

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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FEBRUARY 28, 2020  
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HELD AT: COMMITTEE ROOM - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: MARK TREYGER  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

- Ben Kallos
- Mark Levine
- Ydanis Rodriguez
- RAFAEL SALAMANCA JR.
- BARRY GRODENCHIK
- DANIEL DROMM
- I. DANEEK MILLER
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- INEZ BARRON
- JUSTIN BRANNAN
- FARAH N. LOUIS
- DEBORAH ROSE
- JOSEPH C. BORELLI

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

Karen Goldmark  
Deputy Chancellor  
Division of School Planning & Development  
NYC Department of Education

Lorraine Grillo  
President and CEO  
NYC School Construction Authority

Donald Conyers  
Senior Superintendent

Doctor Kathleen Cashin

Senator Robert Jackson

Joanna Garcia  
Office of State Senator Robert Jackson

Caroline Wekselbaum  
Office of State Senator Brad Hoylman

Leonie Haimson  
Class Size Matters

Loray Forbes  
Student Leader

Tiffany Torres  
Student Leader

Michael Sill  
UFT

Cynthia Wachtell  
Class Size Matters

Sarah Morgridge  
Advocate

Brook Parker  
NYC Kids Pack & Class Size Matters

Karen Sprawl  
NYC Kids Pack

Randie Levine  
Policy Director  
Advocates for Children

Dianna Cruz  
Director of Education Policy  
Hispanic Federation

Lori Podvesker  
Include NYC

Doctor Jacqueline Shannon  
Department Chair of Early Childhood Education  
Brooklyn College

Daniel Katz  
Educator

Joshua Aronson  
PhD Professor  
New York University

Alexa Avilez  
Mother

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

Nicole Hammond  
CEC District 29

Tanisha Grant  
Public Speaker  
Coalition for Educational Justice

Jasmine Esvillan  
CEC District 6

Evie Hanzopolis  
Mother

Curtis Young  
Community Board 12  
Manhattan Youth and Education Committee

Gloria Brandman  
Retired Special Educator

Amy Weintraub  
Parent

Elsey Thompson  
President  
NYC Mission Society

Vernon Ballard  
Advocate

Shino Tanikawa  
Parent

Norman Scott  
Retired Teacher



1 COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Good morning. I am  
3 Council Member Mark Treyger, Chair of the Education  
4 Committee. I'd like to welcome you all to today's  
5 oversight hearing on class size reduction. We will  
6 also hear testimony on a pre-considered resolution  
7 that I'm the sponsor of but I will talk more about  
8 their resolution shortly after some opening remarks.  
9 Before we get started, I'd like to recognize the  
10 members of the committee who are here so far; Council  
11 Member Lewis, Council Member Ampry-Samuel, Council  
12 Member Kallos, Council Member Grodenchik, and Council  
13 Member Borelli. I'm pleased that we are finally here  
14 today. Thank you to everyone who is accommodating of  
15 the date changes to talk about class size reduction  
16 because New York City public school students have  
17 long suffered in overcrowded classes. There is a  
18 considerable amount of research that has linked small  
19 class sizes with a variety of benefits for students,  
20 both cognitive and non-cognitive, short and long  
21 term. The evidence shows that students in the early  
22 grades performed better in small classes, especially  
23 students from disadvantaged backgrounds who  
24 experience even larger performance gains and other  
25 students, and those benefits can extend over their

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2 entire lifetimes. Long term data collected on  
3 students who participated in a large class size study  
4 starting in the 1980s found that students who were  
5 assigned to small classes in the early grades did  
6 better than those assigned to regular size classes on  
7 a variety of outcomes, including high school  
8 graduation rates, college enrollment and completion,  
9 and financial stability, and home ownership, among  
10 others. They are also involved in less juvenile  
11 criminal behavior and teen pregnancy. As a former  
12 high school teacher, this certainly makes a great  
13 deal of sense to me. I know all too well how  
14 difficult it is to teach and to learn in an  
15 overcrowded classroom. It's extremely difficult to  
16 get to know your students and give them the  
17 individual and customized attention they need and  
18 deserve in classes of 30 plus students, which means  
19 over 150 students per day. Think about trying to  
20 teach and interact in a meaningful way. With that  
21 many students, not to mention reviewing and providing  
22 helpful feedback on the many assignments on a regular  
23 basis. It's especially difficult for immigrant  
24 students, English language learners, like the  
25 students I taught. Small class sizes enable teachers

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2 to be more effective by allowing them to spend more  
3 time on instruction and less on classroom management.  
4 Unfortunately, efforts to reduce class size in New  
5 York City public schools haven't gotten very far to  
6 date despite all of the passion and hard work of  
7 people and advocates and teachers and students,  
8 including all of you here today. Even the campaign  
9 for fiscal equity lawsuit, which was a godsend that  
10 we thought was finally going to secure the critical  
11 resources to provide a sound basic education for all  
12 our students has been unable to deliver on that  
13 promise thus far. So much of that failure to deliver  
14 is bound up in Albany politics with city officials,  
15 unions, parents, and advocates, as well as folks from  
16 the State, of the Board of, Education Department and  
17 many legislators on one side calling for the state to  
18 fully fund foundation aid at the levels called for  
19 under CFE. And the governor on the other side calling  
20 CFE, quote, ancient history, and saying he's not  
21 bound by that. No one is above the law. Even, even in  
22 this difficult budget season we all need to continue  
23 to struggle for adequate state funding for our  
24 schools. At the same time, we can't let the city off  
25 the hook. We have to hold everyone accountable for



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2 their efforts, or lack thereof, to make progress on  
3 class size reduction, particularly for our most  
4 disadvantaged students who would benefit most from  
5 smaller classes. This is a basic equity issue for our  
6 students. That's why I fought along with speaker,  
7 with the speaker and other council colleagues like  
8 Council Member Dromm, the chair the Finance  
9 Committee, for more money to be put into the budget  
10 for fair student funding in fiscal year 2019. FSF is  
11 the major funding stream for schools and over which  
12 schools and principals have some discretion. I had  
13 hoped that this additional FSF funding would provide  
14 the means for some schools to hire more teachers to  
15 reduce class sizes, but that was not the case.  
16 Instead, it seems most of the growth and funding went  
17 to cover higher salaries and other cost increases.  
18 But speaking of FSF, we passed the law last year  
19 creating an FSF taskforce that was supposed to come  
20 up with recommendations to improve the formula. This  
21 taskforce was supposed to have completed their work  
22 and submitted a report by the end of September. But  
23 the deal we asked for and received an extension until  
24 the end of December, and then another extension to  
25 the end of January. Here we are at the end of

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2 February and we still have not received the FSF  
3 taskforce report. And we need it, particularly now,  
4 in the, the heat of budget season. We must need, we,  
5 we must get it to deliver for our kids. Our goal with  
6 the FSF Task Force is to make changes that will bring  
7 greater equity and resources such as smaller class  
8 sizes to those students and schools that need it  
9 most. I just want to make clear that when we go up to  
10 Albany and are, and advocate on behalf of Our  
11 students, we need to make clear where that money  
12 needs to go, it needs to go in terms of hiring more  
13 teachers to reduce class size, the hiring of more  
14 social workers and counselors. The fact that we still  
15 have so many schools without full time social workers  
16 is still unacceptable. So, we need to specify where  
17 this money is going in addition to advocating for it.  
18 Once again, the benefits of class size reduction are  
19 clear, better school performance and better life  
20 outcomes. We hope to hear from DOE today what, if  
21 anything, they're currently doing to reduce class  
22 sizes for our neediest students, and what plans, if  
23 any, they have going forward, especially in the event  
24 that more funding becomes available. This hearing  
25 also provides an opportunity for us to learn more

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2 about what students and parents and advocates are  
3 experiencing on the ground, as well as to hear their  
4 concerns and recommendations for how we can work  
5 together to better address class size issues in our  
6 city schools. As I stated earlier, we will also hear  
7 testimony on my pre considered resolution 5915, a  
8 resolution calling on the New York State Legislature  
9 to amend education law, to prohibit reissuance of any  
10 charter, originally issued to a charter school, that  
11 has subsequently closed due to surrender, reputation,  
12 termination, or non renewal of the charter. This is a  
13 resolution I'm sponsoring to oppose the governor's  
14 proposal to reissue charters that were previously  
15 revoked or terminated so that new charter schools can  
16 be opened in New York City. In the even though we've  
17 already reached the charter school cap for the city.  
18 This is basically the governor's attempt to do an end  
19 around, around the cap. I want to make it clear,  
20 almost every year in Albany, the cap that everyone  
21 seems to talk about when it comes to schools is the  
22 charter school cap. But I want to raise another cap  
23 that no one seems to talk about the cap on consortium  
24 schools in New York because I visited, I visited a  
25 consortium school in my district, where they are

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2 exempt from administering the Regents exam. And some  
3 would argue that Oh, if you don't have a Regents that  
4 you're watering down education. Let me tell you as an  
5 educator what I witnessed during the performance  
6 based assessment task, the PBAT, what I witnessed in  
7 that class, was more rigorous and more comprehensive  
8 than any Regents Exam I've ever administered. Those  
9 students had mastery of their content. They weren't  
10 walking around with the Barron's Regents review book  
11 all day trying to memorize dates and names. But yet  
12 the state places a cap on how many consortium schools  
13 can operate in New York City? That's the cap I want  
14 to talk about. But we need more funding and more  
15 support to operationalize that reality for our kids.  
16 And might I add, the data for consortium schools is  
17 very promising. But again, no one seems to want to  
18 talk about that. So, I want to thank everyone who is  
19 testifying today, actually, before I give the thank-  
20 you's. Another word about the charter schools. When  
21 New York's Albany claims that they are providing more  
22 money to New York City Schools. They don't talk about  
23 the added costs that they pass down to the city as  
24 well. One of the areas that the cost is skyrocketing  
25 for city schools is the cost of charter school rent.

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2 So, paying rent to a private real estate developer is  
3 not education funding. Dollars should go to  
4 classrooms, not to private real estate developers.

5 So, I'm going to question and contest any charge  
6 that's being made that that's going to education that  
7 not education, dollars into the classroom. Now, I  
8 want to thank everyone who is testifying today and  
9 want to thank the City Council staff for all the work  
10 they put into today's hearing; Malcolm Butehorn, the  
11 committee council, Jan Atwell, Policy Analyst, Kalima  
12 Johnson Policy Analyst, Chelsea Baytemur Financial  
13 Analyst, and Masis Sarkissian, Financial Analyst. I  
14 want to thank my chief of staff Anna Scaife and my  
15 policy director Vanessa Ogle. I want to remind  
16 everyone who wishes to testify today that you must  
17 fill out a witness slip, which is located on the desk  
18 of the Sergeant at Arms near the front of this room.  
19 If you wish to testify on the pre-considered  
20 resolution on zombie charters please indicate on the  
21 witness slip, whether you're here to testify in favor  
22 or in opposition to the resolution. I also want to  
23 point out that we will not be voting on this  
24 resolution today, today. To allow as many people as  
25 possible testify testimony will be limited to three

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2 minutes per person. And I will now ask the committee  
3 council to administer the oath.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: If you could raise  
5 your right hands, please. Do you swear to tell the  
6 whole truth and nothing but the truth in front of  
7 this committee and answer Council Member questions  
8 honestly?

9 KAREN GOLDMARK: I do.

10 LORRAINE GRILLO: I do.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

12 KAREN GOLDMARK: Good morning. Good  
13 morning Chair Treyger and each of the members of the  
14 education committee who are here today. My name is  
15 Karen Goldmark, and I am the Deputy Chancellor for  
16 the Division of School Planning and Development at  
17 the New York City Department of Education. I'm also a  
18 proud public school graduate and parent and former  
19 student of Michael Rebell. Lorraine Grillo, President  
20 and CEO of the New York City School Construction  
21 Authority is joining me today. We're pleased to be  
22 here to discuss class size in New York City schools  
23 and our work to ensure that all of our students have  
24 access to an equitable and high-quality education. I  
25 would like to acknowledge some of the people who are

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2 here today and who have done so much for education in  
3 New York City. Regent Kathleen Cashin, State Senator  
4 Robert Jackson, and First Deputy Chancellor Cheryl  
5 Watson Harris, as well as many others. I see  
6 Community Education Council Members in the audience,  
7 I see advocates who've worked very hard and very long  
8 on school funding issues and the issues we're here to  
9 discuss today. And I just, in particular, do want to  
10 recognize State Senator Jackson's foundational role  
11 in the campaign for fiscal equity and thank him for  
12 that. Under this administration, we've cumulatively  
13 made \$5 billion in new education investments to  
14 support our schools and improve student outcomes.  
15 This includes over a billion dollars targeted  
16 directly to school budgets through fair student  
17 funding. We are particularly grateful for the  
18 council's leadership here, including the funding  
19 added in the 2019 budget that raised the floor for  
20 fair student funding, bringing all schools closer to  
21 the funding levels they need and deserve. The equity  
22 and excellence for all agenda is making a difference  
23 in our students' lives. They're starting school  
24 earlier with access to free full day high quality  
25 education for three-year-olds and four-year-olds,

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2 through 3-K for All and Pre-K for All. We are  
3 strengthening students' foundational skills with  
4 universal literacy and algebra for all. We're  
5 providing more support to our students along the way  
6 with college access for all. We're meeting the needs  
7 of the whole child and the whole community through  
8 community schools and social emotional learning and  
9 restorative justice practices in all schools. And we  
10 know it's working graduation and college readiness  
11 rates are at record levels as our students go on to  
12 bright futures as New York City public school  
13 graduates. At the same time, we've made historic  
14 investments in our school facilities. The \$18.8  
15 billion 2020 to 2024 capital plan dedicates \$8.9  
16 billion dollars for capacity projects, including  
17 funding for 57,489 new seats over the next five  
18 years, meeting the administration's commitment to  
19 adding 83,000 new seats citywide. The Council has  
20 been a true partner in this work, and we're grateful  
21 to Speaker Johnson, Chair Treyger and to the entire  
22 Council for their leadership support and advocacy.  
23 And we look forward to continued partnership. The DOE  
24 has a long standing commitment to class size  
25 reduction as one of many factors that contribute to a



2 high quality education. There is strong research that  
3 supports the correlation between small class size and  
4 improved student outcomes. We know from our annual  
5 school survey that class size is a concern for  
6 teachers and families. And concurrently, there's also  
7 ample evidence that high quality early childhood  
8 education has powerful positive effects on learning  
9 and life outcomes for students. And there's new  
10 evidence that our community schools approach has  
11 improved graduation rates and test scores, as well as  
12 reducing chronic absenteeism and disciplinary  
13 incidents. It's important to note that class size  
14 reduction is complex and multifaceted. Class size is  
15 a function not only of classrooms available, but also  
16 our ability to recruit and retain teaching staff,  
17 including teachers in hard to staff areas, as well as  
18 school configurations, student assignment, and  
19 building schedules. It's also an issue of funding  
20 resources. And it's very important to note that the  
21 current budget outlook at the state and local levels,  
22 especially at the state levels are very concerning.  
23 The foundational campaign for fiscal equity decision  
24 identified several specific ways in which New York  
25 State's funding shortfalls deprive students of their

2 constitutionally protected right to a sound basic  
3 education. In the original decision, these areas  
4 included teacher quality physical infrastructure, and  
5 basic instruments of learning. The case specifically  
6 addressed class size as one of several approaches  
7 that render educational benefits to children. It is  
8 important to note that the state did fund the capital  
9 portions of the CFE decision. In addition, though,  
10 the operating portions of the decision were never  
11 fully funded. Following that landmark CFE decision,  
12 New York City was required to develop a plan that  
13 included a class size reduction plan that was to be  
14 achieved within a five year period by the end of the  
15 2011/2012 school year. The class size targets in this  
16 plan were supposed to be prescribed by then State  
17 Education Commissioner Richard Mills following his  
18 consideration of recommendations of an expert panel  
19 appointed by him. The state never convened this panel  
20 and as an interim measure in the 2007/2008 school  
21 year, the DOE created class size targets and proposed  
22 a plan for class size reduction, reduction, which was  
23 contingent upon available funding. However, the  
24 targets in the proposed interim class size plan were  
25 suspended by then State Education Commissioner

2 Steiner during the 2009/2010 school year because of a  
3 shortfall in state funding due to the economic  
4 recession. Recognizing the fiscal realities at the  
5 time, SED suspended the class size targets and  
6 instead allow the DOE to use contracts for excellence  
7 money to focus on reducing class sizes in a target  
8 group of 75 underserved schools with large class  
9 sizes, which we did. As the council is aware the  
10 issue of whether the class size targets from the 2007  
11 class size plan are still in effect is the subject of  
12 litigation. SED has determined that those class size  
13 targets are no longer in effect. An appeal of that  
14 determination is pending in Supreme Court in Albany  
15 County, and therefore the DOE is not able to comment  
16 further on this matter achieving classes post  
17 production is contingent on funding in particular  
18 from the state. New York City Schools are funded  
19 through the FSF formula, which ensures that students  
20 with greater needs get additional funding. This  
21 funding is a combination of state and city funding,  
22 and the state is not doing its part. under this  
23 administration and through partnership with the  
24 council, we've been able to secure 90% of FSF for  
25 every single school up from 81% at the start of this

2 administration, investing a cumulative \$1 billion  
3 since the beginning of this administration in that  
4 formula. We deeply appreciate the council's support  
5 for raising the floor for FSF and for funding many  
6 other priorities as well, including social workers,  
7 art teachers, sports teams, after school programs,  
8 and restorative justice programs. And that's not to  
9 mention all the individual items that council members  
10 regularly support in schools. While these initiatives  
11 are not directly labeled as class size reduction  
12 initiatives, they show the council's commitment to a  
13 robust education for all students and they allow  
14 school administrators to use their funding to keep  
15 class sizes small. In order to fund schools at 100%  
16 of FSF and to give principals the resources to hire  
17 additional teachers to reduce class sizes we need the  
18 state to fulfill its obligation to fully fund a sound  
19 basic education as required by the New York State  
20 Court of Appeals decision in the CFE case. Class size  
21 limits in New York City schools are outlined in the  
22 city's contract with the United Federation of  
23 Teachers. Under the contract class size limits are 18  
24 students in pre-k, 25 students in kindergarten, 32  
25 and elementary grades, 33 in middle schools, with 30

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2 in Title One middle schools, and 34 in high schools.  
3 Average class size across all grades in New York City  
4 are well below the UFT contractual limits. The  
5 report, [clears throat] excuse me, on class size for  
6 school year 2019/2020 shows that across all grades  
7 the overall average class size is 26.3 students per  
8 class. By grade level the average class size is 21.7  
9 students in kindergarten, 24.3 in elementary school,  
10 26.6 in middle school core courses, and 26.1 in high  
11 school core courses. We're also deliberate with the  
12 way in which we fund our schools through the fair  
13 student funding formula. FSF is driven by equity, and  
14 the data shows that it is successful in advancing it.  
15 Per capita budgets are higher at schools with high  
16 concentrations of students in poverty, students with  
17 disabilities and multilingual learners. As such, when  
18 we look at class sizes in schools with the highest  
19 concentration of economic need, we find that these  
20 schools have smaller class sizes than schools with  
21 the lowest concentration of economic need. On  
22 average, our neediest schools have an average class  
23 size of 23.5. And schools with the lowest  
24 concentration of economic need have an average class  
25 size of 28.4. A difference of almost five. While we

2 have had major new investments in FSF in partnership  
3 with the council, the state owes New York City  
4 students nearly \$1.1 billion in CFE funding in this  
5 fiscal year alone. Funding which could go directly to  
6 schools as FSF. That said, we know there are many  
7 schools across the city with class sizes that are  
8 larger than we would like. We continue to use all  
9 available tools to reduce overcrowding and class  
10 size, including adding new capacity, rezoning of  
11 enrollment catchment zones, efficiently managing the  
12 space in or underutilized sites, and careful budget  
13 management by school administrators. Large class  
14 sizes are especially prevalent in schools that are in  
15 high demand by parents and students, including choice  
16 schools and high schools such as Francis Lewis,  
17 Townsend Harris, Midwood, Brooklyn Tech, Curtis,  
18 Bronx Science, and LaGuardia. Schools that offer a  
19 wide array of attractive programming options draw  
20 students from all boroughs and we place a high  
21 priority on meeting student demand there. Many  
22 families choose to send their children to schools  
23 with specific academic programs despite the larger  
24 class sizes. There's also strong correlation between  
25 overcrowding and large class sizes. For example, most

2 elementary schools and middle schools in overcrowded  
3 districts such as district 20 in Brooklyn and  
4 district 24 and Queens have class sizes that are  
5 larger than the city wide average. The Office of  
6 Space Planning within the Division of School Planning  
7 and Development is responsible for monitoring  
8 building and school over utilization, and devising  
9 appropriate strategies to reduce overcrowding. OSP  
10 regularly conducts cross departmental meetings with  
11 SCA, the Office of District Planning, the Office of  
12 Student Enrollment, the Division of School  
13 Facilities, the Office of the First Deputy  
14 Chancellor, and superintendents to evaluate seat need  
15 and to consider strategies to relieve overcrowding.  
16 Strategies to alleviate and address overcrowding  
17 include; great expansion, great truncations,  
18 rezonings of elementary middle school catchment  
19 areas, opening new schools, and conversion of  
20 inefficient spaces in existing school facilities, as  
21 well as building new capacity. An example of our  
22 efforts to reduce overcrowding and class size  
23 includes our work with community education councils  
24 and other community stakeholders to rezone the  
25 catchment areas of elementary and middle schools.

2 Since the 2014/15 school year 185 schools have been  
3 rezoned. One illustrative example of how the DOE  
4 partners with CECs to address overcrowding and class  
5 size is in District 24 and Queens, an area with a  
6 large number of overcrowded schools. In 2018, the DOE  
7 partners CEC 24 to create a zone for PS 211. In  
8 building Q298. The primary goals were to provide  
9 stable enrollment and PS 211 to reduce the need for  
10 cap and overflow and to reduce overcrowding at five  
11 nearby elementary schools. Along with accomplishing  
12 those goals reducing the school zone sizes enabled  
13 four of the impacted schools to decrease their  
14 average class size. In the two years since the  
15 rezoning was implemented, the average class size  
16 decreased by 1.4; from 29.1 to 27.7. And PS 13 by  
17 almost one and PS 14 by one and a half at PS 28 and  
18 by almost two at PS 89. In the addition to School  
19 Construction Authority's ability to site and  
20 construct new schools has played a critical role in  
21 providing seats citywide in areas to reduce  
22 overcrowding and class size, accommodate anticipated  
23 growth, and increase diversity. Since 2013, we've  
24 added nearly 55,000 new seats in all boroughs,  
25 including 9,100 seats in Manhattan, over 7,300 seats



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2 in the Bronx, and over 11,200 seats in Brooklyn, over  
3 23,200 seats in Queens, and over 3,600 seats in  
4 Staten Island. In addition to new capacity seats, a  
5 new class size reduction program was initiated in the  
6 2015 to 2019 capital plan. Projects in three schools;  
7 a PS 19 edition in the Bronx, a PS 131 edition in  
8 Queens, and the East New York Family Academy were  
9 funded through the class size reduction program to  
10 address persistent overcrowding in target schools.  
11 Our current five-year capital plan continues to fund  
12 150 million dollars in a successful program. This  
13 administration is making progress and in reducing  
14 overcrowding and supporting smaller class sizes  
15 across the city. But we know that too many of our  
16 students attend schools with large class sizes or  
17 that are overcrowded. We're so grateful to the  
18 council for your advocacy in Albany. And we look  
19 forward to our continued partnership this legislative  
20 season to push for the \$1.1 billion in CFE funding  
21 that will go directly to our schools to help support  
22 equity and excellence for all including reducing  
23 class sizes. This funding is what our students need  
24 and deserve and allow, allow our students to take  
25 their academic achievement to the next level. Thank

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2 you again for allowing us to testify today. And we  
3 would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you very much,  
5 Deputy Chancellor. So, I'll get right to it. I am  
6 very mindful, and I understand that Albany has a lot  
7 of work to do. I don't think there's any disagreement  
8 on that. But I, I want to ask this question. Is there  
9 anything in state law or regulations that prohibits  
10 the city administration, from setting and advancing  
11 its own class size reduction goals?

12 KAREN GOLDMARK: As far as I'm aware,  
13 there's not. I will say that there are many,  
14 obviously competing priorities. And when we are in an  
15 under-resourced situation, the challenge is always to  
16 make those trade-offs in a way that benefits  
17 students. What we have done as a school system, is  
18 we've been very careful to drive the vast, vast  
19 majority of our resources to schools and the vast  
20 majority of the funding through fair student funding.  
21 And we know that whenever we add funding, whether  
22 it's funding that was initiated by the Council, or  
23 funding that we have added, 90% of that goes to fund  
24 staff. So what happens when schools get fair student  
25 funding is they spend it on staff, which leads to

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2 lower class size, either through retaining staff or  
3 through hiring new staff. So we do know that when we  
4 add resources, we do have an impact on class size.

5 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: There's a lot,  
6 there's a lot to unpack there. And I'll follow up  
7 during the course of questions. Deputy Chancellor, I,  
8 you are a former teacher, you're an educator.

9 KAREN GOLDMARK: I am.

10 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: and I, and I, and I  
11 certainly appreciate that. For you, both personally  
12 and professionally, how important is class size for  
13 the DOE to deliver a quality education for children  
14 on a scale of one to 10, 10 being the most very  
15 important one being not very important.

16 KAREN GOLDMARK: So, I actually like that  
17 you asked personally and professionally because I'm  
18 going to go for it and answer personally first. So,  
19 both as a parent and as a former teacher I taught a  
20 class of 36 students. I taught a class of 18  
21 students. There's no question that there's a  
22 difference. There's a big, big difference. What I  
23 will say is that I also taught that class of 36  
24 students as a first year teacher, and I taught a  
25 class of 18 students later in my career, and I wish

2 it had been the reverse. Because there are so many  
3 factors that go into effective instruction, one is  
4 class size, for sure, one is teacher experience.  
5 There are so many, so many factors that go in.  
6 There's the support that we provide teachers. There's  
7 all, so many different elements. There's the supports  
8 we have for students in the form of community  
9 schools, social workers, counselors. There's, there  
10 are so many factors. So certainly class sizes a  
11 factor and I don't think anyone denied that and if we  
12 had unlimited resources, we'd have much smaller  
13 classes. Given that we do have limited resources one  
14 of decisions that the department or I shouldn't, one  
15 of the ways we make those difficult trade-offs is by  
16 having professional educators make those trade-offs  
17 at the school level. Because at the school level, a  
18 principal can say, here's, here's Lauren Grillo, she  
19 has been a teacher for five years. She's an amazing  
20 teacher. And here's Karen Goldmark, she's a first-  
21 year teacher, I'm actually going to have Lauren  
22 Grillo's class size be higher, and Karen Goldmark's  
23 class size be lower, just because of the experience  
24 levels of the teacher. That kind of trade-off can  
25 only be made close to the kids. And that's where we

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2 see those trade-offs made in ways that are very  
3 productive. When we look at the aggregate data we see  
4 that schools with higher need, concentrations of  
5 poverty in the schools, have a lower class size. We  
6 see that lower, that class size is lower in the early  
7 grades. So we see educators making those trade-offs  
8 in the places where we know they have the most  
9 impact. Do we wish class size were lower all across  
10 New York City? We do. Do we think we can do that with  
11 the funding that we have? We don't.

12 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So...

13 KAREN GOLDMARK: So I guess I switched  
14 from personal to professional halfway through, but...

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I appreciate your  
16 candor. It just, the reason why I ask is that I  
17 understand that we have a finite amount of resources.  
18 And that's what, and, and I, as now a member of the  
19 city council's budget negotiation team, we have to go  
20 through a lot of exercises called prioritization,  
21 where we have to, we understand that we don't have a  
22 trillion dollars operate with, we have to prioritize,  
23 and that's why I asked the question on a scale of one  
24 to 10. How important is class size to you  
25 professionally, in terms of delivering a quality

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2 education to children, considering that you are  
3 dealing with competing interests, but to you how  
4 important is class size? Because historically, folks  
5 with sat in your chair, have not always believed that  
6 class size was important. I remember Deputy  
7 Chancellor Rose testified at a hearing when I asked  
8 this question, and felt that class size did not  
9 actually make much of an impact. And that was counter  
10 to not only my experience, but to research and to  
11 years of research. And so, I would just like to have  
12 a clear picture from the current administration. How  
13 important... I know, you're hearing, I hear it's  
14 important to you, how important? Because that will  
15 determine prioritizing it in the budget.

16 KAREN GOLDMARK: So this is where again, I  
17 can't give you...

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah.

19 KAREN GOLDMARK: ...a single rating.

20 Absolutely, Chancellor Carranza has made clear from  
21 the moment he got here, he starts every other  
22 sentence with; "the research says...". I was reading an  
23 article the other day, the research says, he's very  
24 research based. The research on class size is quite  
25 clear that it's beneficial. There's also research

2 that early grade, early childhood education is a  
3 massive driver, perhaps the best thing that you can  
4 do in an, in a school system. There's also research  
5 that appropriate social emotional supports have a  
6 massively beneficial impact. So to say one over the  
7 other, honestly, to me is reductive in a way that I  
8 don't think helps the debate. I'm not... because what  
9 is needed depends on the situation. So there may be a  
10 situation where class size is the most important  
11 driver, there may be a situation, where providing  
12 restorative justice supports is the most important  
13 driver in there. And because we have 1800 schools  
14 across New York City, those decisions need to be made  
15 closest to the students by the professional educators  
16 who know the needs of the students, and that's why we  
17 don't have a one size fits all approach. It's why we  
18 believe in driving funding, using equity principles,  
19 and then having schools determine what makes the most  
20 sense. So absolutely. We do think class size is very  
21 important. We also think wraparound supports are  
22 important. And the community schools research that  
23 came out just last month really supports the notion  
24 that addressing all of the needs that human beings  
25 come into school with, right? We always talk about

2 students, students are human beings. Parents are  
3 human beings, we're all human, we have a set of  
4 challenges and needs that we face. Addressing those  
5 is fundamentally beneficial for education. It's  
6 beneficial for student outcomes. It's beneficial for  
7 people in terms of their long-term outcomes. So it's  
8 very hard to say, you know, what the number one thing  
9 is, and number two thing is, because what that is  
10 depends on the school situation.

11 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right. And, and I  
12 appreciate you mentioned early childhood education,  
13 and that was a choice the administration chose to  
14 invest in and I support early childhood education.  
15 The question is, how much do we value quality early  
16 childhood education because as I have pointed out at  
17 previous hearings, it's painful when I hear from  
18 providers that that their children don't always have  
19 access to social workers and supports. And do we also  
20 monitor class size in terms of in UPK or in 3K?  
21 Because it's not just about, you know, putting kids  
22 in a room and having someone there it's about  
23 delivering a quality service to our children. So if  
24 we're going to invest in an UPK and 3K lets invest it



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2 in the right way? And so are, are there class size  
3 targets even in UPK and 3K settings?

