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COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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March 23, 2021
Start: 9:18 a.m.
Recess: 6:27 p.m.

HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING (VIRTUAL ROOM 2)

B E F O R E: Mark Treyger,
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

- Public Advocate Jumaane Williams
- Alicka Ampry-Samuel
- Inez D. Barron
- Joseph C. Borelli
- Justin L. Brannan
- Robert E. Cornegy, Jr.
- Daniel Dromm
- James F. Gennaro
- Barry S. Grodenchik
- Ben Kallos
- Brad S. Lander
- Stephen T. Levin
- Mark Levine
- Farah N. Louis
- I. Daneek Miller
- Kevin C. Riley
- Ydanis A. Rodriguez
- Deborah L. Rose
- Rafael Salamanca, Jr.
- Eric A. Ulrich

A P P E A R A N C E S

Meisha Porter
DOE Chancellor

LaShawn Robinson
Deputy Chancellor of School Climate and Wellness

Adrienne Austin
Deputy Chancellor of Community Empowerment
Partnerships and Communications

Lindsey Oates
Chief Financial Officer

Lauren Siciliano
Chief Administrative Officer

Kevin Moran
Chief Schools Operations Officer

Christina Foti
Deputy Chief Academic Officer

Brenda Garcia
Executive Director of School Support and
Implementation

Stephanie Crane
Chief of Staff Division of Early Childhood
Education

Nina Kubota
SCA Acting President and CEO

Karin Goldmark
DOE Deputy Chancellor of School Planning and
Development

Anuraag Sharma
DOE Chief Information Officer

John Shea
DOE Chief Executive Officer Division of School
Facilities

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Thomas Taratko
DOE Chief Executive Officer Office of Space
Management

Ling Tan
DOE Senior Executive Director Division of Capital
and Reimbursable Finance

Rebecca Rawlins
DOE Chief Executive Office of District Planning

Elizabeth Williams
DOE Director of Data Analytics Division of Early
Childhood Education

Bibiana Hoyos
Mother of Three Children

Milagros Cancel
Mother of One Child with Autism and President of
the New York City Charter for Families

Ximena Vargus
Interpreter for Bibiana Hoyos and Milagros Cancel

Mark Cannizzaro
CSA President

Michael Mulgrew
President of United Federation of Teachers

Liana Garcia
Police Free Schools

Stephanie Pacheco
Police Free Schools

Rasheedah Harris
Healing Centered Schools Working Group

Jonathan Rampagoa
Elmhurst Queens local and attends Bard High
School Early College Queens

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Jade Entien
Junior at Junior Preparatory High School and
Youth Leader and Board Member at Citizens
Brothers United and Youth Leader at Urban Youth
Collaborative

Akeria Adams
Youth Leader at the Urban Youth Collaborative and
High School Junior at Queens

Brielka Rodriguez
Ninth Grader and Youth Leader at Make the Road
New York and in Urban Youth Collaborative

Smitha Varghese
New York City Campaign Coordinator for the
Alliance for Quality Education

Ellen McHugh
Citywide Council on Special Education

Lori Podvesker
Include NYC

Randi Levine
Advocates for Children

Courtney Yadoo
New York Legal Assistance Group

Maggie Moroff
Arise Coalition

Chris Treiber
Associate Executive Director for Children's
Service with the Interagency Council

Josephine Okungu
New York State Certified Teacher, a Former 4410
Preschool Special Ed Teacher

Josh Melendez
Youth Leader at Sisters and Brothers Unite

Kenneth Jones
Executive Director of Salvadori Center

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

1
2
3 Kaveri Sengupta
4 Education Policy Coordinator at the Coalition for
5 Asian American Children and Families

6 Erick Agarijo
7 Community Outreach and Communication Coordinator
8 for the Korean American Family Service Center

9 Roshni Ahmed
10 Advocacy and Outreach Coordinator for Women for
11 Afghan Women

12 Jennifer Kundla
13 Associate Director with Big Brothers Big Sisters
14 in New York City

15 Natasha Mir
16 Senior Community Schools Director at the Center
17 for Supportive Schools

18 Kevin Dahill-Fuchel
19 Executive Director of Counseling in Schools

20 Marion White
21 Child Abuse Prevention Program of the New York
22 Foundling

23 Liz Accles
24 Community Food Advocates and also representing
25 the Lunch for Learning Campaign

Maeve Montalvo
Director of Education at the Museum of the City
of New York

Patrick Rowe
Director of Education at the Bronx Museum of the
Arts

Paulette Healy
Funding to PreK for Students with Disabilities

Leonie Haimson
Executive Director of Class Size Matters

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

1
2
3 Karen Sprowal
Class Size Matters

4
5 Rebekah Cook-Mack
Class Size Matters

6
7 Fatima Geidi
Class Size Matters

8
9 Marcus Romero
Sisters and Brothers United

10
11 Osvalde Velasquez
Bronx Currently Attending to College

12
13 Khia Duncan
Reading for Iesha[SP?]

14
15 Alyssa Figueroa
Coalition Coordinator of the Urban Youth
Collaborative

16
17 Kate McDonough
Coalition Director for Dignity in Schools
Campaign New York

18
19 Chauncey Young
Bronx Parent in District 9 and the Director of
the New Settlement Parent Action Committee

20
21 Grisel Cardona
Single Mother of Three

22
23 Chaplain Sandra Mitchell
Mental Health Advocate and Mental Illness and
Substance Abuse Counselor

24
25 Jennifer Stewart
Son in Pre-K at Hard Share, a 4410 Preschool
Special Education Program

Tanesha Grant
CEO of Parent Support in Parents New York

Anthony Tassi
Literacy Partners

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

1
2
3 Lisa Schwartzwald
New York Immigration Coalition

4
5 Daryl Hornick-Becker
Citizens Committee for Children of New York

6
7 Leah Van Halsema
Committee for Hispanic Children and Families

8
9 Lena Bilik
Children's Aid

10
11 Carlos Castell Croke
New York League of Conservation Voters

12
13 Farah Ahmed
Community Organizer with Jobs to Move America

14
15 Natasha Capers
Director of the New York City Coalition for
Educational Justice

16
17 Madeline Borrelli
District 21 Special Education Teacher

18
19 David Chung
Teachers Unite, Park Slope United Methodist
Church

20
21 Caitlin Delphin
Special Education Teacher at a high school in
Bensonhurst Brooklyn

22
23 Tajh Sutton
Takes Take Charge

24
25 Brian Aju
Sisters and Brothers United

Geo Ayala
Former Alumni at Sisters and Brothers United

Crystal Reyes
Sisters and Brother United

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Gregory Brender
Daycare Council of New York

Nora Moran
United Neighborhood Houses

Mary Cheng
Chinese American Planning Council

Hope Cannady
Sheltering Arms

Tralane Haynes
Staff Attorney at Legal Services NYC

Diana Cruz
Hispanic Federation and the Latino Education
Advocacy Director's Lead Coalition

Luis Porto
New York Roadrunners

David Garcia-Rosen
Fair Play NYC

Jenny Veloz
Fair Play Coalition

Devaun Longely
Fair Play Coalition

Quadira Coles
Girls for Gender Equity

Rachael Gasdick
York Edge Afterschool Programming

Carly McCallow
Ramapo for Children

Solangel Almonte
Youth Organizer at the Brothers and Sisters Sol

Naa-Shorme Aidoo
Policy Director for Expanded Schools

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Tamara Gayer
Parent Association President from South
Williamsburg

Kemala Karmen
New York City Opt Out

Iman Hamby
Sisters and Brothers United

Wesley Guzman
Sisters and Brother United

Nia Morgan
Urban Youth Collaborative

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SERGEANT LUGO: PC recording good.

SERGEANT LEONARDO: Cloud is rolling.

SERGEANT PEREZ: Backup is rolling.

SERGEANT LEONARDO: Sergeant Kotowski?

SERGEANT KOTOSKI: Good morning and welcome to today's remote New York City Council Hearing on the Committee on Education. At this time, would Council Staff please turn on their video? Please place electronic devices on vibrate or silent. If you wish to submit testimony, you may do so at testimony@council.nyc.gov. That is testimony@council.nyc.gov.

Thank you. Chair, we are ready to begin.

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Good morning to all. I just want to make sure folks can hear me. I want to first actually welcome and congratulate again Chancellor Porter. You know, I have to share that it is very much validating to see an educator at the helm of our nation's largest school district. And it means a lot to have someone who has gone through the system, an educator, principal, superintendent. She has seen the system through a number of lenses and all those experiences and memories are with her forever in every decision Chancellor Porter makes and

1
2 for many educators it means a lot. And so, I just
3 want to congratulate again Chancellor Porter and you
4 know, we wish her much success during the most trying
5 of circumstances and welcome to your first New York
6 City Council Hearing.

7 This is where it is at Chancellor Porter. So,
8 congratulations to you and welcome here to the City
9 Council Virtual Hearing. I can't wait for us to get
10 back to City Hall.

11 So, good morning and welcome to the Education
12 Committee's Hearing on Fiscal Year 2022 Preliminary
13 Budget. First, we will focus on the Department of
14 Education's Preliminary Expense Budget. We will be
15 hearing from Chancellor Meisha Porter and DOE's Chief
16 Financial Officer Lindsey Oates.

17 This is Chancellor Porter's first Budget Hearing
18 and again, I would like to say welcome and thank you
19 for being here this morning. It does me a lot to us
20 in the Council.

21 After their testimony and member questions, we
22 will hear from DOE's Deputy Chancellor Karin Goldmark
23 and School Construction Authority Acting President
24 and CEO Nina Kubota, who will testify on the
25 Departments Capital Budget. Finally, we will hear

1
2 public testimony which is scheduled to begin around
3 12 p.m. or so, although it might run a little bit
4 later.

5 The Department of Education's Fiscal Year 2022
6 Preliminary Budget totals \$28.48 billion, excluding
7 pension and debt service. And has grown to represent
8 31 percent of the city's total budget. While the
9 budget grows by \$921.2 million when compared to the
10 Fiscal Year 2021 Adopted Budget, it fails to make
11 additional investments to address the learning loss,
12 really the impacts experienced by our students.
13 That's really the word that is really important, the
14 impact experienced by our students during remote
15 learning, nor does it make any additional investments
16 to support the programmatic and operational costs
17 brought upon by the pandemic.

18 Additionally, the budget recognizes \$254.8
19 million in cuts to Fiscal Year 2022 alone and will
20 recognize \$356.7 million in baseline cuts to Fiscal
21 2022 and in out years, since the last budget cycle.
22 Of this is a \$45.8 million cut to community schools,
23 the Learning to Work program and the Affinity Network
24 Contracts. These are programs that continue to play
25 a vital role in holistically supporting our students

1
2 and addressing their academic needs and I am on the
3 record saying and I stand by this, every school
4 should be a community school. We need to move
5 forward. We can't go back. So, this is going to be
6 a very big priority for the Council and I am sure it
7 is a priority for the Chancellor and folks in DOE as
8 well.

9 The Preliminary Budget only adds \$35.2 million to
10 Fiscal Year 2022 and in the out years to support the
11 creation of 27 new community schools and the hiring
12 of 150 new social workers. While this is a great
13 investment, it is not enough. Our kids are facing
14 unprecedented levels of trauma, remote learning
15 fatigue, housing and food insecurity, social
16 isolation, technological barriers and stress. As I
17 have said many times before and will say it again
18 yes, every school should have a social worker. Every
19 school should be a community school. The pandemic
20 will leave lifelong trauma for a generation of
21 students and it is our responsibility to equip them
22 with the support necessary to overcome academic
23 barriers and make the most of their education.

24 This brings me to my next point, Special
25 Education. According to a report recently released

1
2 by DOE, nine percent of students with disabilities
3 are not receiving any Special Education instruction
4 and 37 percent are only receiving half of the
5 instruction they are entitled to as outlined per
6 their IEP's.

7 Furthermore, 28 percent of students only receive
8 partial or none of the related services they are
9 entitled to. Many of my colleagues and I fear Mrs.
10 Chancellor that the pandemic will exacerbate the need
11 for special education instruction and services. And
12 that many of our neediest students will fall behind.

13 I find it unsettling that instead of making an
14 investment in Fiscal Year '22 and in the outyears to
15 expand Special Education services and instruction.
16 The budget adds \$220 million for Carter cases in
17 Fiscal Year '21. Why are we okay with spending that
18 much on lawsuits and are not investing additional
19 dollars into related services and Special Education
20 support staff?

21 The State Executive Budget proposed by the
22 Governor would have resulted in devastating cuts to
23 school aid that would have negatively impacted our
24 students. I was relieved to hear that the state
25 budget director announced cuts will not be happening

1
2 as a result of the American Rescue Plan passed by
3 Congress. I hope to see a budget in Albany that
4 provides New York City with the education dollars we
5 are owed prior to the pandemic and certainly during
6 the pandemic and that we received all of the aid
7 intended for New York City schools from the Congress.

8 We hope to hear from you your thoughts regarding
9 the federal stimulus as well. Some housekeeping, I
10 would like to remind Council Members that Chancellor
11 and CFO are here to testify on the Expense Budget.
12 Please save questions about the Capital Budget for
13 Deputy Chancellor Karin Goldmark and President
14 Kubota.

15 Council Members will be limited to five minutes
16 in the first round of questions and three minutes in
17 the second round if time allows. Public testimony on
18 the Education Budget will begin approximately around
19 12 p.m..

20 Before I conclude, I want to thank Committee
21 Staff Chelsea Baytemur, Masis Sarkissian Financial
22 Analyst Dohini Sompura, Finance Unit Head and Malcolm
23 Butehorn Counsel for Committee, Jan Atwell, Kalima
24 Johnson Senior Policy Analyst.

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I just want to thank my staff Anna Scaife, Venessa Ogle, Maria Henderson and Jeannine Cherichetti. I would not like to introduce my colleagues who have joined us for the hearing and just make sure I have everyone that's present. We have Council Member Rose, Council Member Lander, Council Member Grodenchik, Council Member Gennaro, welcome Council Member Gennaro, congratulations. It is great to have you hear with the Education Committee or back to the City Council.

We have Council Member Borelli, Council Member Brannan, Council Member Louis, Council Member Ampry-Samuel, Council Member Kallos, Council Member Dromm, Council Member Gibson, Council Member Rosenthal, Council Member Cornegy, Council Member Barron and forgive me if we have missed anyone. We will - I see Council Member Lander; I think I mentioned. Forgive me if I missed anyone. We will certainly add additional folks.

And with that, we can proceed.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Actually, one moment Chair. Public Advocate Williams was going to give an opening statement and then we are going to turn - and then I will swear in the Chancellor and her backbench.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah and it gives me great
3 honor to welcome and introduce a great partner and
4 friend in government and truly a champion of public
5 education in New York City. Please welcome Public
6 Advocate Jumaane Williams.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

8 PUBLIC ADVOCATE WILLIAMS: Thank you so much Mr.
9 Chair and thank you for your partnership and your
10 leadership on so many issues when it comes to our
11 students and their education and really should be
12 showing the past year, trying to get through this
13 pandemic.

14 Welcoming the Chancellor and again,
15 congratulations both my fiancé and daughter, step-
16 daughter were brought to tears when you introduced as
17 they saw themselves in you. And welcome Council
18 Member Gennaro, who I serve with in person and now we
19 are on Zoom.

20 So, good morning. As mentioned, my name is
21 Jumaane Williams, Public Advocate for the City of New
22 York. I would like to thank Chair Treyger again for
23 his leadership and continued advocacy around
24 education issues. Earlier this year, the Governor
25 presented the state's budget, Preliminary Budget for

1
2 Fiscal Year 2022, which allocates \$31.7 billion in
3 funding to school districts through school aid. The
4 School Tax Relief Program also known as STAR and
5 Federal Funds.

6 The Budget also allocates \$4.3 billion in federal
7 supplemental funds to schools to support ongoing
8 costs related to the pandemic. Two weeks ago, the
9 Congress passed, President Biden signed an American
10 Rescue plan Act, a \$1.9 trillion economic stimulus.
11 That will provide \$6.1 billion in New York City
12 budget and \$9 billion in K-12 schools across the
13 state. And according to the Mayor's Financial Plan
14 for Fiscal Year 2022, the city will be allocating
15 \$28.5 billion to the Department of Education for this
16 coming school year.

17 Given the fact that we now have additional
18 funding coming into our schools from the federal
19 government, we need the administration to clarify how
20 these funds will effect DOE's Budget in our school
21 system. For 2020 to 2021 school year, the
22 Departments of Education budget is \$34 billion, of
23 which 57 percent is provided by the city, 36 by the
24 state and 7 by the federal government and other
25 resources.

1
2 At a Committee hearing back in October, DOE
3 representatives highlighted COVID-19 related
4 expenditures due to the transition to remote learning
5 in their testimony. Money was spent on remote
6 learning devices, Co2 devices, hepa pure, PPE. Given
7 that we now have a growing vaccine distribution, DOE
8 needs to determine how this last phase of the
9 pandemic will impact its expenses.

10 I am calling on the DOE to designate sufficient
11 funding to every student that has remote learning
12 devices and every school has enough social workers
13 and counselors. In order for schools to create and
14 maintain a healthy learning environment, the racial
15 guidance counselors and students should be reduced
16 from its current one to 327 to one and 16 schools
17 with the highest need and one and 100 in every other
18 school.

19 At a hearing the Committee last month, DOE
20 representatives explained they found the
21 Administration and NYP will bring two new classes of
22 school safety agents of 457 as it says to be exact,
23 which actually went against the pledge that the
24 Administration made to the Council last year.

1
2 Before the budget last year, the Administration
3 assured the Council there will be a hiring freeze on
4 SSA's, so they essentially have broken their promise.
5 To make matters worse, the onboard and the 475 new
6 SSA's equates to \$20 million, which could have been
7 invested in other restorative justice models. Rather
8 than spending money on hiring more SSA's, the DOE
9 should have used those funds to hire necessary social
10 workers and guidance counselors with a commitment to
11 a three year roll out of 3,500 new social workers.

12 Last time I spoke on these issues, the union
13 leader actually very intentionally misused my words
14 and so, I want to just make sure a correction. That
15 we are - I am most interested in making sure all of
16 our students and faculty are safe in schools. And
17 secondly, that no one lose their job and their
18 employment and one of the best ways to do that if
19 there is going to be a headcount is through
20 attrition. And so, I am sorry to see DOE has lost -
21 has broken their promise.

22 It is important to talk about the response to
23 trauma when having conversations about in school
24 restorative justice programs. I am calling on DOE
25 and the Administration to designate funding for the

1
2 City's Trauma Response and Education Program also
3 known as TREP. The program is currently being funded
4 through a grant from public schools. The training
5 which is accessible to all city staff citywide has
6 been extended through June 2021.

7 What we may see beneficial to us for the
8 Administrators and our students if we continue to
9 fund and expand this program in the coming school
10 year. Another area I have been meaning to focus on
11 when it comes to funding its language access. There
12 is a been a report of the English - DLL learners and
13 immigrant families are deeply concerned that their
14 children have fallen behind and were already behind
15 before the pandemic.

16 According to a new survey conducted by the new
17 Immigration Coalition Education Collaborative, 36
18 percent of parents and guardians survey that since
19 the start of the pandemic, they have not received
20 information or assignments from their childrens
21 school in the language spoke in the home. Given this
22 data, it is clear that more money has to be allocated
23 to our city's Parent University program.

24 Parent University is a collaboration of resources
25 and course offerings to help parents become more

1 informed and involved in their childrens education.
2
3 With the growing immigration population, it is DOE's
4 responsibility to make certain that families whose
5 first language is not English are fully informed of
6 the child performance and participation.

7 I would be remiss not to mention the 11.5 percent
8 increase in spending the NYPD will be receiving from
9 the city in this budget. While the Department of
10 Education is receiving a six percent cut compared to
11 last year's budget. I would like to also mention
12 that DYCD is facing a six percent cut.

13 Quality education program that meets the social
14 and emotional need of all students helps promote
15 public safety. Funding for our city's public school
16 system should be distributed towards programs that
17 will improve our education environments, not maintain
18 the status quo. It is time for the Department to
19 start prioritizing restorative justice programs. I
20 look forward to hearing how the agency will support
21 our schools given the Administration's proposed
22 budget for Fiscal Year 2022.

23 And just to clarify, my last statement at this
24 hearing, didn't bring up any new reports. I
25 mentioned reports of abuse. It was strange that that

1
2 was brought up as something new because we wouldn't
3 be having these discussions if these kind of reports
4 haven't been made.

5 I think we should all dream of a school where
6 police infrastructure is not the main thing that
7 keeps folks safe. I look forward to dreaming with
8 everybody and trying to figure out how we all can get
9 there with a just transition. Thank you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Public Advocate
11 Williams. I will now go some procedures before
12 swearing in the administration.

13 So, good morning again everyone and welcome to
14 the Fiscal Year 2022 Preliminary Budget Hearing for
15 the Department of Education. I am Malcolm Butehorn,
16 Counsel to this Committee. Before we begin
17 testimony, as with all virtual hearings, there are a
18 few reminders I would like to go over.

19 Today's testimony will first begin with the
20 Department of Education followed by Council Member
21 questions. Following the DOE, the Committee will
22 next hear from the School Construction Authority and
23 DOE personnel on the Capital Budget, again followed
24 by Council Member questions.

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Following the Administration, we will then begin testimony from the public. For the public, I will be calling on witnesses to testify in panels, so please listen for your name to be called. Once your name is called, a member of our staff will unmute you and the Sergeant at Arms will give you the go ahead to begin after setting the timer. So, please listen for that queue. We have an extremely large number of witnesses to hear from today. So, for everyone to be treated the same, all public testimony will be limited to two minutes.

In the interest of time, at the end of two minutes when the Sergeant has declared your time is up, please wrap up your comments so we can move to the next panelist. Council Members present, for those of you who have questions for a particular panelist, please use the raise hand function in Zoom and I will call on you in the order with which you raised your hand after the full panel has completed its testimony.

We will be limiting Council Member questions to five minutes. For the purpose of this virtual hearing at this time, there will be no second round of questioning but if time allows and the Chair

1
2 approves, we will do a second round for three minutes
3 each.

4 Finally, for anyone who wishes to submit written
5 testimony and is not able to be here today or is
6 signed up and has to log off later and has not
7 testified, you may submit written testimony to
8 testimony@council.nyc.gov. It will be accepted for
9 up to 72 hours after the hearing has adjourned.

10 I will now call on the following members of the
11 Department of Education to testify and answer
12 questions: Chancellor Porter; LaShawn Robinson
13 Deputy Chancellor of School Climate and Wellness;
14 Adrienne Austin Deputy Chancellor of Community
15 Empowerment Partnerships and Communications; Lindsey
16 Oates Chief Financial Officer; Lauren Siciliano Chief
17 Administrative Officer; Kevin Moran Chief Schools
18 Operations Officer; Christina Foti Deputy Chief
19 Academic Officer; Brenda Garcia Executive Director of
20 School Support and Implementation; and Stephanie
21 Crane Chief of Staff Division of Early Childhood
22 Education.

23 I will first read the oath and then I will call
24 on each of you in order to respond. If you could
25 please raise your right hand. Do you affirm to tell

1
2 the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth
3 before this Committee and to respond honestly to
4 Council Member questions? Chancellor Porter?

5 MEISHA PORTER: I do.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Deputy Chancellor
7 Robinson?

8 LINDSEY ROBINSON: Yes, I do.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Deputy Chancellor Austin?

10 ADRIENNE AUSTIN: Yes, I do.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Lindsey Oates?

12 LINDSEY OATES: Yes, I do.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Lauren Siciliano?

14 LAUREN SICILIANO: Yes, I do.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Kevin Moran?

16 KEVIN MORAN: I do.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Christina Foti?

18 CHRISTINA FOTI: Yes.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Brenda Garcia?

20 BRENDA GARCIA: Yes.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And Stephanie Crane?

22 STEPHANIE CRANE: Yes, I do.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Finally, for
24 question time, due to the large number of

25 Administration officials present, anyone that will be

1
2 answering questions with the Chancellor, if you could
3 please state your name before you speak. It will
4 make it clear in the official transcript who is
5 speaking. Chancellor Porter, whenever you are ready.

6 MEISHA PORTER: Thank you and good morning. Good
7 morning Chair Treyger and thank you for such a
8 wonderful welcome. Thank you to all the Council
9 Members for welcoming me into this space and Public
10 Advocate Williams also.

11 First, I want to apologize for my lateness. The
12 Bronx really tried to keep me this morning and my
13 Council Member friends from the Bronx know sometimes
14 the Bronx just keeps you close. But I am here and I
15 am excited to be here. I also just want to thank and
16 acknowledge all of the Council Members I have had the
17 privilege of working with in the Bronx and I look
18 forward to expanding that partnership across the
19 city.

20 So, I am Meisha Porter, New York City Schools
21 Chancellor and joining me today is Deputy Chancellor
22 LaShawn Robinson, Chief Financial Officer Lindsey
23 Oates, Chief Administrative Officer Lauren Siciliano
24 and Chief School Operations Officer Kevin Moran.

1
2 I want to thank you for this time to introduce
3 myself and to discuss the Mayor's Fiscal Year 2022
4 Preliminary Budget for New York City Schools, as well
5 as the future of the New York City Department of
6 Education at this unprecedented time.

7 Before I begin, I would like to acknowledge the
8 work of Speaker Johnson, Chair Treyger and the many
9 individual members of the City Council who have
10 supported our students and schools throughout the
11 years. And of course, particularly this year, this
12 most difficult year that we have all experienced
13 across the city.

14 I have witnessed at first hand the benefits of
15 the advocacy and investment on behalf of our students
16 and families and especially you know, principals
17 across the city thank you for your advocacy around
18 the relief that we were able to give them yesterday
19 from you know, the whole time list that was provided
20 in service of forgiving debt. So, I thank you for
21 that work as well.

22 I actually started my first week as Chancellor
23 and today is my seventh day. So, I am like an
24 experienced Chancellor now. I started my first week
25 on a five borough tour. I visited a school in every

1
2 borough of the city. I started in Brooklyn, went to
3 Manhattan, had to stop in and boogie down Bronx, went
4 to Queens; my borough of birth but I ended in Staten
5 Island and I have to tell you that every day and
6 every visit got better and better and better and it
7 was a job and pleasure to see the great work
8 happening in schools. And the great work that
9 teachers are doing with students both in-person and
10 remote.

11 I also was joined by elected representatives from
12 Districts across the city and together, we saw that
13 work first hand. So, I want to thank all of the
14 representatives who took the time to join me.

15 When I think about the ways this pandemic has
16 affected our city, my mind goes to our children
17 first. And that's not just because I have been an
18 educator for more than 20 years. It's because I am a
19 mother, I am an auntie, I am a sister and I am a
20 student of this system myself. And it is because of
21 our young people that I carried a responsibility of
22 engineering a significant recovery for all of us in
23 the years to come.

24 In our school right now, the people who are
25 essential workers, they are visionaries and city

1
2 leaders of the future our students. We must ground
3 them in opportunities to really move this city
4 forward in a way that we can't even imagine as of
5 yet. It's up to all of us together to give them
6 every tool and resource they need to grow in the next
7 straight generation and I am proud to be working
8 towards that mission in partnership with all of you.
9 And in fact, in all of the conversations I have had
10 starting with Chair Treyger and Public Advocate
11 Williams, you know, we talk significantly about this
12 moment. It's not about what the school system is
13 going to do alone but what about this city is going
14 to do in partnership in service of our students.

15 So, I am very newly appointed, seven days and
16 given that we will be working closely together in the
17 coming weeks and months, I would like to take the
18 opportunity today to introduce myself and then share
19 a little bit about my background and to describe the
20 DOE's goals for all of our schools, students for the
21 coming year.

22 As I said, 17 times already, my Chancellorship
23 began a week ago on March 15th but my history with
24 the DOE goes way back. I grew up in South Jamaica
25 Queens, graduated from Queens Vocational Technical

1
2 Highschool. I went to schools, elementary school in
3 Far Rockaway and in South Jamaica. I was bused to
4 school in middle school to Ozone Park and so I know a
5 lot about the experiences that our students have as
6 we think about integration and diversity in our
7 schools.

8 My mom is a teacher and she was absolutely and
9 continues to be my favorite teacher and what I
10 learned from her is the importance that one teacher
11 can make in the life of a young person. But I
12 learned that from many of my teachers. I learned
13 that from Auntie Brenda, who was my PreK teacher and
14 still at family gatherings, we must do educational
15 activities because I am from a family of teachers.
16 My first grade teacher Ms. Pearlman who just made me
17 feel so special and important and from my tenth grade
18 English teacher Ms. Hulack[SP?] who saw me in some of
19 the ways that we talked about. We need to see our
20 students, when I was having my own personal struggles
21 as a high school student.

22 And because of all of that, I know with
23 certainty, it's my duty and responsibility that
24 carried with me my whole life. To lead by moving
25 forward and leaning in to see every student create

1
2 opportunities for them in every moment and work in
3 partnership with schools, communities, principals,
4 teachers and leaders. I want to give every student
5 that experience. To have an educational experience
6 that changes their life because I know it is
7 possible.

8 Up until now I have dedicated my career to
9 service in education in the Bronx. I started as a
10 youth organizer with a group called Take Charge Be
11 Somebody. And in that youth group, we had the
12 opportunity to become a part of the Bronx Center plan
13 as an 18-year-old, I was able to see a possibility
14 for in Bronx that is present today. When we were
15 part of that plan they were just talking about
16 building the Newport House. Developing a 300 square
17 block area redevelopment plan that included the mall.
18 That included you know, so many things that weren't
19 there when I was 17 but are there now and it really
20 prepared me to see the possibilities and potential in
21 the moment and not just be grounded in what we see
22 currently but to really see what can be.

23 And thanks to my friends at the Urban Assembly
24 who have made major investments, not only in our
25 schools across New York City but also in personally.

1
2 Believing in my potential as a young person to
3 partner with communities and partner with residents
4 in the Bronx, to build a plan that led to the
5 creation of the Bronx School for Law Government and
6 Justice. And that work that we did together really
7 speaks to my commitment from my very early beginnings
8 of working in collaboration with parents, families,
9 community-based organizations and elected officials,
10 to build a possibility and that possibility became
11 the Bronx school for Law Government and Justice. And
12 that was about taking the Bronx Criminal Court
13 Complex and turning it into a place where young
14 people would learn that in the workings of the court
15 system by being a part of it and not by going through
16 it.

17 Yesterday was a great day for me. I got to go
18 back to LGJ for the re-opening of high schools and it
19 was amazing. What was more amazing was to see that
20 the work that we had started many, many years ago,
21 continues to build and Principal Hernandez and the
22 team at LGJ, their commitment to Law, Government and
23 Justice and I am going to an emphasis on justice
24 today. Continues as I walk through classrooms and
25 watch young people talk about the Anti-Asian violence

1
2 that has been happening in our city and the things
3 that they could do both in their schools and their
4 communities to address it.

5 You know, LGJ built me up from an English Teacher
6 to an Assistance Principal to a Principal over 18
7 incredible years and I have said this to many of you
8 who I have spoken to already, being a Principal was
9 my absolute favorite job. Because that is where you
10 have the most impact on what happens between students
11 and teachers in the classroom. And so, I look
12 forward to continuing to lean into those partnerships
13 to build our school system.

14 And then Chancellor Farina tapped me to become
15 Superintendent of District 11 in the Bronx, which
16 includes Pelham Parkway, East Chester and Woodlawn.
17 And what I learned very quickly in the role was that
18 it wasn't going to be a thing that I did alone to
19 move and develop a district but it was going to be
20 how I built a community across principals to build
21 strong collaborations that would move our collective
22 district forward. It was about the investment we all
23 made in all of our schools and all of our students.

24 And after three years in that role, Chancellor
25 Carranza, who I am so honored to succeed in this role

1
2 and I admire greatly and you know am just deeply
3 appreciative of the work that he started for our
4 system. Promoted me to Executive Superintendent for
5 the Bronx. And in that position, I was responsible
6 for leading the entire boroughs, 361 schools. Just a
7 few and 235,000 students across community school
8 district 7-12 including the high schools. And now, I
9 sit here in the role of a lifetime for an educator
10 with great honor to be appointed Chancellor of the
11 nation's largest school district.

12 So, from this new position, let me just say a few
13 words about where we stand in the reopening process
14 and our goals going forward. Over the past year, I
15 have seen the impact on our children, from my point
16 of view as Bronx Executive Superintendent and also as
17 a parent. And I have said this to many of you
18 already, if anything is going to disproportionately
19 affect the community, it will happen in the Bronx. I
20 saw firsthand the impact that remote learning had on
21 our most vulnerable students.

22 And so, we knew immediately that we had to create
23 opportunities for remote learning that extended
24 beyond that which we say and so, we built a strong
25 partnership with Bronx Net and our teachers creating

1
2 lessons that students could not only engage in in the
3 remote setting or in person but also through a
4 partnership with Bronx Net and they could view on
5 their public access television.

6 And that's why I keep saying, my main priority as
7 Chancellor is open, open, open. As you know already
8 on February 25th, we were able to reopen our middle
9 schools, which rejoined the 3K, PreK, K5 in District
10 75 schools that opened and reopened in November and
11 just yesterday, with great excitement, we reopened
12 all of our high schools.

13 And today, my 10th grader is excited to be going
14 in for her first day and excited about the two days a
15 week that she will be in person and she is more
16 excited about the opportunity to reconnect. Make
17 those social connects again with our teachers in
18 person, her friends and just be able to be in a
19 classroom sitting at desk. Yet she is joining up to
20 55,000 high schoolers who have been doing the same
21 starting yesterday.

22 Approximately half of our high schools will be
23 offering in-person learning five days a week to all
24 or a majority of their students. And we will
25 continue to ramp that up the same way we did with

1
2 elementary and middle schools. I am also so pleased
3 that we will bringing back all sports in April and
4 offering additional PSAL opportunities throughout the
5 summer. This is essential, not only for academics
6 but for the mental health of our scholars.

7 Sports in particular provide a much needed outlet
8 for our kids and our children have been without them
9 for nearly a year at this point. By having important
10 offerings and opportunities like sports that are
11 driven by student interest, we can expect to see even
12 more students engaged and excelling in academics.
13 Beginning tomorrow, all families across the city will
14 have another chance to opt in to blended learning for
15 the remainder of the school year, thanks to the new
16 guidance from the CDC.

17 This is something I am very proud to offer
18 because I have heard from so many parents who wanted
19 this opportunity and I know you have as well and I
20 can tell you, we are ready to do this. In the Bronx,
21 we saw early on that we could move to five days a
22 week. That we could get more students in-person and
23 we started before we asked but at this moment is
24 about what we do for children.

1
2 It's going to take a herculean effort on the part
3 of our schools to open and we are going to help them
4 and guide them through it, so that we can serve as
5 many in-children students in-person as possible and
6 we are going to need to do this together with all of
7 you.

8 Health and Safety: As of today, with our high
9 schools back open, we have up to 315,000 children
10 learning in physical classrooms. Leading the nation
11 by leaps and bounds and that number will grow even
12 more in April when we implement the CDC's three foot
13 guidance and open our 3K, PreK, elementary school and
14 elementary District 75 schools to additional students
15 and we know that it is safe. In fact, with a .57
16 percent COVID positivity rate, our schools are the
17 safest places to be and it where our children need to
18 be.

19 So, we are going to continue with what we know
20 works. Weekly in-person testing for our students,
21 educator staff and now our student athletes and
22 coaches, 30 day supplies of PPE, nightly cleanings,
23 mandated social distancing and mask wearing and
24 support and monitoring from our situation room. And
25 I can't talk about this without acknowledging the

1
2 great work that our custodians, our school food
3 folks, our school safety agents, our crossing guards
4 and our nurses have done in our schools to make all
5 of this happen.

6 New York City school reopening plan remains the
7 gold standard and it's a proven approach to safety.
8 We are proud that many of our measures are now
9 included as national guidance from the CDC as best
10 practices for schools across the nation. None of
11 this would be possible without our school staff and
12 educators. The hardest working group of people out
13 there.

14 I am also excited about what the summer holds for
15 our students. This summer school will be more
16 important than ever before given the year we are
17 coming out of. It's absolutely crucial for many
18 students in order for them to be set up for success
19 for the coming year. And right now, we are
20 reimagining what summer school can and will be
21 because what we know is that this summer will not be
22 like summers past. This summer needs to be the most
23 exciting, most fun, most academically impactful. It
24 needs to address the social/emotional needs of our
25

1
2 students and meet them where they are to build that
3 bridge to September.

