about "mastery of random guessing" than mastery of test content. I suspect that the real pass rate on the TASC based on content knowledge would be about 10 percent and the number of diplomas would be about 2,000 statewide if mastery of content based on a normal distribution of results was needed to pass the TASC.

2) The New York State Education Department (NYSED) and the NYC Office of Adult Education (DOE OACE) are far more concerned with standardized reading and math test results than with High School Equivalency test results. These reading and math tests are called Tests of Adult Basic Education or TABE.

a) Evidence can be found in the enclosed NY Post article from Susan Edelman. Note that during the 2013-2014 school year, only 299 adult education students in DOE OACE received the high school diploma. That is about 1 percent of all students who enroll in DOE OACE classes in a given year. This is an unfortunate number when you consider how many adults in NYC enroll in DOE OACE expecting to get a HSE Diploma.

b) DOE OACE is given a state report card as is every other adult education provider in NYS. The most important area on the report card is the TABE testing results. Did the student take a Posttest? Did the student make a gain to the next level? This is by far the most important factor in how the NYSED evaluates educational performance.

c) These TABE tests have little to no value in the marketplace. On the other hand, passing the High School Equivalency (HSE) has value to the adult student in terms of getting a job, keeping a job, getting a promotion, or getting into college or training. DOE OACE is oriented almost totally to succeeding on the TABE with very little emphasis on preparing for the TASC.

d) The DOE OACE overemphasizes TABE and underemphasizes High School Equivalency Preparation. The only ones who benefit from TABE test preparation are the City and State Administrators who look good on paper while offering little value to students who are there to get a HSE Diploma or learn an occupational skill.

e) Note that DOE OACE computer technology courses have been turned into TABE preparation courses. The same can be said about Certified Nursing Assistant courses in the DOE OACE.

f) An additional disservice that DOE OACE does to its students is to limit access to the High School Equivalency test by requiring them to have higher scores on the standardized TABE tests before allowing them to sit for the High School Equivalency (TASC). This is like asking someone to demonstrate proficiency in a foreign language or in art history before being able to sit for something unrelated like a test in truck driving or cosmetology. The TABE tests continue to highlight irrelevant achievement on useless math and reading tests which distract students from reaching real goals they need for future success in life.

The DOE OACE needs to prioritize the needs of the students (HSE Diploma or occupational skill such as computers or nursing) and not use students as pawns to collect TABE testing data without meeting real student needs. Instruction should not be limited to improving TABE test scores.

These areas of adult education also need to be corrected:

1) The OACE DOE budget is not available to the public. In K through 12 schools, the UFT and the UFT leadership discuss the program budget with the school administration. Making the budget available to the UFT and to DOE OACE teachers would show where the DOE OACE budget is being spent. The budget needs to be made available to all stakeholders including DOE OACE teachers and the UFT.

2) How is the DOE OACE budget being spent? Is there too much unnecessary administration at the hub site at 475 Nostrand Avenue? Has money been wasted on books and educational materials that are

inappropriate for adults? Are current purchases limited to TABE Preparation materials? Is Professional Development limited to preparation for the TABE test?

3) Why are there so many Unsatisfactory end of year ratings for adult education teachers? Is the Unsatisfactory rate in adult education about 10 times higher than the citywide K through 12 rate? Are senior teachers being targeted for Unsatisfactory ratings at an unusually high rate? Why does the DOE OACE administration refuse to give the UFT the names of all DOE OACE teachers who are rated Unsatisfactory? Why do individuals have to make Freedom of Information requests to get information that should be made available to the UFT on a regular basis? Why are there so many more Unsatisfactory ratings for teachers since Rose-Marie Mills became the Superintendent? Why are so many new teachers and administrators from K through 12? Why is teaching experience in adult education not valued by the current administration? Why has there been such a large staff turnover in adult education over the past several years?

Thank you for considering my views. I hope you will agree with me that action is needed in the areas discussed in this letter and in the enclosed attachments. Please contact me if I can be of help in your oversight of adult education or in your evaluation of current high equivalency outcomes.

