

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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September 20, 2017

Start: 10:28 a.m.

Recess: 1:41 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers-City Hall

B E F O R E: DANIEL DROMM
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

VINCENT J. GENTILE
BEN KALLOS
ANDY L. KING
DANIEL R. GARODNICK
MARGARET S. CHIN
STEPHEN T. LEVIN
DOBORAH L. ROSE
INEZ D. BARRON
CHAIM M DEUTSCH
MARK LEVINE
ALAN N. MAISEL
ANTONIO REYNOSO
MARK TRYGER
YDANIS A. RODRIGUEZ
HELEN K. ROSENTHAL
RAFAEL SALAMANCA, JR.

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

Laura Feijoo

Senior Supervising Superintendent for the New
York Department of Education

Stacie Evans

Literacy Advisory in WKDEV, the Mayor's Office of
Workforce Development

Ron Zang

Senior Director for Adult Education at the New
York City Department of Youth and Community
Development, DYCD

Vernon Kellman

Director of Data Management at New York City
Department of Education

Patricia Crispino

Special Representative for the Adult Education
Chapter of the United Federation of Teachers, UFT
District 79

Sterling Roberson

Member of the New York City Career and Technical
Education Advisory Council and sits on the New
York State United Teachers Board of Directors

Betty Gottfried

Co-Founded the Adult Education Chapter

Roberta Pikser

Taught as an Annualized Teacher for 16 years at
The Office of Adult and Continuing Education

Donna Carroll

Teacher at Office of Adult Continuing Education,
Master Teacher, Curriculum Developer,
Instructional Coach

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

Tilla Alexander
ESOL Teacher for Office of Adult and Continuing
Education and Mid-Manhattan Adult Learning Center

Marcia Biederman
Retired Teacher of English as a Second Language
In the Office of Adult and Continuing Education

Nancy Simon
Recently Retired Teacher who Worked for New York
City Department of Education Teaching ESL in
Adult Education Program, OACE

Katie Naplatarski
Retired Teacher, 27 year DOE Teacher, 25 Years
With OACE

Herbert Hodge
Resident of New York City, formerly Homeless, ACE
Student

Luz Rojas
Senior Manager of Adult Literacy at Make the Road
New York

Stephanie Vona Maneri
Retired Teacher of OACE

Diane Jankins
Retired Teacher of OACE

Lisa Miller
Former OACE Teacher

Lorene Cunningham
Former OACE Educational Officer

Martha Bordman
Former ESL Teacher in the New York City Office of
Adult Continuing Education, OACE

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

David Douglas
Co-Director of Policy and Advocacy with United
Neighborhood Houses of New York

Elaine Roberts
Director of Catholic Charities ESOL Program, the
International Center

Ira Yankwitt
Executive Director of the Literacy Assistance
Center

Amy Torres
Representing the Chinese American Planning
Council Inc., CPC

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

1 3

2 [gavel]

3 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, good morning
4 and welcome to the Education Committee's oversight
5 hearing on Adult Education Programs and Adult
6 Literacy. We will also hear testimony today on Intro
7 1195 sponsored by Council Member Menchaca. I'll talk
8 more about this bill shortly after some opening
9 remarks and then I will read a brief statement from
10 Council Member Menchaca. Today's hearing topic is
11 timely as next week, September 24th through the 30th
12 is National Adult Education and Family Literacy Week
13 when providers and advocates around the country come
14 together to host events and raise awareness about the
15 importance of literacy and more awareness on this
16 issue is certainly needed particularly in New York.
17 according to a March 2017 report by the Center for an
18 Urban Future, 1.6 million New York State residents
19 age 16 to 64 do not have a high school diploma.
20 Further 20 percent of state residents and 25 percent
21 of New York City residents are functionally
22 illiterate. Without a high school diploma or the
23 ability to read and write adequately these adults
24 will never reach their full potential which may also
25 have a negative impact on our state and city economy.

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 Statewide thousands of adults enroll in adult
3 literacy and adult education classes but many more
4 could benefit from these programs. Such programs
5 include English for speakers of other languages,
6 adult basic education, high school equivalency, and
7 career and technical education courses. In 2014 New
8 York State replaced the general education diploma or
9 GED exam with the test assessing secondary completion
10 or TASC exam largely because of the doubling of the
11 cost of the GED exam to about 120 dollars per
12 student. In the years since the TASC was adopted
13 fewer New Yorkers are taking the HSC exam and the
14 passing rates of those who do have... of, of those who
15 do have significantly decreased. While this decline
16 mirrors a national trend, it is important to note
17 that even before this latest decline New York already
18 had one of the lowest HSE exam passing rates in the
19 country. New York City's performance is among the
20 lowest in the state. In 2015 the city had an overall
21 TASC passing rate of only 46 percent and four out of
22 the five counties that had the lowest passing rates
23 in the state were New York City boroughs. The Bronx
24 had the lowest passing rate in the state at 40
25 percent and Manhattan was the only borough with the

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2 passing rate above 50 percent. In addition to the
3 decrease in the number of adults passing the TASC
4 exam the city is also experiencing a decline in
5 individuals taking the exams. The city which
6 represents more than 50 percent of all TASC test...
7 TASC test takers in the state saw a decrease of 43
8 percent in test completion from 2010 to 2015. In New
9 York City, adult literacy and education programs are
10 provided by the Department of Education, Adult...
11 Office of Adult and Continuing Education, OACE as
12 well as by CUNY, public libraries and non-profits
13 funded through the Department of Youth and Community
14 Development or DYCD. According to the DOE's website
15 OACE is the largest provider of adult literacy
16 education services in the state and offers more than
17 900 day and evening classes at more than 175 sites in
18 all five boroughs. Despite being the largest program
19 in 2015 only 316 OACE students took the TASC exam and
20 299 passed it. In comparison, other New York City HSE
21 programs operated by non-profits, libraries and CUNY
22 had 4,900 students pass the TASC that year. We hope
23 to learn more today about the reasons for this steep
24 decline in the number of OACE students taking and
25 passing the TASC exam. Some faculty members site

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2 o
3 problems with the administration of OACE claiming
4 that administrators lack experience in adult
5 education and thus do not provide appropriate
6 support, curriculum and books for adult learners.
7 Teachers who have sent anonymous complaint letters to
8 DOE officials have also complained of low morale with
9 veteran teachers being disrespected and pushed out.
10 These teachers also report that they have been pushed
11 to test students excessively before they've had time
12 to make progress which takes away from instructional
13 time. I was contacted by some of these teachers and
14 met with them along with the committee staff and
15 heard firsthand some of their concerns. We have
16 received written testimony from adult education
17 teachers some of it submitted anonymously and we'll
18 also be hearing from some retired OACE teachers
19 today. Today's hearing will provide an opportunity
20 for the DOE to respond to the concerns raised as well
21 as for educators, advocates, unions, adult learners,
22 and other stakeholders to share their concerns and
23 recommendations related to adult education and
24 literacy with the committee. As I stated earlier we
25 will also hear testimony on Intro 1195 today. Intro
1195 would require the Mayor's Office of Operations

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 ⁿ
3 to submit to the council an annual report by June 1st
4 of each year with information on adult literacy
5 programs offered by the city or pursuant to a
6 contract with the city. The report would include the
7 number of adult literacy programs offered, the number
8 of people who applied to such programs, the scoring
9 method of any literacy intake examination used to
10 screen applicants, the number of applicants who were
11 denied admission to programs based on the result of
12 an examination, and number of applicants who were
13 denied admission to programs due to an adult literacy
14 program's capacity limitations. I would like to
15 remind everyone who wishes to testify today that you
16 must fill out a witness slip which is located on the
17 desk of the Sergeant at Arms near the front of this
18 room. If you wish to testify on 1195 please indicate
19 on the witness slip whether you are here to testify
20 in favor or in opposition to the bill. I also want to
21 point out that we will not be voting on Intro 1195
22 today. To allow as many people as possible to
23 testify, testimony will be limited to three minutes
24 per person and please note that all witnesses will be
25 sworn in before giving testimony. And I'd also like
to ask the administration to please stay to hear some

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

1
2 of the teacher's complaints so that they can be taken
3 very seriously by the Department. So, we hope that
4 you'll be able to stay for part of that testimony.
5 Now Council Member Menchaca's statement; obtaining a
6 quality education is a basic right of every New
7 Yorker and the cornerstone to an equitable and just
8 society. I thank Council Member and Chair of the
9 Committee for Education Daniel Dromm and I thank
10 everyone present to provide... to, to provide
11 testimony. Education is a lifelong process for all
12 age groups, it is critical in the successful
13 development of individuals and for society. Mahatma
14 Gandhi once said, adult education can be said as
15 education for life through life and throughout the
16 life, adult literacy in particular is an essential
17 tool for individual's eager to advance in one of the
18 most competitive job markets in the world. A higher
19 proportion of adults with low literacy proficiency
20 hinders job readiness and weakens our local economy.
21 Many job opportunities remain vacant for lack of
22 prospective personnel who are not adequately trained.
23 Additionally, the inability of individuals to
24 understand societal and city issues reduces community
25 involvement and civic participation. Intro 1195

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 requires the Mayor's Office to issue an annual report
3 to the speaker on adult literacy programs offered by
4 the city. This bill will provide data to better assess
5 the demand for adult literacy programs and their
6 programmatic effectiveness. It helps us prioritize
7 agency and council resources to further eliminate
8 disparities in under resourced communities. I look
9 forward to reviewing all the testimony and feedback
10 on Intro 1195. Thank you and that is the statement of
11 Council Member Menchaca who is the sponsor of that
12 legislation. And before I swear in the administration
13 I'd like to say that we have been joined by Council
14 Member Mark Treyger from Brooklyn, Council Member
15 Antonio Reynoso from Brooklyn and Queens, Council
16 Member Chaim Deutsch from Brooklyn, Council... [cross-
17 talk]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: I just noticed
19 that it's all Brooklyn...

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: All from... Brooklyn is
21 in the house, Council Member...

22 [applause]

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yes... no, go like
24 this, Council... [cross-talk]

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COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Where's the

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rest... where's the rest of the city?

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: They're coming...

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they're coming. Council Member Vincent Gentile from

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Brooklyn as well, Council Member Alan Maisel from

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Brooklyn and I'm sure that other members of the

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committee will be joining us shortly. I myself also

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have been back and forth between both rooms because I

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have test... I have legislation that is being... two

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pieces of legislation that's being heard in the Aging

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Committee so at some point Margaret Chin who's the

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Chair of the Aging Committee may come in and take

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over while I go over there to, to hear that and thank

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you very much Council Member Treyger. Now to the

16

Administration, we have been joined by Laura Feijoo

17

who is the Senior Supervising Superintendent for the

18

New York City Department of Education. We have Ron

19

Zang [sp?] with DYCD, we have Stacie Evans I believe,

20

the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development and is

21

Vernon Kellman here, New York City Department... are

22

you going to give testimony now as well? Oh, oh he's

23

for Q... he's here for Q and A, okay. Alright, so if we

24

need you then we will swear you in at that time. May

25

I ask those who are on the panel now to raise your

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 right hand please. Do you solemnly swear or affirm to
3 tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the
4 truth and to answer council member questions
5 honestly? Okay, Miss Feijoo are you going to start?
6 Okay.

7

STACIE EVANS: Good morning Chairman

8

Dromm and members of the Committee on Education. I'm

9

Stacie Evans, Literacy Advisor in WKDEV, the Mayor's

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Office of Workforce Development. My job is to

11

coordinate and support the integration of adult

12

education in New York City's Workforce System and to

13

support the strengthening and expansion of adult

14

education services. Thank you for the opportunity to

15

testify today about the city's approach to adult

16

education. as a former adult literacy instructor and

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program director with 25 years in the field I thank

18

the council for its ongoing focus on adult literacy.

19

WKDEV is tasked to work with agency partners,

20

employers, labor, education and training providers,

21

philanthropy and community stakeholders to reshape

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the city's workforce system into one that more

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effectively meets the education, training and

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employment needs of city residents and employers.

25

WKDEV's goals are to build skills employers seek,

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 improve job quality, and increase system and policy
3 coordination. A strong adult education system in
4 critical to both the skill building and coordination
5 goals and the goal of creating a more coordinated
6 system is critical to the delivery of a strong adult
7 education service that meets the very needs of adult
8 learners and job seekers. The adult literacy
9 landscape in New York City includes programs and
10 services offered through the Department of Education,
11 the city University of New York, the three public
12 library systems and the many community based programs
13 that contract with the Department of Youth and
14 Community Development. Funding to support these
15 programs comes from city, state, and federal funding
16 streams as well as private foundations. We gratefully
17 acknowledge the council's long history of supporting
18 adult education particularly the allocation of six
19 million dollars for adult education programing in the
20 FY '17 budget matching the city's level of support.
21 That funding enabled the system to serve more
22 learners and to extend its reach to parents and
23 community schools. We appreciate council's renewed
24 matching allocation in FY '18 and look forward to
25 continuing our partnership with council to support

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

1
2 adult education. adult literacy services offered
3 include English for speakers of other languages,
4 ESOL; young adult literacy and adult basic education,
5 ABE, these are classes providing basic skills
6 instruction for youth and adults with reading and
7 math levels below the 9th grade and high school
8 equivalency or HSE classes for youth and adults with
9 10th to 12th grade reading and math levels which
10 prepare students to earn their HSE diploma. Adult
11 literacy plays an important role in the city's
12 workforce system vision. Research of middle skilled
13 jobs in key industry sectors show that nearly 90
14 percent of those jobs require a high school diploma
15 however a large share of customers served by city
16 workforce development programs lack basic literacy,
17 numeracy and or English proficiency skills.
18 Therefore, many of these New Yorkers do not qualify
19 for the vast majority of jobs. Adult literacy
20 programing then is the first step of the career
21 pathways framework for these New Yorkers providing
22 access to the training and credentials needed to
23 obtain good jobs. At present the city serves roughly
24 70,000 adults or older youth in its adult education
25 programs. Adult literacy programs are critical

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 support helping prepare New Yorkers for high, higher
3 wage jobs by providing education programs to job
4 seekers with limited levels of educational
5 attainment, building necessary foundation skills for
6 youth and adults who are not yet ready for college,
7 training, or careers. Turning to the proposed Intro
8 1195 we very much support the goals of the bill and
9 we will work with the council to align the text with
10 the data we can capture. Our career pathways and
11 common metrics databases will facilitate the
12 compilation of the system wide data needed. In
13 closing thank you again for the chance to testify
14 today, WKDEV looks forward to working with the
15 council on our shared goal of supporting adult
16 education to help New Yorkers develop their skills.
17 Once my colleagues finish their testimony I'm happy
18 to answer any questions.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Miss Evans do you
20 have written testimony to submit, we don't have it...
21 [cross-talk]

22 STACIE EVANS: Yes... [cross-talk]

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...here?

24 STACIE EVANS: I do have it.
25

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, very good.

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Sergeant can I ask you to get that for us please?

4

Okay, who's going to go next? Okay, Miss Feijoo.

5

LAURA FIJOO: Thank you. Good morning

6

Chair Dromm and members of the City Council Committee

7

on Education. My name is Doctor Laura Feijoo and I am

8

the Senior Supervising Superintendent at the New York

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City Department of Education. I am joined here by

10

Vernon Kellman, Director of Data and Accountability

11

at the DOE's Office of Adult and Continuing

12

Education, OACE. We are pleased to be here today to

13

discuss our work, to provide high quality adult

14

education programming to city residents and Intro

15

Number 1195. I thank the city council for your work

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to support adult education and I thank the council's

17

Education Committee for this opportunity. OACE's

18

mission is to empower adults in their roles as

19

parents, family members, workers, and community

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members through a continuum of services. Last year we

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offered 700 tuition free classes to over 50,000

22

adults 21 and older at over 200 sites in all five

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boroughs. The majority of OACE programs are funded by

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a prescriptive New York State employment preparation

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education, EPE, EPE grant from the New York State

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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Education Department. 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 US 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 annual award. We also received nine million dollars in city funding this year to support adult education services, that's from the city. 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 evenings and on Saturdays. These options are available on a year-round basis, adult learners can participate in classes at any of our sites regardless of their borough of residence. Student admission to

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 most of our programs is rolling and program
3 applicants participate in a registration process that
4 includes an overview session, intake interview,
5 assessment and orientation. Perspective students can
6 register by visiting any of our adult learning
7 centers. The majority of the students we serve seek
8 English for speakers of other languages, ESOL support
9 and most enter our program performing at the lowest
10 English proficiency levels. While ESOL instruction
11 teaches students basic language skills and the
12 academic skills they will need to successfully
13 complete higher education or job training adult's
14 basic education and adult secondary education classes
15 prepare students for the high school equivalency
16 test. Each year roughly one percent of OACE students
17 enter at or above the 9th grade math and reading
18 level required to access the high school equivalency
19 curriculum. OACE has a career and technical education
20 program serving over 3,000 students at seven sites
21 across the city. Our CTE program has a workforce
22 development focus, many students complete our classes
23 and gain industry knowledge and state certifications
24 allowing them to pursue meaningful employment and or
25 post-secondary education. Our CTE course offerings

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

1
2 range from basic computer literacy to certified
3 nursing assistant, automotive and construction
4 programs. All OACE classes are taught by certified
5 teachers and use high quality standards aligned
6 curriculum. OACE teachers receive ongoing high
7 quality professional development through a
8 collaboration with the New York City Regional Adult
9 Education Network, RAEN. The RAEN is an NY... NYCID
10 contracted entity funded to provide professional
11 development training and other support to all
12 federal, stated funded adult literacy programs in the
13 city. In addition, since 2014 we invested in
14 additional intensive professional development for 400
15 ADE and ASE teachers and hired additional math
16 teachers to work with students and teachers. Over the
17 past five years OACE has seen a steady increase in
18 student performance. The percentage of our students
19 showing one or more years growth for the federal
20 national reporting standards increased from 50
21 percent in 2012 to 71 percent in 2017. The number of
22 OACE students receiving their high school
23 equivalency, HSE since New York State introduced the
24 test assessing secondary completion TASC in 2014 has
25 declined as it has across the state. In Fiscal Year

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 2014 the last year of the previous assessment, 565
3 OACE students took the high school equivalency exam.
4 This number has decreased to 316 test takers in
5 Fiscal Year 2015, the first full year of testing
6 under the new assessment. However, the past rate
7 improved in Fiscal Year 2015 with 95 percent of OACE
8 test takers earning an HSE diploma as compared to 89
9 percent in Fiscal Year 2014. To ensure that the
10 services of OACE are widely known OACE hired eight
11 full time community liaisons last year, their primary
12 responsibility is to engage with community leaders,
13 elected officials and other city agencies, to attend
14 events throughout the city advertising class
15 availability. Additional flyers advertising classes
16 availability are distributed five times per year with
17 supermarket circulars across the state and the DOE
18 placed paid ads in subways, ethnic and community
19 print outlets and online promoting adult education
20 program locations throughout the city. We also
21 maintain literacy, literacy zone drop-in centers at
22 OACE learning centers in Manhattan, the Bronx, Queens
23 and Brooklyn that connect students to OACE's classes
24 and other city resources to assist them with housing,
25 legal, medical, employment and other needs. OACE has

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 established numerous collaborations with community
3 and faith based organizations. Within the DOE itself
4 OACE partners with other divisions, family engagement
5 and collaboration are top priorities for OACE as 44
6 percent of OACE students are parents with a total of
7 approximately 15,000 children in city public schools.
8 OACE works regularly with the DOE's Division of
9 Family and Community Engagement, FACE and
10 participates in many of the family engagement
11 activities held across the city. For example, OACE
12 staff presented and distributed materials to parent
13 coordinators during their quarterly conference and
14 professional development workshop. Additionally, OACE
15 staff participated in the citywide native language
16 family engagement conferences. With support from the
17 city council OACE is also a part of the community
18 school's initiative, one of the key educational
19 initiatives of this administration. The collaboration
20 has enabled community schools and community based
21 organizations and OACE to work in tandem to deliver
22 free accessible high quality adult education services
23 in 22 community schools across the city serving over
24 400 adults. I want to thank the city council for the
25 funding initiation, this year we are expanding the

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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initiative to additional schools. At this time, I'd

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like to briefly address the proposed legislation.