4 Reopening goals for September: In the weeks
5 ahead, we will be making progress toward our shared
6 commitment to fully reopening all of our schools to
7 all of our students in September '21, '22. Our 2021
8 student achievement plan reflects the realities of
9 this past year of learning and looks ahead to what
10 our students will need next year. It is rooted in
11 healing and a 21st Century approach to learning.

12 First and foremost, I want to give every student the
13 option to go back into school buildings five days a
14 week starting this fall.

15 I want New Yorkers to know that our buildings are
16 safe and our schools are ready to open. And I hope
17 to see everyone back full time come September. But
18 we know, we are opening schools to a different
19 reality than we closed. We are coming back from the
20 hardest year of our collective lives.

21 So second, I want to make sure that what we teach
22 reflects students lived experiences, including any
23 trauma related to this past year and that they see
24 themselves in the curriculum that they experienced in
25 the classrooms and in their schools. We will have

1
2 social/emotional supports in place as well. Not only
3 for our students but we also must wrap ourselves
4 around our staffs. We are aware that many people
5 will be returning to schools where they have lost
6 somebody. They may walk past an office that was once
7 occupied by some else who is no longer there. They
8 may think about a paraprofessional who supported them
9 or a kitchen worker who gave them an extra lunch
10 every day.

11 So, we will have a dual pronged approach
12 addressing both academics and social/emotional
13 learning and we will continue to support our more
14 vulnerable students including our students with
15 disabilities, students in temporary housing and
16 multilingual learners as a priority going forward.
17 As we have done throughout this pandemic.

18 Third, I want to take the lessons we have learned
19 during the pandemic into the next school year. As an
20 example, the pandemic forced us to harness technology
21 to create a 21st Century learning experience and we
22 delivered nearly half a million devices into students
23 hands.

24 At the same time, it showed us that human
25 interaction is critical. Nothing, absolutely nothing

1
2 replaces the experience between the student and a
3 teacher in a classroom. So, I want to bring these
4 two worlds together using technology to address
5 students individual needs, both for those learning
6 full time in classrooms and those who may wish to
7 continue learning remotely.

8 Budget: These are the overarching priorities,
9 needs and initiatives that underpin our budget for
10 the coming Fiscal Year. The Department of
11 Education's Budget for Fiscal Year 2022 is
12 approximately \$35.1 billion. I am pleased that the
13 budget includes \$35.2 million for Fiscal Year 2022
14 and outyears for social/emotional learning and mental
15 health work including an expansion of 27 new
16 community schools and 150 new social workers.

17 As you know, we weren't able to count on stimulus
18 funding until very recently and we were facing a dire
19 financial picture. However, the tide is beginning to
20 turn in terms of both the virus and the budget. The
21 Preliminary Budget included reductions of
22 approximately \$293 million. But as a result of
23 Senator Schumer's advocacy and the Biden
24 Administrations commitment to ensure FEMA funding is
25 available to New York City, the Mayor has already

1
2 announced \$194 million will be restored including the
3 savings involved in Fair Student Funding.

4 We are currently reviewing the new Federal
5 Stimulus legislation that was just signed into law
6 and how it will further impact our schools. We know
7 that the state could supplant this funding like they
8 did with the last federal stimulus. This means they
9 replace regular state funding with federal funding,
10 denying us our full allotment from the state.

11 This would harm our students. Since we need
12 every dollar we can get from the federal government
13 to ensure our schools come back stronger than ever.

14 So, we are eager to continue to working with the
15 Council to make sure our schools get the full amount
16 they are owed. We are pleased to see that the Senate
17 and Assembly proposed to pass through to New York
18 City, our full stimulus amount.

19 With the full stimulus funding, we can deepen our
20 investments by beginning to tackle the lasting
21 impacts of the pandemic and specifically build on our
22 commitments to address the academic and
23 social/emotional needs of all of our students who
24 have gone through incredible challenges over the past
25 year.

1
2 We are advocating our pace in Albany every day,
3 working closely with the Mayor's Office and the
4 Mayor's Executive Budget will include our proposals
5 for how to use the stimulus funding passed to us
6 through the state budget process. And we are and
7 continue to be grateful for your advocacy on this
8 front as well.

9 I want to conclude by reiterating the pledges I
10 made to our communities on the day my appointment was
11 in-house. To our students, to young people, I am
12 indebted to you as a leader, as a teacher, as a
13 principal. We will expand learning opportunities and
14 do more to address trauma and academic needs. We
15 will work to ensure you see yourselves every day in
16 the curriculum experiences because we know that this
17 is very, very real.

18 To our families, we will improve communication
19 and build trust. I have heard you. I have been to
20 your schools. Attended virtual town halls,
21 conferences and meetings. We are going to continue
22 to build on investments we have made in the children,
23 our children because every child deserves a rigorous,
24 high quality education, whether they see themselves
25 in the curriculum every single day. To our staffs,

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2 our teachers, our principals, our school aides and
3 secretaries, our paraprofessionals, our guidance
4 counselors, our kitchen staff, our nurses, our
5 custodians who have our building shine and sparkle
6 every day.

7 Our schools safety agents who have been at the
8 frontlines greeting folks every day, jumping I
9 whenever needed. To every single person who works at
10 the New York City Department of Education, we will
11 listen closely, so that we can do the work where we
12 need to get it done. And to all of you on the City
13 Council and to our many advocates and community
14 leaders, this moment is not about what the school
15 system will do alone. It's not about what I will do
16 alone. But it's about what New York City will do
17 together to invest in our children. To make sure our
18 children we put them first in this city.

19 I am ready to get to work. I am so honored to
20 serve in this role and as I have been saying, let's
21 go. Let's do this. I am ready. It is time to get
22 moving. Thank you, thank you so much to the Council.
23 Thank you Chair Treyger and I am happy to take your
24 questions.

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2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Very awesome welcome
3 introduction Chancellor Porter. Welcome again and I
4 just want to note also we have been joined by Council
5 Member Salamanca, Council Member Riley, Council
6 Member Miller and Council Member Rodriguez.

7 And I also just want to quickly note on the
8 record to publicly acknowledge and thank Former
9 Chancellor Richard Carranza as well. He is someone
10 who spoke from his heart. He spoke his truth. An
11 educator as well and was extremely accessible,
12 visible. He visited every corner of our city and
13 followed up on commitments in terms of increasing
14 supports for our kids when I first met him.

15 So, I just want to just publicly acknowledge that
16 and thank him for his services to the City of New
17 York. And also say that Former Chancellor Green has
18 an expression which I shared with Chancellor Porter
19 that the answer is in the room and the answer to lead
20 our nation's largest school system was in the Bronx.
21 And you know, we don't have to do a national search
22 when we have right here in New York City such
23 extraordinary talent and congratulations again
24 Chancellor Porter. We truly are very happy for this
25

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2 announcement and we wish you much, much success
3 particularly in the moment that we are in.

4 Now we will get to questions. And I know that we
5 touched upon on this in the opening, just kind of if
6 there is any further clarity; I would appreciate. We
7 know that there is still a level of uncertainty from
8 the state with regards to school aid, which is
9 influx. How much additional education funding do you
10 expect New York City to receive as result of the
11 American Rescue Plan and to the previous stimulus
12 that was passed in December? Is there any rough
13 estimate which the DOE has at this time?

14 MEISHA PORTER: Thank you for your question Chair
15 Treyger. I am going to ask Lindsey Oates to take
16 that question.

17 LINDSEY OATES: Hello. Can you hear me?

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes but there is a lot of
19 feedback. Do you have us on the livestream in
20 addition to the Zoom?

21 LINDSEY OATES: No.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Alright, we will just give
23 you one moment.

24

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2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: This is a real life example
3 of the joys of remote virtual work. So, we certainly
4 appreciate everyone trying to make it work.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Lindsey, just acknowledge
6 when you want us to unmute you again. Alright, if we
7 can go ahead and unmute Lindsey, we will try it
8 again.

9 LINDSEY OATES: Okay, can you hear me now?

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, yes go ahead.

11 LINDSEY OATES: Can you hear me now?

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

13 LINDSEY OATES: Yes, okay, great. Thank you for
14 your patience. Good morning Chair Treyger. Nice to
15 see you as always. Thank you for the question. I am
16 thrilled to talk about good news with all of you
17 today.

18 We have all talked about extremely hard cuts and
19 declining resources to the department over the last
20 several years. And those have been hard
21 conversations and as always, I have very much
22 appreciated Chair Treyger, your advocacy and that of
23 all Council Members to ensure that education had what
24 we need during toughest of times.
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So, your question Chair Treyger was about stimulus funding. We of course don't exactly know what the full value of the stimulus funding will be, partly because the State's Enacted Budget, as you know, has not yet happened and that very much will influence the outcomes of the stimulus dollars that we will get. And then we will see what the City's Executive Budget will do in terms of our stimulus dollars for Fiscal Year '22.

We do believe that the full value we could get from the Source Act, which is the December 2020 Package as well as the American Recovery Act was recently passed, could be somewhere around \$6 billion to \$6.5 billion total. But again, very, very much depends on what happens with the State's Enacted Budget, as well as the City's Executive Budget which will be released in about a month.

So, we are looking forward to having conversations with you over the next coming weeks about those resources.

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you, thank you Lindsey and just to get a note for my colleagues and those watching, there was a federal bill that was passed last December before this American Rescue Plan

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2 and New York State was again proposing to supplant
3 that money, which is really outrageous.

4 Last year's budget, New York State took \$700
5 million or plus in aid the supplanted, which they cut
6 us during the most trying of times. And so they
7 passed the bill out of Congress in December. Now, we
8 just had the American Rescue Plan, so it's really
9 important to hone in on what exactly is the amount
10 for New York City and also the state is proposing not
11 just cuts but also increased mandated costs down to
12 the city. Which also is really a cut. And so, these
13 are very important things to keep an eye on. I would
14 appreciate if there were a commitment for us to work
15 closely on that, so we know what actual the amount is
16 that we have.

17 So, I will turn some of the key budget
18 priorities. In the Fiscal 2021 Executive Budget
19 introduced in baseline, \$45.8 million in cuts to
20 community schools, the Learning to Work program and
21 Affinity School Contracts. While I am thankful for
22 your commitment to restore \$30.6 million of this cut
23 in Fiscal Year 2021, I am disappointed that this
24 restoration was not baselined. These programs, as I
25 am sure the Chancellor would agree, continue to play

1
2 a vital role in the academic and social/emotional
3 enrichment of our students at a time where they are
4 most vulnerable.

5 Providers continue to wear many hats as to
6 support our students in a holistic way and
7 Chancellor, you know, we are expecting this
8 additional funding you know, once we have clarity on
9 the number but can you commit once we know what the
10 number is, can you commit to restore and baseline
11 funding for these programs and if not at this time,
12 what can you do to help us advocate for the baseline
13 funding to be restored?

14 MEISHA PORTER: Sorry, I was muted but you know,
15 this is what happens remotely. So, thank you Chair
16 Treyger. I appreciate the question. Lindsey is
17 going to take more of it. You know, we are committed
18 to continuing to partner and be in partnership with
19 our colleagues across the city. This has been a
20 difficult budget year. I am going to have Lindsey
21 talk a bit more about what we are doing in that area.

22 LINDSEY OATES: Thanks for the question Chair
23 Treyger and we of course again, appreciate your
24 advocacy for the restoration that we had for these
25 important programs this past November plan and

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2 particularly for your advocacy fully restoring the
3 community schools reduction. I can't say enough
4 about your advocacy really to support that.

5 One thing I just, so you know, the obvious thing
6 that we are looking at is whether stimulus dollars
7 can be used to support these programs. We are
8 looking at other funding sources that would be
9 available potentially to support these programs.
10 This is a reminder stimulus funding is by nature
11 temporary and so, your point about baselining,
12 finding a baselined resource is something that of
13 course, you would be advocating for as well and
14 working with our city partners on that. And I hope
15 that you will see more to come in the Executive
16 Budget. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Lindsey, if I could just
18 quickly follow up on that and I appreciate the answer
19 and I think, you know and I just want to note, I
20 think there is a lot of alignment between the Council
21 and folks at DOE on the importance of community
22 schools, LTW, we just have to make sure that we
23 secure the resources and just know that we will
24 continue to fight very hard to make sure that we have
25 as much resources as possible. Not just to restore

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2 but to really advance this across the city and I
3 really believe that it is important that we emphasis
4 that point.

5 So, if you could just – I don't know if you have
6 it in front of you. How many schools right now in
7 New York City do not have at least one full-time
8 social worker? Do you have that?

9 LINDSEY OATES: Chair Treyger, I do not currently
10 have that number with me but I will be happy to work
11 with the team and follow up.

12 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah and also, if you could
13 just, when following up on that point, without a
14 social worker, without at least one full-time
15 counselor, to give us a budget estimate of how much
16 would it cost to make sure every single school had at
17 least one social worker, had at least a counselor. I
18 think it's really important because to me, it's not
19 about going back to what February looked like last
20 year. It's about making sure that we move forward
21 and that we have adequate supports in every single
22 school because we need to look forward and we can't
23 go back. So, I definitely would appreciate that.

24 I also want to just mention that the Preliminary
25 Budget proposes cutting \$40 million in Fiscal Year

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2 '22 to school allocation memorandum, known as SAM.
3 Like Fair Student Funding, SAM allocations are
4 essential to individual school buildings and can be
5 used for supplemental programs and hiring of staff.

6 Do you believe that this cut to SAM detrimentally
7 impacts schools ability to provide a basic and sound
8 education? And of this \$40 million, do you believe
9 that a majority should be restored to support our
10 schools?

11 LINDSEY OATES: So - [DROPPED AUDIO 55:08-55:21]

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Can we please unmute Lindsey
13 Oates.

14 MEISHA PORTER: Yep, can you unmute Lindsey?

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

16 LINDSEY OATES: Hi, okay, sorry, we are having
17 some technical difficulties this morning, apologies.
18 So, I just want to add something to your previous
19 question too Chair Treyger. Obviously we of course
20 value our social workers and all of our staff as well
21 and we would love to see you know further expansions
22 and the Preliminary Budget as you know expands social
23 workers by 150, which is a good step forward.

24 In terms of the school allocation memorandum
25 reduction that was continued in the Preliminary

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2 Budget, that \$40 million. We absolutely [LOST AUDIO
3 56:05-56:07] and I think you know that I am right
4 there with you in advocating for support for school
5 budgets. That is among the top of the list of items
6 that we would love to restore. Absolutely, we do not
7 want to take school budget cuts ever and particularly
8 not with the opportunity to do otherwise going
9 forward.

10 So, you know, it was a different time in January
11 when the Preliminary Budget came out and a lot of
12 positive things have happened since then and we will
13 be working with you and others to hopefully advocate
14 for that restoration. That allocation impacts school
15 budgets and also some early childhood programs that
16 we would seek to restore, to restore both of those.

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you. Thank you
18 Lindsey. I am happy to hear that that is a priority
19 as well for the DOE. Question, quick question on
20 technology because this comes up certainly in my
21 conversation with many principals and school
22 communities. Does the DOE have any information?
23 How many requests for new or replacement devices have
24 you received this Fiscal Year and have students
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1
2 received all of their requested technology at this
3 point?

4 MEISHA PORTER: So, thanks for that question and
5 you know, we have been really doing the work to make
6 sure that every student had a device and also have
7 been partnering across the city, definitely in the
8 Bronx with our borough president and the Council
9 Members to ensure that every student has a device and
10 continue to work to ensure that that is the case
11 across the city.

12 This moment has allowed us to really cross the
13 digital divide in a real way with our students but to
14 speak specifically, I am going to ask Lindsey or
15 Lauren to jump in and give you some specifics about
16 where we are with devices. Lauren right? Yes
17 Lauren, see I am learning what everyone does around
18 here.

19 LAUREN SICILIANO: Thank you Chancellor and thank
20 you Chair Treyger for the question. It's a pleasure
21 to be with you this morning. As you know, we have
22 worked extraordinarily hard to deliver devices to our
23 students, including over 450,000 LTE enabled iPads.
24 All of the requests that we have received have been
25 delivered or are in transit right now and those would

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2 really be you know, recent requests that we are
3 continuing to fill on an ongoing basis as they come
4 in.

5 So, to date, this Fiscal Year, it's been about
6 140,000 devices requested and delivered but we still
7 have devices available and will continue to fulfill
8 needs that schools and students have.

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And Lauren, thank you for
10 that. Do you have an estimate of how many students
11 are still without their device at this time?

12 LAUREN SICILIANO: So, all of the requests that
13 we are receiving, we are fulfilling right away. So,
14 although any requests that we have received are
15 either delivered or on route. That means that as you
16 all know, device need is extraordinarily fluid and
17 there are students who had access to a device
18 yesterday who may not today because it was their
19 internet access or the device breaks or another
20 member of the family needs it.

21 So, we don't have an outstanding number of
22 students that need devices right now but we know that
23 requests will continue to come in and we will
24 continue filling those. And of course, if you are
25 aware of schools or students who are in need of

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2 devices, you know, as you have done throughout the
3 school year, please escalate those to us and we will
4 make sure a device gets to that student immediately.

5 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes and I appreciate that
6 answer. I will just note that the requests for
7 chrome books keep coming up, particularly in the
8 upper grades and also connections to internet
9 connectivity, particularly students in shelter. That
10 continues to be an issue.

11 This is a question I ask every Chancellor, well
12 the Chancellor I have – I have only met a couple of
13 them but a question I would like to ask the current
14 Chancellor, the new Chancellor. I think is both a
15 budget question but really more so I think an
16 instructional question and just kind of curious to
17 hear your thoughts Chancellor. What are your
18 thoughts on class size and how do you view it as a
19 tool to improve academic results?

20 MEISHA PORTER: So, I think this moment has
21 taught a lot about you know how we can provide
22 students with individual support leveraging
23 technology. You know and you know, we have been able
24 to in the pandemic you know, obviously support
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1
2 students in smaller class sizes because we had to and
3 we were forced to.

4 You know, I think looking at ways to reduce class
5 size collectively across our schools you know, is
6 something for us to look at and I think you know, one
7 of the things that we have done as a system is you
8 know, with through the small schools movement.
9 Through you know, building in social/emotional
10 supports. Making sure that students have an adult to
11 connect to in a building. I think that the bigger
12 question is how are we looking at ways that students
13 have clear connection, social, emotional supports in
14 place in their building so that all of their learning
15 needs are met. There is I think what this moment is
16 really about and it has really is about the need to
17 really educate and advocate for the whole child.

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And I appreciate that
19 answer Chancellor and just from your experience being
20 you know, Chancellor, a superintendent, a principal,
21 do you believe that an effort to reduce class size
22 aligns with an effort to improve academic outcomes
23 and to better meet the social, emotional needs of our
24 kids if you have a smaller class size? So you can
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2 kind of identify it and provide that kind of
3 personalized, customized approach.

4 MEISHA PORTER: I think again, I mean, I would
5 say again that you know we have learned a lot in this
6 pandemic at around how that can happen in a variety
7 of ways. Class size is a contractual matter but I
8 think we have learned a lot about how we can address
9 students individual needs in a variety of ways and I
10 think one of the things I am really looking forward
11 to is how do we lift that in what you and I think
12 agree, is our new school system and our new move
13 forward.

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you Chancellor. A
15 quick question and you know, whoever has the answer
16 to that, please chime in. How many high schools
17 currently don't have a PSAL team and how many middle
18 schools don't participate in the acronym Champs?
19 Does anyone have that data from DOE?

20 MEISHA PORTER: Yeah, I am going to ask Deputy
21 Chancellor Robinson to jump in on that one.

22 LASHAWN ROBINSON: Thank you so much for that
23 question Chair Treyger and for your partnership with
24 public schools, athletic leagues. I know that that's
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1
2 important for you as well as for our new Chancellor,
3 Chancellor Porter who has made this work a priority.

4 We know that we currently have 530 schools
5 supporting over 46,000 students who have participated
6 in the PSAL programming. We look forward to getting
7 all of those schools back active with us and you
8 know, all of the students who are interested in
9 participating, to participate with us and schools
10 right now are making decisions about team
11 reactivation. And in fact today, more information is
12 going out about PSAL to get permission slips and
13 health forms, so that our students can actively
14 participate.

15 As soon as we have the current information on
16 PSAL, we will be happy to send that along to you but
17 we are really excited that we are coming back strong
18 with PSAL. Our communities have yearned for this
19 moment and they are excited about it. We are going
20 to get started with strength and conditioning first
21 and foremost and then we will begin to introduce
22 practice and sports drills and then we are going to
23 start our competitions and we would like you to join
24 us for some of the sports competitions across the
25 city and other Council Members as well.

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But we know as our Chancellor has said, how important sports are to keep young people connected to their peers and to caring adults. And also for their mental health and wellness. It's a whole child model within our school system and we are always looking at increasing access to sports programs. But also increasing access in places where we didn't have access previously. That is a priority for us as well.

So, as soon as we have that information, we will share that with Council and thank you again for your partnership and we look forward to continuing to join forces in this journey for access participation in sports programming.

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you Deputy Chancellor Robinson for your leadership and partnership as well and I would just note for the record very quickly that you know, when the Mayor talks about reopening PSAL, which you know I think is a great thing and I also want to give some kudos to some of the members of the Council. I know Council Member Borelli, Council Member Brannan, many of them have been very forceful at advocating for PSAL reopening but one of the things I want to note for the record is that many

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2 communities, particularly communities of color don't
3 have PSAL teams. Because they don't have the
4 adequate resources and that to me is just not
5 acceptable.

6 So, I just want to make clear that that is a
7 budget priority for this Committee, for myself, for
8 this office and as a member of the Budget Negotiation
9 team, PSAL equity funding is a really major priority
10 for us and I would love to work with the DOE to
11 ensure that we expand those opportunities to all
12 kids.

13 I am a Former High School Teacher. My school did
14 have a team. Those coaches were not just coaches on
15 the field, they were mentors to my students. Asking
16 how they are doing on their history classes. Asking
17 if they submitted their history reports and I
18 appreciated that partnership I had with the coaches
19 and that entire support system. So, PSAL is a major,
20 major priority.

21 Chancellor, I want to just follow up on summer
22 and I absolutely agree with you. There is a lot of
23 alignment and agreement with regards to reimagining
24 summer. I think we need a universal summer for all
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2 children and families who want and need those
3 reconnections.

4 You know, can you just elaborate further on what
5 you believe is needed at this time for our children
6 and families. And I know this will require
7 partnership between DOE, DYCD. It's more than just
8 DOE. If you had an infinite amount of resources and
9 we are going to work to get you as much as possible,
10 what should summer look like for our children in
11 school communities?

12 MEISHA PORTER: So, thank you for that Chair
13 Treyger and we talked a lot about this and I can tell
14 you that the partnership has already started with DOE
15 and DYCD. This summer needs to be about one,
16 building the bridge back to in-person instruction for
17 students. Helping families feel safe and welcome
18 into their school community but also, providing an
19 opportunity for every student who wants to be in a
20 summer experience to have that.

21 You know, we, I am sure there will be questions
22 and a lot of folks talk about learning loss and a
23 learning gap but there was also a significant social
24 disconnect that happened for all of our students.

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2 And so, this summer needs to be about providing
3 enrichment opportunities, academic support,
4 social/emotional supports. Real wrap around services
5 for our students, particularly our K-8 students. And
6 then we need to think creatively about our high
7 school students as well. How are we building SYEP
8 opportunities? Learn to Work Opportunities, right?
9 How are we addressing the credit needs they have?
10 The social/emotional needs? The financial needs that
11 they may have? And so, we are working really closely
12 with DYCD. We also are working with the United Way
13 of New York City and really see this as a moment to
14 build. You know, you and I talked a little bit about
15 the community schools model. Well, our thinking is
16 to build a community school for every summer program
17 and so that schools are partnering with their CBO
18 partners to develop the experience that students
19 need. That they know students need because you and I
20 know as educators that the folks who know what the
21 students in their community needs are those school
22 folks in the school community.

23 And so, that's what this summer is going to be
24 about. We want to create, we want to make sure
25 social/emotional needs are addressed, academic needs

1
2 are addressed. We want to make sure students have
3 fun. We want to make sure they get back into the
4 building and we want to create the space for schools
5 to plan for that.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I really, I really
7 appreciate that answer and I think you know, opening
8 this up for all of our children, all of our families
9 is really important. Usually summer school is a time
10 where students who are assigned to summer school, I
11 think quite frankly all of our kids could use some
12 reconnections right now and I use the word connection
13 because schools are not - if there is anything, I
14 know this has been proven quite a bit but schools are
15 more than just academic centers. They are the great
16 equalizers for our kids. For all those things
17 happening in the world, that's where they feel safe,
18 supported, loved, you know secured and we need to
19 reestablish those connections for them as soon as
20 possible and as meaningfully as possible.

21 So, I really would like to work further with you
22 on that. I have a question and then I will turn to
23 my colleagues. Special Education, which is really,
24 really critical, really important. Again, as I
25 mentioned earlier, according to the February report

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2 on Special Education services, nine percent of
3 students with disabilities are not receiving any
4 special education instruction. 37 percent only
5 receiving half the instruction they are entitled to
6 as outlined for their IEP's. 28 percent of students
7 only receive partial or none of related services they
8 are entitled to. Despite the stats and the
9 possibility that the pandemic will exacerbate the
10 need for Special Education instruction, the Prelim
11 Budget makes no new investments to support additional
12 Special Education instruction and related services.
13 Why doesn't the budget add any new funding to support
14 Special Education instruction and related services
15 for our kids?

16 MEISHA PORTER: So, we will continue to
17 prioritize our students with disabilities. We know
18 that you know, putting their needs first is you know,
19 foremost a priority for our students and we will
20 continue to ensure that the schools have the
21 materials, the staff resources and supports needed to
22 successfully support and teach our students with
23 disabilities. I am going to ask both Lindsey and
24 Deputy Chief Academic Officer Foti to speak
25 specifically about the budget part and the Special

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2 Education needs and what systems and structures we
3 have been able to put in place to support our
4 students.

5 LINDSEY OATES: Thank you Chancellor. Thank you.
6 Okay, thank you for your patience. So, as we talked
7 about earlier Chair Treyger, the budget condition at
8 the Prelim Budget was very different than what we are
9 talking about now.

10 So, just want to you know ground us in sort of
11 where were in January when decisions were made about
12 the Preliminary Budget. We are looking at
13 opportunities to use stimulus funding for all of our
14 students, of course particularly those with Special
15 Education needs. Compensatory services, which I am
16 sure Christina will mention is a big area that we are
17 going to be looking at. But in addition, a few years
18 ago, the city was able to invest \$30 million in
19 expanding special programs for students who were able
20 to stand up a couple of specialized programs for
21 students. We were able to add capacity to our CSE's
22 to support more timely evaluation. That funding was
23 added at the baseline a few years ago and it was not
24 reduced.

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2 So, those enhancements existed. We have seen
3 success in those programs. Christina can talk to
4 those details some more and of course; we are always
5 looking for opportunities to expand those services to
6 students. And I will let Christina take it from
7 there.

8 CHRISTINA FOTI: Thank you Lindsey. Thank you
9 Chancellor and good morning Chair and all. As
10 Lindsey pointed out, you know, all eyes are on our
11 Special Education students and making sure that they
12 get what they need. I just want to correct Chair if
13 I may respectfully correct earlier, the numbers you
14 quoted are accurate but it's not that students
15 haven't received instruction. Students are receiving
16 instruction and that is something we are monitoring
17 closely. The numbers you quoted were about students
18 and program services, which we, as you know, were in
19 a relentless pursuit to get to 100 percent of
20 ensuring that those students are coming up on our
21 report as receiving their programs and services.

22 It is a different number than receipt of
23 instruction, which is really something that we look
24 at through our attendance data and otherwise. And
25 since we closed school, we have been closely tracking

1
2 the provision of remote Special Education services
3 and monitoring student progress.

4 And we are very excitedly planning a very robust
5 program of additional services to address unfinished
6 learning based on student needs without requiring
7 families to file claims or hire attorneys. You know,
8 this is not something families will need to fight
9 for. We are excitedly putting these plans in place
10 and working with Lindsey and of course under the
11 direction of our Chancellor to make sure that we are
12 meeting these needs and we look forward to future
13 conversations on that topic and sharing in more
14 detail what we hope to provide for every one of our
15 students but part our Special Education students.

16 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right and I would just note
17 and listen, I want to publicly thank Mr. Foti being
18 extremely responsive and accessible to my office
19 whenever I email her or contact her she gets back to
20 families. So, I say this with all due respect. Just
21 because a child was marked present, doesn't mean that
22 they were getting the services they really needed.

23 I mean, we heard some really painful stories
24 about some of these virtual classes. It is supposed
25 to ICT classes of every 50 students in a virtual

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2 class. There is no way. I am going to put my
3 teacher hat on now, that is very hard to meet the
4 needs of kids or 50 students in a virtual class and
5 that is just, that's not cutting it.

6 Ms. Foti, if I could follow-up with you on, do
7 you anticipate an increase in the number of students
8 recommended for special education instruction and
9 related services post-pandemic?

10 CHRISTINA FOTI: Sure and just, I am going to
11 answer, certainly answer your question and just those
12 are connected. In response to what you just said,
13 absolutely. Make no mistake that being present does
14 not mean that we have met your need.

15 And so, and there is tremendous need and we are
16 clear on that. In terms of the referral, we do not
17 want to see disproportionate referrals to special
18 education. We never want to disproportionate
19 referrals or unnecessary referrals to special
20 education.

21 And so, I mentioned earlier, the best set of
22 supports we are planning for having to make sure that
23 students get what they need and the least, what we
24 call the least restrictive environment possible,
25 which means an integrated and inclusive and grade

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2 appropriate and most of all it's an environment that
3 meets the child's needs.

4 And so, these are all things that we are thinking
5 very deeply about and hope to share more information
6 about how we - more specific information about how we
7 plan to address in the future but this is front and
8 center and on our minds.

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah and just note, we have
10 over 200,000 students with IEP's in our school system
11 and at last count, we had I believe, somewhere in the
12 neighborhood of 500 or so school psychologists. Ms.
13 Foti, do you agree with my view that we need to hire
14 many more school psychologists, particularly also in
15 District 75?

16 CHRISTINA FOTI: I think that sir that our
17 psychologists are a valuable resource. We have
18 approximately much closer to 1,000 but none the less,
19 they play an incredible role in the lives of our
20 students academically and socially and emotionally
21 and we are really assessing overall need and how
22 psychologists can best support in the upcoming year
23 ahead. I think more to come on that front. I
24 certainly can't speak to whether or not we are able
25 to increase capacity at this point but acknowledging

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2 the importance of the role that our psychologists
3 play.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah and if you could send
5 me over that number and a breakdown of where they are
6 at because I think there is a disagreement about the
7 number or maybe some discrepancy that I would like to
8 resolve. But with that, I would like to now turn it
9 to my colleagues. I know they have been very patient
10 and mindful of time. Thank you very much. Malcolm,
11 can you please?

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, thank you Chair. We
13 were going to first call on the Public Advocate but I
14 just double checked and I do not see him in right
15 now, so we will insert him into the queue if he
16 rejoins.

17 In order, we have Council Members Lander, Kallos,
18 Grodenchik, Salamanca, Riley, Borelli, Barron, Miller
19 and Rose and Rosenthal. We want to remind Council
20 Members that have not raised their hands to raise
21 their hand if they want to be added to the queue. We
22 are doing five minutes for each Council Member and we
23 will begin with Council Member Lander.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.
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COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you Chair.
Chancellor, it's so good to be here with you. I just want to say a hearty congratulations and welcome. I am a public high school parent and my daughter is off today. I am sitting in the place where she has been doing her classes for the last several months. I will say she has only got one in-person class. Mostly she is on Zoom in her school today but she is very happy to be back in her classroom with her friends.

And I want to say a few other thank you's first to you and your extraordinary team for the work this year. I want to say a special thanks to Lindsey for yesterday's announcement of getting those 877 schools, the \$130 million that they need. As you know, it has been a real passion of the principals in my district and around the city the last few months. I am excited about what you are proposing for the summer. You are focused on social and emotional learning and the opt in you know that was announced and that started yesterday.

Uhm, and obviously for all of that keeping students with IEPS and special needs front and center so critical. But I guess my question is, yesterday

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2 245 of the supposedly open school buildings were
3 closed because of COVID cases. And in the vast
4 majority of cases it is my understanding that that is
5 because of the two case rule.

6 Of course we want to close the classroom where
7 there is a student with a case and we want to do good
8 test and trace and make sure. But closing entire
9 school building for unrelated cases where there is no
10 evidence of spread, is not consistent with public
11 health guidelines. It's not consistent with the
12 quarantine rules of the New York City Department of
13 Health and mental hygiene and way back on February
14 5th, the Mayor and Miranda Barbot from DOE said you
15 were going to review the two case rule and reconsider
16 it. Those hundreds of thousands of kids in the
17 classrooms, if they are closed like every other day
18 when there were no cases in their classrooms, they
19 are not getting the benefit of in-person learning.
20 They are not getting any continuity. So, where does
21 DOE stand? I mean, I believe it is time to end the
22 two case rule and use the test and trace approach to
23 make sure that we close classrooms where there are
24 cases but let our school broadly stay open. And I
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2 thought the Mayor and the DOE were headed in that
3 direction six weeks ago. Uhm, where do we stand?

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MEISHA PORTER: So, thank you Council Member
5 Lander and thank you for all of the congratulations
6 and we have two excited daughters today to be in
7 school.

8

You know, we are definitely, you know, this – you
9 know because you have been at this place longer than
10 I have been in this seat. We are grounding all
11 decisions in health and safety but we are really
12 leveraging the new CDC guidance to really look
13 closely at the two case rule and I can tell you every
14 single day that I have been in this seat, all seven
15 of them, we have been talking about ways that we can
16 address that, remediate that and look at a classroom
17 differently than we look at a school building. So,
18 more to come.

19

COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: That's very encouraging.
20 A classroom different from a school building makes a
21 lot of sense. When you know parents are just every
22 single day, every minute asking me about this. When
23 can we expect some more clarity from you?

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MEISHA PORTER: Give me a little time.

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COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: A little time is a week?

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MEISHA PORTER: Not much time. Not much time. Uhm, you know, I am going to ask if Kevin can jump in on this with me. Uhm, but we are you know the new CDC guidance was really promising in this area in particular. We also are continuing to work with our union partners because we want to make sure all of our faculty members and you know, our students all feel safe about the decisions that we are making and building in the building.

COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Absolutely.

MEISHA PORTER: So, Kevin can you jump in on this one for me?

KEVIN MORAN: Yes, happy to. Thank you for the question Council Member Lander. We do work nightly with our health partners on all the policies that impact student safety within our school buildings. So, we are making sure every day we review and interpret the CDC guidance and other -

COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Kevin, I don't want to be rude but I only have a minute left. So, just like how long until we get an answer on when we can end the two case rule and move to a more safe and supportive and appropriate approach?

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2 KEVIN MORAN: I would say soon. It is something
3 we are actively monitoring and we are going to get
4 back to you as soon as we can.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Okay. Alright, so I am
6 just going to -- so that's heartening. I mean, we
7 want our kids, you know 245 school buildings is way
8 more than 245 schools. So, that is promising. I am
9 going to keep pushing. I know parents are going to
10 keep pushing. We want our teachers safe; we want our
11 kids safe and in consistent with public health
12 guidance.

13 So, just I am going to spit out a couple of quick
14 last questions. First, I am excited about the summer
15 programs. I would love to hear about three and four-
16 year-olds and our early childhood and also, the
17 integration of those summer programs. We have got
18 SYEP. We got NYC supported CBO programs. We got
19 early childhood needs. How do we mix those things
20 together and lastly, I am just going to ask you, I
21 know it is on the NYPD side but it does not make
22 sense to hire 475 new school safety agents. Let's
23 use that \$20 million on summer programs or other
24 things --

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

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COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You are unmuted Chancellor.

MEISHA PORTER: Okay, thank you. More to come on the three and four-year-old's. Thank you for 37 questions in 20 seconds. Uhm, more to come on the three and four-year-old's. Definitely working on SYEP expansion and DYCD is real excited about that and we are excited to partner on that together.

School Safety Agents, more to come. We are continuing to do that work and move forward. So, more to come on that as well.

COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. For the record, we want to also acknowledge that we were joined by Council Member Levine and next, we are going to turn to Council Member Kallos followed by Council Member Grodenchik.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Congratulations on your new role Chancellor Porter. It is good to have a fellow New York City public school graduate at the helm. If no one warned you about me, I am going to ask three questions. They are going to be on 3K, school seats and laptops and I am asking you to get

1
2 the answers within the five minutes provided, so
3 pencils out.

4 In 2017, Mayor de Blasio announced 3K for all for
5 every district by 2021. It is now 2021 and only 16
6 out of 32 school districts are slated for 3K with
7 only three more to be added this year. During this
8 pandemic, countless New Yorkers learned how important
9 childcare is, especially as we struggle to convert
10 one bedrooms like mine into an office and school.
11 Full disclosure, my daughter is three but I have been
12 fighting for UPK and 3K since before we were
13 pregnant.

14 Learning Bridges funded at \$93 million faces the
15 challenge of requiring providers to rely on a
16 temporary program while 3K would be present. When I
17 asked Mayor de Blasio, he said that if we got federal
18 funding, he was open to deliver on his promise of 3K
19 for all by 2021. At a cost of fully full roll out of
20 \$200 million to deliver on the Mayor's promise of 3K
21 for all, \$93 million for Learning Bridges to get us
22 half way there. Can we roll it out now instead of
23 leaving a broken promise for the next Mayor to
24 fulfill?
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2 The second question on school seats. We don't
3 have enough school seats, that's why I wrote Local
4 Law 167 in 2018 to create transparency around school
5 seat need and we won 824 new seats for my district.
6 These seats are currently funded in the budget at
7 roughly \$100 million and we have two sites to build
8 the school seats we need.

9 Schools in my district are deeply segregated. I
10 am asking them instead of building one school, to
11 fulfill a longstanding seat need in the neighborhood
12 that will lack diversity on day one. Will you
13 support building two schools for a total of 1,650
14 integrated school seats?

15 And the last question is that the Mayor and your
16 predecessor promised every student who needs one an
17 iPad that was purchased at nearly twice market rate
18 as children struggle to type out essays without a
19 keyboard. How many children are still waiting on
20 devices? How many never got logged in? And would
21 you support my legislation to give every student who
22 needs one a laptop along with internet to make
23 culturally responsive textbooks?

24 MEISHA PORTER: Alright, thank you Council Member
25 Kallos and I am so glad I have so many friends,

1
2 former school system members, teachers in this
3 Council.

4 So, I am going to jump right in and pass all of
5 these things around but excited about partnering
6 around making sure devices and Wi-Fi are in the hand
7 of every New York City public school student. Lauren
8 is going to jump in on devices. Karin is going to
9 jump in on building. Stephanie is going to jump in
10 on Learning Bridges and more to come on 3K and PreK.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Let's start with 3K and
12 Learning Bridges please.

13 MEISHA PORTER: Alright Stephanie.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: You got two minutes.

15 MEISHA PORTER: Can you unmute Stephanie Crane?

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yep, bear with us as we go
17 about unmuting these persons. There we go.

18 STEPHANIE CRANE: Good afternoon Council Member.
19 As always, appreciate your support on 3K and Learning
20 Bridges. As the Chancellor mentioned, we continue to
21 think about ways that we can expand 3K given the new
22 stimulus funding and just the way we have seen child
23 care support our city in the Learning Bridges forum
24 and in 3K and PreK.

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2 So, short answer is we are going to come back to
3 you soon. But we hear this clearly as a priority and
4 would value your partnership in this work and all the
5 great ways you have contributed so far.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I hope you find the
7 sites.

8 STEPHANIE CRANE: Be in touch with you soon.
9 Yeah, so I remember many calls going over all the
10 sites. So, more to come and thanks again for your
11 advocacy.

12 LAUREN SICILIANO: Just to jump in next on
13 devices. So, as I mentioned earlier, any student
14 requests that we have received, those requests are
15 being compelled right now, so there is no you know
16 queue of students waiting. We do still have devices
17 available. Those are LTE enabled iPads. We also
18 have hotspots available and on the keyboard front, we
19 have about 190,000 keyboard cases that are out there
20 for students to use as well. So, just wanted to
21 share that.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Great, thank you.

23 KARIN GOLDMARK: This is Deputy Chancellor Karin
24 Goldmark. On the issue of new school seats and
25 desegregation, we are very optimistic that all new

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2 seats in New York City will serve to advance
3 diversity and integration and desegregation of New
4 York City schools.

5 I cannot comment specifically about your request
6 for more seats in the specific District you were
7 talking about. Obviously, that's a function of
8 enrollment projections and we have a long standing
9 and long process for that but certainly happy to work
10 with you on how we can -

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

12 KARIN GOLDMARK: That's his time, alright. How
13 we can ensure that we are diversifying New York City
14 schools.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
17 hear from Council Member Grodenchik, followed by
18 Council Members Salamanca, Riley and Borelli. So, if
19 we can unmute Council Member Grodenchik please.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: I am unmuted. I am
22 unmuted. Chancellor, good morning. It is so nice to
23 meet you. I am looking for your little box as I look
24 at the - there you are. I am going to one Ben Kallos
25 one better, I am a Queens public school graduate. I

1
2 graduated at PS201, IS237 and the former Jamaica High
3 School, which is such a beautiful building as I am
4 sure you know along with Senator Comrie and
5 Assemblyman Weprin and so many other thousands of
6 thousands, tens of thousands of people through the
7 years.

8 Uhm, I want to echo and thank you – echo
9 Councilman Landers comments about the \$130 million,
10 which will hold schools harmless. As Chair Treyger
11 knows, nobody visits more New York City public
12 schools than I do and uhm, that has been a major
13 sticking point and something that I am really glad to
14 hear. Because when children move in the middle of a
15 school year it's really nobody's fault. It's a
16 family decision generally.

17 I want to also echo the concerns of Ben Kallos.
18 Uhm, you know and we have heard this before from more
19 than one Chancellor. We have heard it for Chancellor
20 Carranza and Chancellor Farina. I am really upset
21 that I have to buy the technology for my schools and
22 I know Chair Treyger shaking his head, he understands
23 this. I spend almost four fifths of my discretionary
24 dollars every year. I have 35 schools and the
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1
2 principals; I don't tell them what to buy but you
3 know, that's something.

4 So, I just want to put that out there that we
5 need to be doing better by our schools and they need
6 to be on a real plan. And I know this is only your
7 seventh day and the world was great at only six days
8 and then God took a rest but you are not getting to
9 take a rest today. So, but I hope you are given
10 strength.

11 The thing that I would like to talk to you about
12 and the other thing, before I go on, I do want to say
13 I support school safety officers in the school. They
14 are utterly professional. I have never once not been
15 challenged, even though most of them know me by my
16 first name and I just want to put that out there as I
17 have before previously.

18 I would like to ask you about afterschool
19 programs and I know there is a lot on your plate
20 today but I represent a district that's more akin to
21 say Council Member Borelli and Councilwoman Rose, who
22 you are going to hear from shortly. I am way out in
23 Eastern Queens and it takes parents and guardians a
24 long time to get home from work and our schools don't

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2 close at three anymore. Most of my schools are you
3 know; they are locked up by three o'clock.

4 So, that's something and when we talk about
5 equality and how we are serving students, I think
6 there would be nothing more important, no more major
7 direction that we could go in than making sure that
8 every school in the City of New York has an
9 afterschool program. It would do so much, especially
10 coming out of the pandemic. I would like to hear
11 your thoughts on that and then, I am going to skip
12 off to zoning and franchises.

13 MEISHA PORTER: Okay, so I will just say very
14 quickly, you know, first of all, thank you Council
15 Member and I know about the commutes in Queens for
16 sure.

17 I will forgive you. I am a Queens girl but I
18 will forgive you for the Mets because the Yankee's.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Uh, oh, we have a
20 problem here Mr. Chairman but go ahead. Go ahead
21 Chancellor.

22 MEISHA PORTER: Uhm, but I absolutely believe in
23 afterschool programs and know what an enriching
24 experience they can create for our students and I
25 agree with you, particularly coming out of this

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2 pandemic, our schools have to really become places
3 that wrap around students.

4 I am going to also ask, if you want some more
5 information or you just want to know where we stood
6 on it, I can ask Deputy Chancellor Robinson to talk a
7 little bit more about our efforts in that space. But
8 it is definitely something I believe in and think is
9 important for our schools and will be an important
10 part of our reopening.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: I appreciate that and
12 I know growing up in New York City and the struggles
13 that we all have faced as children growing up in New
14 York City that you understand and it's so wonderful
15 to see somebody who grew up here and is actually, is
16 actually the Chancellor.

17 The last thing I just want to add to what Chair
18 Treyger and others have said about the PSAL. I know
19 it is hard to believe looking at me but I am a former
20 PSAL athlete, running track at Jamaica High School
21 and [INAUDIBLE 1:35:33]. And my son was a Varsity
22 Athlete at Cardozo and a Varsity football player, JV
23 baseball player. These programs are so important and
24 I want to thank you for taking on this challenge and
25 I hope we can get you out to Eastern Queens, so we

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can show you some of the great stuff that we are doing out there.

MEISHA PORTER: I look forward to coming.

COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Thank you Mr. Chairman.

MEISHA PORTER: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: I am going to seed my last 11 seconds.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member.

Next, we are going to hear from Council Member Salamanca followed by Council Members Riley, Borelli and Barron. Council Member Salamanca.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: One second Council Member, you re-muted yourself, we will have to unmute you. Just give us one second and we will restart the clock. There we go.

COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Alright, am I good? Alright, awesome thank you. Good morning Chancellor. It's great to see you and it is exciting to see that we have someone whose from the Bronx at this high level position, so congratulations to you.

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2 During the, when the school year began, I came
3 out forcefully because there were schools in my
4 Council District that were not getting its fair
5 share of technology. And I thank you because as in
6 your prior position as the Executive Superintendent
7 of the Bronx, you reached out and we visited a few
8 schools to go over what some of the challenges are.

9 And so, my question is because this is an ongoing
10 issue that I am hearing throughout my schools. What
11 is the average ticket time for when they – to get a
12 ticket resolved for IT issues in terms of technology
13 related to students that you know, take this
14 technology home?

15 MEISHA PORTER: Thank you Council Member
16 Salamanca and it has been a pleasure and will
17 continue to be a pleasure to work together. I am
18 going to ask Lauren to talk about the ticket time on
19 you know that DIT takes to respond to device issues
20 for our students.

21 LAUREN SICILIANO: Right, thank you Chancellor
22 and thank you Council Member for the question and we
23 have really enjoyed partnering with you to make sure
24 that students in your district have the devices and
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2 the technology that they need. We are absolutely
3 committed to continuing to do that.

4 We know that our students and families need
5 dedicated help desk support and so, in order to make
6 sure that we could have timely responses, we stood up
7 a separate fully family facing help desk that was
8 distinct from the staff facing help desk in order to
9 make sure that we had the capacity to respond.

10 So, right now, at that help desk, we receive
11 about 3,500 per week. Uhm, an average wait time is
12 one minute 47 seconds. Depending on the issue that
13 comes up in terms of resolution, uhm, timelines can
14 vary. For example, for students who need a
15 replacement device, all of the devices are covered by
16 Apple Care. So, for students who have an iPad that
17 needs to be replaced, we would work with the school
18 to then swap out the device. Get it repaired and get
19 the student a new one. So, depending on – I raise
20 that as an example of depending on the type of ticket
21 that would dictate resolution.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: So, a ticket such as
23 that one, what's the turnaround time for a student to
24 get a new device?

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2 LAUREN SICILIANO: So, the turnaround time; we
3 obviously try and do it as quickly as possible. It's
4 usually about a week or so before the - to get, to
5 swap out the old device and get the student a new one
6 but if you are seeing - if any escalations are stuck,
7 you should absolutely let us know, so that we can
8 make sure that those issues get resolved.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: And that average, that
10 average week is consistent in all five boroughs or
11 are there other boroughs that are getting a quicker
12 response compared to other communities?

13 LAUREN SICILIANO: So, the week timeline is
14 driven by the timeline to get the device back. Uhm,
15 so there is no reason why one particular borough
16 would be worse than the other but again, it sounds
17 like there are some specific issues that are coming
18 up and definitely want to troubleshoot those with you
19 if anything is stuck.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: So, the average wait
21 time for a student in the South Bronx that needs a
22 device replaced through Apple Care, they will get
23 their new device within one week?

24 LAUREN SICILIANO: So, I don't have it broken
25 down geographically but the timeline to do the swap

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2 is about a week. There are all kinds of reasons that
3 that might be longer. It might be if the family
4 isn't able to go to the school, we then work with the
5 family to set up pickup at the home, for example.

6 So, that's why without knowing the specific
7 cases, it's hard to say. But again, if there are
8 issues coming up, we absolutely want to troubleshoot
9 those with you, so please, just let us know and we
10 will work to make sure they get resolved.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Alright, thank you.
12 Uhm, Chancellor, I [LOST AUDIO 1:40:41-1:40:47].

13 MEISHA PORTER: You are muted.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We will re-unmute you. Just
15 one moment Council Member. There we go.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Thank you, thank you.
17 Uhm, Chancellor, I just want to you know, reiterate
18 what my colleagues are saying regarding the two case
19 COVID rule.

20 I heard you loud and clear that is being
21 revisited. I really hope that a new policy can be
22 put in place as soon as possible. It is unfair to
23 shut down an entire school just for two cases. There
24 is quite a few Charter and private schools in my
25 Council District, there may be some cases. They

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2 don't shut down an entire school. They shut down a
3 classroom. They may shut down a floor but an entire
4 school for two cases I think that's just a little
5 over doing it.

6 And finally, I want to also lend my voice to the
7 \$20 million that they are trying to spend on new
8 school.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Officers, I believe in
11 keeping our children safe. I truly believe that and
12 I am a supporter of school safety officers. But I
13 also feel that every school should have a social
14 worker and there are many schools in my district that
15 do not have a social worker.

16 So, when we are talking about \$20 million,
17 reallocating this, I think that funding should go to
18 social workers. Thank you.

19 MEISHA PORTER: Thank you.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
21 hear from Council Member Riley followed by Council
22 Members Borelli, Barron, Miller, Rose, Rosenthal and
23 Cornegy. So, we will now turn to Council Member
24 Riley.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Thank you Chair Treyger
3 and I think I share the same sentiments with saying I
4 am so elated to see our new Chancellor Meisha Ross
5 Porter who has been so great to us here in the Bronx.
6 I have had the opportunity to work for my entire
7 career in public service, so I am so elated to see
8 you here Chancellor.

9 I just have one quick question and it's kind of a
10 follow-up question that I mentioned at a previous
11 hearing regarding the SESIS program. Prior to the
12 pandemic, there was a lot of attention on Special
13 Education, particularly the DOE capacity in the areas
14 of manage and referrals, planning and delivery of
15 services to special education students.

16 One significant challenge area that we often
17 heard about was SESIS. Previously, a previous
18 testimony from DOE leadership made it clear that the
19 intention was to replace SESIS. So, I just wanted to
20 get a status of that effort.

21 MEISHA PORTER: Okay, thank you so much.
22 Council Member Riley, your whole career, you make me
23 feel really old when you say that. I mean really.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: No pun intended. No pun
25 intended.

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2 MEISHA PORTER: Thank you but I just want to
3 congratulate you also. I am so excited to see you in
4 the seat you're in. I am going to pass it to Lauren
5 Siciliano, Lindsey, I am sorry, to Lindsey. Yes, my
6 apologies, to Lindsey. I am looking at too many
7 papers. She will talk to you more about SESIS.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Thank you.

9 LINDSEY OATES: Thank you Council Member for the
10 question. We share this as a goal and as a priority
11 to replace the SESIS system. The procurement was a
12 little bit delayed as were many things, as a result
13 of the pandemic over the last year. We have recently
14 picked that work up. We expect to be able to make an
15 award on that procurement by the end of this school
16 year.

17 So that is about all we can say now, given that
18 we are still in the procurement process and I think
19 we will have more to share hopefully very soon.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Thank you and I just want
21 to echo the sentiments of my colleague Council Member
22 Salamanca. We really do need more social workers
23 within our schools, especially during this pandemic.
24 We are going to have abundance of students return to
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2 school soon, being that opt in period will be begin
3 again starting tomorrow.

4 A lot of students are going through a lot during
5 this pandemic and we want to ensure that we are
6 taking care of their mental alongside of their
7 academics. So, I just wanted to echo that with
8 Council Member Salamanca. So, I just wanted to thank
9 you so much Chair Treyger for your leadership. You
10 continue to do an amazing job and Chancellor, so glad
11 to see you again. Thank you.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member
13 Riley and for the record, I just wanted to
14 acknowledge that we have been joined by Council
15 Members Levin and Ulrich. And next, we will call on
16 Council Member Borelli for questions.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Thank you and welcome
19 Chancellor to your first Budget Hearing as
20 Chancellor. I hope you are having as fun as we all
21 intend to. I just have a question. I know we said
22 we are working on the two case rule. We are thinking
23 about it. We are having conversations. We have you
24 know, used all these terms that we throw around but
25 what specifically are we waiting? What is the

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2 determining factor on the two case rule? What are we
3 waiting for? Is there a study? Is there a question
4 that needs to be answered? Is there a device that
5 needs to be installed in classrooms? What is it?
6 There is no classified information in city
7 government, so what are you waiting for?

8 MEISHA PORTER: So, we, you know again, I am
9 going to pull Kevin in to talk more specifically
10 about it. Uhm, we definitely are leveraging the new
11 CDC guidance that looks specifically about the you
12 know, about when we close and when we do not close.
13 And you know, a big part of this pandemic for all of
14 us has been like centering health and safety. There
15 are so many things that we don't know. We have
16 learned a lot in the last year, which is why we are
17 looking at the two case rule and have heard, I am
18 sure as you have, from many parents about this issue.

19 So, Kevin, can you talk some more specifically
20 about what we are waiting for? It is just the
21 question of the hour and the day.

22 KEVIN MORAN: Yeah, thank you Chancellor and
23 thank you Council Member Borelli. For us, we are
24 multitasking, as you can imagine and working with
25 multi-agencies around all guidance that's released.

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2 As you know, we just opened up our high schools and
3 that was the intent focus. Working with the
4 situation room on a nightly basis. Looking at cases.
5 Working and partnering with the Health Department,
6 partnering with Test and Trace. I think we are all
7 looking at this issue. I wish I could give you a
8 definitive date or timeline when I could provide you
9 an update -

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: But there is no new
11 study we are waiting for. I mean, we are basically
12 waiting for feelings and how things seem to be and
13 appearances because there is no specific study that's
14 going to come out between now and the day where this
15 decision is going to be made.

16 So, I just don't understand why you know, why we
17 are not using the day after spring break for example
18 as a good day to end it.

19 KEVIN MORAN: Well, I promise that we will
20 follow-up with you. I do think there are a host and
21 a range of operational considerations about what this
22 would mean operationally and how we do that. And so,
23 those are the things we are contemplating nightly.
24 We are not looking for a new study. We are looking
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2 at what we have present and making the best decisions
3 that we can.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Okay. I am not trying
5 to press you but you know, operationally, I mean, if
6 a school is set to be open and the school can close
7 on a dime, you know, what operational challenges
8 could there be if we just simply say, we are not
9 going to close the school that we have prepared to
10 close? I mean, it doesn't actually -

11 KEVIN MORAN: I appreciate your concern. Look,
12 my two children are at I24 and it closed the book,
13 seventh graders especially.

14 So, I am very interested in updates to the
15 policy, I just can't offer you a response right here
16 on the Council call now but do promise to get back to
17 you where we are with that.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Okay, the next question
19 for the Chancellor or for anyone is the CDC guidance
20 on three feet. So, I am reading now from the website
21 three studies - this is from CDC's website.

22 Three studies published in today's morbidity and
23 mortality weekly report, also address SARS COVID to
24 in school. Taken together these studies build on
25 evidence that physical distancing of three feet

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2 between students can safely be adopted in classroom
3 settings. They specifically mention elementary
4 schools. Now, in elementary schools, we have in-
5 person learning but many of them we have cohorting
6 where we have students coming in on different days.

7 So, if the CDC is now saying that three feet is
8 okay, specifically for elementary schools, they put
9 all sorts of caveats and conditions for middle and
10 high school and I will conceive that point but for
11 elementary schools, they say regardless of the risk,
12 three feet is fine.

13 If we already have the teachers in the classroom.
14 We already have students coming and now, the CDC is
15 saying we have more space for the students. Why
16 can't we just put more students in the classroom and
17 give them five days a week?

18 MEISHA PORTER: So, we have opened up, we are
19 opening up actually tomorrow the opt-in period and we
20 are going to keep the window open for two weeks. In
21 the middle of the opt in period is also spring break,
22 which we think everybody needs a break right now and
23 so, we wanted to give a window to schools to also
24 plan what those numbers might look like if we need to
25 bring and identify additional staff. So, we wanted

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2 to not just open but we wanted to open the window to
3 open, so we can plan to do so safely.

4 We also have to consider in elementary schools in
5 particular, in that guidance it also speaks to eating
6 and distancing you know, having six feet of distance
7 for when students eat. So, we have to plan
8 accordingly, we can't just open up and say just come
9 in. We have to make sure again that we do it safely.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: I appreciate your
11 answer, it was more specific than the two case rule
12 answer.

13 MEISHA PORTER: I promise we are coming back with
14 the two case rule and we hear it loud and clear from
15 every Council Member.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Thank you very much and
18 good luck to you in the job.

19 MEISHA PORTER: Thank you.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member and
21 next we will hear from Council Member Barron.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you so much to the
24 Chair for this very important hearing and to the new
25 Chancellor. I want to welcome you Chancellor Meisha

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2 Ross Porter and your staff and to say that you
3 certainly will be a figure to be noted in Women's
4 History Month for the years to come because you were
5 bold enough to accept this position in challenging
6 times that have never been witnessed before. Your
7 reputation precedes you, so I know that there will be
8 great legacy that you leave whenever that time comes.

9 And in full disclosure, I do want to always
10 remind people that Deputy Chancellor LaShawn Robinson
11 is a relative of mine. We have a common great,
12 great, grandparents in Fredrick and Levina Robinson.
13 And I also want to invite you to the ribbon cutting
14 that will take place this September. School
15 Construction Authority despite the pause that was
16 required is going to finish the school on time. It's
17 a middle and high school and I will be inviting you
18 to that at the appropriate time.

19 In terms of looking forward to what our students
20 are going to be facing. The Former Chancellor
21 instituted the title and focus on a culturally
22 responsive curriculum. And talked about the
23 social/emotional learning that needed to be
24 implemented for its students to have more than just
25 the academics of what goes on into the classroom.

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2 I wanted to ask you your position on that in
3 terms of training and preparation of teachers to make
4 sure that they respond appropriately and I also
5 wanted to say that particularly in light of this
6 latest rash of hate crimes that are being perpetrated
7 on the Asian community and that this is a part of
8 what has been a part of our history in terms of
9 identifying particular ethnic groups and targeting
10 them. So, I wanted to ask you about that, what is
11 your response to that?

12 Additionally, your admission criteria. How can
13 we look at the admission criteria, specifically for
14 the so-called elite high schools and for the early
15 college high schools? LaGuardia High School came and
16 said that there were some issues that they were
17 facing and that they had concerns about in terms of
18 the disparate representation of Black and Latino
19 students in their school programs.

20 And finally, understanding that as you and I and
21 all of my former teachers and principals who are now
22 in the Council recognize, the principal is the
23 ultimate person responsible for any and everything
24 that happens in a school building and with that
25 understanding, what is your position about policing

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2 in schools where police officers can usurp a
3 principals authority and insist that a student be
4 arrested for perhaps a minor infraction that a
5 principal or a social worker could have intervened in
6 and had a more appropriate response in having a child
7 arrested.

8 And how are we going to compensate for the
9 learning losses. I think you addressed it in some of
10 your earlier answers. How are we going to compensate
11 for the learning losses that have been exacerbated by
12 this great pandemic that we are in and will widen the
13 chasm of achievement that we see in our public
14 schools between ethnic groups?

15 MEISHA PORTER: So, thank you Council Member
16 Barron and I think all of those questions are deeply
17 connected and I can see your and LaShawn's connected
18 roots in all of the questions that you asked. I am
19 so honored to have her be a member of my team and I
20 am going to pull her into this also.

21 So, I am going to start from the principal point
22 because that was my favorite job and so it's always
23 the point I like to start with. You know, I am going
24 to say two things. One, I have as a principal
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2 enjoyed an amazing relationship with my school safety
3 agents and my local Police Department.

4 We had a great partnership and really worked
5 together to wrap ourselves around students. With
6 that said, I think we have to eliminate policing in
7 schools. We have to replace policing with the
8 social/emotional supports and the wrap around
9 services that our students need and principals need
10 to lead that effort because they know what it looks
11 like and what we need.

12 I will also say you know from my I think my first
13 day here, you know, in my onboarding process, one of
14 my first conversations was with Deputy Chancellor
15 Robinson specifically around how do we build true
16 social/emotional learning academic integration that
17 is grounded in the culturally responsive curricula?

18 What this recent wave of hate crimes against our
19 Asian American brothers and sisters have shown us in
20 the real way -

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

22 MEISHA PORTER: Our diversity and inclusion plan
23 has to also be about what happens in classrooms. How
24 we train our teachers. How the adults show up for
25 our students. And so, they are all very deeply

1
2 connected tissue. And the learning loss is connected
3 also to students being able to really see themselves
4 in the curriculum they experience. Students need to
5 come back into a school that welcomes them. That is
6 inviting to them. That addresses the trauma that
7 they are experiencing and that we all are
8 experiencing but also, you know, and curriculum that
9 acknowledges the diverse experiences across the city,
10 the diverse culture of this city. If we are learning
11 nothing about this moment that our Asian American
12 brothers and sisters are facing, it is that ensuring
13 that the diversity of our city shows up in our
14 classrooms, is critically important in this moment.
15 And you know, if you want to add something Deputy
16 Chancellor Robinson, I would love to pull you in.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Also in response to the
18 Admissions criteria?

19 MEISHA PORTER: Hmm, hmm. So, we are looking
20 closely at the admissions criteria. You know, we
21 took a pause on screens this year for our middle
22 schools. That is going to be a continuing
23 conversation. Listen, I am not going to shy away
24 from the questions about race and diversity in our
25 system and in our school and segregation. Our

1
2 schools are deeply segregated. What I would like the
3 Council to join me on is our communities are also
4 deeply segregated. And so, we have to also make sure
5 that there is a great school in every community for
6 every child while we also look at the ways that you
7 know, our system fundamentally excludes students and
8 we have to create a system that is deeply inclusive
9 in starting in the admissions process.

10 LASHAWN ROBINSON: The only thing that I will add
11 Chancellor and great to see you Council Member
12 Barron. It's an honor to be here today and everyone
13 here. The one piece that I will add is that
14 Chancellor Porter is a partner in this work. She
15 certainly was a partner as an executive
16 superintendent in the Bronx and back. The Bronx pose
17 the highest numbers of staff members trained in
18 trauma responsive practices and this work has been
19 implemented with fidelity in her school. So, we are
20 looking forward to continuing to partner with
21 Chancellor Porter as we deepen this work across the
22 city and she will be a partner and I hope to see you
23 at the ribbon cutting ceremony and thank you
24 Chancellor Porter for your leadership in this area.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you Mr. Chair.

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member
3 Barron. Next, we will hear from Council Member
4 Miller followed by Council Members Rose, Rosenthal
5 and Cornegy. Council Member Miller.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Good morning and thank
8 you Mr. Chair. Good morning Madam Chancellor, it is
9 such a pleasure to see you again. Happy seventh day
10 on the job. Can everyone hear me? Okay, thumbs up,
11 okay great.

12 Without standardized testing and I understand now
13 that standardized testing will happen but will we be
14 using it as just a means to quantify the learning
15 experience of our scholars over the last year or will
16 they be used in the normal way of assessing our
17 childrens understanding of the work that they have
18 done over the past year.

19 With that being said, because we understand that
20 over the past year that the students have lost nearly
21 100 days of in-person learning due to the pandemic.
22 Which leads me into the third part of summer school.
23 Will summer school instruction be for those who just
24 rate N or needs additional service or will we have
25 summer school and I know you talked about the robust

1
2 programming around summer school, social/emotional
3 learning and the plethora of the programming that
4 will be available.

5 But the butts and bolts of the in-person learning
6 that was missed, will that be available for students
7 other than those who find themselves rated as
8 students in need. How do we make up for those days
9 for those students?

10 MEISHA PORTER: So, my goal is to shift the
11 narrative around summer school from a deficit
12 approach to a really holistic inclusive approach,
13 particularly in this moment right. We are all coming
14 out of – a year and a half ago we would never have
15 thought we would be in this moment. And so, every
16 student has experienced a level of loss
17 social/emotional loss, disconnect from school.
18 Social connections to their students, their
19 counterparts.

20 And so, I really want to look [LOST AUDIO
21 2:00:54-2:00:57] summer as an opportunity to bring
22 students back into school to get them back in the
23 rhythm of schooling but also, really defining what
24 school should look like for our students.

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2 I also would say standardized testing will only
3 be one piece of how we look at students and we don't
4 have much of that in this moment right. And so, we
5 also have to take a holistic approach to assessing
6 learning loss and learning needs and to ways in which
7 we need to close learning gaps for students.

8 And so, we will be using baseline assessments to
9 see where our students are but also leveraging
10 ongoing assessment practices to design personal
11 learning plans for students to meet them where they
12 are and bring them to the place we want them to go.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Is there a summer school
14 program to meet those needs that we have - at least
15 that what we have seen, what we know to this point
16 that we lost over 100 days of in-person learning and
17 so many other things, as well as the social. What
18 kind of robust programming can we expect?

19 MEISHA PORTER: Yeah, there will absolutely be an
20 academic portion of summer school right. But I will
21 tell you, I as a parent, would not send my child to
22 summer school for just - right. They have been on
23 the computer doing - my daughter has been on the
24 computer doing ELA and math for eight months. She is
25 done right and so; I think we have to build in those.

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2 Academics must and absolutely will be a part of the
3 summer experience but our students have also not
4 connected to school. They also have not had social
5 interactions. They haven't been on a trip. They
6 haven't been engaged in athletics. They haven't been
7 engaged in dance.

8 And so, we want to make sure that in addition to
9 the academics, that they will experience in summer
10 school, that there are a number of wrap around
11 supports as a part of it as well.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: So, the last two things.
13 What does that target audience look like? Who are we
14 looking to attract? Are they coming from particular
15 communities or are we addressing this equitably and
16 holistically? Every child needs to have this extra
17 engagement.

18 And then finally, how do we codify the transfer
19 of the school safety agents? In terms of how do we
20 make sure that we are keeping folks safe? How do we
21 assess the needs of the work that is being previously
22 done and quite frankly a necessity and how do we make
23 sure that we are engaging these experiences -

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.
25

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: And community leaders in
3 the process themselves?

4 MEISHA PORTER: So, I am going to ask the folks,
5 the team here to unmute Deputy Chancellor Robinson to
6 talk about the school safety part. On the summer
7 school part, and I got to think of a new name for it,
8 we can't even call it summer school anymore.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Okay.

10 MEISHA PORTER: I will let you know; I am working
11 on it. I am good at that stuff too.

12 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Universal Summer.

13 MEISHA PORTER: Yes, alright, okay. But the
14 summer experience I want to have open to all students
15 who want to engage and I want to give to Council
16 Member Barron's point, principals and school teams
17 the opportunity to design what that looks like and
18 means and who they are targeting. I don't want it to
19 be a deficit approach. I don't want it to be the
20 mandated kids. All of our students, all of our
21 children right. Our New York City babies, they all
22 need something this summer and we need to figure out
23 how to get it to them.

24 LASHAWN ROBINSON: And I will just add Chancellor
25 Porter, uhm, and what Chancellor Porter has said is

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2 creating and safe and supportive school for all of
3 our children as a top priority for the DOE. And that
4 includes everyone within the school community from
5 physical safety, social safety, emotional safety. It
6 is incumbent upon all of us to ensure that we are
7 supporting the needs of young people.

8 I really appreciate that she has also stated that
9 it's the city's responsibility as a whole because our
10 young people are educators. All of us, we have been
11 through so much. So, we share and you know, the
12 goals that we have discussed previously in a
13 priority. It's of a successful transition of school
14 safety. Back to the DOE, we certainly value and
15 appreciate our school safety agents and we are
16 looking at all of the systems within a school to make
17 sure that they are safe and supportive for our young
18 people and being really thoughtful about trauma and
19 how our young people have been impacted by trauma and
20 not creating conditions where they are retraumatized.

21 So, we are committed certainly to working with
22 Council to make this transition successful and we
23 know that getting this right is a critical step
24 towards long term success and we are going to need
25 all of you, the collective here in New York City to

1
2 support in this process and we have a great leader in
3 Chancellor Porter to make this happen.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you Madam Deputy
5 Chancellor.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member
7 Miller and next we will hear from Council Member Rose
8 followed by Council Member Rosenthal. So, we will
9 turn to Council Member Rose.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you and welcome
12 Chancellor Porter. It's exciting, I have great hopes
13 for your leadership and I want to echo Council Member
14 Barron's remarks about the historic significance of
15 your appointment.

16 I am concerned about Learning Bridges and the
17 lack of you know, funding beyond June for it. Will
18 there be you know, an effort, a concerted effort to
19 fund it beyond you know, June for summer and fall?
20 And does DOE recognize the value of continuing the
21 Learning Bridges program and Learning Labs and I
22 would really like an accurate count of the enrollment
23 of each of the Learning Lab programs. Not the
24 matches that were made but the actual number of
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2 students that participated in the programs from K-8
3 and the PreK side.

4 And then my second question is about the Learning
5 to Work program. In Fiscal Year '21, it included a
6 \$32 million cut to the program, leaving a total
7 budget of \$42 million in FY21. The program currently
8 serves 17,000 students across 46 transfer schools and
9 20 young adult borough centers. In November, the
10 plan restored only \$22 million, leaving the program
11 with a \$10 million deficit.

12 And it totally left it out of totally unfunded
13 for Fiscal Year '22. Can you tell me what the plans
14 are for Learning to Work and again, why this program
15 was cut?

16 MEISHA PORTER: Thank you Council Member Rose and
17 thanks for your congratulations. I look forward to
18 doing great work together for the city. I am going
19 to ask – first of all, I will tell you we are going
20 to be working with Executive Superintendent Tim
21 Lisante to really look closely at Learning to Work.
22 We see it as an important tool to leverage as a part
23 of our summer plan. But I am going to ask Lindsey to
24 talk a bit about the budget side and Stephanie, if
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1
2 she wants to pipe in here about Learning Bridges as
3 well.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: If we can unmute Lindsey
5 Oates.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Hello.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Bear with us just a moment.
8 We need to unmute Lindsey Oates and Stephanie Crane.

9 LINDSEY OATES: Okay, thank you for the question
10 Council Member Rose. So, I will let Stephanie talk
11 further about the Learning Bridges program. It's
12 wonderful to have such advocacy for these important
13 programs. Just as a reminder, the Learning at
14 Bridges program was designed to be uhm, just for this
15 year only to support hybrid learning. To support
16 students in the days that they are not in their
17 classroom. And so, we had to do emergency
18 procurements for just this school year. Stephanie
19 can talk about what we are thinking about going
20 forward but certainly, I think the hope is that we
21 will have more students in our building in the fall.

22 And for Learning to Work, again, super appreciate
23 the advocacy for this critical program. You are
24 absolutely right that thankfully it was partially
25 restored for only one year and we are working with

1
2 our city partners exploring whether stimulus funding
3 is perhaps a source of funding that could be used to
4 offset this reduction.

5 Ideally, we want to see the restoration fully
6 restored in the baseline to support these critical
7 services for our students. Stephanie, can you please
8 add more to the Learning Bridges program question?

9 STEPHANIE CRANE: Yes, so thank you very much
10 Council Member for your question and your continued
11 advocacy for Learning Bridges. It was with the
12 support of many on this call that we were able to
13 watch this program and for children across the system
14 with the Department of Education and the Department
15 of Youth and Community Development. As Lindsey
16 mentioned, this has been meant to be a program to
17 support children on the days when they are not
18 conducting in-person learning. But we are thinking
19 about how to maximize supports from the Department of
20 Youth and Community Development and our early
21 childcare programs across the summer, so children
22 have the support they need. And so, we will provide
23 more information on that and how we might further
24 support the Student Learning Bridges model.