4 KAREN GOLDMARK: Absolutely, it's 18.

5 There are...

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Is that the, is that  
7 standard or is that average?

8 KAREN GOLDMARK: It, sorry, I'm answering  
9 the UPK, thank you. That's the UPK in the, so the  
10 class size targets and or contractual limits are  
11 different at different grade levels. They are lower  
12 in lower grades. And in terms of quality. The good  
13 news is in addition to having what is nationally  
14 regarded as a very, very high quality program to  
15 begin with every year, the quality indicators that we  
16 have on UPK have come back with positive increases.  
17 And that's the case again this year. So we were  
18 really in record time able to, to get to scale with a  
19 high quality program and that program has continued  
20 to increase in quality. So we are really pleased with  
21 how you UPK is working in terms of its universality  
22 and how it's working in terms of continuing to  
23 increase what was already a very high quality  
24 program.

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2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I keep hearing that,  
3 you know, class size is important and, and folks at  
4 DOE value the research behind it. Just a couple of,  
5 you know, technical questions. Are there any  
6 questions about class size on quality review reports  
7 and sheets? When folks visit schools are there  
8 questions on class size on the QR?

9 KAREN GOLDMARK: Apparently, no. I just  
10 want to note while I work a lot on school planning  
11 and space utilization and while I do have a  
12 background as a teacher, it's been a while and I'm  
13 not a pedagogue. So you're going to see me turning  
14 around a lot if you ask me a lot of instructional  
15 questions.

16 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: No worries, I...

17 KAREN GOLDMARK: I know a lot about how we  
18 use the space and I rely on Lorraine as...

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: If folks no Mark  
20 Treyger I'm getting to a point. So...

21 KAREN GOLDMARK: So this...

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: It's not, it's not  
23 asked on quality reviews and for the public just to  
24 folks to know these are tools that the DOE uses to  
25 when they visit schools, they want to ask some

2 questions and see how things are going. It's a way  
3 to, to monitor progress and to, and to check things  
4 out, and when a principal or in a school community  
5 has a, has a superintendent visit with the quality  
6 review, they tend to pay attention to the questions  
7 asked on the quality review, and then they begin to  
8 tailor their approach and their investments around  
9 the questions asked around the quality review. So if  
10 a, if class size is not being measured or talked  
11 about, or evaluated on a quality review that sends a  
12 message to an administrator, that class size is  
13 actually not that important to leaders in the DOE.  
14 That is my professional opinion. Because I have a  
15 view that if it's not measured, it's not invested in.  
16 And so you have to find ways to make these very  
17 important goals. measurable. Follow up, another  
18 question and if you don't know that, it's fine. It's,  
19 I have a safe assumption, or is class size asked  
20 about on a principals performance checklist? I know  
21 every month they have to fill out a checklist item.

22 KAREN GOLDMARK: So I think I know the  
23 answer to this one without turning around. But if  
24 someone taps me on the shoulder, then I'll take a  
25 pause.

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2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes.

3 KAREN GOLDMARK: One of the important  
4 things to note is that for a principal, there are,  
5 principals do have influence in the form of their  
6 budget, but there are many factors beyond the control  
7 of a principal such as the zone, the number of  
8 students attending a school. So, whether a student,  
9 whether a school is overcrowded or not is not, thank  
10 you, it's not really in the control of the principal.  
11 So in terms of reviewing a principal reviewing a  
12 school, it's not necessarily fair to hold a principal  
13 accountable for something that they may not at all be  
14 able to control.

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So Deputy Chancellor  
16 if, if that was true, then it's not fair to ask  
17 principals how they use technology to improve their  
18 instruction, when many schools don't have adequate  
19 internet or technology, which I know that they're  
20 trying to figure out now. But I sat in on quality  
21 reviews when I was a teacher, and they would ask my  
22 school community how we use technology to improve  
23 instruction in our school, but I worked in a school  
24 that if the teachers cafeteria had the microwave on  
25 the SMART Board would turn off. And so that was not

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2 fair to the school community either to be penalized  
3 for technology issues when we had old infrastructure  
4 issues. So my, just, my question is, how is class  
5 size evaluated in terms of quality review and  
6 interaction from tweed, and the local school  
7 communities?

8 KAREN GOLDMARK: So I'm now being joined  
9 by Donald Conyers... [cross-talk] answer.

10 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: All right.

11 KAREN GOLDMARK: Can you...

12 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Great.

13 DONALD CONYERS: Hi, good afternoon.

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Do we have to?

15 DONALD CONYERS: Good morning.

16 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Just say name for  
17 the record. I'm sorry.

18 DONALD CONYERS: Donald Conyers, Senior  
19 Superintendent within the..

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you.

21 DONALD CONYERS: ...agency. So as far as the  
22 quality, just to clarify a couple of things.

23 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah.

24 DONALD CONYERS: Quality review is not an  
25 evaluative tool used by superintendents for schools.

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2 It is an opportunity for schools to receive  
3 information and feedback across a variety of  
4 different areas, when talking about class size, and  
5 the, and then in some kind of informative way we look  
6 at positive school culture the, positive learning  
7 culture. So there are many things as Deputy  
8 Chancellor spoke about, such as the, the  
9 opportunities through 3K, through, and, and having  
10 guidance services and having all the things that will  
11 contribute to a more positive and effective pathway  
12 for learning for students. So that is what the  
13 quality review will surface in one of its components.  
14 But to say does class size actually matter? It  
15 matters, but we look at it and we get to the class,  
16 the impact of class size through other things like  
17 the learning culture, the positive attitude that  
18 students have, the psychological safety that they  
19 will feel, etc.

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So I say this  
21 respectfully, that I think if you ask any principal,  
22 if they feel a QR is an evaluation period they, most  
23 of them will likely agree with me. I have sat in on  
24 quality reviews and the questions were very  
25 evaluative. And I personally prefer, and things could

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2 have changed since I was teaching. But I, when I sat  
3 in, I never heard a question on class size. I did  
4 hear questions about scores. I heard questions about  
5 how many ninth graders are moving to 10th grade. I  
6 heard, you know, what they wanted to look at our  
7 rubrics for assignments, which is which is fair, but  
8 I don't recall a question on class size and whenever,  
9 and my next question was, for example, when we  
10 evaluate just overall administrators, is that  
11 something that we speak to folks about because I  
12 understand giving principals you know, certain  
13 discretion and over budgets I get that because they  
14 are the school leader and they should consult with  
15 their school community. But the question is, if, if  
16 we are not in any way providing guidance or language  
17 to leaders, that class size is important. Why should  
18 we then expect them to operationalize class size  
19 reduction in their school communities?

20 KAREN GOLDMARK: So again, what we found  
21 is that anytime school leaders get additional  
22 funding, they spend it on the very topics you're  
23 raising, on either keeping class size low, reducing  
24 class size, adding staff, adding needed support  
25 staff. The frame for that conversation is wholistic.

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2 However, what we find is that school administrators  
3 spend money on, almost entirely on staff, it is the  
4 predominant priority. And when additional funding  
5 comes in 90% of it goes to either additional staff or  
6 to staff that are already in the building and adding  
7 roles and sometimes retaining staff. Despite a  
8 reduction in enrollment, so I, I understand what  
9 you're saying about all of the frameworks, I'm just  
10 saying what actually happens in the school system is  
11 that the professional educators deploy the resources  
12 in ways that meets the students right where the  
13 students' needs are.

14 KAREN GOLDMARK: Alright I, I am just  
15 pointing out the contradiction that I see not just  
16 with city but even state leaders. Whenever I, I hear  
17 a lot of politicians say that our children are more  
18 than a score, and that we should not base you know,  
19 and I hear that a lot. But yet when they run for  
20 reelection or run for election or discuss education,  
21 the first thing they say out of their mouths is  
22 scores are up, scores are up. I want to add, first of  
23 all, are they up for everybody? Are they up for every  
24 subgroup? No. But I want to I want them to talk about  
25 also class size as an indicator of, of school health



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2 as well. Because that I don't really hear much about.  
3 I do hear it's important to people. But when you get  
4 to the crux of it, I don't see it really being a, a  
5 measured item in any quantifiable way. I do, question  
6 about is the DOE in receipt of substantial numbers?  
7 And I don't know if you have any data with you of  
8 that, of grievances from educators about large class  
9 size or class sizes in our schools. Can you speak to  
10 that?

11 KAREN GOLDMARK: Yes. So the DOE does have  
12 grievances about class size, particularly in schools  
13 that are overcrowded. And we did in this most recent  
14 contract actually put some measures in place to have  
15 a much more proactive way of addressing those  
16 challenges right from the beginning of the year so we  
17 now address those faster. And essentially, what we  
18 now do is the superintendents proactively analyze  
19 class size at the beginning of the school year to see  
20 where there are challenges, and then deploy resources  
21 to address those challenges. So, we do have  
22 grievances on class size. And one of the challenges  
23 just I think everyone has experienced this as a  
24 parent perhaps is you never quite know how many  
25 students are going to be there on the first day of

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2 school, you can project, we do enrollment  
3 projections, but there's always some variation. So  
4 we, every year have some schools that have more  
5 students than they expected. And we have schools that  
6 have fewer students than they expected. What we've  
7 done since last summer is put in place a new process  
8 where we are actually proactively analyzing that data  
9 right at the beginning of the school year and taking  
10 steps to address it. So sometimes we address it  
11 before the grievance, and sometimes a grievance is  
12 filed, and then we implement that process  
13 immediately. But that is new, and we have seen  
14 positive results from that process this year.

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah, I actually  
16 want to know, in defense of the DOE, I actually want  
17 to point something out that I think the DOE cannot  
18 always be at fault for but I do think we need to do  
19 more work on this issue. The issue of perception of  
20 schools. That impacts enrollments, I know that  
21 firsthand, and that impacts class size. That, I also  
22 know firsthand, and the example I give is in my own  
23 backyard. I was a teacher at New Utrecht High School  
24 which a school that was built for about 2,000 or so  
25 children. When I was teaching were over 3,000 kids, I

2 heard it got even bigger than that. One of the issues  
3 that happened during my teaching tenure was the  
4 Bloomberg administration's relentless hits against  
5 John Dewey High School and other schools in the  
6 neighboring community, where they, they took a lot of  
7 shots at the school community without providing  
8 support to the school community and their big plan.  
9 Their big Dewey plan was oh, just change the name.  
10 Change Dewey's name, that's going to be the big, big  
11 plan for John Doe's... the turnaround. lived through  
12 that. Now, compare that to what we did. When I  
13 actually, I visited the John Dewey community, they  
14 did have a change of leadership, which was also I  
15 think, an important point. But we had a new leader.  
16 You had a council member who said, let's find ways to  
17 increase support to the school, make strategic  
18 investments, our work with SCA president grow and  
19 others. We visited the school, we invested over \$3  
20 million to build a state of the art culinary kitchen,  
21 we're making other investments, and four or five  
22 years later, there's a whole new day, it's a whole  
23 new day and John Dewey high school. The culture is,  
24 is much better. Enrollment is up. So when you  
25 actually support leaders, invest in schools, believe

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2 in kids, things tend to get better. Now what the  
3 impact that has had on the neighboring schools is  
4 significant because now that parents and families  
5 feel safe and supported to send their children to  
6 John Dewey High School the neighboring schools don't  
7 have to be as overcrowded. We still have work to do.  
8 But the point is, is that not every, you know,  
9 official, I guess is Mark Treyger. And we need to  
10 understand that we all have a shared responsibility  
11 to support and lift up our schools. We do have to  
12 fight back against false negative perceptions of our  
13 school communities. That impacts enrollment, that  
14 also impacts class size. So yes, when we, when we  
15 hear the, the term, the phrase, invest in schools,  
16 it's not just a slogan, it has to be an applied  
17 practice. And it actually does make a difference in  
18 the school community. I, so I have some more  
19 questions but some of my colleagues here, I want to  
20 be mindful of their time as well. We'll begin with  
21 Council Member Kallos.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you chair  
23 Treyger for your leadership on this issue and Finance  
24 Chair Dromm for the leadership before that, and just  
25 all the teachers in the room for all the great work

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2 you've done prior to your work in the council. I just  
3 want to get a clarification. So in your testimony you  
4 cited in the UFT contract as an upper limit for class  
5 sizes. And so for high school, that would be 34. You  
6 also cited my alma mater, Bronx High School of  
7 Science. And as a person who had 36 kids, sometimes  
8 more, per classroom where we sat on the window sills  
9 during our freshman classes that was not the most  
10 conducive environment. And I will say I think we  
11 started with 750 students in my class, and we  
12 graduated 450. So, as I stayed in that '94 to '98, we  
13 can check the numbers, but part of the high attrition  
14 may have been just the class sizes when you start are  
15 just so big and you get lost. And by the time I was  
16 graduating, our classes got much smaller than those  
17 36 class sizes. So I guess I'm looking at the UFT  
18 numbers. So you're saying 34 in high schools. And  
19 then in our committee report, I see the contract for  
20 excellence. And that the DOE had a five year plan  
21 that was passed and authorized by the city as well as  
22 by Albany, and that set an upper limit of 24.5. So if  
23 you could explain the discrepancy.

24 KAREN GOLDMARK: So, as I said in my  
25 testimony, I can't comment on the class size

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2 reduction plan part that's currently subject to  
3 litigation. But I don't think that means I can't  
4 answer anything at all.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I appreciate that.  
6 I don't want you to answer anything on litigation. I  
7 guess.

8 KAREN GOLDMARK: Yeah.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: To, to, to frame  
10 it away from the litigation, at one point the city  
11 set a goal of an upper limit of 24.5 for, for high  
12 school students, and a limit of 19.9. Right now  
13 you're using a UFT contract as your upper limit.  
14 Could the city set a, a goal that is lower than the  
15 UFT limit and perhaps closer to previous goals?

16 KAREN GOLDMARK: So, the contractual limit  
17 obviously sets the absolute highest number absent  
18 some sort of action at the school level like. So,  
19 the, what I'm happy to report is that our actual  
20 average numbers are not at those contractual limits.  
21 So the average size in high school core classes is  
22 26.1. That's significantly lower than that 34. In  
23 actually each of the areas are average size is lower  
24 than the contractual limit. The, again, not  
25 commenting on, on other goals around the numbers. We

2 try wherever we can to keep class size as low as  
3 possible. You did cite an example of a school that  
4 has very high class size. There are a number of  
5 schools where at the high school level where class  
6 size is high and where parents choose to send their  
7 child to a school knowing that the class size will be  
8 high. I did actually just that, or should I say my  
9 daughter just did that. The older one who has since  
10 graduated, she attended Bronx science. She was in  
11 classes that were very large. In her middle school,  
12 the classes were very large. The decisions that  
13 parents make, reflect a number of different  
14 priorities, including class size, and depending on  
15 the child, a parent may decide different, make  
16 different decisions. The overall goal that we have is  
17 to have class size be as low as we can possibly make  
18 it with the funding that we have available.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Or in  
20 conversations with principals, they are keenly aware  
21 that class size matters, that it has an impact on  
22 education. And so because they're dealing with the,  
23 the UFT guidelines, and the blue book and then having  
24 folks come around and tape measure things, the  
25 principles are trying to get down to for the, for the

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2 elementary, I guess they're, they're aiming for a  
3 sweet spot of between 20 and 24. At the same time, as  
4 they're getting immense pressure from DOE to be at,  
5 at 32. So that, they're trying to get enrollment at  
6 just the right number, where when you, what where you  
7 have just enough kids That you need an extra class,  
8 but not so few, that you end up with multiple full  
9 classes at the end. So I just want to note that  
10 there's a lot of folks whose body language are  
11 indicating that they're well aware of this practice.  
12 And, but it creates an immense amount of stress. And  
13 then it also creates a situation where there's an  
14 inverse reward for principals of if they pack them in  
15 they get more money, and if they have fewer kids in  
16 the class, they get less because of the per student  
17 funding. So I guess I'm, I'm, I believe I've hit a  
18 little bit of a reality of what's going on. How can  
19 we support our principals toward that goal and say,  
20 you know what, it's okay if you want to get that 24  
21 and you don't have to play games with numbers and  
22 admissions?

23 KAREN GOLDMARK: So it just want to note  
24 that it, schools don't get a different amount of  
25 money based on how they configure classes. Schools



2 get the amount of money based on how many students  
3 they have.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Right?

5 KAREN GOLDMARK: So schools that have to  
6 make tough trade offs, because as we've all noted,  
7 we're still not in a place where our schools are  
8 fully funded. We've made actually great progress on  
9 the city side of that equation over the last several  
10 years, very much due to support from the council. But  
11 principals are still in a situation where they have  
12 to make difficult trade offs. That said, the way they  
13 make those trade offs takes, they have to make those  
14 decisions. We think those decisions need to be  
15 closest to the students so that they're made in a way  
16 that drives the best possible outcomes under the  
17 circumstances. So with respect to kind of all of the  
18 different ways that principals have to think about  
19 the questions I want to reserve the bluebook question  
20 for, for one answer because that's a different  
21 question. And I would like the rain to address that.  
22 In terms of a principle deciding, I want to have a  
23 number that's high enough or not high, or I want to  
24 pack them into a classroom. That is, in our  
25 experience, not how it goes. In schools that are

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2 overcrowded, principals don't even have a choice  
3 right? In a zone school if students show up, and 32  
4 students show up, you've gotta serve them. And if you  
5 don't literally have the space in the building,  
6 you're going to have to serve them in a class of 32.  
7 And that's what happens in our overcrowded schools  
8 where we've made tremendous progress, after a long,  
9 serious backlog we've made tremendous progress on  
10 addressing that and there's more to do. In terms of  
11 principals making those trade offs we do believe that  
12 those trade offs are best made closest to the  
13 students. Lorraine, do you want to address the blue  
14 book question?

15 LORRAINE GRILLO: Sure. Thank you.

16 Apologies, Councilman for my voice. I'm struggling  
17 with laryngitis. But in terms of the blue book, the  
18 blue book is really a tool. It's a planning tool for  
19 us to determine where we stand now and where we're  
20 going in the future. It is not the Bible. It doesn't  
21 make decisions as to how many students are in a  
22 class. However, I will tell you that while the UFT  
23 limit is, is the maximum, okay. The way the blue book  
24 is configured, and the way we judge efficiency in  
25 classrooms, our numbers are well below that UFT

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2 limit. Just for an example at K to three, we're  
3 looking at 20 students per, per classroom. At four to  
4 five, we're looking at grades four to five, 28  
5 students, six to eight, 24.5 students in a regular  
6 classroom. Nine through 12, 26.3 students in a  
7 classroom. This is based on the numbers and if the  
8 program efficiencies that we put in.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: So that is, that  
10 is a different goal than what the Deputy Chancellor  
11 test, so that is a, that is an acceptable number for  
12 SCA's planning purposes?

13 LORRAINE GRILLO: Correct.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Okay. And so if  
15 principals are, are aiming for those numbers versus  
16 the UFT contract numbers, they can be in a place  
17 where they don't end up being told, oh, you don't  
18 have enough kids and. I'm trying to figure out how we  
19 can use those blue book numbers.

20 LORRAINE GRILLO: But these are, these are  
21 very different ideas. The blue book, as I said, is a  
22 planning tool for us, for the...

23 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Okay.

24 LORRAINE GRILLO: ...SCA, and how we  
25 determine the needs over time. It is not, again it is

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2 not, it's not the Bible. It's not a measure that  
3 principals should feel necessarily attached to in  
4 order to make decisions.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I want to thank  
6 the chair and the committee for their indulgence if I  
7 could just do, have one last question. The Upper East  
8 Side, Manhattan is largely a built environment. We  
9 end up in situations where we do have a developer who  
10 comes in and warehouses a block. It's not a good  
11 thing. But as it's happening, it does provide an  
12 opportunity. But once that opportunity is gone, we  
13 lose that site. This point, we have three blocks in  
14 my district being warehoused by developers seeking to  
15 put up buildings where we're in negotiations with at  
16 least one or two of the sites. We only have funding  
17 for one school. Is there an opportunity for more  
18 funding? As you do see planning, is there any thought  
19 around integration, and the fact that if we build  
20 more seats then perhaps are necessary in a specific  
21 part of the city, the upper east side, the district I  
22 represent, is the second least diverse district in  
23 the city of New York. But we have districts four,  
24 East Harlem, which I also represent to the north and  
25 that there might be opportunities to do programs

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2 where you have district two district four for those  
3 seats, given the fact that we actually have the sites  
4 in play right now. Are there opportunities to do that  
5 to alleviate overcrowding in my elementary schools as  
6 well as district four in creating an idea of  
7 following some of the SDAG recommendations, creating  
8 enrichment, doing Spanish dual language, other types  
9 of things that will bring folks to our school seats  
10 and then other, the other piece is competing with  
11 some of the private schools in the district. I would  
12 like to see racial integration and socio economic  
13 integration so saying, okay, we'll do Spanish dual  
14 language, we can do French dual language and compete  
15 with please say francais on the district and bring  
16 families of every level, every socio economic class,  
17 every zip code into the same place.

18 KAREN GOLDMARK: Okay, that sounds pretty  
19 beautiful so.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I'll take it. I'm  
21 good.

22 KAREN GOLDMARK: Obviously, anytime we can  
23 have a, a new capacity that addresses equity and  
24 diversity and essentially next century or current  
25 century learning skills, including dual languages,

2 there's so much there in terms of great promise,  
3 obviously. And I know I keep saying this, we are in a  
4 resource constrained environment but we'd be happy to  
5 talk with you about the possibilities there. And I  
6 will say that, I want to respect that President  
7 Grillo's struggling with laryngitis. I'm not gonna  
8 ask her to speak on this, but I will just briefly  
9 note that the SCA does now have a really robust  
10 history and track record and method of doing mixed  
11 use developments. It's, as you noted, New York City  
12 is an increasingly built environment and so this is  
13 more and more, one of the ways that we build new  
14 schools, so we're always happy to discuss that.  
15 However, the public dollars are for public schools  
16 not for developers.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you. And next  
19 we'll hear from Council, Council Member Grodenchik.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Deputy  
21 Chancellor, hope I can make you laugh but I don't  
22 know if I'm as good as Mr. Kallos. Thank you for  
23 being here this morning. Thank you, Mr. Chairman for  
24 this hearing on this very important topic. I want to  
25 thank, on the record, Miss Grillo, and really her

2 whole team. I know how hard they're working for every  
3 seat and we are building about just over 2,500 new  
4 seats in my district. I'm very excited about three  
5 new schools opening this fall. And I'm sure they're  
6 all on time? Good. I, I have been in government in  
7 Queens for over a generation. I'm old, but that's  
8 okay. But I have a memory too. And my memory is that  
9 we have been building school seats in Queens County  
10 since forever. Especially, well, it just seems that  
11 the Queens is growing. And that's a great thing. And  
12 we continue to add seats. Like my first question for  
13 you this morning is, and I love Pre-K and I will  
14 learn to love Pre-Pre-K when it opens in District 29  
15 in my district this fall. And I know the principals  
16 love the kids because they're quote unquote, so cute.  
17 But how much has that affected our ability to keep  
18 up? Because every cohort that we add is about 70,000  
19 new children if my math is correct, and I know Pre-K,  
20 Pre-Pre-K may not be a full cohort. But sometimes I  
21 feel it's, maybe it's a good thing, but I feel like  
22 we're been on a treadmill, but I'm not losing any  
23 weight. So I don't ever want to take this question.

24 LORRAINE GRILLO: Council Member thank you  
25 and my team thanks, you. It's been a pleasure working

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2 in your district. It's interesting. The question is  
3 very interesting because as I've said over time,  
4 these numbers we've noticed over the last several  
5 years, enrollment dropping, and perfect example this  
6 year, with, including Pre-K and 3-K, across the city  
7 enrollment has dropped 40,000 students. So, what  
8 you're seeing in your districts in particular, is  
9 enrollment shifts throughout the city. In some  
10 districts where we've had historical overcrowding,  
11 for example, Councilman Dromm's district, we've  
12 actually seen a large drop in enrollment. So it's  
13 very difficult to say. We've monitored as time goes,  
14 every year to see what the trends will be. But in  
15 particular, as it relates to your question, we are  
16 not seeing an enormous strain on this system because  
17 it 3-K or UPK.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Okay maybe,  
19 well, I know, I know some of my schools are more  
20 crowded than others. And it's like trying to hit a  
21 moving target blindfolded and some, and populations  
22 shift tremendously. And when I talk to principals, I  
23 think we just finished our fifth tour of the schools  
24 in my district. But I, you talk to them and, you  
25 know, one year they have a gain of 100 students,



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2 which is quite unusual for, you know, a medium sized  
3 elementary school and then the next year they're down  
4 50. So I, I sympathize. And I guess you kind of  
5 answered this Lorraine, but it, I guess, also in  
6 districts that are not full to capacity you're not  
7 building there, of course. And so I think you  
8 answered my other question, and I, I'm going to yield  
9 back whatever time I have left to the chair. I know  
10 my colleagues would like to ask questions, but I do  
11 thank you and I look forward to opening schools this  
12 fall with you. Thank you.

13 KAREN GOLDMARK: Can I just jump in with a  
14 thank you?

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Uh-oh, go  
16 ahead.

17 KAREN GOLDMARK: To all your help with  
18 Cardozo. We were at the groundbreaking with President  
19 Grillo. And it was really a wonderful experience. And  
20 we really want to thank you for your support in  
21 helping make that happen.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: It's my  
23 pleasure. It was sitting there, that piece of land  
24 was sitting there since the school opened. I think  
25 it's going to be a great complement. We have a great

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2 educator there at Meagan Colby, and, and I think that  
3 that's going to polish that apple so to speak, and  
4 I'm very, very excited about it. And so we'll  
5 continue onward and upward. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you Council  
7 Member. And next we'll hear from Council Member and  
8 our Finance Chair Dromm.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Thank you very  
10 much. Congratulations Council Member Grodenchik in  
11 getting that piece of land. I know that's something  
12 you talked about since you've been in the council. So  
13 good news. Good morning. Good to see you. Thank you,  
14 Deputy Chancellor Goldmark for your testimony and for  
15 your honesty, in terms of your experience as having  
16 been a teacher. I share some of those same  
17 experiences, you know, I taught at PS 199, and sunny  
18 side, which was crowded for years and years and  
19 years. Finally, we've gotten a new school in that  
20 area. Three, I forget the number, but it's on 43rd  
21 Street. I know that for sure. But yet there still  
22 remains some pockets, I think as you acknowledge,  
23 where we have overcrowding, particularly in 24, but  
24 even in District 30, and my good friend Nuala  
25 O'Doherty who's here from the CEC for district 30,

2 handed me a form that said at PS 148. Almost every  
3 grade seems to be over the targeted numbers. So I  
4 just wanted you to look at that. So for example, in  
5 kindergarten, there's 22.5 average number of students  
6 in some classes is as high as 25. In third grade, I  
7 think in, on second grade it's 28.2, fourth grade 28.  
8 So, and then also at PS 149. So the, I think, you  
9 know, these little sub district pockets do remain as  
10 problems and certainly, President Grillo, you also  
11 said that enrollment is down in some of the other  
12 schools in the district. So it's kind of a, an  
13 interesting pattern to look at exactly what is  
14 happening in certain parts of Jackson Heights, and  
15 not in other parts of Jackson Heights. It's a little  
16 hard to explain that. But I just want to go back  
17 again to the questions that Council Member Kallos was  
18 asking, in terms of the blue book. So the blue book,  
19 target class sizes for grades four to eight, and for  
20 nine to 12, are 28 and 30, if I'm not mistaken,  
21 right? But now they're currently at about 26 to 27.  
22 But that target number is higher than was actually  
23 there. So my question is, are you intending to fill  
24 those seats? Because the target number is higher? Or

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2 is there any type of a plan to keep it at the lower  
3 levels?

4                   LORRAINE GRILLO: Thank you, Council  
5 Member. Again, I'm going to repeat this. The Blue  
6 Book is a planning tool. The Blue Book is not  
7 direction for particular schools or the Department of  
8 Education. Those decisions on enrollment in a  
9 particular school bill, and whether to raise it up  
10 really are as the Deputy Chancellor said, either in  
11 the principal's realm, or working with space planning  
12 and others to make those decisions.

13                   KAREN GOLDMARK: Absolutely. Thank you,  
14 Council Member. And thank you, Lorraine also,  
15 obviously in the case of rezoning questions, working  
16 very closely with community education councils and,  
17 and as I believe, as I hope everyone here is aware,  
18 we've really changed how we engage with communities  
19 and with the ECS around questions of planning so that  
20 we now work together to develop proposals together.  
21 We don't give a proposal to community and say, we  
22 want you just to approve this we say to the  
23 community, what is it that you think we should do. We  
24 provide data, including blue book data, including  
25 enrollment trends, and we work together with

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2 communities to develop proposals in the case of PS  
3 148 and PS 149 I will look into those and get back to  
4 you. We did rezone those schools last year. So part  
5 of the goal was to alleviate overcrowding. So it  
6 sounds like we have to actually circle back and see  
7 what's going on now. So I thank you for raising that.  
8 In terms of the planning actions that we take with  
9 respect to building utilization it is a very  
10 community engaged process. I know that wasn't always  
11 the case, but it is now. And that dialogue happens  
12 with the ECs. And of course, the ECs have the legal  
13 power to, to make the rezoning changes.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Okay, one of the  
15 issues that happened to me when I was at 199, was  
16 that you needed a certain number of students to open  
17 a new class does that law still hold or that  
18 regulation still hold? Because what would happen, I  
19 had 38 students often and the principal told us that  
20 you had to have 17 more, I think, in order to be able  
21 to open a new class.

22 KAREN GOLDMARK: So I'd actually like to  
23 get back to you with a specific answer to how exactly  
24 that works, but the general rule is a school, sorry a  
25 class cannot be over the contractual limit and we do

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2 try to have schools have a certain number of  
3 students, say half the students of the full number in  
4 order to open a new class. But how exactly that plays  
5 out is a case by case situation. And so I'd like to  
6 get back to you with the exact framework for how that  
7 works.

8                   CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I mean some years he  
9 would give us an extra prep, or have a teacher come  
10 in and do math or something like that. So that was  
11 helpful, but it wasn't a great answer, you know so.  
12 Also, I got a tweet from Laney Hansen, yes, my good  
13 friend Laney, she's there. Are there any DOE studies  
14 or analysis of about how class size affects students  
15 outcomes? Has the DOE ever done their own internal  
16 studies about looking at the different class sizes  
17 that you have and studying the outcomes of those  
18 students in those overcrowded classes?

19                   KAREN GOLDMARK: So to be definitive, I  
20 would need to actually go check and come back on that  
21 question. I'm not aware of any studies that do that.  
22 What we have done, of course, is look at all of the,  
23 some of it is the most robust educational resources  
24 out there. So we've looked, we certainly look at the  
25 educational research that exists. And we have seen,

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2 obviously, some of the analysis I shared today about  
3 where class sizes tend to be lower and how we drive  
4 resources in ways that we're ensuring that we are  
5 serving the students who need it the most. But I  
6 really would have to check with our policy group to  
7 see if we've done an internal study. I haven't seen  
8 one. I could say that.