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Intro Number 1195 requires the Mayor's Office of

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Operations to report on adult literacy programs

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offered by the city or pursuant to a contract with

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the city. We support the goal of this legislation to

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ensure transparency however we would welcome the

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opportunity to meet with the city council after the

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hearing to ensure that the reporting parameters the

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council establishes aligned to existing reporting

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systems and those of NYCID's funding program database

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so we have one streamlined set of reports and data

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systems as opposed to overlapping duplicative

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systems. We are committed to ensuring that New York

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City residents have access to a high-quality

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education, we know we have more work to do and look

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forward to our continued partnership with city

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council. Thank you.

20

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Next please.

21

RON ZANG: Good morning Chairman Dromm

22

and members of the Committee on Education. my name is

23

Ron Wang and I'm the Senior Director for Adult

24

Education at the New York City Department of Youth

25

and Community Development, DYCD. Thank you for the

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 chance to testify today and for the city council's
3 strong support of adult literacy programs over the
4 years. For over 30 years DYCD has been administering
5 adult literacy programs through community based
6 organizations across New York City. DYCD funds and
7 supports a broad network of CBO's to ensure our
8 city's diverse communities have access to a range of
9 reading, writing, English language and high school
10 equivalency programs. With services and locations in
11 your local neighborhoods CBO's have strong roots in
12 local communities and have established trust with
13 community members. Adult students and older youth who
14 struggle to succeed in traditional school settings
15 are attracted to academic programs in their
16 communities. By attending neighborhood based adult
17 literacy classes they take the critical next steps
18 toward raising their literacy levels and completing
19 their education while becoming better positioned for
20 employment and economic opportunities. CBO based
21 literacy programs also offer the benefit of being
22 located in multi service organizations with cultural
23 and linguistic competence enabling them to provide
24 services and supports in a wholistic manner under one
25 roof, this is especially attractive for immigrant New

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 25
3 Yorkers. In Fiscal Year 2017 90 DYCD funded adult
4 literacy programs served over 40,000 New Yorkers.
5 Instructional services were offered to students at
6 least 16 years of age and not enrolled or required to
7 be enrolled in secondary school under state law.
8 Students who lack sufficient mastery of basic
9 educational skills, lack a high school diploma or who
10 are unable to speak, read, or write the English
11 language to participate in education, training, or
12 employment. Programs assist adults to become literate
13 and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for
14 employment and self-sufficiency and to pursue further
15 education. adult basic education, ABE and high school
16 equivalency, HSE programs provide instruction in
17 reading, writing and mathematics and prepare students
18 for the HSE tests. English for speakers of other
19 languages, ESOL programs provide instruction to
20 increase basic English language communication skills.
21 All programs provide classes that meet a minimum of
22 six hours a week, classes offer flexible, flexible
23 hours and are available in the morning, afternoon,
24 and evenings to meet the needs of participants. We
25 thank the city council for working with the Mayor to
add 12 million dollars in adult literacy funding in

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 Fiscal Year 2017. With the portion that DYDC received
3 we expanded adult literacy program slots and
4 strengthened program capacity and quality so that
5 students can achieve better learning outcomes.
6 Literacy assistant center.. our literacy technical
7 assistance provider offered increased professional
8 development trainings for DYDC community based
9 literacy providers. Due to the strong support of
10 Council Member Menchaca and the city council the
11 adopted Fiscal Year 2018 budget included again a one-
12 year allocation of 12 million dollars for adult
13 literacy programs. Given the tremendous demand and
14 need for adult literacy programs in New York City it
15 is vital to maximize existing resources. Towards this
16 end we work with DOE and HRA to increase access to
17 existing adult literacy programs. For example, we
18 have worked to connect DYDC's... I'm sorry, we have
19 worked to connect DOE's adult literacy programs to
20 DYDC's beacon and cornerstone programs. DOE's
21 programs provide teachers while DYCD's beacon and
22 cornerstone community centers offer space to house
23 classes. DYCD and the HRA staff provided joint
24 orientation sessions to adult literacy providers,
25 HRA's employment services programs and their clients.

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 Our program locations and capacity are shared with
3 HRA programs to facilitate referral, collaboration
4 and coordination of services. To conclude my
5 testimony today I'd like to briefly, briefly address
6 Intro 1195, while DYCD is in a process of upgrading
7 its program databases we are prepared to work with
8 the Mayor's Office of Operations, the Mayor's Office
9 of Workforce Development or, or... and other offices of
10 the Mayor to provide the info for this annual adult
11 education report. However, we suggest that the
12 release of the date of the annual report is pushed
13 back from June 1st to allow for a full fiscal year to
14 be prepared to be reported on. We welcome the
15 opportunity to meet with the city council after
16 today's hearing to further discuss this bill. Thank
17 you again for the chance to testify today, we look
18 forward to our continued partnership with the city
19 council to support adult literacy programs, I'm ready
20 to answer any questions you might... you may have.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much
22 for your testimony to this panel. Let me start first
23 by asking Mr. Zang you mentioned in your testimony
24 that in Fiscal 2017 90 DYCD funded adult literacy
25 programs served over 14,000 New Yorkers of that

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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so
14,000 can you tell us how many were prepared to take tests or what did that program break down look like, what are they being prepared for? I think... I think your mic is off. Yeah.

RON ZANG: We served... FY '17 we served over 14,000 people and the breakdown would be... let's see... alright, the bulk of the students are in our ESOL programs that's about... that's over 8,000 people enrolled in the ESOL programs, ABE programs a little over 2,000, HSE we have about 1,400 that's the breakdown of the enrollments and specifically I think you asked about the... how many people actually took the test, we... out of the 1,400 people we referred about 750 people to take their high school equivalency test and out of that 389 people obtained a high school diploma certification, that's about 52 percent.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And that was in Fiscal 2017?

RON ZANG: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So, that seems to me... because for... according to the New York Post Story of 2015 that 4,900 students passed the test it seems to

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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no
have dropped somewhat if it's 750 in 2017 that
passed.

RON ZANG: We'll be happy to take a look
at the previous year's data, I'm not aware that we
had 4,000 people.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: 900... can you get back
to us on that because that's really an important
distinction and I'm wondering if that was the year
that the test changed, would you know that offhand?

RON ZANG: Well the year... the new test
took place, I think it was two... beginning of 2015.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: 2015, okay so..
[cross-talk]

STACIE EVANS: Can I just clarify that
the 4,900 is for DYCD for the libraries and for CUNY
not just for DYCD.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Okay, that's
good. Alright, thank you. So, let me go over to DOE,
how many teachers are currently teaching under OACE?

LAURA FIJOO: I'm going to have to..
[cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: While you're looking
for that let me just also say we've been joined by

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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Council Member Debbie Rose and Council Member Rafael

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Salamanca and Council Member Dan Garodnick.

4

LAURA FIJOO: Yeah, I'll have to get back

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to you on the number, I may have it in here but I'm

6

not sure that I do.

7

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, can you put

8

your mic on.

9

LAURA FIJOO: Oh I apologize, I'm not

10

readily able to find the number of teachers in the..

11

Vernon's going to answer the question for me.

12

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay..

13

LAURA FIJOO: Thank you.

14

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Uh-huh, I do have to

15

swear you in before you answer.

16

VERNON KELLMAN: Okay, let me just find

17

the relevant numbers on these..

18

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, so can you

19

raise your right hand? Do you solemnly swear to.. or

20

affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing

21

but the truth and to answer council member questions

22

honestly?

23

VERNON KELLMAN: I do.

24

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you and

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then state your name for the record please.

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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VERNON KELLMAN: My name is Vernon

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Kellman.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you and

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that number?

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VERNON KELLMAN: Can you repeat the

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question please?

8

LAURA FIJOO: The number of teachers.

9

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yeah, is your mic on,

10

the red light should be on?

11

VERNON KELLMAN: I just put it on, sorry.

12

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, good.

13

VERNON KELLMAN: Could you repeat the

14

question?

15

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: The question is how

16

many teachers are currently teaching under OACE?

17

VERNON KELLMAN: We have a total of 147

18

full time teachers and 379 procession teachers.

19

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Now can you give us

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an... a number for the teacher turnover rate for the

21

past ten years, would you be able to give us that

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type of information?

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VERNON KELLMAN: No, I would not.

24

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: How about for the

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last year?

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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LAURA FIJOO: We could send you teacher turnover data, I just want to clarify the difference between a full-time teacher, we could give you turnover data, procession is an application process every year and so we might have a different range of people that apply for the program but we could provide you... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: But the program has, has it been renamed?

LAURA FIJOO: No, it's all... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So, basically, you'd still have a core group of people who'd be applying for those jobs and who would be receiving those jobs under the UFT contract, am I right?

LAURA FIJOO: Absolutely, the 147 remains fairly consistent but we will get you the turnover data on the full-time employees, I'm just making a distinction between the 379 processions... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

LAURA FIJOO: ...teachers which we probably can also tell you how many have retention rights under the contract... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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LAURA FIJOO: ...and who return or not but

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there's a distinction between those..

4

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yeah, sometimes they

5

don't reapply for it but basically mostly many

6

teachers do reapply for that so.. [cross-talk]

7

LAURA FIJOO: Yeah and the full time..

8

[cross-talk]

9

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...if we could get

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those number I would appreciate that and we want to

11

look at that very carefully. And in.. and in terms of

12

those numbers as well those who retired, resigned, or

13

who were terminated would be important to us.

14

LAURA FIJOO: Sure.

15

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, what is the

16

total number of staff working under OACE?

17

VERNON KELLMAN: 729.

18

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: 729 and what about

19

administrators?

20

VERNON KELLMAN: 23.

21

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: 103?

22

VERNON KELLMAN: 23.

23

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: 23, okay and can you

24

give us the turnover rate for that as well?

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LAURA FIJOO: We'll get that to you.

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. We have... as I

mentioned in my opening testimony, a number of
advocates and teachers who have raised concerns about
the administration of the adult education literacy
programs, does the DOE track filed complaints against
administrators?

LAURA FIJOO: Absolutely, any complaints
we receive are either depending on the nature of
those complaints are either reviewed by the Special
Commissioner of Investigation referred to the Office
of Special Investigation or referred as a school
based investigation, some of which we engage in and
some of which depending on the nature of the case who
would review those.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Do you know the
number there?

LAURA FIJOO: I would... there would be no
way for me to know in a Special Commissioner of
Investigation because those are confidential cases,
they're only... when they referred but I would have to
ask the Office of Special Investigations how many had
been referred to that office.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, those... and, and
so if it went to the Office... the Special

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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Commissioner's Office for Investigation or OSI that would be for more serious type complaints?

LAURA FIJOO: Ones that we receive that we would escalate to SCI would be more serious complaints and often times they make the determination whether to hold the case or refer it to OSI but we have no knowledge of how many would be in their database since they're a city agency not... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Would harassment go to OSI?

LAURA FIJOO: Harassment, it would depend, typically if it had to do with OEO complaints, Office of Equal Opportunity they are very confidential, we would not get numbers on those, that office holds those confidential in the highest regard and so they would handle any complaints like that. Those can either come through the same referral system, SCI to OEO or some go directly to OEO.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yeah, the, the... another complaint that I've heard is the use... the materials being used in the classrooms... [cross-talk]

LAURA FIJOO: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...some of the teachers that I met with complained that the materials were mostly for children rather than for adults, what materials are you using for adult education classes?

LAURA FIJOO: So, without naming subject area material I want to raise your attention as I did when I met with you and the committees of teachers you brought together to meet with us to talk about this. There are a couple of different things, when the test changed we had to all... obviously select curriculum that aligned with the HSE test so that we would be preparing students in that continuum but in order to select those materials we used committees of teachers and committees of principals and we had a curriculum fair much like the rest of the department does to have the people doing the work, look at those materials in order to make the decision about which were the best ones for either the ESOL classes or certainly the HSE classes at each level but there was a curriculum committee that made those decisions. If you're looking for specific titles I would have to send to you for each of the content areas and for each of the subjects what titles we're using, I don't know if that was the intent but all... [cross-talk]

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: No, no... [cross-talk]

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LAURA FIJOO: ...classes have... [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...I... how was that

5

committee formed?

6

LAURA FIJOO: I believe by the chapter,

7

the union chapter as well as the principals coming

8

together to, to do this.

9

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Do adult ed. Teachers

10

receive a survey similar to the survey the teachers

11

in regular Department of ED. Classes receive, the

12

annual survey?

13

LAURA FIJOO: That is a good question,

14

I'm not sure that they do.

15

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: They do?

16

LAURA FIJOO: I'm not sure, do they

17

receive the satisfaction survey? We're going to

18

check, I'm sorry, I don't have the answer.

19

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, that's really

20

also very important and if they don't let me state on

21

the record I would certainly hope that in the future

22

they will... [cross-talk]

23

LAURA FIJOO: I will certainly... [cross-

24

talk]

25

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...I think that that
3 survey was very helpful to me as a teacher in terms
4 of learning about the, the atmosphere and school
5 environments as well as issues of trust with
6 administrators as well. So, in 2014 this... I have the
7 answer here... okay, in 2014 the state transitioned
8 from administering the GED exam to administering the
9 TASC what efforts were taken by the DOE to support
10 educators with this transition?

11 LAURA FIJOO: Well we provide
12 professional development to teachers especially in
13 those areas as the test was transitioning, I mean we
14 knew well in advance that the state did not continue
15 to adopt the GED test and so we did provide
16 professional development to all of the teachers in
17 both the transitioning curriculum materials as well
18 as the changes in the test. The format of the test as
19 well as the sections of the test as you know have
20 changed and so that was provided to teachers over the
21 course of the school year.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: How is the
23 professional development delivered, when is it done,
24 how are teachers given the, the, the training that
25 they need?

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 LAURA FIJOO: So, I would say.. just like
3 to take one step back, we have eight principals
4 responsible for the regional centers and the
5 principals are responsible for figuring that out and
6 providing professional development, we also use the
7 RAEN network to be able to provide professional
8 development that's funded by the state so that
9 there's aligned professional development for teachers
10 but I want to make the distinction that the
11 principals are responsible for figuring out the plan
12 because there are a lot of challenges, there's a lot
13 of procession teachers that you heard us just report
14 out on as well as full time teachers and to be able
15 to make sure that people could get to opportunities
16 both at their site or to travel to a site provides a
17 challenge so principals to be able to do that and we
18 had to do that as we transitioned the test to make
19 sure that our procession providers are equally adept
20 at providing instruction over smaller chunks of time
21 as our full time providers have during a regular day.
22 So, I would say both push in and pull out
23 opportunities for that professional development.

24 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Just to get the, the,
25 the order of, of, of supervision in, in.. [cross-talk]

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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LAURA FIJOO: Sure... [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...the department; it's
you who then oversees Superintendent Mills?

5

6

7

LAURA FIJOO: I, I oversee all of the
superintendents in the Department of Education all
46.

8

9

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: All, all of them..
[cross-talk]

10

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LAURA FIJOO: So, Superintendent Mills is
one of the Superintendents and programs that I
oversee, I would set aside that I've been involved
with adult ed. a little longer in terms of Tim
Lisante in District 79 and adult education both when
it was Jan Coles and Rosemary Mills over a period of
years.

17

18

19

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So... but for, for
adult education it would be Superintendent Mills,
right?

20

21

22

23

LAURA FIJOO: Yes, for... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay and then

Superintendent Mills oversees the principals, did you
say... [cross-talk]

24

25

LAURA FIJOO: Yes... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...seven?

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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LAURA FIJOO: Eight.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Eight, eight

4

principals..

5

LAURA FIJOO: Yes..

6

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...and then those

7

principals are responsible to get the professional

8

development out to the teachers?

9

LAURA FIJOO: Yes and they also receive

10

professional development so I want to share that it's

11

a coordinated effort in terms of what professional

12

development we give principals to then figure out the

13

best ways to do that with teachers in the regions so

14

it's not each person does their own thing, there's

15

certainly a coordinated effort, I don't want to make

16

it sound like that but how they figure out

17

specifically where people are going at what time.

18

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, so let's go

19

back to the New York Post again, I can't believe..