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2 And then I think to your second question on
3 enrollment, we can provide the most updated numbers
4 to you as children return to the school buildings.
5 The numbers do change but we will get the information
6 to your office so you have the enrollment numbers and
7 can get it specific to your community as well.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: But aren't you going to
9 continue remote learning? Young people are
10 especially when the schools are closed because of you
11 know, these incidents of COVID, you don't see the
12 need to -

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Continue to have Learning
15 Bridges programs in place?

16 STEPHANIE CRANE: So, right now, Learning Bridges
17 is meant to for sustained periods of time. So, for
18 children when they are consistently not in the school
19 buildings and in order to maintain the safety of
20 students, we do not typically make new enrollments
21 for that ten day period when schools are closed.

22 So, it's more for long term planning but I think
23 if we see a continued need for children to be
24 supported in that context, we would think about but
25 right now, it does not support in the briefer

1
2 closures but it is for the longer term support needed
3 when children are not in person in their buildings.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member Rose
6 and next we will hear from Council Member Rosenthal.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you so much
9 Chair. Always a great hearing. Thank you so much
10 Chancellor. I look forward to working with you.
11 Everyone says such great things about you and you
12 know, so gratitude from the beginning.

13 I have two suggestions and one question. So, and
14 I am going to word this - I am hoping to word this
15 question a little bit differently than how others
16 have but I know it's the same question you are
17 getting. Do you have a ranked priority order and
18 dollar amount of programs or people, things, staff,
19 that you would like to have funded with stimulus
20 money?

21 In other words, if the Mayor came to you and said
22 to you, Chancellor, welcome aboard. What are your
23 top five things that we need to fund? Are you
24 prepared to turn that over to him?

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MEISHA PORTER: We are actually working on that.

3

You know, we have had the greatest seven days because

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we got the stimulus announcement. They told me the

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cabinet has never been as happy as they are now. I

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thought it was just because I came but -

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COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Mostly because you

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came.

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MEISHA PORTER: Thank you but we are absolutely

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working with the cabinet on building that because we

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want to be ready July 1 to start spending.

12

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Well, right I mean

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hypothetically, you need to get it in the budget

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first.

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MEISHA PORTER: Yes, yep hmm, hmm.

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COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: When do you think you

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might have that priority list to share with the

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Council?

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MEISHA PORTER: I think we could have a priority

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list early, in about two weeks. We are working with

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the cabinet to prioritize how we want to - what our

22

priorities are for the stimulus money.

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COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Exactly, that's all I

24

am looking for.

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MEISHA PORTER: It's priorities.

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COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yes, thank you and OMB

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MEISHA PORTER: I can tell you really quickly,
our priority is around opening. So, right like, our
priorities are going to be around what our summer
programming looks like. Our priorities are going to
be around what we do with the professional learning
with our staff this summer. Our priorities are going
to be grounded in you know, advancing CRSC practices.
And so, those are some of the beginning of the things
that we are looking for but we want to first get to
the Executive Budget you know, as we work towards
priorities.

14

15

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I appreciate you so
much. I know just City Hall and OMB, they are both
plotzing right now and that is okay and that is okay.

16

17

18

MEISHA PORTER: Yep.

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COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: And I promise not to
hold you to anything.

21

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MEISHA PORTER: Well, we need to make the right
decisions right.

23

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COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Right and I guess what
I'm -

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2 MEISHA POTER: Are one thing but decisions are
3 another.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: And I guess what I am
5 asking fundamentally is that if you could send over a
6 draft list and allow the Council to help in that in
7 some way. So, here are my two suggestions. One is
8 and this came up at another hearing, it has to do
9 with the length of time it takes to get a new iPad to
10 a student when they turn in their broken one.

11 Apparently, what I learned was there are 50,000 iPads
12 in a warehouse somewhere that are ready to be
13 distributed and just a suggestion, I would give 100
14 to each school, so that when a student turns it in,
15 they get the new one that day, that minute. And of
16 course you would set up a very complicated but
17 important checking system but we really you know, a
18 week wait just doesn't cut it. So, that's my first
19 suggestion.

20 And my second suggestion is I think given that we
21 all have PTSD but in this conversation we are talking
22 about our kids that a really good use of stimulus
23 money would be for social workers at every school.
24 Not teams of social workers, not a social worker in
25 each building but you know, come up with a meaningful

1
2 model of number of kids per social worker. And then,
3 implement that throughout the system. So, those are
4 my two ideas.

5 MEISHA PORTER: Hmm, hmm, thank you so much for
6 your ideas. I am also going to turn it over to
7 Lindsey, just to talk a little bit about the
8 Executive Budget.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you.

11 LINDSEY OATES: Thank you Council Member
12 Rosenthal. I think as you all know we need the state
13 budget to be enacted first before we can really
14 determine the size of the resources that we are
15 working with.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: For sure.

17 LINDSEY OATES: So, we appreciate the Council
18 Members advocacy in supporting the reversal of
19 executives proposal to supplant significant stimulus
20 dollars. So, we are eager to see that the one house
21 bills which reverse and reject the executives
22 proposal. We are excited about that but ultimately
23 we need to see what the states enacted budget is and
24 then as you also know, we need the executive budget
25 to pass. To really reflect what ultimately our FY22

1
2 budget will be going into next year and what our
3 stimulus dollars are.

4 With that said, we are absolutely working on
5 those priorities right now and as I said, it's a huge
6 change from where we have been over the last couple
7 of years. Wonderfully timed with our new Chancellors
8 arrival and we will be continuing to talk with you
9 all I think throughout the next several months going
10 into the adopted budget about our priorities for
11 stimulus funding.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Sure and in about a
13 week we will know the state budget. So, uhm, you
14 know I think we will have a lot of the information
15 that you can work with very much prior to the
16 Executive Budget. So, I don't think the Council
17 should have to wait until the Executive Budget is
18 published to get a sense of what your priorities are
19 and what you are expecting to fund. Again, my two
20 cents.

21 LINDSEY OATES: So, I would say that you have
22 already started to see some of the priorities coming
23 from the Mayor's announcement and the Chancellors
24 announcement yesterday, holding all of our schools
25 harmless this current year. I think that was \$130

1
2 billion of federal stimulus money. And so, we are
3 already starting to talk about those types of things
4 this year. I think you will hear more from us about
5 our priorities.

6 I am just reminding you sort of the process of -
7 that you well know, we need to sort of figure out
8 what we are working with within the existing. And
9 the other thing I would just add from a real
10 technical long perspective but that's who I am, the
11 federal government and the state government who are
12 our oversights for this funding have not yet actually
13 propagated any of their rules governing the
14 eligibility and all of that.

15 And so, we do need to work within that. We need
16 to understand how we can spend this. We want to make
17 sure we spend it well. All eyes are going to be on
18 New York City DOE on how we spend this money and we
19 want to make sure that we do that right. We are
20 working with two stimulus packages that have
21 different rules. That's a really unique place for us
22 to be. And so, we want to make sure that we do that
23 well and certainly support all of the priorities but
24 follow all the rules of course.

1
2 So, we will continue to talk about it. The
3 Mayor's announcement yesterday was the first big one
4 about what we plan to do with stimulus funding and
5 you will hear more from us as we move forward.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you so much.
7 You got this Lindsey. You are going to nail it.
8 Thank you Chancellor so much, welcome, welcome.

9 MEISHA PORTER: Thank you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member
11 Rosenthal. For those Council Members who have not
12 asked questions, if you want to raise your Zoom hand
13 now or forever hold your peace.

14 MEISHA PORTER: Or you guys can have time back in
15 your lives which nobody ever is going to have.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Seeing no hands, I will turn
17 it back to Chair Treyger. Oh, it looks like you may
18 have dropped off, we have to unmute -

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: No, they muted the Chair
20 and now they have unmuted the Chair. I do have to
21 say some clarifying things because it is just a
22 couple things I just want to and I am sure the
23 Chancellor would agree and folks in the DOE who have
24 enormous respect for would agree as well. To look at
25 the priority, that the prioritization of the stimulus

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and resources under an equity lens because I want to just say this and I am in full support of what we just announced as far as the midyear school budget adjustments, making sure that schools are not left harmless but I want to just dig deeper for a moment what that means.

Because there is an equity issue right. So, if a family and again, I support all of our families, all of our school communities but if a family chose to remove their child from the public school and they had the resources and money to enroll in a private school or in a private learning pod, which many families in wealthier zip codes did. Many families in Coney Island in my district don't have the means to do that and their needs also have to be accounted for.

And so, I just want to just be mindful of the fact that there are children who have greater and communities that have greater needs than others. And we need to make sure that there is an equity lens in that. I want to just note for the record that just recently a parent in Coney Island shared with me, her child has an IEP and he has regressed during this time and she feels that he needs and quite frankly,

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2 he is entitled to more services. She took him to a
3 professionalist or someone, a professional to do an
4 evaluation and you know, there is an estimate, a bill
5 \$7,000 that she would have to pay out of pocket,
6 which she doesn't have to get an official diagnosis
7 or an official evaluation and she is turning to us
8 for help and support. And the current system right
9 now again from an equity, she would basically have
10 sue the - she would have to find money somewhere to
11 hire the professional. She would then have to hire a
12 lawyer to sue the DOE, which is really outrageous
13 that we have parents who have to sue to get services
14 which their kids are entitled to.

15 And so, I really, really hope and I also have to
16 say this and this is a criticism of the Mayor and
17 OMB, not of the Chancellor or DOE but just think
18 about the language and the response when we are
19 fighting for community schools or we are fighting for
20 Learning to Work and we are fighting for many
21 critical programs that we know work for our students.
22 Sometimes the answer from bureaucracy is, well we
23 have to see what the stimulus money is. We have to
24 see how much we can baseline. We have to see how
25 much - but notice that I didn't really hear that

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2 language from the City Hall when it came to hiring
3 additional School Safety Officer. In over \$20
4 million in additional agents. I didn't really hear
5 that from them.

6 To the point that Deputy Chancellor Robinson made
7 and I am going to keep emphasizing that point. The
8 safety needs of our – when our children are in
9 temporary housing or living in shelter, that's also a
10 safety issue. When our children share with us that
11 they are hungry, that's also a safety issue. When
12 our children have now become primary caretakers for
13 their families at home, that's a safety issue. When
14 our high school kids are now taking on additional
15 responsibility helping mom and dad pay rent because
16 mom or dad lost their job, that's also a safety
17 issue.

18 So, I really want, this message is really for OMB
19 and for the City Hall folks, these are the priorities
20 that we need to be looking at in terms of meeting the
21 needs of our children and to really have an equity
22 lens because I would like to leave in this final
23 year, in this moment, to ensure that every single
24 school has a social worker. Every single school has
25 a counselor and there are schools that have larger

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2 student populations that require even greater and
3 more support. Every school has a PSAL team. Every
4 school – we move the needle on community schools.
5 That really has to be it. The sense of urgency and
6 that sense of passion has to apply you know I think
7 and Chancellor, I would just be interested to hearing
8 your thoughts and reactions to that. Thank you.

9 MEISHA PORTER: Yep, so I can say, everybody is
10 going to be like, don't commit to a thing. What we
11 can commit to is that we are going to leverage the
12 stimulus money in service of equity and in service of
13 meeting the needs of the children in our system
14 period. That is the priority, that is what we need
15 to do. We know that there are communities that are
16 effected differently in this moment and we need to
17 address those issues and I think – everybody okay, I
18 think we can agree that that is a commitment that we
19 can make.

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you and Chancellor
21 and I asked earlier about class size. I am curious
22 to also hear your – in your principal; you mentioned
23 that that was a very big – I also want to just say
24 that shout out to our extraordinary school leaders
25 and educators and yes, the entire school support

1
2 staff because Chancellor you would agree, that any
3 time there is a change announced, it's up to them to
4 have to operationalize everything.

5 And so, I just want to really just say thank you.
6 I cannot stop thanking them enough. Your view on the
7 importance of Fair Student Funding because you know,
8 we are hearing about the needs of our kids are
9 growing but Fair Student Funding is really where it
10 is at. It's where the rubber meets the road as far
11 as the principals ability to better meet those needs.

12 And what is your view and how - and is there
13 consideration in terms of helping support Fair
14 Student Funding as well with these added resources?

15 MEISHA PORTER: So, we haven't gotten there yet
16 in terms of what that looks like. I think we need to
17 make sure that our funding patterns are also
18 equitable and that's what we are going to work
19 towards together and I am going to pass it on to my
20 partner in education over here Lindsey to talk more
21 about Fair Student Funding.

22 LINDSEY OATES: Thank you Chair Treyger and thank
23 you Chancellor for that question. No one has been a
24 greater advocate for Fair Student Funding than you.
25 I was just talking about the Fair Student Funding

1
2 Hearing that you held several years ago. It seems
3 like a long time ago, different world.

4 So, we appreciate your advocacy getting the Fair
5 Student Funding cut last year restored. Obviously,
6 we were thrilled that the Mayor did not implement the
7 Fair Student Funding cut that had previously been
8 considered for the Preliminary Budget.

9 As you well know but I will say again, one of the
10 biggest issues we need is for the state to step up
11 and continue to support New York City schools, so
12 that we can afford to raise the floor. I want to
13 really emphasize that piece along with the stimulus
14 funding. So, stimulus funding is designed to be
15 supplemental and we really need the state to continue
16 to support all localities throughout the state but
17 particularly New York City and increasing state aid.
18 As you know, they are far below their commitment for
19 the Campaign for Fiscal Equity Lawsuit. We need them
20 to continue to reflect increases in state aid so that
21 we can afford to make these permanent investments in
22 the Fair Student Funding formula and I appreciate
23 as always your advocacy as we work towards that goal
24 in this Enacted State Budget to be released soon.

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2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I appreciate the answer
3 Lindsey and I would just say that you know, I am
4 tired of the city playing defense on this. We need
5 to play offense. We are in a moment where we cannot
6 go back and I think that and to all of our colleagues
7 up in Albany, to everyone who is watching, I also
8 count colleagues in the City Council, we can't play
9 defense anymore. We cannot – the mindset cannot be,
10 let's go back to what February was before this
11 started. No, that's destructive to our kids because
12 they were preexisting conditions played in our school
13 system that got us here in the first place. And I
14 also have to say, uhm that you know, I know that
15 there is a lot of concern quite frankly about the
16 reopening and closing and I just want to make sure
17 that public health experts are driving that
18 conversation because you know, we lost about 80 or so
19 DOE employees. That was as of June of last year, the
20 number could have grown even larger. Some are not up
21 to date on the count but you know folks, we lost
22 school family due to this pandemic. So, those health
23 and safety protocols came out I think out of an
24 abundance of caution to make sure that we do – we
25 lost principals, we lost teachers, we lost school

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2 safety, school support staff and we still also
3 sometimes have staff under quarantine, which is also
4 CDC and health guidance.

5 And for the record, New York State released their
6 reopening guidance for schools pretty late into the
7 summer and usually principals and I think Chancellor
8 Porter would agree to start planning for September
9 not by July or August and start planning January,
10 February, you know much sooner.

11 MEISHA PORTER: Yeah.

12 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, in fairness to our
13 school communities, you know, please don't assign
14 blame to our principals to our schools. They can
15 only deal with what they have and information that
16 they have, resources at which they have but you know
17 I just, because sometimes the blame gets assigned
18 really to the wrong folks. There are politicians and
19 bureaucrats you know way above us that quite frankly
20 bear a lot of responsibility.

21 So, I see that we have been joined also by
22 Council Member Gibson. From the great borough of the
23 Bronx, I think you know who Chancellor Porter is and
24 you have been a big fan and you have been raving
25 about Chancellor Porter even before she became

1
2 Chancellor. So, I would like to invite Council
3 Member Gibson who has been a big champion supporter
4 also of Fair Student funding and also accessibility
5 in our schools. So, please, say a few words.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you Chair Treyger
8 and good morning to all of my colleagues. Good
9 morning Madam Chancellor Porter and your team. Thank
10 you so much to everyone at the Department of Ed.
11 Chancellor, I had the honor to join you and the Mayor
12 just yesterday at Law Government and Justice as we
13 reopened our high schools to in-person learning. I
14 appreciate your compassion, your conviction, your
15 commitment and everything you have done and while
16 Southeast Queens can claim you, we claim you in the
17 Bronx for your professional career in school District
18 9 and in High Bridge, that I am proud to represent.

19 Previous Chancellor's always know I talk so
20 lovingly about District 9 and the work we continue to
21 do and Chair Treyger has been phenomenal on Fair
22 Student Funding. On lifting up our students and
23 families, community schools. We work to save Single
24 Shepherd in District 7 in the Bronx and I thank you
25 for that Mark. Universal breakfast and universal

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2 lunch, making sure our students come to school with a
3 nutritious meal because many of them don't have
4 access to all these things.

5 And so, I fundamentally believe in all of that as
6 you do. I believe in restorative justice and
7 social/emotional learning and trauma informed care
8 and holistic services and safe spaces for our
9 children. We have all been traumatized by COVID and
10 I worry that so many of our students, particularly
11 students of color are behind. Our District 75 kids,
12 students with IEP's and you all know I represent a
13 lot of students in temporary housing.

14 So, I just have a few questions in terms of your
15 partnerships with some of the other agencies. Number
16 one, the partnership with DHS. As we see the
17 eviction moratorium in place, holding a lot of
18 pending evictions, we know these are families of
19 color and working families that have lost their jobs.
20 I worry about students in temporary housing and the
21 numbers going up when the moratorium is lifted.

22 So, I wonder what the DOE can do to help those
23 students to make sure that we don't get more students
24 in temporary housing into our school system, number
25 one.

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2 Number two, I am sure Chair Debbie Rose talked
3 extensively about summer youth and the partnership
4 with DYCD is important. So, I am wondering, are you
5 working with them on what the summer season looks
6 like? And in addition to DYCD, I want to add, NYPD
7 and the New York City football club, they have a
8 program called Saturday Night Lights and it's a
9 program that we started pre-pandemic where we look at
10 some of our DOE campuses that have gymnasiums and
11 spaces that are normally closed on the weekend and
12 Friday, Saturday night from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m., we
13 open up the schools for basketball, for soccer and
14 programs. We know that a lot of families do not feel
15 safe having their children in the local park at night
16 during the summer. So, can we have these
17 conversations about a Saturday Night Lights program
18 using some of our DOE spaces on the weekends,
19 specifically Friday and Saturday?

20 And then, the final question I have is I want to
21 understand with some of the social/emotional learning
22 and in a lot of that curriculum, the school-based
23 health centers, the partnerships with them. Are we
24 doing anything different now with in-person learning
25 recognizing all that our children have endured, as

1
2 well as our educators and teachers right? I
3 recognize the incredible value, the work. I visit my
4 schools. I have seen the school aids, the cafeteria
5 staff. You know they are holding it down in the best
6 way they can and we have to do more to assure them
7 that we support them. That we are there and this
8 budget, this blueprint which is a reflection of our
9 values is really going to make investments.

10 So, the final thing I will say as my time runs
11 out is thank you for your announcement this week in
12 recognizing that schools should not be penalized
13 because of a reduction in enrollment. When
14 enrollment goes down, they lose money per student.
15 Thank you for recognizing for a lot of our schools
16 particularly in neighborhoods like ours in the Bronx,
17 you know those schools need that money.

18 So, I thank you for restoring that and I hope
19 that is a commitment that will continue even if we do
20 see a reduction in enrollment. So, thank you so much
21 and thank you Chair Treyger for everything that you
22 do on behalf of our kids. I appreciate and love your
23 passion.

24 MEISHA PORTER: Thank you Council Member Gibson
25 for your just continued partnership around our school

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2 especially yesterday in the Bronx LGJ. It felt like
3 old times here together. I am going to ask if we
4 could unmute Deputy Chancellor Robinson to talk some
5 more about some of these pieces. I will say we are
6 working closely with DYCD on SYEP expansion and how
7 they have become a real part of our summer program.
8 You know, one of my goals is to do more partnering.
9 We are going to be, LaShawn has already been talking
10 -

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

12 MEISHA PORTER: To the Parks Department around
13 how do we partner now around PSAL and so, we think
14 this idea that the city needs to wrap itself around
15 our children is a very, very clear one and that
16 includes all of the agencies that we work with.

17 So, I am going to pass it to LaShawn to talk more
18 about our practices, you know we are expanding our
19 community schools model to add more community schools
20 in those neighborhoods hardest hit by COVID. 150
21 social workers, you know, I know you know all of the
22 top lines because I know you pay attention but
23 LaShawn, if you could come in and talk some more
24 about the partnerships around sports, NYPD, DHS and
25 our students in temporary housing.

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2 LASHAWN ROBINSON: Absolutely. Thank you
3 Chancellor and thank you Council Member Gibson for
4 your continued partnership and advocacy, especially
5 for our Single Shepherds. They are critical to our
6 school communities, especially now during this
7 pandemic. And thank you to Chair Treyger for your
8 advocacy in this area as well.

9 We know that when we support our children and
10 their social/emotional needs, we are giving them the
11 tools to succeed academically and that has been the
12 Chancellors charge to ensure that we are fully
13 integrating social/emotional learning and academics.
14 We call that the cell academic integration. Cell is
15 central to all of the work that we do across the DOE.
16 Because we understand that it creates the conditions
17 for optimal teaching and learning to occur.

18 Over the course of this administration, we have
19 invested in increasing the number of social workers
20 and guidance counselors in our schools. We have
21 invested in restorative practices, social emotional
22 learning and mental health programming, harmony in
23 all of our elementary schools. Restorative practices
24 in our middle schools and high schools. We have
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2 increased health education and we added our school
3 response clinicians to support with trauma.

4 Most recently as many of you are aware, we
5 implemented trauma training across our schools. Not
6 just to support our young people but to support our
7 educators as well. Fully recognizing the impact of
8 this pandemic on all of us.

9 We have also partnered with Health + Hospitals
10 for added support. We redesigned the school mental
11 health specialist role and partnership with DOHMH and
12 the Office of School Mental Health and as the
13 Chancellor has shared, we are so excited to be able
14 to add to our community schools. We truly believe in
15 the value of community schools will be adding 27 new
16 community school partnerships and as the Chancellor
17 shared, 150 social workers and then also investing in
18 cell screeners to really understand where our
19 children are in a targeted way. How do we support
20 them? So, making sure that you know, our young
21 people and educators who need more receive more. But
22 really engaging and transformative work and the power
23 of partnership. We are working closely with HRA and
24 DHS to support our young people in temporary housing.

1
2 So, really thinking in really deep ways about you
3 know, how we partner for support. You can rest
4 assured Council Member Gibson that you will see the
5 Saturday Night Lights programming continue, along
6 with our flag football programming in Far Rockaway
7 had been partnerships that we have had in the past
8 that we really want to see continue.

9 So, we fully recognize the impact on our young
10 people. Housing insecurity, food insecurity, how our
11 young people, many of them have been disconnected
12 from their peer groups, from their teachers,
13 connected in different ways but certainly
14 disconnected from the school community and we want to
15 do everything that we can in partnership across this
16 city to really restore supports and engage in
17 resilient recovery citywide and accelerating learning
18 for our young people citywide.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, thank you so much.
20 I look forward to working with you. There is a lot
21 more work to be done over the next several weeks and
22 I just again, encourage all of you to work with all
23 stakeholders. As much as we invest in our students,
24 we have to invest in our educators, teachers,
25 administrators, principals, support staff, para's,

1
2 parents, leaders, faith, clergy, after school
3 community groups, community partners. I know them
4 all and we have to make sure we engage with them
5 because everyone has the same interests. We want the
6 best for our children. Their future should be
7 brighter than ours and every child, God's children
8 are all destined for success, no matter where they
9 live, where they come from, their zip code and I am
10 extremely passionate about this work.

11 And so, I appreciate all of you and I know that
12 you know, it's not easy. No matter how far we go, we
13 seem to take steps back but you know, I am reminded
14 and every setback is preparation for a comeback. And
15 this setback of COVID, we are going to prepare for a
16 comeback like never before.

17 So, I thank you so much for your time. Thank you
18 Chancellor, congratulations to you and to Chair
19 Treyger, thank you so much for today's hearing today.
20 Thanks.

21 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you Council Member
22 Gibson and I know that we have also been joined by
23 Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez, who I see his hand
24 is raised. Council Member.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. Thank you
3 Chair and congratulations to our new Chancellor. As
4 someone that knows also the school model that she has
5 started teaching at, I also have one of my friends
6 Joanna Garcia who is a principal in one of the
7 schools also working for so many years in the public
8 assembly model.

9 So, I know that their heart is there. I know
10 that we you know, have to continue doing the best we
11 can but also, I also know that you and the rest of
12 the team know that you know we have a public school
13 of the middle class and upper class and the public
14 school are the working class. And I think that
15 that's where you know, we have to continue and then
16 putting other resources and talk on those issues.
17 Connecting parents you know with the resources that
18 they need. In order that we can try to you know
19 equalize the level of education. You know, for
20 working children who live in an underserved community
21 as other children they go to public school but that's
22 the type of public school that they raised \$5
23 million.

24 So, one of the challenges and again, one of my
25 questions to you is like, what is the legacy that you

1
2 want to leave in the time that you will be serving as
3 the Chancellor you know, to close that level of
4 access. To real quality education to those kids who
5 live in underserved community. As close as those
6 kids that they go to working class, to working class,
7 who live in working class community but they don't
8 have the same level of education. It's not because
9 as a teacher, I was a teacher for 15-years. I have
10 been a cofounder to a school. So, we know that the
11 heart of the teacher, the heart of everyone is in the
12 right place. The question is about resources.

13 So, one is, what is the legacy that you are
14 working leave? The second thing is everything is
15 local. You know, 38 percent of the students in New
16 York City they are Latino. They are English Language
17 learners. They deserve the same opportunity. They
18 deserve [INAUDIBLE 2:44:55-2:44:59] and resources.

19 So, again, in the matter we say we are
20 describing, we know that we have left that community
21 behind. They are the English Language learner, like
22 myself are as equally as important of any children
23 such as my two daughters who also have been born and
24 raised here.

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2 So, how are you – you know, working to connect
3 that population? The 50 percent of the Latino
4 students who make 38 percent of New York City
5 population in New York City? You know a student that
6 they will have the same resources as the rest of the
7 students. And [INAUDIBLE 2:45:34-2:45:37] and if you
8 have not. Look at how much does the DOE invest as
9 purchasing a book or investing for a school to buy
10 the textbook? And as you know, I am not going to ask
11 you the numbers of – do you think that we have fewer
12 percentages of other who are Black and Latino whose
13 book are they using at the school because we know
14 that that is a reality.

15 So, what are you looking right? The number that
16 we have and if you have a one percent as other, that
17 right book, those books that they are using in New
18 York City public school are Black and Latino and
19 Asian and what is your goal to close it? To provide
20 those opportunities for those Black, Latino and Asian
21 others who had not been getting an opportunity to get
22 the book in the classroom? Because the publisher
23 working with DOE had been there for years and years
24 and it is very easy for them to justify why they had
25

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2 to continue having [INAUDIBLE 2:46:42-2:46:47] book
3 use in the DOE.

4 And the other piece is about rental engagement.
5 You know one of the things that my wife Christina
6 Melendez said and I said a lot of things of education
7 based is that DOE look at parents as equal partners
8 to fix the problems that we face on education, we
9 wouldn't have moved from where we are.

10 So, that's my last piece. What is your goal?
11 What are you looking to do with parents to give them
12 the respect to look at them as equal partners in our
13 New York City public schools?

14 MEISHA PORTER: So, I will just say you know, my
15 - what has always been important to me as an educator
16 but really -

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

18 MEISHA PORTER: But really is that the school
19 that I lead the classroom that I teach in and now the
20 system that I lead has to be full of schools that I
21 would send my own children to period point blank.

22 So, you know you asked me about what I want my
23 legacy to be and I would say, that would be my
24 legacy. To ensure that we have classrooms that we
25 have quality schools in every single community. You

1
2 know, I led an amazing school for 11 years as
3 principal but spent 18 years building that school.

4 And you know, we have AP classes. Our students
5 went to high level colleges and universities. We
6 never saw a deficit in any of the students in the
7 south, south Bronx that came to the Bronx School for
8 Law Government and Justice. We were a 6-12 school.
9 Our middle school is into high school with regents
10 credits. You know, we knew that the priority in
11 closing the gap for them outside of our school was
12 about creating a bridge to college for them.

13 And so, that's my legacy. My legacy is I want
14 every school leader, every teacher to see what I saw
15 at my school and what potential and possibilities
16 existed there. As far as parents, when I talk about
17 this city is responsible to wrap around our students,
18 I am talking about all of our students. I am talking
19 about our English language learners. I am talking
20 about you know, ensuring but I am also talking about
21 who our partnerships are with and parents and you
22 know, there are many of us on this call that are
23 parents of New York City public school students. And
24 so, we are the most important partners. We are the
25 first teacher you know.

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2 Deputy Chancellor Adrienne Austin has done an
3 amazing job at building out parent university. Our
4 CEC elections are coming up. We need you all to help
5 us get the word out. This is an opportunity to
6 really build parent voice in a real way, through our
7 publicly elected process. In the Bronx, I saw that
8 as a huge equity issue. I was pushing
9 superintendents every day to say no, we are not going
10 to let the Bronx be left out of this moment. We are
11 not going to allow the Bronx to not have voice at the
12 table for parents.

13 And so, those are all of the things that you said
14 are connected to that, which I want my legacy to be.
15 I want students to walk into classrooms and see
16 themselves in the curriculum. In the textbooks they
17 experience, in the lessons, in the heroes we
18 celebrate, in the holidays we celebrate. I said to
19 folks at a meeting, they were talking about how they
20 celebrate culture in our schools and they talked
21 about all the food and the celebrations they have and
22 those are important you know because we had a lot of
23 celebrations that were rich, rich food. I was always
24 responsible for the macaroni cheese and banana
25 pudding at a celebration at LGJ. They still expect

1
2 me to bring it every Thanksgiving. I only got out of
3 it because of the pandemic for the last year.

4 But what I will say is there is more to celebrate
5 in culture than food and dance. It is celebrating
6 the heroes, lifting up the legacy, lifting up the
7 impact that the varying cultures and communities have
8 had in our city, in our state and in our country.

9 And so, if I do nothing, it is that students see
10 themselves in the curriculum. That we level the
11 playing field for parents and that the city really
12 wraps itself around New York City public schools.

13 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you and just making
14 sure, I don't think there is any other member whose
15 hand are raised. And just to close Chancellor, I
16 want to you know thank you for staying the entire
17 duration of our hearing. I do want to close, just
18 it's not really a question, it's more of a reflection
19 and feel free just to add, because I do think this is
20 important. Obviously, we are all here for our
21 students. You know, it's always my principal who I
22 work for always said, it's about the kids and keep it
23 focused about the kids and that's 100 percent
24 accurate. What I will share with you Chancellor and
25 I think it's important for me to share this you know

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2 openly. I have been on the phone with school leaders
3 and teachers, school staff probably more this past -
4 I mean, even when I was a teacher myself but every
5 day and the number of times where school leaders
6 would literally just break down also in tears because
7 they want to do more for their kids.

8 And anecdotally, I am just hearing concerns about
9 school principals or assistant principals and
10 teachers and others who are looking to retire, leave,
11 resign, transfer out of the school system. Have you
12 seen any data about what the retention numbers look
13 like as far as from our school communities? Are you
14 concerned about the trend and the direction? What
15 are we doing to make sure that we support school
16 staff because they are also human beings. You know,
17 they are not robots. They have - many of them are
18 parents themselves or caretakers for their families
19 have lost people in their lives and lost colleagues.
20 So, people sometimes think of them as some robotic
21 people. They are human beings and we need to make
22 sure that they are okay and that they are supported
23 because they are an integral part of our school
24 community.

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2 So, can you just speak about if you have seen
3 anything in numbers, in retention that worries you.
4 What can we do as a system to retain and hire more of
5 our extraordinary school leaders and teachers and to
6 better support them in our school communities?

7 MEISHA PORTER: Yeah, I will say quickly and then
8 I will pull in Lauren who might have some more
9 specifics. But I will say you know we were thinking
10 about this even when I was the executive
11 superintendent and the superintendent. We were
12 thinking about potential retirements, number of
13 principals that we would expect to lose in this
14 system and as you stated so eloquently, it's been
15 exacerbated by this pandemic. People have just been
16 exhausted and have said you know, I just got to go.
17 But we have also had people say, I am going to stay
18 because I can't leave my school at this moment.

19 And so, I think this is a moment for – we also
20 have I will say, brought in a number of substitute
21 teachers to help support us through this process and
22 have identified a new level of talent, who never
23 thought they wanted to be teachers. And so, how are
24 we cultivating them as a part of our system? And so,
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I think and Deputy Chancellor Robinson talked about this a bit also.

This moment of wrapping around is not – it is our students, our children, our babies and our priority but it is also about how we are wrapping ourselves around our staffs, our principals, our teachers and all of the staff members that you mentioned, including our central office staff members.

You know, this pandemic has done a thing to all of us and so, this moment of wrapping ourselves around folks, you know, it has to be really important and your advocacy around the Fair Student Funding, your advocacy around forgiving you know, the debt that schools had as a result of register loss. Let me tell you something, that goes a long way. Right, folks seeing us recognize you know the hard work that they put in in this moment and what they really need from us as a system going forward.

So, I think there are a lot of ways for us to really show up on this moment and I think the continued advocacy from the Council has really helped. And we are going to wrap ourselves around our people. I promise you that. We definitely will so that they know that they are not out there on

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2 their own and I said this to you and I said this to
3 all the Deputy Chancellors and the team here. Our
4 job is to work and service of schools. Our job at
5 the central office is to ensure that every move that
6 we make is in service of what happens between
7 students and teachers in classrooms. And that's the
8 message that I want to get out to our school leaders.

9 I don't know if Lauren wants to add any specifics
10 on the staffing piece but that's what I would offer.

11 LAUREN SICILIANO: Yes, having to do so, very
12 hard to follow that up Chancellor. That was really
13 wonderful and of course completely agree and support
14 everything that you just shared. And thank you again
15 Chair Treyger for all of your advocacy here. We know
16 that it's so critical to make sure that our schools
17 have the staff support that they need.

18 In terms of retirements and just attrition
19 overall, the most attrition and retirements happens
20 over the summer. And so, as we for this year, from
21 this past summer leading into this school year,
22 attrition was actually down compared to prior years,
23 both for principals and for teachers. We will of
24 course continue to monitor this over the course of
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2 this summer to make sure that we are preparing for -
3 to backfill anyone who is leaving.

4 But as the Chancellor said, there were some folks
5 who left the system but there were also many folks
6 who decided to stay and we will continue to keep a
7 close eye on this.

8 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah and I appreciate that
9 and I just, I feel, just last point towards just to
10 kind of emphasize, the folks who have talked about
11 you know, whether they can't - it's hard for them to
12 continue. It's not weakness, it's you know, as a
13 teacher and I did this at every start of every new
14 semester, every new school year, you know, before you
15 go into open up your notebooks, let's get to work,
16 you have to make sure you are establishing a trust
17 and a certain level of trust in relationships in your
18 classroom. And there is a critical moment in a
19 school year in the new school year when students look
20 you in the eye and you look them in the eye and they
21 have to be able to trust you and to know that you
22 speak from the heart and you care about them.

23 And for a lot of our school staff, it's been hard
24 to face people in the eye or whether virtually or in-
25 person and to say, everything is okay when a lot has

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2 not been okay. And many times during the course -
3 and this predates your tenure Chancellor and quite
4 frankly, I am not even faulting the previous
5 Chancellor. It wasn't his fault either but a lot of
6 announcements, a lot of decisions, were not always
7 made in the greatest consultation with folks at the
8 school level.

9 And quite frankly, I am sure the DOE itself has
10 been blind sighted by some big decisions above them
11 too. But at the end of the day, folks on the ground
12 have to operationalize everything and it's hard. And
13 sometimes it's okay to admit that you are not okay.
14 And it's hard to look folks in the eye. Your staff
15 in the eye, students in the eye, parents in the eye
16 and to give them answers. They want answers but they
17 don't have all the answers themselves.