9           COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: It would be  
10 interesting to see. I mean, I know that there have  
11 been some national studies, and some of them are  
12 conflicting reports. But it's interesting to see what  
13 the dynamics look like here in New York City. I mean,  
14 look, from my own experience, just having fewer  
15 children in the classroom gave me the opportunity to  
16 provide more individualized instruction, which is  
17 actually I think one of the major goals with the  
18 Department of Education is to individualize student's  
19 instruction, particularly when we have  
20 heterogeneously mixed classrooms. So it might be  
21 something we want to look at moving forward.

22           KAREN GOLDMARK: Absolutely not to get too  
23 personal but as a parent, I have found that when my  
24 child, my older child didn't have this opportunity,  
25 but my younger child has been in ICT classes,

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2 understanding that's not quite the same thing, but  
3 two teachers in a class does also have really  
4 beneficial effects. So sort of any way we can get to  
5 the point where we are differentiating instruction,  
6 where we are having students work in smaller groups,  
7 of course, is a, is a practice that we...

8 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: It's interesting  
9 that you say that too, because a lot of charter  
10 schools actually have two teachers in a classroom. So  
11 that might be one of the better practices we need to  
12 look at.

13 LORRAINE GRILLO: I'm not taking that  
14 bait.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Thank you Deputy  
16 Chancellor. I appreciate it. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And, and just to  
18 kind of follow up a little bit on Council Member  
19 Dromm's point. I mean, as you know, I was also once a  
20 rookie teacher, and I remember my first year of  
21 teaching and they gave me the maximum allowed  
22 students in the class, 34. And I had 34 English  
23 language learners. And I think this is an issue that  
24 disproportionately impacts a very vulnerable student  
25 population that absolutely needs smaller class size



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2 to provide that, I think not just individualized  
3 education, but also just customized into to make sure  
4 that we reach them. And it was hard for me. And I'm  
5 speaking, this is very real. This is not politics.  
6 This is hard. And one of my questions I prepared  
7 today was even the topic of teacher retention and,  
8 and the number of teachers who leave the system  
9 burned out. Not because they've given up is because  
10 they've refused to participate in a system that  
11 really shortchanges our kids. And it was really,  
12 really hard for educators. And, you know, and I just  
13 want to say that the DOE's stock answer to that  
14 issue, Deputy Chancellor and I feel like we're at a  
15 faculty conference now Chair Dromm was go to a PD.  
16 And I'm just, no disrespect to folks but those PDs  
17 the muffins were greater than the presentations. They  
18 only taught me how to, you know, customize test prep,  
19 but not to really reach kids. Translating Regents  
20 Exam questions into different languages is not what I  
21 need. I need to know how, to how to reach kids. And I  
22 want, I want folks to know how I did eventually  
23 learn. And this is something for the Bloomberg folks  
24 to, to pay attention to. I learned from my veteran  
25 colleagues, I learned from my veteran teachers. So

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2 when he was pushing last in, first out, I would have  
3 lost greatly if I lost my veteran colleagues, my  
4 colleagues who spent years providing quality  
5 education to, to our students. They taught me. I  
6 observed their classrooms. And that's where I  
7 obtained best practices that I applied to my class.  
8 So I am grateful to my teacher colleagues, I'm  
9 grateful to my seasoned experienced teachers. I  
10 learned from you. I became better because of you. And  
11 so I just want to just put that out there and to, to  
12 also to the chairs question about having systems in  
13 place to monitor and gauge outcomes for a reduction  
14 in class size. You know, the Chancellor talked about  
15 EduStat, does EduStat have the ability to gauge and  
16 monitor class size and how that's improving student  
17 outcomes?

18 KAREN GOLDMARK: I am going to have to  
19 defer on EduStat questions because I am not expert on  
20 it.

21 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Okay.

22 KAREN GOLDMARK: What I do want to say,  
23 just in terms of the what you mentioned about both  
24 teacher retention and burnout is that that's  
25 something where I'm pleased to say that the

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2 experience that you were describing, and then I had  
3 really a lot has changed, both in terms of salaries  
4 and in terms of actual retention numbers, in terms of  
5 teachers. It's, we have seen really good progress in  
6 terms of that, where when I first started working in  
7 the school system, there were 12,000 vacancies a  
8 year. That number's much lower. And the teachers who  
9 are getting hired into the school system now tend to  
10 have experience. People actually come to New York  
11 from other places in the country because the salaries  
12 here. I know the cost of living here is no joke. But  
13 the salaries in New York are treating teachers as  
14 professionals and we know that nationally there's  
15 been a massive challenge around teachers not being  
16 able to make a living wage. And it's something that  
17 is one of the priorities that, that this mayor has  
18 invested in and that we see great benefits in. On  
19 professional development, there's a national  
20 challenge around professional development. But I do  
21 want to say that this is also something that the  
22 system's made big investments in and the, the  
23 professional development efforts have really moved a  
24 lot over time. So I'm.

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2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I, I would say  
3 Deputy Chancellor the DOE could save so much money if  
4 they simply offered per session to veteran teachers  
5 to run the PDs. You would save so much and you would  
6 gain so much because that's how I personally learned.  
7 I learned from my teacher colleagues, I did not get  
8 much from PD, but I don't want it, this is not going  
9 to be a whole PD seminar, but I just I just want to  
10 certainly throw that out there to the universe. Next  
11 we'll hear from my colleague. Also, so we've been  
12 joined by Council Member Cornegy. And next we're  
13 going to hear from another educator, a leader in  
14 education, Council Member Barron.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you, Mr.  
16 Chair. And thank you to the committee for coming. And  
17 I, I'm sure that the new high school for East New  
18 York Family Academy is on schedule. So we'll be  
19 opening in about 18 months, I've been watching it go  
20 up. And I didn't want to thank you for your attention  
21 to that. I have concerns, some concerns at the  
22 beginning. And the Chancellor assured me that if he  
23 had to come and drive the machines himself, it would  
24 be done. So I want to thank you for that. In terms of  
25 class size, my colleague, Danny Dromm talked about

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2 what we used to call breakage when you don't have a  
3 specific number per grade that equalizes out with  
4 what the allocation is. So if, in fact, we looked at  
5 a scenario where there were, let's say, 90 Children  
6 in grade 1, 90 in grade kindergarten, 90 in grade  
7 two, and 90 in grade four, you will have 360  
8 children. How many classes would you expect that that  
9 principal would have arranged those children into 90  
10 on each grade K, One, Two, and three, which gives you  
11 360 students. Okay.

12 KAREN GOLDMARK: So.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Get the  
14 calculators out.

15 KAREN GOLDMARK: Can we have paper pen and  
16 a couple minutes?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: According to my  
18 calculations, it would be based on 20 per grade, you  
19 would get four with 10 extra in each grade. Right? If  
20 you're putting 20 in a class. If you have 90 per  
21 grade.

22 KAREN GOLDMARK: So the 20 in a class,  
23 again, I want to differentiate between the blue book  
24 and the and the, the UFT contractual limits. So the  
25 blue book is really how we think about space. So that

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2 20 number is when we look at a room that can be used  
3 for K through three, we think as a K through three  
4 section as having 20 students in it. The contractual  
5 limit being 25 for kindergarten and 32, for first and  
6 second grade, is what we, the absolute maximum that  
7 we could have.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So I'm just trying  
9 to get to how the principal is going to face the  
10 reality of constructing these classes, when you have  
11 students over what fits neatly into what would be an  
12 arrangement for class. And the other part of that  
13 question is, what kinds of adjustments are made when  
14 public schools get an influx of students from charter  
15 schools on November 1 and going forward and the  
16 budget's already been set.

17 KAREN GOLDMARK: So I am happy to answer  
18 that second question and then...

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay.

20 KAREN GOLDMARK: ...do you want to come back  
21 to the...

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay.

23 KAREN GOLDMARK: ...question? I can't do the  
24 breakage question.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. That's fine.

2 KAREN GOLDMARK: Okay. So on the question  
3 of the different ways that enrollment and budget are  
4 calculated for charter schools compared to district  
5 schools. We, this question was raised to us by the  
6 Council last year and we actually did an analysis. I  
7 just want to remind everyone how it all works in  
8 terms of per law charter schools are paid on a bi-  
9 monthly basis. So every two months, the Department of  
10 Education gets enrollment information from the  
11 charters and since the pass through of the funding as  
12 required by state law, to the charter school. The way  
13 it works for district schools is as you mentioned,  
14 this October 31 is the day when enrollment is  
15 typically at its highest and that is why we count  
16 enrollment on that day. There's also another  
17 adjustment on December 31 for students with IEPs  
18 because those numbers do change to, do tend to shift  
19 in terms of enrollment during the course of the  
20 school year. So we did have this question of are  
21 there schools that have massive influxes of students,  
22 because the student leaves the charter after that  
23 10/31 day. And then for the rest of the school year,  
24 the district school is serving the child, and there's  
25 no way to account for that in the budget. So there

2 are, first of all, we found that we actually did the  
3 math for each and every school, and for the schools  
4 that had 10 or more students coming from charters. To  
5 our surprise, we found that the schools also had an  
6 equal number of students actually leaving the school.  
7 So it just turned out to be a high mobility school.  
8 So the budget impact wasn't there in terms of the  
9 school itself. That said there is an escalation  
10 pathway...

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So you're saying  
12 that there's no change?

13 KAREN GOLDMARK: What we're saying is that  
14 we did not find a school that has a budget impact  
15 where they're getting 20 kids, and they did not have  
16 funding for those kids. Who the students are can  
17 change. But the schools that tended to have the  
18 higher numbers of students coming from charters, also  
19 had students who were there on 10/31 who then left.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So if there is, if  
21 there are schools that do have a net increase, what  
22 happens for those schools?

23 KAREN GOLDMARK: So for schools that have  
24 a net increase or have any other kind of a budget



2 challenge, where there's the process is not working,  
3 there is an escalation pathway for those schools.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: There's what?

5 KAREN GOLDMARK: There is an escalation  
6 pathway for those...

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Oh, okay.

8 KAREN GOLDMARK: ...schools to bring that to  
9 the attention of the Office of the First Deputy  
10 Chancellor and the Chief Financial Officer's Office.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay.

12 KAREN GOLDMARK: But what we found was we  
13 because the question was do we need to put in place a  
14 policy and a practice because there are so many  
15 schools with this problem and what we found was we  
16 did not find schools You know, beyond...

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay.

18 KAREN GOLDMARK: We actually did not find  
19 any schools where there was a real budget impact. But  
20 if there is a school that is experiencing that budget  
21 impact, there's a pathway for them to individually  
22 escalate and we didn't find that as a system this is  
23 having an impact on schools.

24

25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. Well, if I  
3 find that there might be some instances, I would love  
4 to bring them to your attention. And...

5 KAREN GOLDMARK: Please, yes, thank you.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And another  
7 question which would require... your note.

8 KAREN GOLDMARK: That's for you, thank you  
9 Council Member.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. There are  
11 some proposals for development for mixed use that  
12 developers are putting forward and they would like to  
13 see charter school as a part of that development.  
14 They already operate charter schools and now they're  
15 proposing residential and community use facility and  
16 parking and they are proposing a charter school. What  
17 is the DOE's position on building schools designated  
18 as charter schools?

19 KAREN GOLDMARK: Thank you, Council Member  
20 for that question. So, as Chair Treyger mentioned in  
21 his opening remarks, there is a there's a state law  
22 that requires the DOE to either provide space in DOE  
23 buildings or to provide tuition reimbursement to  
24 provide reimbursement, and I shouldn't call it to...  
25 it's rental reimbursement, to charter schools when

2 they rent space in a private facility. For charter  
3 schools that are pursuing that option of rental  
4 reimbursement that's usually how they are able to  
5 afford the kind of space you're talking about in a  
6 mixed use facility. So it's a development project  
7 that is partially paid for with the state required  
8 rental reimbursement. The challenge there for us is  
9 that at this point, that's \$100 million a year and  
10 that is funding that comes out of the department of  
11 education's budget, it goes towards rent for physical  
12 space. It's not going towards instructional efforts.  
13 It's not going towards teachers. It's not going  
14 towards class size reduction. So that is now  
15 representing a significant funding challenge for the  
16 Department of Education. So the problem that we face  
17 is that we have a pretty serious challenge because if  
18 we aren't going to do the rental reimbursement, the  
19 only way to avoid that is to provide space in a DOE  
20 building. So we don't really feel like we have good  
21 options in that situation. And communities have made  
22 clear to us when they do and do not support public co  
23 locations. So we've been doing a lot of the rental  
24 reimbursement. It's now gotten to a point where it's  
25 a significant budget challenge. So to the question of

2 do we support new developments that do this? It's  
3 really a conversation we need to have with each  
4 community. We'd want to hear from you and where you,  
5 you stand on it. It's not, I can't say across the  
6 board we support private developments for charter  
7 school facilities, because that's funding that comes  
8 out of the DOE budget and isn't fully reimbursed by  
9 the state. I don't know if you like that answer. I  
10 don't, I don't think I have an answer that anyone  
11 likes on this.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Well as the other  
13 educators on this committee have, over the years  
14 indicated, we understand the impact that charter  
15 schools have on public school, real public school  
16 education, where the schools are accountable to other  
17 entities besides those that are the ones that funded  
18 them. And we have great concerns about that, and how  
19 that's impacting the instruction that we really need  
20 to give to those students who are in really public  
21 schools that are accountable to the chancellor and  
22 accountable to people that are sending their children  
23 there and don't have the option of cherry picking and  
24 pulling children out when they don't conform, and

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2 don't take in those students that have other needs  
3 other than just the cream of the crop.

4 KAREN GOLDMARK: Thank you.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you. Thank  
6 you, Mr. Chair.

7 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you, Council  
8 Member Barron and just to kind of build on that line  
9 of questioning and also, this is the impact of having  
10 educators on the council. This is...

11 KAREN GOLDMARK: Yeah.

12 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I mean, thank you,  
13 Council Member Barron for understanding the needs of  
14 our kids and our communities and also waiting.  
15 You're, you're still an educator. But along those  
16 lines, is it accurate? Is it accurate to say that New  
17 York state mandates the New York City Government to  
18 pay for a charter school to operate at Hudson Yards?

19 KAREN GOLDMARK: Yes, in that...

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So I just want to  
21 make, make folks understand. The state argues that  
22 they have increased aid to the city. And at the same  
23 time in the same sentence, mandates that the City of  
24 New York pays rent for a charter school at Hudson  
25 Yards. Now, I am not involved in any way in real

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2 estate. But I do know that Hudson Yards is not a  
3 cheap place to operate and do business in. Is it fair  
4 to say from this panel, that Hudson Yards is a very  
5 expensive place to operate, do business, and pay  
6 rent? Is that, can folks just go across?

7 LORRAINE GRILLO: Accurate, very accurate.

8 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, President Grillo  
9 that's accurate. Deputy Chancellor is that accurate?

10 KAREN GOLDMARK: I really am not a real  
11 estate expert either, but yes, it is.

12 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And Sir you could  
13 chime in as well.

14 [off mic comments]

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: There you go. So  
16 this is the shell game that is played in politics. On  
17 one hand, they'll say that they've increased aid. On  
18 the other hand, they increase mandated cost that  
19 does, and the money does not go to classrooms, it  
20 goes to rent in one of the most expensive, if not the  
21 most expensive, real estate probably in New York  
22 City. That is not education spending. That is  
23 negligence. That is negligence. I also just want to  
24 just say for the record Deputy Chancellor, when  
25 Council Member Barron talked about principals and

2 schools having to deal with mid school year  
3 adjustments in terms of kids coming in. I just, I  
4 just had a principals breakfast. Every year I have a  
5 breakfast with my school leaders, and I heard the  
6 direct opposite of what you just shared. They are  
7 receiving an influx of students that are being  
8 discharged, some of them from charter schools after  
9 the attendance register month, and some of the  
10 students require what's called a crisis power. And  
11 the DOE we did not provide funding for the crisis  
12 power. So now they have to dig into their own budget  
13 and find something which will take away potentially  
14 after school services or procession services to  
15 provide added support for kids to pay for supports  
16 that are mandated and required for the kids that they  
17 have just received in the middle of the school year.  
18 Are you saying that you are not hearing about these  
19 cases?

20 KAREN GOLDMARK: So actually, I want to  
21 be, I want to clarify what I said. Because we, we did  
22 do an analysis and I, it is absolutely the case that  
23 students are leaving charters and going to district  
24 schools after our enrollment date of October 31st.  
25 That is absolutely the case in very noticeable

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2 numbers. What happened when we did a school level  
3 analysis is we wanted to see are there schools, for  
4 example, that on October 31, they have 400 students.  
5 And then in March, they have 450 students, right, we  
6 wanted to see is there actually a budget impact on  
7 this? And what we found was that the schools that got  
8 enough students from charters for there to be a  
9 budget impact also had students who were on register  
10 on that register day who left the school. So in other  
11 words, as many students left as came in, and that  
12 there is a budget pathway for any school that's not  
13 finding that to be the case for them. I did, but I do  
14 want to be clear, I wasn't saying we aren't, we  
15 didn't see any data that's student aren't coming from  
16 charters to district schools after 10/31. We  
17 absolutely are seeing that. It's just the question  
18 that was asked of us was about the budget impact on  
19 schools. So that's where we didn't see a trend that  
20 required a policy change, because we do have this  
21 individual pathway for schools that are having  
22 individual challenges, particularly in the case of  
23 the crisis power, if you'd be willing to just after  
24 let us know what school that is, whenever there's a  
25 school that is having trouble accessing the services,



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2 this is the purpose of the entire reorganization of  
3 the DOE with all of the schools being in a very  
4 structured management environment with the first  
5 Deputy Chancellor and Executive Superintendents and  
6 Superintendents. There's an escalation pathway for us  
7 to address issues like that. I, I hope that was  
8 clarifying. I wasn't saying hey, we aren't seeing  
9 kids move from charters to district schools. We are  
10 saying that. We, we, what we didn't see was the  
11 budget impact.

12 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I, so this is also  
13 news to me, because my conversations with my school  
14 leaders, they did not raise this issue to me, only to  
15 say it was a neutral cost to them. They said it was  
16 an added burden to them to the point that they had to  
17 take funds away from added supports for the student  
18 population to make way for students that have very  
19 high needs. And so even if we apply your logic, if a  
20 school loses a student, off their register and gains  
21 a student in the register that has higher needs, you  
22 have to pay for powers you have to pay potentially  
23 for other types of support services, that money does  
24 not always travel with the student end. And then the  
25 DOE places the expectation on that school to perform

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2 when they don't have all the resources to meet the  
3 needs of that child. And to be clear, not one of my  
4 principals said to me, we don't want these kids, not  
5 one, they embrace every single child. Which the same  
6 cannot be true for every other school. They embrace  
7 every child, what they say to me, give me the  
8 resources to help them succeed. That was a message  
9 that they gave to me. And so when some folks and  
10 again, I'm not here, we're not here just to discuss  
11 just all charter schools, there are some charter  
12 schools that have different policies and others. And  
13 I understand that. But in many cases, charter schools  
14 don't give you a choice. They give you a chance. They  
15 give you a ping pong ball, they don't give you a seat  
16 automatically. And in the case, where I worked in my,  
17 in my district, public high school, we welcomed every  
18 single student but we didn't have all the resources  
19 to meet every one of their needs. That's the  
20 difference that I think Council Member Barron, was,  
21 was getting at. I just want to also just get back to  
22 the, we mentioned the fair student funding report.  
23 When can we expect to receive that report?

24

25

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2 KAREN GOLDMARK: My understanding is that  
3 it is in process and that it's not far off. I don't  
4 have a specific date.

5 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Alright I just, I  
6 just want to just reiterate the importance of the  
7 report to this body. This is a, you know, for folks  
8 watching and paying attention. Fair student funding  
9 is also known as city tax levy dollars, which is the  
10 most precious funding streams of schools. And we  
11 identified certain inequities and issues within that,  
12 within that stream. That stream is not it's not  
13 perfect. And that's why this council, it was actually  
14 my bill that advanced a task force to re examine fair  
15 student funding because the last time this funding  
16 stream was examined in any comprehensive way was it  
17 was under the Bloomberg administration. And you  
18 cannot use the term I think equity and Bloomberg in  
19 the same sentence. So therefore, we need to re  
20 examine this this punishing and we do need their  
21 report, especially right now during budget season. Do  
22 any, we've also been joined by council member Mark,  
23 Mark Levine. And do any of my colleagues have any  
24 additional questions I just want to close by, by  
25 saying I appreciate the, the testimony here today. I

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2 would just urge the DOE to make sure that we  
3 operationalize our goals in ways that are evident and  
4 visible to schools. I know we have work to do, both  
5 in the state and the city to add more resources for  
6 our schools and we're going to harp on the state to  
7 pay its bill New York City, but at the same time, I  
8 do think it speaks volumes that, that school  
9 communities see that we care about class size, that  
10 this is an issue that is evident more than just with  
11 words and testimony but actually through visit  
12 visits, school visits and other types of measurable  
13 items. And school principals will rightfully say,  
14 well give us the resources we need to operationalize.  
15 And, and they are absolutely correct. But it doesn't  
16 stop us. It shouldn't stop us from at least making  
17 this a goal that they see and hear about. Because if  
18 I ask a principal or school leader, how many PDs have  
19 you gone to that talk about class size reduction? I  
20 would probably argue they haven't been to one. But  
21 they have gone to a number about improving school  
22 culture, how to get scores up, how to get kids  
23 through the system. I get that, but I think class  
24 size does make a difference. I think your experience  
25 Deputy Chancellor was similar to me rookie teacher,

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2 34 kids, but 34 English language learners that really  
3 needed to be in a smaller class size setting and I  
4 needed so much more help and support. And these are  
5 the kids that we see routinely fall through the  
6 cracks. So we have a lot of work to do. But let's,  
7 let's operate, operationalize both in terms of  
8 resources. In terms of DOE logistics, that this  
9 matters to our, to the DOE, and it sends a message to  
10 hear from our school leaders; class size does matter.  
11 And it does impact in terms of equity and excellence  
12 for all. And with that, I thank the panel. Thank you  
13 very much. Yes, yes, I think the next panel and  
14 someone who I had the honor of seeing last night at  
15 boys and girls high school and I have to tell you,  
16 we're very fortunate to have Dr. Kathleen Cashin  
17 serve in her role as a member of the Board of  
18 Regents. I have never seen someone of that stature  
19 take, spend so much time to listen to students and  
20 educators during and after the meeting and I, I think  
21 we're very fortunate to have her leadership in New  
22 York. So I welcome Dr. Kathleen Cashin today. And  
23 someone who is no stranger to the New York City  
24 Council, who I would argue if not for him, we will  
25 not even be having a conversation on CFE. And he has

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2 advanced the fight for children throughout his entire  
3 life and we're very blessed to have his leadership  
4 now in Albany. We welcome Also Senator Robert  
5 Jackson. And we also welcome from the State Senate,  
6 Joanna Garcia as well. And we have another senator  
7 who has been very helpful and supportive to our  
8 schools from the Office of Senator Brad Hoylman.  
9 Caroline Wekselbaum. So whoever is ready to go first  
10 doc Dr. Cashin if you like to go. Great, nice seeing  
11 you again.

12 DOCTOR CASHIN: Thank you for coming to  
13 boys and girls high school last night. Good morning,  
14 members of the city council. Good morning, ladies and  
15 gentlemen. And thank you for staying and for your  
16 words or we were having a meeting on graduation  
17 standards. And the turnout was incredible. And your  
18 comments were riveting. So thank you, Chairman. I was  
19 Superintendent in Ocean Hill, Brownsville. It was the  
20 honor of my life. And in 1999 I think it was  
21 Chancellor Leavy and Rudy Crew developed a new  
22 assessments. The assessments included reading,  
23 writing, listening. It was much more comprehensive  
24 than simply answering a bubble sheet. And I remember  
25 being concerned about my students and how we could

2 prepare for this. So the first thing I did as  
3 superintendent of Ocean Hill Brownsville was to  
4 reduce class size. The first thing. In those days the  
5 superintendent's had more control over their budgets.  
6 So I told my budget director reduce the class size of  
7 the fourth grade, already the primary grades had  
8 reduction. But I want, this test was going to be for  
9 the fourth graders for the first time. I told them to  
10 reduce class size as much as possible, which could be  
11 in the high teens 16 to 19. I wanted it reduced in  
12 the fourth grade. And we did. When we turn to Regents  
13 years later, you'd have a regional operation center  
14 that would allocate positions. But in this case, the  
15 local superintendents had more to say, and that's  
16 what I asked to be done. And we found remarkable  
17 things happen. I'm not going to read, you have my  
18 testimony, I'll just talk it if I may. Not only did  
19 the children respond beautifully to the reduction in  
20 class size, and the closer relationship with the  
21 teachers. But the teachers responded better, because  
22 they didn't have an overwhelming number of children  
23 who have high needs because of poverty to deal with.  
24 So it benefited not only our children, first and  
25 foremost, of course, but it also benefit greatly. Our

2 teachers, and this is something if I may, I want to  
3 reinforce. You see, I somehow feel that everybody  
4 says the children are the center, we agree. But you  
5 can't make the teachers secondary or third or fourth  
6 in line. They've got to be important. And they've got  
7 to have a voice. And so what we found was not just  
8 the fact that the children wanted to come to school,  
9 more Both children love the teacher. But when the  
10 children have a closer relationship in terms of  
11 numbers, they want to come to school, they will, they  
12 don't want to stay home, even if they don't feel that  
13 well, that's the thing we saw happening. There was a  
14 connection that was greater and more in depth,  
15 because of the reduction in class size. It was  
16 enormous. We also found secondarily, the teachers  
17 collaborated more. They didn't close the door and  
18 just try to keep the kids from hurting each other.  
19 There was so many of them. That's what some teachers  
20 have to do. They have to make sure there's no  
21 dangerous behavior, because there was so many kids,  
22 but if you reduce class size, the doors open. And the  
23 teachers start collaborating, which is what they  
24 really want to do. They don't want, want to be  
25 someone that closes in, lock, you know, closes and



2 locks the door. They want to be someone with the  
3 doors open collaborating, sharing. And that's what  
4 happens, in my opinion, with reduction in class size.  
5 This is a crisis not only for the children. This is a  
6 crisis for our teachers. We are losing teachers. We  
7 are losing teachers left and right, they get burned  
8 out. I believe one of the primary reasons they get  
9 burned out is they have so many children with so many  
10 needs, and they are exhausted emotionally, and maybe  
11 even physically. If the class size isn't manageable,  
12 for the class size in my book. So we did this, and  
13 Ocean Hill Brownsville. As I said, it was the honor  
14 of my life and it was I became regional  
15 Superintendent included Ocean Hill Brownsville and  
16 East New York and the Rockaways, but the honor of my  
17 life was Ocean Hill, Brownsville. What does this  
18 mean? It means that there was, we weren't  
19 adversarial, the teachers, the parents of the kids  
20 were all pushing the same agenda. And the teachers  
21 were able to manage and do a great job a better job,  
22 because they had fewer little ones to really care  
23 for. Poverty is a terrible teacher. And it drains  
24 everyone that comes in contact with. It drains the  
25 children too. But when they have that teacher and

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2 they can get that attention, it changes their life.  
3 So that was my experience. We had the greatest growth  
4 in the city in the fourth grade in a district that is  
5 probably one of the poorest In the nation. There are  
6 many, many housing complexes. I listen on the news  
7 sometimes and they'll mention a housing. And I  
8 remember walking there. I remember the kids had to  
9 walk through playgrounds to get to these schools. I  
10 know exactly where they were. And what this renders.  
11 And you know, what also happened as a result of  
12 reduction in class size. The parents were biggest our  
13 biggest advocates, the parents if we toured a certain  
14 methodology, let's say, writing, a strategy for  
15 writing. The parents wanted to have a parent retreat  
16 and have them taught the same methodology. And that's  
17 what we did. So we had the parents pushing the same  
18 agenda, the teachers with a manageable class size,  
19 and we have the students being the recipients of all  
20 of this focus. So I heard you asked before Chairman,  
21 the you know, the class size how important To me,  
22 it's almost everything. I mean, you have to have a  
23 teacher, but to be it's nine or 10. Because if you  
24 have, sometimes when you have low, when you have  
25 large class size, are you really teaching? Can you

2 really teach? I don't think we'd need, I do think we  
3 need guidance counselors and social workers. There's  
4 no doubt about it. But I also think violence would  
5 decrease greatly. Disruptive behavior would decrease  
6 greatly if we had caring teacher being able to give  
7 that child who's acting out the attention he or she  
8 needs. So having said that, I don't know if I  
9 finished my sheet or not, I'm not even looking at it.  
10 I would simply say the whole world changes in the  
11 school, the teachers change, they collaborate. The  
12 children change, they're not as angry. They're happy  
13 to go to school to see their teacher because they are  
14 able to form a connection. Teachers are happy. The  
15 principal certainly were happy with the reduction in  
16 all things get better. But I also want to say  
17 tangentially and reinforce this last point. We have a  
18 crisis in teaching. We can say the teachers need more  
19 options for a promotion. That could be as well. But I  
20 think the crisis emanates from the fact that we don't  
21 have smaller classes, that it's too much on one  
22 person to handle 30 young students and know their  
23 abilities and disabilities. But if you have 20 for  
24 the older grades 20, 25 but lower than that, when you  
25 need it, it brings about unbelievable results. And we

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2 also came up with an instructional plan that matched  
3 match the reduction in class size. You have to couple  
4 it with other things. I'm not just saying it's only  
5 class size, but the social emotional connection. You  
6 want cultural responsiveness, and social  
7 responsiveness, class size. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: We have a proud  
9 Council tradition of doing like spirit hands when we  
10 applaud. But I think for Regent Cashin it's, it's  
11 appropriate. I just want to say I mean this from last  
12 night to this morning's testimony. It's very rare to  
13 hear from such high level folks in the state speak so  
14 passionately and, and just you get it. Like it's very  
15 rare for me to say folks at your level, get it and  
16 what you just shared. Teachers were burned out, I was  
17 one of them. And it was painful. And to some of my  
18 colleagues who left the profession, they never gave  
19 up on the children. They refuse to participate in a  
20 system that shortchange them. And that's the  
21 difference. And I ran for council to be a voice for  
22 kids and for my colleagues. And so I'm here on a  
23 mission, which we still have much more work to do as  
24 you're right. Social workers are a part of it, but  
25 not enough. We need to reduce class size to provide a

2 quality education. That's why I framed my question. I  
3 framed my question, how important is class size in  
4 the DOE's ability to deliver a quality education and  
5 I agree with you it is, it is a 10, it is a 10. It  
6 goes hand in hand with many other critical components  
7 in terms of knowing the students, knowing their  
8 needs, and in the case of my experience, I had over  
9 34, 34, sometimes higher, 34 kids, and about 40  
10 minute period classes, and it's hard, just do the  
11 math. It's hard to provide that individualized  
12 attention and time to every single child in that  
13 class. And so thank you Regent Cashin for your very  
14 powerful testimony for leadership. And next we'll  
15 hear from another champion who we admire so much.  
16 This is your house Senator Jackson, please. The floor  
17 is yours.