20

[cross-talk]

21

LAURA FIJOO: Okay.. [cross-talk]

22

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...I'm quoting the New

23

York Post so often but this is where we got some of

24

our data. In 2015 OACE served more than 27,000 adult

25

students but only 316 passed and I noticed that in

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 your testimony you did say that... let me just go back
3 to it... that the rate was improving..

4

LAURA FIJOO: Yes.

5

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So, but still it
6 seems to me that there are few test takers compared
7 to the overall number of students who are enrolled in
8 the programs... [cross-talk]

9

LAURA FIJOO: Right... [cross-talk]

10

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...can you describe for
11 me the reason why there are still so few test takers?

12

LAURA FIJOO: Sure, much like our other
13 agencies reported most of our students that come
14 through the program are very interested in ESOL
15 programs. We serve whatever students come to us and
16 we create classes based on the student need and that
17 is by far probably two thirds of our student
18 enrollment is for ESOL classes and then the next
19 largest chunk I would say probably another portion of
20 that third that's left are for adult basic education,
21 we take students at a very low level of education in
22 order to progress them in the direction of the high
23 school equivalency exam. So, as they progress through
24 the classes and through the levels there is about one
25 percent which is about the average students that are

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 ready to access the curriculum for HSE, the
3 curriculum is written at a 9th grade level as you
4 would imagine because it's a high school equivalency
5 exam so in order for them to access the curriculum
6 materials we have to prepare them for that and so the
7 preponderance of the people are coming in at other
8 levels. So, it's a very small number in those
9 classes, the numbers and the percentage that we
10 represented in terms of passing the exam we do very
11 well with students who get to that level, stay with
12 us or come in at that level and then take the test
13 after taking our program.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, so what
15 criteria do students need to achieve in order to be
16 eligible to take the TASC exam?

17 LAURA FIJOO: So, in order to... there's a
18 9th grade level, we have to test them and they have
19 to test in at the 9th grade level to be able to
20 access the curriculum. Once they do that we put them
21 in classes at the adult secondary education level and
22 we prepare them for the test, the decision of when in
23 that range they take the test is a conversation
24 between the student and what their goals are because
25 I will add that the goals of the student play a big

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 role in how we make decisions about where they choose
3 to take classes and what classes they choose to take
4 so it's a decision that's made by the student but
5 certainly the student would consult with the teacher
6 about what... readiness to take the exam.

7

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So, one of the
8 complaints that I've received deals with the, the,
9 the number of tests that teachers have to give...
10 [cross-talk]

11

LAURA FIJOO: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

12

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...during the course of
13 their time in the classrooms... [cross-talk]

14

LAURA FIJOO: Sure... [cross-talk]

15

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...and a number of them
16 complained to me that it's difficult to give the
17 test, I think they have to be given individually if
18 I'm not mistaken and then they have a whole bunch of
19 other students sitting in the class that are not
20 being serviced, can you describe how those tests...
21 what those tests look like that the teachers are
22 required to give, I think it's monthly if I'm not
23 mistaken?

24

LAURA FIJOO: No... so, there's one
25 required... so, we have to pretest them as a

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 requirement of the state and then there's one
3 requirement on the first post, post-test that we have
4 to give depending on the number of hours the student
5 is in class, the first post-test is required by the
6 state after that it is up to the student and the
7 teacher to make decisions about that, I don't know...
8 Vernon if you want to describe the firm... format of
9 the test but as with all classes you can imagine that
10 there are things students can do as a part of the
11 test or as the class independently at the same time,
12 I mean we expect that we have a differentiated group
13 of people we wouldn't want to test the whole class at
14 the same time who... some of them may not be ready to
15 take the test or it may be too... [cross-talk]

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: How long does it take
17 for the teacher to give the test?

18 LAURA FIJOO: How long is the test
19 administered?

20 VERNON KELLMAN: We're talking ESOL
21 tests?

22 LAURA FIJOO: The post... I think the post-
23 ready.

24 VERNON KELLMAN: Well... [cross-talk]

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COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: The, the test that...

[cross-talk]

VERNON KELLMAN: ...the... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...is used to determine whether they're ready to move to the next level?

VERNON KELLMAN: For ESOL students it's a computer based test and the test is adaptive so the time varies depending on the answer sequence the, the student gives so that's the... for ESL instruction. For BE instruction, the test is a written test...

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So, at what point is the teacher involved in administering the test?

VERNON KELLMAN: The state guideline for the first post-test depends on the intensity of the class, how many... the weekly hours but the average among all classes about... is about 40, 45 hours before the first post-test needs to be administered.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So, when does... what I was trying to get at is when does the teacher administer the test to individual students, how long or how often does that have to happen in a classroom, like if I have 30 kids in my class and I have to give one test to each kid every day that means every single day of the... you know of the month or more I'm

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 having to sit with the kids and then there's no time
3 for me to give, you know whole group instruction or
4 directions or anything that's what I'm looking for?

5 LAURA FIJOO: Well... while the teacher is
6 monitoring the student taking the test they can still
7 be teaching, it's not that it would take the whole
8 test period and the rest... [cross-talk]

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So, that... so, what
10 does it... what does the test require the teacher to
11 do?

12 LAURA FIJOO: Vernon.

13 VERNON KELLMAN: For ESL test the test
14 would require the teacher to ask the student a series
15 of questions.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: To ask the questions?

17 VERNON KELLMAN: To ask and then grade
18 the answers based on...

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So, that would seem
20 to me that it would take a good deal of time to
21 administer that test and then the question that I
22 have is how often are we doing that testing and how
23 does that take teachers away from the work that they
24 need to do with other students in the classroom and
25 that is one of the complaints that I'm getting from

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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the teachers is that it takes an awful lot away from

3

actually working with the other students in the

4

classroom because of the frequency of the testing?

5

LAURA FIJOO: So, just the first one is

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required after that it's a... there's no requirement on

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the number of hours to take the test before the

8

readiness, I think that that's a determination also

9

of the teacher of the student's readiness to go into

10

the next level of classes or to get from ESOL into

11

adult basic education but we'll get back to you on

12

the timing of the test, I do not believe it's a full

13

amount of time but we can get back to you on how many

14

minutes it takes to ask the specific questions for

15

that portion of the test.

16

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, so let's just

17

move on. How... what efforts is the DOE taking to

18

institute to increase the number of TASC test takers,

19

you mentioned that you were successful in getting

20

more test takers what have you done?

21

LAURA FIJOO: So, as I provided in the

22

testimony we work closely FACE, we went to the parent

23

coordinators meetings so we'd make sure every city

24

school can refer adults to us, we put flyers in the

25

newspapers and in supermarkets five times a year,

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 there is a subway ad as well that goes out, we
3 provide information at the places where we have
4 adults education classes and recently we hired one
5 person in each region whose responsibility it is to
6 make local partnerships, faith based organizations,
7 elected... people that we can... our partners in the
8 community to be able to hold this information and
9 share this information, we use regular city places
10 like the libraries to provide information and there's
11 some amount of referral in, into programs from our
12 other city partners.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I just want... thank
14 you for that I want to just go back a little bit to
15 what I was asking you before as a matter of fact. Is
16 the process the same for all the agencies in terms of
17 how students are evaluated and tests are given and
18 how the teachers... you know give the test, distribute
19 the test, is... do, do all the DYCD programs operate in
20 the same way as the DOE programs?

21 RON ZANG: In terms of administering BEST
22 Plus for ESL is very similar, students come in, you
23 give them... ESL students you give them pre-test using
24 BEST Plus, ABE students you give them pre-test using
25 the TABE test and then what DYCD does is that we

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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require each class that is established will have

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about 120 instruction hours and at which time you,

4

you give the post-test so it's, it's around 100

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instruction hours then you'll give a test. It's... and

6

I would have to say that it's, it's, it's really

7

necessary and important to assess the student's

8

progress after a period of instruction.

9

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, you know I'm

10

going to let some of my colleagues ask questions

11

because they have questions as well so... we have

12

Council Member Treyger followed by Rosenthal and then

13

Rose who have questions. Council Member Treyger?

14

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you very

15

much Chair Dromm for this very important oversight

16

hearing. I just wanted to provide some brief context

17

before I go into my question is that as, as many of

18

you know I, I represent an, an area that was

19

devastated by Superstorm Sandy and we worked hard to

20

bring with, with the help of the administration, a

21

workforce one center into Coney Island to help

22

connect residents with recovering employment

23

opportunities, speaking with workforce One staff we

24

learned that a number of, of residents from Southern

25

Brooklyn were walking into the office lacking a high

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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3 school equivalency diploma which was an issue for
4 many employers because that's, that's a base... basic
5 requirement so we partnered up with a great
6 organization OBT, opportunities for Better Tomorrow
7 which it... which is a great organization to provide
8 free on-site local high school equivalency classes in
9 the Coney Island community. So, I've received some
10 feedback and some information after their, their
11 first year and I think it's important that I share
12 that with you and get your feedback. First of all, I,
13 I think you note... even noted in your testimony that a
14 number of applicants, students are parents themselves
15 so daycare was an issue, daycare's an issue
16 especially if the classes are during hours where they
17 have to care for their child that became a barrier, I
18 also heard that a number of the applicants... I, I
19 believe that in order to take the classes and take
20 the test, now it's called TASC you need to have a
21 certain reading level, certain math level, some folks
22 are not there so the non-profit is suggesting that I
23 work to get pre-high school equivalency classes even
24 before we get to the classes. So, I, I do want to
25 hear about what are we doing to make sure that we are
building up the capacity and the skills of, of the

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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3 applicants, also there are some folks... I, I read in
4 your testimony that... I'm not sure if the state
5 tailored it this way but you have to be 21 and over
6 to take the, the course or, or... and... because some,
7 someone might be 19 or 20 are we weeding them out so
8 I just want to get clarity on that but I just want to
9 hear your feedback and thoughts on some stuff that
10 we're seeing already in, in my district?

11 LAURA FIJOO: So, let me try to address
12 the daycare issue first. So, a lot of our families
13 are school aged children but many of them are in
14 school, I would say the majority, there are
15 definitely... one of the challenges of adult's
16 education is for adults that have young children, we
17 have pre-k centers, we're starting 3K, not in Coney
18 Island but certainly 3K to get more and more students
19 able to do that, I'm happy to partner with a
20 community organization and figure some of that out
21 and be able to provide you with the locations of
22 adult ed. programs in Coney Island because I know we
23 have a number of them and so the challenge you're
24 talking about is not being able to access the 9th
25 grade curriculum which is really what prepares you
for the test is one of our biggest challenges and an

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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3 area that we're focused on because a good number of
4 our students are in that category and so to partner
5 to get them ready to go into the program that you've
6 created a partnership with is something we'd be happy
7 to do because we are strong in our ABE programs and
8 can provide you with locations that they can go to
9 and then come back to this program if they'd prefer
10 to take the HSE program here. So, there is a number
11 in Staten Island.. I, I want to clarify the 21 and
12 older situation, so the way the Department of
13 Education is funded and it would be a different
14 answer for DYCD or some of the other city agencies is
15 that up to 21, the year that you turn 21 you are the
16 responsibility of the Department of Education and
17 that is funded through District 79 and Tim Lisante
18 this I believed was adult education hearing how we
19 referred to it in the DOE that's above 21 no longer
20 mandatory education required and so we use majority
21 state funding to be able to support adults 21 and
22 older but if you wanted to take a high school
23 equivalency exam and you were under 21 we would just
24 refer you to a District 79 program, try to encourage
25 you depending on the number of credits and how old
you are to complete your high school program and we

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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have transfer schools and we have alternative schools, we have some transition centers where you don't have to decide right away you can take classes in math and English and science and social studies so that we get you ready for either passing the regents or taking an exam but we support students straight through 21 but particular to what my testimony was about was adult education and OACE above 21.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Okay and I... and I appreciate that and I would like to follow up with the DOE with regards to what we can provide to build up capacity to prepare them to take the classes and, and meet them where they are and one last thing Chair just be aware that one of the things that we also heard feedback on which my office addressed through grants is a lack of technology because a lot of the... a lot of these courses and actually I think the exam... I think it's, it's tech based as well if I'm not mistaken and, and so we... I use the digital literacy initiative grants to provide computers for students in, in the program but I just want to make sure that there's technology access for all sites, making sure that they have functioning, working computers and someone's there to help them with those basic skills

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 as well, that they should be not just preparing them
3 for a test but preparing them for life skills in
4 general.

5 LAURA FIJOO: I know... I will say that
6 while it was intended that this test would be fully
7 online test based it is still not yet there, we still
8 do plenty of paper and pencil and while I'd like to
9 say that OACE has a very strong initiative focusing
10 on technology and building the technology instruction
11 not only to one day maybe support the test but to
12 support instruction in CTE classes like medical
13 billing and some of the other course work the
14 students are taking when it's appropriate for that
15 class we have a growing technology, I won't say in
16 every single classroom or every single student having
17 it but we do have a growing program of technology
18 where we're focused on it and we know that it's an
19 imperative skill for today's employment.

20 RON ZANG: And just to add to that
21 building up technology is really an ongoing effort
22 and I'm glad to report that last year Fiscal '17 with
23 the additional funds received we actually, DYCD
24 essentially purchased 20 laptops for each of our
25 funded literacy programs and, and also our TA

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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provider provided a series of digital literacy and integrating technology into instruction trainings so it has been very, very useful and beneficial to the students to... especially for those who needs to take the computer based test.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much, Council Member Rosenthal?

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you Chair Dromm and thank you for sponsoring this Committee hearing, thank you all for coming today. I'm the Chair of the Contracts Committee and one of the things that I've been looking at over the last three years is how adequately we fund our contracts and whether or not they are sufficiently funded to do the work that we're asking them to do and the administration really made a terrific move in this last budget by increasing funding for contract services in several areas, adult literacy was not one of them and I've heard from providers that the contracts are severely underfunded compared to the work that these organizations are being asked to do so Mr. Zang actually if I could start with you how many contracts, let... just some basic information, how

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 many contracts does DYCD have for adult literacy and
3 what's the reimbursement rate?

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RON ZANG: We across the program areas we
5 have 90 programs I said earlier that's pretty much
6 the 90 contracts.

7

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: 90 contracts?

8

RON ZANG: Yes.

9

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay... [cross-
10 talk]

11

RON ZANG: Last year and... [cross-talk]

12

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Is each
13 contract for a single provider at a single site?

14

RON ZANG: Not necessarily, some
15 providers have multiple, multiple contracts... [cross-
16 talk]

17

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay... [cross-
18 talk]

19

RON ZANG: ...for example they may have an
20 ABE and an ESL...

21

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay.

22

RON ZANG: So, they may have two and we
23 have... as I said we have different program areas. For
24 example, we have ESL programs, we also have ESL
25 civics programs... [cross-talk]

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Uh-huh...

RON ZANG: So, a little bit different so one agency might have both of these and reimbursement we... at CYCD from our last RFP was basically settled on a per student cost of 850 dollars to 950 that's a range that we have been using.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: And when was that RFP issued?

RON ZANG: The last RFP was issued for 2015.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: When do you plan on issuing the next one and will you do a review of... sort of a, a model, you know actual... you know cost based model in order to come up with the reimbursement rate?

RON ZANG: Well that's... you know that's always the case, you know whenever we have a new RFP we will... we review the, the cost too, that's what we did last time.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Uh-huh, so when are you going to have a new RFP?

RON ZANG: We recently renewed the current contracts...

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So, it's like
a three year... [cross-talk]

RON ZANG: Yes, it's a three... [cross-
talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...and then a...
[cross-talk]

RON ZANG: ...year renewal... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...three-year
renewal... [cross-talk]

RON ZANG: ...so, there will be probably
another I would say year and a half... [cross-talk]

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

RON ZANG: ...to begin to look at another
RFP.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: May I continue
for just a moment Chair?

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So, you
already... you... so, in the renewal you didn't... I'm
going to guess, you did not take the opportunity to
update the rate structure?

RON ZANG: That's true, we didn't... we...
well, well this was... it has been an ongoing

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 conversation with this but at renewal we, we did not
3 make any changes to the contract.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Would you
5 consider starting to go through that exercise? Here's
6 why I say it, you know for three years I, I've been
7 hearing about organizations that are really living,
8 you know on the edge, you know and being held
9 together by spit and glue so specifically on adult
10 literacy I'm told that the actual rate that they do
11 because often these programs are mission based
12 providers so they don't want to underserve, it's part
13 of their mission so at the risk of the organization
14 going down they're providing services really at 1,500
15 dollars per student..

16 RON ZANG: We're certainly open to
17 reviewing the, the cost the next time when we have an
18 opportunity and I would have to say that with the
19 additional funds, you know thank.. you know thanks to
20 council we try to help agencies for example we bought
21 agency computers, we bought.. [cross-talk]

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yeah, I..
23 [cross-talk]

24 RON ZANG: ...assessment materials for
25 them.. [cross-talk]

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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3 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Right, it's
4 not the city council's responsibility, I mean I'm
5 grateful to my colleagues and of course that's
6 terrific but why... what's the downside... I've been
7 working with the Mayor's Office of Contracts on this
8 model based budgeting and they're starting to do this
9 now for other agencies where they're having a very
10 interactive dialogue with providers about the
11 services that they're providing and modalities of
12 course get updated all the time, why is there
13 anything in law that prevents you from doing a model
14 based budgeting now of these contracts and modifying
15 the contracts for real cost because we're talking
16 about people learning today, I don't understand why
17 we would wait for, you know sort of this... the... you
18 know sort of false, if I can be so blunt narrative of
19 the contract doesn't get renegotiated for three more
20 years, contracts can get renegotiated every year so...
21 at any time the administration wants, right, I mean I
22 can give you three examples of it so let's just
23 assume it's true would you be willing to go back and
24 start the model based budgeting today?

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COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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RON ZANG: Well points well taken, I'll take it back and it's a discussion with, you know our... with our legal and so...

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: And when they... [cross-talk]

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

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...get funded... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...Council Member we have to wrap it up a little bit.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Sorry, last question when they get funded is it 100 percent city funds or do you get state and federal reimbursement?

RON ZANG: Our contracts have mixed funding sources...

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yes... [cross-talk]

RON ZANG: ...with city, federal CSPG and federal CTBG.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So, if you could send back information to the committee on what percentage is city and the other and then do city funds draw down additional other funds, right so if

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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3 you invest more city tax levy does that bring in more
4 federal or state funds?