18 And again, when the Mayor makes a decision about
19 schools, parents and community members, they don't
20 call the Mayor because it's - they can call 311.
21 They call principals. They call the school secre-
22 shout out to school secretaries. They are the
23 frontlines who answer the phone. And so, I just want
24 to tell them that we see them. We hear them. We
25 have their back and whatever we can do to better

1
2 support our educators, our frontline staff and also
3 again, I know Chancellor you have said this and it's
4 worth repeating. School buildings physically have
5 been open in many cases. School food workers or
6 school safety, school crossing guard, school safety,
7 they were serving our families at Grab and Go sites
8 for meals being a critical lifeline. We see them and
9 we must have their back, not just in words but in
10 action.

11 So, I am closing Chancellor. Thank you for
12 staying here from beginning to end and for your
13 entire team. Lindsey, there are some follow-up
14 questions that we need some I guess, some homework
15 assignments Lindsey in terms of the supports because
16 social workers in every school, counselor, nurses,
17 which we are in a pandemic. I think it shouldn't
18 have taken a pandemic to realize every school needs a
19 nurse as well but again, thank you for your time
20 Chancellor and again congratulations in your new
21 role.

22 MEISHA PORTER: Thank you. Thank you so much.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair and now we
24 will begin the Capital portion of this hearing.
25 Lauren Siciliano will be staying for this, so I am

1
2 not going to swear her in but I will call the
3 following members of the School Construction
4 Authority and DOE for this Capital portion of this
5 hearing to testify.

6 So, from the SCA we will have Acting President
7 and CEO Nina Kubota. From the DOE we will have the
8 following: Karin Goldmark Deputy Chancellor of
9 School Planning and Development; Anuraag Sharma Chief
10 Information Officer; John Shea Chief Executive
11 Officer Division of School Facilities; Thomas Taratko
12 Chief Executive Officer Office of Space Management;
13 Ling Tan Senior Executive Director Division of
14 Capital and Reimbursable Finance; Rebecca Rawlins
15 Chief Executive Office of District Planning; and
16 Elizabeth Williams Director of Data Analytics
17 Division of Early Childhood Education.

18 I will first read the oath and then I will call
19 on each of you individually to respond. If you could
20 please raise your right hands. Do you affirm to tell
21 the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth
22 before this Committee and to respond honestly to
23 Council Member questions? President Kubota?

24 NINA KUBOTA: I do.

25 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Deputy Chancellor Goldmark?

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KARIN GOLDMARK: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Anuraag Sharma?

ANURAAG SHARMA: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: John Shea?

JOHN SHEA: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thomas Taratko?

THOMAS TARATKO: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Ling Tan?

LING TAN: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Rebecca Rawlins?

REBECCA RAWLINS: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And Elizabeth Williams?

ELIZABETH WILLIAMS: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and again as before, due to the large number of administration officials present, for anyone that will be answering questions with President Kubota or Deputy Chancellor Goldmark, the first time you speak, if you could just state your name for the record, it will make it more clear in the official transcript. And whenever you are ready to begin. Thank you.

NINA KUBOTA: Thank you and good afternoon Chair Treyger and members of the Education Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is

1
2 Nina Kubota and it is my pleasure to join you for the
3 first time in my new capacity as Acting President and
4 CEO of the New York City School Construction
5 Authority.

6 I am thrilled with the opportunity to build upon
7 and continue learning Grillo's many accomplishments
8 at the Authority. I am joined by Karin Goldmark
9 Deputy Chancellor of the Division of School Planning
10 and Development at the New York City Department of
11 Education. We are pleased to be here today to
12 discuss the February 2021 Proposed Amendment to the
13 current FY20-24 five year Capital Plan.

14 I want to start by reiterating our gratitude to
15 the City Council for its continued strong partnership
16 and generous funding of our schools. We have been
17 successful in large part due to our ongoing
18 collaboration and pragmatic approach to providing our
19 students with the spaces and tools they need to
20 succeed. We are deeply appreciative of your
21 commitment to our schools, which enables our students
22 to have the best learning environments we can
23 provide.

24 From auditoriums to gyms, science labs and
25 specialized space for our special education students

1
2 and way beyond. In fact, I am happy to report we
3 recently received OMB's authorization for Reso 8
4 projects for Fiscal Years '20 and '21 and members
5 should start to see those projects getting underway
6 shortly.

7 We are truly grateful to our elected partners for
8 your ongoing support. So far in this plan, we have
9 received over \$800 million allocated by the City
10 Council, Borough Presidents and other mayoral council
11 sources and again, thank you for your support.

12 The last time we appeared before you was when our
13 current 2020-2024 plan was adopted. Since that time,
14 the plan has grown from \$17 billion to \$19.3 billion,
15 an increase of \$2.3 billion. At \$19.3 billion, this
16 is our largest ever capital plan.

17 Here are few highlights of our February 2021
18 Proposed Amendment to the Capital Plan. \$7.8 billion
19 for over 57,000 new seats in fulfillment of the
20 Mayor's commitment to reduce overcrowding.

21 \$750 million to make 50 percent of elementary
22 school buildings partially or fully accessible and
23 one-third of all buildings fully accessible. \$276
24 million for electrical work to support air
25 conditioning in all classrooms by the end of 2021.

1
2 \$589 million in support of the 3K and PreK for All
3 Initiatives. Over \$1 billion for technology
4 enhancements and \$84 million for improved
5 ventilation.

6 The proposed February 2021 Amendment to the FY20-
7 24 plan has funding allocated in three overarching
8 categories. Our Capacity program totaling \$8.92
9 billion. The capital investments category with \$6.72
10 billion allocated for work in our existing buildings
11 and finally, our mandated programs at \$3.63 billion.

12 We remain committed and are well on our way to
13 identifying locations for all 57,000 seats funded in
14 the plan. There are 20,676 seats already in progress
15 and another 5,000 seats currently in the pipeline.
16 That means we are nearly halfway towards identifying
17 these seats only a year and a half into our five year
18 plan.

19 As we have done with great success in our 30 year
20 history, we will continue to create seats in areas of
21 current overcrowding and projected enrollment growth.
22 We will be opening eight new buildings and additions
23 as well as three PreK centers this year.

24 This year, we will break ground on the largest
25 project in our history. A much needed 3,079 seats

1
2 high school on Northern Boulevard and Queens. We
3 will also begin construction on a new school home for
4 PS47 in Broad Channel, replacing a building that was
5 devastated by Super Storm Sandy in 2012. Along with
6 a new 550 seat middle school at 650 86th Street in
7 Bay Ridge Brooklyn.

8 In the Bronx, we will break ground on a new 458
9 seat elementary school at 1302 Edward L Grant
10 Highway, which is part of the Jerome Avenue rezoning.
11 We thank the Council for your partnership on these
12 projects and the many other projects we have pursued
13 together.

14 We also continue to identify new and creative
15 ways to bring our students the facilities they need.
16 This past November, we join the Mayor, Chancellor,
17 community leadership, elected officials and community
18 partners to announce a collaboration that will yield
19 a state of the art competition size gymnasium,
20 science labs and classrooms for Medgar Evers College
21 Preparatory High School, as well as new space for
22 Medgar Evers College.

23 We will demolish the transportable classroom
24 units our kids have been using and replace them with
25 a facility to be proud of. While creating seats is a

1
2 vital part of what we do, we cannot forget that 200
3 of our buildings are over 100 years old and the
4 majority of our buildings are over 50 years old. The
5 plan directs a total of \$6.72 billion for capital
6 investments. The capital investment portion of the
7 plan includes two main categories; \$3.11 billion of
8 for the Capital Improvement Program, which includes
9 building upgrades and necessary capital repairs such
10 as roof and façade work, structural repairs and
11 safeguarding our buildings against water
12 infiltration.

13 And \$2.8 billion for school enhancement projects,
14 which funds the realignment of existing facilities to
15 better suit instructional needs, bathroom upgrades,
16 science labs, the Mayor's Universal Fiscal Education
17 Initiative, Accessibility and other necessary
18 improvements.

19 Every year we make progress on removing TCU's in
20 use across the five boroughs. This plan dedicates
21 \$230 million in both CIP and capacity dollars for the
22 ongoing removal of these units with dedicated
23 capacity dollars allocated in this plan to fund the
24 construction of the needed seats to allow for the
25 removal of the TCU's. To date, we have removed 226

1
2 of the original 354 TCU's. Of the 128 remaining
3 TCU's, we have plans in progress to remove another 79
4 and we are developing plans to remove the final 49.
5 Other highlights in our capital investment category
6 include \$200 million for safety and security, \$119
7 million for specialty room upgrades, \$100 million for
8 athletic field upgrades and \$50 million for bathroom
9 upgrades.

10 The mandated programs category with \$3.63 billion
11 allocated includes approximately \$650 million for
12 boiler conversions in buildings currently using
13 number 4 oil. The remaining funds are assigned to
14 cover other required costs including code and local
15 law compliance. The SCA's wrap up insurance and
16 completion of projects from the prior plan.

17 As always, public feedback is an important
18 component of our annual capital planning process.
19 Every year we undertake a public review process with
20 community education council's, the City Council,
21 other elected officials and community groups. We
22 offer every in the city the opportunity to conduct a
23 public hearing on the plan. As you know, we also
24 partner with individual Council Members and CEC to
25 identify local needs. We also regularly attend

1
2 community-board meetings and are always willing to
3 meet with parents and other stakeholders.

4 Many factors contribute to the successes we have
5 experienced in implementing our capital plans but one
6 of our strongest core values is our commitment to our
7 MWBE contractors. Continually developing a larger
8 and more diverse group of contractors who can bid on
9 our work and complete large and complicated jobs,
10 helps us to deliver better projects more efficiently.

11 We have been incredibly successful in increasing
12 participation of our minority owned businesses by
13 providing a framework for eligible businesses to
14 develop and grow within the construction industry and
15 establish long-term business relationship with the
16 SCA.

17 So far in this plan, the SCA has obligated \$221
18 million to MWBE in prime construction contract awards
19 and we intend to award \$70 million more in our mentor
20 program to small contractors before the end of the
21 current Fiscal Year.

22 Under this Administration, the SCA has obligated
23 \$3.1 billion to MWBE firms in prime construction
24 contract awards representing 24 percent of our prime
25 construction contracts. In addition, the SCA has

1
2 awarded 29 percent of subcontractor work to MWBE
3 firms, totaling over \$2 billion.

4 Firms that have participated in our mental
5 program have increased MWBE participation by more
6 than 367 percent since 2015 and account for 62
7 percent of all MWBE awards at the SCA. We are of
8 course proud of our accomplishments in this area but
9 we continue to identify more ways to build on these
10 successes.

11 While this overview of our five year Capital Plan
12 highlights our long term impacts, it is safe to say
13 that the past year is nothing like the SCA has ever
14 experienced in our 30 year history. It is hard to
15 believe that we have been managing through the
16 impacts of COVID-19 for a full year now. As all of
17 you will remember in March of 2020, we began working
18 remotely and hundreds of our projects in various
19 stages of scope, design and construction were paused
20 by executive order.

21 Since that time, we have worked closely with City
22 Hall and OMB to successfully resume our work. We
23 started hundreds of projects roughly and gradually
24 during 2020 and 2021. Focusing first and foremost on
25 our capacity projects. That is why I am so proud to

1
2 share despite the many obstacles we faced, SCA was
3 able to successfully complete and open 11 new school
4 additions and leases, as well as ten PreK centers for
5 the 2020, 2021 school year.

6 Each location was open on schedule last September
7 despite the construction pause. This is truly a
8 testament to the dedication of our team as well as
9 our continued focus on equity and excellence in our
10 schools. At a time when our children needed new
11 schools more than ever, the SCA was able to deliver
12 despite the unprecedented circumstances.

13 The 11 new schools, additions and leases added
14 over 5,500 much needed seats. The 10 3K centers
15 added 1,440 new seats for our youngest students.
16 Under this administration, the SCA has created 51,540
17 new seats in fulfillment of the Mayor's commitment to
18 reduce overcrowding and increase diversity.
19 Including 10,973 seats as part of the Mayor's PreK
20 and 3K for All initiatives.

21 We were extremely deliberate about how we
22 prioritized the resumption of work following the
23 pause. We wanted to maximize every inch of space
24 within the schools footprint both indoor and outdoor.
25 To facilitate adherence to rigorous safety and social

1
2 distancing protocols. This means we have waited to
3 start many new projects that would require us to take
4 spaces off line during construction, such as
5 auditorium upgrades and playground innovations.

6 We also prioritize the resumption of work in
7 neighborhoods that were hardest hit by COVID. And as
8 always, we have worked closely with our school
9 communities to minimize construction impact as much
10 as possible on school operations and will continue to
11 do so. And we work tirelessly with our partners to
12 get construction crews back to work with rigorous
13 protocols to keep our school communities, our staff,
14 our contractor communities safe.

15 Early in the pandemic, restarting our mentor
16 contracts became an urgent priority for us and the
17 many MWBE contractors who depend on SCA's mentor
18 program to provide them much needed construction
19 work. Our business develop staff assisted our mentor
20 firms in securing paycheck protection program loans
21 worth more than \$3.2 million. But it was clear that
22 our mentor contractors were under tremendous
23 financial strain due to the construction pause.

24 In July 2020, we were able to restart more than
25 400 mentor projects worth approximately \$118 million,

1
2 primarily under our Air Conditioning for All
3 Initiative. While our priority in resuming this work
4 was to put our MWBE contractors back to work,
5 restarting these projects also allowed us to keep our
6 commitment to complete this initiative by the end of
7 2021.

8 Upon the completion of the AC Initiative, roughly
9 15,000 air conditioning units will have been
10 installed in classrooms along with supporting
11 electrical work in 700 school buildings throughout
12 New York City. 2020 was a year like we have never
13 faced and the lengthy construction pause has impacted
14 the construction schedules of all projects. We have
15 reassessed the construction schedules for hundreds of
16 projects and will continue to do so as we work our
17 way back to normal operations.

18 We recognize how important these projects are to
19 the school community and we look forward to
20 completing all of these projects. With given the
21 enormity of the challenges we faced, I am so proud of
22 the dedication of the SCA team and all that we have
23 been able to accomplish.

24 Thank you again for your ongoing partnership. I
25 will now turn it over to Deputy Chancellor Goldmark,

1
2 who will discuss additional aspects of the plan.

3 Thank you.

4 KARIN GOLDMARK: Thank you so much SCA President
5 Kubota. Good morning Chair Treyger and member of the
6 Education Committee. My name is Karin Goldmark for
7 those of you who don't know me and I am the Deputy
8 Chancellor of the Division of School Planning and
9 Development at the New York City Department of
10 Education.

11 Before I begin, I would first like to thank
12 Speaker Johnson, Chair Treyger and the City Council
13 for your continued leadership throughout this
14 pandemic and for all that you have done on behalf of
15 New York City during this time. You remain fierce
16 advocates for equity in our school communities and we
17 are so grateful to have you working with the DOE and
18 on how best to serve all students of New York City
19 during this time.

20 Your insights and support have been crucial in
21 the midst of this crisis. As we pivoted to remote
22 learning in our 1,600 school communities across the
23 city last spring and then opened school buildings
24 this school year.

1
2 Having seen firsthand the incredible resilience
3 and commitment of our DOE staff and I should say SCA
4 staff because the partnership has been really even
5 better than usual this year. So, thank you for that
6 President Kubota.

7 So, as I have seen firsthand the incredible
8 resilience and commitment of our DOE staff, SCA
9 staff, students and families as well as New Yorkers
10 generally, I know that we will continue to respond in
11 extraordinary ways to these extraordinary times.

12 The proposed February 2021 Plan continues to
13 demonstrate the Administration's commitment to
14 creating a safe and positive learning environment for
15 all students and staff. We are proud to say that we
16 are closing the digital divide, making critical
17 investments in technology and improving ventilation
18 and accessibility in our school buildings.

19 The pandemic exposed existing inequities in our
20 nation and in our city and we know these resources
21 and upgrades are central to moving our school
22 communities forward into advancing our equity and
23 excellence for all agenda.

24 In the area of technology, the proposed amendment
25 allocates \$1.02 billion for technology, which

1
2 includes funding for emergency remote learning
3 student devices increasing bandwidth in school
4 buildings and upgrades to classroom connectivity.

5 Since the start of the pandemic, just over a year
6 ago, ensuring that all students have access to remote
7 learning devices has been a priority and we have
8 purchased over 500,000 LTE enabled iPads to support
9 students in need. Prioritizing equity, we started
10 distributing centrally purchased internet enabled
11 devices to our most underserved students.

12 We continue to fill device requests as we receive
13 them from schools to ensure families have what they
14 need to participate in remote learning. We are
15 grateful that the Council's long-standing and
16 continuous investment in technology for our schools
17 made it possible for the DOE to distribute devices to
18 students since the onset of this crisis.

19 Another anchor of the plan is the \$750 million
20 allocation towards improving school-based technology.
21 Since 2015, the DOE has increased our overall
22 internet bandwidth to 240 gigabytes across two major
23 data centers, which allow schools to access much
24 faster connectivity.

1
2 Previously, the DOE had only 14 gigs to share
3 across all of our schools, it was a massive increase.
4 This investment will also allow us to upgrade
5 critical equipment like routers, switches, firewalls
6 and wireless access points in schools. Upgrading
7 also ensures that the equipment has the latest
8 security protections and controls in place. 3:21:04

9 When it comes to ventilation, health and safety
10 are at the center of every single decision to reopen
11 school buildings and the science shows tht our
12 rigorous multilayered approach has made our schools
13 the safest place in New York City. As part of this
14 comprehensive effort, over the summer we surveyed the
15 ventilation in every building and we have conducted
16 extensive repairs and spaces that needed attention.

17 Following Federal Centers for Disease Control
18 Guidance for school operations on air ventilation to
19 reduce the spread of COVID-19, every classroom was
20 inspected by School Construction Authority led teams
21 of professional engineers. Repairs and remediation
22 efforts were based directly on those assessments,
23 including fixing windows and fan motors and cleaning
24 air ducts.

1
2 Out of the 64,550 classrooms across our system,
3 over 99 percent are safely in use. We also
4 identified and prepared alternative spaces for those
5 schools that needed them and we have made the clear
6 commitment that any space that does not meet our
7 ventilation standards will not be used.

8 In buildings with central HVAC systems, we have
9 replaced existing filter elements with new ones rated
10 at MIRV 13. The DOE has also purchased indoor air
11 quality monitors for CO2 testing. As carbon dioxide
12 is an indicator of adequate ventilation. And 67,000
13 high efficiency particulate air or HEPA purifier
14 units. These purifiers are certified to remove virus
15 sized particles from the air and are being used in
16 all occupied classrooms, nurses offices and isolation
17 rooms. We will continue to order more equipment as
18 needed.

19 Relatedly, custodian engineers are key
20 contributors in ensuring that our school, our
21 students in school communities remain healthy and
22 safe. DOE's Division of School Facilities
23 reallocated building cleaning staff to ensure
24 continuous daily touch points and whole building
25

1
2 overnight disinfection of all occupied school
3 buildings.

4 All buildings were provided with electrostatic
5 sprayers to increase the efficiency of disinfecting
6 labor tasks. In addition, all schools have
7 sufficient PPE and supplies to ensure safe operation
8 for full in-person learning, which our custodial
9 engineers manage for the entire building.

10 If the past year has taught us anything, it's
11 that teaching and learning can blossom, even in
12 nontraditional spaces and even under the most adverse
13 conditions. As part of this proposed amendment, we
14 are excited to launch the IDEAS Initiative, which
15 stands for Innovative Diverse Equitable Accessible
16 Spaces. This new IDEAS undertaking will foster the
17 creation of dynamic and innovative learning spaces in
18 ways that empower communities, respond to students
19 voices, encourage new partnerships and advance
20 diversity, integration and inclusion.

21 These efforts will further support the DOE's work
22 to promote equity and excellence by providing access
23 to 21st Century learning opportunities to more
24 students across New York City.
25

1
2 The Proposed February amendment continues to
3 recognize the importance of ensuring access for all
4 students and has emphasized accessibility as a major
5 priority. As part of this administrations equity and
6 excellence for all agenda and as a direct result of
7 support from the Council, thank you and our community
8 partners, the amendment continues to include \$750
9 million. A historic investment towards the
10 critically important work of making our school
11 buildings more accessible.

12 We greatly appreciate the Council's support in
13 this area and I want to stress that we greatly
14 appreciate the Council's support. It has been
15 essential. Our team has been meeting with students,
16 families and community partners to ensure that we
17 truly understand the needs of students and families
18 and that we can make the necessary changes as quickly
19 as possible.

20 To drive this work forward, we established
21 offices of accessibility planning within the DOE's
22 Division of Space Management and School Facilities,
23 as well as the SCA. Working together, DOE and SCA
24 have already planned and improved 41 new
25 accessibility projects in our historically

1
2 underserved districts. We are committed to making a
3 third of the buildings in every district fully
4 accessible by 2024 and at least 50 percent of our
5 buildings housing elementary school grades fully or
6 partially accessible by 2024. And I am pleased to
7 report that we are on track to meet that goal.

8 In a system this big, there will always be more
9 work to be done. We will continue to update our
10 capital plan in response to changing conditions and
11 needs from our school communities and we will seek
12 your input in that process. We are thankful again
13 for your collaboration and generous support of
14 capital projects now more than ever. We are really
15 thankful for the partnership between SCA and DOE.

16 Our students have been able to expand and improve
17 their educational experiences because of these
18 efforts and we look forward to seeing our future
19 students benefit as well. We are proud that we were
20 the only large school district in the country to
21 safely reopen. We wish everyone else had been able
22 to do it but we are proud that we did. To safely
23 reopen school buildings in the fall for in-person
24 instruction and we look forward to welcoming all
25 families back this coming school year.

1
2 The pandemic has posed unprecedented challenges
3 to all of us but together we have stepped up and
4 responded in extraordinary ways on behalf of our
5 students and families. And of that, we can be very
6 proud.

7 Thank you again for allowing us to testify today
8 and we would be happy to answer any questions you may
9 have.

10 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you. Thank you very
11 much Deputy Chancellor Goldmark and I also want to
12 just publicly you know thank you and folks from your
13 team. This has been trying for a lot of folks but I
14 know how diligent and how many late nights you have
15 also personally experienced to try to give our school
16 communities the very best in terms of guidance and
17 you know, you searched the world for best practices
18 to implement here in the city. So, we thank you for
19 your service.

20 And to President Kubota, you know, a big part of
21 leadership is preparing the next generation of
22 leadership and this is the first budget hearing
23 without Lorraine Grillo who is a legend in New York
24 and we wish her continued success in her role but the
25 markable leader is preparing the next leader and we

1
2 really appreciate you. We have seen you; I have seen
3 you at numerous meetings and hearings and we are very
4 fortunate to have you take on this role. It's a big
5 task, it's a big job at a very critical time and
6 thank you for agreeing to take on this
7 responsibility. We are in good hands and I will just
8 say for the public that's watching, look, as Deputy
9 Chancellor mentioned, the SCA has room to grow and
10 Council is not shy to point out those areas of
11 growth. But in New York City, it takes - the SCA can
12 build an entire new school in about between two,
13 three years, three years or so on average.

14 It takes the Parks Department over ten years to
15 build a bathroom in an apartment. So, the SCA quite
16 frankly is on another level in terms of getting
17 things done in New York. So, I want to just thank
18 you to President Kubota and your team, your staff
19 that's been incredibly responsive and accessible to
20 you know, my staff and folks. So, I just want to
21 begin by acknowledging that.

22 I would like to and I think some of these
23 questions I have, some things have already kind of
24 been touched upon but further elaboration would be
25 appreciated.

1
2 How – if you could describe the ventilation work
3 in our schools. This was an issue before the
4 pandemic, certainly got highlighted big time during
5 the pandemic. How many systems were upgrades? How
6 many systems were repaired? How many were completely
7 replaced? Does anyone have that breakdown?

8 KARIN GOLDMARK: So, I think I will start and
9 then President Kubota please jump in and I will also
10 invite in Kevin Moran and/or John Shea from
11 Operations in the Division of School Facilities.

12 This was an example of the remarkable partnership
13 between DOE and SCA. There was – we just sat down
14 and said, what does it take to get the work done?

15 So, in terms of ventilation, we knew last spring
16 this was something that we were going to need to work
17 on as we work towards school buildings reopening.

18 So, we sat down with SCA or we Zoomed with SCA and
19 DOE and we identified a process to start the survey
20 process to just start figuring out what the status
21 was of each school, even before we did the official
22 inspections, we started working. For example, fixing
23 windows that had been bolted shut.

24 So, we did a bunch of repairs. We then had
25 inspections done through the SCA and we did further

1
2 repairs as we found issues. So, when you — I am
3 going to try to get to your specific question. I am
4 not trying to duck the data question. When we
5 approached September, we were very pleased to be in a
6 place where there was only one school.

7 A lot of the buildings in New York City where the
8 ventilation system needed further work. Every other
9 system was actually functioning as designed and we
10 had all of the ventilation in place and operating.

11 So, that one building of course was the MLK
12 Campus and we were able to identify alternate spaces
13 for those schools in partnership with CUNY and
14 actually Success Academy and we are grateful to both
15 of those and to entities for helping us find that
16 alternative space and we then used the fall to
17 quickly make the repairs needed at MLK and many of us
18 have personally walked through that building several
19 times and the ventilation there is now fully
20 functional.

21 So, your question is, how many ventilation
22 systems did we repair? I am not sure that we can
23 quantify that because we did work across the entire
24 system to make sure that everything was working but
25 sometimes that work was very minimal, like taking

1
2 bolts out of a window and other times as at MLK, it
3 was a significant effort on the ventilation system.

4 So, I would invite up President Kubota or Kevin
5 or John Shea if you would like to jump in. I guess
6 we think of it as a finish line that we had to get
7 every school to as opposed to which schools had work
8 done. But again others jump in.

9 NINA KUBOTA: Maybe I will start just by saying
10 and John and Kevin can jump in with more detail but I
11 think Division of School Facilities, DOE in general
12 did a lot of work that really wasn't highlighted
13 between you know, sort of March of 2020 through the
14 summer. As you mentioned, we were sort of the final
15 survey point but there were so many checks along the
16 way and so many things that were done. And I can't
17 speak to the number of repairs, I know that they have
18 worked tirelessly to get it done.

19 In terms of the SCA's capital work, we did do a
20 lot of return fan work over the summer. In fact, we
21 started out with 30. We didn't need to do as much
22 work as we thought, so it ended up being 19 projects
23 that we completed. We do have some longer term
24 projects. That's not to say that the systems aren't
25 working but they are old and we would like to replace

1
2 them before they no longer work. And there are about
3 40 projects in process on that front.

4 But again, I think I would invite John and Kevin
5 to talk about the extraordinary work they did both
6 last spring and into the summer and quite frankly
7 through now.

8 JOHN SHEA: Great, thank you President Kubota and
9 Deputy Chancellor Goldmark. A couple of things that
10 I will add. First, I want to reinforce that the SCA
11 and DSF have both done a great job over the years.
12 We have always paid attention to and as you can see
13 from prior capital plans, the amount of money that
14 the SCA has invested in making sure their AC systems
15 remain in good operating order. It's not something
16 new but of course, in a COVID world we knew we had to
17 pay attention to it a little differently.

18 So, again, to reiterate some of the things that
19 were already said. We were ahead of the curve with
20 this when COVID first became an issue in late
21 February, early March. We were already out in the
22 buildings and I want to really thank our custodian
23 engineers and our skilled trade folks who are our
24 frontline defense in these issues.

1
2 So, we were looking at what we had to think about
3 repairing and we were in pretty good shape but there
4 were certainly things that we needed to do and I
5 think the second round of inspections that were done
6 by the School Construction Authority with the
7 professionals, it was also great for us to give us
8 some tools and some data to know where to target our
9 resources so that we could get back to that 99
10 percent of all classrooms being ready last September
11 and that's just gotten better.

12 Again, I want to make sure everybody understands
13 that our commitment has always been that a
14 fulfillment – if a space was not meeting our
15 ventilation standards, we were not going to use it
16 and with the enrollment that we have seen, we have
17 had more than enough space. The multilevel approach
18 that we have taken with ventilation depending on the
19 systems, whether they were essential HVA system where
20 were able to put in MIRV 13 filters or whether it was
21 an older building that just had windows and exhausts
22 vents for ventilation. We were able to supplement
23 that with the air purifiers. We equipped all of our
24 custodian engineers with the indoor air quality
25 monitors, so that they could look in each one of the

1
2 buildings, each one of the spaces within the building
3 if there were any concerns about ventilation. And
4 train them on the use of that and also, we now have
5 anemometers so that we can take ventilation airflow
6 readings where we need to.

7 So, continuing to work with the custodians with
8 the changing CDC guidance and working with the
9 Department of Health making sure that we stay current
10 on those things. As we have been sitting here in
11 this hearing, things have continued to break across
12 the system. It's a large system, that's just what
13 happens but we're remaining out in front of it and
14 continuing to make sure that we make the repairs as
15 we go along and when summer comes and we have all of
16 our buildings open for everyone that we will be able
17 to accommodate everybody on the ventilation side.

18 KARIN GOLDMARK: I would like to just take one
19 moment to give a shout out to John Shea because I
20 really don't know when else I am going to get the
21 opportunity to do this quite so publicly.

22 So, there were many, many moments, as you said,
23 long nights, early mornings and I can't remember
24 exactly when it was because that's how the last year
25 has been but there was a point quite early on where

1

2 John Shea quite casually as is his style, mellowly he
3 said, I have already ordered the MIRV 13 filters. He
4 had ordered tens of thousands of MIRV 13 filters
5 before anybody had really gotten to the point of
6 saying hey John, we need to order these.

7

8 And that actually was tremendously helpful
9 because naturally one month after that, the national
10 supply of MIRV 13 filters was incredibly tight and he
11 had gotten that order in early. He just went ahead
12 and did it and it was not in a bad way but it was
13 fantastic. It was one of those great moments of
14 feeling like the team is covering all the bases even
15 if we haven't had a moment to talk about it yet.

16

17 So, I just wanted to give him that specific shout
18 out because I don't know if we are going to be able
19 to like hold up a sign in a ticker tape parade but I
20 hope it is forthcoming a year or two from now.

21

22 JOHN SHEA: Thank you Karin. That's very kind
23 but it does speak to the team that we were allowed to
24 make that decision in a group and move forward under
25 the leadership of the Chancellor, you and everybody
else. So, thank you for saying so.

26

27 KARIN GOLDMARK: And Ursulina Ramirez who has
28 since left.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes, there are some folks
3 who have left the system who deserve a lot of credit.
4 You know, a lot of behind the scenes work. Ursulina
5 is certainly – we appreciate her very much so but I
6 do want to certainly recognize that custodians,
7 school cleaners, they have been frontline central
8 workers even before the pandemic, certainly you know,
9 I would argue that we should always be given them
10 resources to properly maintain buildings. It
11 shouldn't have taken a pandemic to really highlight
12 that work.

13 But I do need to kind of follow up on this point
14 because you know, I think it's not a secret that I
15 took a lot of interest in the MLK Campus Junior for a
16 number of reasons. But is it accurate to say that
17 the DOE or within the school facilities or SCA, were
18 folks aware about the broken ventilation system prior
19 to the pandemic at the MLK Junior Campus?

20 KARIN GOLDMARK: So, I will actually start and
21 invite whoever wants to come in. Candidly, we had –
22 I don't know if they were consultants, I think they
23 were volunteers. We had HVAC experts come do a tour
24 of the building with us as we approach reopening.
25 And they actually sent us here. You could actually

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2 probably get this ready in time for the start of
3 school and here is how and we wanted to not rush for
4 the start of school and cut any corners. And so, the
5 ventilation system at MLK and John, correct if I am
6 wrong here but my understanding is that we did not
7 have to actually do major repairs. We had to make
8 adjustments so that the air flow would be what we
9 needed it to be in the context of the pandemic.

10 So, it's not that the ventilation system was
11 broken. It's that with adjustments, we could get the
12 air flow that we needed in the current context, which
13 is different from prior.

14 With that said, we – as with all of the buildings
15 were super cautious about making sure that everything
16 was working as designed to work before we put
17 students in the building and we didn't want to do a
18 rush job at MLK and I will invite John or Nina. I
19 would also like to invite Tom Taratko, who is the
20 Chief Executive of the Division of Space Management
21 to talk about all the work we did at MLK because we
22 took the opportunity to actually work with all the
23 schools in the building to make sure that we could
24 come up with a campus plan that works for all the
25 schools because the building is challenging

1
2 architecturally and we have been able to make great
3 strides in terms of really important improvements in
4 that building, not just the HVAC. So, I guess John.

5 JOHN SHEA: Yeah, I will start on the ventilation
6 part and then turn it over to President Kubota if she
7 has got anything else to add and then Tom.

8 If you are familiar with the building, Martin
9 Luther King Campus is an interesting building from a
10 design standpoint. It's actually a great building
11 designed for a school because it's from the HVAC
12 side. It's a high volume, low velocity system which
13 is good because it is quite and provides a lot of air
14 flow but it's also harder to tell like a normal
15 system, if you are familiar with a ventilation duct
16 that a normal system even in your office. You
17 usually got one distribution of the air coming out of
18 a vent in the room, whereas in Martin Luther King,
19 all of the classrooms, the air is distributed through
20 little ventilation ducts in all of the light
21 fixtures.

22 So, if the ventilation is not working, it's
23 tougher to tell than in a regular building. Having
24 said that, when we did the inspections and with the
25 help of the SCA and Tishman Speyer, the building was

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2 from the equipment side, structurally sound. There
3 were no major failures. We did find that the biggest
4 issue was a couple of fire dampers that had closed,
5 which again, we didn't realize but that's a typical
6 maintenance item that happens and we were able to use
7 this as an opportunity to go back and open those up.
8 Balance the system again, which we did successfully
9 and we have shared the air flow readings with the
10 school community, with the principals, with the
11 parents and the students. So, that they could see
12 that we had a professional go through and actually
13 take ventilation readings. And we did a bunch of
14 minor repairs and took the opportunity to use the
15 time. That building had been so heavily utilized
16 that it is difficult to do maintenance in that when
17 it is open from seven o'clock in the morning until 11
18 o'clock at night seven days a week.

19 So, we are aware of some of the maintenance
20 issues but there were no major structural concerns
21 with that building and we didn't have major work to
22 do, contrary to what you might have heard. Nina, do
23 you want to add anything?

24 NINA KUBOTA: No, I think that was everything. I
25 will say that the sort of long branches of the duct

1
2 work also contributed to sort of at the end of that
3 branch, you know not seeing the air flow and then we
4 discovered it was the dampers like you said.

5 So, there were a lot of things that I think you
6 know we could not have known going into this but
7 certainly with all the checks and the double checks,
8 is really what brought our attention to it. So,
9 [LOST AUDIO 3:43:11-3:43:17].

10 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I am not sure if we lost
11 President Kubota but what I will add is that the
12 photographs of the school that folks sent me, I don't
13 see windows in the classes and I am not used to that
14 as a teacher. I am used to seeing windows in the
15 class and that certainly made it that much more
16 important to have a functioning ventilation system.

17 And I just want to make sure that you know that
18 we make the investments in this critical
19 infrastructure work always and not wait for a
20 pandemic to kind of get the work done and also,
21 Deputy Chancellor, whatever consultant, tried to push
22 us to cut corners, I hope they are not working with
23 us anymore.

24 KARIN GOLDMARK: No.
25

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2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I am glad to hear that
3 because that is not what we need.

4 KARIN GOLDMARK: Sorry, I should have clarified
5 that point.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah.

7 KARIN GOLDMARK: That was a volunteer who
8 actually is a national expert in HVAC and they didn't
9 say cut corners. What they did was they looked at
10 the system and said, you can get this system working.
11 And we were so close to the start of school, we
12 wanted to take the time to get the system working and
13 put that challenging burden on the schools to have
14 them be in a different location. But absolutely,
15 they did not encourage us to cut corners and I
16 appreciate you bringing that up. They were actually
17 a great partner to us in assessing the system and
18 also, providing much needed external information
19 because the parents understandably wanted some
20 validation from industry experts, which they deserve.
21 It shouldn't just be the private real estate industry
22 that has the leading experts in HVAC systems and we
23 are grateful that that helped us with the assessment.
24 It's just, that was the one school that was not ready
25 in time for that September start date. And we still

1
2 consider it a pretty magnificent achievement to have
3 all the other buildings in New York City have been
4 ready and it's a testimony to the work of the people
5 you mentioned earlier of the carpenters, the skilled
6 trades folks, the custodians, the cleaners. There
7 was a lot of work put in.