18                   SENATOR JACKSON: Well, thank you, Chair  
19 Treyger and staff of the committee. And I was asking  
20 Joanna Garcia, my chief of staff how many people on  
21 education committee, and I say that because when I  
22 was the chair of the education committee, we had 19  
23 members. And obviously, when you're giving testimony,  
24 obviously you're so important in framing and  
25 direction of the education committee along with the

2 leadership of the city council. But golly you would  
3 hope to see a half a dozen members of the city  
4 council talking about what the major issue that  
5 impacts the city of New York that has over one third  
6 of the city's budget. And that's education. But you  
7 know, the public is also watching, oh, by live and I  
8 say to you, thank you for your leadership as a chair  
9 of the education committee, someone that was a  
10 teacher in the system. Where myself, I was not a  
11 professional teacher, but I was a parent activists  
12 and I'm still a parent activist, fighting on not only  
13 on behalf of the 1.1 million children of New York  
14 City, but of all of the children in New York State.  
15 And as you know, in many of us know that I was the  
16 lead plaintiff in a campaign for fiscal equity case  
17 that resulted in them landmark decision that  
18 determined that our children are being cheated out of  
19 billions of dollars and being cheated out of the  
20 opportunity to receive a sound basic education. So I  
21 thank you for holding this oversight hearing. And I  
22 also understand that you have, I believe, a  
23 resolution on the charters. And I'll speak to both of  
24 those matters. Right now, class size matters. In  
25 fact, class size matters was one of the reasons that

2 helped begin to campaign for fiscal equity, and  
3 obviously, someone that was around during that period  
4 of time Leonie Haimson, of class size matter. She is  
5 one of the people that is out front, making sure that  
6 part of the foundation a formula which the contract  
7 for excellence is part of that is to make sure that  
8 the class sizes are low enough understanding the  
9 student body of New York City and there needs an  
10 order so that they can be a when students raise their  
11 hand have a question. And instead of saying, well,  
12 there's too many children in the class, and, you  
13 know, we have to continue to follow the curriculum.  
14 And in that timeframe, they can have that dialogue  
15 with the students so that that student can  
16 understand. But believe me, if one student is asked a  
17 question that many other students that don't know,  
18 also, that are listening to the question and  
19 listening to the responses from the educator, so we  
20 thank you for that. And obviously, the campaign for  
21 fiscal equity back in 93. Seeing our overcrowded  
22 schools in district six were during my time as  
23 president of the board, it is a real problem that  
24 class size and grades K to three have increase rather  
25 than decrease. I remember when they said at a certain

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2 period of time going back to the five year capital  
3 plan, that class sizes would be under the contract  
4 for excellence 21 and all of the portable classrooms  
5 will be gone. That did not happen. And in fact, you  
6 know, New York City's budget overall is increasing.  
7 So what it comes to is the priorities of the  
8 administration, what are the priorities? I'd say to  
9 you, I was at a rally about three weeks ago up in  
10 Albany, of housing justice for all. And I agree  
11 housing is human right. And everyone that  
12 assemblymember, Senator got up and spoke about that.  
13 And I got up and I said, I agree with you  
14 wholeheartedly but education is the foundation for  
15 our children to learn and to be the leaders. And  
16 also, research has shown, the more education you  
17 receive, more than likely, not all the time, more  
18 than likely you will earn more money, you earn more  
19 money, you're going to be able to afford at least  
20 affordable housing, and even maybe even more, but  
21 your family will be healthier and better off overall.  
22 So I'd say to you that the only way to reduce class  
23 size is by hiring class, classroom staff. Two main  
24 mechanisms for doing so is increasing the funding and  
25 spending existing funding more efficiently both which



2 class side advocates across the state of New York  
3 have been fighting for. But executing it has been  
4 more difficult because the DOE has not been so  
5 willing at every turn. In fact, they're dealing with  
6 their problems. And obviously, we have a new  
7 chancellor. But there has to be a more concerted  
8 effort in following what the law says. And we don't  
9 follow the law, and they are the leaders, then  
10 parents have to rise up. Advocates have to follow  
11 actions in court if necessary, and that's what CFE  
12 was about. So, we need more educators, more teachers  
13 in the classroom in order to meet the needs of our  
14 students. And I understand some of the resistance  
15 comes from fiscal concerns, but that's why I'm  
16 committed to fully fund the foundation aid formula at  
17 the state level. And I say that to you, because at  
18 the joint budget hearings, the state commissioner and  
19 the State Board of Regents, they said, let's come in  
20 with \$2 billion of this year and phase in the rest of  
21 the money that's owed to our children. Over the next  
22 couple years. I've said loud and clear in the  
23 Democratic Conference of the State Senate. Let's come  
24 in with the \$2 billion to match the State Board of  
25 Regents and the state education Commissioner, and

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2 assembly should come in with that also, too, so we  
3 are united and coming in asking for the same amount  
4 of money and not watering it down. And in fact, I say  
5 to you, as part of the education workgroup in the  
6 State Senate, that is recommending to the entire  
7 conference, we're coming in with that 1.9 billion of  
8 the 2 billion that the State Education Department is  
9 asking for. That's the type of advocacy that we have  
10 to have on the children of New York City. So that is,  
11 we have a bill that basically to tax millionaires and  
12 billionaires just a little bit more, not a whole lot  
13 more, just a little bit more. And that Bill said it  
14 would raise about 4.5 or \$4.3 billion to go towards  
15 the foundation aid and that's what that bill is  
16 about. And we're going to be asking every member of  
17 the State Senate, Democrats and Republicans to sign  
18 on to that bill. And if they don't sign on to it,  
19 they let them speak to their constituents when the  
20 money is not there, and they have to cut back. sports  
21 programs after school program may have to cut back on  
22 teachers. Rochester, New York, December 31, laid off  
23 100 educators. Why? Because Rochester School District  
24 Board overspent the budget by \$27 million. They  
25 didn't steal the money. They didn't misspent it. They

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2 spent it on a good program for children, just like  
3 myself, just like if I have a family and I don't have  
4 any money, but I have credit cards, I'm going to  
5 spend my credit cards to the max so that my family  
6 will eat and have shelter. That's the way life is.  
7 Rochester, New York is owed \$86 million on the  
8 foundation aid formula. So that's what we're talking  
9 about. The need is we need to fund education. So all  
10 of the things that we need to do we talked about,  
11 yes, class size is very important, but there's many  
12 other things, but if we had all the money the  
13 chancellor came up with the George budget hearings  
14 and he said, New York City is owed \$1.1 billion. The  
15 lawsuit of Michael Bell found in 1993 ended in 2006.  
16 Michael Rebel filed another lawsuit on behalf the  
17 children of New York State going after the \$4 billion  
18 That goes to trial, this fall in front of supreme  
19 court justice, Lucy Billings, and you know who's the  
20 lead plaintive in that case? Marium, stand up Marium  
21 please. Where's Marium. She's here? She just left?  
22 She's the lead plaintiff as a former president of  
23 school board six, we need activists to rise up and  
24 fight back the system. So schools have to have the  
25 space for instructions in addition to the space for

2 instruction, they need space for art, science lab,  
3 therapeutic services. And as you know, many community  
4 schools, they have health clinics. So we need to have  
5 all of that from a comprehensive point of view on the  
6 children of New York City Schools. Schools, and I say  
7 to you, you talked about Hudson Yards. Please. I say  
8 to you that education workgroup, I hear some of the  
9 stuff that has been asked. You know what I ask the  
10 question. Tell me how that impacts New York City  
11 because I represent New York City. Even though I'm  
12 fighting for the entire state, and what I know has  
13 happened over the years since the republicans were in  
14 the leadership of the State Senate, and the governor  
15 and charter school hedge fund people, basically they  
16 have gerrymandered many of the education laws to  
17 favor charter schools over the public schools. I say  
18 that's a fact. And I can prove it. But I'd say to  
19 you, Chairman Treyger that I am still fighting for  
20 the children of New York City, and the children of  
21 New York State. And I want you to know, that up in  
22 the State Senate, I am not afraid to stand up and  
23 talk about the needs of our children in New York  
24 State. And I thank you for your leadership and your  
25 staff for doing what they have to do. Understanding

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2 that the contracts for excellence and class size is  
3 so important in the development of our children. And  
4 finally, I grew up with nine children. And to, nine  
5 siblings, eight of us, there was nine of us. And  
6 either we lived in a two bedroom or three bedroom  
7 apartment with bunk beds on each side of the room.  
8 And let me tell you, it was crowded. So I know what  
9 crowded means. And so even when I go into the  
10 Democratic Conference, there are 40 Democrats, and  
11 it's so crowded, that we can't even get in the chair,  
12 we have to step over each other because there are so  
13 many people in the room. So crowded classrooms has a  
14 negative impact, as the former executive  
15 superintendent and Regent has said the impact is very  
16 negative on children and educators in the classroom.  
17 So I thank you for listening to me. I can go on but I  
18 know that Joanna Garcia and the other speakers have a  
19 lot to say. Thank you, Chairman.

20 JOANNA GARCIA: Let's go back. Good  
21 morning, Chairman Treyger. It's an honor to speak  
22 before you in the education committee. My name is  
23 Joanna Garcia. I am a public school parent and  
24 education advocate, former president of CEC six, and  
25 former president of President's Council in district

2 six, and presently I serve as chief of staff to State  
3 Senator Jackson. Class size matters is not a sexy new  
4 curricular fix or groundbreaking change in  
5 disciplinary procedure. It's a simple idea and is one  
6 of the single most effective tools we have to improve  
7 the quality of the education our children receive.  
8 That's why I joined the lawsuit and sit here before  
9 you as a plaintiff. I joined the lawsuit with eight  
10 other parents class size matters and Alliance for  
11 Quality Education against the Commissioner of New  
12 York state of Education Department and the Chancellor  
13 of New York City Schools. New York City Department of  
14 Education has not adhered to the contracts for  
15 excellence mandates and NYSED it has not held them to  
16 those mandates. Their failure means our children's  
17 education suffers as an Afro-Latina public school  
18 parent I understand these failures to perpetuate  
19 educational racism because they have detrimental  
20 effects on the student body that is 85 percent black  
21 and brown and predominantly working class. The  
22 problem of educational equity has many potential  
23 solutions. But one that stares us in the face every  
24 time we walk into a classroom is the overcrowding  
25 that dilutes the attention our kids get from their

2 teachers, teachers whose jobs are already difficult  
3 enough because of mis-diagnosis of learning disorders  
4 like dyslexia, and disciplinary models that focus on  
5 punishment instead of consequences. Let me flip it  
6 around and talk about my personal experience. I am a  
7 parent of a child with dyslexia and ADHD. He had to  
8 repeat kindergarten, which by itself I think is  
9 ridiculous. But in first grade, his first grade  
10 teacher had a breakthrough and came to me at the end  
11 of the school day, very excited and said, oh my gosh,  
12 Aries actually was able to blend the words today he  
13 blended, he got it, something clicked, it's working.  
14 And I was just so happy and enthusiastic and hopeful.  
15 But that help that great teacher couldn't sustain  
16 that breakthrough with my son, because the class was  
17 just too large to continue making that breakthrough  
18 with my son. And as a result, my son's education  
19 continued to squandered. That, to me was an  
20 indication of how class size was hurting kids like my  
21 son, and how it was making it very difficult for  
22 teachers to reach children that they identify as  
23 needing extra help. I have another example. My oldest  
24 daughter, who right now is a freshman in college, and  
25 who, when she was in eighth grade, came home and told

2 me that she had another peer had to go into the next  
3 door classroom to bring chairs because there weren't  
4 enough seats in the English class classroom. There  
5 were already more than 30 students, and she told me  
6 that at least one student was sitting on top of the  
7 radiator, not enough chairs in a classroom. And that  
8 was very troubling and is why I was urged to join the  
9 lawsuit. By hiring more educators we can enable our  
10 teachers to reach students where they are. Teachers  
11 can have the breathing room to tailor lessons to  
12 differentiated classrooms. They can forge stronger  
13 relationships with parents to support their students  
14 at school and at home. They can focus on their jobs  
15 as educators instead of feeling pressure to  
16 constantly manage behavior in an overcrowded  
17 classroom. If we are serious about addressing  
18 educational racism, we must get serious about class  
19 size in our schools. We have to be honest about the  
20 problems and clear eyed about implementing the  
21 solutions going forward. I want to end by commenting  
22 on your resolution. I am very much aware, as Afro-  
23 Latina, and as part of an immigrant community, that  
24 the majority of our parents are not organized or  
25 mobilized enough to speak on resolutions to say,



2 wait, something's happened in policy in education  
3 that's going to affect my child's school. So I am  
4 here because I happen to be part of government, I  
5 happen to work in it. So I have an inside track on  
6 what's going on. So I want to be here and speak for  
7 those parents. Because right now, every jurors, who  
8 represents charter networks, effectively sent an  
9 email out to make sure that every single Council  
10 Member on the Education Committee hears from charter  
11 school parents, urging the council members to vote  
12 against your resolution. And I want you to please  
13 hear my voice echoing the voices of those parents,  
14 that are not as organized and say and urge your  
15 colleagues to please pass your resolution. We cannot  
16 afford lifting the cap in our New York City Schools  
17 when we are grossly underfunded and we still have  
18 educational racism to, to address in our system.  
19 Thank you.

20 CAROLINE WEKSELBAUM: Hi, good morning. My  
21 name is Caroline Wekselbaum and I work for New York  
22 State Senator Brad Hoylman. He's sorry that he  
23 couldn't be here but I will be reading testimony on  
24 his behalf. My name is Brad Hoylman, and I'm a state  
25 senator representing New York's 27<sup>th</sup> senate district

2 in Manhattan. Thank you for the opportunity to  
3 testify before the New York City Council Committee on  
4 education regarding school class size reduction. As  
5 the elected representatives for a district with  
6 thousands of families with young children this issue  
7 is a primary concern for my constituents, and as a  
8 public school parent of two young daughters, this  
9 issue is also personal. My constituents and my  
10 children deserve every opportunity to succeed in  
11 school and class size is an integral factor that  
12 determines a student's success. The benefits of  
13 smaller classes are numerous, observable and  
14 empirically proven. We know from ongoing research  
15 that larger class sizes result in worse educational  
16 outcomes for most students. small class size is an  
17 essential ingredient in a quote, sound basic  
18 education, which is the constitutional right of every  
19 child in New York State. Yet children in New York  
20 City are denied this right in large part due to  
21 excessive class sizes. A 2006 decision by the state's  
22 highest court even stated this explicitly, resulting  
23 in the Contracts for Excellence Law, which was passed  
24 by New York State in 2007. In exchange for additional  
25 funding, this law required the New York City

2 Department of Education to improve schools largely by  
3 reducing class size over five years. The law contains  
4 specific class size goals, which vary by grade level  
5 and needed to be met by 2011. Many hope that this law  
6 would finally move the needle on this problem that  
7 impacts on New York students on New York City  
8 students and families. Despite over \$2 billion in  
9 cumulative aid since the law's inception, class sizes  
10 have continued to rise. According to DOE's own data.  
11 The average class size across New York City was 26.3  
12 students, which is greater than any of the goals set  
13 in the 2007 C for E law for any grade level. This is  
14 unacceptable. And must be rectified. It must be noted  
15 that Albany bears much responsibility for these  
16 issues. I have spent the last several years in the  
17 state legislature, including now with my dedicated  
18 colleague Robert Jackson, who founded the campaign  
19 for fiscal equity, fighting to ensure that New York  
20 City receives all the money it is owed by the state  
21 under CFCs. lawsuit. We still have yet to see these  
22 debts fully repaid under an enacted budget. That has  
23 to change and soon. Albany cannot keep telling our  
24 children to wait another year for the education they  
25 deserve. Yeah, I also believe that the city has a

2 responsibility as well to provide students with a  
3 better opportunity to learn, which is why I support  
4 the proposal for the council to allocate 100 million  
5 dollars in next year's budget to invest in beginning  
6 the process of providing smaller classes that all New  
7 York City Children need, but especially our most  
8 disadvantaged students, this amount would represent  
9 less than point 3% of the DOE's overall budget for  
10 next year. Reducing class size would benefit the  
11 performance and well being of those who need it most,  
12 including low income and minority students and those  
13 with special needs. This is especially important when  
14 children are younger so that concerns can be  
15 addressed early before they compound, a 2011 paper  
16 published by the Brookings Institution stated quote,  
17 it appears that very large class size reductions on  
18 the order of magnitude of seven to 10 fewer students  
19 per class can have significant long term effects on  
20 student achievement and other meaningful outcomes.  
21 These effects seem to be largest when introduced in  
22 the earliest grades, and for students from less  
23 advantaged family backgrounds, unquote. Even the most  
24 competent and effective teachers cannot successfully  
25 teach and address the needs of each and every student

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2 in an overcrowded classroom because they cannot give  
3 everyone the attention they deserve. Overcrowded  
4 classrooms not only set up students to fail, but also  
5 their teachers who cannot succeed in this  
6 environment. I was extremely fortunate to have a  
7 world class education. I want this for my children,  
8 constituents and city. I strongly believe that our  
9 city needs to meet the challenges of systemic  
10 overcrowding and large class sizes. The impact of  
11 education are long lasting and extend well beyond the  
12 students we educate to those they touch in their  
13 lives and the contributions they make to our  
14 community and world. A community we must build  
15 together. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank, thank you all  
17 very much. And you know, thank you all for your very  
18 powerful testimony. And you know, I agree. I know  
19 many of us point to the CFE lawsuit which I again,  
20 Senator Jackson has been a champion. And I'll tell  
21 you, it doesn't matter that you're not a teacher, you  
22 are the You are the best friend to teachers and  
23 students and parents in our school system. So, you, I  
24 am very grateful to Senator Jackson, for your  
25 leadership. But I'll even go back before CFE, CFE. I

2 mean, I was a former history teacher and I go back,  
3 you know, I noticed that we have in the audience, you  
4 know, teens take charge who remind us of some deeper  
5 history. Brown versus Board of Education. And one of  
6 the indicators of disparities in the separate and  
7 unequal system was issues of class size. Were in some  
8 communities, mostly mainly white privilege. We had  
9 lower class size, quality educators, folks who are  
10 seasoned, and communities of color, very large class  
11 size, vacancies, and hard to find and hire and retain  
12 seasoned educators. So, that is part of our mission  
13 to desegregate and to integrate and to provide more  
14 equal better outcomes for all kids and all  
15 communities. And so, this is much even deeper than  
16 CFE. But in the case of CFE, I remind the governor  
17 and you know, we heard these, these words a lot in  
18 recent weeks, but no one is above the law. No one is  
19 above the law. From the person in the White House to  
20 the person in the state house. No one is above the  
21 law. And CFE is a legal mandate. And we have a lot of  
22 work to do. And so I just read from the state level  
23 and from the city level, and I would say Senator  
24 Jackson and to the office of Senator Hoylman as well  
25 that when we go back to Albany, I know that you're

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2 mindful of this. But last year, when we looked at it,  
3 we crunched the numbers in the city, there was  
4 actually a \$25 million net cut to city schools, when  
5 you factor in any type of increase in aid versus  
6 mandated cost, and one of the areas that they cost  
7 significantly skyrocketed in was the rent to charter  
8 schools, significant cost. So it was an unfunded  
9 mandate from Albany down to the city. So when I see  
10 advertisements by the governor that we increase  
11 school aid, he leaves out that he mandated increased  
12 costs to city schools. So there was a cut. We could  
13 not make a dent in class size. We could not make a  
14 dent in social work. We had to use city revenue to  
15 use city revenue to hire 100 new full time social  
16 workers in our school system, which I am very proud  
17 of that we still have so much more work to do. But I  
18 thank you for being allies and champions you get it.  
19 And whatever we can do from our end to help and  
20 support you. We have your back and I think you Regent  
21 Cashin as well, for your leadership as well. Thank  
22 you. Yes, we're going to take a five minute recess  
23 just to add some more chairs today and, and we'll  
24 call some students in as well. So there'll be a brief  
25 five minute recess.

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2 [recess]

3 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Okay, we are  
4 restarting the hearing. We're going to hear from, we  
5 have some students here. We'll call up to Naden,  
6 Naden August, Peter Valentine, Edens Absalon, oh  
7 okay, Tiffany Torres, who I know from Teens Take  
8 Charge, Alexander Rodriguez and Loray Forbes. Make  
9 sure your mic is on when you speak and introduce  
10 yourself and you may begin. Make sure it's on.

11 LORAY FORBES: Hello, okay. My name is  
12 Lora Forbes and I'm a Senior at Clara Barton High  
13 School and a student leader at Teens Take Charge  
14 smaller sizes are extremely important, not only for  
15 the students, but also for the teachers. Me being a  
16 student can only imagine how hard it must be for  
17 teachers to have to balance the work so that it  
18 reaches every student's level. I believe that more  
19 teachers should definitely be hired to reduce class  
20 sizes for more teacher to student interactions, and  
21 more people who work on the same or similar paces to  
22 have the same classes. Me personally, I've been to  
23 three high schools, and at each of them class size  
24 has been a huge problem. The first two were already  
25 campus wide schools. So there were more than three



2 schools in the building. Space wasn't at all limited.  
3 Teachers were though it would be 30 to 35 kids in  
4 each classroom. To the outside ear that might not,  
5 they might not think that it's much, but to me, the  
6 student who has to sit in gym and remind their gym  
7 teacher their name once again in February. The  
8 student who can't get a hold of their English  
9 teacher, because there were about 20 kids who needed  
10 to speak to her before me, this student who is  
11 probably failing history, because the teacher can't  
12 have a one on one conversation to assist me in the  
13 work, because the other 34 kids would have the class  
14 in shambles. The student who was a senior getting  
15 work at a 10th graders level because the students in  
16 her class can't write a paragraph. The student who  
17 wants to express her ideas, and leave room for a  
18 little debate, but whose voice isn't heard, ideas are  
19 put away and shut down because there's no time. And  
20 the student who has nobody to gravitate to when the  
21 teacher says it's group work time because they have  
22 no friends. That student is me. I went to the same  
23 middle school as Tiffany right here. It was a one  
24 floor school and it was extremely small and to give  
25 the exact number of students that it had, it was 24,

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2 I mean 264. I now go to a high school with over 1,000  
3 students and it is overwhelming. I feel as if my  
4 fellow students and I are being robbed of the  
5 opportunity to be as big as we can be. I am a black  
6 woman and I am from what many people call the hood,  
7 Brownsville, Brooklyn. I live in the projects. People  
8 have low expectations within the education system for  
9 people who have situations like me. Imagine coming to  
10 school and not being able to achieve as much because  
11 of something many people overlook, like class size.  
12 Schools like Beacon High School raise over half a  
13 million dollars a year using these funds to pay for  
14 additional resources such as that they can reduce  
15 their class sizes by relying on parents for fiscal  
16 support. But that's not the case with schools in my  
17 neighborhood. This really highlights bigger issues  
18 such as inequity and the limits of diversity.

19                   TIFFANY TORRES: Good afternoon. My name  
20 is Tiffany Torres. I'm a senior at Pace High School  
21 and a student leader at Teens Take Charge. My  
22 experience with class sizes vary over the years. My  
23 middle school which I also went to with Loray, where  
24 there were less than 200 students, classes remained  
25 relatively small. There was always a teacher I could

2 go to for help. Administrators were accessible and I  
3 didn't have to worry about asking questions and  
4 disrupting the lesson. High School, however, has been  
5 the opposite experience. Over the past four years, my  
6 class sizes have grown substantially, yet our space  
7 remains limited. My school building houses three  
8 different schools. Mine now outnumbering the other  
9 two and my classes have grown from an average of 20  
10 students to over 30. In the beginning of this school  
11 year, there were 35 students in my AP calculus class.  
12 In a school where students typically underperformance  
13 STEM subjects this has proven to be a difficult size  
14 to manage. Four students have dropped the class no  
15 longer able to handle the rigor and unanswered  
16 questions. I find myself spacing out during the  
17 lessons confused but scared of interrupting the  
18 lesson and distracting the now 31 other students in  
19 my class. Smaller classes allow for more in depth  
20 discussion of topics at hand. Things my teachers  
21 crave, but never have the time to facilitate. They  
22 allow for greater individual attention per student  
23 and a more targeted learning experience. Students can  
24 ask specific questions and have time to receive  
25 answers, boosting our quality of education. But we

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2 all know this already. This ties to a much larger  
3 issue a systemic one. Discriminatory screens both in  
4 middle schools and high schools serve to concentrate  
5 students with the greatest needs in the same schools.  
6 Class size becomes a major issue and when there are  
7 over 30 students in a room with a single teacher all  
8 struggling yet unable to receive the attention they  
9 need. We begin to understand how black and Latin x  
10 students are consistently left behind. After two  
11 years of fighting the DOE and the mayor to address  
12 segregation and other inequities in our systems like  
13 class size. We at Teens Take Charge have a really  
14 simple message for Mayor de Blasio, Chancellor  
15 Coronza and the entire DOE, your time is up. We have  
16 begun preparing for a citywide school boycott. If the  
17 administration does not act fast and issue  
18 comprehensive plan to address systemic segregation,  
19 the youth, us, will take charge and make our voices  
20 heard in huge numbers by boycotting school on May  
21 18<sup>th</sup>. We thank Council Member Treyger for his  
22 continued support of Teens Take Charge and hope the  
23 rest of the council will support our demands for  
24 immediate action from the DOE. Thank you.

25

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Throughout history,  
3 students have led the way. They continue to lead the  
4 way. Students have led movements throughout,  
5 throughout the world. And they continue to show the  
6 courage that at times, adults often lack and so I do  
7 want to just acknowledge and credit you, the courage  
8 you have to come to a city council hearing and speak  
9 so powerfully and real. And I'm going to ask both of  
10 you the same question I asked the Deputy Chancellor.  
11 I asked the deputy Chancellor on a scale of one to  
12 10, 10 being very important one being least  
13 important, how important is class size in receiving a  
14 quality education. You mentioned and hit on many  
15 other powerful issues that impact quality, equitable  
16 education. But in your view and someone that's  
17 students who are in the front lines, how important is  
18 class size from your vantage point and from the  
19 vantage point of your peers from one, from one to 10?  
20 And explain. It's like a, it's like a question of  
21 asking a high school class, but if, whoever likes to  
22 go first, please.

23 TIFFANY TORRES: Absolutely a ten. Just  
24 speaking from experience in mind, not only in my AP  
25 classes, but in my regular classes like a lot of the

2 students struggle in my school, especially in STEM  
3 courses, myself included. And it's been extremely  
4 difficult for me to progress in my science classes  
5 and in my math classes, especially now that I decided  
6 this year to take a, advanced placement courses, it's  
7 been extremely difficult for me to understand what's  
8 going on and to stay engaged. Like there's a  
9 difference between having a good teacher and having a  
10 teacher that can actually handle all of the students  
11 in their classroom and to the best of their ability.  
12 And so like, just speaking about my AP calculus  
13 class, because that's my most recent example. And my  
14 most serious example, like there have been students  
15 who just zone out during the class, they don't really  
16 know what's going on. We're now in our second  
17 semester, so it's too late to even think about  
18 dropping it for the students who haven't already and  
19 our teacher is always like telling us like you guys  
20 can do this, like you, you just have to study and  
21 work hard, like outside of school, but if we don't  
22 understand what's happening during class time, you  
23 can't expect to expect us to be able to teach  
24 ourselves something that we were never exposed to  
25 beforehand on our own. And so it's really important

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2 that students are able to ask these one on one  
3 questions and to facilitate these interesting  
4 discussions to prepare us for college because I know  
5 that that's not going to be the case when I do go off  
6 to college and especially, and that's with me having  
7 additional support outside of my school, and for  
8 students that don't have that additional support it's  
9 a must.

10 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Excellent answer.

11 LORAY FORBES: I definitely agree with  
12 Tiffany. I do believe that it is a 10 and before I  
13 explain I have to ask you a question.

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Please?

15 LORAY FORBES: Do you know what senioritis  
16 is?

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I know what council-  
18 itis is. Yes.

19 LORAY FORBES: Okay. Me personally, I am a  
20 victim of senioritis. And I feel like many people  
21 don't believe that senior, not only senioritis but  
22 like the love for school, it can also, it has to do  
23 with class size, people with large classes, like me,  
24 they tend to not pay attention that much in the large  
25 classes, because if they don't understand something,

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2 it will be hard to grab the teacher's attention when  
3 there's about 30 other kids in the classroom who also  
4 need the teacher's attention. And, like I had said  
5 before. Yeah, so people who work on different paces  
6 are also jumbled into the large classes. So I could  
7 be reading on a college level while there's people  
8 who's reading on a freshman level in the same class  
9 as me and it kind of hinders you from learning as  
10 much as you really can. When teachers would usually  
11 have to go to the young, like the I don't want to say  
12 younger, but like the people who's like reading on a  
13 different level or the people who need more help than  
14 others, and they would need to, like teach the whole  
15 class on that level to make sure everyone is getting  
16 it and everything like that. But if you reduce the  
17 class sizes, and you have classes where it's like,  
18 like in my middle school, they separated the classes  
19 to the levels of the students. So it would be like  
20 801, 801 would be like the standard class, and then  
21 803 would be like the above class like the, the class  
22 that's ahead, if that makes sense. So I do feel like  
23 class size is a 10. That is very important.

24 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I want a couple  
25 things just hit me as both of you were speaking.



2 Tiffany you talked about the word engaged. In our  
3 school system, there is a big difference between  
4 being compliant and being engaged. And many times  
5 school officials will just come in checking for  
6 compliance. But what you just talked about is the  
7 real key to Education, engaging and empowering young  
8 people and students in class. Because you can walk  
9 into a school and say, Okay, these number of kids are  
10 in the seats marked more present. But how present are  
11 they? And how engaged are they, during the course of  
12 the lesson in teacher talk that's called accountable  
13 talk, one or two hands being raised or to talking is  
14 not really a classroom wide conversation. And in my  
15 experience, when I had over 34, 35 kids in my class,  
16 and at 40 minute periods, it was hard to hear from  
17 every single student in that class. The math just  
18 didn't add up. So you reminded me that there is a big  
19 difference between being compliant and being engaged.  
20 And it's in those engaged lessons that we actually, I  
21 think, I think I reached more kids, but it's hard to  
22 do that in very large class sizes. Now, you reminded  
23 me of just, and this is in front of the public to  
24 understand also, look at the small example of seating  
25 arrangement. When you have a large class size, many

2 teachers probably remember this. They like to seat  
3 students in these rows where they just face the back  
4 of their head, which is not actually conducive to  
5 great classroom conversation. I like and I prefer the  
6 Socratic seminar method of having kids facing each  
7 other sitting in a room with like a college seminar  
8 type of course, it's hard to do that when you have  
9 small physical space and 35 kids in a class. It's,  
10 it's impossible. And so that's why they have kids  
11 seated in this factory row setting where the only  
12 thing they're facing is the back of their peer's  
13 head. And it's hard to facilitate a classroom wide  
14 conversation. I'm giving you the micro examples of  
15 what class size impacts in a classroom setting. It's  
16 hard. Kids are not sardines. You can't just stuff as  
17 many as you want into classroom. They're human  
18 beings. They have to learn, and we have to maximize  
19 learning opportunities. I think it's also important  
20 that we heard this from my colleagues before. I  
21 believe whoever's in charge of a school budget, at  
22 the school level needs to also be an instructional  
23 leader. There are difference between managers and  
24 leaders. A manager will say, let's fit as many kids  
25 as possible into a class to maybe save some money

2 elsewhere. A leader understands if you invest in  
3 reducing the class size, having fewer kids, you will  
4 you'll see better outcomes for the entire school  
5 community. So even, it's not just Albany, yeah Albany  
6 has a responsibility. The city has a responsibility,  
7 but even at the school level, we have  
8 responsibilities at the school level to make sure  
9 that we do everything possible to reduce class size,  
10 and to maximize student learning and outcome. So  
11 thank you for keeping it real for showing a lot of  
12 courage that oftentimes adults lack. And I continue  
13 to encourage both of you to not only complete your  
14 schooling, but to consider public office and being  
15 the folks in these seats in a few years. Thank you  
16 very much for your testimony. Thank you. Next, we're  
17 going to hear from Michael Sill from the UFT.