5

6 RON ZANG: We don't have that.

7

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: You don't have
9 that, okay thank you very much. So, just the
10 percentage.

11

12 RON ZANG: Sure.

13

14 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you.

15

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much,
17 Council Member Rose?

18

19 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you. the
20 Office of Adult and Continuing Ed. is the largest
21 provider of adult literacy services in the state and
22 you offer more than 900 day and evening classes
23 Monday through Saturday at more than 175 sites
24 throughout the five boroughs and every individual has
25 to apply... has to partake in an in, intake interview,
right? So, of the eight regional offices that you
operate in New York City there is not one in Staten
Island and if every individual is supposed to go
through this intake process that means that everyone
on Staten Island has to travel somewhere which is
region eight, could you please tell me why that is
that there's no regional office in Staten Island,

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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what the numbers are of people who participate in our

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adult ed. programs and how the distribution of staff

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or resources in District Eight, region eight are

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distributed and how it impacts my, my... not only my

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district but Staten Island as a whole?

7

LAURA FIJOO: Sure, so I'm going to make

8

a few comments and then I'm going to ask in the

9

meantime Vernon to look up the information about the

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number of programs or... that we have in Staten Island.

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First the Staten Island students would not have to go

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to a regional office, it is mostly aggregated so that

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we have eight schools one of which covers part of

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Brooklyn and Staten Island and so students can go to

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the regional walk in center but they can also go to

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other offices and we could provide you with a list of

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those offices so they would not have to go to

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Brooklyn for orientation or intake or for classes, to

19

get started or to be tested, there are plenty of

20

places, I mean I can name off the top of my head that

21

we have one at New Dorp and something in Saint George

22

and some places that we... they can go to and we can

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provide you with a list of those places for them to

24

be able to access the intake... [cross-talk]

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COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: So, no one has to go off of Staten Island to access the interview... the intake process?

LAURA FIJOO: That is correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: And when... and so they can go to some other borough based program?

LAURA FIJOO: They can go... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: And it meets... [cross-talk]

LAURA FIJOO: ...to programs... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: ...the requirement?

LAURA FIJOO: Yes, they can go to programs on Staten Island, we have those programs, the region encompasses part of Brooklyn but that does not mean that we don't have the programs or the availability of all the services on Staten Island. I think that one thing I'd like to say to you is we certainly would like to grow our Staten Island program, I know that there is an opportunity now with the community school's partnerships to grow some of our Staten Island programs and increase... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Because what are our numbers because I'm sure that our numbers

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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indicate that we should have a, a regional office in

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Staten Island?

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LAURA FIJOO: So, the hubs that they're

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talking about are where the... the facility is almost

6

entirely adult education, I won't say entirely

7

because it's also shared space but there is a large

8

hub of classes that happen at the Brooklyn Adult

9

Learning Center or the Manhattan Adult Learning

10

Center and we could possibly... we could look into it

11

and... happy to have a dialogue further, we can provide

12

you with information on where the principal is and

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where some of the courses are and where students can

14

go for both registration and intake but a facility

15

hub that requires a lot of space to be able to run

16

one is something we don't have on Staten Island.

17

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you Chair.

18

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you very

19

much. We do have a lot more questions but we're going

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to ask a lot of them by letter but just to wrap it up

21

with a couple more. We've heard reports that there's

22

been a reduction in the number of classes offered by

23

OACE as well as the elimination of some programs such

24

as practical nursing, automotive, and distance

25

learning programs, why have these specific programs

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 been closed and has there been an overall reduction
3 in the number of classes offered?

4

LAURA FIJOO: I don't believe there's a
5 reduction in the number of classes offered but Vernon
6 is going to look into that. The practical nurses
7 program was both privately funded in partnership with
8 an organization and at one point in the past we were
9 utilizing state funding incorrectly to be able to
10 provide this program, once it went to fully privately
11 funded we were no longer able to fund it because a
12 requirement of a nurse is to have a high school
13 diploma and one of the requirements of receiving EPI
14 funds is not to have one so it was in contradiction
15 so we moved towards privately funded and then that
16 funding stream dried up with the closing of the
17 hospital on Randall's Island so, that's one. The
18 distance learning I'm not sure that we closed nor
19 the... what's the third one you mentioned?

20

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Automotive.

21

LAURA FIJOO: No, the automotive program
22 we definitely have an automotive program, I'm certain
23 of that and distance learning..

24

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: It hasn't... it hasn't
25 been reduced?

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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LAURA FIJOO: No, I believe there are students enrolled in the automotive program.

4

VERNON KELLMAN: I think the... what happens with, with, with programs like this like automotive is if we lose a teacher sometimes it's very difficult to replace that teacher because of the state requirement of having the proper certification so there are certain areas like medical billing and, and let's say heating and HVAC you lose a teacher it's very difficult to, to, to get a, a certified replacement so that contributes to sometimes scaling back on, on classes in these specific areas.

14

LAURA FIJOO: But they're not closed programs.

16

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Just in general can you give me a number, how many folks in your programs are immigrants?

19

LAURA FIJOO: I wouldn't have that number off hand so...

21

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I would imagine a large number though?

23

LAURA FIJOO: We don't... well we don't track information... [cross-talk]

25

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

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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no

LAURA FIJOO: ...on immigrant status at
all... [cross-talk]

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

LAURA FIJOO: ...as students come in, we do
ask the country of origin as a part of, you know
gender, age, some things that we ask on intake in
terms of the state database but we do not ask
questions about immigration or immigration status or
anything to that nature...

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well I answered
because I think a large number of the folks that are
the in the programs are probably immigrants.

LAURA FIJOO: Well I would just say to
you that likely ESOL students are likely people who
have a native language from another country so I
would make that assumption.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well and, and so what
I was really going to get at is that the Center for
Urban Future ranks New York as 18th in terms of per
adult funding for adult education and so I think
that's something that we really need to look at
moving forward is to really find ways to continue to
provide funding to ensure these programs particularly
in light of what's going on in Washington D.C. and

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 providing those services to our immigrant communities
3 is vitally important to them. So, I'd like to really
4 encourage that we, we look at that together a little
5 bit further down the road.

6 LAURA FIJOO: Absolutely, thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright, so we have a
8 lot of people who want to give testimony so I'm going
9 to... I'm going to stop here and we'll... [cross-talk]

10 LAURA FIJOO: Thank you... [cross-talk]

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...follow up with other
12 questions by mail, by letter to the agencies but I do
13 want to thank you all for coming and providing
14 testimony and we hope that you'll stick around to
15 hear some of the other testimony as well.

16 LAURA FIJOO: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much.

18 And with that I'd now like to bring up Patty Crispino
19 from the United Federation of Teachers and Sterling
20 Roberson from the UFT as well. Okay, can I ask you to
21 raise your right hand? Do you solemnly swear or
22 affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing
23 but the truth and to answer council member questions
24 honestly?

25 [off-mic acknowledgement]

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, very good. Who would like to start, okay Mr. Roberson.

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STERLING ROBERSON: First of all good morning Chairman Dromm, it's good to see you again and it's great to be here to talk about an important topic around adult education and the Intro to... 1195 in terms of reporting and having the Mayor's Office of Operations report around adult literacy programs. That becomes extremely important and obviously for us and the members that we represent particularly in adult education it is important with regards to the conversation but thank you and the council for having a, a leading voice in advocating for access in equity for our public schools and in this case having the conversation about the issues concerning adult education. So, in my testimony I'm going to take... without reading the testimony verbatim, copies are being circulated, I'm going to take it into the three areas of focus why adult education matters is number one, why listening is key and the only way to move adult education forward is through collaboration. So, I'm going to take those three aspects and then following my testimony my colleague Patty Crispino who represents the adult education chapter will

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COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 conclude in that testimony but very quickly when we
3 think about why adult ed. matters you heard the
4 Department of Education about the demographics of the
5 number of students, adult ed. students in the
6 population that they serve. Number one there are 60
7 percent of the students, ESL that are below the level
8 in terms of reading of grade six, 50 percent that are
9 beginning in terms of literacy, 80 percent folks of
10 color, African American, Hispanics, 80 percent low
11 income, average age 39, those are some recaps and
12 highlights that we see in terms of the demographics.
13 We also talked about some of the labor which is
14 included in my testimony with respect to the rate of
15 pay, why it's important that the adult education
16 exists that is an extremely troubling but, but
17 knowing that we have to repair our adults. Also,
18 these are individuals in New York and New Yorkers
19 that have kids in our public-school system and they
20 deserve the, the best quality education and they
21 represent not just their families, they represent
22 their communities and the city of New York as well.
23 Listening is being key, there's no secret that at
24 times we disagree with the Department of Education on
25 several different matters. When it comes to adult

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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education and many of its policies that has been
instituted some that has been highlighted today in
terms of changing and testing, we have disagreed
around how do we refer or council students out of
programs especially to other providers other than
that, making sure that there's access to quality
programs that's what we want for all of our students
that are delivered by certified teachers that have
the skill sets because it's not just having a
teacher, it's a teacher that has the skill set to be
able to deliver adult education just like adolescent
literacy, adult literacy it requires a much different
skill set but let me just talk about our members,
many of them have submitted testimony anonymously,
many of them are going to testify today. The
difference between just the idea of teaching, this is
not just for them teaching it's a calling. The idea
that the, the conditions of their students is, is, is
coupled with the work conditions that they deal with
every single day. So, the passion that they bring to
the table and the skill sets that they bring it only
shows that these are important issues around what it
is that they feel around what's going on and their
voices needing to be heard. So, with that in mind

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 when we think about the shifting of student
3 populations, altering admissions criteria,
4 transitioning students to other programs, these kind
5 of issues are issues that are passionate for those
6 that have been doing this work for a very long time
7 and if they're not included in the... at the table you
8 are going to get many of the responses that you have
9 in terms of the passion that they bring about the
10 input that they feel that is there and I think it's
11 important that these concerns matter and the only way
12 that we resolve those matters is through consultation
13 with the Department of Education. So, I just want to
14 make sure that we... I put that on the table so that
15 folks actually understand that that becomes the case.
16 Last but not least the category of collaboration,
17 yes, there is a lot of work to be done, there's a lot
18 of... the testimony that was from the Department of
19 Education and others in the city knows that with that
20 work there's a lot of things that need to be done.
21 Prior to our contract one of the things that's the
22 highlight of our contract that was bad was educator
23 voice. Educator voice is primary to our collective
24 bargaining and through that we did convene meetings
25 with the Department of Education some issues were

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 resolved but there's a lot of other issues that are
3 outstanding. What we did in that convening we also
4 made sure that now we're going to make sure that we
5 fast track some of the concerns from the adult ed.
6 chapter. The DOE agreed that they wanted to move in
7 the right direction and expand the programs, there's
8 a lot of complexities we highlighted in the CTE, if
9 you move the teacher what happens, so there's
10 complexities all the way around but the only way that
11 we're going to do this as well and negotiate on some
12 of these things is that we have to work together but
13 primarily it has to be a solution driven approach to
14 many of the issues. We talk... they... we heard about
15 curriculum, we heard about changes in the test, we
16 heard about all of those things, it requires the
17 educator voice especially many of the, the teachers
18 in the adult ed. chapter whether they are the full
19 time that were highlighted or the ones that come in
20 part time. No one should be left out of that
21 conversation so I am glad to be here to provide that
22 particular... the... this portion of the testimony so
23 that we have the context on what it is that we deal
24 with in terms of some of the challenges but also what
25 we need to do in terms of moving forward. So, let me

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 just turn over to my colleague Patti Crispino for her
3 testimony on this important matter.

4

PATRICIA CRISPINO: And I'm not as versed
5 at doing this so I'm going to read from my testimony.
6 Good day Chairman Dromm and members of the Education
7 Committee. My name is Patty Crispino and I'm a
8 Special Representative for the Adult Education
9 Chapter of the United Federation of Teachers. I want
10 to thank you for this opportunity to offer, offer
11 supplemental testimony to what you've just heard from
12 Vice President Sterling Roberson on the city's adult
13 literacy programs. The Department of Education's
14 Office of Adult and Continuing Education runs more
15 than 900 tuition free classes in adult education;
16 basic education, high school equivalency and ES...
17 English for... I'm sorry, English for speakers of other
18 languages, career and technical education for adults
19 21 and above. The Department of Education's funding
20 stream for an adult education program is largely
21 dependent upon money from the state's employment,
22 preparation, education program currently... commonly
23 known as EPI. Through EPI the state provides funds to
24 public school districts as they can provide ed... adult
25 and... with education opportunities leading to high

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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school diploma or high school equivalency diploma.

The EPI formula is based on 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 high needs population. This cap negatively effects the ability of the city to serve the, the adults who need to earn high school equivalency diploma or acquire English language skills to become contributing members to the community as taxpayers and consumers. We urge city council to use its influence with the state Education Department to press for a greater equity in EPI 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 provident services to adults in the community and I quote Roberta, "they need our help, they need someone who is able to help them get from point A to point B, this is... is this any more important mission in education than helping someone advance towards their goals regardless of their age". We know we're all in the same... we're all on the same page when it comes to helping our communities, with more equitable

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 funding from the state we can make dreams come true
3 for more neighbors... for our neighbors. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much.

5 I'm not going to ask too many questions, it's just
6 really an observation because we are a little bit
7 pressed for time, we're supposed to be out of the
8 room by one p.m. but number one, thank you and the
9 UFT for your support, you know I was a 25-year union
10 chapter leader and then we're always very grateful
11 for the work that the UFT does and I did not know
12 about this... what did you call EPE funding formula and
13 that is... [cross-talk]

14 PATRICIA CRISPINO: EPI... [cross-talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...something that we
16 would like to... I would like to talk with you more
17 about as well because I, I ended my comments with the
18 DOE about increased funding particularly because of
19 the communities that are effected by the services
20 that are provided through adult education. So, that
21 is something I'd like to, to look at a little bit
22 further down the road. And also, just to continue to
23 press forward with the consultation items, I think
24 some of the issues that the teachers have brought to
25 us are issues that I've mentioned to you as well and

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 that it... they're issues of major concern and
3 importance to me as Chair of the Education Committee
4 and I know that you're working on many of those
5 issues. So, I just want to thank you for coming in
6 and giving your testimony.

7 PATRICIA CRISPINO: Thank you.

8 STERLING ROBERSON: Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much.

10 Okay, our next panel is Roberta Pikser, Pikser, I'm
11 sorry, Pikser, Tilla Alexander, Katie Naplater..
12 Naplatarski [sp?], Donna Carroll [sp?], Donna? And
13 Betty Gottfried. The Sergeant... okay, I have to ask
14 you to raise your right hand please so I can swear
15 you all in. Do you solemnly swear or affirm to tell
16 the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth
17 and to answer council member questions honestly?
18 Okay, who would like to start? Okay, down here,
19 everybody wants to start first well we'll start over
20 here just make sure that mic is on and make sure you
21 say your name. Push the red button..

22 BETTY GOTTFRIED: This one?

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yep.

24 BETTY GOTTFRIED: Is it on now?

25 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yeah.

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

1 on

2 BETTY GOTTFRIED: Yeah, I can hear. Okay,
3 thank you. my name is Betty Gottfried, I Co-founded
4 the Adult Ed. Chapter nearly 50 years ago and I
5 served as its Chapter for over 40 years. My statement
6 aims to give some historically perspective to the
7 testimony you are about to hear today. OACE evolved
8 from a group of great society programs that were
9 formed in the 60's and 70's in response to the
10 demands of the Civil Rights Movement. The mission of
11 these programs was to educate the disenfranchised;
12 African Americans, Latinos, immigrants, school drop
13 outs and the poor. Working in conjunction with the
14 teacher's union these programs merged to form an
15 adult education program that provides teachers with a
16 salary, licensure, and benefits commensurate with
17 that of the K through 12 teachers. Licensure and
18 benefits stabilized the program with qualified
19 personnel and enabled the teachers to develop
20 curriculum, fight for their student's rights and
21 expand its full-time teaching staff. OACE's doors
22 were open to all New York City adults aged 21 and
23 above, non-readers, new language learners, high
24 school equivalency candidates, and those seeking
25 technical career training. Teacher's administrators

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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3 state ed. officials and the literacy assessing center
4 worked together to create curriculum that was
5 suitable for the diverse populations OACE serves.
6 Today all of these projects have been scrapped by the
7 current administration which someone else after...
8 following me will discuss further. The importance of
9 certification, to create an effective literacy
10 program OACE set a policy with the approval of the
11 union of interviewing teachers from its certified
12 staff to be assigned to the lowest level readers. Our
13 certification which is determined by our employer not
14 by our funding which Miss Mills has suggested
15 operated to ensure that these students got the best
16 teachers, because state law protects seniority rights
17 of certified teachers, the director could not use
18 these interviews to protect teachers he favored from
19 lay-off. Conversely these protections discouraged the
20 teachers from applying for these assignments in order
21 to bypass seniority. Certification is a protection
22 against cronyism and patronage. The current
23 administration's position that EPI funding does not
24 require a license or certification and hiring is open
25 to supervisory whim has set the clock back 50 years,
it's not only an unfair labor practice it sends a

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 o^o
3 disgraceful message to the students, you are not
4 worthy of a qualified teacher. In a more pernicious
5 move the administration decided to move the lowest
6 leveled students out of the program to the libraries
7 because their gains were not advantageous to the
8 program, what a message to send to the population of
9 the city, the DOE is more interested in statistics
10 than it is in people. At the other end of the
11 spectrums the high school equivalency diploma, the
12 GED exam replaced by the TASC has its origins in the
13 second world war, it was instituted to educate
14 African Americans who were victims of the Jim Crow
15 law so that they could help in the war effort. When
16 there is a will to educate a disenfranchised
17 population, it does get results. Today access to the
18 TASC is limited, the adult community believes that
19 free access to the exam should be open to all.
20 Finally, this body has a history, the, the council of
21 working with the union to support adult education. in
22 2006 the former Chair of this committee, Robert
23 Jackson, a recipient of the UFT's John Dooley award
24 and a strong supporter of adult education worked with
25 former teacher David Green and Calvin Miles and I say
with a heavy heart the late Bob Ostrowski whom we

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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just lost on, on December 3rd who was a great union

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member and, and, and supporter of adult ed. to pass a

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resolution that entered the adult education Bill of

5

Rights into the permanent record of the city council.