Sincerely,



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DOE OACE Teacher, Retired  
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Enclosures:

--3 page letter on HSE Testing with 3 attachments  
--NY Post Article from Jan. 31, 2016  
--Exchange of Letters with NYS Education Department

9/18/17

New York State (NYS) is currently using a High School Equivalency (HSE) exam that is directly harmful to both adult education students and workforce development in NYS.

The Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC) has been in use in NYS since 2014. TASC is a deeply-flawed test, as it can too often be passed by use of random guessing by the test taker, which in turn means that a potential employer or college admissions office cannot have any assurance that the applicant has knowledge equivalent to that of a high school graduate.

A new Request for Proposals (RFP) is expected to be issued by the New York State Education Department (NYSED) in the near future for a company to provide the exam to measure high school equivalency in NYS, beginning January 1, 2018. I am recommending that NYS eliminate the TASC exam (the company which produces it is called DRC) from consideration for this contract, and give every consideration to alternatives such as the HISET published by Educational Testing Service (ETS).

First, it is important to look at HSE test results since the TASC became the only available HSE test in NYS in 2014. A 3 page summary of HSE test results in NYS from 2002 through part of 2016 is Attachment 1.

	<u>Passed</u>	<u>Failed</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Pass Rate</u>
2013 (Last year of the old GED)	35,708	26,019	61,727	57.9%
2014 (First year of the TASC)	12,823	13,017	25,840	49.6%
2015 (Second year of the TASC)	11,114	9,734	20,848	53.3%

Takeaway 1: About 3 times as many people passed the HSE in NYS in 2013 compared to 2014 or 2015.

Takeaway 2: The number of people testing in 2015 was less than the number of people testing in 2014. Also note that the number of people who tested in 2015 is about one-third as many as the number of people who tested in 2013. The HSE results in NYS are obviously trending in the wrong direction when measured by how many people are taking the HSE, a test that so many adults need for employment, on the job promotion, and entry into college and training.

Looking more closely at the TASC exam shows its poor quality:

The evidence is in the scoring tables from DRC (the company that produces the TASC). One can observe that it is possible to pass parts of the TASC by random guessing alone without any content knowledge in the subject area. (Readiness Expected Performance Tables for 2015 are Attachment 2)

Chance of Passing Based on Random Guessing			
*Math	18 percent	*Social Studies	18 percent
*Science	27 percent	*Reading	17 percent
*Writing	Could not be determined because the essay score is combined with the multiple choice score.		



Look at the Readiness Expected Performance Table for 2015 in Science (Attachment 2). Note that there are 20 questions on the TASC Science Pretest. If you know the answers to 4 questions and guess at the other 16 questions, you are most likely to get 8 right answers (4 plus 25 percent of 16 = 4 plus 4 or 8. According to the Table, you have a 78 percent "Likelihood of Passing the TASC Science Test". If you only know 4 of 20 questions, you obviously lack content mastery and should not have a 78 percent chance of passing. The TASC Science test is obviously beyond the level of the average test taker.

If a test is properly constructed, the chance of passing any part with random answers and no content knowledge is less than 1 percent. NYSED is working against the interest of taxpayers and all NYS residents by allowing people to pass this test who demonstrate "mastery of random guessing" and not "mastery of content".

Is there a better HSE test available than the overly difficult TASC, which is also consistent with common core standards? The HISET is a far better test than the TASC for the following reasons:

- 1) It was pre-tested and standardized with high school students before it was used with adults. It is currently used in about 10 states. When the TASC was initiated in NYS in 2014, no test was graded for several months until NYSED had evaluated hundreds of tests completed by adults in NYS. This indicates that the TASC was rushed into use and not standardized to high school students before it was used by adults in NYS.
- 2) After looking at sample questions from HISET, it appears to be a test that does all of the following:
  - a) Covers multiple areas of the common core.
  - b) The level of difficulty is appropriate for the test taker and a normal distribution of results is generated.
  - c) Requires that students master some of the test content in order to receive a HSE diploma.
  - d) HISET test results yield both a passing score and a higher college readiness score based on the normal distribution of results.