8 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, you mentioned that this
9 was one school that had this issue. What I would -
10 at last year's hearing, I had asked for and I think
11 Kevin Moran, he had testified that you know the DOE
12 would have a winter plan. I know now that we are now
13 in spring but they mentioned a winter plan in terms
14 of ventilation because in many of our schools,
15 particularly older buildings, the ventilation system
16 is inadequate. And so, what counted for adequate
17 ventilation was opening a window but I had feared - I
18 had feared and I had visualized teachers and kids in
19 a class with coats on with the window open with cold
20 blistering air coming in to be you know, check a box
21 that that's ventilation when in fact, that is not the
22 learning environment that students can learn and
23 thrive in or staff deserves quite frankly.

24 So, just curious to hear, did your offices
25 receive complaints from schools about staff and kids

1
2 freezing cold in the classrooms because opening the
3 window was the only source of ventilation?

4 KARIN GOLDMARK: Well, we received complaints.
5 We certainly saw commentary on some social media.
6 What I will say is here is we are having such old
7 buildings is both a blessing and a challenge. Many
8 of our buildings were actually designed in the wake
9 of the 1918 influenza pandemic and in a time when the
10 city was trying to respond to tuberculosis being wide
11 spread across the city. And so, the buildings were
12 designed with giant windows and heating systems that
13 could essentially heat way more than the heat needed
14 if the windows were closed.

15 And actually many of us have this in our
16 apartments as well. Our apartments get really hot
17 and we open the windows in the winter and we think
18 why are we doing this? This is kind of a waste.

19 Because 100 years ago, people were figuring out
20 that ventilation is so important for public health
21 and it obviously continues to be. So, the actual
22 ventilation of a window and a heating system that can
23 actually heat a room, even with the window open, was
24 an intentional design for those buildings.

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2 Obviously, newer buildings have modern HVAC
3 systems and it's not such a challenge but in the
4 older buildings, they actually are designed to be
5 able to support that but that does not mean that the
6 window should be open for like all three feet right.
7 And one of the things that we found is that the
8 windows can certainly provide more than adequate
9 ventilation without being open all the way.

10 So, some of it was just making sure that everyone
11 understood what's you know, how open do you need to
12 have the window? And you know, that is one of the
13 challenges of having a building stock as ours which
14 is beautiful and amazing and has its challenges as
15 100 year old buildings.

16 So, we certainly noticed that as a trend and we
17 made a point of making sure that custodians and
18 building staff understood that and John, I will just
19 invite you if you want to add anything here.

20 JOHN SHEA: I sure do. I really want to
21 highlight the partnership again with the SCA on this
22 specific issue. They were very helpful with us
23 working with the calculations to determine just how
24 much the windows would have to be open and as Deputy
25 Chancellor said, you really only need in most

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2 buildings two windows open two to three inches in
3 order to provide enough air flow to meet the safety
4 standards.

5 So, again, I meet with my staff weekly. We have
6 been messaging that out to custodians. We have
7 provided them with the indoor air quality monitor, so
8 that they can check that. The fact that we have
9 added air purifiers to those rooms as an additional
10 layer of protection. All of those things together
11 and we also had the heaters, temporary heaters put in
12 if we had complaints where we couldn't overcome for
13 whatever reason. The colder temperatures with
14 opening the windows. We supported schools that way,
15 so we haven't had nearly as many complaints as I
16 would have thought. We have responded to those
17 complaints and I think in every case successfully.
18 And the Deputy Chancellor was right about the design
19 of those buildings. That's the way they are supposed
20 to work.

21 There was an article in the New York Times a
22 couple of weeks ago that illustrated that I think
23 fairly well for those older buildings. So, we did
24 get through the winter and now we are looking forward
25 to our summer ventilation plan.

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2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And that's going to you
3 know, certainly bring us to the push for more air
4 conditioners and HVAC systems but I do, just to close
5 on this and again, I worked in an old building and I
6 worked in a school that had some ventilation
7 challenges. And even if you and it's quite
8 fascinating that we are having the conversation about
9 how much of the window to open. But if you are that
10 child sitting near that open window, you are in the
11 same class, it is cold. I have had that and then we
12 would shut the window and then a few minutes later,
13 people would say it is hot again. So, from an
14 instructional standpoint, that is a problem, it's a
15 nightmare because it's hard to get kids and folks to
16 pay attention and the cold air comes in and it's in.
17 The answer is to have 21st Century functioning
18 ventilation systems in all of our schools.

19 Is there a rough estimate? I know that this is
20 an extraordinary expense but just to have a rough
21 number of what it would cost to upgrade and have 21st
22 Century upgrades, HVAC's to all of our schools.
23 Understanding that many of them are old but is there
24 at least a number that — does anyone have?

25

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2 KARIN GOLDMARK: I am not aware of such a number
3 and invite my colleagues if they are aware of one to
4 share.

5 NINA KUBOTA: I am not aware either.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: If folks could get back to
7 me on that, I would appreciate that. You know, we
8 are in a moment where I think Congress is now
9 discussing an infrastructure bill and infrastructure
10 is also about schools and communities and so, I think
11 now is the time to certainly -

12 KARIN GOLDMARK: Yes, I will say that I don't
13 think we would need to spend the entire federal \$100
14 billion that might be proposed but we might take a
15 big chunk if it were every building in New York City.

16 We will absolutely look into that and yes, the
17 prospect of federal support for school infrastructure
18 is eagerly awaited by those before you here from SCA
19 and DOE.

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah and it's not just
21 ventilation although that's critical, it's making
22 sure that our schools have adequate bandwidth and
23 internet and 21st Century equipment and supports
24 because the physical space is really important and
25 you can't really divorce the physical space from the

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2 academic and social spaces for kids. So, that's
3 something I think we need to prioritize.

4 Very quickly, on the issue of maintenance, is the
5 DOE providing resources in terms of custodial
6 maintenance, supplies to early childhood education
7 providers in CBO spaces? Can you speak to the level
8 of support there? Have they made requests for
9 additional support in terms of their expenses? Can
10 anyone speak to that?

11 KARIN GOLDMARK: I will invite John in here. I
12 know early on we were supplying cleaning supplies and
13 PPE to any educational entity that wanted it across
14 New York City but I will admit, I don't know what we
15 are currently doing. So John, I will turn to you.

16 JOHN SHEA: That's correct Deputy Chancellor.
17 Early on at the beginning, we did provide PPE,
18 cleaning supplies. In comes cases air purifiers.
19 Supported them with delivering other central supplies
20 but they have probably twice as many facilities as we
21 do and we don't as school facilities even deliver
22 stuff directly from a central location to our own
23 buildings. We have our integrated supply that
24 manages that for us.
25

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2 So, there is really no system in place to be able
3 to distribute supplies to our CBO's except on an as
4 needed basis. Of course we do fill one request if
5 there is something that that they need, we are going
6 to help them out but systemically, we are not
7 providing any additional support at this time.

8 KARIN GOLDMARK: And I will invite Elizabeth
9 Williams from the Division of Early Childhood
10 Education to speak. She may have information about
11 the support that we are providing.

12 ELIZABETH WILLIAMS: Yeah, thanks Deputy
13 Chancellor Goldmark. Yeah, we actually are
14 continuing to ship PPE to our community-based
15 providers. We send 60 day and 90 day shipments and
16 have been doing that throughout the year. So, those
17 go directly to our CBO's, our family childcare
18 providers, our Learning Bridges programs and they can
19 request more or different compositions of those
20 things, sort of at any time from us.

21 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Okay, I mean, I just think
22 that you know we are still in a pandemic. We are
23 still in this moment and I think that we should still
24 be a source to provide health and resources to all of
25 our kids regardless of what settings you know, in

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2 physical DOE space or CBO settings. I really
3 encourage the DOE to continue that support.

4 I want to get to seat need. The SCA plan funds
5 57,489 seats with 20,676 seats in process and cited.
6 What is SCA's timetable to cite the remaining
7 approximately 37,000 seats?

8 NINA KUBOTA: So, I think I mentioned in my
9 testimony that we actually have over 5,000 in
10 process. Meaning we are negotiating with landlords
11 or with landowners. So, we can't cite that until
12 that negotiation is complete but there is another
13 5,000 and we have several other leads. As you know
14 we have our real estate firms out there looking at I
15 think all districts where there is a funding need.
16 And while some real estate markets are tighter than
17 others, we have been quite successful. You know, I
18 do think that almost 50 percent cited or 46 percent
19 cited with about a year and eight months into the
20 capital plan. It's good progress. We won't stop.
21 We will keep looking for sites and of course, you
22 know with suggestions, we always welcome them. We
23 have been successful a few times in your suggestions
24 and we would encourage that for Council Members or
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2 anybody to email us at sites at nycsca.org anytime.

3 So, we appreciate that.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes and I think President
5 Kubota, you and I and Deputy Chancellor Goldmark have
6 discussed the site in my district, which I cannot
7 wait for us to move forward on and advance to better
8 meet the needs of our kids and that's - we will
9 follow up on that conversation after the hearing.
10 But I am mindful of time and I will now turn it over
11 to my colleagues who have questions. Malcolm.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member. I
13 just want to remind Committee Members that if you
14 have questions for DOE or SCA on the Capital portion
15 of this hearing, to use the Zoom raise hand function
16 and I will call on you in the order that you raised
17 them.

18 There will be five minutes for each Council
19 Member for questions and answers. I do just want to
20 put out there now though, it is 1:16, we have two
21 public witnesses that need translation services and
22 the interpreter is only available until 2:00 p.m..
23 So, as we get closer to 2:00, if I have to come in
24 and moderate if I will. We want to make sure that
25 those people have that opportunity to testify.

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2 So, we will first turn to Council Member Kallos
3 followed by Council Members Barron, Gibson and
4 Rosenthal. Council Member Kallos.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Deputy Chancellor Karin
7 Goldmark, first I want to start with a thank you. I
8 saw a letter you sent to Live Science's High School
9 in my district. The school is 99 percent students of
10 color. I believe zero students from my district but
11 I fight for them nonetheless and perhaps even harder
12 and you have given quite a lot of capital commitment,
13 so I want to thank you and just we can be sure all
14 the repairs will be made before September when school
15 opens again?

16 KARIN GOLDMARK: All the commitments in the
17 letter will be met, yes.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Great. I mentioned this
19 in the pre-year prior questioning, I referenced Local
20 Law 167, the fact that we found seat need involving
21 that transparency for 824 additional seats in my
22 district.

23 I noted that my district is incredibly segregated
24 and we were out of time to have a back and forth. In
25 your response, you indicated that any new seats

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2 would be integrated seats, which I entirely 100
3 percent support. If we have 824 seat need for this
4 neighborhood in order to integrate and I would like
5 to integrate at a 50/50 model versus a 60/40 model or
6 70/30, I think it should be as close to 50/50 as
7 possible. We would need to have an additional 824
8 seats on top of it.

9 I have two sites. I have gotten both in play. I
10 have also offered any developer. I will say it right
11 now to anyone watching from home, I will print to you
12 air rights to build a school if you need 100,000 FAR,
13 I will print you 100,000 FAR for that school. So,
14 Deputy Chancellor how can we get; and also for the
15 SCA, how do we get these school built?

16 KARIN GOLDMARK: Thank you so much Council Member
17 Kallos. So, the issue that you are raising is
18 actually precisely why we have created this category
19 that is - let me back up a moment.

20 In the Capital Plan, we have traditionally
21 structured it. There really are two main categories.
22 New capacity and existing capital improvement
23 projects, where we are making needed building system
24 upgrades, like a new roof or parapet in capital
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2 improvement projects. And then in new capacity of
3 course, it is new seats in new buildings.

4 And one of the things we have realized is that
5 there is a lot of hunger in the community for
6 different types of educational models. So, one great
7 example of this is the Brooklyn Steam Center, which
8 is a consortium of eight high schools that send
9 students to the Brooklyn Navy yard where the students
10 pursue post-secondary credentials. They pursue CTE
11 certification and they also have work-based learning
12 experiences with employers on the Navy yard where
13 they are learning state-of-the-art, like
14 manufacturing and tech-based work skills that
15 correspond to jobs that people actually have in the
16 Navy yard.

17 And so, the Brooklyn Steam Center is the model
18 that's not a new seat and it's not a building
19 improvement project. So, this was why we created
20 this category for innovative programs and I am not
21 committing that to this effort. What I am saying is
22 we have recognized the need that communities have
23 brought to us for new educational models and new ways
24 of addressing some of the educational innovation and
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2 inclusion and access in diversity challenges that the
3 system faces.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Would you agree that if
5 we don't use an innovation model or something else,
6 all we do is just build the 824 seats, that that
7 would not go toward the integration that you and I
8 are both looking for?

9 KARIN GOLDMARK: I can't really agree with what
10 you just said because I am not - the way I would
11 characterize it and certainly I have done a lot of
12 diversity and integration work in Brooklyn on the
13 upper west side -

14 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Let's do it on the upper
15 east side.

16 KARIN GOLDMARK: Well, the way that it has worked
17 and also in District 13. The way that it has worked
18 is to really have commitment, community engagement
19 and community planning. So, the participatory action
20 research efforts, the efforts to really take time and
21 have dialogue where all parties are at the table, we
22 would be happy to do that on the upper east side as
23 well. But that's what needs to the real - the real
24 way [INAUDIBLE 4:02:43].

25 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: And along the same lines,

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KARIN GOLDMARK: Complicated process.

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COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Whether we get 3K in 2021 that the Mayor promised or 2022 or 2023 or 2024 construction is happening now and Manhattan is a largely built environment. Can we work with SCA to start locating the sites, retrofitting them and getting them in place so that when we are ready to roll out and keep the Mayor's promise that we have the seats ready, so we don't have to do what we did in my district of going from 100 up to a 1,000?

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

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NINA KUBOTA: Absolutely and you know Council

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Member Kallos, you have been a really good partner to

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2 us and you have put forth many sites and we
3 appreciate them and we know very well the two sites
4 you are talking about and we are looking at both of
5 them. And you know, in terms of 3K or PreK, yes
6 absolutely, we should definitely connect. It would
7 be great to have some of your insight here. So we
8 appreciate that.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member
11 Kallos. Next, we will hear from Council Member
12 Salamanca had his hand up but I am not seeing him on,
13 so we will turn to Council Member Barron.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you Mr. Chair and
16 thank you Deputy Chancellor Goldmark and to Ms.
17 Kubota from the School Construction Authority.

18 My question, my first question regards a new
19 facility that is going to be opening here in
20 September 2021. I have the highest commendations for
21 the SCA being able to meet that deadline. Chancellor
22 Carranza new this was a very, very important project
23 and he assured me that he himself had to get there
24 and operate that equipment. It would happen and it
25 is happening and I am very pleased to know that is on

1
2 schedule, despite the pauses that were required in
3 the construction.

4 I wanted to know, what adjustments needed to be
5 made, if any, during the time of this pandemic and
6 knowing now that there might be other kinds of
7 considerations? Were there any particular
8 adjustments that needed to be made to that particular
9 building that you know of based on the fact of what
10 the requirements are that we know based on the
11 pandemic?

12 NINA KUBOTA: So, that East New York Family
13 Academy is near and dear to all of us. I have been
14 around for a while, so I know how important it is to
15 you also Council Member Barron. But yeah and I have
16 to say in terms of any sort of design or any
17 adjustments, none of them had to be made. We are
18 using 13 or better, 14, 15 in all of our HVAC
19 systems. So, nothing in the design needed to be
20 done.

21 I will say because of the pause, you will, you
22 may remember that we really wanted to get this open
23 earlier. So, what we are doing is we have sort of
24 two TCO's in place. One of for the main building and
25 then the pool is separate. So, we will actually be

1
2 able to obtain the TCO late April, early May for the
3 main building and we won't get the TCO until probably
4 about the end of July for the pool portion. But
5 that's just to say, that was the adjustment. We
6 needed to sort of segregate the two and have them
7 phased but both will open before school opening but
8 that was the adjustment we had to make in terms of
9 schedule.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

11 KARIN GOLDMARK: And if I can just jump in here
12 because very early on in my time in this role, I got
13 to attend the groundbreaking for East New York Family
14 Academy.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Yes.

16 KARIN GOLDMARK: I cannot tell you how much I am
17 looking forward to attending the ribbon cutting. To
18 be able to see it end to end, is so exciting and you
19 are right Chancellor Carranza was so deeply committed
20 to this project.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Yes.

22 KARIN GOLDMARK: And so, we will get him to come
23 to the party and Chancellor Porter as well. It is
24 really, it's a tremendous project and you have been
25 such a driver of it.

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COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you. Thank you.

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KARIN GOLDMARK: So, thank you for that and yes, President Kubota has done an amazing job. The entire SCA, it's really an unprecedented thing to have, such a long construction pause and they have been very careful about what they are promising. It's a trip really to see the speed and to see how they have come back, has been really inspiring.

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COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I am so pleased. I am really so pleased. Thank you so much. And then my other question is related. As you may remember, there were I believe eight portable in that little school yard. So, what is the status of those TCU removals? Have we removed all of them throughout the city or are there still some that need to be removed and what's your timetable for that?

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KARIN GOLDMARK: President Kubota, would you like to take it or would you like me to? We have both been told to memorize these numbers, so either one of us can do it. You want to take it?

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22

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay.

23

NINA KUBOTA: So, yes that you for that question.

24

So, we can tell them a little bit of our hard work.

25

Out of the 354 original TCU's that existed in the

1
2 city, 226 have been removed and so, we now have 78,
3 79 sorry in process. And so the remaining 49, we are
4 developing plans for. So, we are well underway. We
5 intend on removing all of them and what's great about
6 this plan versus the last plan is if you remember,
7 two plans but we didn't have any money to move any of
8 the TCU's.

9 The last plan, we were able to add some money.
10 This time, we have actually been able to add capacity
11 funding. So, there are instances where we needed to
12 build an addition in order to get rid of the TCU's.
13 And so, in this plan, we have dedicated \$180 million
14 towards capacity where we can't remove the TCU's
15 without adding that capacity.

16 So, that's what's different about this plan and
17 so, we are well underway.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

19 NINA KUBOTA: Okay and that's that.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you so much. I am
21 very pleased and look forward to both of you being at
22 the ribbon cutting. Thank you Mr. Chair.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member
24 Barron and next, we will hear from Council Member
25 Gibson.

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

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COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you so much. Thank you again Chair Treyger and good afternoon to our new President and CEO of SCA. Thank you so much for all of your work. I have heard a lot of great things about you. I'm a huge fan of Lorraine Grillo. I am thankful for all of the work of SCA and to Deputy Chancellor Goldmark and everyone at DOE, thank you.

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So, now that the moratoriums have been lifted, capital was moving. I just want to understand where we are with school cafeteria design. School accessibility, the Deputy Chancellor, you have spoken a lot about that and I definitely want to understand where we are as it relates to some of our Bronx schools.

24

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As an example, the Taft campus in my district has about \$33 million of capital work that's ongoing and

1
2 I remind all of you at SCA and DOE, Morris High
3 School at 1100 Boston Road has had a scaffolding up
4 for 20 years. 20 years and no one has ever explained
5 to me why the scaffolding remains up and it's been a
6 sight for sore eyes. We have been doing amazing work
7 at Morris with the five schools there but the
8 scaffolding refuses to come down.

9 So, I just want to understand what we are doing
10 specifically at the Morris High School Campus. Brand
11 new school buildings, I wonder where we are. When I
12 last talked to President Grillo, I know there was a
13 delay in some of our new school projects, so I want
14 to bring up the new school in District 9 at 1302
15 Edward L Grant Highway. This was a part of the
16 Jerome neighborhood redesign and rezoning back in
17 2017 and I understand that there could be a delay on
18 that.

19 And then the last thing I want to bring up are
20 capital projects. Every year we work closely with
21 the SCA on Reso. 8 funding. We work with our Borough
22 Presidents. We join jointly on projects. A lot of
23 it is related to school technology. I have been
24 doing a lot around the digital divide, giving our
25 schools money for technology, for the PA system, the

1
2 cafeteria, the auditorium, the library, the science
3 lab, the art studio. I mean, I think I funded almost
4 everything because I realize our schools in the Bronx
5 are needed.

6 But now with you know the moratorium lifted, I
7 wonder how these projects are going to move forward
8 and I worry about any projects that we have already
9 fully funded now being underfunded because of the
10 delay due to the pandemic. So, is there any way that
11 you guys could just let us know broadly how we move
12 forward on capital discretionary for each of our
13 districts and then collectively what we could do to
14 help you push these projects along this budget year
15 and moving forward. Thank you so much.

16 KARIN GOLDMARK: Wow, that was a lot.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: That was a mouthful
18 right.

19 KARIN GOLDMARK: I am writing it down. Thank you
20 so much Council Member Gibson. You are always such a
21 great advocate for the Bronx and District 9.
22 President Kubota, shall I start on accessibility?
23 You mentioned new buildings in your testimony. There
24 is Reso. A, Morris and Taft High Schools. That's
25 what I got.

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COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Yes and cafeteria.

KARIN GOLDMARK: And cafeterias, I am sorry, I skipped a line there. Yes, so the cafeteria redesigning continues and I am going to have to invite Tom Taratko in to talk about some of the work we have done with cafeterias and accessibility. In some cases we are combining those projects in the same building. We are making the building accessible and we are upgrading the cafeteria and it gives a whole overall better feel to the whole building. The cafeteria work has been really successful in terms of student appeal and also food consumption. Actually, the students are eating more of the food when it is presented in an attractive way, like a café.

So, we are back at that work. quite a lot and accessibility, we are on track to meet the goals and we have projects across 41 buildings. I will ask Tom Taratko to just jump in if he wants to talk about some specific Bronx projects.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay.

THOMAS TARATKO: Hi Council Member Gibson.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Hi Tom, good to see you.

THOMAS TARATKO: Good to see you. So, in District 9 specifically, we have two projects approved moving

1
2 forward and that's X073 and X110 but overall in the
3 Bronx, we had a few historically underserved
4 districts up there and I am very happy to tell this
5 Committee that there are nine current projects
6 whether it be in they are approved at the
7 subcommittee level. They have been sent over to the
8 SCA. They have LOW numbers and they are moving
9 forward through scope design and then it would be you
10 know, construction bid and award.

11 So, a lot of good things happening up in the
12 Bronx and we are very, very excited about it. So,
13 good seeing you.

14 KARIN GOLDMARK: In terms of Taft, Tom, you want
15 to talk about Taft Tom because you have I have been
16 talking about that recently.

17 THOMAS TARATKO: Yeah, it has been a few months
18 since I have been out there but we get a lot of work
19 up there and I would have to circle back to get more
20 details of that work.

21 So, I haven't been there in a while. We have
22 been kind of busy with other items but we will
23 definitely circle back because I would like to see
24 where we are there and what we could do moving
25 forward, especially now working with Chris Tricarico

1
2 from School Food on his piece with the cafeterias as
3 well. We will have some sway in you know projects
4 that will get done.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, we can talk offline
6 because we added a D75 school into the Taft Campus as
7 well, so I want to make sure that that work is
8 ongoing.

9 THOMAS TARATKO: I mean, I would love to visit
10 the place with you, that would be great.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay.

12 KARIN GOLDMARK: Yeah we will get up there soon
13 and just in general, one of the things that Tom
14 Taratko has been working on closely with DSF and
15 other offices is this notion of a campus-wide plan.
16 So, not just doing a project in the building but
17 taking the opportunity to actually look at the entire
18 campus and help the entire campus make sense. And
19 that worked really well at the MLK Campus and we have
20 been talking about that for Taft.

21 Nina, did you want to say something?

22 NINA KUBOTA: Yeah, I turned off my video in
23 hopes that my connection is a little bit better. I
24 will say for Taft, we did have a – we did have to
25 bring in a new contractor, which has delayed the

1
2 project. The exterior project and that is due to
3 complete by the end of this calendar year.

4 So, we do have that. We recognize that it's been
5 up for a long time. Sorry, that was for Morris, my
6 mistake and then the other thing about the cafeteria
7 upgrades, yes, the \$25 million has been allocated.

8 We have been working with our school food folks and
9 we have recently identified or they have identified
10 39 projects that they want to proceed with. Ten of
11 which are in the Bronx and we are happy to send that
12 information over to you.

13 And then finally, yes, we have had some of our
14 delays with our FY20 and FY21 Reso. 8 project, some
15 of which also was a result of remember not wanting to
16 take any spaces, playgrounds for that matter, out of
17 service while we were identifying as much space
18 within the pool as possible. But we are now working
19 through those and so, those should be you know
20 underway very shortly.

21 So again, happy to discuss offline some of the
22 specific projects in your district. And I do finally
23 think that 1302 Edward L Grant

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Edward L Grant, right.

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NINA KUBOTA: So, that - two things about that.

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Because of the extensive delays the pause caused, we

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do believe that that will open in September of 2024.

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Which I believe is a year later than originally

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thought.

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COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: It is.

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NINA KUBOTA: And also just to point out, that is

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currently being used as a testing center. But that's

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not the cause of the delay but that is, we are

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working with Health + Hospitals to make sure that

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that becomes available to us this summer, so we can

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begin construction.

14

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay and I will talk to

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you guys offline about the Morris campus but I do

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understand with the pause act, but I am not happy

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that that site is delayed by a full year. That's not

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acceptable. Yes, it is being used as a COVID testing

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site, which I am grateful for. We are using the

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land, but a year later to have to tell my local

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parents and CEC, to me is not acceptable.

22

So, I want to find a way that we can expedite

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that. Whatever hitches are in the system, we need to

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identify them because a full year to me is a problem.

25

I fought tooth and nail for that school to make sure

1
2 that that project would be a reality and I don't want
3 to tell my parents that they have to wait until 2024
4 when it was supposed to be 2023.

5 So, I would love to talk offline about it as well
6 as the Morris Campus and the Capital work that's
7 there and that scaffolding 20 years. In my lifetime,
8 if I can get that scaffolding down, I think I will be
9 successful.

10 I want to do that before I leave this earth to
11 get that scaffolding down from Morris Campus and you
12 guys are going to help me.

13 KARIN GOLDMARK: We will. On the construction, I
14 understand it was so challenging. I will just note
15 that we had an eight month construction delay, so the
16 challenge of course with eight months is that school
17 years run in school years, so even if we don't lose
18 any time beyond the eight months, it puts us out of
19 fall 2023 and do we really want to move a building in
20 March 2024 and so, it's very challenging. We will
21 certainly discuss it further. I just need us all to
22 remember that there was an eight month construction
23 delay and it was really very long and so, it's not
24 any fault of the SCA. It's not any slowdown in the
25 process, it's simply the freeze we were all under and

1
2 how school year calendar's work and it doesn't make
3 sense to move into a building in May.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay.

5 KARIN GOLDMARK: But let's keep talking about it
6 because you pushed us and gotten us to do lots of
7 things before. So, I recognize you are not going to
8 let it go.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, thank you everyone.
10 Thank you Chair Treyger. I appreciate the additional
11 time. Thanks so much.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member
13 Gibson. I am just going to ask for the indulgence of
14 Deputy Chancellor Goldmark and President Kubota.
15 Just so we can hear from the two witnesses because we
16 are time limited on the translation services.

17 So, we are - and all public testimony is limited
18 to two minutes. So, we are first going to hear from
19 Milagros Cancel and then Ximena Vargus will provide
20 the translation. Then we will hear from Bibiana
21 Hoyos and then Ximena will then again translate for
22 Bibiana. So, we will first start with Milagros.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

24 XIMERA VARGUS: Good afternoon everyone, this is
25 Ximena Vargus. [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE 4:21:57-

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4:22:03] Ms. Milagros you may start speaking now, I will translate for you. [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE 4:22:06-4:22:14]. Are you there? [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE 4:22:17-4:22:22]. We can come back, so let's unmute Bibiana and then we will come back to Milagros.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

XIMENA VARGUS: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE 4:22:34-4:22:41] Ms. Hoyos, this is Ximena the interpreter, are you there? You have two minutes to speak.

BIBIANA HOYOS: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGAUGE 4:22:53-4:23:07].

XIMENA VARGUS: Hello everyone, my name is Bibiana Hoyos, I am very grateful that you have given me this space to speak in this audience. I am the mother of three children.

BIBIANA HOYOS: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE 4:23:21-4:23:34].

XIMENA VARGUS: I am asking today that our new director spends money in the improvement of our educational system, culturally and responsibly continuing to put forward.

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BIBIANA HOYOS: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
4:23:50-4:24:02]

XIMENA VARGUS: The responsible, cultural
education CRR is the very rigorous system in which
the student is in the center of the studies and it
improve the education. Gracious.

BIBIANA HOYAS: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
4:24:15-4:24:23].

XIMENA VARGUS: It is very critical that they are
prepared to help them – to be helped in their skills
to do their state exams.

BIBIANA HOYAS: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
4:24:36-4:24:44].

XIMENA VARGUS: It ties together the academics as
well as the students personal experience in the
contemporary context.

BIBIANA HOYAS: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
4:24:55-4:25:01].

XIMENA VARGUS: And it improves the academic
racial and cultural abilities.

BIBIANA HOYAS: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
4:25:09-4:25:16].

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2 XIMENA VARGUS: And it helps students develop the
3 ability to communicate better and to interact better
4 culturally.

5 BIBIANA HOYAS: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
6 4:25:26-4:25:30].

7 XIMENA VARGUS: It empowers the students as
8 people who might make social changes.

9 BIBIANA HOYAS: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
10 4:25:38-4:25:43].

11 XIMENA VARGUS: And it inspires students to fall
12 in love with learning.

13 BIBIANA HOYAS: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
14 4:25:48-4:25:56].

15 XIMENA VARGUS: Studies have shown that in the
16 case of students as well as -

17 BIBIANA HOYAS: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
18 4:26:00-4:26:05].

19 XIMENA VARGUS: It helps students of color as
20 well the students, as White students.

21 BIBIANA HOYAS: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
22 4:26:13-4:26:19],

23 XIMENA VARGUS:? CR diminishes the suspensions
24 and the absences.

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2 BIBIANA HOYAS: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
3 4:26:28-4:26:36].

4 XIMENA VARGUS: And it allows for more
5 participation, better academic development.

6 BIBIANA HOYAS: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
7 4:26:44-4:26:47]

8 XIMENA VARGUS: And the number of – an increasing
9 number of graduates – for the graduations for the
10 students.

11 BIBIANA HOYAS: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
12 4:26:53-4:27:00].

13 XIMENA VARGUS: It is important –

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

15 XIMENA VARGUS: That that the education skills of
16 New York turn into an academic national model for
17 everybody.

18 BIBIANA HOYAS: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
19 4:27:13-4:27:20].

20 XIMENA VARGUS: It is important to be able to
21 embrace all the cultural and embrace your art, so
22 that we can erase the inequalities, the racial
23 inequalities and social inequalities.

24 BIBIANA HOYAS: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
25 4:27:35-4:27:37].

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XIMENA VARGUS: In public education.

BIBIANA HOYAS: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
4:27:40-4:27:46].

XIMENA VARGUS: It is incredibly unjust that in
2021, our students have a model of studies.

BIBIANA HOYAS: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
4:27:54-4:27:56].

XIMENA VARGUS: That does reflect in the world in
which they live in.

BIBIANA HOYAS: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
4:28:01-4:28:04].

XIMENA VARGUS: And neither the people who
surround them or who are around them.

BIBIANA HOYAS: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
4:28:08-4:28:12].

XIMENA VARGUS: New York City is one of the most
diverse places in the world.

BIBIANA HOYAS: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
4:28:18-4:28:24].

XIMENA VARGUS: And our schools are a reflection
of that with over 180 languages that are spoken.

BIBIANA HOYAS: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
4:28:30-4:28:33].

XIMENA VARGUS: By our students.

1
2 BIBIANA HOYAS: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
3 4:28:36-4:28:41].

4 XIMENA VARGUS: And sadly these diversities are
5 not reflected in the numbers of graduations.

6 BIBIANA HOYAS: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
7 4:28:51-4:28:58].

8 XIMENA VARGUS: In 2016, only 60 percent of Afro
9 American and Latino students.

10 BIBIANA HOYAS: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
11 4:29:07-4:29:13].

12 XIMENA VARGUS: And 31 percent of students who
13 had English as a second language.

14 BIBIANA HOYAS: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
15 4:29:18-4:29:22].

16 XIMENA VARGUS: Managed to graduate from a
17 secondary school for years.

18 BIBIANA HOYAS: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
19 4:29:27-4:29-32].

20 XIMENA VARGUS: In comparison to 82 percent of
21 White students.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Ximena, this is Malcolm, time
23 was called. If you could just ask if she could wrap
24 up her final thoughts and then we will go to
25 Milagros.

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2 XIMENA VARGUS: SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
3 4:29:45-4:29:56].

4 BIBIANA HOYAS: Okay. [SPEAKING IN OTHER
5 LANGUAGE 4:30:00-4:30:15].

6 XIMENA VARGUS: We are asking the Board of Ed to
7 improve the education for our children and that all
8 the children, Afro American, Latino, White have the
9 same opportunities to get education in the public
10 schools.

11 SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE 4:30:34-4:30:36.

12 Thank you, thank you.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next, we will go
14 ahead and go to Milagros. If we can go ahead and
15 unmute her.

16 XIMENA VARGUS: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
17 4:30:44-4:30:56].

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: If you could tell her, oh,
19 there she goes she is unmuted.

20 XIMENA VARGUS: Okay.

21 MILAGROS CANCEL: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
22 4:30:59-4:31:06].

23 XIMENA VARGUS: Good afternoon to everyone.

24 MILAGROS CANCEL: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
25 4:31:09-4:31:18].

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XIMENA VARGUS: SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE

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3 4:31:20-4:31:22].

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MILAGROS CANCEL: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE

4

5 4:31:23-4:31:34].

5

XIMENA VARGUS: Good afternoon everyone, my name

6

7 is Milagros Cancel, I am the mother of one child with

7

8 autism and I am President of the Charter, the New

8

9 York City Charter for Families, sorry. Okay, continue

9

10 moving forward.

10

MILAGROS CANCEL: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE

11

12 4:31:55-4:32:07].

12

XIMENA VARGUS: I am here today to speak on

13

14 behalf of myself and other Latino American parents

14

15 that are having a right violated with IEP.

15

MILAGROS CANCEL: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE

16

17 4:32:23-4:32:35].

17

XIMENA VARGUS: And this month, our rights, the

18

19 rights of my child in IEP were violated when they

19

20 weren't - they did not send the IEP in time for my

20

21 child.

21

MILAGROS CANCEL: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE

22

23 4:32:47-4:33:00].

23

XIMENA VARGUS: I would like to say that during

24

25 the times of slavery they kept the slaves

25

1
2 uneducated. They forbade them to speak, I'm sorry,
3 to learn how to read.

4 MILAGROS CANCEL: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
5 4:33:15-4:33:25].

6 XIMENA VARGUS: For fear that they would cause of
7 revolt and liberate themselves during the time of his
8 slavery.

9 MILAGROS CANCEL: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
10 4:33:31-4:33:34],

11 XIMENA VARGUS: And from there, educational
12 oppression has started.

13 MILAGROS CANCEL: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
14 4:33:40-4:33:49].

15 XIMENA VARGUS: This has been the system of
16 oppression that has existed in this country,
17 especially when it comes to students of color.

18 MILAGROS CANCEL: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
19 4:33:56-4:34:02].

20 XIMENA VARGUS: When the laws do not apply or the
21 rights do not apply the same equally to the students
22 who come from minority communities -

23 MILAGROS CANCEL: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
24 4:34:12-4:34:16].

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XIMENA VARGUS: This is part of this country's history and now you are part of its history.

MILAGROS CANCEL: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE 4:34:21-4:34:24].

XIMENA VARGUS: We still have a segregation in the school levels.

MILAGROS CANCEL: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE 4:34:29-4:34:33].

XIMENA VARGUS: Our children of color are not receiving the same education.

MILAGROS CANCEL: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE 4:34:37-4:34:40].

XIMENA VARGUS: And this is similar to the time of oppression.

MILAGROS CANCEL: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE 4:34:44-4:34:51].

XIMENA VARGUS: It is obvious that the oppression, the housing oppression directly effects the oppression in education, discrimination in education, sorry.

MILAGROS CANCEL: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE 4:35:10-4:35:15].

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

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XIMENA VARGUS: Okay, there has to be a program that starts for when students sit in school.