6

I put it before you today, I gave you copies of the

7

Bill of Rights, the items speak for themselves and

8

ask you to reaffirm your support for the rights of

9

these students and the rights of these teachers.

10

Thank you very much.

11

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much

12

and thank you for recalling the memory of Bob

13

Ostrowski as well, he was a good friend and supporter

14

so...

15

BETTY GOTTFRIED: Yeah... [cross-talk]

16

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you, yeah.

17

BETTY GOTTFRIED: His death leaves quite

18

a hole in our, our union... [cross-talk]

19

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yeah. Thank you, next

20

please, let's go right down the, the, the row here.

21

ROBERTA PIKSER: Okay, good morning. My

22

name is... [cross-talk]

23

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Is the red light on?

24

ROBERTA PIKSER: Sorry.

25

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: There you go.

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 ROBERTA PIKSER: Yes. Good morning still.
3 My name is Roberta Pikser and for 16 years I taught
4 as an annualized teacher at the Office of Adult and
5 Continuing Education. My purpose today is to give you
6 an overview of the problems besetting the Office of
7 Adult and Continuing Education. My written testimony
8 deals with these matters in detail and my colleagues
9 will deal with specific matters in detail. The first
10 thing to understand and keep in mind is that teaching
11 adults is a very different process from teaching
12 children. Points in common do exist but the adult
13 learner is a formed individual with life experience
14 and entrenched habits and perception. Additionally,
15 returning to school can be very delicate and
16 complicated psychologically. Under Superintendent
17 Rosemary Mills the programs are being so badly
18 mismanaged that one could characterize her
19 administration as one of dismemberment. There is
20 mismanagement of the teaching staff and of support
21 staff, there's mismanagement of class schedules so
22 that students are denied access to the education for
23 which their taxes pay and so the teachers especially
24 experienced teachers are obliged to work 12 hours
25 split shift days. There are continual attempts to

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 of
3 remove lower leveled students from the program though
4 it is mandated to open to anyone over 21 years of
5 age. There is refusal to deal with the pressing
6 problems of immigrant students who are asked for
7 their social security number or their work permit
8 authorization at intake and who disappeared in droves
9 from classes after January 20th of this year. There's
10 at minimum an eight percent contraction of a program
11 for which there is increasing need, there is
12 misrepresentation of testing data which may suggest
13 fraud and there is tremendous financial mismanagement
14 and an opaque budget. If the goal of the program is
15 to serve the students one can truthfully say it is
16 being dismembered. If the goal of the program is to
17 create an expanding system then perhaps it is a
18 success. This program was established to serve the
19 citizens of New York, many immigrants documented and
20 undocumented who have lived here, worked hard and pay
21 taxes for many years have improved their lives and
22 the lives of the rest of us do their studies at the
23 program, many have become US citizens but all of our
24 students, immigrant and native born are citizens of
25 New York City, they deserve the best that the city
can give them as they give the best of themselves to

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 or
3 it, they deserve more classes not exclusion from the
4 program, they need a proper education so they can
5 help their children with schoolwork, they deserve
6 experienced teachers and staff so they can get a
7 quality education, they deserve an education arising
8 from respect for what they know and who they are,
9 they do not deserve to be treated as numbers in a
10 database, a mere source of money which is then
11 squandered. It is impermissible for the Department of
12 Education and the Chancellor to allow this
13 mistreatment of students and staff to continue,
14 experienced staff must not be harassed and fired, the
15 program must be expanded not dismembered, we must
16 have free adult education for all who desire it. If
17 Superintendent Mills and her superiors are unwilling
18 to serve the people of the city of New York they must
19 be replaced by those who will do so.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much,
20 next please.

21 KATIE NAPLATARSKI: I'm going to read
22 quite fast actually and I have other documents as
23 evidence of some of the things I say. Dear Council
24 Members and Councilman Dromm thank you for holding
25 this hearing regarding adult literacy in New York

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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City and seeking to ensure the accountability of New York City literacy providers. A 27-year DOE teacher I was with OACE for 25 years, the last five as an instructional facilitator which deals with curriculum and materials, books and staff development. I transferred out of OACE two years ago, I currently work with another DOE division as an academic coach itinerant. I would like to shed light on the following issues which I know through personal experience and keeping my ear close to the ground for the past two years. TASC test numbers, only 316 diplomas were earned in 2015 out of 30,000 students. I taught the TASC test from my current program and the excuse that it... this new test is harder is not valid as a reason for this low number. In fact, last year the program I am currently with earned 1,700, 1,700 diplomas out of 7,000 enrolled, it's an ESL program and a BE program. OACE severely lacks TASC fund staff development, it lacks staff development for the TASC test 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 post article, "there is no feedback, no support, no curriculum, we

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 are left to our own devices and that is still true".
3 Case and point, in 2015 I witnessed that the
4 principal at Brooklyn's Adult Learning Center had the
5 mandatory TASC practice test locked in her office
6 cabinet until April of, of the school year. She took
7 them out only when the Saturday class threatened
8 mutiny. In addition, according to current staff the
9 scheduling of these mandatory tests often goes by the
10 wayside and students languish in class or leave.
11 Students, students learn that OACE no longer has the
12 TASC test as priority, if they are applying on their
13 own their applications are pulled, pulled by the
14 TASC, if they apply on their own they're pulled by
15 the TASC department which is run by OACE, they pull
16 their applications. Standardized testing policy, I'm
17 not talking about the standardized.. the post-test
18 that the students take NESL and BE. OACE is out of
19 compliance with federal and state testing policy. Uh-
20 oh, I'm missing a page... here we go, sorry. State and
21 federal guidelines, state and federal guidelines
22 state that students should not... should take the test
23 after a minimum of 40 instructional hours at yet
24 program wide OACE systematically, systematically
25 post-test students at 12 hours including

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

1 on
2 instructional intake hours and I have... I have
3 evidence right here of a memo from this year.
4 Numerous teachers have stated that this is common
5 practice for the past two years, all one needs to do
6 is look into this to find evidence clear as day.
7 OACE, OACE success is questionable. The present
8 administration, a large part justifies its leadership
9 practices by its success on this testing but the
10 ratings are... that... OACE does not follow the testing
11 guidelines, the testing data is not legitimate.
12 Mismanagement, teachers and other staff, staff are
13 not respected, valued or supported. Virtually all
14 focus is on standardized testing in order to get a
15 good rating. Teachers teach to the test and are
16 hounded by data trackers, I just spoke to somebody
17 last night who daily and relentlessly order for
18 students to be tested in the classroom during
19 instruction or the teacher has to give the test... best
20 test while the students who knows what they're doing.
21 Part time and full-time teachers that have left in
22 droves often mid-year and institutional memory is
23 gone, community building is nearly non-existent,
24 retention is not focused and students are tested
25 after just 12 hours, there is little motivation in

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 retaining students. The students are often frustrated
3 because they have no chance to progress to a higher-
4 level class due to OACE arbitrary rules, once they've
5 tested in math and shown gain they might not take
6 another test, reading test for a month and can't
7 advance, advance to a TASC class. Rank and file is
8 not consulted.. not consulted on educational matters
9 and materials. Hundreds of thousands of dollars were
10 wasted in the administration's first six months on
11 the purchase of useless materials which are still in
12 the basement of the learning centers. One teacher
13 told me last night that the books and CD's are still
14 hanging around five years later they can't even be
15 given away and we were not consulted and I was part
16 of the team that should have been consulted and there
17 was... what we... once... we once had... what was once an
18 excellent learning institution is now a mill, years
19 of complaints and cries for help have gone unheard,
20 DOE passes the buck of blame to the state saying OACE
21 is under the state's guidance. It has so far
22 protected the administration, ignoring the writing on
23 the wall and damage. The administration's leadership
24 style may be characterized as abusive, disrespectful,
25 mean and non-collaborative, arrogant, dictatorial and

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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tyrannical. One might say it lacks creativity,

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innovation, vision, and one might say heart. If one

4

is unlucky enough to be in the cross hairs of this

5

administration one might call it a reign of terror,

6

seriously it's that bad.

7

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: If, if you... [cross-

8

talk]

9

KATIE NAPLATARSKI: I... yes... [cross-talk]

10

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...could just wrap it

11

up a little bit... [cross-talk]

12

KATIE NAPLATARSKI: Okay, so that's,

13

that's it, I'm just... my last points are the council

14

members please would further investigate and also

15

partner with the state to look into those... the

16

testing practices because it's right in there.

17

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright and Katie

18

thank you... thank you for your testimony... [cross-talk]

19

KATIE NAPLATARSKI: Thank you very much...

20

[cross-talk]

21

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...it's very powerful,

22

as you know we are doing this at, at... because you

23

folks came to us and that's... [cross-talk]

24

KATIE NAPLATARSKI: ...I'm so... [cross-talk]

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COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...the beginning of the process and I just want to state though also some of the charges that you make are very serious and I think that you should report them to OSI if you have not already... [cross-talk]

KATIE NAPLATARSKI: I would... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...done so... [cross-talk]

KATIE NAPLATARSKI: ...love to do that and if the council could help us or steer us in how to do that and there are many people who can speak to this because I've spoken to many people and many of the people sitting here know these things, I think that would be just fantastic and I really, really appreciate... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And some of the... [cross-talk]

KATIE NAPLATARSKI: ...you having this... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...things that you did... [cross-talk]

KATIE NAPLATARSKI: ...hearing... [cross-talk]

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...bring up I did ask

3

DOE, some of the things they were not able to answer

4

today... [cross-talk]

5

KATIE NAPLATARSKI: Yes... [cross-talk]

6

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...some of the things

7

they will get back to us on and... [cross-talk]

8

KATIE NAPLATARSKI: Yes... [cross-talk]

9

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...we will make that

10

public as well.

11

KATIE NAPLATARSKI: Yes and I very much

12

appreciate the questioning that you did, I do have

13

and I will give to you this is the memo which is

14

about testing schedules... [cross-talk]

15

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

16

KATIE NAPLATARSKI: ...for one whole region

17

and shows that it's not 40 to 60 hours, we have some

18

other memos available too.

19

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you very

20

much.

21

KATIE NAPLATARSKI: Thank you very much,

22

I very much appreciate it.

23

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, next please.

24

DONNA CARROLL: Good morning Chairman

25

Dromm and members of the Educational Committee. My

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

1
2 name is Donna Corell, I have been teaching for the
3 Office of Adult and Continuing Education for 30
4 years. I have been a master teacher, a curriculum
5 developer, an instructional coach providing
6 professional development of teachers and
7 administrators and lately if have represented
8 teachers of their chapter leader in our program.
9 Thank you for allowing me to speak to you today and
10 to bring some of my concerns regarding administrative
11 decisions made by OACE leadership. Did you know that
12 our current principals, all of the newly hired
13 assistant principals and instructional coaches none
14 of them have any experience working with adult
15 learners? It is their responsibility to make
16 decisions that impact our students and the quality of
17 classroom instruction they receive. For example, a
18 decision to eliminate low level literacy students out
19 of our program is particularly disturbing. Such a
20 decision could have only made by those who have never
21 had to look in the eyes of a desperate scared adult
22 student, one who knows this is his or her last chance
23 to learn to read and write. No teacher should ever
24 have to say to their students sorry but you cannot
25 stay in my classroom, my boss doesn't allow me to

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 teach you. I implore you do not accept our
3 administrator's argument that the state doesn't
4 provide the funds for nonliterate students or that
5 there just isn't enough money or time that a less
6 expensive adult ed. program in the city can serve
7 this population, demand that OACE redirects its funds
8 from a top heavy administrative staff back to the
9 students who need us the teachers the most. Thank
10 you.

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much,
12 I did know that the principals do not have a... [cross-
13 talk]

14 KATIE NAPLATARSKI: None... [cross-talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...background in adult
16 education so... that's very interesting, thank you,
17 next please.

18 TILLA ALEXANDER: Good day Chairman Dromm
19 and committee members. My name is Tilla Alexander.
20 After 20 plus years of teaching ESOL to adults for
21 the Office of Adult and Continuing Education, the
22 last 16 at the Mid-Manhattan Adult Learning Center
23 which was a showcase for our formerly esteemed
24 program I decided to retire partly due to my age but
25 also because I have found it demoralizing and

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 oppressive to remain. I will share from my
3 perspective the many positive aspects of our program
4 as it used to be which proved to be so beneficial to
5 both teaching and learning. I will then contrast that
6 with how our program has declined in quality
7 specifically over the past five years and the
8 negative impact this has had on teachers and
9 students. We have had previously a lot of support
10 from both administrative and central office staff
11 teaching and administrative. I would not have been
12 able to accomplish all that I had and become... be a
13 successful teacher to my intermediate ESOL students
14 without the support from both administration and
15 other staff at OACE. We previously had collaboration
16 within and without our program, we collaborated with
17 LAC and we had a large representation in All Write
18 Symphony Space writing program and the NYU literacy
19 review. So, what has changed? We now have non-
20 existent or low-quality support at best. In fact, we
21 sometimes feel like we're going it all alone. We have
22 inadequate professional development offerings, mainly
23 focused on data given by incompetent or unlicensed
24 professionals with no teacher involvement which used
25 to make them enriching. We have no encouragement to

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 reach out of the box and collaborate with other
3 educational groups. Now, now very few teachers are
4 involved in the All Write Symphony Space Project and
5 I was... this year I was the only teacher represented
6 at literacy review, the activities at our school
7 became very top down where our assemblies and
8 programs were truly collaborative and teachers could
9 self-select, now the administration chooses the
10 program agenda and the teachers and students to be
11 selected for that program. Whereas before teachers
12 were encouraged to develop activities and flexibility
13 based on student needs now the administration is
14 dictating topics as well as a pacing schedule.
15 Whereas before quality of instruction and creativity
16 were most important now data and testing are
17 paramount to the administration. Whereas before the
18 OACE professional community met together three times
19 a year for stimulating all day workshops where there
20 was much collegial sharing of ideas, methods,
21 materials, and experiences now by contrast we are
22 divided by our eight regions for such all-day
23 professional development where we are fed narrow and
24 rigidly designed instructional mandates from the top
25 down. Whereas before we had a cohesive program where

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 no
3 teachers and students felt valued now teachers come
4 to school apprehensive and battle fatigued, the
5 students sense all of this while not understanding
6 what is behind it. Whereas before all ESL teachers
7 were licensed by the city and state now main... many
8 new one's lack ESL certification. I conclude in the
9 last five years Miss Rosemary Mills has taken over...
10 since she has taken over as Superintendent OACE has
11 been in professional decline and deterioration.
12 Experienced, licensed, innovative teachers have been
13 denigrated and unsupported by the administration.
14 What was once a stellar program, one that used
15 innovative forward-looking methods is now a shell of
16 its former self. Our students deserve more.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much
17 and I appreciate all that you've said, your emotion
18 in this is clear and evident and as I said before we
19 are just beginning to look at this issue and we will
20 be following up on it very, very soon. Thank you
21 again for coming.

22 TILLA ALEXANDER: Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, our next panel
24 will be Herbert Hodge... yeah, it's going to be a
25 combination of some teachers and other providers and

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

1 recipients. Herbert Hodge from ACE New York, Luz
2 Rojas from Make the Road New York, Stephanie Vona
3 Maneri, and Diane Jankins. So, we have two additional
4 panels after this, if you have not... if you want to
5 speak and have not turned in your form please make
6 sure that you've done that. Okay, so I need to... we're
7 missing someone... oh okay, good. Okay, if I could ask
8 you to raise your right hand. Okay, I'm sorry. Do you
9 swear... do you solemnly swear or affirm to tell the
10 truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth and
11 to answer council member questions honestly? Okay, I
12 also want to state that we have been joined by
13 Council Member Ben Kallos as well. Who would like to
14 start on the panel? Yes. You just need to make sure
15 that red light is on.

17 LUZ ROJAS: Okay. Good afternoon, I am
18 Luz Rojas, Senior Manager of Adult Literacy at Make
19 the Road New York. With over 20,000 members Make the
20 Road is the largest grassroots immigrant organization
21 in New York City. At Make the Road we work every day
22 to build the power of Latino and working-class
23 communities to achieve dignity and justice. Thank you
24 to our members of the... of the Education Committee for
25 allowing me the opportunity to speak today. First, I

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 100
3 want to thank you for investing 12 million dollars
4 for adult literacy in this fiscal year. Adult
5 literacy is important for full participation in our
6 society. Literacy is connected to everything to
7 employment, school performance, health, integration
8 and very important to community involvement. Without
9 adult literacy classes, many immigrants are unable to
10 reach their full potential in our communities and our
11 city suffers. We are grateful to you for introducing
12 this bill which aims to... for adult literacy services
13 in New York City. We understand that in order to get
14 more funding for adult literacy we need to
15 demonstrate the need for our services in a way that
16 DYCD has, has done a good job to help us with this.
17 We were not surprised to see that DYCD's community
18 needs assessments from this past June found that
19 across the city adult literacy services were ranked
20 as one the areas of greatest need. Based on our
21 experience this is not at all a surprise. Major roles
22 New York currently grants over 25 classes a week for
23 500 students a cycle at four offices with a
24 combination of city, state and private funding. We
25 enroll students quarterly and maintain waiting lists
in all our, our offices to try to maintain a sense of

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 the need. At any given point, we can have waiting
3 lists between 50 to 400 potential students depending
4 on the location of their office and the kind of
5 class. Keeping waiting lists can be challenging for
6 programs because we don't want to give people false
7 hope that we will have chance for needed classes in
8 the near future. Sometimes we just don't have a class
9 at a level or time that works for them. we believe
10 that together we can best demonstrate the need for
11 classes by looking at assistant practices like DYCD's
12 own community needs assessments as well as samples
13 waiting lists, and surveys of program administrators.
14 We also encourage this council to work to establish
15 an adult literacy task force and the Mayor's Office
16 for Adult Literacy again which could gather
17 information and needs but to also work to enforce the
18 adult literacy system in a long term and a strategic
19 way. We are eager to work with you to come out with a
20 simple and effective way for capturing and sharing
21 the info about the need for adult literacy classes.
22 Our hope is to engage in a data gathering process
23 desperately needed and makes a strong case for these
24 services but doesn't create a large additional
25 administrative war for programs. Thank you again

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 Education Committee members for your time today, we
3 at Make the Road New York look forward to working
4 together with you this year.