18 MICHAEL SILL: Hello, Chair Treyger.

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: How are you?

20 MICHAEL SILL: Very good. On behalf of the  
21 190,000 plus, UFT members, of which you are one, I'd  
22 like to thank you and the committee for having this  
23 hearing today on class size reduction. We view the  
24 number one issue here as an issue of funding, as so  
25 many of the people who went before me have mentioned.

2 As you know, the state's contribution share of  
3 education funding for New York City has been dropping  
4 since 2011. And any hope of lowering class size drops  
5 with that. I also want to touch on the issue of  
6 zombie charter schools. Sometimes things that are  
7 dead should stay dead. Zombie charters are charters  
8 and been given up. They shouldn't be repurposed in  
9 New York City. And we keep hearing this number 18.  
10 But that's really 54 because one charter can mean an  
11 elementary school, a middle school, and a high  
12 school. 54 schools is about the size of community  
13 district 24. 54 schools the size of the school  
14 district in Durham, North Carolina. 54 schools is the  
15 size of the school district in Indianapolis, Indiana.  
16 It is a large number of schools, it's going to lead  
17 to more overcrowding. And we applaud the city  
18 council's call to not revive the zombie schools. Back  
19 to the funding. As you know, in New York City public  
20 schools are owed \$1.1 billion in state funds as part  
21 of what we consider a successful campaign, the  
22 campaign for fiscal equity. The settlement Contract  
23 for Excellence, which was supposed to direct funding  
24 so that schools, so class sizes could be reduced, has  
25 not resulted in smaller class sizes. And that's

2 because the money wasn't allocated to that purpose.

3 And part of the reason is that, as I said, the  
4 state's portion of funding for New York City Schools

5 has gone down and another part of the equation is

6 that New York City's needs are growing. Alright? In

7 the last decade, the number of English language

8 learners has increased by 24 percent, special

9 education students has increased by 63 percent,

10 children in temporary housing that number is

11 increased by 70%. We have the distinct privilege to

12 serve these children, their families, and their

13 community, we would never turn them away unlike some

14 charter schools, I wonder how many of them are taking

15 the seven train to Hudson Yards. I want to recognize

16 the educators of New York City because during the

17 same time, the high school graduation rate has

18 reached an all time high. The numbers of students

19 taking advanced placement courses, getting into

20 college have also risen. But we deserve a reliable

21 partner in Albany to see these gains were made

22 without the benefit of smaller class sizes. In fact,

23 they were made despite rising class sizes. And can we

24 all just imagine how much greater the progress would

25 be if we had the class sizes in division by the

2 contract for excellence. So we need to get our fair  
3 share from Albany, including the \$1 billion owed so  
4 we can use the contract for excellence framework to  
5 do what it was intended and reduce class size. Now we  
6 are proud and I heard. Deputy Chancellor Goldmark  
7 mentioned this earlier, we are proud of what we did  
8 in this latest round of bargaining, expediting the  
9 process for reducing class size when they are  
10 overcrowded. But we know that sometimes when a class,  
11 a class might be oversized, even when it's not  
12 oversized, depending on the nature of that class. And  
13 the work you put into a classroom as a teacher, as  
14 you know, well, is a bottomless pit. You're never  
15 done. And when you if you had a class of 20 students,  
16 there would be more work to be done. You add 14 to  
17 that as a high school teacher, as you were, as I was  
18 that's incredible. So, you know, we, there have been  
19 improvement. The new process works if you take  
20 district 24, I mentioned that earlier in Queens is  
21 one of the historically most overcrowded districts in  
22 the city. We've reported zero oversized classes by  
23 October that's down from 100, just a year before, but  
24 again, they're still large. Alright? And just to come  
25 back to the issue of zombie charter schools, the main

2 problem is only going to make the problem that we're  
3 talking about worse. Right. The DOE slated to spend  
4 roughly \$2.4 billion next year on charter schools  
5 just siphoning off already scarce resources. It  
6 results in a I think you said earlier a separate  
7 unequal system that draws public funding from  
8 traditional public schools, but doesn't have the same  
9 level of accountability for how the funds are spent,  
10 how children are admitted, retained, discipline,  
11 discipline policies, all of that. New York City's  
12 charter sector already has an estimated 50,000 new  
13 seats, they don't need any more. They're already  
14 unfilled and have already been approved for an  
15 expansion process. We agree with the City Council's  
16 position that we do not need these zombies to be  
17 resuscitated. Thank you for your time. Happy to take  
18 any questions may have.

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And I, I thank you.  
20 And I just, I wanted to share with you that with the  
21 UFT and many folks was that when the former mayor was  
22 recently on television saying ask teachers in New  
23 York City about his experience with teachers. I  
24 remember oh, do I have, I don't have enough time for  
25 today. But on one of the things I do remember was, I

2 was a UFT delegate. In addition to being a teacher, I  
3 was elected by my colleagues to be a delegate. And I  
4 remember that was in the middle of a big fight where  
5 Michael Bloomberg was pushing last in, first out,  
6 trying to really punish and divide the teaching  
7 workforce and try to turn the newer teachers against  
8 the more veteran seasoned educators and vice versa.  
9 And I share the story earlier today that I learned I  
10 became a better teacher not from the PDs run by  
11 interesting consultants that had good food but very  
12 bad presentations. But I learned and I became better  
13 because of my veteran colleagues. When I observed  
14 their classrooms, and they allowed me to observe  
15 their classrooms, I took notes. We debriefed inter  
16 visitation, that's when I became better. So I just  
17 thank the UFT for never caving to the former mayor to  
18 not hurt veteran, to even though he did a number on  
19 the workforce, in terms of morale, in terms of people  
20 that did leave the system. And I will never forget  
21 that because I'm here today because of my colleagues.  
22 But I do acknowledge that the UFT was fighting him  
23 with, with, with a lot of you knows everything that  
24 we had in terms of some of his destructive policies,  
25 so and on the case of the charters what I, I'm just



2 going by the objective things that I've seen now as a  
3 legislator, that Albany last year said that they gave  
4 us an increase in aid but in fact, it was actually a  
5 net cut to our budget. And when I research why it was  
6 at a net cut, one of the biggest costs that was  
7 passed on to us was the charter school rent. And I  
8 just highlighted the example for the public that we  
9 now will be forced in the city of New York to pay for  
10 rent for a charter school at Hudson Yards, one of the  
11 most expensive real estate areas in New York. And so  
12 when you hear from people in Albany say, we're  
13 spending a lot on education, that is not going into a  
14 classroom that is going into some private developer  
15 land words pocket, just to you know, house, a  
16 building that does not serve everybody. It serves  
17 some in the most expensive, the most expensive real  
18 estate areas in New York. And that's, that's a huge  
19 problem. And the last thing, I'll say with the UFT is  
20 that there's another cap that nobody seems to want to  
21 ever talk about. Year after year the only cap I hear  
22 about is the charter school cap. But I am sharing  
23 with you that I visited a consortium school that is  
24 exempt from administering the Regents Exam that  
25 actually has a more rigorous comprehensive way of

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2 assessing student performance. And I observed a  
3 what's called a PBAT or performance based assessment  
4 task, which was extraordinary. And yet, we have a cap  
5 on them. There's a cap on how many schools can open  
6 under that consortium license. And that's a cap we  
7 never talked about. Well, no one ever talks about.  
8 And there are public schools. They are open for  
9 admissions for all. They're showing some promising  
10 data. Nothing is perfect, but there's a lot of  
11 promising data and yet it's the it's like the best  
12 kept secret in New York City. And so that's a cap  
13 that I think I'd like to actually explore and look at  
14 what's working, what's not working. And so I just  
15 want to again thank you for your time and, and for  
16 your, and for your leadership as well.

17 MICHAEL SILL: Thank you very much.

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you. Someone  
19 who is certainly a leader on class size Leonie  
20 Haimson. It's good to have Leonie back. Cynthia  
21 Wachtell, Karen Sprawl, Brooke Parker, Rosalie  
22 Frienze [sp?], Sarah, Margaret, Sarah M. That was my  
23 Delaney card. You may begin, yes.

24 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Okay. I'd like  
25 Cynthia to go first because she's actually reading a

2 statement from Diane Ravitch. And so I think that's  
3 important to go first.

4           CYNTHIA WACHTELL: Thank you for having me  
5 here this morning. I am on the board of class size  
6 matters. My name is Cynthia Wachtell. Before reading  
7 the message from my colleague on the board of Class  
8 Size Matters, Diane Ravitch, I'd like to just add a  
9 couple of notes of my own. I am a professional  
10 educator. I am a professor of American Studies at  
11 University where I also run the S. Daniel Abraham  
12 honors program. And I'm the mother of two sons who  
13 went straight through the New York City public  
14 schools. So I'll just note that I remember when I  
15 first toured kindergartens with my older school, we  
16 would count the heads and our hearts would drop every  
17 time you know we got beyond 20, beyond 25, knowing  
18 what the impact would be on our student, sons as they  
19 went through that school and that continued  
20 throughout the years of their school that we were  
21 struck, and always disheartened when they had large  
22 class sizes. I'll also note that my second son who  
23 graduated last June, entered the school system in  
24 2006, which is the same year of the ruling and the  
25 campaign for fiscal equity decision. In other words,

2 my son went entirely through the New York Public  
3 School System, waiting for that money to arrive. We  
4 had the excitement at the first, the enthusiasm, the  
5 belief that this money would come, would change the  
6 scene and he went through that school system for 13  
7 years without that money arriving. And to me, that is  
8 such a damning statement about the state of funding  
9 for our schools. So having said that, I'd like to  
10 read the statement from my colleague Diane Ravitch. I  
11 am happy to add my voice to those of parents,  
12 teachers and students on behalf of class size  
13 reduction. The single most effective way to improve  
14 instruction is to reduce class size. The benefits of  
15 class size reduction are greatest for the neediest  
16 students. Students who are failing falling behind can  
17 catch up if their teachers has the time to give them  
18 individualized attention. Students are more engaged  
19 and learning is more productive. The research on the  
20 benefits of reducing class size is overwhelmingly  
21 positive. If you are serious about helping children  
22 reduce class size. If you're serious about helping  
23 teachers to be more effective, reduce class size,  
24 reducing class size is more effective and test prep.  
25 It is more effective than hiring coaches and

2 consultants. It is more effective than buying new  
3 hardware and software. It is more effective than any  
4 of the many other quote reforms that have been  
5 imposed by the federal or state government. We have  
6 spent billions on testing and there's nothing to show  
7 for it. New York State scores on national tests have  
8 been flat for 20 years. It is time for fresh thinking  
9 to what works reduce class size. Thank you.

10 LEONIE HAIMSON: So thank you very much  
11 Chair Treyger for holding these important hearings  
12 today which is so central to the concerns of parents,  
13 working teachers and students. As you've heard, my  
14 name is Leonie Haimson, Executive Director of Class  
15 Size Matters. I first want to talk very briefly about  
16 the fact that the previous Chancellor and the PEP  
17 voted to close a very small school in Brooklyn called  
18 P 25. Despite the fact that it was by its own DOE's  
19 impact ratings, it was the fourth best Elementary  
20 School in the entire city and, and the best in  
21 Brooklyn. And the reason we believe it was so  
22 effective was that it had very tiny class sizes of 10  
23 to 16, and excellent teachers, and a good principal.  
24 And it actually outperformed the city on test scores,  
25 even though it's 100 percent poor, 30 percent Special

2 Ed, and 22 percent homeless. It's a natural  
3 experiment in class size that that the city should be  
4 doing everything it can to emulate. They actually  
5 outperformed other similar students by 21 percentage  
6 points in ELA and math, their special needs students  
7 outperformed other special needs students by 47  
8 percentage points. And I'm not someone who thinks  
9 that test scores is everything. But at the same time,  
10 they scored very highly in all the other metrics that  
11 the DOE uses from collaborative teachers to  
12 leadership, etc, etc. And I think one of the reasons  
13 they rated so high is what super Regent Cashin talked  
14 about, because when you reduce class size, it's so  
15 much easier to collaborate and to share information  
16 and to feel empowered. Luckily, we got a court  
17 injunction a preliminary injunction and the DOE  
18 changed their mind at least for another year. But I  
19 think it's a really important example for everyone to  
20 look at because it has happened here. It does happen  
21 and it needs to be copied and spread among more  
22 students. People have talked about those, the  
23 campaign for fiscal equity decision, where it was  
24 very clear that the court said that our kids were  
25 being denied their constitutional right to a sound

2 basic education because class sizes were too large.  
3 And despite the fact that Mayor de Blasio when he ran  
4 for office promised, over and over that he would  
5 lower class size. This has not happened. And I have a  
6 lot of data here. I also have charts in the appendix.  
7 But one of the salient points I want to point out is  
8 that in grades first through third classes of 30 or  
9 more have increased by 3,000 percent since 2007, and  
10 the number of kids in classes of 30 or more are more  
11 than 325,000, about nearly half of our middle school  
12 students and more than half of our high school  
13 students are in classes at 30 or more. So the  
14 averages that DOE talks about are not reflective of  
15 the reality in many of our schools. And then I talked  
16 about the research, which I'm sure you've heard many,  
17 many times. I don't need to recount here. But I do  
18 also want to talk about a couple of other things,  
19 which is that teachers themselves when they're asked  
20 by the UFT, what's the most effective reform they  
21 can, we can institute in our schools respond at 99  
22 percent, 99 percent that class size reduction would  
23 be the best way to improve our schools. The other  
24 point I want to make is that the city council does  
25 have a history way back when of allocating specific

2 funding for class size reduction. They did it in the  
3 days of speaker Vallone, they allocated funding to  
4 cap class sizes at 28 in grades first through third,  
5 though, that's not ideal it's a hell of a lot better  
6 than 32. And the DOE actually complied with that side  
7 agreement until 2010 when Bloomberg decided to stop  
8 doing it and that's when we saw such a huge increase  
9 in those early years where we know it's absolutely  
10 most important and key. So thank you again, for  
11 holding these hearings and for listening to all of  
12 us. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Leonie I thank you  
14 and I was just, I just checked with our, Jan is  
15 everything to us. She is outstanding. That those are  
16 the years before mayoral control were instituted. And  
17 I remind the public that I was the only member of the  
18 Council to testify in favor of changes to mayoral  
19 control to give the council some more power. But  
20 right now we actually have a full mayoral control  
21 system. And so we have the power of oversight. We  
22 certainly have the power to negotiate and we've shown  
23 that we can negotiate. But we have to find every tool  
24 in the toolbox, how we can operationalize the  
25 reduction of class size because as we've learned is



2 that we could even fight to get them more money, but  
3 how do you implement it into the classroom is always  
4 the challenge and, but we have to continue working at  
5 this. And as you heard from even the deputy  
6 chancellor didn't, didn't want to give a number. She  
7 said it's very important class size. Teachers say is  
8 very important. Regent Cashin, the Board of Regents  
9 say it's very important. I former teacher, chair of  
10 the education committee give the issue a 10 plus 20.  
11 It is critically important and it is one of the  
12 biggest equalizers and difference makers. We need to  
13 just make sure that we convince the administration to  
14 operationalize resources towards the reduction of  
15 class size to comply with the law, which they are,  
16 they contest whether it's still the law. But we know,  
17 to me, it's beyond the law, it's the right thing to  
18 do for our kids. So thank you.

19 LEONIE HAIMSON: Yeah I just want to add  
20 one thing that Mayor Giuliani was the mayor back  
21 then.

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah.

23 LEONIE HAIMSON: And he was not very gung  
24 ho on class size or public education in general.

25 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah.

2 LEONIE HAIMSON: And so now we have a  
3 mayor who says he believes in it.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Agree.

5 LEONIE HAIMSON: And he ran on it, in  
6 fact, and we have his signature on it. So I think  
7 that politically it would be very difficult for him  
8 if you were strong advocates for that to say no,  
9 we're not going to do it and given your budgetary you  
10 know, influence I just, I just hope that you do work  
11 as hard as you can. And I really appreciate your,  
12 your commitment to this issue.

13 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you Leonie.  
14 Thank you so much. Next.

15 LEONIE HAIMSON: Anybody.

16 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I'm Rosalie's  
17 friend. And I thank you for the opportunity and I  
18 thank you for holding the hearing on this. As a  
19 retired educational psychologist, I recommend that  
20 class size be reduced in order to enhance student  
21 learning. Most people feel it's self evident that a  
22 teacher can give more attention to each child when  
23 there are fewer children to work with. Research  
24 supports that no factor affects learning as much as  
25 class size. The best research model for learning and

2 instruction is an experiment with a comparison of a  
3 control group and an experimental group with random  
4 assignment of subjects so that achievement can be  
5 attributed to the factor that varies between the two  
6 groups. A further requirement is that there be a  
7 large enough number of participants so the results  
8 can't be due to chance. These research conditions are  
9 very difficult to make when conducting research in  
10 schools. The one study on class size that exemplify  
11 these conditions was the student teacher achievement  
12 ratio experiment, or project star which was conducted  
13 in Tennessee during the late 1980s. This four year  
14 study included 11,600 students attending 80 schools.  
15 It found that a large reduction in class size  
16 significantly improves the learning of the children  
17 in the small classes, compared to children randomly  
18 assigned to large classes. The estimated effects of  
19 class size are largest for the neediest students,  
20 black students, economically disadvantaged students,  
21 inner city students, and boys. Research in how  
22 students learn sheds light on an important reason  
23 that small classes enhance learning. Our role as  
24 educators is not to produce obedient drones to do  
25 what they're told on the factory floor. We want our

2 children to analyze information and analyze  
3 situations. We want problem solvers. Everyone knows  
4 that telling things to children does not do much for  
5 learning. Children have to be actively involved in  
6 the learning process in order to connect new ideas  
7 and procedures to their prior knowledge so that the  
8 new material can be drawn on in new situations in use  
9 to solve new problems. We must teach children to read  
10 between the lines figure things out and remember what  
11 they learned in one situation when it will be useful  
12 in another situation. For this type of learning to  
13 occur, the children must actively try out new ideas,  
14 discuss things with one another and work on projects  
15 together. Classes must be small enough so that  
16 teachers can work with small groups of students and  
17 can have time to analyze original writing. And in  
18 depth assignment from every child. Reducing class  
19 size is an investment, not an expense. And I would  
20 also like to add since assessment is part of the  
21 field of educational psychology that these tests that  
22 they're talking about for accountability. The  
23 American Educational Research Association says  
24 they're not valid. The American Statistical  
25 Association says they're not valid. Valid means that

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2 the scores are not due to what they're trying to  
3 attribute it to. Thank you.

4 SARAH MORGRIDGE: Thank you for holding  
5 the hearing on this topic. My name is Sarah  
6 Morgridge. I'm going to skip my background. You can't  
7 hold the hearing on class size without soul, without  
8 also bringing in the FCA capital plan and the  
9 enrollment capacity and utilization report. Reducing  
10 class size means New York City will need more  
11 classrooms. The question becomes how many? Well, that  
12 depends on which yardstick you use. There's the UFT  
13 contract, there's the blue book, and there's the  
14 contract for excellence. There are very different  
15 levels of need that emerge depending on which  
16 yardstick you use. Clearly, far fewer Middle School  
17 seats, will appear to be needed in my class size of  
18 33 or 28. Rather than what the state has said is  
19 optimal, 23. Clearly, far fewer High School seats  
20 will be used, needed if class sizes set at 34 or 28  
21 versus 25 in the contract for excellent. State  
22 standards in the contract for excellence were  
23 developed in consultation with the experts who  
24 studied the impact of class size on academic  
25 outcomes. They're independent of budget

2 considerations or realities. They're independent of  
3 political negotiations, contracts for excellence  
4 class size standards are the real deal. Why would the  
5 city of New York use class size standards that are  
6 not supporting optimal academic outcomes? Yes, they  
7 may be aspirational, but any standard that does not  
8 use academic outcomes, as its primary consideration  
9 is severely flawed. Contracts for excellence class  
10 sizes are what should we use to measure our school  
11 buildings to see if more classrooms and more seats  
12 are needed. SCA takes care with its design process to  
13 build educational environments that support academic  
14 achievement but then goes on to measure school usage  
15 by a yardstick that's not aligned with the standard  
16 set in the contract for excellence. I have a call to  
17 action that goes beyond this resolution for money. I  
18 urge the members of this committee to consider  
19 sponsoring legislation that will compel all reporting  
20 of class size to use see free benchmarks in making  
21 any assessments. And I further use, or I urge the  
22 council as a whole, to use its to influence to  
23 advocate for the alignment of the union contract with  
24 the class size standards in C for E, nothing else  
25 really makes since. The way class size standards are

2 determined for our students should be based on proven  
3 methodologies that support learning rather than  
4 diminish it. Our children deserve our best selves.  
5 Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I thank you and I,  
7 very powerful testimony. And you're absolutely spot  
8 on about the role that the SCA capital plan plays in  
9 this. And even in even in terms of the contract. The  
10 reason why I asked the administration about the  
11 number of grievances that they receive is that even  
12 the contract many times is being violated. They, so  
13 they violate the UFT contract numerous times. They  
14 vile, they're in obvious violation of the CFE and  
15 contract for excellence. And the real question is  
16 enforcement and how do you make them comply? And the  
17 city council will continue to use its oversight  
18 power. And I think, folks know I'm not shy to speak  
19 my mind, and I will continue to do that. But that's  
20 been my appeal even to our state legislators is that  
21 it's not just money. It's just basic enforcement as  
22 well. And I have not seen enforcement. I, I just I  
23 don't see adequate enforcement on these on these  
24 critical issues. And so your testimony is very  
25 powerful. And it is noted that how much more work we

2 have to do both locally and statewide. So thank you  
3 very much. Next, whoever would like. Thank you.

4           BROOKE PARKER: Hi, my name is Brooke  
5 Parker. I'm on New York City Kids Pack and I'm  
6 representing Class Size Matters as well. And I'm  
7 speaking on behalf of Nylar Rosario who could not be  
8 here and I'm reading her testimony. Good morning. My  
9 name is Nylar Rosario. Hi. I'm a parent of a high  
10 schooler Gainer McCown high school in district 31 and  
11 a middle schooler at MS 839 and district 15. Thank  
12 you education Chair and members of the committee for  
13 the opportunity to testify today. Today I'd like to  
14 provide testimony on behalf of New York City Kids  
15 Pack, a parent led political action committee focused  
16 on the York City public schools. Both of my children  
17 have been in large classes since kindergarten. I'm  
18 very concerned that my children have not been able to  
19 receive the attention and feedback needed from their  
20 teachers. This year my daughter's class has 32  
21 students. The teacher often cannot respond to  
22 students' questions given the size of the class. My  
23 daughter is often frustrated by the inability to  
24 obtain help from her teachers. Her school is located  
25 in a school district that has grown but schools have



2 not been built at the same pace. According to  
3 advocacy groups like class size matters, class size  
4 has increased sharply in all districts since 2008 and  
5 are 15 to 30 percent larger on average than in the  
6 rest of the state. My children and I are experiencing  
7 this firsthand in District 15. After attending  
8 elementary and middle school in District 15 My son is  
9 now in a school with an average number of 21. In  
10 District 31 in Staten Island, I can see the  
11 difference in the type of attention he now receives  
12 from his teachers. His just, his tests scores have  
13 increased. He's had better grades and overall I find  
14 him to be more engaged in school. It's unfortunate  
15 that more black and Latino children like him are not  
16 in school districts like district 31. According to  
17 chalk beat since Mayor de Blasio took office  
18 achievement levels have been flat or declining as  
19 measured on the NAEP exams, the most reliable  
20 national assessments, and the gap in test scores  
21 between students of different economic and racial  
22 groups has widened. Today, I would like to join with  
23 class size matters and ensure and urge the mayor and  
24 the New York City Council to allocate 100 million  
25 dollars to be specifically allocated towards hiring

2 teachers to lower class size, starting first in the  
3 early grades and in struggling schools. That amount  
4 would pay for the salaries of about 1,000 new  
5 teachers which could reduce class size and as many as  
6 4000 classrooms as adding a new teacher to grade  
7 level lowers class size for all the other students in  
8 that same grade in the school. These funds would  
9 represent less than 1 percent of the \$27 billion at  
10 the deal he is spending this year my children has  
11 spent more than eight years in classes with excessive  
12 student teacher ratios, they've been lucky to have  
13 wonderful teachers. But this ratio simply doesn't  
14 allow for the one on one attention that a classroom  
15 requires. We need to solve this problem now not in  
16 five or 10 years. In my daughter's school, many  
17 teachers do not have their own classrooms and must  
18 teach in the library or computer lab rendering these  
19 rooms unusable by the rest of the school. This also  
20 makes it impossible for these teachers to use  
21 learning tools on which teachers with their own  
22 classroom space rely, such as charts and maps and  
23 displays of student work. The hallways are spilling  
24 over with students between classes creating an unsafe  
25 environment. Classes are at maximum size or beyond

2 opening the school to potentially union grievances.  
3 According to class size matters about half the school  
4 districts there's, almost done, there's space to  
5 lower class size now. In some overcrowded districts  
6 pre k classes can be transferred into CDOs, many of  
7 which are under enrolled. Kindergarten classes could  
8 be moved to half to half empty DOE operated in pre k  
9 centers, where there is more space to reduce class  
10 size. Overall there does need to be an expedited and  
11 expanded capital plan. Another hundred million in  
12 upfront costs to amortize amortized over time would  
13 find more than 21,000 additional seats, given the  
14 current current 50 percent state reimbursements for  
15 capital expenses. Thank you for the opportunity to  
16 testify today please allocate 100 mil toward lowering  
17 class size for my children and many students like  
18 them that come home frustrated because they asked  
19 their teacher a question.

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank, thank you  
21 very much for your powerful testimony and we'll note  
22 that we, we pushed them to include \$125 million in  
23 city tax levy dollars the other fiscal year. One of  
24 the goals was to reduce class size, also to hire more  
25 social workers and other supports. What we learned is

2 that, and that's at the discretion of the school  
3 leaders and we learned a year later that that money  
4 was mainly used to just retain 900 staff positions.  
5 Otherwise, it would have been excessed. So in it,  
6 that's why I say it is more than just getting the  
7 money which they need. And there's no question about  
8 it. It's how do we operationalize it? You heard my  
9 questioning to administration about the metrics they  
10 use when they visit schools. And even though we  
11 acknowledge that our schools are still underfunded,  
12 but not to even ask how class size is the lens  
13 through which we improve instruction, sends a  
14 powerful message to principals that the fact that  
15 it's omitted from quality reviews, it's omitted from  
16 the principal performance checklist items. And I  
17 don't want to, you know, speak for every, but every  
18 school has what's called a CEP where they set goals.  
19 I, I don't think class sizes on many of those CEPs.  
20 So that's the issue on the ground that in addition to  
21 the fight for more money and CFE, their current  
22 infrastructure does not even encourage or measure or  
23 gauge class size reduction efforts in our local  
24 school communities, that is a culture problem within  
25 the DOE because principals, you know, will tailor

2 their limited resources around where they are being  
3 measured. And I can't, I'm not, and I, and I  
4 understand that because they want to make sure that  
5 their schools are being in compliance, and they're  
6 not on some list. And I understand that but at the  
7 same time, the best instructional practice is to try  
8 to reduce class size, but yet, the DOE doesn't ask  
9 about that anywhere and, and that is a culture issue  
10 that we have to change within DOE.

11 BROOKE PARKER: I would argue it's not a  
12 culture change. It's, it's intentionally omitted  
13 because they're also claiming the parents... [cross-  
14 talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Oh, can you please  
16 speak into the mic. I'm sorry, yeah.

17 BROOKE PARKER: They're also claiming that  
18 parents are making choices based on class size when  
19 they have absolutely no idea what the class size is  
20 at any school that they're choosing. So they know  
21 what they're saying when they say that and they know  
22 that parents have absolutely no idea what class size  
23 looks like, since there's nowhere anyone can find out  
24 about what class has looks like. But I also want to  
25 point out that Nyla's testimony was really clear with

2 possibilities of removing Pre-K from a lot of public  
3 schools and putting them in CBOs to reduce some of  
4 the pressure for space within a school and I think  
5 both kindergarten, Pre-K considering those options  
6 can be really powerful for a lot of space allocation  
7 needs. And I don't want that lost in the, in the  
8 method of assigning is a really, a really, a real  
9 possibility to make better use of our CBOs, under,  
10 you know, the under enrolled CBOs.

11 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: And apparently a lot  
12 of the DOE Pre-K centers are half empty. They  
13 overbuilt they spent a billion dollars on building  
14 these centers and they're half empty. The Pre-K  
15 people will tell you that. So those could provide  
16 homes for kindergarten, for smaller kindergartens,  
17 and then you move the kindergartens out there's more  
18 space for first graders and second graders it's  
19 simply untrue that if they didn't overcrowded schools  
20 with Pre-K expansion, hundreds of schools were  
21 further overcrowded. Hundreds of thousands of  
22 elementary kids were further overcrowded because of  
23 the expansion of Pre-K. And yet these Pre-K centers  
24 and CBO's are starved for kids.

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2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you very much.  
3 Next. Sure.

4 KAREN SPRAWL: Hello. Can you hear me?  
5 Okay? Okay, good morning. My name is Karen Sprawl.  
6 I'm a mother of one school aged son with special  
7 needs and two adult daughters. Together we all  
8 attended New York City public schools and every  
9 decade since the 1960s. But it was not until 2007  
10 when my youngest child entered kindergarten that I  
11 became deeply involved with public education  
12 advocacy. I'm also here to provide testimony on  
13 behalf of New York City Kids Pack, a political action  
14 committee that includes parent leaders from all five  
15 boroughs that Informs electorates and supports  
16 candidates for office who have demonstrated a  
17 commitment to improving our schools. And you're  
18 definitely one of them. And I want to thank you for  
19 that. Jan, I also want to thank you for making this  
20 happen. You are amazing, fearless. And I just can't  
21 say enough about you. We have some great folks,  
22 Malcolm and my chief of staff...