In the forthcoming NYSED RFP for a test designer, a successful applicant must, in my view:

- 1) Require students to demonstrate mastery of appropriate test content at a level consistent with a normal distribution of results.
- 2) Design the test so that random guessing gives the test candidate almost zero chance of passing any part of the test. As stated above and in Attachment 3, and illustrated in the attached "Readiness Expected Performance Tables for 2015", this is a major flaw in how the TASC is currently graded.
- 3) Provide a normal distribution of results normalized to a representative sample of high school students to ensure that it is a test of High School Equivalency.

When the old GED expired at the end of 2013, NYSED had 3 choices:

- 1) New GED
- 2) TASC
- 3) HISET

These are my views on the decision to use TASC:

- 1) NYSED was correct in not choosing the new GED. The new GED is even more difficult than TASC, is only available online, and is more expensive than TASC and HISET. HISET (\$50) costs a little less than TASC (\$52).

- 2) NYSED made a major error in choosing TASC over HISET. I feel that HSE teaching and learning throughout NYS have been negatively impacted by the use of an overly difficult and inappropriately grade-inflated exam (TASC). The attachments included in this communication provide evidence of this impact. I hope that NYSED will choose a test that will result in more successful outcomes consistent with results from 2002 through 2013.

It is essential that NYSED not repeat the error of choosing TASC over HISET. I hope you will consider the facts on this important issue affecting tens of thousands of adults in NYS who need the HSE credential.

I am NYC based and available to meet with you in NYC, Albany, or anywhere else in the State to discuss this matter further. I can be reached by phone, mail, or email. My contact information is below.

Sincerely,



Stephen Meyerson  
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Attachment 1 is a 3 page printout summarizing HSE test results from 2002 through part of 2016. Note the sharp decline in how many adults took and passed the HSE since the TASC was implemented in NYS in 2014.

Attachment 2 is a 5 page document from DRC, the company which publishes the TASC. The expectations are based on the 2015 TASC Readiness test. The TASC Readiness test results are designed to have a high positive correlation with actual TASC performance.

Attachment 3 is intended to add background information on how multiple choice tests should be graded and why the TASC does not provide a normal distribution of results.

Note: The views expressed in this letter are my own and do not represent the views of any school, organization, and/or committee.

Walk In + Prep Program Completers											
Overall Counts			GED and TASC Only Completer Pass Rate				TASC Completers who Benefitted from Grandfathering				
Year	Test Administrations	Unique ID	Passed	Failed	Total	Pass Rate	Passed	Failed	Total	Grandfather Pass Rate	Overall Pass Rate
2002	47,248	42,912	22,662	18,697	41,359	54.79%					
2003	57,719	50,034	27,965	20,658	48,623	57.51%					
2004	62,567	54,025	30,484	22,194	52,678	57.87%					
2005	61,561	53,117	31,094	20,718	51,812	60.01%					
2006	61,566	52,109	28,722	22,150	50,872	56.46%					
2007	63,611	53,836	31,751	20,722	52,473	60.51%					
2008	68,861	58,022	33,998	22,645	56,643	60.02%					
2009	66,237	55,501	29,458	24,645	54,103	54.45%					
2010	56,574	48,373	28,294	19,016	47,310	59.81%					
2011	52,452	44,972	26,246	17,633	43,879	59.81%					
2012	54,009	45,415	24,026	20,319	44,345	54.18%					
2013	78,617	63,042	35,708	26,019	61,727	57.85%					
2014	32,248	27,671	12,823	13,017	25,840	49.62%	2,707	10,310	13,017	20.80%	60.1%
2015	37,318	29,841	11,114	9,734	20,848	53.31%	523	9,211	9,734	5.37%	55.8%
2016	3,341	3,340	919	856	1,775	51.77%	1	855	856	0.12%	51.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>800,588</b>	<b>678,870</b>	<b>375,264</b>	<b>279,023</b>	<b>654,287</b>	<b>57.35%</b>	<b>3,230</b>	<b>19,521</b>	<b>22,751</b>	<b>14.20%</b>	<b>57.8%</b>

\*Completer (GED + TASC) Grandfather Pass Rate includes those completers who have 5 subtest scores between GED and TASC combined.

