



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein
Chancellor

TESTIMONY OF THE NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
ON PROPOSED INT. NO. 59

BEFORE THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL

February 23, 2010

Barbara Stripling, Director of Library Services

Good afternoon Chair Jackson and members of the Education Committee. My name is Barbara Stripling, Director of the Office of Library Services for the New York City Department of Education. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Proposed Intro. 59.

On behalf of the Department, I'd like to first express our support for the overall objectives and intent of Intro. No. 59, sponsored by Council Member Van Bramer. Our mission at the Office of Library Services is to help all students become independent learners and readers—and it takes a variety of resources and spaces to achieve that goal. Already, the Department employs a range of strategies to connect public libraries and schools, educating our students—and school librarians—about the resources available in our three public library systems. To name a few:

- Our K-12 **Family Literacy Guide**, published in partnership with New Visions for Public Schools, includes booklists and other content developed collaboratively with the three public library systems.
- The public libraries participate actively in the Department's **annual Fall and Spring Library conferences**, where we invite representatives from the library systems to give presentations and distribute booklists to roughly 600 school librarians. Our school libraries help distribute the summer reading lists for elementary and secondary students and encourage students to participate in the summer reading program.
- We have worked closely with the New York Public Library on its **Homework Help website**, and encourage school librarians to promote it with their teachers and students.
- At the local level throughout the school year, public and school librarians collaborate on assignment notification; public librarians visit schools to give book talks; and school librarians encourage students to sign-up for library cards.

As you can see, in all of our initiatives regarding curriculum, collection development and professional development, the Office of Library Services considers how we can use our partnership with the public libraries to support our schools and build a seamless web of library support for our students and families. But today we are here to discuss one initiative in particular: library cards.

The Department currently engages in a concerted, ongoing effort to encourage all students to obtain a public library card—and I hope today’s hearing opens the door to providing even greater support for these existing programs:

- At the start of each school year we distribute a **Family Guide** to every public school student and family. The guide—which is translated into nine languages—dedicates a section to explaining how parents and students may apply for a free library card. It lays out clear instructions on the process itself, and details the many resources offered by the three public library systems
- During our **annual Pre-K enrollment drives**, all of the information sent to parents includes information on how to obtain a library card and directs parents to their local branch. Representatives from the public libraries attend Pre-K information sessions in all five boroughs, and explain how to obtain a library card and how to apply online using public computers.
- Finally, in the **NYC School Survey**, administered to parents each year, we encourage parents to visit their local public libraries—and we include information on how to obtain a card.

As you might expect, the Department fully supports the underlying goals to increase access to the public library systems, and to raise awareness about public library resources. We are committed to working with the Council to make the legislation operationally feasible for the Department to implement. As you know, the Department faces a significant budget gap for the coming school year—to be precise, \$1.2 billion given the Governor’s preliminary budget. Even if we are able to convince state legislators to reduce the size of the Governor’s cut, we will certainly face a deficit and be forced to find savings throughout the system. The costs associated with development, distribution, and translation of any new pamphlet detailing the process for obtaining a library card—in addition to the information we already provide, in the form of physical documents—will be particularly burdensome at a time when we can least afford it.

To that end, we believe that the goals and sentiment of this legislation can be realized through actions that are budget-neutral, and build upon our existing approaches. I sincerely look forward to working with the Council to amend the proposed legislation so that we can achieve its goals without incurring costs that would necessitate cuts to other, equally important educational priorities.

Finally, I do want to express my personal thanks to the Council for all it has done in recent years to revitalize school library services in New York City. I have seen, first hand, how your actions and direct support have helped turn greater numbers of children into independent learners and readers. These revitalized libraries have helped improve student achievement and create more equity across the system. That is our ultimate goal at the Department and one I know we all share.

I would be pleased to answer your questions.



Paula Harbace
Norm Brown
Isaac Painter
Neil Simon
James M. ...
James B. Singer
Riv Thomas

Brooklyn
Authors

**NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
PUBLIC HEARING ON INTRO. 59**

**250 BROADWAY, 14th FLOOR HEARING ROOM
February 23, 2010**

TESTIMONY OF BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Good afternoon, my name is Andrea Vaughn; I am Coordinator of School Age Services at Brooklyn Public Library.

Thank you to Committee Chairman Robert Jackson for inviting BPL to testify today concerning the distribution of information about library cards and applications to public school students. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Council for its steadfast support of public libraries, understanding the importance of the services we provide to millions of New Yorkers each day.