5 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much
6 and I hear you very loudly about the administrative
7 burden that might be placed on you because that was
8 an issue for me when I was a New York City public
9 school teacher as well. Thank you and thank you to
10 Make the Road for coming in.

11 LUZ ROJAS: You're welcome.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Mr. Hodge would you
13 like to start?

14 HERBERT HODGE: Yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Just... if you make
16 that red light is on, on your mic.

17 HERBERT HODGE: Test...

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And pull the mic over
19 to you, to your mouth, there you go.

20 HERBERT HODGE: Good morning... good
21 afternoon. My name is Herbert Hodge, I'm 64 years of
22 old... I'm 64 years old, I'm from Newark, New Jersey. I
23 came from what you would call a dysfunctional family,
24 I have problems and I didn't know how to cope. I went
25 to school until the 10th grade but by that time I was

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 making all the wrong choices and I paid a heavy
3 price. I won't go into too much detail but from the
4 time I left school I was moving around on the
5 streets, I was homeless a few times, sometimes by
6 choice and sometimes because I had nowhere to go.
7 Eventually I made up my mind to get some help and
8 give myself a break. I've been living here in New
9 York since the end of 2013, I came to New York to
10 receive treatment for a drug problem.. a drug problem.
11 At that time, I needed some help and encouragement to
12 continue to try and be a better person. Through the
13 treatment center I heard about ACE, they offered me
14 different classes and encouraged me to find
15 employment, to save my money and to get a roof over
16 my head. The courses I took at ACE consisted of math,
17 reading and computers and it brought a lot of what I
18 had forgotten when I was in school. When I was in the
19 computer class we were learning about punctuation and
20 grammar to help us on our resumes. I still have a lot
21 to learn but I am better than I was before, back then
22 I didn't know what button to push to turn the
23 computer on now I use the computer every day to
24 update the sanitation track and spreadsheet with what
25 I did and where I was and when I'd show on the

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 different sanitation routes. You have to know how to
3 read in order to get around, you have to understand
4 how to navigate the subways and the bus routes, I
5 learned some of those basic skills at ACE like
6 reading a map and how to pronounce and understand
7 words and their meanings, I use these basic skills
8 every day. I'm glad that I used a lot of the services
9 at ACE, it gave me the tools to be satisfied and to
10 be a productive... and to be productive and that is
11 what I have always wanted to do. I wanted to make an
12 investment in myself and improve my education. After
13 a few months in ACE's program I got hired by ACE to
14 do sanitation, working started to become the natural
15 thing to do. I let my supervisor know that I liked
16 the work which consisted of cleaning the streets and
17 providing maintenance after that I got hired full
18 time and I couldn't believe it. I never thought it
19 would be this easy, I now have to work... I know I have
20 to work for everything I have but I could never have
21 imagined that in three years I would be in a position
22 where I am the supervisor working with the staff in
23 the field and reporting to the organization. I am
24 helping other guys giving their suggestions on how to
25 do a better job in sharing my experience. Right now,

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 I work five days a week, within the last three months
3 I have received a promotion to supervisor, I have
4 been employed going on four years. Everything I
5 learned in the classes I use every day to some
6 degree. In addition to work I continue to go to
7 school to get my GED and I'm going to get my high
8 school diploma even if it takes me three to four
9 times to pass the test. That will open more doors and
10 there is no telling how far I could go. I feel that I
11 am on the right track and I am going in the right
12 direction, don't ask me what direction that is but I
13 know it's the right direction. ACE opened up a lot of
14 doors for me, they gave me hope, they showed me that
15 I can do it and that I have to choose to make it. I
16 graduated from ACE's project come back over three
17 years ago and now I have money in the bank and
18 positive people in my life. I have regrets but I know
19 that is what I had to go through to get where I am
20 today. I am a better person and I am satisfied with
21 who I am, it's a beautiful thing. Thank you to the
22 council for allowing me to share this today.

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much
24 Mr. Hodge you are... yes, let's...

25 [applause]

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: You are truly an
3 inspiration and a powerful example of how people can
4 turn their lives around and I know that firsthand
5 because you worked in my district and I'm very
6 appreciative for all that you did and the only thing
7 that I can say is that I think it's a shame that you
8 got a promotion because that meant that they took you
9 out of my district but now as the supervisor of some
10 of the men in my district you're doing even a bigger
11 job and ensuring other people get the same benefit
12 that you had so congratulations to you and you are,
13 as I said a powerful example of the power of learning
14 to read and become a literate and what it can do to
15 change people's lives..

16 HERBERT HODGE: Yeah... [cross-talk]

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you again for
18 coming in today.

19 HERBERT HODGE: You're right.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Next please.

21 STEPHANIE VONA MANERI: Okay, me?

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yeah, whatever, who...

23 STEPHANIE VONA MANERI: Okay, yeah. I'm

24 Stephanie Vona Maneri, I'm a retired teacher from

25 OACE, I worked.. I, I started as para in 1976, I left

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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3 and came back in 1982 as a full-time teacher and I
4 retired in 2014. I presently work as a volunteer too
5 for some of the... some of the former OACE students,
6 why because some of the students have not... been
7 constantly complaining to me... I do some of my old
8 students and some... and some of them brought their
9 friends that all they see is TABE test. These are
10 motivated students who want a high school diploma for
11 advancement, for post-secondary vocational training,
12 for college admissions and for personal satisfaction.
13 Most of my students left OACE because they wanted to
14 take the TASC test instead they were given the TABE
15 test, the TABE test didn't bring them any closer to
16 getting their TASC diploma. While the TASC can
17 provide some assessment information the TABE score is
18 no substitute for a high school diploma. Over-testing
19 is a waste of time when, when testing overdone. Most
20 of my students... most of the students who I am
21 presently tutoring have passed the TASC test but
22 they're not part of the OACE total because they
23 stopped attending classes at OACE locations. I think
24 it's sad because a lot of us who retired they've made
25 it difficult for us to return and work as... work in
the program. Instead of having... and I don't want to

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 no
3 be negative towards my colleagues, teachers who don't
4 have any high school equivalency experience, you have
5 people who work in other areas. I started working in
6 OACE when I was very, very young and I just want to
7 say is that it's a disservice because I still get
8 calls from students who... because I basically... I
9 volunteer every other Saturday and, and I can only
10 take a small group at a time because I'm in volunteer
11 space. I think something needs to be done also to
12 rectify what has been done to some of the older
13 teachers. Some of... some of the... our spirits have been
14 crushed and we want to contribute but who wants to go
15 to a building where you're going to be humiliated,
16 talked down to and really made to feel like a piece
17 of crap. I love OACE, OACE has provided a lot for me
18 but also, I've... I'm... my students... the thing that
19 really touched me was some of my OACE students and
20 now colleagues, they're teachers now, some of OACE
21 students are registered nurses, I see them at Kings
22 County Hospital, I see them at the city hospitals,
23 why can't we continue to do this? Why must you
24 choose... why must, must... why must you choose to be
25 treated like crap, my focus is please do something,
look at... look at the administration deeply, look who...

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 look, look at the people supervising us they don't
3 know anything about us, it's a paycheck for them, for
4 me it wasn't a paycheck, it was a living that's why I
5 give up my Saturdays, my every other Saturday to, to
6 the students and if you need a list of them I can get
7 you a list but they left OACE and its sad because
8 some of my colleagues here contributed.. well they
9 were lower level ABE students and some of them have
10 reached the TASC level but because of what's going on
11 they can't continue, some of my colleagues deserve
12 the... from bringing these students to that.. to where
13 they are now.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much
15 and I want to assure you we're listening and we're
16 hearing it and we're going to act on it and as soon
17 as we get those numbers we'll have more information
18 for you as well. Thank you, next please.

19 DIANE JANKINS: Good afternoon everyone,
20 how is everybody feeling? I don't hear you, how you
21 doing?

22 [off-mic dialogue]

23 DIANE JANKINS: You feel good?

24 [off-mic dialogue]

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COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 DIANE JANKINS: I feel good because
3 finally we're getting this mess out in the open.
4 Thank you very much Mr. Dromm, thank you very much
5 Education Committee for having me. I'm going to look
6 at the mission of the adult ed. program and how it's
7 not reaching its goals because of the Mill's
8 misadministration. Adult education needs true
9 accountable andragogic leadership of the largest
10 state for education program in New York State.
11 Leadership who actually brings the same type of
12 compassion, dedication, experience to a program
13 that's as dedicated adult education teachers have
14 demonstrated for decades. Now you may ask me well
15 why, why because of the population we serve, 1.6
16 million people in New York City do not have a high
17 school diploma. Most of our, our, our students come
18 in and they're reading on a very low level, many of
19 our students come in they cannot speak English
20 properly, they don't know the, the ins and out
21 workings, okay. When you have a population like this
22 the things that you are supposed to provide is
23 sanctuary and only the way that we can provide that
24 sanctuary if we are able to do what we're supposed to
25 do and we're not allowed to do that, okay. The Office

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 of Adult and Continuing Education mission is to
3 empower adults in their roles as parents, family
4 members, workers, community members, etcetera and we
5 promote lifelong learning, we never stop learning, I
6 hope you never did, I keep learning every day,
7 alright and the development of problem solving skills
8 through the continuum of services including adult
9 basic education, ESOL, high school preparation, and
10 career and technical education programs. Now how can
11 we do this without providing qualified, experienced
12 adult education administration? How can we do this if
13 our program consists of mean spirited K through 12
14 administrators who know absolutely nothing about
15 adult education? How can we do this if a teacher
16 demonstrated that kind of insensitive, selfish,
17 narcissistic, unilateral behavior in their classroom
18 their students would have long walked out and given
19 them a U rating. The 40,000 students per year
20 deserves better than an arrogant, incompetent, and
21 dishonest administration. How do I abuse thee let me
22 count the ways? On my first day, I came and I said
23 it's my way or the highway, I have a central office
24 made up of numerous administrators with substantive
25 salaries with many of them doing absolutely nothing

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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3 about adult ed. How are you going to administrate
4 what you don't know? An administration who cuts hours
5 and classes while ordering principals to give
6 unsatisfactory ratings to their teachers, who loves,
7 I love you. How do we do this if I make you cringe
8 every time by having my administrators call your
9 students children when the average age is 39? How can
10 we do this when administrators are an unwelcome
11 combination of inexperienced, incompetent, and
12 program damaged. How can we do this when the meaning
13 of andragogic is confused with pedagogy? How can we
14 do this when as soon as new hires understand how they
15 were bullied and mistreated they're out there. I
16 can't even count Mr. Dromm over the last three years
17 how many people came in, they saw the horizon and
18 they left? How can we do this when administration
19 forces senior staff to train the new hires, how can
20 we do this when students are placed incorrectly in
21 classes levels one through four because the person
22 placing them does not know the difference because
23 they have not been properly trained and they have not
24 been in the program, know nothing about adult ed. How
25 can we do this when the administration forces, forces
non-certified staff to administer TABE and BEST, BEST

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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Plus tests, do new student's intake, score tests, interview and place students, prescribe tests, all of this has to be done by a certified person who knows adult education and that's not what's happening. How can we do... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: If I can just ask you to wrap up, okay?

DIANE JANKINS: Okay, how can we do this when the administration indulges in nepotism and favoritism and lastly, how can we do this when community coordinators and community assistants are allowed to do payroll when they should be doing outreach. This program is mismanaged by K through 12 educators who know nothing about this program and it's dying as we go.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright, which is unfortunate. Thank you again for coming in, we look forward to continuing to work with you on this issue and we appreciate your testimony.

DIANE JANKINS: Thank you...

STEPHANIE VONA MANERI: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright, our next panel is Marsha... Marcia Biederman and Marcia's also going to be showing a video of some students I

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 believe, yeah okay. Nancy Simon, Lisa Miller and
3 Lorene Cunningham. Oh, I'm sorry and we also want to
4 announce that we've been joined by Council Member
5 Mark Levine and Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez,
6 thank you for being here. And we were joined by
7 Council Member Inez Barron but she has now left to go
8 to another hearing. Okay, can I get you to raise your
9 right hand so I can swear you in? Alright, do you
10 solemnly swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole
11 truth and nothing but the truth and to answer council
12 member questions honestly?

13 [off-mic affirmatives]

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Marcia, would you
15 like to go Marcia?

16 MARCIA BIEDERMAN: Yes, Marcia. So, good
17 day Chairman Dromm and committee members. My name is
18 Marcia Biederman and I retired one year ago from
19 teaching English as a second language in the Office
20 of Adult and Continuing Education. Many of my ESL
21 students had never gone to school in their native
22 countries, I taught them not only English but also
23 how to read and write. In June 2014, my colleagues
24 and I became aware of a new policy that would have
25 shunted the students away from the OACE sites to

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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3 classes in the public libraries and I have an exhibit
4 which was one of the colleagues... the case managers
5 had the evidence principal's... its exhibit one,
6 principals please recommend your low-level students
7 to these adult education classes at New York Public
8 Library and it was the same in Brooklyn and probably
9 the same in Queens and the DOE never, never denied
10 this. So, I contacted the Brooklyn Public Library
11 where the Director of Adult Education programs told
12 me that no one at the DOE had discussed this seismic
13 shift with him. Moreover, he pointed out that
14 although the Brooklyn Public Library offers learn to
15 read classes they're designed for native speakers or
16 those with native like English proficiency, they're
17 not for students struggling with both the language
18 and... as well as basic literacy. Hence the students
19 were not so much being referred as being rejected and
20 then... this is addressing Council Member Menchaca's
21 bill, how are nonliterate, ESL students identified,
22 it's actually not through an exam. In some cases,
23 their low skills become evident as soon as the
24 teacher writes on the board. The intake exam for ESL,
25 I just wanted to part from the, the script for a
minute, is purely oral, it's all reading... it's all

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 speaking and listening so it's not immediately
3 evident in some cases that the student is
4 nonliterate. Some other students request ABC classes
5 or they struggle to sign their names and intake
6 workers ask about years of school attended. In the
7 case of my students the answer was often zero. In the
8 past OACE teachers would find a way to work with them
9 ideally in a specialized class now they are being
10 shown the door. In correspondence with Chancellor
11 Carmen Farina's office and I have exhibits two and
12 three and discussion with OACE Superintendent
13 Rosemary Mills we were told that state funding
14 requires nonliterate students to be served not by our
15 program but by the libraries which receive ALE or
16 adult literacy education funding. So, those are
17 exhibits two and three. We were very disappointed,
18 we, we... you seen exhibit two that the council... the
19 Chancellor's strategic response book just said that's
20 how it is, they get AL Funding but if you'll jump to
21 exhibit four... in fact the libraries did not get AL
22 funding and... at least not as reported by the state so
23 this, this was the pre-text or excuse given both by
24 our Superintendent and unfortunately to our great
25 disappointment by the Chancellor's office which... and

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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there seems to be some sort of contradiction here

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because in the reporting I have... I can't show it to

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you but you know there's a school report card for

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adult education, it says AL funding no for the New

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York and Brooklyn Public Libraries..

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: It, it... [cross-talk]

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MARCIA BIEDERMAN: ...eventually... [cross-

9

talk]

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...it could be that

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they get city funding and that's what the DOE might

12

be referring to.

13

MARCIA BIEDERMAN: But they wrote AL

14

funding..

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: They wrote what?

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MARCIA BIEDERMAN: They wrote A... this is

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from the Chancellor's... I have to go by the evidence.

18

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Uh-huh...

19

MARCIA BIEDERMAN: Exhibit two is

20

precisely what we received from the Chancellor's

21

strategic response group.

22

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I, I see, okay...

23

[cross-talk]

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MARCIA BIEDERMAN: If you see the

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circled... [cross-talk]

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...I got it... [cross-talk]

MARCIA BIEDERMAN: ...you know exhibit two the areas I've circled they stated AL funding several times, it was also... this was repeated to us in meetings that we had with, with the Superintendent so I don't think it was a slip of the tongue Council Member Dromm. Eventually Miss Mills agreed to let me continue with my existing nonliterate students provided they were making educational gain. Sympathetic staffers enrolled or kind of snuck in additional new students but access to education should be a matter of policy not empathy. I don't know what happened after I was gone and I can't count the number of students who were turned away because there was no tracking of the students who were turned away and that would be useful and I think that's what the... what Council Member Menchaca's bill is, is, is proposing. And even as all this was happening the OACE stated on its website and this is exhibit five that the classes were open to anyone over age 21 with no additional requirements. Now my... let my students speak for them... speak for themselves here, they knew that they were under threat and I asked them if they

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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want to record something and I hope the sound is on...
and... if we can get sound... okay, I'm going to have to
turn up the volume, I'm sorry... very sorry... here
perhaps... okay, I also have the sub... I also have
subtitles so... they're just little speakers.

[playing video]

MARCIA BIEDERMAN: Okay, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much,
very powerful, next please.