23 KAREN SPRAWL: Yes, yes, yes.

24 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: The whole committee  
25 staff.

2 KAREN SPRAWL: ...we start naming names, but  
3 I just I had to make sure that I got you and Jan. We  
4 know from countless research studies that lowering  
5 class size leads to enormous health and economic  
6 benefits, and as well as substantial savings, and  
7 most importantly, enhances the chance of successful  
8 academic outcomes for all children, especially  
9 disadvantaged ones, and children of color. When my  
10 son entered to kindergarten in 2007, he was first  
11 enrolled in a charter school that soon pushed him  
12 out. It was very public, it was the New York Times,  
13 saying that we could not provide him with a smaller  
14 the smaller class size he needed, he needed. In the  
15 public school he was transferred to he was fortunate  
16 enough to be put in a classroom with only 20 kids.  
17 His class size remain between 18 and 23 through third  
18 grade, despite the difficulties, learning challenges  
19 that he faced daily having ADHD he thrive during  
20 those years in both general and inclusion class  
21 settings, at one point, he, he was well above grade  
22 level, and the teacher suggested that we consider  
23 applying to a gifted program for him. But when he  
24 entered the fourth grade, his class size increased to  
25 29 students. And it was apparent very early on that



2 he could not learn in the classroom with that many  
3 students. We watched in horror as my son unraveled  
4 and became emotionally unhinged whenever he was in  
5 school, his teacher didn't even realize that he could  
6 read or write because he only participated in class  
7 when was, when he was in a small group. By mid year  
8 he had required an arsenal of mandated clinical,  
9 behavioral, and academic support services that also  
10 include a crisis power professional who shadowed him  
11 everywhere. His IEP power services were poorly  
12 managed and the DOE provided no real oversight. He  
13 had meltdowns daily in class his attendance suffered,  
14 he was subjected, subjected to frequent suspensions.  
15 And as his mental health continued to decline he had  
16 to be hospitalized several times from school.  
17 Needless to say the DOE, I'm about to wrap up, the  
18 DOE's refusal to lower class size has been  
19 devastating for my son and hundreds of thousands of  
20 other students. After two or more years of this we  
21 concluded that the DOE you could not adequately or  
22 humanely educate my son. He's now in a private school  
23 where his class size is small. His teachers are well  
24 trained and supported. And he's happy he's learning  
25 and he's preparing for admission to college. And his

2 tuition is \$93,000 a year being paid by the DOE. Even  
3 as a class, even as class size reduction may be  
4 costly. I would like the DOE and our elected  
5 officials to think about the, to think about the  
6 cost, not lowering. Think about the costs of not  
7 lowering class size. He's one child. His tuition is  
8 more than tuition for Columbia. One of the fastest  
9 growing expenses in the city's education budget is  
10 paying for private schools for children with special  
11 needs. Over the last four years, there has been a 13  
12 percent increase in the number of students with  
13 disabilities enrolled in private schools at the DOE's  
14 expense. More and more children have been suing to  
15 get their children out of public schools at the cost  
16 of nearly double to more than \$325 million. At the  
17 same time the number of public schools diagnosed  
18 having special needs children have increased by 9  
19 percent to more than 22,000 students at the cost of  
20 \$2 billion annually, yet nearly a quarter of the  
21 students with disabilities do not receive their  
22 mandated service. I'm convinced that fewer children  
23 would be diagnosed with special needs in the first  
24 place if class sizes are smaller. Since 2008 and 2009  
25 school year has also been the thresholds increase in

2 the number of elementary grade students enrolled in  
3 inclusion classes in which children with disabilities  
4 are placed in classes with general education students  
5 and two teachers. Inclusion is a great policy yet for  
6 my son and many others. Their classes are often too  
7 large to provide substantial feedback and quiet  
8 client climate that they need. And many parents like  
9 us will soon become desperate and move the children  
10 into smaller self contained classrooms or private  
11 placement. I would like to suggest to the DOE and the  
12 City Council the following; that the city allocate at  
13 least \$100 million to lower class size, which is  
14 likely to save millions more on special education  
15 costs, both in terms of the cost of service providers  
16 and for private school placement. Secondly, someone  
17 needs to analyze whether large class sizes of many of  
18 these inclusion classes are really working for our  
19 children, and whether it would be far better to split  
20 these classes in half. Can you imagine if instead two  
21 teachers in a class of 28 or 32 do we divide up into  
22 two classes of 14 and 15? This would be ideal for so  
23 many students who otherwise suffer and get left out  
24 or act out in these large classes. I strongly believe  
25 that both our special education and general education

2 students would have academic and social emotional  
3 needs met better address and smaller class size, this  
4 would be far more successful, and it would save the  
5 city a lot of money in the end. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you and I, I  
7 am, I'm sorry that the system really failed you and  
8 your child and very sobering powerful testimony. And  
9 I've also drawn attention to the significant costs in  
10 special education, particularly outsourcing it to  
11 some other institutions when we should be insourcing  
12 and finding ways to serve kids within our system. And  
13 again, I agree with you wholeheartedly that one of  
14 the one of the most effective ways of better serving  
15 kids is reducing class size and hiring more  
16 educators. So thank you very much. Appreciate.

17 KAREN SPRAWL: Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Appreciate the  
19 panel. Thank you. Next, we'll hear from Randie  
20 Levine, Dianna Cruz, Lori Podvesker, Dr. Jacqueline  
21 Shannon, Daniel Katz, and Joshua Aronson.

22 JACQUELINE SHANNON: Thanks. Hi. Thank you  
23 chair Treyger for holding these important meetings,  
24 hearings today. My name is Jacqueline Shannon and I  
25 am an associate professor and the Department Chair of

2 the Early Childhood Education in our Education at  
3 Brooklyn College. And in 2014, I helped write a  
4 letter to the then Chancellor Farina warning her that  
5 the increases in class size that had occurred since  
6 2007 in New York City public schools, particularly in  
7 the early grades of K to three threatened to  
8 undermine the gains one might otherwise expect from  
9 the expansion of the Pre-K across the city. The  
10 letter which is attached to my testimony, was signed  
11 by over 70 professors of education, psychology, and  
12 sociology. Sadly, we received no response from the  
13 chancellor. Since we sent this letter more than five  
14 years ago, city has made very little progress and  
15 lowering class sizes which are still far larger than  
16 they were in 2000. And seven, especially in the early  
17 grades, kindergarten through third grade or those  
18 very early years, where the research is most crystal  
19 clear and convincing that class size is a strong  
20 determining effect on learning, especially for our  
21 disadvantaged children and students of color. And yet  
22 the number of children in kindergarten in classes of  
23 25 or more, has risen by 68 percent since 2007, and  
24 the number of first through third graders of 30 or  
25 more has increased by nearly 300 percent, no 3,000

2 percent. Luckily, class sizes are strictly limited by  
3 state law by, for Pre-K, none when they're enter  
4 kindergarten. The only limits on class size are the  
5 UFT contractual limits which are far too large and  
6 only inconsistently enforced. One of the best  
7 experimental studies of Pre-K, recently conducted in  
8 Tennessee by researchers from Vanderbilt University  
9 found 1,000 randomly selected economically  
10 disadvantaged children from pre K through third  
11 grade, and compared them to the control group who did  
12 not attend Pre-K. Not only did the children who  
13 missed the Pre-K can catch up within a year or two,  
14 but the children who attended Pre-K had fallen behind  
15 their peers on many achievement measures by the third  
16 grade. The lead researchers of Vanderbilt study were  
17 surprised. They had speculated about why the program  
18 failed to produce positive results. As a co  
19 investigator, investigator Jael Pharaoh concluded  
20 Pre-K is a good start, but without a more coherent  
21 vision and consistent implementation of that vision  
22 we cannot realistically expect dramatic effects. Too  
23 much has been promised for one year of preschool  
24 intervention without the attention needed to the  
25 quality of experiences children's have and what

2 happens to them in K to two, K to 12. The other co  
3 investigator Mark Lipsy pointed out that the study  
4 raises important questions about what was happening  
5 in the other early grades to cause these students who  
6 felt, fall behind. The biggest mystery here is what  
7 is, what in the world is going on with these children  
8 as they enter kindergarten, first, second, and third  
9 grade that is not building on what we seem to be have  
10 come out of the Pre-K results. There is no mystery at  
11 all, to what New York City children as they are in  
12 kindergarten in public schools, is what as we wrote  
13 in our letter to the chancellor, nearly five years  
14 ago, New York City schools have the largest classes  
15 in the state and among the largest in the nation. We  
16 believe strongly that more equitable outcomes depend  
17 on more equity and opportunity. We commend you for  
18 your commitment in expanding Pre-K programs. But as  
19 you have know, early childhood ed does not begin and  
20 end at four. We urge you now to focus on lowering  
21 class sizes in all the grades which are improving  
22 teaching and learning in our public schools. Thank  
23 you for this opportunity. And just one quick little  
24 point. Ed Zigler, who is the father of Head Start he  
25 has 20 years ago was saying the need to bring in the,

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2 those concepts and content up, up to the third grade  
3 not, you know, dismantle that good work. Thank you.

4           RANDIE LEVINE: Thank you for the  
5 opportunity to speak with you about the importance of  
6 reducing class size. My name is Randie Levine and I'm  
7 the policy director at Advocates for Children of New  
8 York. We're really here today to echo the call of our  
9 fellow advocates, students, parents, teachers, and  
10 administrators to reduce class size. When Advocates  
11 for Children does workshops for families on the  
12 kindergarten admissions process, parents are often  
13 shocked to learn that kindergarten classes can have  
14 as many as 25 students. Families, especially those  
15 who have children with disabilities, or learning  
16 English as a new language, worry about how their  
17 children will get the attention they need when the  
18 teacher has to focus on two dozen children. We are  
19 similarly concerned about students sitting in large  
20 classes, where it is difficult for teachers to manage  
21 challenging behaviors in a supportive trauma informed  
22 manner. And to appropriately differentiate  
23 instruction to meet the needs of a range of learners.  
24 For example, the early elementary grades are a  
25 critical period for literacy development. Students



2 who are not proficient readers by third grade are  
3 four times more likely to leave high school without a  
4 diploma. Every year Advocates for Children hears from  
5 families of students with dyslexia and language based  
6 learning disabilities who have made it to middle or  
7 high school without ever having mastered foundational  
8 literacy skills. This is in part due to the fact that  
9 students who struggle with reading are more likely to  
10 slip through the cracks, cracks, their difficulties  
11 unnoticed and unaddressed, when they are one of 25 or  
12 30 children in a classroom. Yet, as you know,  
13 according to the preliminary class size report for  
14 the current school year, more than 17,000  
15 kindergarteners are in classes of 25 or more  
16 students, while 8,400 first graders are in classrooms  
17 with at least 30 children. When a child is struggling  
18 with reading and needs extra help, instruction and  
19 intervention must be targeted to an individual  
20 student's specific areas of need. Without such  
21 targeted evidence based intervention, students fall  
22 further and further behind and the consequences grow  
23 increasingly severe. But even the most skilled and  
24 well trained classroom teachers can only provide  
25 prompt individualized support to a limited number of

2 children. A teacher faced with a large number of  
3 struggling students will be forced to conduct  
4 educational triage. This is particularly concerning  
5 in light of the fact that only 43 percent of black  
6 and Hispanic third graders in New York City scored  
7 proficient in reading in the 2019 state test.

8 Finally, in our case work at Advocates for Children,  
9 similarly to what the speaker on the last panel  
10 noted, we have seen large class size pose a barrier  
11 to the full inclusion of students with disabilities.  
12 When a student with a disability is overwhelmed in an  
13 integrated co-teaching class with 30 students and is  
14 struggling to keep up, the only option is to move  
15 them to a more restrictive setting, a self contained  
16 special education class, which has far fewer  
17 students, but provides no opportunity to interact  
18 with non-disabled peers in the classrooms. There is a  
19 subset of students for whom a 30 person class is  
20 clearly inappropriate, but whose needs are not so  
21 significant as to require a special education class.  
22 Reducing class size would disproportionately benefit  
23 this population of students with disabilities who  
24 could both receive appropriate support for their  
25 learning needs and reap the advantages of inclusion

2 in a more reasonably sized ICT class. Thank you for  
3 the opportunity to testify. I'm happy to answer any  
4 questions.

5           LORI PODVESKER: Hi, I want to thank the  
6 committee for holding this important hearing and you  
7 as well Chairman Treyger. My name is Lori Podvesker  
8 and I lead the policy work at Include NYC. I'm also a  
9 parent of a high schooler in a district 75 program.  
10 Include works with hundreds of thousands of families  
11 since our founding 37 years ago helping them navigate  
12 the complex special education, service, and support  
13 systems. We testify today to highlight the need for  
14 smaller classes and urge the city to allocate  
15 additional funds in this year's budget towards hiring  
16 more teachers. There's a direct relationship between  
17 class size and the over referral of general education  
18 students for special education services, a teacher's  
19 ability to deliver student centered instruction and  
20 with interventions site interventions with fidelity,  
21 and effective classroom management. These factors  
22 lead to inferior proficiency in graduation rates for  
23 students with disability, disabilities, and the  
24 extent to which the nearly 220,000 school age  
25 students with IEPs in New York City public schools

2 are college and career ready. For example, math  
3 proficiency rates for students with disabilities in  
4 grades three through eight last year was 18 percent  
5 compared to 53 percent for general education  
6 students, there's an even greater gap in English with  
7 only 16 percent of students with disabilities scoring  
8 proficient compared to 53 percent of non disabled  
9 students. In addition, only 53 percent of students  
10 with disabilities graduated in four years, compared  
11 to a graduation rate of 77 percent for all students.  
12 More teachers leads to smaller class sizes. Smaller  
13 class sizes, coupled with supporting teachers with  
14 more training would allow teachers to provide  
15 differentiated instruction and meet the  
16 individualized special education, social, and  
17 behavior needs of students. With fewer students in  
18 the classrooms, teachers will have the ability to  
19 give and document methodologies and interventions,  
20 such as response to intervention, implement,  
21 universally designed learning, and most importantly  
22 to teach foundational literacy skills such as reading  
23 and writing. In order to close the achievement gap in  
24 New York City between disabled and non disabled  
25 students, we believe all teachers need training in

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2 the following areas, basic characteristics of  
3 disabilities, especially learning, emotional,  
4 intellectual, physical, ADHD, and sensory processing  
5 disorders, multi tiered system of supports,  
6 behavioral supports, interventions, and strategies,  
7 effective co-teaching, training on the value of  
8 inclusion and creating an inclusive school and  
9 classroom environment, and how to partner with  
10 parents in their child's education. The quality of  
11 academics and supports for students with disabilities  
12 should not be compromised because they are educated  
13 in an inclusive general education and integrated co  
14 teaching classrooms that are too large. Thank you for  
15 taking the time to consider these important matters.  
16 Thank you.

17 DIANNA CRUZ: Can you hear me now? Okay.  
18 Thank you. So on behalf of the Hispanic Federation,  
19 my name is Dianna Cruz. I am the Director of  
20 Education Policy. And I thank you for your time. I  
21 know it's been a long day. But this is an important  
22 you know topic that a lot of, a lot of our recent  
23 groups I'm here to advocate for. So class size  
24 matters. We have heard pretty much the whole the  
25 whole time here. We know the class size has shown to

2 have a direct effect on students learning educational  
3 success and is one of the primary variables in  
4 education system that has shown long term benefits  
5 for students. Smaller classrooms support teachers  
6 effectiveness to provide individual support to  
7 students and this is especially critical for students  
8 with higher academic needs, disabilities, and from  
9 multilingual learners. When teachers have the ability  
10 to individualize their methods based on students'  
11 needs rather than providing general instruction, due  
12 to a large class size, it increases the likelihood  
13 for students graduating high school and achieving  
14 post secondary success. The Hispanic Federation,  
15 along with the many advocates here strongly supports  
16 the 100 million allocation in the city budget to  
17 support the reduction of class size in the Pre-K to  
18 12 classrooms. It is imperative that early education  
19 in schools to primarily serve academically at risk  
20 students are prioritized when allocating funding for  
21 you to reduce class. This funding is intended to  
22 allow schools to hire additional teachers and one of  
23 the things that we want to advocate, advocate is that  
24 we focus on students in bilingual and multilingual  
25 support students. We know the New York City needs

2 teachers who have a specialties and who are qualified  
3 and certified to teach students who need specific  
4 care and instruction. Funding to reduce class size  
5 increase the number of teachers will directly address  
6 the shortage crisis of ESL and bilingual teachers.

7 Multilingual learners students are growing at a rapid  
8 rate and are currently make up almost 50 percent of  
9 the students population. When we look at the numbers  
10 I say why New York City holds 62 percent of the  
11 students multilingual learners, and for many of the  
12 students Pre-K is the first year of their formal  
13 education. The reality is that a large percentage of  
14 the students do not speak English at home and in  
15 order to adequately facilitate their academic growth.

16 New York City must provide funding to support the  
17 decrease of classroom size, and the increase of  
18 certified teachers that are qualified to teach them.  
19 As... the number of multilingual learners has been  
20 growing but the resources and supports offered to the  
21 students has not. Classroom sizes and hired in higher  
22 teacher supports are necessary to provide the  
23 students with successful educational outcomes. This  
24 is especially true when we look at the lack of  
25 certified bilingual teachers and, and English

2 speakers. I'm sorry, bilingual education and English  
3 to speakers of other languages teachers. In fact that  
4 is an 100, a 10 percent... of the number of certified  
5 teachers across the state in many, in many be higher  
6 in the city. The lack of attention to reduce class  
7 size is having a negative effect on multilingual  
8 learners. And if this issue is not addressed, it can  
9 change, and if this issue is addressed, it can change  
10 the students school outcomes. Drop out rates should  
11 never be higher than graduation rates. And yet, in  
12 2007, the four year multilingual learners dropout  
13 rate was 30 percent higher than the 27 four year  
14 state graduation rate and the 20 percent city  
15 graduation rate. In the same year, only 13 percent of  
16 multilingual learners were proficient in math and  
17 five percent in English in New York state  
18 assessments. This numbers clearly illustrate how  
19 paramount immediate action is for this group of  
20 students. And New York City must do better by  
21 multilingual students population in lowering  
22 classroom sizes and employing certified ESL and  
23 bilingual teachers that will make a difference. Thank  
24 you.



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2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I just want to say  
3 very quickly, I know your testimony is spot on.  
4 Correct because I was that teacher.

5 DIANNA CRUZ: Yeah. No, I appreciated the  
6 comment that you made. And you know, being in the  
7 classroom we know that students with disabilities,  
8 multilingual learners, so as we advocate for  
9 classroom sizes, we'd really do need to think about  
10 teachers quality and who is coming into the  
11 classroom.

12 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Your testimony is  
13 spot on. Everyone's testimony is spot on, it just,  
14 when you were speaking I was, I was that rookie  
15 teacher in a class full of multilingual learners. And  
16 I didn't have enough training and need a lot of help.  
17 And the support they gave me was insufficient or  
18 poor. And I had to learn from other colleagues and,  
19 but my students' time is just, is also precious and I  
20 needed a lot more support. And so you are, you are  
21 spot on, and we need to do a lot better job of hiring  
22 more bilingual staff that speak the languages of our  
23 student population. So thank you very much for your  
24 testimony. Absolutely. Next, please.

25

2 DANIEL KATZ: I'd like to thank you for  
3 the opportunity to speak today. My name is Daniel  
4 Katz. I'm a lifelong educator. I've been teaching  
5 since I started my career as a high school ELA  
6 teacher in 1993. Currently, I am a teacher educator  
7 and Chair of the Department of Education Studies at  
8 Seton Hall University. More importantly, I am the  
9 father of two children who attend New York City  
10 public schools PS 334 in Manhattan. And additionally,  
11 I am also a former member of the Community Education  
12 Council for district three, it's my pleasure to speak  
13 today in support of class size reductions as one of  
14 the most robust ways to support our city students.  
15 Although I agreed to speak as an academic in the  
16 field of education, I'd like to begin by relating two  
17 very different experiences that I've witnessed as  
18 both a parent and a CEC three member. As I mentioned,  
19 my children attend PS 334 in Manhattan which is one  
20 of the schools in the city that is fortunate enough  
21 to have the capacity to engage in aggressive  
22 fundraising. We can rightly question why it is the  
23 parental resources have such an impact on children's  
24 educational opportunities in a city with this much  
25 wealth, but we can also look at how raised funds are

2 used in the case of PS 334, those funds contribute to  
3 teaching assistance in all early grade classrooms. As  
4 a result during their crucial early education years,  
5 my children enjoyed classroom conditions that all  
6 children in our city deserve. This stands in stark  
7 contrast to what I witnessed as a member of CEC three  
8 at PS 208 in Harlem, we heard pleas from families  
9 about a situation where an entire grade enrolled just  
10 fewer than 40 students who were all crammed into a  
11 single classroom, parents were pleading for an answer  
12 and explaining how detrimental this situation was for  
13 their children. Our Superintendent repeatedly said  
14 the situation was the result of principals budgeting  
15 choices, and could not explain how it was the  
16 district administration could allow that situation to  
17 persist. What was left unacknowledged was the very  
18 cold calculation that it was better to harm an entire  
19 grade of children whose parents did not have deep  
20 fundraising potential than it was to pay to staff to  
21 classrooms that would have been well below maximum  
22 class cap, but still large enough to be viable  
23 classrooms. This is a situation that plays out daily  
24 in the lives of our children, and the few schools  
25 that can use copious fundraising to supplement their

2 budgets. Young children enjoy smaller effective class  
3 sizes while many, many other schools, students and  
4 teachers struggle with class sizes that impede  
5 effective classroom communities and that hinder  
6 instruction and services. Research over, studies over  
7 time are clear on this matter. Class size reduction  
8 is an effective way to improve school outcomes. It  
9 increases student learning, it decreases disciplinary  
10 referrals, it increases teacher retention. As a  
11 school improvement strategy that is highly popular  
12 with both teachers and parents and surveys. In  
13 September 2014, 73 education scholars submitted a  
14 letter to DOE urging action to reduce class sizes as  
15 part of any school improvement plan and warning and  
16 warned that failure to do so would undermine other  
17 efforts. Yet classroom sizes remain stubbornly high,  
18 we exceed class size averages for the state at every  
19 grade level. All grade levels have increased average  
20 class size since 2007. And a quarter of our students  
21 are in classes that exceed 30 students. It is very  
22 probable that laudable efforts in recent years to  
23 reform our schools were hindered by class sizes that  
24 made proper support for students and teachers, much  
25 more difficult than was necessary. There's an

2 opportunity to act in support of reform that was  
3 passed over in 2014 when the DOE we was asked to do  
4 it. Relatively small commitment in funding would  
5 leave room for other innovations while adding enough  
6 new teachers to reduce class sizes in thousands of  
7 classrooms. It is up to our leaders to think  
8 comprehensively. Thank you for your attention and  
9 time.

10 JOSHUA ARONSON: Hi, I'm going to try to  
11 be brief and not read my talk. So maybe I can entice  
12 you to read the what I've submitted. I want to tell a  
13 positive story about this because I think we are we  
14 underestimate. We say things like class size matters.  
15 But I don't...

16 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Have your name for  
17 the record.

18 JOSHUA ARONSON: Oh, yes, Joshua Aronson,  
19 PhD, NYU professor, author, father of two public  
20 school kids, survivor of the public schools myself.  
21 So I, about 15 years ago, the Department of Education  
22 sent me around to sort of explain my research to all  
23 kinds of schools all over the country and I stumbled  
24 across a school that looked too good to be true. In  
25 four years, it went from the bottom of the state in

2 Maryland in test scores to the very top. It serves  
3 kids with 80 per 6, percent of whom are living below  
4 the poverty line. Some kids in houses without running  
5 water, who you can smell from across the room. Yet,  
6 so that test score change struck me as it possible,  
7 so I went to check it out, worrying that I would find  
8 a school another school cheating on their test  
9 scores. What I found instead was I think one of the  
10 answers to the questions about how do you, how do you  
11 educate poor kids? How do you turn their lives  
12 around? A couple of points that will reiterate the  
13 literature. One, this school had a great leader, who  
14 believed in small classes, made sure that whatever it  
15 took her classes were going to be no more than 12  
16 kids. And she had to work hard to make that happen.  
17 The achievement of these children in test scores are  
18 one thing and I think most of us don't believe that  
19 they tell the whole story. Think about this  
20 statistic. A kid graduates from this school, in the  
21 sixth grade goes to middle school, sixth, seventh,  
22 eighth, goes all the way to high school. And then  
23 graduates, if you went to this Little school that  
24 used to be the bottom of the state. your odds of  
25 becoming a National Honor Society recipient are 50

2 times bigger than any other school in the district.  
3 So for example, last year they, the district had  
4 eight of these students that are the best students in  
5 the district. 100 percent of them, went to the  
6 smallest little school that has 150 kids. Smallness  
7 really works. And if you go to Choate, Andover,  
8 Exeter, places that cost \$80,000 a year for your kid  
9 to go, they will not be in a classroom more than 10  
10 kids, because they know you cannot hide your  
11 incompetence in a small class. Because they know when  
12 your teacher knows things about you. They immediately  
13 start advocating for you. They see things from your  
14 point of view. A couple of things about money. I met  
15 teachers at this school who are willing to teach for  
16 nine to \$15,000 a year? People with three, with three  
17 kids, they have job offers from places that would  
18 double their salary and they wouldn't have to drive  
19 very far. And I said, why are you here? They said,  
20 because this place loves children. Because this place  
21 loves teachers. Yeah, if you love teachers, you don't  
22 make them do an impossible job of getting to know 35  
23 kids, you just don't treat them that way. And this  
24 place is awash in gratitude. It's impossible to  
25 imagine all that success doesn't save money in

2 addition to spending it. So for example, we I  
3 interviewed a child, I'm writing a book about the  
4 school, a child who went there six years ago. She's  
5 now in high school. And my entire class at NYU  
6 interviewed this teenager, about when she was a  
7 little kid, and they said, was there ever any  
8 bullying in your school? She goes, well, there was  
9 this one time when one kid said something that was  
10 slightly not nice to another kid. That was it. If you  
11 don't have any fighting, any bullying, any students  
12 that are disrespectful, you can do great things. So I  
13 do, I go into classrooms and I look at how engaged  
14 the kids are. In New York City classrooms about at  
15 any given time, half the kids have their heads down  
16 on desks. In my school in Maryland, hundred percent  
17 of the kids are like, eyes wide open loving your  
18 teacher listening. And the test scores show it but  
19 that's not nearly the best thing about this school.  
20 So I want to end with invitation. I brought a  
21 billionaire to this little school in Maryland,  
22 because he asked me how I'm building a great school  
23 for poor children. What should I do? I just brought  
24 him to Maryland. And he immediately brought me on as  
25 his executive advisor because the school was exactly



2 what we need. School operates on a shoestring budget.  
3 And here's the secret. When you do right by kids,  
4 everybody wants to be part of it. So when you give  
5 your all to a child and they achieve well, because of  
6 it, you get lots of free labor. Every time I go back  
7 to this school, there are people just wanting to be  
8 part of that. And so you get a good student to adult  
9 ratio simply because you get free labor. The same  
10 thing that built the pyramids, although without  
11 slavery is saving the school. Free labor is a  
12 beautiful thing. And you get it when you do right by  
13 children. Thank you very much.

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: It's a, very  
15 powerful stuff we hear today. And one thing of note  
16 I've heard from the, first of all, thank you to the  
17 professors who are here as well. I do note that and  
18 folks working in our higher education fields. I noted  
19 the issue with regards to PTA fundraising of being  
20 used to hire teacher assistants and, and I, I applaud  
21 that. It just, I, folks remember the bill that I  
22 advanced the reporting bill that showed the ability  
23 of some school communities to do that, and many, the  
24 inability to do that. And under a deal, we mantra,  
25 equity and excellence for all regardless of your zip

2 code, when in fact your zip code does impact the  
3 number of opportunities our kids received. I mean,  
4 there's, I think what we crystallize here today, and  
5 we're going to continue to hear from more folks today  
6 is that we know this works. Research, the facts on  
7 the ground, this works, but yet, is not even measured  
8 in any way or official way within our official school  
9 system. And I am someone that sat through, when I was  
10 a teacher, a quality review. So that's why when the  
11 administration said that, oh, it is not used to  
12 evaluate schools, I'm not sure what time my Twilight  
13 there in but it is used as an evaluation tool. I've  
14 sat through a state, what they call a joint event,  
15 joint intervention team visit, it's called the JIT.  
16 I've sat through that as well, when the state and  
17 city come to your school and ask questions about and  
18 they evaluate you. I have sat through a number of  
19 these visits, not one person from the city or state  
20 ever asked my school community about our efforts to  
21 reduce class size. I don't think I heard class size  
22 at all. What I did here were questions about why are  
23 more kids passing the Regents? Why aren't more kids  
24 advancing from 9th to 10th grade. They talked about  
25 attendance, they talked about other things, rubrics

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2 and so forth, which are also important discussions.

3 Not one person asked us about class size. So the

4 impact of that is that when they leave the building,

5 and the principal then has to begin working on the

6 budget for the year ahead. With limited amount of

7 resources, where do you think she directs most of

8 those resources? Test prep, test prep, test prep.

9 That is what happened in my, in the case of my

10 school, and I always share the story of Anthony

11 Ramos. Some of you might have heard, the previous

12 hearings, a student, where I taught who excel through

13 our art theater program. Well theater and art in my

14 school was cut because of Bloomberg budget cuts to

15 move towards old test prep. So the amount of

16 instructional negligence that has occurred because of

17 how we measure student proficiency or student

18 progress is outrageous. And the research is on our

19 side, the facts on our side, the kids are on our

20 side, we have to find a way to actually get them to

21 do the right thing and to enforce it, and to ensure

22 compliance and I thank you for validating those

23 powerful experiences. Thank you to the panel.

24 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: If I could just offer

25 just this..

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2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Please.

3 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: ...quick 30 seconds

4 because...

5 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes.

6 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: ...we, when our friends

7 from DOE were here, and they were talking about

8 funding, and they were talking about budget, and they

9 were talking about how money is spent. You know I

10 don't want to, I don't want to disrespect the fair

11 funding formula. I think it is a very good thing that

12 schools with very high needs children get higher per

13 pupil allocations, but what they never talk about and

14 what I don't hear enough people pinning them down on

15 is the question of adequacy before we talk about fair

16 student funding. What I mean by that, is that how can

17 we have schools where the superintendents are blaming

18 the principals for their budgeting decisions. But

19 somewhere along the line, the, the base level of

20 funding, that, where we say if we're going to have a

21 school, what are the things that it has absolutely

22 has to have, who are the people that it has to have.

23 An apparently librarians are not among those things

24 that all schools have to have.

25 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: There are nurses.

2 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yeah.