Our public libraries are centers for lifelong learning. It begins with Brooklyn's infants who gain pre-literacy skills in our story time programs and continues through our programs and services designed for toddlers, preschoolers and school age children and teens. Our youth librarians work tirelessly to put library cards into the hands of young people. A library card gives them access to

technology, valuable online resources, thousands of programs, and of course, millions of books.

To reach every young person in Brooklyn we work to build strong relationships with the teachers, school librarians, and principals in our 770 schools. We welcome teachers to arrange class visits to one of our 58 locations to get library cards, attend a program and learn what the library has to offer. We also go out to schools, speaking in classrooms, school libraries and auditoriums about the many materials, programs, and services available, such as after school homework help, book discussions, and writing workshops, or the wide range of services to support teens from SAT practice tests to Teen Health & Wellness workshops, to meaningful volunteer opportunities. We might tell young people about the Reading is Fundamental program where they can earn free books to keep when they check out books from the library, or how we can help them maintain their reading skills over the summer through the Summer Reading Program. They can also use their library card to access our online databases from their home computer, 24 hours a day.

We currently employ 85 Children's Specialists and 64 Young Adult Specialists to serve the youth of Brooklyn. They reach as many students as they can but there are many demands on classroom time and our relationships with some schools are not as strong as they can be. Also we typically see more younger students and are not given as much access to classes from upper elementary, middle school and high school. We currently have 175,000 school age children and teens with library cards but we know there are many more students who could benefit from the wealth of services the public library provides.

We are willing to collaborate with the Department of Education, New York Public Library and Queens Library on a brochure that would help get this information to students. In fact, the three library systems have already worked together to produce such a document with a universal library card application for a feature in the New York Daily News five years ago.

BPL would be supportive of any mechanism that supports getting library cards into the hands of more students, helping us continue our work to make a difference in the lives of young people in Brooklyn.

Again, thank you for providing the Library with the opportunity to testify, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.



**Testimony before the New York City Council Committee on Education regarding
Int. No. 59
Chairperson, Robert Jackson**

February 23, 2010

Good afternoon Chairman Jackson and members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding Int. No. 59, which would require the Department of Education to distribute information on obtaining a library card to all students. I am Lynda Kennedy, Director for Teaching and Learning, Literacy and Outreach at the New York Public Library (NYPL). The NYPL wholeheartedly supports Int. No. 59 and its goal of putting library cards in the hands of thousands of New York City's youngest residents.

The NYPL system is comprised of 87 branch libraries in the boroughs of the Bronx, Manhattan and Staten Island, as well as four world-class research libraries - the Stephen A. Schwarzman Building, the Science, Industry and Business Library, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and the Library for the Performing Arts. This past year the NYPL had over 18 million visitors to its libraries and over 26.5 million online visits - the highest number in its over 100 year history.

A library card is a gateway to expanding a child's knowledge and scope in understanding the world. It's also an entrance way to a child's independence, allowing him or her to explore a vast collection of books, DVD's, CD's and online resources in a safe and welcoming environment. All free of charge. Access to books is essential to the development of reading and comprehension skills. Certainly, a library card is an essential tool in a child's education.

A library card provides access to computers and to the internet, which is critical for those who do not have a computer at home. All NYPL sites provide free computer access and trained staff prepared to provide assistance in computer instruction. But most importantly, the cardholder accesses the expertise and knowledge of a librarian, who they can turn to for assistance in refining their internet searches. The library also has a number of online resources for children including, On-Lion for Kids, Tumble Books and homeworkNYC.org. Of course, librarians don't just help with computers. They help the developing reader find skill appropriate reading

materials in specific subject areas. And, at the library, you get a librarian free of charge. All you need is a library card.

The NYPL's many programs are designed to engage children from the time they are babies up to their teenage years. Our afterschool programs offer essential educational assistance and provide a safe haven. Thousands of New York's older children use their local library to do homework and avail themselves of library materials to supplement their studies. Programs such as Story Time, Summer Reading and HomeworkNYC are valuable resources for so many students. This past summer over 75,000 participants ranging from toddlers to teens took part in the NYPL's Summer Reading Program, reading over 380,000 books. Many of the program participants signed up for their own library card for the first time. While these summer reading programs are a tremendous success, we know that there are many more children who are without a library card and don't have access to the many resources libraries provide. According to City statistics, in 2007, there were 1,947,524 children living in New York City's five boroughs. Currently, The New York Public Library has issued library cards to 544,481 children under 18, approximately 28% of those eligible. Studies show that a child who reads throughout the summer is better prepared to begin school in the fall. There is little question that every child should start school with a library card in their pocket. It's free but its possibilities are priceless.