Data are as of 3/15/2016

A Completer is someone who completed all 5 subtests.

Note: This calculation only takes into account TASC Completers and does not include those who became completers via a combination of TASC Scores and GED Scores.

Based upon subtest scores. Includes ineligible.

Attachment 1  
(3 pages)

Prep Participant - Completers											
Overall Counts			GED and TASC Only Completer Pass Rate				TASC Completers who Benefitted from Grandfathering				
Year	Test Administrations	Unique ID	Passed	Failed	Total	Pass Rate	Passed	Failed	Total	Grandfather Pass Rate	Overall Pass Rate
2002	18,102	16,941	10,657	5,830	16,487	64.64%					
2003	22,377	20,409	14,943	7,170	22,113	67.58%					
2004	24,859	22,554	17,038	7,509	24,547	69.41%					
2005	24,500	22,222	17,067	7,142	24,209	70.50%					
2006	23,971	21,344	15,588	8,076	23,664	65.87%					
2007	22,655	20,462	15,494	6,873	22,367	69.27%					
2008	21,628	19,513	15,290	6,091	21,381	71.51%					
2009	22,176	19,670	14,873	7,022	21,895	67.93%					
2010	20,050	18,221	14,311	5,501	19,812	72.23%					
2011	18,530	17,157	14,050	4,268	18,318	76.70%					
2012	18,994	17,108	13,743	5,040	18,783	73.17%					
2013	25,518	22,754	19,082	6,164	25,246	75.58%					
2014	10,439	9,242	5,588	3,345	8,933	62.55%	844	2,501	3,345	25.23%	72.0%
2015	13,341	11,491	5,953	3,229	9,182	64.83%	190	3,039	3,229	5.88%	66.9%
2016	1,800	1,800	646	475	1,121	57.63%	1	474	475	0.21%	57.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>287,140</b>	<b>259,088</b>	<b>194,323</b>	<b>83,735</b>	<b>276,937</b>	<b>70.17%</b>	<b>1,034</b>	<b>5,540</b>	<b>6,574</b>	<b>15.73%</b>	<b>70.5%</b>

\*Completer (GED + TASC) Grandfather Pass Rate includes those completers who have 5 subtest scores between GED and TASC combined.

Data are as of 3/15/2016

A Completer is someone who completed all 5 subtests.

Note: This calculation only takes into account TASC Completers and does not include those who became completers via a combination of TASC Scores and GED Scores.

Based upon subtest scores. Includes ineligible.

Overall Counts			Walk-In Participant - Completers					TASC Completers who Benefitted from Grandfathering				
Year	Test Administrations	Unique ID	GED and TASC Only Completer Pass Rate				Passed	Failed	Total	Pass Rate	Grandfather Pass Rate	Overall Pass Rate
			Passed	Failed	Total	Pass Rate						
2002	29,146	25,971	12,005	12,867	24,872	48.27%						
2003	35,342	29,625	13,022	13,488	26,510	49.12%						
2004	37,708	31,471	13,446	14,685	28,131	47.80%						
2005	37,061	30,895	14,027	13,576	27,603	50.82%						
2006	37,595	30,765	13,134	14,074	27,208	48.27%						
2007	40,956	33,374	16,257	13,849	30,106	54.00%						
2008	47,233	38,509	18,708	16,554	35,262	53.05%						
2009	44,061	35,831	14,585	17,623	32,208	45.28%						
2010	36,524	30,152	13,983	13,515	27,498	50.85%						
2011	33,922	27,815	12,196	13,365	25,561	47.71%						
2012	35,015	28,307	10,283	15,279	25,562	40.23%						
2013	53,099	40,288	16,626	19,855	36,481	45.57%						
2014	21,809	18,429	7,235	9,672	16,907	42.79%	1,863	7,809	9,672	19.26%	53.8%	
2015	23,977	18,350	5,181	6,505	11,666	44.24%	333	6,172	6,505	5.12%	47.1%	
2016	1,541	1,540	273	381	654	41.74%	0	381	381	0.00%	41.7%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>513,448</b>	<b>419,782</b>	<b>180,941</b>	<b>195,288</b>	<b>375,575</b>	<b>48.18%</b>	<b>2,196</b>	<b>13,981</b>	<b>16,177</b>	<b>13.57%</b>	<b>48.8%</b>	

\*Completer (GED + TASC) Grandfather Pass Rate includes those completers who have 5 subtest scores between GED and TASC combined.