3 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And what you just  
4 described is exactly what we challenge the state to  
5 also do. That in, with fit, with FSF for folks to  
6 understand, the city tax levy dollars. Every school  
7 regardless of enrollment gets \$225,000 just open up  
8 shop. That's still insufficient, but it's, it's a  
9 base amount. We, I challenge our state leaders when I  
10 testified at a state panel about foundation aid. I  
11 challenged them. What does a sound basic education  
12 look like when you open up a school. Because to me,  
13 it is not normal to have a school without a full time  
14 social worker, it is not normal to have a school  
15 without a full time counselor, it is not normal to  
16 have a school without a full time nurse and a full  
17 time librarian, and other key instrumental key  
18 services provided for our children. It's not normal  
19 to me. And the state said it's an interesting  
20 exercise. But we still have 700 schools in our system  
21 today that do not have a full time social worker. The  
22 state does not even require elementary schools to  
23 have a counselor and we have kids in crisis at the  
24 early grades. Speaking of early grades, the number of  
25 kids in crisis that I'm hearing about is alarming.

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2 Particularly and, and educators continue to call  
3 which I have, I have this, I love my colleagues, but  
4 I'll call this out. You do not call 9-1-1 on a seven  
5 year old having a bad day in a school. That is  
6 outrageous and it should. That is just another  
7 indictment against the system. So I thank all of you  
8 for validating powerfully the experiences of our  
9 kids, and we have so much more work to do. Thank you  
10 so much. Appreciate the panel. Next panel Nuala  
11 Odarity Noranjo, Nicole Hammons, Kim West, Emily  
12 Helstromm, and Jasmine Davila. We'll call some more  
13 folks up because we have some folks that left Jessica  
14 Siegel, Tinasha, Tanisha, forgive me, Tanisha Grant,  
15 it's been a long day Maria Rita, Maria Rita, and also  
16 Ebby H. Honsapoulous. Did Jessica come up. Okay.  
17 We'll also call up Alexa Avilez, Alexa, thank you.  
18 Alright, what, whoever is ready first that, you can  
19 may begin. Make sure the mic is on and you state your  
20 name.

21 ALEXA AVILEZ: Oh, there it is. Good  
22 afternoon. Thank you so much. My name is Alexa  
23 Avilez. I'm a proud mother of an 11 and a 14 year old  
24 New York City public school students. I've served as  
25 a PTA president and a district 15 Elementary School

2 for about 10 years. And now I'm serving on the school  
3 leadership team in the middle school. I've been  
4 barred from that in high school from my daughter. I'm  
5 a member of Brooklyn community board seven and the  
6 chair of the New York City Youth Board at the  
7 Department of Youth and Community Development. Thank  
8 you so much for the opportunity to testify at the  
9 hearing today and for taking time to listen to, to  
10 the direct experiences of our families in the public  
11 school system today. Esteemed city council members,  
12 thank you for your work. And I encourage you to  
13 continue zealously advocating in support of our  
14 children and to support this proposal to allocate 100  
15 million to lower class size. Imagine your child or  
16 your favorite person in the whole world needed  
17 surgery. And the day you showed up, you were informed  
18 that there had been some budget cuts, and the agency  
19 had the money, but they're going to put it somewhere  
20 else. They tell you that rather than using kind of  
21 the latest evidence based techniques, they're going  
22 to kind of use some old stuff that's relatively  
23 unsuccessful. But you know, that's what they've been  
24 doing. Imagine they tell you, the surgeons actually  
25 are going to operate with one hand tied behind their

2 back, and they actually won't be able to see very  
3 well. They'll tell you that the operating room is  
4 packed with 33 other patients. How are you feeling  
5 about this surgery and the chances of success? I can  
6 tell you I'm not feeling good. I'm actually quite  
7 angry. I'm wondering why my child is not receiving  
8 the best care. I'm wondering whether doctors and the  
9 administrators are seemingly okay with these current  
10 conditions and continue to perpetuate them. The same  
11 dynamic obviously is playing out here in the  
12 education system with our children. Reducing class  
13 sizes has been identified as one of the top reforms.  
14 We've heard it all day. The evidence is clear. And  
15 yet we seem to be okay with not following the data  
16 and worsening conditions. My own children have  
17 struggled with the impacts of crowded, crowded  
18 classrooms. I've witnessed many teachers too  
19 overwhelmed by the large numbers and competing needs.  
20 In my city council district, district 30, a vibrant  
21 immigrant community we have hundreds of English  
22 language learners, hundreds of special needs children  
23 who are struggling in general ed classes. Imagine for  
24 a minute what a class of 32 feels like for an ELL  
25 student with special needs, it feels like you're



2 trying to actually learn something in the middle of  
3 Times Square on New Year's Eve night. Imagine how  
4 successful that's going to be. I'm in District 15,  
5 with some of the largest increases in class sizes  
6 since 2006. One instance burns in my head just last  
7 year with my daughter. I was, I'm almost done I'll  
8 wrap up quick. My daughter telling me and her upset  
9 little voice when I pressed her about why she was so  
10 engaged in school. She said, Mommy, there's so much  
11 happening. The teachers spend most of their time  
12 trying to discipline kids. They're running from one  
13 thing to the next. We haven't been able to get  
14 through anything. This is a waste of my time. She  
15 also talks about how sad she felt for her teacher. As  
16 you would imagine, this broke my heart. We are  
17 failing her. And we are failing hundreds of thousands  
18 of kids in New York City School System. Interestingly  
19 enough, our city finds money to build jails, to  
20 support developers, to flood the train station with  
21 police when people can't afford to pay the train  
22 fare. But when we ask for increased budget for our  
23 most prized possession in society, we seem to be in a  
24 flux. Failure to prioritize funding for reduction of  
25 class sizes is telling our children, our families,

2 our teachers our administrators, they are not  
3 important. We need to stop repeating the old  
4 mistakes, ignoring the evidence, and we need to make  
5 a full body commitment to the success of New York  
6 City's children. And I'm also in full support of your  
7 resolution. Thank you.

8           JESSICA SIEGEL: My name is Jessica Siegel  
9 and I'm, I just retired as an associate professor of  
10 of education English in Journalism from Brooklyn  
11 College after working there for 18 years. And before  
12 that I was a high school teacher at three different  
13 high schools in New York City where I work for 12  
14 years. I worked at Seward Park High School, which had  
15 30, 3,500 students, at Abraham Lincoln, which had,  
16 has 1,750 students, then at the heritage school in  
17 East Harlem, which has 300. And yet the differences,  
18 the most telling difference, the most important  
19 factor in student learning is not size of school,  
20 despite all the brouhaha, especially under Bloomberg,  
21 is class size, which we all agree on, and I kind of  
22 feel like I'm you know, gilding the lily here because  
23 so many people have said so many important things,  
24 especially the students. So let me just add a few  
25 more things to the, to the pile and the argument. I

2 taught aspiring and working English teachers at  
3 Brooklyn College on how to teach writing, which,  
4 frankly, I feel like with all the other things that  
5 English teachers do, turning kids on to literature  
6 learning genres, exploring their own lives, I think  
7 when it comes down to it, one of the most important  
8 things that English teachers do is teaching writing.  
9 And, unfortunately, even though there's this talk  
10 about writing across the curriculum, and I know many  
11 social studies teachers do their bit. It comes down  
12 to the English teachers. And I, my feeling is that  
13 after working in education for over 30 years, that  
14 it's, that it's facility in writing and being able to  
15 write in a variety of forms, styles and purposes,  
16 that is an important factor in determining whether a  
17 student can succeed in college and in a career after  
18 that. Every career requires writing of some sort. An  
19 ability to write is crucial enabling students to  
20 transform their lives and to bridge the class chasm.  
21 Yet according to, to the stats that Class Size  
22 Matters has collected over 159,000 high school  
23 students are in English classes with more than 30  
24 students. So this thing about averages, you have to  
25 look, you know, you have to look a little deeper than

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2 that. That's 47 percent of all, of all high school  
3 students, and 55 percent of students in social  
4 studies classes, your, your discipline, the other  
5 class where students do concentrated writing are in  
6 classes of 30 or more. So let's look at some of the  
7 numbers. If an English teacher has five classes of 34  
8 students a day she's responsible for 170 students,  
9 and all of us who are writers know that writing is  
10 revising that students really learn to write through  
11 revising, and in, in fact, it's something you want to  
12 teach your students to do instinctively, you want  
13 your students to revise then those 170 papers times  
14 time are now multiplied by two or three. And during a  
15 semester students have three or four major  
16 assignments and homework and smaller assignments. How  
17 many papers are English teachers responsible for? I'm  
18 going to ask if it's okay for you to read something  
19 from one of my students who is a working teacher in  
20 the Bronx. I asked. I asked these, these teachers  
21 that I've taught to tell me about what it's like for  
22 them teaching writing and how many students they  
23 teach. This is from her. She's an amazing teacher. My  
24 largest eighth grade class is a whopping 37 students.  
25 I teach two more classes one with 32 and the last one

2 with 28. Both, both include English language learners  
3 and students who require push in services for their  
4 individualized education plans. The need for feedback  
5 for writing and reading intervention is very high. I  
6 try to meet with students to assist them in their  
7 revisions. Not only was I just able to leave brief  
8 and hurry feedback on the original paper, which took,  
9 took me over two weeks to read, but I could only  
10 devote about a minute to each student to explain how  
11 to implement the feedback. Even then it took days to  
12 get to each student. I feel as though I'm being torn  
13 to shreds when I'm helping others, their eyes hungry  
14 and ready and yet they're, they're unable to reach  
15 them. It's as if you have you have one life raft and  
16 must choose which child gets saved. It's heart  
17 wrenching and demoralizing.

18                   NICOLE HAMMOND: Good afternoon, Nicole  
19 Hammond, CEC district 29. Thank you for having this  
20 hearing. It is nice to come in and see you Council  
21 Treyger so passionate about this. I have been a  
22 parent advocate for both of my daughters. I've raised  
23 my hand for their education. Soon as they went into  
24 public school, I am a husband, are public school  
25 proud parents, and so advocating as a mom, then a PTA

2 president, then President's Counsel, and then seven  
3 years on CEC. The level from one to 10, where class  
4 size would matter for me, as a mom, a 10 for sure.  
5 Going through this system for the past seven to 10  
6 years, I would say nine, only because I know that  
7 there are other things that have to come into place  
8 as you grow and learn, you understand. Class size is  
9 important. If the DOE could take the model of the  
10 Department of Health for summer camp, which the ratio  
11 for staff to student is purposely made small for a  
12 time where education and engagement is in its purest  
13 form, and kids grow and learn. That would be our  
14 perfect world. I've been in fights with SCA, I've  
15 been in fights with DOE in regards to making sure  
16 that we get what you say we're supposed to have, that  
17 the fair student funding, although we present this,  
18 at my CECs every single year, the numbers stay the  
19 same. I don't see how that's fair. I don't understand  
20 where it distributes. And why. And why is there not a  
21 weight on the class size itself, and it's only on the  
22 student. Grodenchik is in my district. I have 35  
23 schools, he has three. The three that he has is on  
24 the cusp. And yes, Queens is growing and we do have a  
25 large population. And the schools that we're getting

2 new is not really going to change the problem of  
3 overcrowding that we have in our buildings, the  
4 school, the seats that are coming up are for Pre-K  
5 and 3-K, which we're getting in September. But  
6 unfortunately, those babies are going to get into  
7 kindergarten and first grade and have to sit with 28  
8 to 30 other children. My daughter was in first grade  
9 and there was 38 kids in the class, and they wouldn't  
10 collapse it or split it because there were not enough  
11 teachers. I'm not going to take up everybody else's  
12 time but PTA at that time, we'll fund, we'll get it,  
13 because you know, parents are passionate. So we're  
14 going to try. We'll do what we need to do to get it.  
15 But as you said zipcodes do affect those things and  
16 fundraising efforts do affect those things. But the  
17 heart of it and wanting to do it is definitely there  
18 for the parents. So I believe that we do need this.  
19 We do need the money. I agree with everything that  
20 everybody's testimony here today has said, and I hope  
21 that our conversations are not just conversations.  
22 Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I thank you and  
24 you've kind of completed the whole, I guess the, the  
25 trifecta where I've asked that question of like,

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2 administration, students, parents, folks are giving,  
3 the administration did not want to acknowledge on the  
4 record that it's a 10, but I think they know in their  
5 hearts it's a 10. Students we heard clearly it's a  
6 10, former teacher, chair of the committee, I'm  
7 calling it a 20. And we heard from parents and I mean  
8 it's, it's beyond common sense at this point, and I  
9 appreciate your you're serving in so many different  
10 hats and roles, not just on behalf of your kids but  
11 on behalf of really all kids in our, in our system.  
12 And I thank you so much for your for your service of  
13 being here today. Thank you. Sure. Thanks.

14 JASMINE: Hello. So my name is Jasmine  
15 Esvillan. I'm from CEC six. I'm a parent with an IEP.  
16 My son just started first grade. And I have another  
17 one that will be too. So I am new to this. I'm also  
18 part of the PTA, part of the SLT. And a few things  
19 like with my son, my personal story is that he was in  
20 ICT class in kindergarten with kids, with 24 kids.  
21 And other people may say well, that's a pretty decent  
22 size especially when I hear that some ICT classes  
23 have 30 kids, but I say for my son, that was too many  
24 kids. He wasn't concentrating. He was, he was in the  
25 point to that I was worried that he will get left



2 back. And from the beginning of before he even  
3 started school because he did come from a school that  
4 had only in the classroom 10 kids with three  
5 teachers. My fear was that he will not be able to fit  
6 in the 20 somethings class. So the moment went in, I  
7 told them that I was interested in this program, I  
8 didn't get it right away. But when I had my IEP  
9 meeting, they told me that he does need. And the  
10 school that my son goes to is the only school in  
11 district six with program. So in March, he finally  
12 got what he needed and was placed in this program,  
13 which only has 12 kids, and I saw a huge difference.  
14 He is where he's at and where he needs to be. But  
15 unfortunately, not all kids that have IEP, that have  
16 special needs or are on the spectrum like my son,  
17 because he's also on the spectrum but yes he also has  
18 ADHD and he has anxiety. And then why parent heard is  
19 when it comes to IEP what a people don't know is an  
20 actual documents, a legal documents. These schools  
21 need to follow these things, especially when it says  
22 in my son's case, a 12 to one. A class with 30 kids  
23 is a violation of that child's IEP. In 2003, the  
24 campaign for fiscal equity case, and the state court  
25 of appeals conclude that the class size was too large

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2 in New York City and yet, nothing has been done.  
3 Mayor Bill de Blasio promised when he was elected,  
4 that he was going to make class size smaller, nothing  
5 has happened. Research studies and I, me personally,  
6 I think research are great. I don't know how you feel  
7 or anyone else feels but I'm kind of tired of  
8 research because the fact that there's a research  
9 from 1980 that someone had mentioned before that  
10 happened in Tennessee with Project Star that shows  
11 from K to three, that smaller classes does make a  
12 difference, and the fact that they earn better  
13 grades, they get better test scores, there's less of  
14 a chance of them being held back, there's less  
15 disciplining issues, they're more likely to graduate  
16 high school on time, they're most likely to graduate  
17 in college with a stem degree. And I say that because  
18 especially in district six and other districts  
19 they're constantly pushing for STEM. And, you know,  
20 let's do what needs to be done. And I'm almost done.  
21 And I know someone brought up how in more seats are  
22 being placed, and I know someone mentioned in Queens,  
23 but in district six, we're being told that more seats  
24 are not going to be added, even though their schools  
25 are overcrowded. For example, PS 187 is overcrowded

2 by 114 percent. There are classes in district six,  
3 that the classes are being taught in the hallways.  
4 They're, we're being told, in district six we're not  
5 getting more seats. And I also want to conclude  
6 because the fact that someone had mentioned how when  
7 sometimes charter schools, kids leave charter  
8 schools, and I want to rephrase that because it's not  
9 always them leaving because leaving means that it's  
10 optional, when a lot of times these kids are being  
11 kicked out? And yes, it does have an impact in our  
12 public schools. Because as I said, I am part of that  
13 PTA. When kids come into the public schools, money  
14 has to be moved around. Ours, the school that my son  
15 goes to, we have to pay for the music teacher because  
16 there's not enough money in the budget. In January I  
17 paid \$2,100. We do not have a librarian because the  
18 person retired, the parents wants the PTA to pay for  
19 a librarian. But in the fact that in district six  
20 there's over 80 percent of low income families it is  
21 hard to fundraise and tell these parents to donate to  
22 the fundraisers, so we can maintain a bank accounts  
23 to do the things that needs to be done, that should  
24 be done. So thank you again for this time.

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you. And you  
3 are spot on about IEPs are not recommendation. These  
4 are, these are meant legal mandates. You also just  
5 described situations where many teachers don't feel  
6 that they're actually teaching. They're just covering  
7 material, because the system that we're talking about  
8 here, where you reduce class size that's conducive to  
9 learning. But we have a system for the most part that  
10 is not really centered around learning. It's around  
11 covering and trying to be compliant towards  
12 regulations and mandates that are not really geared  
13 towards actual student learning. So you are correct  
14 and very powerfully expressed the views of many  
15 parents who I've heard from, both as my time as a  
16 teacher and now as Council Member. So thank you for  
17 leadership as well. Thank you. Next.

18 TANISHA GRANT: Hello, Assemblyman. My  
19 name is Tanisha Grant. I am a public speaker. I am a  
20 member of Alliance for Quality Education. I am a  
21 member of Coalition for Educational Justice. And I  
22 also sit on CEC district five in Harlem. As a parent  
23 of three and a grand, and a had, and a grandparent of  
24 one artistic son I heard a lot of things said here  
25 but there was things that I did not hear, I mean I

2 did not hear said here. The term children falling  
3 through the cracks is problematic for black and brown  
4 people. I think that if white people are going to be  
5 centered in this work, they need to know how to be  
6 culturally responsive. Culturally responsive is a  
7 part of class size matters. Okay, that's my first  
8 point. The Regent lady who set up here and said about  
9 how class size matters, and how she noticed in  
10 poverty areas where her school was in poverty areas,  
11 when she lowered the class size it made the kids less  
12 angry, that's problematic. Don't suggest that because  
13 the class sizes are not what they're supposed to be  
14 our children are angry because that is not the case.  
15 This is a age old system. I'm going to sit here and  
16 say what everybody else is not saying. I stand on the  
17 shoulders of my ancestors who built this country.  
18 This system was built this way to keep black, brown  
19 and poor people down. It was not built to educate our  
20 children because if it was built to educate our  
21 children, there would be more concern for our  
22 children, there would be more care for our children.  
23 It is not, we would not be sitting here asking for  
24 \$3.8 billion when everybody knows that it's supposed  
25 to come to us. You say, nobody is above the law. But

2 it's looking to me like Cuomo and Trump is. That's  
3 what it's looking to me like. So I'm out here to  
4 fight for my kids, because they're all my kids. Any  
5 kid that is so-called being left behind, or is not  
6 getting the education that they deserve, are my kids  
7 and I am out here fighting for them. And I just don't  
8 appreciate the fact that we're not centered in this  
9 conversation when it's about us. It's about red  
10 lining. It's about all them things that have been put  
11 in place to oppress people. And I didn't hear anybody  
12 say that here today. And that's a problem for me.  
13 Because if we're not gonna deal with where the  
14 problem comes from then we're not gonna get anywhere,  
15 no matter what money we get, if we're not dealing  
16 with what's really, where it's really coming from.  
17 And I think that there's no, nobody better to speak  
18 to the problem than the people that have to deal with  
19 the problem every day. It's good to come up here with  
20 data and statistics, but we live it. We are in our  
21 schools. We are doing everything that we can to help  
22 our children. Another thing that I didn't hear  
23 mention today, more black teachers. I hear teachers,  
24 teachers, teachers, what about black teachers,  
25 children come to school with a culture. That culture

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2 is often stripped away from them because the  
3 workforce is 80 percent white women and the  
4 curriculum is 80 percent written by white women like  
5 this young lady down here said about being an English  
6 language arts teacher. The whole pediology [sic] has  
7 to change. We have to, our children have to see  
8 themselves in their stories. That's also a part of  
9 class size matters. All of that is this, in the same  
10 Weldon [sic] pot, we cannot talk about class size  
11 matters with everything that goes with it. But thank  
12 you for your time. Thank you for listening to me and  
13 I hope that you heard me.

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Definitely heard  
15 you. Definitely appreciate you and just so you know,  
16 that I actually I... advance a measure that passed,  
17 that's now law, that's going to require the DOE to  
18 report on staff demographics, because you are correct  
19 that our children deserve and need to see an  
20 education workforce that looks like the city speaks  
21 like the city and could better reach them. And, and  
22 that was my personal experience when I became an  
23 educator that I needed help and support and one of  
24 the ways was to definitely hire more staff that was  
25 reflective of the student population. So I, I

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2 appreciate your testimony. Thank you very much. Next  
3 please.

4 EVIE HANZOPOLIS: Hi, my name is Evie  
5 Hanzopolis. And I'm the mom of three children. One  
6 who has gone through the system and has graduated and  
7 is in college and two who are currently New York City  
8 public high school students. Currently, I serve as  
9 the Executive Director of Global Kids, which is a  
10 nonprofit that works in all five boroughs, primarily  
11 with youth in underserved communities, to empower  
12 them to take action on critical issues facing our  
13 world, and also support them in their efforts to  
14 address things that they really, really care about.  
15 I'm also the president of the High School of Art and  
16 Design PTA and I'm a member of the SLT at John Bowne  
17 High School. Throughout my years as an educator, a  
18 past PTA president at PS 85 and PS 122 in Queens and  
19 as a mom of three, I know that from my own personal  
20 experience that class sizes should be given to  
21 students, should be smaller to give students a better  
22 chance of success. You've heard the data, research  
23 proves this is a simple strategy of reducing, of  
24 improving outcomes for young people, particularly our  
25 most vulnerable ones so that they can not only have



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2 learning outcomes improved while they're in school,  
3 but also for their future as they seek to go to  
4 college, build families, get jobs and become engaged  
5 and productive citizens. I appreciate the fact that  
6 you are bringing an important perspective, that  
7 perspective as a former teacher, and all that you're  
8 doing to try and promote equity within our school  
9 system. For those of us that have kids or educators,  
10 we really don't need data and you've said this. We  
11 don't really need data. We know that smaller class  
12 sizes are key and important. Students are more  
13 engaged. They're fluid, fewer disciplinary problems,  
14 because teachers don't have so many children to deal  
15 with. Their individual academic and social and  
16 emotional needs are better met. And you can create  
17 more humane experiences for both the students and the  
18 teachers. And we need to see humanity in education. I  
19 mean, I could go on and on about that, but we got to  
20 bring it back. And one way to do it is to really have  
21 nurturing relationships between students and teachers  
22 who are culturally responsive. I agree with you 100  
23 percent. Our children and youth face an ever changing  
24 world and a future with jobs that have yet to be  
25 defined. What we do know is that they will need

2 skills that are, are, that are adaptable and  
3 transferable; critical thinking, problem solving,  
4 cross cultural communication, collaboration, an  
5 ability to understand diverse points of views and  
6 other cultural, cultures. They'll need to know how to  
7 separate fact from fiction and how to inquire, probe,  
8 explore, and address critical issues our world and  
9 communities are facing. As a teacher, it's nearly  
10 impossible to do all of that effectively when you  
11 Have overcrowded classrooms. Smaller class sizes  
12 allow teachers to prepare our children for the  
13 future. And given the wonderful gains that we've seen  
14 with Pre-K for All the momentum must continue for  
15 children as they move up. Not only is it an education  
16 issue in New York City, it's a social justice issue  
17 given our student population, and the systemic racism  
18 that has existed here, I urge you all to allocate the  
19 necessary funds to implement this strategy,  
20 especially in high need schools. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you very much.  
22 And just to note that we have met with many parents,  
23 advocates, educators, in terms of advancing a more  
24 just culturally responsive system, both in terms of  
25 curriculum because you are correct, that there are,

2 there's no, there's no defending it. It's  
3 indefensible, and, and, and they have resources  
4 they've already allocated towards in terms of  
5 resources, curriculum maps, but they still, there's  
6 still major issues that in terms of demographics,  
7 still issues with this. And I mentioned before that  
8 I've always believe that public education is the big  
9 equalizer. Right? Well, class size helps us get  
10 there. And of course, our students, the most of the  
11 public students, public school students, are black  
12 and brown students. And this is exactly, of course,  
13 what we're talking about and what's, what's at stake.  
14 So we have a lot of work to do, and I agree, no one  
15 is or should be above the law. It is more frightening  
16 when you have leaders who actually deny that the law  
17 even exists, because we're actually hearing from the  
18 governor that he believes that they've already  
19 completed or finished with CFE. He is not checked in  
20 with the reality on the ground. And, and that's why I  
21 argue with city Officials that when you go up to  
22 Albany to advocate for resources, be specific. Do not  
23 just talk about CFE, be specific, like I was very  
24 specific on the fact that we have over 700 schools in  
25 our system that do not have a full time social

2 worker, we have kids who experience crisis, trauma  
3 from a variety of reasons. And what they, what they  
4 have happen is a school will call 911 on a seven year  
5 old having a bad day, when that is not a police  
6 matter. And, and so, that's untrained staff. That's  
7 just a lack of leadership from, from the DOE. But in  
8 terms of even class size, no one visits from the  
9 school system down to the school and say, why are  
10 your classes so large? And if you leave the budget  
11 decisions to a manager, not a leader, then they'll  
12 try to stuff as many kids as possible into a class,  
13 not realizing or not understanding that if you want  
14 to improve outcomes, you lower class size, you make  
15 investments not in test prep, but in hiring more  
16 educators to reduce that class size. That is, that is  
17 also a big part of this conversation. And I just, I  
18 want to thank everyone here for each of your roles  
19 that are very, very important. We have a lot of work  
20 to do, both in the city budget, but also the state  
21 budget process to prioritize and to, and to  
22 operationalize this because I want to make it clear,  
23 we can fight for more money from the city school,  
24 city school budgets. But my concern is how do we  
25 force them to use that money in the classroom to hire

2 more educators and to reduce class size? That piece  
3 we still have to resolve, it's not resolved. I don't  
4 want to mislead anybody here. We were successful in  
5 getting them more money into school budgets a couple  
6 years back with with, with, with fair student  
7 funding, but they did not use it to reduce class  
8 size. They used it just to retain staff, and in some  
9 cases to do more test prep. And that is, that is  
10 where we have to figure out how do we operationalize  
11 this important goal and also, how do we make it  
12 measurable. When a leader visits a school community  
13 say what are your efforts to reduce class size that  
14 has to be measured somewhere, whether it's a quality  
15 review, whether it's, and also parents who serve in  
16 PTAs or SLTs. I was on an SLT. The principal is  
17 supposed to consult with you in shaping the CEP.  
18 Right? Very often in my school, the goals were tied  
19 to tests. Let's try to show a 3 percent improvement  
20 next year. I encourage parents to speak with your SLT  
21 members, how do we make a goal within the CEP to  
22 reduce class size? I don't think anything in the  
23 rules prohibits folks from advocating through the CEP  
24 process to make class size a goal. If the principal  
25 says it's an issue of resources well that's where

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2 advocacy comes in. But let's make it a goal. Let's  
3 hold ourselves accountable. That's, I think, another  
4 possible avenue and tool. So I just want to thank all  
5 of you and applaud all of you, not just speaking on  
6 behalf of your own kids, your own communities, but  
7 really on behalf of all the kids in our school  
8 system. Thank you so much. Appreciate you all.

9 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I just want to say  
10 that New York is one of the richest states in the  
11 country. There's no reason why any child should be in  
12 an overcrowded class. New York has 112 billionaires  
13 that live in this state. It has over 10,000  
14 millionaires. Nobody should be with, without they  
15 need. And for the children to be like the last thing  
16 on the list is a problem. I went to Senator Brian  
17 Benjamin, I had him sign that bill. I just want you  
18 to know that in this conversation, parents are very,  
19 very important because we get the work done that  
20 y'all don't see.

21 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Next we'll hear from  
22 Dr. Zoe's, Czar, forgive me if I mispronounce it, Amy  
23 Weintraub Miriam Arrestee Fairer, Farar, Gloria  
24 Brandman, Curtis Young, and Esther, Esther B.

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2 Whenever folks are ready you just make sure you turn  
3 the mic on and state your name and you may begin.

4 DOCTOR: Hello, I'm Doctor, member of  
5 Citywide Council on English Language Learners former,  
6 former CEC District 14, District which is... dual  
7 language program in this city. I would like to speak  
8 on behalf of my community of course. As a member, I  
9 will speak as myself not a whole members Council. So,  
10 first of all, thank you very much for this  
11 conversation and this opportunity to speak on behalf  
12 of English language learners. Of course, we need  
13 smaller classes, not because of size but because of  
14 time of attention to the kids, to the students. They  
15 are specialists, students with, who are ELL students  
16 need more time to develop English language and they  
17 because they mainly in Dual Language Program, they  
18 work too much harder because they need to know home  
19 language and speak in home language perfectly as well  
20 as English language learner, as English, English  
21 language. So that's special this class is also should  
22 be smaller. It's just mathematic. If we can't, if we,  
23 if we know how many students is, if we know that the  
24 lesson is like one hour, so we immediately know how  
25 many minutes each teacher spend to, to specials to,

2 to their students. I'm English Language parents too.  
3 So sorry for I'm not speaking English very well and  
4 fluently but I'm trying. And also, the process of  
5 education it's not a question of building. Some we,  
6 we have a right now many community spaces open and  
7 free and empty, many commercial spaces are empty. So  
8 that is not the problem with this, with the building  
9 but the problem with the thinking about this. Also,  
10 school is a process between teachers educators,  
11 because also the parents are educators and the  
12 students and not necessarily it's connected with the  
13 building. So, we are coming to the next age of  
14 education when the maybe we should think about  
15 education in the field. But what is important?  
16 Teachers because we can teach people with, without  
17 building, but not without teachers. So that why this  
18 also is important to develop teachers who could  
19 educate dual language programs, easier with  
20 certification, give them special trainings because  
21 it's so many students who like to teach dual language  
22 program, but there is no teachers but there is no  
23 rooms but there is so many excuse. So, please  
24 consider that dual language programs developed, we  
25 need, most what we need is communication with the



2 parents DOE have a lack of communication. Some  
3 people, some parents don't even know that some like  
4 CEC exist. Some parents don't even know that parents  
5 right exists. So how they need to cooperate with the  
6 DOE or not in parents. So creating communication  
7 strategy, effective communication strategy, help  
8 everybody to support in the process and engage their  
9 parents. Thank you very much.