In closing, I would like to reiterate that the NYPL fully supports Int. No. 59 and its intent to see that every child in New York City have a library card. However, we would recommend that the DOE be required to consult with the three public library systems when developing a pamphlet or written material for distribution to students.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to testify in regard to Int. No. 59 and to Council Member Van Bramer for his leadership on this issue. The Council is a steadfast supporter of the City's libraries and the essential services that they provide. The NYPL is prepared to work with the City Council, Mayor's Office, DOE and fellow library systems in Brooklyn and Queens to see that this bill becomes law.

Thank you.

TESTIMONY BY QUEENS PUBLIC LIBRARY

City Council Intro 0059-2010 Requiring the Department of Education to distribute information on obtaining a library card to all students.

Tuesday, February 23, 2010

Good afternoon, my name is Maureen O'Connor and I am the Chief Operating Officer at the Queens Library. First, let me say thank you to the City Council Education Committee and Chairman Robert Jackson for inviting us to testify on this bill today and also to Councilman James Van Bramer for introducing this important piece of legislation.

We are pleased to take the opportunity today to join the Brooklyn and New York Public Library systems in support of this bill, which will encourage all public school children in New York City to take advantage of the many resources the public library system has to offer.

Currently, the Queens Public library has library cards on file for approximately 207,000 residents ages 5-18. Based on the 2008 data from the American Community Survey of the Census Bureau, there are approximately 381,000 school aged children living in the borough of Queens. This means that some 45% of school aged children in the borough do not hold a library card. For those 100,000 plus students, this is simply a missed opportunity.

Students who go to the library after school find innumerable resources beyond the stacks that dovetail with their school studies and further enrich their educational experience. In many neighborhoods, students literally walk directly from the school building at the close of day to their local community library.

Queens Library offers afterschool support in every community library through our BOOST programs. In some libraries, students have access to specifically trained tutors for homework help, in others they find a dedicated teen space and in all, highly educated youth services librarians. We already collaborate with the Department on Education on many of their initiatives, including summer meals and programs that help parents track their kids' progress and take surveys through our public access computers. We welcome the opportunity to work with the department on this outreach as well.

This piece of legislation will go a long way to ensure that every public school student in the city has access to the free and resource rich environment of the library system.

Again, I would like to thank the City Council for considering this important piece of legislation that stands to benefit so many school children.

TESTIMONY of EILEEN MULLER

PRESIDENT of LOCAL 1482, BROOKLYN LIBRARY GUILD

February 23, 2010

Before the New York City Council giving support to Int. No. 59

Good afternoon. I am Eileen Muller, president of D.C. 37's Local 1482, the Brooklyn Library Guild. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to communicate with you today.

I've had the privilege of speaking to you many times about the effect the Library's has had on the patron who use them. Although today I would like to lend my support to the legislation being presented. 'Distribute information on obtaining a library card to all students.'

Children need a library card so they can develop using the library at a young age. I would hope the library will get in their blood and they will become a regular visitor.

They will always have a place to go when they need to get an answer to a question.

They will use the library to get the help they need with their school assignments.

They will use the public computers; many do not have computers at home.

They will.....there are so many things they can do, It would take me forever to list them all.

The message I'd like you to take away from me today is;

CHILDREN NEED A LIBRARY CARD.

This legislation will help put a library card into the hands of every student in the NYC school system.

Thank you for your time,

Eileen M. Muller

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: John Hyslop

Address: 89-15 89th St. Woodhaven, NY 11421

I represent: Local 1321 Queens Library Guild

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 59 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: LAISE STAMP

Address: 70-13 137th St.

I represent: DC 37 NYPL 1930

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 2/23/10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Eileen Muller

Address: _____

I represent: DC 37 Local 1482

Address: 125 Barclay Street N.Y., N.Y. 10007

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 59 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MARSHALL S CONNER

Address: 123 (W) 83RD AVE KENNY BARTEN

I represent: QUEEN'S LIBRARY

Address: 89-11 MERRICK BLVD JAMAICA

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 59 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 2/23/60

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Barbara Strippling

Address: _____

I represent: DOE

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 59 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 2/25/60

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lynda Kennedy

Address: 455 5TH AVE 6TH FL 10016

I represent: New York Public Library

Address: 28-40 56TH PL 11377

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ann Marie Lettieri - Baker

Address: 52 Chambers St.

I represent: NYC DoE - Exec Director of Academics

Address: 52 Chambers St NY NY 10007

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 59 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 2

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ANDREA VAUGHAN

Address: 455 5th Ave 6th Fl 10016

I represent: BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Address: 10 BRANTZ AVENUE PL.

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