LISA MILLER: Okay, my name is Lisa
Miller and I am a former OACE teacher, I was
discontinued in 2016 and I want to just talk a little
bit about how the observation reports are used to, to
denigrate and U rate and fire teachers and they are
irrational and nonevidence based. Okay, so what
happens to a teacher who is sensitive to her
students... her student's needs in OACE, what do you
think, class, what happens to her? Okay, I'll tell
you, she gets fired that's what happens to her. I was
faulted for not differentiating for the single
student that was in my class, not differentiating for
one student, how do you do that? I was U rated and
scolded because I didn't say turn and talk to your
partner and I have been given a list of demands and

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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3 expectations for one lesson so as to make the lesson
4 so convoluted that it would make the lesson
5 completely unmanageable and incoherent. I was falsely
6 accused of not having a lesson plan for a formal
7 observation. A specialist has come into my room who
8 herself was U rated to remediate me, another one who
9 had no experience with either adult education or ESL
10 demonstrated an appallingly bad model lesson that
11 lacked any coherence whatsoever and did not address
12 my alleged deficiency. She did not group the students
13 appropriately nor did she differentiate, she did not
14 check for comprehension or say turn and talk to your
15 partner. Not only did she not know how to construct
16 and deliver an ESL lesson but I suspect she found it
17 just as unmanageable to satisfy all the demands that
18 the principal required in one lesson. I was supposed
19 to model my lessons on this. I have been demeaned and
20 harassed mercilessly by, by hostile supervisors and
21 have... who have brought me to tears but mine is not an
22 isolated case. Similar irrational observation reports
23 non, non-evidenced based were used against other
24 senior teachers to order... in order to justify U
25 ratings. The clear targeting of OACE senior teachers
by Superintendent Mills began in 2013... '12 and '13

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 when she came on. Miss Bernard, who is a... was a, a
3 principal in, in... who is a principal in the Bronx
4 where I work meted out U ratings to the majority of
5 senior teachers with decades of satisfactory even
6 exemplary experience in adult education, ESL and BE.
7 One of the U rated GED teachers covered her walls
8 with copies of GED and ESL and the U rated group and
9 ESL teacher in the U rated group had mentored new,
10 new teachers in how to teach basic literacy skills to
11 ESL students yet all Bernard could do was denigrate
12 their skills. This past year the hostile work
13 environment was drift... has driven a number of Bronx
14 teachers to leave before the end of the school year.
15 The revolving door of teachers is harmful to our
16 students, it is, is as harmful to our students as the
17 loss... the revolving door of teachers is harmful to
18 our students as is the loss of experienced teachers.
19 The U ratings of senior teachers has become more
20 widespread with each passing year of the Mills
21 administration. This year 24 teachers who were U
22 rated for the '16, '17 school year came to the
23 Manhattan... [cross-talk]

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COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I have to ask you to wrap it up a little bit because we have to be out of here in ten minutes.

LISA MILLER: Okay, I just have like a little.. just a tiny bit left about that. The.. came to the Manhattan Office of the UFT to file appeals. The youngest were in their 40's and the majority were in their 50's and 60's. More teachers in other boroughs were U rated as well. The number of U ratings in our relatively small program compared to the K-12 schools is shocking. Furthermore, the preponderance of U ratings are reserved for the most experienced teachers. Some PK-12 teachers gave up their tenure to work in OACE and were especially vulnerable as senior teachers without tenure. A number of these senior teachers got letters of discontinuation, the targeting and loss of experienced teachers does great damage to the student population OACE is supposed to serve and that's it.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you, I want to assure you we're going to look at the issue of the senior teachers being pushed out, we're going to look at that issue, thank you, next please.

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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NANCY SIMON: Okay, good afternoon everybody. My name is Nancy Simon and mine is about excessive unsatisfactory ratings for OACE teachers. I am a recently retired teacher who worked for the New York City Department of Education for many years. I taught ESL in the adult education program for the latter half of my career, OACE. 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 Mill's leadership? I am at this hearing to speak to the alarming and demoralizing increase in unsatisfactory annual ratings that have been unfairly dealt to many experienced and effective teachers which began when Miss Mills became the Superintendent of OACE in 2012. These unsatisfactory or U ratings have risen far beyond passed norms. They have also far exceeded the ineffective ratings given to our teacher counterparts in the PreK through 12th

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 124
3 grade system. The following is a comparison of the
4 ratings for these two groups of teachers for the
5 school years 2013 to '14 through 2016 to '17, that's
6 four years. For... first the annual ratings of PreK
7 through 12th grade teachers are taken from a New York
8 State Education Department Report and there's a copy
9 here, anybody can see on their website, it's all
10 published, this is page 13 of the report. So, the
11 report shows that one percent of New York City
12 teachers received an ineffective rating for the 2013
13 to '14 through 2015 to '16 school years. The 2016 to
14 '17 ratings are not yet available but I have heard
15 that ineffective ratings seemed to have diminished
16 therefore I've estimated an across the board
17 ineffective rating of one percent for the past four
18 years for PreK through 12th grade teachers.
19 Unfortunately, data on OACE teacher's unsatisfactory
20 ratings is more difficult to obtain. The numbers for
21 2013 to '14 and 2014 to '15 were finally obtained by
22 a freedom of information act letter, oddly a freedom...
23 the, the... this carbon copy type Freedom of
24 Information Act or F... FOIL requests for the same
25 information for 2015 to '16 was denied, okay, so
there's a copy of the denial as well for the same

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 information but there is a new request pending.
3 However, our understanding of the 2016, '17 number is
4 well informed, at the end of June most of the U rated
5 teachers attended an emergency meeting at the UFT to
6 file their appeals. Word got around of the high
7 number of U ratings because it was so shocking. Now
8 this is where I'm going... I was a little shocked at
9 this hearing to hear, I think it was Vernon site the
10 number of full time teachers as 147 because I took
11 the directory that was sent to us in May, I was still
12 teaching up until, you know the summer and we've went
13 through it and called through it and got rid of all
14 the procession people and all the duplicates, these
15 were teachers that had classes, full time, I... my
16 count is 189 and I include teacher line because they
17 are teachers and they get U rated too, those are case
18 managers and instructional facilitators so what I'm
19 going to say here my numbers... then I did the quick
20 math on his numbers which makes the U ratings even
21 worse but okay, so to get the percentage I took a
22 count of full time or non-procession OACE teachers
23 based on last year's class directory adding in all
24 full time teacher line personnel, case managers and
25 instructional facilitators this came to a total of

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 189 teachers. This number should closely approximate
3 the previous three years so it is used to calculate
4 the percentages of U rated teachers. Okay, here we go
5 with my figures, 2,000... these are the percentages of
6 OACE teachers rated unsatisfactory are as follows:
7 2013 to '14, '13 teachers seven percent were rated
8 unsatisfactory, you remember PreK through 12, one
9 percent, 2014 to '15 school year, FOIL result again
10 nine percent of OACE teachers were rated
11 unsatisfactory, 2015 to '16 not available, FOIL
12 rejected another one is pending, 2016 to '17 school
13 year 14 percent of teachers were U rated, that was 27
14 teachers got unsatisfactory. Now with the numbers
15 that I got from Vernon I just quickly tried to do,
16 2016 to '17, 27 U's if we indeed have 147 full time
17 teachers that makes it 18 percent were U rated, okay
18 and then 2014 to '15 we had 17 U's, you know and my
19 figure said what... that was nine percent U rated well
20 it's 12 percent so, you can see... I guess we got to
21 get those numbers figured out because they never...
22 okay, just a few more... couple more... [cross-talk]

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright, just if you
24 could... [cross-talk]

25 LISA MILLER: Okay... [cross-talk]

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...wrap it up because...

[cross-talk]

LISA MILLER: ...yeah, I worked hard on
this... [cross-talk]

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

LISA MILLER: ...and people... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, I know I just...
I, I'm being... [cross-talk]

LISA MILLER: ...alright, I, I try to give...
[cross-talk]

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

LISA MILLER: ...hard data and... you know
these numbers especially last years are in stark
contrast to one percent 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
that. My... I did not get a U rating but I felt... I, I
had a lot of this... you know a lot of us do. Along
with the annual U ratings there have been an

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 excessive number of observations that are rated
3 unsatisfactory throughout the year given both to
4 teachers who end up with unsatisfactory and
5 satisfactory annual rating. The harsh and sometimes
6 absurd critiques that follow often seem to have no
7 rhyme or reason and do not reflect the reality
8 experienced by the teacher and students, not the
9 enthusiastic participation and learning activities or
10 the student's demonstrable achievements. I will close
11 by saying that I hope these words and those of others
12 on this topic will have a meaningful impact, such
13 poor treatment of teachers is not healthy for the
14 teachers, the students, or anyone working in the
15 program. OACE leadership truly needs change.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you very
17 much and we'll look at your numbers too if you want
18 to give us your numbers.

19 LISA MILLER: I, I attached... I had... of
20 course I had many copies of the testimony and then
21 you should have... if you have five sheets that you
22 have everything.

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

24 LISA MILLER: I, I ran out so then some
25 people just get the testimony.

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well give me your quick numbers too, I want the numbers that you were doing while you were here on... [cross-talk]

LISA MILLER: Oh sure... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...what he was saying... [cross-talk]

LISA MILLER: ...yeah... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...as well, okay...

LISA MILLER: Absolutely.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yep. Yeah, put the... put the numbers that you were figuring too so I can work off of those numbers.

LISA MILLER: Yes, yes... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Alright, thank you.

LISA MILLER: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Next please.

LORENE CUNNINGHAM: Good afternoon, my name is Lorene Cunningham, I was a OACE Education Officer, I recently retired, I retired this past February. I have been a part of OACE for 24 years and have gone through many administrations and this last one has been a real challenge in terms of the workload and what we are seeking to get. Speaking on...

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 just as a point of reference here you had questioned
3 that... you said you never... you weren't aware of the
4 EPI, the EPI... each one of our students garners \$8.43
5 per hour that they sit in a classroom so that there
6 in there for a morning class of three hours it's 25
7 dollars and change and for a three day 227 and for a
8 five-day class 379. So, it's like they've gone to
9 work and that's how we're garnering and getting our
10 money. What we are asked to do as Education Officers
11 and with our data team is to take the pre-test that
12 come in and the post-test and get this all into
13 surmised reports for the teachers some of which plays
14 for or against the teacher depending on the
15 demographics in their class and their test. Many
16 times, the students are tested before they've had 12
17 hours of realistic instructional time because the 12
18 hours can encompass the intake hours and class time.
19 So, we do have students who have walked away because
20 they did intake on Friday and their class starts
21 Monday and they walk in and they're told I need to
22 post-test you. So, they've not seen a teacher to even
23 say what is my range or what do I have to work with
24 so I know my improvement, then it comes to data and
25 we're told to enter this in to create the reports

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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3 which are done by schematic and mapped within the
4 software and sometimes the reports are dismal because
5 this is what we have given to us. So, it's a loaded
6 gun in terms of its weighted more for whom is what
7 and how you have to ask it. The data teams are to be
8 the magicians in terms of trying to get this done but
9 it's unrealistic for the students, the students get
10 discouraged because it's a test and it's a test and
11 it's a test and what we have to do is we have to save
12 our program, we have to realistically be more
13 accountable so that we look at our students not as
14 just the number that's going to get us the EPI dollar
15 because they sit in that class but we have to look at
16 the students as that person striving trying to create
17 and reach a goal and that's what we're there for.
18 Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Very good and very
20 distinct and very informative, I appreciate it and
21 those were some of the, the... there was some of the
22 information I was trying to get from the DOE earlier
23 was on that testing, right that's what I was
24 referring to.

25 LORENE CUNNINGHAM: Yeah.

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So, thank you for that, it was very, very informative and thank you to this whole panel, I wish we didn't have to rush as much as we do but I do have one more panel I need to bring up but I appreciate all of you coming in.

7

LORENE CUNNINGHAM: Okay.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, our next panel Ira Yankwitt, Literacy Assistant Center; Kevin Douglas from United Neighborhood Houses; Elaine Roberts, Catholic Charities Community Services; Amy Torres, Chinese American Planning Council and Martha Bordman, OACE ESL teacher. Why don't we do Martha first, where's Martha, okay because then you... it'll be with... consistent with what the other teachers were saying and then we'll go into service providers. Would you all raise your right hand please so I can swear you in? Do you solemnly swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth and to answer council member questions honestly? Okay, Martha.

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MARTHA BORDMAN: Okay. 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

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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3 Education in New York City. I was an ESL teacher in
4 the New York City Office of Adult and Continuing
5 Education until I retired in June 2014 with over 30
6 years of experience in the field of ESL Adult
7 Education. I am here to testify... today to testify how
8 the mission of the OACE is being undermined under the
9 stewardship of Rosemary Mills, the Superintendent of
10 the New York City OACE. OACE instructional staff
11 understands that funds for the program are based on
12 test score data gains but for superintendent Mills
13 the extraction of this data has little to do with
14 improving educational outcomes instead this so called
15 good data is used to embellish her profile.
16 Superintendent Mills continuously... teachers and
17 support staff to produce these data gains another
18 words to basically squeeze good data out of students
19 by testing them over and over again. This of course
20 has demoralized students. The principals and
21 assistant principals are also under pressure to show
22 test score gain so they in turn harass teachers about
23 test scores. I have a 2013 email from my principal
24 that exemplifies the kind of threats and pressure
25 teachers receive then but have heard from my in-
service colleagues that this pressure has greatly

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 intensified, it's in my packet, you'll receive it. at
3 the end of sprint 2014... at the end of the spring 2014
4 term Superintendent Mills decided to cut low level
5 literacy basic education and ESL students from the
6 program since these students contribute to so called
7 bad data. As evidence, I have a memo from
8 Superintendent Mills directing principals and
9 assistant principals to send low level students to
10 adult education classes at local libraries. Never
11 before had the OACE turned away low leveled students.
12 The administrative excuse for this decision was that
13 library classes could better serve low level literacy
14 students. As an ESL low level literacy teacher, I
15 decided to follow up and was shocked to find out that
16 the library where I was to refer my students did not
17 even offer classes for low level literacy students.
18 On July 22nd, 2014, the online educational news
19 publication Chalkbeat reported on this egregious
20 directive in an article called Adult Students with
21 Poor Literacy Getting Short Shrift and I have a copy
22 for you in here. Superintendent Mills and her
23 expensive layer of elementary and middle school
24 administrative appointees have tried to impose an
25 elementary school curriculum for the teaching of

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 125
3 adult ESL students. In fact, during the two... 2014
4 school year large sums were squandered on children's
5 textbooks with inappropriate elementary themes for
6 example multiple picture books on animals.
7 Instructional staff with a wealth of experience in
8 ESL adult education had absolutely no input in
9 selecting these materials and Superintendent Mills
10 told teachers that these elementary materials
11 satisfied the goals of common core. Consequently,
12 boxes and boxes of unused children's books were
13 warehoused in adult education closets throughout the
14 city that year while teachers were left with the
15 dearth of appropriate materials. At a 2013, '14 OACE
16 staff meeting I attempted to ask Superintendent Mills
17 a question about ESL materials but was shut down.
18 Superintendent Mills said all questions concerning
19 materials should be directed to principals therefore
20 I emailed my questions to my principal, my principal
21 never wrote back but Superintendent Mills did. I'd
22 like to read you her email to me, I have my email to
23 her you can read it later but here's her email to me:
24 Miss Bordman, it is clear that your agenda is not in
25 the interest of the program rather it is to ensure
that the status quo continues please know that I am

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 responsible for the leadership of OACE and will not
3 tolerate anyone trying to undermine the program, your
4 contact yesterday borders on unprofessionalism and I
5 caution you to desist and focus on providing
6 instruction to your students, you are not a leader in
7 OACE so don't try to make leadership decisions. A
8 couple of days later my principal stopped my... by my
9 room to give me a warning, she said there could be
10 consequences for asking the Superintendent questions.
11 I strongly advise this committee to take a deep look
12 at what is going on in the OACE.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well very powerful.
14 Is your memo relating to the libraries the same as
15 the one that Marcia had in her packet?

16 MARTHA BORDMAN: The, the, the... [cross-
17 talk]

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Can you... have... do you
19 have... do you have the, the memo on the library
20 funding?

21 MARTHA BORDMAN: I don't have the memo on
22 the library funding but there was a, a library set up
23 for teachers before...

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COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: No, I mean in... and

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Marcia mentioned that there was a memo, I think it

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was in Marcia's...

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[off-mic dialogue]

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MARTHA BORDMAN: Yes, I have that memo.

7

Yeah, that's... [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: It's in your

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testimony?

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MARTHA BORDMAN: Yes, it's in my

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testimony.. actually.. [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay.. [cross-talk]

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MARTHA BORDMAN: ...it's attached to the

14

article from Chalkbeat.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, alright, very

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good.. [cross-talk]

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MARTHA BORDMAN: Okay.. [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, good, I just

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want to be sure that I have that as well. Alright,

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thank you very much... [cross-talk]

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MARTHA BORDMAN: You're welcome.. [cross-

22

talk]

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...and I think that

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that is the end of our teacher and.. let me say this

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as well, I have never had a hearing where so many

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 teachers have turned out on an issue as we have had
3 here so we are definitely going to be looking at this
4 issue more thoroughly as we move forward so thank you
5 to the teachers who have turned out for this.

6 MARTHA BORDMAN: You're welcome.

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Now let's go to our
8 service providers and where should we start? Kevin,
9 you want to start?

10 KEVIN DOUGLAS: Sure. Good afternoon, my
11 name is Kevin Douglas, I'm Co-Director of Policy and
12 Advocacy with United Neighborhood Houses of New York.
13 I want to thank the Chair and members of the
14 committee for convening this important hearing on
15 Adult Education in New York City. I just want to
16 quickly off, off my formal testimony commend the
17 teachers that testified this morning, I'm not in a
18 position to weigh the, the validity of the claims but
19 it's really inspiring to see such passionate
20 educators come out and advocate for their students
21 and I think we all share the same goals of wanting a
22 quality education system for adult learners in New
23 York City. So, my network is non-profit settlement
24 houses that are in the five boroughs, we have 30
25 agencies that serve three quarters of a million New

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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Yorkers every year, over two thirds of those agencies are providing adult literacy services to about 10,000 students, that includes ESOL, ABE, HSE as well as testing. We are long time members of the New York City... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: If I may just interrupt you, Cultural Affairs hearing has been moved next door just to make sure that everybody whose here in the room knows that this is the Education Committee hearing, Cultural Affairs has been moved next door, thank you. Go ahead Kevin, I'm sorry.