10 CURTIS YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. Chairman for  
11 holding this very important meeting and for the  
12 opportunity to testify before you today. My name is  
13 Curtis Young, a member of community board 12  
14 Manhattan Youth and Education Committee, as well as I  
15 chaired the Public Safety Committee for community  
16 committee board 12. I am speaking today on behalf of  
17 the nonprofit organization I serve Artistic Noise. We  
18 work with young people who are involved with the  
19 juvenile justice system and are in prisons, who are  
20 in juvenile detention centers, or otherwise involved  
21 in the justice system, including probation programs.  
22 One thing I have noticed from my work is that  
23 students with learning challenges behavior issues  
24 ADHD, history of trauma, anxiety, among others, are  
25 often the students I meet in my line of work. These

2 are the students who have been left behind in the  
3 classrooms and end up in the justice system. Because  
4 of this reoccurrence, I began to pose questions to  
5 the youth my organization serves about their own  
6 experiences in classrooms. And that's when I realized  
7 that the school to prison pipeline begins at the  
8 classroom level. Imagine a third grade student, let's  
9 call him Michael. Michael was a young black student  
10 in a classroom with 30 students. Michael has  
11 challenges focusing in the classroom and really  
12 requires a lot of attention that unfortunately his  
13 teacher can't give him. As a byproduct of this need  
14 for him to and he begins to act out in the classroom.  
15 Due to his large class size, the teacher isn't able  
16 to manage this behavior and sends him out of the  
17 classroom. Michael is reprimanded and ends up missing  
18 critical content in class. Michael eventually returns  
19 to class but is now faced with the challenge of  
20 catching up and the teachers simply can't help with  
21 that, as they are focusing on the other 29 students.  
22 Michael's behavioral issues continue becoming a  
23 reoccurring problem for the teacher. He eventually is  
24 suspended from school. Years later, Michael drops out  
25 of school, as we all know, men of color who have, who

2 don't have high school degrees or more in like, more  
3 inclined to enter the system of mass incarceration.  
4 So let's be clear about facts. Large classes packed  
5 with students provide more opportunities for  
6 personality conflicts, tension, and general  
7 disruptive behavior. Teachers with years of  
8 experience, certifications, and degrees still find it  
9 difficult to manage overcrowded, overcrowded  
10 classrooms successfully and can find themselves  
11 spending more time managing their classroom than they  
12 do teaching. In these cases, the easy solution is to  
13 send students with these conflicts and issues to  
14 outside the classroom or suspend them. This is proof  
15 that we must invest in class size reduction plans for  
16 all of our students whilst specifically being  
17 attentive to those who are at high risk in  
18 underserved communities. What we do know for sure, is  
19 that one, class size reduction improves test scores  
20 for black male students and significantly narrows the  
21 achievement gap. Two, class size reduction leads to  
22 increases in college entrance and other post  
23 secondary outcomes for black male students. Three,  
24 class size reduction has non cognitive and  
25 disciplinary impacts that are likely to benefit black

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2 males. At the, at very young ages, young black boys  
3 and young black girls are at risk of entering the  
4 school to prison pipeline without even their, without  
5 even knowing. Imagine a world where those students  
6 are receiving the attention and social emotional  
7 learning also in the classroom and outside the  
8 classroom that they need to be successful in life.  
9 That is why class size matters. And that is why we  
10 need your support today. Thank you.

11           GLORIA BRANDMAN: Hi, good afternoon, and  
12 thank everybody who's still waiting here. And I think  
13 we're kind of talking to the chorus at this time, but  
14 I still appreciate this opportunity. My name is  
15 Gloria Brandman. I am a retired special educator. I  
16 have worked in the New York City public schools for  
17 34 years as a special education classroom teacher,  
18 resource room teacher, and education evaluator, the  
19 special education coordinator in my school, and a  
20 whole lot of other things that I do to help our  
21 special needs kids get the services they require and  
22 are mandated to receive, and I've also been in  
23 education activist for that same amount of time. We,  
24 I fought against the charter schools against school  
25 clothes and against budget cuts, against many things.

2 We closed down the pep meetings, been fighting this  
3 fight for a long time and we still unfortunately have  
4 to do it. Some of the things I'm going to say has  
5 been, have been said with more data than I'm going to  
6 give, but it's important stuff. As a trained Wilson  
7 reading teacher, my experience proves how crucial it  
8 is for students with reading disabilities to have  
9 instruction provided, ideally individually or, at  
10 best, at least in small groups. And in New York City.  
11 We know that there are many kids who have not been  
12 diagnosed with skill, with dyslexia, with reading  
13 disabilities, emotional problems, but they have them  
14 they are there we know that. But sitting in classes  
15 with over 30 other students, they do not improve  
16 they. Generally their skills decline, and then they  
17 have behavior problems and we know what happens then.  
18 And you just gave a really good story, sir about  
19 that. So reducing the size of our classes will not  
20 only prove their chances of learning the skills they  
21 need to be successful, but smaller classes would also  
22 reduce special ed referrals and avoid additional  
23 placements in special ed programs and this would save  
24 a lot of money. And speaking of money, I just can't  
25 help but think and point out of the huge tuition

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2 costs some parents will pay to get their kids into  
3 private schools. A couple of examples Trinity School  
4 tuition is 54,540 bucks, has six to one class size  
5 ratio students to teachers. The Windward school also  
6 costs 54 grand a year has a standard class size of 12  
7 with two teachers and it's acknowledged, it is an  
8 acknowledged leader of educating students with  
9 dyslexia. And the last school I would like to mention  
10 is the Spence School which is where Michael Bloomberg  
11 sent his two daughters. On, on the website, the  
12 average class size is 16 to 18 students in lower  
13 School, 14 in high school, with tuition almost 55  
14 grand. So there are many reasons parents will pay  
15 these enormous tuitions to get their kids into these  
16 schools. But surely small class is one of those  
17 reasons. And of course, most of the children who  
18 attend public school in New York City come from  
19 families who cannot afford to send their kids to  
20 those private schools. And I think it's already been  
21 stated the most of the kids in our school come from  
22 lower class poor communities, communities of color  
23 for the most part, and they don't have that money.  
24 And we won't get into the reasons why this system is  
25 rigged against them. But we, but it is. So I would

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2 say it in ending the, the right thing at least, the  
3 very least thing we can do is provide our students  
4 with small class size. And also just somebody had  
5 mentioned how this city has so much money. This  
6 country has so much money. I'm also working on  
7 another resolution, resolution 747 a, move the money  
8 from the bloated war budget to fund our community's  
9 needs. And that's a whole other story. I won't get  
10 into it now. But it is something that I do hope to  
11 speak with our council people at another time, but we  
12 have the money we need to use it for our children.  
13 Thank you.

14           AMY WEINTRAUB: Good afternoon. My name is  
15 Amy Weintraub. I am a parent. I have a  
16 kindergartener, a fourth grader and an eighth grader.  
17 I didn't intend to speak today, but I felt compelled  
18 to put my name on the list to ask some questions that  
19 I haven't heard asked. I'm also the PTA president at  
20 our elementary school in Brooklyn PS 107 and, and I'm  
21 on the SLT. And I first want to say I really admire  
22 your stamina, for listening for this long. So the  
23 folks who were here from the DOE, a few times, touted  
24 that principals have choice over their budget and  
25 that principals can make these decisions about

2 prioritizing their money, but in reality, and you  
3 know, as a teacher, what happens is, the budget comes  
4 in June for the following year, based on a prediction  
5 of student enrollment that the DOE, DOE makes based  
6 on some very complicated algorithm, I'm sure. And so  
7 what happened in our school last year is they  
8 predicted a 25 student decrease, which is basically a  
9 teacher, one teacher And so operating on that budget,  
10 you know, we lost a teacher. But then in fact, the  
11 student population was up about 25 kids, not from  
12 their prediction, but from what the actual was. And  
13 so now this year, we have 32 students in each of our  
14 second grade classes. And these are children who, as  
15 you know, are still learning to read. They still need  
16 all these foundational skills. And the problem is  
17 that even when the budget gets adjusted, and on  
18 paper, it looks like oh, the money was there. It's  
19 too late. The school can't open up another classroom,  
20 they can't hire another teacher. And so my question  
21 is does the Council have any kind of way of  
22 compelling the DOE to make, to change that system  
23 right? Because we knew before school started that we  
24 were going to have this problem. But we knew that the  
25 money wasn't going to come in until November. So if



2 faced with overcrowded classrooms, can the DOE make  
3 those adjustments before October 31?

4                   CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, excellent  
5 questions. And thank you for affirming what we know  
6 on the ground despite the DOE's denial that there are  
7 a number of middle school year, even late school year  
8 enrollment issues where they could, they call them  
9 over the counter kids even though I don't I'm not a  
10 fan of that term. But many kids get transferred to,  
11 to schools during the course of the year without the  
12 resources traveling with the child and they have many  
13 needs. One of the things that I am proud of that what  
14 we did in the last budget, not only did we get the  
15 DOE to hire 200 new Full Time social workers, which  
16 we desperately need, we need a lot more. But we made  
17 it so that the DOE paid for them, they did not come  
18 out of the school budget. And that's really  
19 important. Because many schools, principals, would  
20 gladly and wholeheartedly hire social workers to  
21 their budgets, they don't have the money to do it.  
22 The DOE is paying for the full time social workers to  
23 the schools, which can potentially free up resources  
24 to hire additional teacher staff to reduce class  
25 size. I actually think that staff like social workers

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2 and counselors should maybe be covered centrally. So  
3 we can assist. And there are other ways of reducing  
4 costs. Like for example, some of the large high  
5 schools said that even with the fair student funding  
6 increase that we push for a couple of years ago, take  
7 my old high school for example, the average teacher  
8 salary was around \$87,000. With the FSF increase, my  
9 school got half a million, \$500,000 increase. So you  
10 would think \$500,000, we can do a lot, we could hire  
11 some new folks. Actually, they couldn't hire anybody.  
12 Because the average teacher salary went up from  
13 87,000 to 89,000. And when you have 250 teachers, 250  
14 times two, that was the entire budget increase. It  
15 was used to retain 200 teachers, 250 teachers in the  
16 school, they couldn't hire one new person. It was  
17 just to kind of keep the number of staff that they  
18 had. And the system currently is designed just so  
19 folks know, to almost punish a school to keep  
20 seasoned teachers. Because when the more years of  
21 service you have, the higher your salary because  
22 you've earned it. And that becomes an increased cost  
23 to the school because your average costs keeps going  
24 up. And so the school principal says, I want to keep  
25 these veteran teachers, but they're much more

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2 expensive. And that's what the former mayor tried to  
3 do, he tried to almost get rid of veteran teachers to  
4 try to reduce cost to the system. So I think we have  
5 to find ways to support key staff through central  
6 lines. So it's not a cost to the individual school  
7 budget. And we have to find ways to overall reduce  
8 burdens on the local school community, and to make  
9 sure that tweed covers some of the critical supports  
10 because otherwise, you're right, it is principals  
11 will tell me, I want to do this. How do I fund this?  
12 How do I how do I operationalize this?

13 AMY WEINTRAUB: It's almost a cash flow  
14 issue?

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right, and that's  
16 why if you heard me before I asked the DOE does their  
17 new fancy system EduStat, even gauge or monitor class  
18 size? I think the answer was no or they had no  
19 answer. But they, but they found money to implement  
20 EduStat. And if you heard the chancellor, why he  
21 needed EduStat, he said I needed to find a way to  
22 know how things are during the course of the year, I  
23 could find out through an email to my colleague how  
24 things are. And you're right, a lot of the feedback.  
25 It'll be even their own testimony, feedback from

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2 teachers, reduce class size, you don't need to pay  
3 for a study to do that. You don't need to pay for a  
4 new system to tell you that. And so it's an issue of  
5 prioritization that with the precious resources you  
6 have, invest in reducing class size, that's, it's got  
7 to be a funded strategy to improve student outcomes.  
8 And so thank you for again, validating that very  
9 powerful notion. Thank you so much. I thank the  
10 panel. Alright so mindful of time. Cathy Price,  
11 Vernon Ballard, Tisha Groover, Eileen Ben, Eileen B.  
12 We can call up some more names. Crystal Elias, Elsey  
13 McCade Thompson. Shino Tanikawa, Shino This is the  
14 final panel all right. Make sure you turn on the mic  
15 and introduce yourself and you may begin.

16 ELSEY THOMPSON: I'm Elsey McCabe  
17 Thompson. And I too, didn't plan to come here to  
18 talk. But I can't not. I'm the president of the New  
19 York City Mission Society. We're the oldest anti  
20 poverty organization in the city, dedicated  
21 exclusively to education. And in our 208 years of  
22 experience, we've observed a variety of things. We  
23 serve thousands of kids, K-12, across the city, a  
24 third of our kids on average, and I say kids, because  
25 at my age, they're all, they all look like little

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2 people to me, have IEPs. The vast majority of  
3 everybody else, they act the same. Because what's,  
4 they have attention issues and serious attention  
5 issues. And when you, you know think about why. It's  
6 because they're functionally PTSD, because of all the  
7 traumas inherent in poverty. Poverty is by its very  
8 nature, a traumatic experience. And it makes perfect  
9 sense. If you think about how and why it is. There's,  
10 if you think back to all the movies we love to love  
11 or love to hate from the 80's where the affluent  
12 white kid academically implodes, because he's heard  
13 his parents arguing, and he's worried that, oh my  
14 god, maybe they'll get divorced. That is a trauma.  
15 I'm not diminishing that. But we have kids who are,  
16 deal with that times an exponent every day. And, you  
17 know, we've talked here today. I've heard you know,  
18 the value of small class sizes. Which we're all aware  
19 of for kids with IEPs. But for every other child who  
20 doesn't have an IEP who, you know, who nevertheless  
21 needs small attention, small class sizes. You know,  
22 there's a lot of terms of art that are quite in vogue  
23 in education speak these days; authenticity,  
24 personalization, you know, the need for high  
25 expectations. But when you think about what these

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2 mean, you know, you can't authentically, as far as a  
3 young person is concerned, have high expectations for  
4 a student you don't know. And how can you reasonably  
5 fairly ask a teacher, you know, humanely ask a  
6 teacher who has 32 kids in her class to know more  
7 than their students names? Because, you know, there's  
8 only so much bandwidth any human being has. So how  
9 can you have high expectations and authentically talk  
10 to the needs of students you don't know? I've always  
11 advocated not just for a small class size of 23, 18,  
12 but 12 because if you have a 12 student class size,  
13 like McCrone, his, you know his epiphany two years  
14 ago was to deal with poverty issues you need to  
15 offer, particularly those students, and I would say  
16 every student, you know, personal attention, and he  
17 instituted a 12 student class size in those  
18 communities. You know, we're New York City. I'm a New  
19 Yorker born and bred. I'm quite proud of it. I'm also  
20 quite proud of the fact that I'm a special needs  
21 adult. I should have had a variety of IEPs but back  
22 in the 60s, you know, particularly for black and  
23 brown kids, you know, nobody thought there were IEPs.  
24 And, you know, the conclusion was, of course, it's a  
25 behavioral issue, which in my case, it was because,

2 first, it was a get the fact that I, I'm dyslexic.  
3 I'm dysgraphic. I'm acutely ADHD, as my husband will  
4 assuredly tell you. But this is New York City. You  
5 know, everybody talks about the class size study back  
6 in, you know, from Tennessee. Lamar Alexander, did  
7 that, commissioned that study, but then he walked  
8 back and said, you know what, yes all the data shows  
9 that class size does matter, particularly for young  
10 people who are living in poverty. You know, his  
11 conclusion was for black and brown communities. It's  
12 actually not that they're black or brown it's that  
13 they're poor because they're living in poverty. And  
14 then you know he dismissed the findings by saying, no  
15 one can afford it. I would urge how can we not afford  
16 it? We are New York City. We know that every employer  
17 is looking for employees who can problem solve, who  
18 can think creatively? And how can you think and work  
19 creatively, if you're demeaned and demoralized  
20 because, you know, things like art has been taken out  
21 of your curriculum, because teachers are punished if  
22 they don't you know put test prep first, schools are  
23 punished. But if you reprioritize, if you, I would  
24 urge that New York and our council do, you know, not  
25 just progressive speak, but progressive talk and

2 progressive action. So, let's show, let's be the city  
3 and the place that shows Lamar Alexander that we  
4 can't afford not to fund small classes and to make  
5 that our priority because those are our values.

6           VERNON BALLARD: Sorry, sorry. I want to  
7 thank the panel. My name is Vernon Ballard. And I'm  
8 here today to give testimony on at the behest of my  
9 dear friend Leonie Haimson because class size  
10 matters. My wife and I are products of public schools  
11 from kindergarten through college degrees. I'm from  
12 Pennsylvania. She's from Germany. Impact for the, in  
13 fact, for the past 30 years I've worked for the City  
14 College of New York. We have two lovely and amazing  
15 daughters who are 10 and 12 in fifth and seventh  
16 grade. I came very late to parenting and was 39 when  
17 I had my eldest and wizened by those extra years, I  
18 committed myself to ensuring they receive the best  
19 education possible in the best city in the world to  
20 prepare for a dozen years of fraud adventures in New  
21 York City parenting, when my girls were still  
22 toddlers long before they were enrolled in school, I  
23 was co-chair of the community board nine Youth and  
24 Education Library committee, and then a member of the  
25 CEC for district three. I also spent a year on the



2 parent commission with Shino and Leonie on mayoral  
3 control, critiquing the Bloomberg administration's  
4 awful stewardship of public schools, while ardently  
5 advocating for more sensible and effective solutions.  
6 From these purchase, I had a comprehensive and  
7 intimate views of the challenges, shortcomings, and  
8 failures that besieged public schools and their  
9 families on the Upper West Side, Central, and West  
10 Harlem. Socio economic inequity across the entire  
11 school system that is segregated by race and class  
12 leading to disturbing and persistent racial  
13 achievement gaps, mayhem in the bureaucratic  
14 administration of special education that traumatizes  
15 already challenged families, curriculums tailored to  
16 accommodate scholastically dubious high stakes tests,  
17 low high school graduation rate, and today's topic,  
18 classroom overcrowding. All of these factors  
19 culminate with droves of New York City public high  
20 school graduates underprepared for the rigors of  
21 college and the competitive workplace. There were of  
22 course occasionally reports of triumphs and  
23 achievement construction or newly founded schools.  
24 But usually when parents, teachers, and  
25 administrators come to a community board or CEC

2 meeting, they are there, they're at their wit's end  
3 frantically struggling to resolve a stressing  
4 problem. With all this in mind as our girls came  
5 school age, my wife and I braced for a dozen years of  
6 bureaucratic warfare with the public school system.  
7 But fortune smiled on us. We won the lottery. Both  
8 our girls were admitted to the school at Columbia  
9 University, which is an experimental community school  
10 forged by public private compact that resulted in 50  
11 percent of the seats being set aside for a lottery  
12 for children in districts three and five. We felt  
13 well for all the obvious reasons we felt compelled to  
14 opt out of public school. The school is a veritable  
15 utopia with a cadre of academic and social emotional  
16 learning specialists, no high stakes tests pressures  
17 on teachers, administrators, and students. And in my  
18 estimation, most importantly, small class sizes. In  
19 primary school, K through three each class of 12  
20 students has two lead teachers and intermediate and  
21 middle division classes with up to 24 students are  
22 taught by a single teacher, but all classes are  
23 supported by a cadre of math, literary, language, and  
24 SEL counselors and advisors. With all these  
25 instructors, our teacher student ratio is about four

2 to one. But even in this utopia, there are regular  
3 challenges, shortcomings, and failures. I'm not going  
4 to air my grievances with paradise in this forum, but  
5 you better believe I Marshal the skills that I found  
6 in preparation for public schools in order to  
7 challenge them. Nevertheless, our girls are among the  
8 fortunate and privileged view. In a city of millions  
9 of students. They are among the 1 percent that are  
10 learning in small classes. We have many friends in  
11 public school, and I can assure you, private schools  
12 kids are not better or smarter than their peers. But  
13 I strongly believe on the whole they are better  
14 prepared because their teachers are less stressed and  
15 stretched thin and can therefore be more engaged and  
16 attentive. As a parent I know I'm much less stressed.  
17 One of the things I never have to worry about are my  
18 girls slipping between the cracks because our  
19 teachers are overwhelmed by the challenges of  
20 engaging far too many young minds at once. I'm almost  
21 finished. Finally, as a proud product of public  
22 schools, I often regret abandoning my quixotic duty  
23 to fight the noble public school fight. But this  
24 regret is fleeting knowing that half a dozen years  
25 after the bloom after Bloomberg, that the progressive

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2 de Blasio administration continues to fail a  
3 generation of public school children. Literally. A 77  
4 percent graduation rate should be grounds for  
5 embarrassment not bragging. My little black girls  
6 deserve much better. Reducing class sizes won't  
7 solve, won't resolve all the problems in public  
8 school, but it will rectify many, it's long past time  
9 to implement the recommendations of the campaign for  
10 fiscal equity. After 17 years of stepping sideways  
11 and backwards, this hundred million dollar investment  
12 to be focused on reducing class sizes, that Class  
13 Size Matters is now recommending is a small  
14 stabilizing, stabilizing step forward. Thank you.

15 SHINO TANIKAWA: Good afternoon. I'm sorry  
16 I'm late to the party. But I guess being late is good  
17 because I didn't have to wait long to speak up here.  
18 My name is Shino Tanikawa. I'm a parent of a public  
19 school graduate and another one who is a senior in a  
20 public high school in district two. I'm also a member  
21 of the community education council district two, co-  
22 chair of the Education Council Consortium, a former  
23 co-chair of the Blue Book working group with Lorraine  
24 Grillo, and a member of the Fair Student Task Force,  
25 Fair Student Funding Task Force. But I'm speaking as

2 a parent today. As a parent I have watched my two  
3 girls go through the public school system. And I have  
4 sat on five different school leadership teams, one  
5 for elementary, two for different middle schools, two  
6 different high schools, and I have seen firsthand the  
7 struggles of the principal in making a decision on  
8 how to fund their schools. Oftentimes we decide to  
9 keep the existing staffing level with the funding,  
10 which means you're stuck with the class sizes you're  
11 stuck with. And there's just really no wiggle room.  
12 So definitely funding levels is an issue. But also, I  
13 am firmly convinced that the current fair student  
14 funding formula that is driven by student enrollment  
15 number of students has had a deleterious effect on  
16 class size. Think about it. If you need more money,  
17 the best way to raise more money for your school is  
18 enroll more students. Principals know this. Even  
19 principals who know that the large class sizes are no  
20 great. They take in more students up to the UFT  
21 contractual maximum or sometimes more so that they  
22 have the funding to provide robust programming. That  
23 is not a choice anybody should have to face. So as  
24 the Fair Student Funding Task Force, we wanted to  
25 talk about that aspect of the funding formula.

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2 Unfortunately, the Department of Education seems not  
3 to believe there's any connection between the fair  
4 student funding and class size. And that is a problem  
5 that is akin to somebody with an addiction problem  
6 refusing to understand that we have a problem. Same  
7 with the blue book working group. We put out a  
8 recommend, a set of recommendations, one of which was  
9 to base the blue book formula on the class size  
10 reduction plan, class sizes. One of many  
11 recommendations. The DOE accepted most of the  
12 recommendations except for that very critical  
13 recommendation to use the class size reduction plan  
14 class sizes, therefore the Blue Blue Book is still  
15 flawed. That is an indication that this  
16 administration as well as the prior administration,  
17 do not believe that class size is important. And I  
18 would like to tell the chancellor and I, I'm gonna  
19 try to find an opportunity to do this. This is the  
20 Chancellor who believes in school integration, and I  
21 am in fully in support of that initiative. But I want  
22 him to understand that to fully integrate schools,  
23 which includes culturally responsive sustaining  
24 education, you cannot do that with 32 students in a  
25 classroom. How is the teacher supposed to develop

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2 that personal relationship with individual students?  
3 If there are 38 students in the class, 36 students in  
4 the class? If you're a middle school teacher, high  
5 school teacher, you actually have more than 100  
6 teacher, 100 students. So I want the DOE to  
7 understand the critical importance of small class  
8 sizes for the school integration work that we're all  
9 here to do. Finally, I have to support the class size  
10 matters initiative of 100 million dollars from the  
11 city council. I would actually like to ask 200  
12 million dollars from City Council. This is an issue  
13 that we should put on the state for campaign for  
14 fiscal equity funding, but as well, we need to put  
15 this onus on the city council and the city of New  
16 York as well. This is investing in the future of our  
17 city and our planet. If we can't spend money on  
18 educating our students properly, what else are we  
19 investing our money on? So, thank you for this  
20 opportunity to speak. Really appreciate your staying  
21 till the bitter end.

22                   NORMAN SCOTT: My name is Norman Scott. I  
23 was a teacher from 1967 through 2002. When I retired,  
24 I was an activist in both the UFT and with various  
25 groups within the UFT and outside. I was an activist

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2 for the group called the grassroots education  
3 movement, GEM, which made a movie The Inconvenient  
4 Truth behind waiting for superman, which was in 2011  
5 and 2012, which took on many of the issues which  
6 being back here today. I started teaching in 1967,  
7 with a lot of other men from all around the country  
8 who were running away from the Vietnam War. And  
9 because we were offering us deferments so that, they  
10 had a lot of people, they were hiring a lot of  
11 people. And when I walked into my school in District  
12 14, PS 16, the first grade had two teachers for 30  
13 children, and the second grade had three teachers for  
14 every two classes, which was an interesting concept  
15 at 1967 actually had a clue about class size. They  
16 also set up special schools that were very expensive  
17 to run, but were very effective, more of, it was  
18 called more effective schools, MES, and as a matter  
19 of fact, one of the reasons of the 1967 teachers  
20 strike was to get more, more effective schools. And  
21 my friend taught at one in Brownsville, PS 41 with an  
22 absolute limit of maximum of 20 in the class, and all  
23 kinds of services, basically the kind of ideal school  
24 we would all want to have. So that was, I don't want  
25 to count the years since 1967, but there are many



2 years. So isn't it ironic that some one somewhere in  
3 1967, had some ideas that we would wish for today?  
4 And that, all that began to fall apart in the early  
5 70s, when the budget cuts began to come? So another  
6 thing that happened around 1969 and 70 was class size  
7 limits in the contract. Now, I know a lot of people  
8 will argue, well, it shouldn't be up to the teachers  
9 to negotiate these things. And I have had my own  
10 internal fight with my own Union for 50 years almost,  
11 in which I have argued that they should make that a  
12 priority in negotiation item. And they have argued,  
13 well, that's not our, you know, not our job to do it,  
14 but they didn't do it in 1969. And that number has  
15 not changed since 1969. And the idea would be if you  
16 don't codify it in a contract, we're, just like what  
17 happened in the 70s. And after the city council  
18 limits, we'll put in from K to three, and the minute  
19 Bloomberg got in, he wiped those out, we can't rely,  
20 especially on the mayoral control that oh the next  
21 mayor decides to change the class size limits, we  
22 have to codify it, unfortunately, because I don't  
23 believe in absolute, oh, every school has to follow  
24 the same train. You know, when I started, we had held  
25 a homogeneous grouping. So they took the top 25 or 30

2 readers and they put them into one class and then it,  
3 took the next one. And in the contract, we had to  
4 rotate. So I had the experience of having what was  
5 called the bottom class one year and the top class  
6 the next year, and I have to tell you, that under  
7 that teaching under those conditions were, how can I  
8 put it, very, very different. In the same school, in  
9 the same kids all came from the projects across the  
10 street. But there was a tremendous difference between  
11 the one class and the bottom class. And, and some  
12 forward looking administrators in certain schools  
13 would adjust the class sizes from the top class and  
14 have 30. And the bottom class would have maybe 22.  
15 Because they knew that the kids who had more needs  
16 would need more attention. And those, I mean, you  
17 know, you think about people who, at those years  
18 administrators came through teaching, you couldn't be  
19 an administrator unless you had seven years of  
20 teaching. People don't, don't think enough. And  
21 that's another major, a fault of Bloomberg who didn't  
22 care. And so I think we needed people who really had  
23 experience the classroom from it for many years and  
24 that understood. You can't be in a classroom and not  
25 understand that class size matters. Right? I mean,

2 It's not even conceivable. So the problem is the  
3 people making decisions are not people who have done  
4 that for long enough for that to make in, embed  
5 itself in their psyche. And I think, you, so we can't  
6 solve these problems without solving a whole bunch of  
7 other problems, including make people actually teach.  
8 And, you know, I wouldn't, I, you know, let anyone,  
9 any administrator, anyone from the Board of Ed, that  
10 bureaucracy, I want them to be in a classroom, I want  
11 to be in a classroom on a regular basis, and I want  
12 to hold them somewhat responsible so that they know  
13 what it feels like to do that. And I think that the  
14 the, the, so, so the last thing is that  
15 differentiation of instruction is the big word in the  
16 Board of Ed. That is the most laughable thing I've  
17 ever heard in my life, unless you reduce class size,  
18 how do you differentiate? So Johnny needs to know  
19 this and Joey needs to know this, but you're gonna  
20 give me 30 Johnny's and Joey's and tell me to  
21 differentiate in structure? And I actually recently  
22 sat in at a hearing of a teacher they're trying to  
23 fire. Luckily, they didn't get away with it, because,  
24 and the charge against teachers are, they're writing  
25 them up, you didn't do enough differentiation of

2 instruction. I mean you have to laugh out loud at  
3 some of these people. And I'll let, since it's Friday  
4 afternoon, I'll let you all go now.

5 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Briefly, because  
6 they have to do work in the room but yes, go ahead.

7 UNIDENTIFIED: A note about co-teaching.  
8 It doesn't work for basic neuroscience, neurological  
9 reasons. If you have two teachers in a room of 32,  
10 and you're a little kid, you and I, we're old enough  
11 and we've been around but we also have developed the  
12 neuro, neurological abilities to sit in a cocktail  
13 party and be able to talk directly to each other and  
14 parse out all the white noise that's happening around  
15 us and not listen to it or see it. Little kids can't  
16 do that. Physically, not cognitively, they can't do  
17 that. And so there is a big difference between, it's  
18 not a 1:15 student teacher ratio if you have two  
19 teachers in a class of 30, because it's different. So  
20 I would urge the council to ask the DOE, insist,  
21 mandate that they provide student teacher, not  
22 student teacher ratios, but actually class size, you  
23 know, disclosures? Let, make it that transparent.  
24 Because, you know, student teacher ratios can mask

2 the, the difference in, you know, a co-teaching  
3 situation or something similar.

4           CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah. And last note,  
5 I had a co-teacher, I taught an ICT class and one of  
6 the things that we had to push for was common  
7 planning time, because two teachers we're not robots.  
8 We're also human beings. And we're, we're charged  
9 with responsibility to modify our instruction to meet  
10 the needs of our kids. But we have full schedules,  
11 and it's a large comprehend. At school, when it's a  
12 great time to meet together, we didn't have aligned  
13 schedules. So our school actually did advance what's  
14 called an SBO, it's called a school building option,  
15 where you can modify the school, the school calendar,  
16 where we shorten the period days on Wednesdays. So  
17 rather than having 48 minute classes on Wednesdays,  
18 we met for 32 minutes. And that 15 minutes for each  
19 period came, added up to about an hour, hour and a  
20 half, each Wednesday morning where every teacher  
21 would have common time throughout the entire  
22 building. And imagine what a novel idea for teachers  
23 to sit down and plan together and modify instruction.  
24 So again, I hear you. Everything you're saying is  
25 spot on, and we just have a lot of work to do. And

1 <INSERT TITLE OF MEETING>

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2 it's, the irony of this day. It was a very  
3 overcrowded room for a class size hearing, shows the  
4 interest and the passion around this issue. So thank  
5 you all very much more work to do. This hearing,  
6 thank you. Hearing's adjourned.

7 [gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date April 1, 2020