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MILAGROS CANCEL: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE 4:35:23-4:35:29].

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XIMENA VARGUS: Instead of when they end up in jail because they did not have access.

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MILAGROS CANCEL: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE 4:35:34-4:35:38].

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XIMENA VARGUS: And did not have access to the same services in the education. [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE 4:35:41-4:35:48]. I am letting her know now about the time.

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COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

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XIMENA VARGUS: SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE 4:35:50-4:35:56].

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MILAGROS CANCEL: Okay. [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE 4:35:57-4:36:11].

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XIMENA VARGUS: I am asking the Board of Ed, the Governor and all executive parties to please give the same education to the children with this capacity to please, especially the kids that come from minority communities.

24

25

MILAGROS CANCEL: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE 4:36:30-4:36:35].

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2 XIMENA VARGUS: And to please fund, give funds to
3 the educational funds in equal manner.

4 MILAGROS CANCEL: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
5 4:36:42-4:36:53].

6 XIMENA VARGUS: And I ask the legislatures to
7 please approve the use of funds to help with the – to
8 improve the help, the federal help with the state
9 help.

10 MILAGROS CANCEL: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
11 4:37:04-4:37:15].

12 XIMENA VARGUS: The federal help, economic help
13 that we are getting should not be used to replace the
14 existing state funds but it should be used to improve
15 it. Thank you so much for your attention.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Milagros. Thank
17 you Ximena.

18 XIMENA VARGUS: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
19 4:37:30-3:37:32]. My pleasure. Thank you everybody.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Deputy Chancellor Goldmark
21 and President Kubota, thank you for that. The Chair
22 just texted me, I just need to ask your indulgence
23 one more time. It's going to just be a quick two
24 minutes. CSA President Mark Cannizzaro has to get
25 off the Zoom in four minutes.

1
2 So, if we could, if the master muter could please
3 unmute the CSA President.

4 MARK CANNIZZARO: I think I am unmuted. Can you
5 hear me okay?

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yep, we can hear you now.

7 MARK CANNIZZARO: Oh great, thank you so much and
8 thank you for indulging me. I am sorry, I have to
9 jump off.

10 Good afternoon everyone and thank you for this
11 opportunity to testify and thank you to Chair Treyger
12 and the entire Committee for your support throughout
13 the years. Especially with the whole harmless – with
14 this year's budget due to the pandemic, too many
15 schools lost register that could not be predicted and
16 your strong support was vital in convincing the
17 Department of Education to whole schools harmless.
18 So, that is such a big, big victory and we appreciate
19 your help there.

20 Second, we have a fair student funding, which as
21 you know we have been advocating alongside you and
22 this Committee, the City Council for years trying to
23 get all schools to 100 percent. We believe that this
24 year with the federal stimulus money, that should be
25 a first priority before any other priorities are set.

1
2 We have also in our contract, agreed with the
3 Department of Education that is the best practice to
4 have an Assistant Principal in every school. We have
5 about 111 schools currently with no Assistant
6 Principal and we will be urging the Department to
7 make sure that there is an Assistant Principal funded
8 in every school.

9 I heard earlier reference to the fact that there
10 is going to be significant turnover in school
11 leadership and teaching positions coming up due to
12 the pandemic. That is true and there is also a
13 tremendous recruitment problem regarding school
14 leadership because not only due to the pandemic but
15 due to the last several years, the challenging
16 leadership positions that people are asked to take on
17 have become really unattractive and our ALPAP
18 executive leaderships, assistant principal leadership
19 program prepares Assistant Principals to take on the
20 role to be successful principals and we are going to
21 ask for continued funding through City Council. Were
22 you have been so generous in the past, so we will be
23 leaning on you to continue to support that vital
24 program, which is even more vital at this time.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

1
2 MARK CANNIZZARO: And just finally, it's our
3 Early Childhood Educators who are continuing to do
4 the terrific work with our youngest students and they
5 have been understaffed and underfunded for years and
6 we are going to be looking for support there also.

7 So, thank you very much.

8 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I just want to say publicly
9 to President Cannizzaro, I meant it earlier when I -
10 with the exchange with the Chancellor and folks, I
11 will never forget the calls I have had with
12 principals this past year. I mean, they will be with
13 me for the rest of my life and principals and our
14 school staff, they move heaven and earth to make this
15 work for kids with very limited and inadequate
16 support. And with no consultation of any cases and
17 no heads up and finding out about announcements
18 Friday, three o'clock and as I mentioned to the
19 Chancellor, parents don't call the Mayor. They don't
20 have, many of them don't have his numbers. They call
21 Principals, they call their school communities and we
22 just want you to know that this Council, this
23 Committee, we have our educators maps and I know that
24 the CSA champion initiatives even prior to the
25 pandemic, that are really a support system for school

1
2 leaders and to prepare future school leaders. It's
3 going to be a major priority for us in this Council
4 to make sure that we not only restore cuts but
5 actually increase support and Fair Student Funding is
6 where the rubber meets the road. You know, all the,
7 all the wonderful positions our schools need and all
8 the great supports, that's where Fair Student Funding
9 comes in. If they don't have the money to do it, it
10 just doesn't happen and thank you for always
11 centering that. For every year I have known you, you
12 have always centered. That's where the rubber hits
13 the road for our schools whether we have the money or
14 not.

15 For all the support staff and I just want to
16 thank you for your leadership and to all your
17 members, we see you, we appreciate you and we must
18 have your back in this budget. Thank you.

19 MARK CANNIZARO: Thank you and we really
20 appreciate all that support and we recognize it as
21 well. So, thank you very much.

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you Mr. President.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair. Thank you
24 CSA, thank you SCA, thank you DOE. We now go back to
25 our regular scheduled program. Albeit a little

1
2 behind schedule but we are now going to call on
3 Council Member Rosenthal followed by Council Member
4 Miller and then back to the Chair.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Hi, thank you so much.
7 Thank you Chair. You know, twelve of DOE
8 representatives, thank you for all the hard work you
9 do. It's a pleasure working with you.

10 Two quick questions and I will ask both, so you
11 can think about one while you are answering the
12 other. So, the first is that the Capital Plan, if I
13 remember right, drops remarkably between uhm, sorry,
14 I think, I am really prepped here, after FY24.

15 So, for the Capital Plan for the SCA it's looking
16 like '22, '23 and kind of '24 hover around \$4 million
17 to spend commitment. And then starting in '25, it
18 just stops to \$1.1 billion for the rest of the ten
19 year plan. And I am wondering if you could talk
20 about that. Sort of you know, I know we had paused.
21 I understand all of that but if you could, you know,
22 are you confident that it will only be \$1.7 billion
23 in the outyears blah, blah, blah, blah?

24 My second question is how many about the MWBE's,
25 how many businesses are part of the program? The

1
2 MWBE program? And what is their share within SCA's
3 pool of contractors?

4 So, I guess that means, if you have total value
5 of the contracts, what's their percentage? Isn't it
6 supposed to be 30 percent? And then, what's the - if
7 you just look at the number of MWBE contractors as a
8 part of all contractors? Thank you.

9 KARIN GOLDMARK: I am happy to start on the
10 Capital Plan question.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: And I think we need to
12 unmute Ms. Goldmark.

13 KARIN GOLDMARK: I thought I was unmuted. Can
14 you hear me?

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, you are unmuted.

16 KARIN GOLDMARK: Okay, thank you.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I think we still need
18 to unmute Ms. Goldmark. Who has a lot to say and
19 answering my question.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Rosenthal, she
21 is unmuted. We can hear her.

22 KARIN GOLDMARK: Everyone else can hear me.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Every single -
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COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Rosenthal?

No, no, no, she is unmuted. Can you hear us? I don't think you can.

KARIN GOLDMARK: It's not me, it's you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Can you hear us now? Council Member Rosenthal, can you hear us?

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I can.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, thank you.

KARIN GOLDMARK: Thank you, okay, sorry. You missed my bad joke Council Member, I said it's not me, it's you.

I am sorry, I don't mean it. It just was there. Uhm, so President Kubota, if it is okay, I will start on the Capital Plan question and then please jump in. Uhm, so a couple of different intersecting laws, right. The city has to have a ten year capital plan an outlook and the DOE is required by statute to have a five year capital plan which we develop relying heavily on School Construction Authority. And that dates back to the creation of the School Construction Authority and the sort of at that point, prior to mayoral control big challenges in terms of school construction, delays and so the creation of the School Construction Authority to cut through all of

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2 that and their tremendous track record in that part
3 of the structure is a five year capital plan.

4 So, we know and that's actually what we are
5 testifying about today and that's something where you
6 see the amendment usually and there is not a pandemic
7 every year, so the five year capital plan numbers you
8 are looking at are the five year capital plan. The
9 city's ten year capital plan, it's a place holder
10 number and you will see a change when we develop the
11 next five year capital plan.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Oh, so it goes by five
13 year chunks? Got it, got it. So, for the next three
14 years, the current, the next three year- we are just
15 missing a year. Do you have to wait every two years
16 when you are doing a five year plan or something?
17 Because I only have three years of numbers around \$4
18 billion and then it drops right down.

19 KARIN GOLDMARK: So, we are in - what year are we
20 in? We are in two.

21 NINA KUBOTA: Year two, hmm, hmm.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: It's a timing thing.

23 KARIN GOLDMARK: I think we remember the creation
24 of the plan. It was just before as we said.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Well, it's a timing
3 thing. I guess my question is for FY22 then, are you
4 confident that for '21 and '22, are you confident
5 about the amount that you have committed there? Do
6 you think you will really get there? Thank you.

7 KARIN GOLDMARK: Ms. Kubota? With an eight month
8 construction delay, I don't know about FY21 but I
9 will let President Kubota handle that.

10 NINA KUBOTA: Yes, sure, thank you. I think the
11 difference just to reiterate what you were saying is
12 that we are in a fixed five year capital plan. So,
13 FY20-24 versus the city's rolling ten year plan and I
14 think that's sort of the gap between the two.

15 So, it's not that we just need to look ahead,
16 past the two years, it's that fixed period. So, as
17 Karin mentioned, we do work with OMB and obviously
18 City Hall as the next five year capital plan cycle
19 approaches us. We will start that in FY23. And the
20 funding levels that you are seeing of \$1.7 billion in
21 Fiscal Year's '25 and '26, are quite similar to what
22 they were as we went into this capital plan back in
23 '18.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Totally get it and so,
25 if you were thinking about the commitments for end of

1
2 the year '21 final, what would that number be and
3 what's your expected for '22?

4 NINA KUBOTA: So, we are planning on committing
5 \$4.5 billion for FY21. We were able to resume our
6 designs and everything and we do have in this last
7 quarter about \$2 billion that we are planning on
8 awarding. So, we are well on our way to achieve
9 that.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Let me know. Thank
11 you so much.

12 NINA KUBOTA: And similarly in FY22 as well.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Oh, did anything get
14 pushed out to FY22 from FY21 because it seems to
15 roughly be \$4 plus billion every year.

16 NINA KUBOTA: So, I think there was a bit of a
17 cascading effect due to the pause. So, there were a
18 lot of projects that were not awarded in FY20 that
19 would have moved to FY21 and similarly FY21-22.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Got it. If you could
21 just send those over, that would be incredibly
22 helpful to the Finance team or however you send that
23 information over, that would be great. And then
24 about the MWBE's real quickly.
25

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2 NINA KUBOTA: Right, so I had mentioned a little
3 bit earlier that in this Administration, that we
4 have, the SCA has obligated over \$3.1 billion to MWBE
5 firms in prime construction contracts and over \$2
6 billion to MWBE subcontractors.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: What year window?
8 Sorry.

9 NINA KUBOTA: So, FY15 through current.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay.

11 NINA KUBOTA: So, I will also say that we have
12 156 firms that participate in our mentor and graduate
13 mentor programs and we have 100 and I am sorry, 1,968
14 qualified firms of which 962 are MWBE firms.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: 90 percent of the
16 firms you contract with are MWBE's?

17 NINA KUBOTA: So, about 50 percent of the
18 contractors that are -

19 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Of 1,000, sorry.

20 NINA KUBOTA: 1,900, sorry, 1,968.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay about half?

22 NINA KUBOTA: Yes, about half. that is correct.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay. President
24 Kubota, thank you so much for all of your help, you
25 have been amazing and I know you are really helping

1
2 my District as well. And we really appreciate and
3 Deputy Chancellor Goldmark, it's great to have you
4 back. Thank you very much.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member
6 Rosenthal and finally, we will hear from Council
7 Member Miller.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Saving the best for last.
10 So, good afternoon Mr. Chair, Madam President. It is
11 a pleasure to see you in that seat and obviously we
12 have worked together over the years for quite a
13 while, which is probably the nexus of what I want to
14 talk about. Is some of the projects that we have
15 talked about over the past six or seven years that
16 are in queue.

17 I want to talk about the scheduling and the
18 impact that the moratorium has had if in fact that we
19 are going to resume a normal schedule. Have we
20 prioritized it? Is there some work that we can do as
21 other agencies have done where there is minimal
22 disruption to the functions of the building? What
23 exactly does it look like and what projects can we
24 expect to see moving forward citywide and we can
25 localize it just a little bit?

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2 KARIN GOLDMARK: President Kubota, would you like
3 to start or?

4 NINA KUBOTA: If you would like to that's fine.
5 Specifically about some of the projects in Council
6 Members District, in particular, the – so citywide,
7 just let's just take a step back right. We
8 definitely prioritize a restart of our capacity
9 projects, making sure that our FY, our September 2021
10 schools would open on time. Which we did but then
11 when we got to the granular level, we certainly
12 prioritized our MWBE firms, which I mentioned earlier
13 and also, those projects that were effecting the
14 hardest hit in terms of COVID rates throughout the
15 city.

16 So, that was our prioritization process as we
17 restarted hundreds of our projects. And we tried to
18 do it as equitably across the entire city. With that
19 said, some of the things happening in your specific
20 district is that we have just authorized a new 800
21 seat high school. We have begun the process and
22 working with the Community Board to start that public
23 review.

24 I think Campus Magnet is something close to you
25 as well. And so, we anticipate that to be going out

1
2 to bid and starting construction this summer with
3 completion of Fall of 2022. So, we are really happy
4 that we have restarted.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Is that the gymnasium
6 portion?

7 NINA KUBOTA: Sorry, say that again.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Is that the gymnasium
9 portion because there was a number of jobs in Campus
10 Magnet.

11 NINA KUBOTA: I think we were specifically
12 talking about both the gym and the athletic field.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Okay. Okay, I am super
14 disappointed but if we get started, that's okay.
15 Those were participatory budgeting and we really
16 wanted to see you know, in order to encourage people
17 to participate in that process, they need to see the
18 projects and that one is probably five years in the
19 running. But glad that they are happening.

20 In terms of full broadband and access and wiring,
21 can you say that all of our schools have been
22 equitably wired and that they are able to see in
23 person instruction without any disruption due to lack
24 of broadband?

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2 KARIN GOLDMARK: I am happy to speak about that
3 and to also invite in Anuraag Sharma and anyone else
4 from the DOE who would like to speak about this or
5 CIO Anuraag Sharma is also here.

6 In terms of broadband, we have made significant
7 additional investments. The capital plan, this five
8 year capital plan already had \$750 million funding
9 and we have increased that. So, we are now at \$1.02
10 billion and we have been able to increase the
11 capacity across the entire system 14 gigabytes to 240
12 gigabytes. So, more than ten times the amount.

13 In addition to that, we have now a five year tech
14 refresh cycle, so every school has equipment. We
15 just essentially, we go through and we keep
16 refreshing as we go. So, 20 percent of the schools
17 get the upgrade in any given year and that's because
18 of that large investment and it's because of the
19 attention that Council Members such as you and your
20 colleagues on the committee have been bringing to the
21 technology issues for years. So, we are very
22 grateful for that support.

23 And so, the good news is that at this point, the
24 schools have more capacity across the entire DOE
25 system, significantly more. There are two data

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2 centers operating where there used to be just one and
3 we have converted all of the -

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 KARIN GOLDMARK: All of the wiring of the network
6 over to Fiber Optic. So, everything up to the school
7 wall is addressed within the school wall. At this
8 point, it's again -

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: And that's in every
10 school?

11 KARIN GOLDMARK: That's across every school. And
12 then, at this point there is the tech refresh
13 happening in every school.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Okay, great and just very
15 quickly. I believe it was PS95 that we were looking
16 at. Seats, additional seats, they were tremendously
17 over crowded. We looked at a couple of locations in
18 the area, the same area that we are talking about
19 building the high school. Is there any and as the
20 elements you know K-8, is there any headway that we
21 have made on that particular location? And if you
22 can give me some clarification just because I think
23 we left it at 50 percent of the MWBE or was it 50
24 percent of MWBE participating in the mentoring
25 program or actually those who are getting the

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2 contracts? I am sending everybody towards the DOE
3 and School Construction.

4 NINA KUBOTA: So, we didn't find anything yet as
5 an alternative PS95 or close to PS95. We still are
6 searching. So, you know, we continue that search and
7 like I mentioned before, we welcome any suggestions
8 and we are still early in this plan, so we will
9 continue our search there.

10 What I was saying about, those are prequalified
11 firms that make up 50 percent of our pool of
12 contractors and vendors. I will say through that our
13 mentor program has been fabulous. It was established
14 in 93 and it is you know, what we do is provide that
15 technical assistance and access to capital and
16 bonding and mentoring is part of that program.

17 And I don't know if you are aware but we have
18 increased the value of the mentor program. It was
19 previously \$1 million for each project, it's now to
20 \$1.5. Beginning in July it will be two and next July
21 it will be three. So, the access to the number of
22 potential projects that a mentor firm can bid on is
23 tremendous and I will say that about 60 percent of
24 all contract awards go to Black and Hispanic firms.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Okay, that is good to
3 know and we have to figure out a way to ensure that
4 we are reaching our target audience and involving
5 more folks into the mentor program. Thank you so
6 much for your time and President. Thank you Mr.
7 Chair and I guess everybody gets to go home now. I
8 have to jump on transportation. Thank you guys.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: That's it for Council Member
10 questions Chair.

11 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you. Thank you all.
12 Thanks to the Administration and again, I certainly,
13 you know, we all agree that we have a lot more work
14 to do but I do appreciate and acknowledge that a lot
15 of folks here have been working long days and nights
16 and more to do and more resources to secure for our
17 schools. So, thank you all for your services.
18 Thanks.

19 KARIN GOLDMARK: Thank you.

20 NINA KUBOTA: Thank you.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you everyone and that
22 concludes testimony from the Administration. I am
23 just going to go over once again procedures for the
24 public portion of this hearing. We are sorry that it
25 is behind schedule but this is an important budget

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2 and an important year and there were lots of Council
3 Member questions from the Education Committee.

4 So, for public testimony again, the public clock
5 is for two minutes. Please wait after I call your
6 name for the Sergeant at Arms to give you the queue
7 that you may begin and a member of our staff will
8 unmute you. After the two minutes when the Sergeant
9 calls time, we ask that people please wrap up their
10 final thoughts.

11 So, we will first hear from – we are going to
12 first hear from the UFT but I believe Michael Mulgrew
13 is currently on another Zoom. So, we will go to our
14 next panel and then we will go back to him.

15 So, for the first panel, we are going to call and
16 I apologize if I am pronouncing anyone's names.
17 Liana Garcia, Stephanie Pacheco, Rasheedah Harris,
18 Anna Jean Louis and Jenny Metheny. And we will first
19 start with Liana Garcia.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

21 LIANA GARCIA: Hi –

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Hello. Your connection is
23 garbled, we can't hear you.

24 LIANA GARCIA: Oh okay.

25 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: There we go.

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LIANA GARCIA: Now everyone can hear me, okay. I stand in solidarity with my fellow youth advocates across New York City who have long demanded police free schools and who have been silenced by the Department of Education and I would like to point out that our problems we have – the problems we have, have been here long before COVID and they will continue to be here unless the Department of Education decides to work with students and parents.

As a student, I demand that I see more people of color in our curriculum. I demand New York City schools be centered around healing and helping low-income, homeless, Black and Brown children like myself be able to get the educational experience, the best educational experience they can get in school.

I would like to use the rest of my time to sit in silence to symbolize the Department of Education has silenced students who have long called for police free schools. [SILENCE 5:03:29-5:04:43].

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will hear from Stephanie Pacheco.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

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2 STEPHANIE PACHECO: Hello. I would like to
3 second the thoughts shared by Liana. I also stand in
4 solidarity with all of the youth across New York City
5 that have been demanding to have police removed from
6 all of our schools and demanding a fully funded and
7 just education for all Black and Brown low-income
8 students. I will also be using my time to stand in
9 solidarity with these people who have been
10 consistently silenced by people in this very call.
11 And I stand in complete solidarity with their fight
12 and with our fight for fully funded police free
13 healing centered schools. Thank you. [SILENCE
14 5:05:29-5:07:00.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
17 hear from Rasheedah Harris.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

19 RASHEEDAH HARRIS: Hi, good afternoon. My name
20 is Rasheedah Harris and I am providing testimony on
21 behalf of the Healing Centered Schools Working Group
22 today. I stand in solidarity with the Youth
23 Advocates across NYC who have long demanded police
24 free schools but have been silenced in the real
25 discussions surrounding this transformation. But I

1
2 am here today to talk about how much money the city
3 currently spends to criminalize and harm students and
4 how that money can be invested in healing. I have
5 four points and one question.

6 All the next points I am about to mention come
7 directly from Girls for Gender Equity, GGE. A
8 redistribution of NYPD's \$450 million annual school
9 policing budget across all 1,600 public schools would
10 give every school budget an additional \$282,000 each
11 year.

12 If School Safety Division was a standalone police
13 department, it would be the fifth largest in the
14 country. The 188 officer uniform taskforce, which
15 are actual uniformed NYPD police, not SSA's in our
16 schools cost a whole whopping \$24 million. That's
17 just our reality. The current budget reality that we
18 talk about when we talk about finance schools right.

19 The Mayor's budget offers the following: We pay
20 for every 1,000 students. The numbers I am about to
21 call are for every 1,000 student, so please keep that
22 in mind. So, we pay for every 1,000 students. We
23 pay for five SSA's, 2.6 School counselors, 1.3 School
24 Social Workers, .9 School Psychologists and .6 School
25 nurses.

1
2 I don't need to remind you all that a budget is a
3 moral document and we need to prioritize healing
4 center and restorative practices through an anti-
5 racist, anti-bias culturally responsive lens.

6 Question Chair Treyger, are they still planning
7 on hiring 475 new school safety agents at a cost of
8 \$20 million for the DOE's budget? I implore you to
9 block that please. It's not prioritizing healing
10 centered schools. We need culturally responsive
11 sustaining education, smaller class sizes and we
12 must, must include students and parents and community
13 member in these planning meetings. Our healing
14 centered schools roadmap provides the framework for
15 making this happen. We all need healing.

16 Thank you so much. Thank you for your time and
17 peace.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and that concludes
19 this panel for those that are present. We will move
20 on to our next who is rejoining us, Michael Mulgrew
21 from the UFT.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

23 MICHAEL MULGREW: Thank you. Good afternoon and
24 I want to thank the City Council for having this
25 hearing. I want to thank Chair Treyger for all his

1
2 great work and all the other City Council folks who
3 are here.

4 Look, I want to be really quick here. We are
5 facing phenomenal challenges at this point and time.
6 The amount of damage that has been done because of
7 COVID and what we are looking at is going to take an
8 immense amount of work and funding. Thankfully, with
9 a lot of effort, we were able to get a president in
10 the United States who actually believes in investing
11 in actual people and not corporations and banks and
12 now we have this funding. But the question for us as
13 a city is are we going to spend it wisely? This is a
14 once in a lifetime opportunity to do a lot of good or
15 is it going to become political footballs and a waste
16 of time and funding?

17 And I am imploring folks here, we have a five
18 point plan. It's in my testimony. We need an
19 intervention team for every 200 students. An
20 academic intervention as well as an emotional and
21 social assessment. We want to make sure that we are
22 doing everything in our power right now to spend our
23 money wisely.

24 Okay, we want to make sure we have a real intense
25 summer school experience right now, not what's been

1
2 in the past and we want people to be brought together
3 safely. And these are the challenges that we have
4 but we want to take these challenges on but we really
5 need partners and that's what City Council has been
6 our partners. And this is really - as we go through
7 the rest of this school year, making sure all of our
8 graduating seniors get the support and information
9 that they need. So, that they are making really good
10 choices about their college or careers or whatever
11 path they are choosing to do. All of these things
12 are imperative right now.

13 So, we are asking City Council to be there and
14 work with us on behalf of the children of New York
15 City. Lots of stuff is tough, we understand it. And
16 as to the last speaker, I do not agree with hiring
17 475 more school safety officers. I am just telling
18 you that right now. No reason to be doing anything
19 like that at this moment.

20 So, again, I want to thank Chair Treyger and
21 everyone else in City Council support for all the
22 things you have done in the past. But now, some of
23 our greatest challenges ever are before us.

24 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And I want to say a couple
25 things publicly as well. And I would like for

1
2 President Mulgrew to hear because you know, there has
3 been a lot of commentary on folks who have never
4 spent a day working in a school about school
5 reopening or school safety concerns. I just want to
6 remind the public that the City Administration did
7 not even come up with or even work on a plan to
8 reopen the school system until after July 4th. Now
9 if you actually worked in a school, you would know
10 that school communities prepare for September not in
11 the end of July, not in August but you prepare may
12 January, February, earlier in the year.

13 There was no plan, if anything, the UFT to their
14 credit, to their credit did the work really of the
15 administration to at least call I public health
16 experts to provide some level of guidance on the path
17 forward, reminding the public that as of June of last
18 year, close to 80 DOE employees passed away because
19 of the virus. Principals, educators, support staff
20 and there was understandable distrust of the
21 government because we put people in very dangerous
22 situations where the virus was spreading at the time.

23 So, the administration did not even come to the
24 table with any plan until later in the summer. And
25 to the UFT's credit and to I would say CSA others,

1
2 they brought in public health experts. They wanted
3 to hear from infectious disease experts, what is best
4 to protect our kids. Not just the staff themselves
5 but we are here for the children. So, I want to just
6 get that straight and as I mentioned with the DOE
7 earlier and SCA, there was a school in Manhattan, MLK
8 Junior Campus that has no windows and they failed the
9 ventilation test because of the infamous toilet paper
10 test. That's why that school community had their
11 school opening delayed.

12 So, we need to get the facts out there because
13 educators always prioritize the safety and wellbeing
14 of their children and of their classrooms. And
15 educators are not robots, they are human beings and
16 we publicly should acknowledge and thank a workforce
17 that literally transformed the largest school
18 district in the nation from in-person to remote
19 moving heaven and earth with inadequate support.
20 Even while facing challenges in their own personal
21 lives, losing loved ones, being primary care takers.

22 And Mr. President Mulgrew, I mentioned before
23 with CSA, it's worth repeating with the UFT. I also
24 empathize with teachers who go above and beyond
25 teaching virtual and recording the lessons to do in

1
2 person, vice versa. They are going above and beyond
3 what the requirements are. Not even being
4 compensated but just going above and beyond, doing
5 wellness calls. Teachers are de facto counselors,
6 social workers, because of the inadequate amount of
7 social workers and counselors we have in our school
8 system.

9 So, to our educators, to our support staff, to
10 our nurses, everyone, thank you and we see you and we
11 are always going to have your back. And I think it
12 is important to get that out there President Mulgrew.

13 MICHAEL MULGREW: Thank you. Thank you very much
14 Chairman, Chair Treyger excuse me.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And that -

16 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Oh, no, I was going to say, I
18 don't see any questions from other Council Members at
19 this time and Mr. Mulgrew was by himself on this
20 panel.

21 MICHAEL MULGREW: Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you President
23 Mulgrew.

24 MICHAEL MULGREW: Thank you.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. The next panel
3 that we will be calling is Jonathan Rampagoa, Jade
4 Entien, Akeria Adams, Brielka Rodriguez and Smitha
5 Varghese. We will start with Jonathan.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

7 JONATHAN RAMPAGOA: Good afternoon City Council
8 Education Committee. My name is Jonathan Isha
9 Rampagoa and my pronouns are he and his. I am an
10 Elmhurst Queens local; I attend Bard High School
11 Early College Queens. I am also a member of the New
12 York Civil Liberties Union Project.

13 Today, I am calling on this body to allocate
14 additional funding for ventilation and PPE for public
15 schools. This is especially essential for the
16 current school year and for the next academic year of
17 2021-2022. Yesterday, based on the Mayor de Blasio's
18 decision, NYC High Schools reopened for in-person
19 learning. It is imperative that students transfer
20 back and forth to in-person learning. Have a healthy
21 and space environment that adheres to the CDC
22 guidelines. There are a number of health concerns in
23 regard to the ventilation in our schools.

24 According to the NYC DOE, of the 90 percent of
25 classrooms that have functioning ventilation systems,

1
2 there are still another 2,882 in need of repairs.
3 Additionally, ventilation action team inspectors say
4 21 schools housed in ten buildings throughout the
5 city are unfit for teachers to return to due to poor
6 ventilation.

7 We demand there be full accessibility and a
8 complete installation of ventilation systems in all
9 our schools in our city. This will lower the risk of
10 contracting COVID-19 amongst students alike. And
11 also decrease the chances of transmission throughout
12 the city. There are still questions remained to how
13 students will get the vaccine.

14 So, until we all have access to this vaccine, we
15 must receive proper ventilation and sufficient PPE
16 for our schools and it must be mandated citywide. I
17 am also calling on the body to increase funding for
18 enrichment and extracurricular programs for our
19 public schools, especially districts who are
20 suffering and struggling with underfunding during
21 this pandemic. All children deserve to be given
22 opportunities to thrive in their academic and
23 afterschool activities and this includes the
24 opportunity to participate in a wide variety of
25 educational and artist programming.

1
2 To reiterate, here are my two demands. Number
3 one, allocate funding for ventilation systems and PPE
4 for our public schools. And number two, increase the
5 budget for extracurricular and enrichment programs
6 for all public schools, so that all children have a
7 chance to have the holistic approach.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

9 JONATHAN RAMPAGOA: Thank you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
11 hear from Jade.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

13 JADE ENTIEN: I am going to be reading on behalf
14 of Jaden. So, good afternoon everyone. My name is
15 Jade and I am a junior at Junior Preparatory High
16 School and a Youth Leader and Board Member at
17 Citizens Brothers United and a Youth Leader at Urban
18 Youth Collaborative.

19 As a young person, fighting for police free
20 schools means fighting for my liberation. When I see
21 police in the schools, I can't help but feel
22 uncomfortable, scared, threatened, inferior and like
23 a target. So, why put them in our schools? These
24 are real feelings from students in New York City.
25 With police in schools, our freedom is not only

1
2 limited, it is taken away. How can we feel safe in
3 our learning environment knowing that there are
4 people there trying to hurt us when we need help the
5 most?

6 In New York City with predominantly students of
7 color, there are more police officers than student
8 counselors. We have also seen in the past more than
9 90 percent of students handcuffed during child and
10 crisis issues students of color. Children as young
11 as five years old have been handcuffed during a
12 mental health crisis. With data like this, who am I
13 supposed to turn to when I need help the most? If I
14 don't feel okay, if I am scared, if I am about to
15 have a mental breakdown, who is going to help me?

16 The same people trained to mace me if I scream in
17 fear. The same people who will pin me down if I need
18 space. The same people trained to hit me if I feel
19 uncomfortable being held. Our schools continue to
20 feel more like prisons than actual schools and the
21 police want us behind bars, that is much clear.

22 What makes the school to prison pipeline in New
23 York more painful and complex, is that our people,
24 people who look like me are the ones that are tasked
25 to police us in schools and communities. It is time

1
2 to reimagine safety but when we say we want – when we
3 say, we keep us safe, we don't mean we want –

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 JADE ENTIEN: Education is the starting line to
6 my future, to all of our futures and to get there, we
7 cannot continue to utilize the same oppressive
8 practices. We need real investment and support and
9 it starts with police free schools. I ask the
10 Council today to fight for a budget that does not
11 hire new cops in our schools. But instead, invest in
12 the counselors, social workers and restorative
13 justice practices. Thank you.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
15 hear from Akeria Adams.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

17 AKERIA ADAMS: Hi, my name is Akeria Adams, I am
18 a Youth Leader at the Urban Youth Collaborative and I
19 am a high school junior in Queens.

20 As a student that attends an overpoliced public
21 school with mostly students of color, I have
22 witnessed and experienced the impacts of spending so
23 much money on school cops. Our schools need more
24 guidance counselors and mental health resources
25 especially during this time.

1
2 I recently had an issue that only my guidance
3 counselor can handle. It took two months for me to
4 reach her. My peers at school are going through even
5 more situations than I was and can't get any help.
6 Schools cops can't solve issues that students have,
7 yet we spend \$450 million on them each year and are
8 even paying them right now to patrol empty schools.

9 School police are known to escalate situations
10 and harm students. I have seen school police in my
11 school use excessive force and hurt students until
12 they are bruised. I have seen them arrest students
13 and yell at them during metal detector searches.

14 I once had a [INAUDIBLE 5:22:12] in my bag for
15 lunch and they told me I couldn't go to class unless
16 I threw it away, making me late to class. I have
17 been taken to the side nearly every other week to be
18 scanned by a wand because of items like a hole
19 puncher, jewelry or any other harmless items. Why
20 does city budgets prioritize policing instead of
21 resources to help students? It is unfair that there
22 is a hiring freeze on other educational staff yet
23 there is a negotiation to hire more school police
24 when they don't benefit students.
25

1
2 It is also unfair that the city wants to transfer
3 school cops from the NYPD to the DOE, which does
4 nothing to remove them. Stop neglecting our needs
5 and give us police free schools and resources that
6 help us. Thank you.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
8 hear from Brielka.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

10 BRIELKA RODRIGUEZ: Hi, my name is Brielka
11 Rodriguez. I live in Staten Island. I am in Ninth
12 Grade and I am a Youth Leader at Make the Road New
13 York and in Urban Youth Collaborative. I am here
14 today testifying because after years of young people
15 campaigning for police free schools, it's a slap in
16 their face to learn that the city is planning to
17 spend \$20 million to hire 475 more school cops. All
18 while the Mayor already cut \$700 million from the
19 year's education budget.

20 New York City already spent \$450 million on
21 schools police, schools cops. We need funding to
22 make our school more equitable and compassionate,
23 compromised space to learn. I was excited to be in
24 high school but my freshman year was not how I
25 imagined it to be. When the pandemic hit, it made me

1
2 realize that my school and other schools across New
3 York City were not equipped to deal with a situation
4 like this one.

5 My first day of high school was disorganized
6 because I was not informed about any of staff about
7 my school schedule, nor emotional support that was
8 available to deal with my anxiety from the pandemic.
9 I became aware that there is a lack of funding for
10 emotional support and mental health support for
11 students.

12 To me and probably to many other students, the
13 lack of resources is a nightmare. My school is
14 located a couple blocks away from where Eric Gardner
15 was killed. It is unbelievable to know that those
16 same police from the precinct are in my school. It's
17 frustrating that close to \$450 million is spent on
18 police in schools. Even more so that they are doing
19 is not policing empty buildings. My schools is a
20 community school. This is important to me because
21 community schools are more important than ever in
22 providing the support students and families need as
23 we return.

24

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1
2 Community schools could be facing cuts in the
3 upcoming year. We need to say, what does that mean
4 to me and other students about where –

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

6 BRIELKA RODRIGUEZ: They are choosing to invest
7 their money; policing me or supporting me to be
8 successful. We have to stop spending money on
9 policing in schools. Hiring more school safety
10 agents is not what your people like myself need. For
11 years we have been extremely vocal about removing
12 police out of schools. We have been demanding to
13 reallocate the funding for police to students social,
14 emotional and mental health support. There are more
15 school safety agents across New York City schools
16 than social workers, guidance counselors and school
17 nurses available for students.

18 Every time students of color like myself walk
19 inside a school building, we have to go through metal
20 detectors. We get treated like, as a problem but we
21 aren't a problem. Racist police are the problem. We
22 can't hire new school safety agents and can't
23 transfer them to the Department of Education. It
24 will not erase the harm NYPD has inflicted Black and
25

1
2 Brown young people like myself. This transfer will
3 not undo the trauma that many have experienced.