Data are as of 3/15/2016

A Completer is someone who completed all 5 subtests.

Note: This calculation only takes into account TASC Completers and does not include those who became completers via a combination of TASC Scores and GED Scores.

Based upon subtest scores. Includes ineligible.

## Readiness Expected Performance Table 2015 Form 2: Science

Total Points Earned	Expected TASC Test Performance Level	Likelihood of Passing TASC Test	Likelihood of not Passing TASC Test
0	Did Not Pass	21%	79%
1	Did Not Pass	21%	79%
2	Did Not Pass	21%	79%
3	Did Not Pass	21%	79%
4	Did Not Pass	21%	79%
5	Did Not Pass	27%	73%
6	Did Not Pass	39%	61%
7	Pass	57%	43%
8	Pass	78%	22%
9	Pass	92%	8%
10	Pass	98%	2%
11	Pass	99%	1%
12	Pass	99%	1%
13	Pass	99%	1%
14	Pass	99%	1%
15	Pass	99%	1%
16	Pass	99%	1%
17	Pass	99%	1%
18	Pass	99%	1%
19	Pass	99%	1%
20	Pass	99%	1%

Attachment 2 (5 pages)

## Readiness Expected Performance Table 2015 Form 2: Mathematics

Total Points Earned	Expected TASC Test Performance Level	Likelihood of Passing TASC Test	Likelihood of not Passing TASC Test
0	Did Not Pass	18%	82%
1	Did Not Pass	18%	82%
2	Did Not Pass	18%	82%
3	Did Not Pass	18%	82%
4	Did Not Pass	18%	82%
5	Did Not Pass	21%	79%
6	Did Not Pass	35%	65%
7	Pass	53%	47%
8	Pass	75%	25%
9	Pass	93%	7%
10	Pass	99%	1%
11	Pass	99%	1%
12	Pass	99%	1%
13	Pass	99%	1%
14	Pass	99%	1%
15	Pass	99%	1%
16	Pass	99%	1%
17	Pass	99%	1%
18	Pass	99%	1%
19	Pass	99%	1%

Readiness Expected Performance Table 2015 Form 2: Social Studies

Total Points Earned	Expected TASC Test Performance Level	Likelihood of Passing TASC Test	Likelihood of not Passing TASC Test
0	Did Not Pass	17%	83%
1	Did Not Pass	17%	83%
2	Did Not Pass	17%	83%
3	Did Not Pass	17%	83%
4	Did Not Pass	17%	83%
5	Did Not Pass	18%	82%
6	Did Not Pass	19%	81%
7	Did Not Pass	22%	78%
8	Did Not Pass	32%	68%
9	Pass	50%	50%
10	Pass	68%	32%
11	Pass	85%	15%
12	Pass	95%	5%
13	Pass	99%	1%
14	Pass	99%	1%
15	Pass	99%	1%
16	Pass	99%	1%
17	Pass	99%	1%
18	Pass	99%	1%
19	Pass	99%	1%
20	Pass	99%	1%



## Readiness Expected Performance Table 2015 Form 2: Reading

Total Points Earned	Expected TASC Test Performance Level	Likelihood of Passing TASC Test	Likelihood of not Passing TASC Test
0	Did Not Pass	16%	84%
1	Did Not Pass	16%	84%
2	Did Not Pass	16%	84%
3	Did Not Pass	16%	84%
4	Did Not Pass	16%	84%
5	Did Not Pass	17%	83%
6	Did Not Pass	18%	82%
7	Did Not Pass	25%	75%
8	Did Not Pass	39%	61%
9	Pass	58%	42%
10	Pass	76%	24%
11	Pass	88%	12%
12	Pass	95%	5%
13	Pass	99%	1%
14	Pass	99%	1%
15	Pass	99%	1%
16	Pass	99%	1%
17	Pass	99%	1%
18	Pass	99%	1%
19	Pass	99%	1%
20	Pass	99%	1%