KEVIN DOUGLAS: I, I thought all these folks were interested in Adult Education. So, like I said I'm, I'm a member of the New York City Coalition for Adult Literacy, we've been a long-time partner and leader in that group which is consisting of teachers, program managers from the CBO sector as well as CUNY campuses and library chapters are our branches and we're committed to seeing a system of adult education that's high quality and accessible for the 2.2 million New Yorkers who need those services. We are really grateful thanks to your leadership as a long-time supporter of IOI as well as

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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3 Chair of the Immigration Committee Carlos Menchaca,
4 Speaker Mark-Viverito and Finance Chair Ferreras-
5 Copeland for really putting adult education back on
6 the map in city council discussions and in particular
7 for the 12 million dollar investment that's made in
8 each of the last two years, that's made a huge
9 difference in terms of capacity for the system
10 although we know we're still seriously underfunded in
11 terms of where the actual need is. For today, I'm not
12 going to focus so much on the need questions as much
13 as the bill that has been presented by Immigration
14 Chair Menchaca and I guess I would say we support the
15 idea and the concept of the bill, we know there's a
16 huge unmet need in the city and there's not a lot of
17 good data to really mark progress in terms of if the
18 city makes an investment how far are they moving the
19 needle. As a field, we've done self-surveys over the
20 years and our most recent survey we found that at any
21 point in time there is over 15,000 students who are
22 on waiting lists to get into classes which was
23 consistent with a survey we done two years prior and
24 found 14,000 students on waiting lists. This was an
25 anecdotal survey responded to by a portion of the
field so we know it was only scratching true demand

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 so for that reason we really support the goal of this
3 legislation which would to be do a, a more
4 comprehensive data capture on the number of people
5 trying to access services. The one concern we have
6 is, is really around the administrative burden that
7 this would place on programs. We know that programs
8 are seriously underfunded as is, we, we heard Council
9 Member Rosenthal talk about the 850 dollars that
10 programs are getting to support their students which
11 is really well below what it needs to be and so
12 there's a concern that if we add on additional data
13 reporting capturing without appropriate funding it's
14 going to be a nightmare really for the programs to
15 administer and so we support the idea and would want
16 to work further with this committee and, and the bill
17 sponsor to find ways to reduce that burden or and a...
18 and a more preferable solution actually work to
19 increase funding rates for programs they can actually
20 capture the data as requested. The last two things I
21 will say is part of the challenges that we've heard
22 this morning and I've articulated are due to the fact
23 that there's no coordinated central leadership in the
24 city on adult literacy, we have a variety of
25 different providers whether it's OACE or CBO's or

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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3 libraries or CUNY or WRK_DEV or HRA each doing their
4 own piece of adult literacy and there's no central
5 coordinator. We've been advocating for a long time
6 that the Mayor's Office of Adult Literacy be restored
7 and, and renewed with the mission of bringing
8 together all of these stakeholders including teachers
9 and students to really create a vision for the system
10 that would include comprehensive funding access and
11 high quality for students. At... last thing, going back
12 to the 12-million-dollar investment we are very
13 grateful for that. The biggest challenge for us is
14 that it wasn't baselined which means it's one-year
15 funding which makes it incredibly hard for programs
16 to expand and not know if they're going to be able to
17 retain those teachers in the, the following years to
18 support students so we'd ask that this council work
19 with the administration in the next budget to at a
20 minimum baseline that funding and actually negotiate
21 a new RFP. We heard DOACD say that they extended the
22 current RFP for three years which makes it very
23 difficult to enter into negotiations for rates. We
24 can't wait three years for the new rates and so we
25 want the funding baselined and new RFP's to be able
to address that concern. Thank you very much.

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much,
next please?

ELAINE ROBERTS: Okay. Good afternoon. My name is Elaine Roberts, I'm the Director of Catholic Charities ESOL Program, the International Center. We serve as an important resource for all the clients at Catholic Charities, we work with refugee resettlement clients, help them obtain employment, we work with clients from Immigration Legal Services, help them obtain citizenship, we work with parents in the Alianza Dominicana after school programs and we provide English practice for children in the Unaccompanied Minors Programs. Our goal is to provide the language skills and the confidence necessary for 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 then specialized off site programming for vulnerable communities in Manhattan and the Bronx. We are also an active member of the New York Coalition for Adult Literacy. We are honored to testify today at the hearing alongside

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 education advocates and colleagues and before the New
3 York City Committee on Education whose commitment to
4 adult literacy we appreciate. Just a word about
5 Catholic Charities, we serve all New Yorkers Catholic
6 and non-Catholic alike throughout the five boroughs
7 and seven counties in the Lower Hudson Valley. Our
8 work is broad diverse and focused on responding to
9 individual needs. Some of the services that we
10 provide to New Yorkers include eviction prevention,
11 case management to help people access benefits and
12 solve financial and family issues, emergency food,
13 specialized assistance for the blind and the visually
14 impaired, after school, dropout prevention, and
15 employment programs for low income at risk youth,
16 sports and recreation programs, and supportive
17 housing for adults with mental illness. We provide
18 these programs throughout the city in our own centers
19 and then in partnership and collaboration with other
20 community resources. We... our department... the ESOL
21 Department is part of the division of immigrant and
22 refugee services which includes immigration legal
23 services, refugee resettlement, unaccompanied minors
24 and then the new American's hotline. About
25 Introduction 1195, I just wish to say thank you again

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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3 for your time and attention to this issue. As you
4 know there is a great unmet demand for adult literacy
5 classes, we do truly appreciate the 12-million-dollar
6 investment this year as Kevin mentioned, there are
7 still students that cannot find seats we based that
8 on a, a survey that was done a few years ago by
9 NYCAL. Continuing to support adult literacy and
10 baselining the funding would be helpful for programs
11 to strengthen their services. We support the goal of
12 1195 to more clearly show the demand and the need for
13 adult literacy services and again to echo what Kevin
14 said we feel strongly that the reporting mechanism
15 must include data that is easy for programs to access
16 and to report on especially if there's not going to
17 be additional funding to support the data collection.
18 Our recommendation is to increase and baseline the
19 adult literacy funding and to develop the proposed
20 report. The collaboration... the report should be
21 developed in collaboration with the adult literacy
22 programs ideally through a task force drawn from
23 providers and advocates in the field. And this would
24 help us to include the most useful information... most...
25 many identified in the proposal and also with people
in the field. In addition, we feel that an accurate

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 report on adult literacy must include data about
3 students who have not yet come into contact with the
4 programs because of lack of awareness, fear about
5 their status or other concerns. Information from
6 other city agencies such as HRA and MOYA and others
7 should be considered and... as well as the Neighborhood
8 Advisory Boards that are mentioned in DYCD's
9 community assessment... needs assessment. And thank you
10 for your time.

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much
12 also, next please.

13 IRA YANKWITT: Okay, good afternoon and
14 thank you Chairperson... [cross-talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Good afternoon...
16 [cross-talk]

17 IRA YANKWITT: ...Dromm and members of the
18 committee for giving me the opportunity to testify.
19 My name's Ira Yankwitt and I'm the Executive Director
20 of the Literacy Assistance Center, a 34-year-old non-
21 profit organization dedicated to strengthening and
22 expanding the adult education system and to advancing
23 adult literacy as a core value in our society and a
24 foundation for equal opportunity and social justice.
25 As this committee is well aware and as Kevin

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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3 mentioned earlier today in New York City there are
4 approximately 2.2 million adults who lack English
5 language proficiency, a high school diploma or both
6 yet funding for adult literacy education is so
7 limited that fewer than four percent of these adults
8 are able to access basic education, high school
9 equivalency or any English classes in any given year.
10 This is nothing short of a citywide crisis and I wish
11 to express deep appreciation to the city council for
12 recognizing the urgency of this crisis over the past
13 two years and championing a significant increase in
14 funding for programs. New York City has historically
15 been a national leader both in its vision for adult
16 literacy education and in its level of investment.
17 Your commitment over these past two years and the
18 bill before us today demonstrates that this council
19 once again wants to place New York City at the
20 forefront of the movement for adult literacy and is
21 striving to create a city that truly provides equal
22 educational opportunity for all. The field of adult
23 literacy education faces two acute challenges, one a
24 chronic shortage in funding and two, the complexity
25 of meeting an overwhelming need. Intro 1195 is an
important step in beginning to address the ladder.

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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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 1980's through the early 2000's which could track interest and demand and make, make referrals to programs that have seats and maintain a centralized waiting list that could direct potential students to programs when space becomes 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'd like to focus the remainder of my testimony on some of the critical funding challenges based 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 posit of the funding itself

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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3 which shuts the door to over 95 percent of those
4 adults in need. The second is the short term and
5 unreliable nature of the current funding streams
6 which pose a continuous threat to program stability,
7 staff continuity and the ability to fully achieve
8 program and policy goals. The third is the inadequacy
9 of the fund... in... is the inadequacy of the funding
10 formulas and rates which undermine programs ability
11 to provide the full ray... a full array and levels of
12 service that students need and it's this third issue
13 that I'd like to discuss a bit more. The Literacy
14 Assistant Center, my organization is currently in the
15 process of completing a report entitled Investing in
16 Quality, a Blueprint for Adult Literacy Programs and
17 Funders. The report was funded by DYCD as part of the
18 LEC's contract to provide technical assistance to the
19 field and is designed to answer two questions and
20 really two questions that were posed to us by the
21 budget committee last year when it was looking at the
22 increase in funding. First question, what are the
23 defining features of a quality community based adult
24 literacy program. Second question, what does it cost
25 to run one. After reviewing the literature and
engaging in extensive discussions with program

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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3 leaders and other stakeholders the report identified
4 14 components of a comprehensive high-quality
5 community based adult literacy program as well as the
6 resources needed to implement them it also includes a
7 sample budget for a hypothetical but realistic
8 program. Based on our cost model we found that
9 community based adult literacy programs would need to
10 have their current funding rates increased by three
11 to six times in order to fully implement the
12 components and services outlined in the report. While
13 this might sound like a big leap we know that at the
14 current funding rates many of the critical program
15 components that we identify in our report such as
16 full-time teachers, counseling, referral networks,
17 workforce transition services and in-depth data
18 analysis are often compromised. The mayor and city
19 council have shown a principled commitment to the
20 children of New York City and have rightfully made
21 necessary substantial and meaningful investments in
22 our K 12 system. However, for the one in three New
23 Yorkers in need of adult literacy education we need
24 to make sure that New York City does not become a
25 tale of two education systems. At the Literacy
Assistance Center, we envision a future in which

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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151

2 every immigrant, every parent and every adult in this
3 city has the full range of knowledge and skills they
4 need to secure employment, achieve economic security,
5 access quality health care, support their children in
6 school and actively participate in the civic lives of
7 their communities. We look forward to working with
8 the city council and in partnership with NYCA which
9 we're also a, a partner and member of over the weeks
10 and months ahead to secure increased funding to serve
11 many more of the 2.2 million New Yorkers in need as
12 well as to baseline more adult literacy and funding
13 to ensure greater programs stability and continuity
14 and to increase the funding rates for programs in
15 order to guarantee that every adult who gains access
16 to a program is given the comprehensive, high quality
17 services they deserve. In a city committed to equal
18 opportunity and social justice we can do no less.
19 Thank you again and I'm happy to take any questions.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Just curious to know
21 if someone were to call 3-1-1 and ask for adult
22 literacy what would they... what would happen?

23 IRA YANKWITT: So, that's an excellent
24 question. So, as I mentioned from the late 80's
25 through the early 2000's there was an adult literacy

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 hotline, it was multilingual people who called
3 specifically to access services and they'd be
4 directed by knowledgeable operators to programs, that
5 ended with the creation of 3-1-1 under the Bloomberg
6 Administration. I have to say I've not called 3-1-1
7 to ask in a while, I know that early on 3-1-1 would
8 direct to the Office of Adult and Continuing
9 Education but I think the problem there is that they
10 don't necessarily have knowledge of the full range of
11 programs and they're also maybe more significantly
12 not trained in how to actually talk through someone
13 who's taking the very big step of calling and
14 enquiring about programs whether they're an immigrant
15 who speaks very little English or whether they're
16 someone who just barely reads and writes. So, it's
17 not just an issue of making sure that they're
18 referred to the range of programs but really the
19 quality of the interaction with the call.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Uh-huh, thank you,
21 Council Member Rosenthal?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you and
23 thank you for coming to testify today and sharing
24 your information. It was interesting I asked the
25 representative of the DYCD today about whether or

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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153

not... you know just sort of getting to the point of your study and I'm glad to hear that they asked you to do a study, I didn't see any indication from this particular representative that they're interested in changing the contracts that they've just renewed but perhaps let's assume he's not representative of being able to make that decision. I just want to confirm, I'm hearing three things from your testimony. First that we're not... first that we're addressing the need of five percent of the population?

IRA YANKWITT: Fewer than that but... yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Second that despite the fact that these are three-year contracts, DYCD seemed to indicate there's still problems with program stability?

IRA YANKWITT: Yes, in so much as, as, as you asked and are alluding to that the funding... the current funding rates for those programs really don't cover even the full cost of what they're doing now...

[cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Got it...

[cross-talk]

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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IRA YANKWITT: ...much less the full cost of really providing the kind of comprehensive program that they seek to find and provide.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So, tell me about... and your findings are extraordinary in the idea that it's three to six times that 850 dollars per student they currently give is meaningful, what's the nature of your contract with DYCD in terms of moving... them taking... when do they get your findings and have they talked about their commitment, any commitment, any interest to change?

IRA YANKWITT: So, this is a very timely question so, the way... and I just want to go back for one moment to the five percent question so I... it's more like four percent and that's an, an estimate based on data we have of all the adults who are being served through the wide range of programs that you've heard about today; the CBO's, CUNY, the libraries, the Department of Education and we're saying four percent of the 2.2 million adults that we know or in need and we have hard data to support that 2.2 million. In terms of DYCD so the way this, this report was funded is that as DYCD's technical contract, the technical assistance provider to the

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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Adult Literacy Programs with the increased funding that you secured for the programs last year part of that came to us to expand our technical assistance services and I think it's worth noting that it was DYCD itself who saw value in having us engage in this process knowing that the overwhelming likelihood would be that we would come back to them with the report that stated that funding is grossly inadequate so I, I do want to recognize... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yep... [cross-talk]

IRA YANKWITT: ...that and Ron Zang who was here earlier is our principle partner at DYCD... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Sure... [cross-talk]

IRA YANKWITT: ...the, the, the report is currently in the process of going through finalization, we're actually meeting with DYCD leadership on Monday so to be fair, you know it has not been finalized and released... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Sure... [cross-talk]

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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156

IRA YANKWITT: ...yet nor has DYCD leadership had a chance to, to comment on it but you know I think that I, I appreciate DYCD for their willingness to open up this conversation to, to subject themselves to the finding of this report and you know the, the presumed pressure that will be on them certainly we as part of NYCAL plan to share more of this with you in the budget process to argue that it's not just about baselining the 12 million dollars but dramatically increasing the reimbursement rates so programs can provide the services that they need so...

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I appreciate that I'll definitely... include me on your mailing list.

IRA YANKWITT: I'd be delighted.. [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...for that... [cross-talk]

IRA YANKWITT: ...thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: The only thing... other thing I would ask is... sorry, I forgot middle age muddle...

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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IRA YANKWITT: That's alright, I understand.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you for doing this.

IRA YANKWITT: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you, okay and next please, Amy Torres.

AMY TORRES: Hi everyone, thank you Chair Dromm and members of the Committee on Education. My name is Amy Torres, I'm 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 of 1195. Founded in 1965, CPC's mission has been 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 per day through 50 plus contracted programs and 30 more locations in Manhattan, Queens, and Brooklyn. CPC serves over 800 English first speakers of other language students per

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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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, they are perspective college students or on their way toward gaining their high school equivalence, they're entering the workforce for the first time or they're making the next step in their career and they are recent immigrants and aspiring citizens and longtime voters. Each student enters our program with a different goal but every student depends on adult literacy programming in order to achieve it. we're thrilled and grateful that the city's inclusion of 12 million dollars for adult literacy programs this year recognizes how integral these services are to New Yorkers achieving their dreams and we're grateful to see the introduction of a bill like 1195. Introduction 1195 would compile and report the number of adult literacy programs offered by the city, the number of people who applied for those classes and the number who were denied admission due to entrance exam score or program capacity. CPC's happy to see the introduction of a bill that recognizes the need and demand for adult literacy programs across the city and we support

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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3 introduction 1195's broad goal of capturing,
4 validating and addressing that need. Each year CPC's
5 wait list exceeds the total number of students we
6 offer in a year, last year the number of people on
7 our wait list has nearly doubled the amount that we
8 have capacity for and in the last six months our
9 demand has been so high that nearly all of our
10 enrolled students have come either from our wait list
11 or via word of mouth referral from existing students.
12 While we recognize the value, and need for formally
13 capturing this unmet demand for adult literacy
14 programs and the number of services addressing that
15 demand we raise concern over the phrasing of the
16 message proposed. Specifically requiring programs to
17 report on the methods of any literacy test and number
18 who were denied admission based on a literacy exam
19 seems to shift the focus of the bill's goal away from
20 capturing unmet demands toward additional reporting
21 from programs. Capturing methods of literacy tests
22 suggests that a standardized entrance method could
23 further meet demand however as you heard in testimony
24 earlier today programs are already required to use
25 standardized test like BEST Plus or the test of Adult
Basic Education, TABE to enroll a student in a

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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3 contract. Additionally, students are rarely
4 waitlisted or turned away because of exam scores
5 rather these preliminary benchmarks assess whether or
6 not there's an available class at the schedule that
7 they'll need. CPC reiterates its support for this
8 bill's goal of capturing the number of students
9 offered by the city and the number of people who
10 applied but were unable to enroll, we have seen the,
11 the demand in our program and fully support a
12 mechanism that captures how the need is being met
13 across the city. To address our concerns, we would
14 like to see the bill's language amended to exclude
15 denied admission based on literacy exam and the
16 testing methods of any literacy test used to evaluate
17 applicants. CPC in coordination with other providers
18 under the New York City Coalition for Adult Literacy
19 is happy to consult on reporting that would be least
20 burdensome to both the program and student alike
21 while still accurately capturing that unmet demand.
22 Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you very
24 much and Council Member Rosenthal I know has some
25 follow up questions.

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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161

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Two quick questions, are you folk's members of the non-profit Resiliency Committee.

AMY TORRES: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So, your issues are... you're part of the working group, okay and...

ELAINE ROBERTS: Yes but just to clarify adult literacy is not a, a major topic of conversation within those committees because you talked about the module budgeting earlier, adult literacy isn't on the immediate schedule so, we're part of the committee and we appreciate your questioning and would encourage further questioning that adult literacy had greater prominence in the work of that group.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Good, the next steps. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, alright that's it. I appreciate all of you coming in, I especially appreciate you, the last panel waiting to give testimony I much appreciate it and very... we look forward to reviewing the... what has been said here and bringing these, these issues to the attention of

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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162

Council Member Menchaca in particular regarding his
legislation. So, with that I'm going to say that this
meeting is adjourned at about 1:37 in the afternoon,
thank you.

[gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date

September 26, 2017