## Readiness Expected Performance Table 2015 Form 2: Writing

Total Points Earned	Expected TASC Test Performance Level	Likelihood of Passing TASC Test	Likelihood of not Passing TASC Test
0	Did Not Pass	6%	94%
1	Did Not Pass	6%	94%
2	Did Not Pass	6%	94%
3	Did Not Pass	6%	94%
4	Did Not Pass	6%	94%
5	Did Not Pass	6%	94%
6	Did Not Pass	6%	94%
7	Did Not Pass	6%	94%
8	Did Not Pass	9%	91%
9	Did Not Pass	13%	87%
10	Did Not Pass	19%	81%
11	Did Not Pass	29%	71%
12	Did Not Pass	41%	59%
13	Pass	56%	44%
14	Pass	72%	28%
15	Pass	86%	14%
16	Pass	94%	6%
17	Pass	98%	2%
18	Pass	99%	1%
19	Pass	99%	1%
20	Pass	99%	1%
21	Pass	99%	1%
22	Pass	99%	1%
23	Pass	99%	1%
24	Pass	99%	1%
25	Pass	99%	1%
26	Pass	99%	1%
27	Pass	99%	1%
28	Pass	99%	1%

Attachment 3: (Attachment to HSE letter from Stephen Meyerson)

A multiple choice test should be scored to ensure a normal distribution of results. The median score should be at the midpoint between a perfect score (100%) and a random score (25% on a test like the TASC, which is multiple choice A through D). The midpoint between 100 percent and 25 percent is 62.5 percent. The median test taker should be getting about 60 to 65 percent of the questions correct, based on knowing about 50 percent of the questions and guessing correctly on about 25 percent of the remaining questions. This would be a ratio of about 4 to 1 when measuring right answers based on content knowledge compared to right answers based on random guessing.

From looking at Attachment 2 (Readiness Expected Performance Tables 2015), it is obvious that the "Likelihood of Passing TASC Test" is skewed too much toward random guessing and too little toward knowing more than a small percentage of the TASC test content.

If the TASC were graded on a normal distribution based on mastering some of the test content and not on an abnormally low "cut score", we would estimate that the 2015 pass rate would have been about 10 percent (not 53.3 percent), and the number of people who passed would have been about 2,000 or 3,000 and not the 11,114 who got the HSE diploma.

Note on the Calendar Years on Attachment 1:

1) More people tested in 2013 than 2012 due to test takers wanting to take the Old GED before it expired on 12/31/13. The number of test takers in years other than 2013 (2002 through 2012) on the Old GED is still about double the number of test takers from 2014 and 2015 on the TASC.

2) The total number of people who completed the TASC dropped by about 5,000 (25,840 compared to 20,848) from 2014 through 2015. This is a trend that is going in the wrong direction as potential test takers become more discouraged about the overly difficult TASC content.

Random Factor When A Candidate Tests Multiple Times:

According to the Readiness Expected Performance Tables 2015 (Attachment 2), there is a 27 percent chance of passing the TASC Science test with a random score each time the test is attempted. If the candidate is persistent enough to take the TASC Science test 3 times in a calendar year (there are 3 forms of the TASC in each calendar year), that person has a high probability of passing the Science test within that calendar year just by guessing at every question. The Math, Social Studies, and Reading parts of the TASC also share the issue of students who can pass parts of the TASC more than 50 percent of the time by random guessing due to multiple attempts. These are examples of how random guessing on tests taken multiple times can yield diplomas to candidates lacking content knowledge.



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY,  
NY 12234

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ADULT CAREER AND CONTINUING EDUCATION SERVICES  
ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM AND POLICY  
89 WASHINGTON AVE. ROOM 460 EBA  
ALBANY, NY 12234  
Tel. 518 474-8892 Fax 518 474-0319

June 24, 2016

Stephen Meyerson  
2355 East 12 Street, Apartment 5S  
Brooklyn, NY 1122  
[Ag258@optonline.net](mailto:Ag258@optonline.net)

Dear Mr. Meyerson:

Thank you for your letter where you call the TASC™ a deeply-flawed test and recommend that New York State Education Department eliminate the TASC™ from consideration when we rebid the High School Equivalency (HSE) contract.

As you note, the awarding of the HSE test was based upon a RFP which considered the soundness and reliability of the test as well as the professionalism of the vendor. The vendor was required to demonstrate that their HSE test met psychometric standards, and was properly normed to graduating high school students.

You expressed concern that the New York State passing rate for the TASC is lower than the New York State passing rate for the GED® test. Please note that a lower passing rate in the first year or two of a more rigorous test is to be expected. Also, please note that our pass rate increased from 49.6% in 2014 to 53.3% in 2015.

It's true that the number of people taking the HSE test over the past two years is below the historic average. However, after the tremendous surge in testing during the last year of the GED® test (which saw a 45% increase in testing over the previous year) a reduction in testing the following year is to be expected. Nonetheless, we agree that the number of testers is low and intend to launch an advertising campaign to encourage more testing.

The data that you cite when pointing to the possibility of testers passing the test by random guessing are based on the scoring tables for the *TASC Readiness Test*, not the actual TASC™ test. It is true that the original readiness test was somewhat flawed. We raised our concerns about this test to CTB/McGraw Hill. They have since created new and improved readiness tests.

The original decision to award the HSE contract to CTB/McGraw Hill was made by an outside panel of psychometricians, higher education and adult education experts. The technical score

between the TASC and the HiSet was nearly identical; the determining factor was the cost. HiSet was priced approximately \$20 higher per test than TASC™. It was only after New York State announced the awarding of the contract to CTB/McGraw Hill that ETS reduced the price of the HiSet to \$50.

The New York State Education Department will issue a new RFP for the HSE test in the near future. Rest assured, we will follow all due diligence to choose the best test that is available.

Sincerely,

Mark Leinung, Director

c: Keeno Ahmed-Jones  
Kevin Smith

Response to Paragraph 1: No comment

Response to Paragraph 2: No comment

Response to Paragraph 3: I did not express concern about the pass rate of 49.6% in 2014 or the pass rate of 53.3% in 2015. I did express concern about how the pass rates are artificially high due to a cut score that is way below a normal distribution of results. I remain concerned that the "real pass rate" based on content mastery as per a normal distribution is about 10% (my estimation), not 49.6% or 53.3 percent. I repeat that the problem is not the pass rate; the real problem is that the pass rate is based too much on random guessing and too little on mastery of content. It is a pass rate that looks acceptable on the surface, but is scored too far below a normal distribution to be meaningful.

Response to Paragraph 4: An advertising campaign will not solve the problem of a drastic drop in the number of testers from year to year. You did not address the issue of the drop between Year 1 of the TASC (2014) and Year 2 of the TASC (2015). A slight reduction from 2013 to 2014 was to be expected. A drop of more than 50 percent was not. Switching to a new test will raise the number of testers, not an advertising campaign for an inappropriate product. Put a proper test in place first before advertising. The potential testers need to know that the TASC is gone, replaced by an appropriate test with content that must be mastered to receive a diploma.

Response to Paragraph 5: The TASC Readiness Test was flawed in both 2014 and 2015. I only cited 2015 data in my June 10, 2016 letter to illustrate that the concerns that NYSED gave to CTB/McGraw Hill about the 2014 TASC Readiness Test were not addressed in the 2015 TASC Readiness Test. I have not seen the 2016 Readiness Test (it seems to be several months late in arriving), so I don't know if there will be any improvement. My assumption is that the lack of change from 2014 to 2015 will continue in 2016. I hope my assumption is wrong.

Response to Paragraph 6: Now that HISET is priced competitively, there is no reason to keep HISET out of New York State. I am happy to hear that HISET had a competitive technical score.

Response to Paragraph 7: I am happy to hear that a new RFP will be issued in the near future. I am confident that the mistake of choosing TASC will not be repeated.

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor     in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Maryla Bordman (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 358 President St, Brooklyn

I represent: ~~OP~~ OAGE Est Teachers '12-31

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor     in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: VERNON KETLMAN (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor     in opposition

Date: 9/20/17

Name: Stephanie Varner - Mene (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 9938 70th Drive

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1195 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 9/20/2017

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Amy Torres

Address: 150 Elizabeth Street

I represent: Chinese-American Planning Council, Inc.

Address: 150 Elizabeth Street

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: Sept 20, 2017

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: PATTI CRISPINO

Address: 52 BROADWAY

I represent: WFT

Address: 52 BROADWAY.

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: SEPT 20, 2017

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: STERLING ROBERSON

Address: 52 BROADWAY

I represent: WFT

Address: 52 BROADWAY



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 9-20-17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Laura Feijoo

Address: NYC DOE, 52 Chambers

I represent: Senior Supervising Supt

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dr. Laura Feijoo

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYC DOE

Address: 52 Chambers St NY, NY 10007

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Vernon Kellman

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYC DOE

Address: 52 Chambers St NY, NY 10007

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

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[ ]

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Roberta PIKSEK  
Address: 154 W 131<sup>st</sup> Street NYC  
I represent: Adult Education Action Committee  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[ ]

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nancy Simon  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
I represent: OACE/Teacher  
Address: NYC (adult ed)

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1195 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: 9/20/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: LUZ A. ROJAS  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
I represent: Make The Road New York  
Address: 92-10 ROOSEVELT AVE  
JACKSON HTS, NY 11372

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



THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: HERBERT HODGE

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: ACE NY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. ~~1185~~ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 9/20/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Stacie Evans

Address: Literacy Advisor

I represent: Mayor's Office of Workforce Development

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 9/20/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: RONG ZHANG SENIOR DIRECTOR,  
ADULT EDUCATION

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: DMCD

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1195 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 9-20-17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Elaine Roberts

Address: 80 Maiden Lane, 14th Fl

I represent: Catholic Charities Community Services

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kevin Douglas

Address: UNH

I represent: 415 Broadway, NY NY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ariel Savransky

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: UJA - Federation of NY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1195 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 9/20/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: IRA YANKWITT

Address: 486 17th Street, Brooklyn, 11215

I represent: LITERACY ASSISTANCE CENTER

Address: 85 Broad St., 27th Floor New York 10004

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tilda Alexander

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Teachers at OACE

Address: 475 Nostrand Ave Bklyn NY

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Betty Gottfried

Address: ~~70th Street NYC~~

I represent: OACE Teachers

Address: BALC 475 Nostrand Avenue

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

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1195-2016 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Donna Kio

Address: 475 NOSTRANA AVE, Brooklyn NY

I represent: Teachers of OACE

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1195-2108 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 9/20/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Luzene Cunningham

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: OACE

Address: 475 Nostrand Avenue

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 9/20/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Katie Naplatarski

Address: 952 Limer St. Brooklyn,

I represent: Concerned Educator NY

Address: (OACE) 11222



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor     in opposition

Date: 9/20/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Diann Jenkins

Address: Brooklyn NY

I represent: Concerned Educator

Address: (OACE)

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

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor     in opposition

Date: 9/20/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Marcia Biederman

Address: 133 Garfield Pl #2 Bklyn, 11215

I represent: myself, retired OACE educator

Address: 133 Garfield Pl #1

Brooklyn NY 11215  
Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

133 m

# THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Marcia Biederman

Address: 133 Garfield St #2  
Brooklyn, NY 11215

I represent: Two OACE low-literacy students  
testifying on 1.5 min video

Address: Brooklyn, NY

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

# THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 9/20/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lisa Miller

Address: 1550 E. 13th St. #6B Bklyn, NY 11230

I represent: Myself / Former ESL Instructor w/OACE

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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