4 I have a little sister who is nine years old and
5 is in elementary school and because of her, I am
6 committed to keep fighting so she does not have to
7 ever experience police in schools. Numerous studies
8 have already completed removing police from schools,
9 including Seattle, Portland, Rancho, Denver and a
10 couple of weeks ago Oregon, announced that they will
11 not renew the contract with police departments.

12 While other cities are cutting size, where the
13 police department in New York City is increasing its
14 funding's for schools police and moving them into the
15 DOE, making it fall even more behind in the national
16 movement to end racist institutions. Now, more than
17 ever, we need everyone to listen. We need guidance
18 counselors that can make us be on track. We need
19 student successors that can make the process easy,
20 less stressful and less scary. We need staff on our
21 side that will make us feel safe and supported.

22 I want to go into a school building that
23 prioritizes students' needs and wellbeing, not that
24 criminalizes just because of their skin color. Thank
25 you.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next and
3 finally from this panel we will hear from Smitha.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

5 SMITHA VARGHESE: Good afternoon. My name is
6 Smitha Varghese, I am the New York City Campaign
7 Coordinator for the Alliance for Quality Education,
8 which is also a member of Dignity in Schools
9 Coalition and DSC's main mission is to dismantle the
10 school to prison pipeline.

11 My written testimony has specific numbers but in
12 summary, there are more SSA's policing our students
13 and our guidance counselors and social workers
14 combined as the student who just testified before me
15 mentioned. And Chair Treyger, you have said this
16 many times before. This is what systemic racism
17 looks like. When the City Council continues to vote
18 for a budget that includes funding to maintain police
19 and police infrastructure within our schools and that
20 same budget provides needed supports related to
21 students social/emotional needs that in 2021, it's
22 the City Council who is going to be held accountable
23 for being complacent and maintaining the systemic
24 structures born from White supremacy.
25

1
2 The Mayor's Preliminary Budget continues to
3 allocate \$445 million to keep cops in our schools.
4 So, AQE calls on the Council to push back against
5 this proposal to continue funding SSA's and instead
6 reinvest that money into restorative justice
7 programs. Hiring more Black and Brown counselors,
8 teachers, psychiatrists and other critical supports
9 needed to uplift our youth instead of criminalizing
10 them.

11 AQE also rejects the mayor and the NYPD's plan to
12 hire 475 new cops and it is important to note that
13 the city is also receiving at least \$4 billion from
14 federal stimulus money. We hope this money will be
15 used for things identified by school leaders as being
16 needed to address the needs of their individual
17 schools and creating real restorative justice
18 programs and more social/emotional supports for
19 students struggling during the pandemic.

20 Lastly, we reject Intro. 2211 that would solidify
21 the transfer of cops and we hope that the Council
22 votes no on it because it would just transfer cops
23 from you know, the NYPD to the DOE and this would
24 just create more infrastructure to police and
25 criminalize our students.

1
2 I would like to use the duration of my time to
3 sit in silence to symbolize how -

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 SMITHA VARGHESE: Silence in students calling for
6 police free schools. Thank you.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and that concludes
8 the testimony for this panel. Next, we will hear
9 from Donald Nesbit, the Vice President of Local 372.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

11 DONALD NESBIT: Thank you Councilman Treyger.

12 [LOST AUDIO 5:29:50-5:29:56].

13 Local 372 New York City Board of Ed employees. I
14 am here today to testify on Mayor's Proposed Budget
15 for Education and I am here on behalf of the 24,000
16 members of Local 372 under the leadership of
17 President Shaun D. Francois I.

18 Thousands of workers at Local 372 represent the
19 former support services to help the 1.2 million
20 public school children of New York City to be
21 learning ready. From our school crossing guards, the
22 school lunchroom workers, the school aids, the
23 family, workers to our community who is the parent
24 coordinators and who work with the Department of
25 Homeland Services to make sure that children have a

1
2 place to sleep at night. To our SAPIS counselors who
3 are going to help our children navigate the system
4 now after the COVID-19 pandemic is over.

5 Throughout the pandemic, we have examples of the
6 school crossing guards and school lunchroom employees
7 who have fair communities, who have fair families and
8 who have made sure that they were safe going to and
9 from the school communities. We have our parent
10 coordinators and community titles who have
11 communicated with parents and have been a liaison
12 between families and schools through remote learning
13 and teachers and the administration.

14 We have our family workers who have checked up on
15 families, our school aids and so on and so forth. It
16 is important to note the SAPIS, they already provide
17 a social and emotional strategies that help students
18 remain learning ready. This includes classroom
19 mandatory presentations and counseling or mental
20 health services and crisis mitigation in an
21 individual and group setting.

22 So, they are already [LOST AUDIO 5:31:47-

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

24 DONALD NESBIT: [LOST AUDIO 5:31:51-5:31:56].

25 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Mr. Nesbit, your -

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DONALD NESBIT: [LOST AUDIO 5:31:58-5:32:04].

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Mr. Nesbit, your internet connection is coming in and out. Are you there?

DONALD NESBIT: Yes, is it better now?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: A little bit.

DONALD NESBIT: Now?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: There we go.

DONALD NESBIT: Okay, I just want to say two things. We have members who in the public schools, in the Charter school system and at this time the City and the State have acknowledged that the Renaissance Charter School, the members there have acknowledged that the funding gaps that that charter school faces have provided problems with them being able to hold up their financial assistance to the workers that are there. We ask that the City Council support them in whatever funding that is needed at Renaissance Charter School in District 30.

In closing, Local 372 extends their gratitude to the City Council for their support for our titles. We recognize that they are tough decisions that will have to be made and there is not enough money that may be able to go for every worthy issue or service throughout the city but we thank you for everything

1
2 that you have done in the past and we just ask that
3 you assist and make sure that the students are
4 supported by our support staff.

5 One last thing I just want to include that I
6 forgot. The school lunchroom workers, if we could
7 fit into the capital plan something with ventilation
8 in school cafeterias. It's about to be spring and
9 summer again and our members are in excruciating pain
10 and hurt and suffering throughout the summer months
11 when temperatures hit close to 130, 140, 150 in our
12 school cafeterias.

13 Thank you members of the Council.

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And I just want to say that
15 you know, I thank the other key unions to DC37 to Mr.
16 Nesbit, to your membership. We owe you more than
17 thanks. We owe you more than recognition. You know,
18 I keep correcting some folks who say that school
19 buildings have been closed. Many of them in my
20 district across the city have been open. Staffed by
21 school food workers, cafeteria workers and our school
22 cleaners, who put their own life on the line. Got
23 sick themselves, going through challenges in their
24 own personal lives. Feeding our families all day,
25 serving them, not just with food by the way, with

1
2 information because schools are a point of
3 information and resources for folks and I went around
4 my district thanking our schools and I had to – I saw
5 the number of families interacting, speaking, getting
6 information, in addition to a meal. Having someone
7 to talk to, being a support network for each other
8 and we are forever grateful but we have to do more
9 than just say thank you. It has to be reflected in
10 the budget.

11 And you are right, even before the pandemic, DC37
12 always talked about what our school workers are
13 subjected to but very hot temperatures in these
14 cafeterias. This is not a luxury item; this is being
15 able to have adequate ventilation and not working in
16 100 degree temperatures at work. This is a workplace
17 safety issue. It's really, it's a public health
18 issue and we are with you. That is really, that is a
19 priority for us. And I just want to again, publicly
20 acknowledge and thank you and your membership and
21 also, your SAPIS counselors, they are powerful
22 professionals who are DC37. There are nurses DC37,
23 so many – parent coordinators, many key positions in
24 schools that are critical support systems for our

25

1
2 kids, our DC37 members. We appreciate you; we see
3 you and we thank you Mr. Nesbit.

4 DONALD NESBIT: Thank you Councilman.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And that concludes the
6 testimony for this panel. Next, we are going to hear
7 from Ellen McHugh the Citywide Council on Special
8 Education, Lori Podvesker Include NYC, Randi Levine
9 Advocates for Children, Courtney Yadoo New York Legal
10 Assistance Group, Maggie Moroff the Arise Coalition
11 and Chris Treiber. Following this panel, we will
12 hear from Josephine Okungu, Josh Melendez and Kenneth
13 Jones. We will start with Ellen McHugh on the
14 current panel.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

16 ELLEN MCHUGH: Hello, can you hear me?

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, we can.

18 ELLEN MCHUGH: Thank you very much for the
19 opportunity to speak. This has been a long and
20 interesting morning and half of an afternoon. I hope
21 that some of the recommendations and comments will be
22 taken to heart. There is a longer presentation or
23 documentation that we have but this is a short
24 version.
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For those of us who have children with special needs, we are very tired of glib statements on holistic and inclusionary education, when our children continue to be isolated, separated and apart from the general population. We are requesting that when we use the words inclusionary and holistic, we also include the fact that there is no one at leadership at the DOE that we know of who has an identified disability. Who uses a wheelchair, who is deaf, who has other issues that might impede his or her mobility.

As our kids want to see someone like them in leadership positions, we would hope that the DOE would spend some time recruiting individuals with special needs to be on leadership teams.

We are coming up to an if only budget. If only we had 100 social workers. If only we had 100 psychologists. If only we had more room. If only we had fewer children. We do have fewer children. 30,000 students left this system.

With that in mind, it would benefit us all to lower class sizes because it works for children of all types and all persuasions. We would also like to see -

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

ELLEN MCHUGH: The iPads and other equipment that have been distributed to individuals, be made accessible to those with disabilities and also include English Language learners who have been denied in some ways full access to these devices.

Thank you very much for your time and effort on behalf of the children and I appreciate the opportunity to speak today.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Ellen and next we will hear from Lori.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

LORI PODVESKER: Hi everybody. I would like to thank the Council's Committee on Education and Chairman Treyger for holding this important oversight hearing on the FY22 Preliminary Budget. My name is Lori Podvesker and I am the Director of Policy at Include NYC.

For the last 38 years, Include NYC formally resources for children with special needs has helped hundreds of thousands of New York City families navigate the complex special education service and support systems.

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2 With much gratitude, we commend the Department of
3 Education and all staff at 1,600 plus schools for
4 their unwavering commitment to our children and their
5 families during this very challenging year. We
6 testify today to urge the city to prioritize meeting
7 the needs of the near 300,000 students with
8 disabilities in this year's budget. For too many
9 years, our city chose not to allocate adequate
10 funding to support the system with reducing the
11 achievement gap between general education students
12 and students receiving special education services.

13 With help from the federal government on its way,
14 the city can no longer say it does not have the
15 resources to do so. The city must use these targeted
16 funds appropriately to help students with
17 disabilities begin to recover their academic losses,
18 strengthen their literacy skills and make educational
19 progress. An investment like this now, will allow an
20 historically underserved group, mostly Black,
21 indigenous and people of color to gain access in the
22 near future to more opportunities, higher education
23 and employment. It will also support better
24 integration into our communities.

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2 As a result, we recommend City Council ensures
3 there is adequate funding in the budget for the
4 Department of Education to do the following: Develop
5 a citywide plan to adequately address compensatory
6 services by June 30, 2021. To reevaluate every
7 student with an IEP in Fiscal Year '22. Immediately
8 lift hiring freeze and hire additional licensed
9 special education teachers, school psychologists and
10 related service providers –

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

12 LORI PODVESKER: This summer for onsite
13 evaluations and related services, disseminate
14 guidance documents for schools on the implementation
15 of the citywide compensatory plan by August 30, 2021.
16 Provide compensatory services to all students who did
17 not receive mandated special ed services and
18 specialized instruction as part of their IEP since
19 March 16, 2020. And provide parents with more
20 support and training on specially designed
21 instruction and online learning, behavioral supports,
22 digital literacy and their educational rights.

23 Thank you so much.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
25 hear from Randi Levine.

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

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RANDI LEVINE: Thank you for this opportunity.

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My name is Randi Levine, I the Policy Director of

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Advocates for Children of New York.

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With the federal government having approved the

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largest one time investment in education in our

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nation's history, the city needs an ambitious

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education initiative to pave the way to hope and

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opportunity for our students. We have submitted

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detailed recommendations including the need for core

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professionals to focus on academic support,

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social/emotional support and outreach. An expanded

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summer program, one on one or small group tutoring,

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evidence based literacy instruction and intervention,

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compensatory services for students with disabilities,

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make up language instruction for English Language

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learners and targeted support for student population

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such as students in the juvenile justice system.

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Significant mental health support, intensive outreach

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efforts and extended school eligibility for 21-year-

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old students who would otherwise age out this year

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but need more time.

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I want to highlight a few issues that predate the

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pandemic and reaction is needed even more urgently

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2 now. First, while the preliminary budget would
3 expand 3K to four additional districts, it includes
4 no additional support for preschool special
5 education. Data released last week confirmed what we
6 have seen on the ground. The city still has a
7 shortfall of hundreds of preschool special education
8 class seats. The city cannot claim to provide PreK
9 for all while continuing to leave children with the
10 most significant needs out in the cold. This year's
11 budget must include sufficient funding for these
12 legally mandated classes and provide salary parity
13 for teachers of preschool special education classes
14 at CBO's.

15 Second, especially given the impact of the
16 pandemic, funding including NYPD school safety
17 funding should be allocated to staff to help support
18 students social/emotional needs. The city must
19 invest in staff such as social workers and behavior
20 specialists and provide an integrated system of
21 intensive mental health supports for students in high
22 need schools. Such as the mental health continuum
23 included in the Council's FY20 response to the
24 Preliminary Budget.

25 The city should also invest -

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

RANDI LEVINE: In schoolwide restorative justice practices to address the root cause of student behavior.

And finally, the pandemic has underscored the need for a DOE office for students in foster care. Currently, there is not a single DOE staff members focused full time on students in foster care who have the lowest graduation rate of any student group in the city. Especially following the disruption of the pandemic, schools can be a stabilizing force for students in foster care but only if someone is focused on addressing their needs.

Thank you for this opportunity and I am happy to answer any questions.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will hear from Courtney.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

COURTNEY YADOO: Good afternoon. My name is Courtney Yadoo and I am an Equal Justice Works Fellow at New York Legal Assistance Group. For more than 20 years, NYLAG Special Education Unit has advocated on behalf of low-income students with disabilities. Our lawyers collaborate with families to ensure that

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2 students receive the educational services that they
3 need and are legally entitled to.

4 During the pandemic, many of our clients have
5 experienced profound learning loss and regression.
6 Today, we are here to ask that the City Council
7 prioritize their needs in the budget. Before the
8 pandemic, students with disabilities already faced
9 enormous challenges navigating the special education
10 system. Our clients often waited months and years
11 for necessary services. The pandemic has exacerbated
12 these longstanding problem.

13 With my limited time, I will share the challenges
14 that four NYLAG clients have experienced this year,
15 which are representative of the obstacles that so
16 many families have faced. Our ten-year-old client
17 from Brooklyn has a learning disability and needs a
18 small classroom setting. However, his remote class
19 has 27 students in it, more than double the mandated
20 size. He receives minimal live instruction each day
21 which he often misses because his speech and
22 occupational therapy sessions are scheduled at the
23 same time.

24 Our six-year-old client from the Bronx has autism
25 and ADHD. Due to his disabilities, he can't

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2 meaningfully engage with remote instruction. For
3 that reason, his family opted for blended learning in
4 the fall. However, he didn't receive a school
5 placement until months into the school year, while he
6 was waiting, he didn't receive any educational
7 services.

8 Our four-year-old client from Queens has
9 significant language delays. Her family requested an
10 assisted technology evaluation last January before
11 the pandemic. Over a year later, she still has not
12 been evaluated. Our 15-year-old client from
13 Manhattan lives in a city shelter without reliable
14 internet access. Despite numerous requests, he
15 didn't receive a DOE iPad until July. That device
16 still frequently malfunctions preventing him from
17 engaging in remote learning. These are just a few of
18 the challenges that our clients have faced.

19 After this year of educational loss, the city
20 must adjust the needs of students with disabilities.
21 We ask that the Council prioritize their needs in the
22 budget. Thank you for the opportunity to testify
23 today.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next will hear
25 from Maggie Moroff.

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: One moment Maggie, you should see a prompt looking to accept the unmute. There we go.

MAGGIE MOROFF: Malcolm, thank you. Good afternoon. My name is Maggie Moroff and I am here today representing the Arise Coalition. I will send in my full written testimony later and will be attaching to it ten recommendations from Arise that we believe necessary to address the needs of students with disabilities after this year of serious educational disruption.

I am going to focus my oral testimony however, on two of those points. The first is compensatory services. I was pleased to hear from DCA Foti earlier that they are working on this and I am very thankful to you Chair Treyger for asking about it. We are looking forward to more details from the DOE.

With that said, all students had their school life thrown into upheaval this year. Among those most impacted were students with disabilities who are disproportionately Black and Latinx. They lost countless hours of critical special education instruction and support. Many lost skills that they

1
2 had worked hard to gain prior to the pandemic. The
3 city really needs to roll out a plan for determining
4 what students missed and providing instruction and
5 services to make up for that.

6 This is going to require a hiring or contracting
7 additional special ed teachers and service providers
8 and we ask that the Council make sure that there is
9 funding in that for the budget.

10 The other thing I want to talk about is literacy
11 instruction. When students leave school without
12 learning to read, the fault isn't theirs, it lays
13 with the system. Most of our students, including
14 those with disabilities can learn to read with
15 evidence based core instruction and targeted
16 intervention.

17 This is absolutely an equity issue given the
18 unacceptable disparities in reading proficiency. In
19 2019 for example, less than half of all 3rd through
20 8th grade students, just over one-third of Black and
21 Hispanic students and only 16 percent of students
22 with disabilities were reading proficiently. We
23 recommend funding in the DOE's budget to train and
24 support teachers and coaches to provide evidence
25 based culturally appropriate targeted literacy –

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

MAGGIE MOROFF: Two quick points. Two quick suggestions really. The city should use those funds to purchase appropriate curriculum that all schools will then have access to in order to improve their core instruction. The city might also consider expanding a program that they launched last summer pairing trained educators with small groups of students who needed additional literacy support.

There is more in my written testimony. Thank you for the chance to testify today.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and finally from this panel we will hear from Chris Treiber.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

CHRIS TREIBER: Yes, good afternoon. My name is Chris Treiber, I am the Associate Executive Director for Children's Service with the Interagency Council.

Since I have two minutes, I will limit my remarks to the subject of preschool special education and the children and families who depend on these critical services and the issues of equity, access and quality. Every child who attends a 4410 preschool special education program is a public school child. They are placed there by the New York City DOE

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2 because there is no other educational option for
3 these children.

4 These children live in your neighborhoods and
5 they would have gone to PreK for All programs if he
6 or she did not have a disability. Based on the
7 Mayor's Preliminary Management Report, we know that
8 86 percent of all students with disabilities in New
9 York City attend 4410 programs. It is simple, our
10 schools are the schools that serve children in New
11 York City. But our schools have not been treated
12 that way nor have they been funded that way.

13 In the last ten years, our preschool programs
14 have received only a ten percent increase in tuition
15 while state aid to school districts has increased by
16 44 percent. This has created a challenge for our
17 schools in terms of recruiting and retaining
18 certified teachers. Our teachers are now the lowest
19 paid teachers in New York City. We are happy that
20 the City Council prioritized salary increases for
21 early child teachers in New York City but our
22 teachers were left out of that salary increase. It
23 makes it very hard for us, our schools to retain
24 certified teachers and recruit new teachers.

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2 If all the kids came back to school, the schools
3 would not be able to operate all the classrooms
4 because they don't have enough teachers. I see I am
5 running out of time.

6 So, in closing, I want to share with you the most
7 troubling question I was asked by one of our parent
8 leaders about two weeks ago. One of them asked me,
9 can I explain to them why our children are valued any
10 less than children who attend public schools?

11 I had no answer for them. Do you? Thank you.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and that concludes
13 testimony for this panel. The next panel that we
14 will be calling is Josephine Okungu, Josh Melendez
15 and Kenneth Jones. Following that panel, we will be
16 calling on Kaveri Sengupta, Erick Agarijo and Roshni
17 Ahmed. We will start with Josephine Okungu.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

19 JOSEPHINE OKUNGU: My name is Josephine Okungu, I
20 am here as a trained teacher, a New York State
21 Certified Teacher, a former 4410 preschool Special Ed
22 Teacher appearing to a child with special needs. As
23 now, as I advocate for equity for students with
24 disabilities.

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2 Recently, I quit my teaching job from a 4410
3 preschool for special education. Not because I hated
4 it and not because I do not love teaching my
5 students. I do. I quit my job because my salary
6 wasn't meeting my basic needs and it was a very tough
7 decision but I had no choice. My husband had lost
8 his job and so, I had to make drastic decisions.
9 Just like every teacher in New York State and
10 District 75 schools. I had my master's degree,
11 passed all my state exams before being certified. I
12 worked very hard to become a New York State Certified
13 Teacher. Believe me, it's a daunting process but
14 after all my hard work, I came to realize that equity
15 in teacher numeration excludes teachers who works
16 with students who have special needs in 4410
17 preschool special ed programs.

18 Why do I have to paid 40 percent less of public
19 school teachers in District 75 teachers and 44 ten
20 schools serve 3-5-year-old children and parents who
21 children attend these schools did not choose to send
22 their kids there. Our kids were placed there by the
23 DOE because they need extra support and the DOE has
24 determined they cannot get the support they need in
25 public schools.

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2 These kids do not have the luxury of attending
3 their neighborhood public schools. Now, that you
4 have all this information, why did the city reach a
5 salary parity agreement and agree to pay 3K and PreK
6 teachers the same salary -

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

8 JOSEPHINE OKUNGU: As public school teachers but
9 excluded teachers of 4410's? Please explain to me
10 why this year's budget proposal does not fix this
11 discriminatory policy, which will likely lead to more
12 teachers like me leaving special ed classes. And
13 leaving preschoolers with disabilities without the
14 teachers they need.

15 This year, we are asking the City Council to
16 demand that the budget help our preschoolers with
17 disabilities. We are asking the city to have faith
18 in preschoolers with disabilities and show that you
19 believe in them by investing in them. The city must
20 make sure there is a seat for every preschooler with
21 IEP and the city must change course this year and
22 include 4410 preschool special ed teachers in this
23 salary agreement.

24 And also, I have listened to many of you speak
25 about and testify about spending of millions and

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2 billions, yet none of you spoke about finding special
3 ed preschools. Do you know they exist? Do you know
4 that every year more kids get diagnosis and have some
5 kind of disability. Well, I am here because special
6 ed preschools exist and we need funding. Thank you.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
8 hear from Josh Melendez.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

10 JOSH MELENDEZ: Hello everyone, my name is
11 Matthew and I am a Youth Leader at Sisters and
12 Brothers Unite. I live in Council District 8 and I
13 am in 7th grade and I attend James Kieran High
14 School, Junior High School.

15 After hearing the Mayor's plan of 475 police
16 officers, I strongly demand that the City Council
17 make it a priority to block this as the money used to
18 employ these cops in our schools would be better
19 spent on social workers, guidance counselors and
20 health workers in our school.

21 I am excited to go back to school to learn
22 alongside my peers but I still don't feel safe
23 knowing that cops are going to be at my school. Cops
24 don't make me feel secure and safe in my school or in
25 my neighborhood because I have from personal

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2 experience how they treat me and my friends on my way
3 to school and in front of my school in entrance and
4 also in the hallways.

5 As a student in a music class, I have to bring a
6 guitar home to practice and there was a time when I
7 went to school and the cops said that they would not
8 let me inside and they checked my bag and my guitar
9 in case for a gun. I got scared and I felt nervous.
10 I wanted to cry as they accused me of having a gun.
11 Me, an 11-year-old at the time being, partially
12 judged at the door and being treated like a criminal.

13 Seeing them all over my school just reminds me
14 when I have - when I used to have my family member at
15 Rikers. The constant surveillance, the pat downs at
16 the door. The bag searches. It felt exactly the
17 same as going to school. I strongly oppose the idea
18 of transferring the cops from NYPD to the DOE or
19 Intro. 2211, as there was no point for them being in
20 my school unless you want them there is to continue
21 to harass me and intimate us.

22 Students need to feel like they belong in a safe
23 and supportive school. In not a school where the
24 system is built to put us in jail. I want to go to a
25 school where I don't feel like -

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

JOSH MELENDEZ: I am a target of a school cop. But in order for this to be, we need money to be divested from school policing and put the money into development of school like social workers, guidance counselors, medical professionals and in general, more resources in all public schools but specially, in the Bronx and Brooklyn. Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will hear from Kenneth Jones.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

KENNETH JONES: Thank you for the opportunity to talk with you today. One of the things I want to talk to you about is a resource that's available to the DOE. Running the DOE even before COVID was an incredible task and it is herculean now with the reopening. But you have a lot of nonprofits in the city, many of whom are vendors with the DOE who are there to help you. They are subject matter experts in the fields that they specialize in. They develop curricula specific to the subject matters and they can help especially in schools that were hit hardest by COVID in economically disadvantaged communities help class room teachers go deeper in subjects. Not

1
2 every elementary school teacher has the bandwidth to
3 be a subject matter expert in every subject.

4 So, some nonprofits focus on a specific area.

5 The Salvadori Center where I am the Executive
6 Director, focuses on STEAM, Science, Technology,
7 Engineering, Arts and Math. And just like the Deputy
8 Commissioner Goldmark mentioned about the New York
9 Times article about ventilation, that's how we teach
10 kids math, science and the arts. We use the built
11 environment right around them to show them how what
12 they are learning in their grade is relevant to their
13 immediate life.

14 But more importantly, what we do is we actually
15 do it in a way that's accessible for all learners.
16 Visual instruction, so that L's can participate.
17 Project based materials that are hands on and common,
18 so the kids don't need a computer if they don't have
19 one or if their family can't afford broadband. That
20 they can still access the creative stem based, design
21 based curriculum, that truly brings what they are
22 learning in school to life and making it relevant.

23 So, my question for you, not really a question,
24 my last statement is to take advantage as you are
25 going through the herculean task of reopening

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2 schools, of the nonprofits who are your partners and
3 are willing to work hard side by side with you for
4 student success. Thank you for the time.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and that concludes
6 the testimony for this panel. Next, we will be
7 calling on Kaveri Sengupta from the Coalition for
8 Asian American Children and Families, Erick Agarijo
9 from the Korean American Family Service Center and
10 Roshni Ahmed from the Women for Afghan Women and we
11 will begin with Kaveri.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

13 KAVERI SENGUPTA: Good afternoon. My name is
14 Kaveri Sengupta and I am the Education Policy
15 Coordinator at the Coalition for Asian American
16 Children and Families. Thank you to Chair Treyger
17 and the Members of the Committee on Education for
18 giving us this opportunity to testify.

19 Founded in 1986, CASF is the nation's only Pan
20 Asian Children and Families Advocacy organization,
21 leading the fight for improved and equitable
22 policies, systems, funding and services. Asian
23 American students comprised 16.2 percent of the New
24 York City student population. They attend over 95
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2 percent of our public schools, make up almost one in
3 four L's and over 15,000 have an IEP.

4 I want to highlight that a critical way that
5 elected officials and DOE can address the rising
6 levels of violence against Asian Americans and help
7 to dismantle the model minority myth is by enacting
8 policies and a budget that are truly supportive of
9 our students. Show them that you see, acknowledge
10 and care about them.

11 In the vein, CACF leads the 15 percent and
12 growing campaign, which is a group of over 45 Asian
13 led and serving organizations that work together to
14 fight for a fair, inclusive and equitable New York
15 City budget, protecting the most vulnerable APA New
16 Yorkers.

17 So, I want to talk a little bit about Schedule C.
18 So, in Fiscal Year 2021, Asian led and serving
19 organizations received only 4.65 percent of City
20 Council discretionary dollars and less than 1.5
21 percent of social service contract dollars, when we
22 are 15 percent and growing of the population.

23 Although Asian American students have a high
24 school graduation rate of 80 percent, the percentage
25 of college and career ready students is significant

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2 lower at over 50 percent. To that end, City Council
3 must expand funding for the College and Career
4 Readiness Citywide Initiative to ensure that more APA
5 led and serving groups are adequately funded to
6 support those with the highest need.

7 Many of our organizations are already providing
8 these resources without funding. In addition, CACF
9 is a steering committee member for the New Yorkers
10 for Racial and Just Public Schools Coalition. It's a
11 multiracial citywide education justice coalition
12 aimed at centering racial equity and policy and
13 budget decisions for public education.

14 As part of our JPS we are demanding that the city
15 make significant investments in culturally responsive
16 and sustaining education as a means of educating and
17 honoring all communities. Especially the
18 contributions of Asian Americans who have been
19 overwhelmingly invisible in our —

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

21 KAVERI SENGUPTA: This must include at least \$500
22 million of the federal stimulus funds to include a
23 new culturally responsive curriculum for PreK to
24 12ELI.
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2 As DOE continues to expand the community school
3 model, we reiterate the need to do so in harder to
4 reach Asian communities and emphasize how imperative
5 it is to expand partnerships with Asian led and
6 serving CBO's beyond the current organizational
7 partners, which are unable to cover all of the need.

8 We need more counselors and social workers, not
9 more school safety agents and we need them to be
10 culturally responsive. Like all students, APA
11 students need school to invest in them as whole
12 children and their worries and struggles must be
13 acknowledged in and out of the classroom at all
14 levels, from school level staff to DOE leadership.
15 Thank you.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
17 hear from Erick.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

19 ERICK AGARIJO: Thank you members of the
20 Committee on Education for giving us the opportunity
21 to testify today. Once again, my name is Erick
22 Agarijo, Community Outreach and Communication
23 Coordinator for the Korean American Family Service
24 Center.

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2 Our KAFSC a little bit about our nonprofit
3 organization is that we provide social services to
4 Korean Asian immigrant survivors and their children
5 who are effected by domestic violence, sexual assault
6 and child abuse for the past 32 years. All of our
7 programs and services are offered in culturally and
8 linguistic appropriate setting. 98 percent of our
9 clients are immigrants, 100 percent of our staff
10 members are immigrants themselves or children of
11 immigrant parents and over 95 percent of our clients
12 first language is not English and come from low
13 income backgrounds, including myself.

14 So, KAFSC is at the frontline serving our
15 community and the constituents to fill the gap during
16 this unprecedented trauma. The pathway to the
17 recovery is long and hard and we respectfully ask for
18 the restoration or expansion of the budget for FY2022
19 in education.

20 KAFSC's programs like the Hordori program, which
21 I would love to highlight was established in 1994.
22 It was designed to help children ages 5-13, all from
23 low-income immigrant and working families to ensure
24 that we build self-esteem and improve communications
25 and social skills by engaging therapeutic, creative

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2 and academic activities that are culturally relevant
3 and developmentally appropriate in a safe and healthy
4 environment.

5 As of May 2020, KAFSC immediately pivoted our
6 Hordori afterschool program to virtual classrooms.
7 As an afterschool program that serves 100 percent or
8 children of immigrant parents who live under the
9 poverty line, the support for KAFSC Hordori program
10 provides is critical.

11 Many of our families are digitally illiterate and
12 limited English proficient. Thus are teachers and
13 program coordinators work additional hours to provide
14 technical support for remote learning.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

16 ERICK AGARIJO: In a linguistically appropriate
17 way. Challenges due to limited English proficiency
18 already existing issues due to family violence at
19 home, poverty and cultural differences.

20 Particularly, the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent
21 closing the schools and businesses highlighted these
22 gaps even further.

23 We are also currently providing a greater number
24 of parent counseling sessions to support our parents
25 who are navigating unexpected needs around health,

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2 safety, financial distress, virtual school
3 requirements, food and housing insecurities and more.
4 So, initiatives and other support will be critical
5 for the sustainability of the organization as we
6 provide culturally and linguistically services in
7 educational programs to serve our immigrant families
8 and their children.

9 Thank you very much for today.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
11 hear from Roshni.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

13 ROSHNI AHMED: Hi everyone, my name is Roshni
14 Ahmed and I am the Advocacy and Outreach Coordinator
15 for Women for Afghan Women. Thank you to all the
16 members here today.

17 I want to talk a little bit about the needs of
18 Asian Pacific American youth in the city who have
19 gone exponentially during this pandemic. Our
20 coalition of 45 Asian led and serving organizations
21 through the 15 percent and growing campaign,
22 advocates for budget equity to protect the most
23 vulnerable in our community.

24 WAW has been providing comprehensive and
25 culturally specific services to Afghan, South Asian

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2 and Muslim families since 2003. 85 to 90 percent of
3 women that come to WAW for services are survivors of
4 domestic violence and often illiterate in any
5 language. The lack of education among Afghan adults
6 greatly impacts their children who struggle in school
7 because English is not their first language. These
8 challenges have been further exacerbated during the
9 pandemic.

10 Because their parents are unfamiliar with the
11 school system in the U.S., many of these youth look
12 to WAW for guidance in applying for colleges,
13 academic support and career development. We first
14 started our youth programs in 2005 and now currently
15 have four youth programs for young men and women aged
16 10-20 from low-income and immigrant or refuge
17 families.

18 This year, our team has worked extra hard to
19 serve as a support system for our youth who graduated
20 high school. We held a drive by graduation to
21 celebrate their achievements, as they are the first
22 in their families to attend college. WAW provides
23 academic and career development such as workshops on
24 writing personal statements, resume building,
25 interview etiquette, public speaking and much more.

1
2 Youth also have opportunities to explore various
3 career options in engineering, law, community,
4 organizing, public service, education and others. 99
5 percent of our youth program graduates go on to
6 pursue higher education. Among girls, none were
7 forced to marry early, though all were at risk and
8 now have successfully advocated for themselves to
9 finish their education.

10 Asian led and serving organizations receive -

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

12 ROSHNI AHMED: Only 5 percent of City Council
13 discretionary dollars. Though we make up more than
14 15 percent of the city's population. We call for a
15 restoration and enhancement of critical funding such
16 as the college and career readiness initiative.

17 Thank you for your time today.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and that concludes
19 testimony for this panel. Thank you to that panel.
20 I will now be calling on David Chase from Ballet
21 Hispanico and Jennifer Kundla from Big Brothers Big
22 Sisters. We will start with David Chase.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

24

25

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: If we can go ahead and unmute
3 David Chase. And David, you will see a prompt asking
4 you to accept the unmute.

5 DAVID CHASE: There, okay. Good afternoon. I am
6 David Chase Associate Director of Institutional
7 Relations at Ballet Hispanico. We are grateful for
8 the City Council's support for our long standing CASA
9 and Arts Education programs in New York City
10 throughout the years, yielding a tremendous return on
11 investment for all New Yorkers. I appreciate this
12 opportunity to advocate for funding in the FY22
13 Budget.

14 Support for Arts Education is more important than
15 ever. As we begin to come out of the pandemic, Arts
16 Education will support students in countless ways,
17 both emotionally and academically. A study by
18 Americans for the Arts showed that students with an
19 arts rich education have better grade point averages,
20 score better on standardized tests in reading and
21 math and have lower dropout rates. For these reasons
22 and many more, we request continued support in FY22
23 for the CASA program and new support for the
24 Coalition Theaters of Color Initiative. Ballet
25 Hispanico has an important role to play in the

1
2 culture sectors recovery through our education
3 programs that will help students succeed in the post
4 pandemic world.

5 Our Arts Education programs typically reach
6 10,000 New York City students each year. Activities
7 include dance residencies in schools, interacted
8 performances and classroom workshops and master
9 classes. We successfully transitioned all of our
10 programs online last year and continue to serve some
11 5,000 students.

12 I will close by saying it has been both
13 heartbreaking and inspiring this past year to see
14 students in our Zoom classes dancing in their living
15 rooms, bedrooms and kitchens. A recent note from the
16 mother of one of our students, simply and eloquently
17 sums up the impact of the pandemic. The impact of
18 Ballet Hispanico and the need for Arts Education. "I
19 just wanted to say thank you for all you are doing.
20 I don't see Gannon[SP?] smiling as much these days
21 and to see the huge genuine grin on his face while
22 dancing in your class warms my heart."

23 Thank you for this opportunity today.
24
25

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
3 hear from Jennifer Kundla from Big Brothers Big
4 Sisters.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

6 JENNIFER KUNDLA: Thank you Committee Chair
7 Treyger and members of the New York City Council for
8 holding today's hearing. My name is Jen Kundla, I am
9 the Associate Director with Big Brothers Big Sisters
10 in New York City. I am here to advocate on behalf of
11 the thousands of youth we serve each year and young
12 people across the city's whose education has been
13 disrupted.

14 Big Brothers Big Sisters in New York City
15 adjusted our operations to best support our families
16 and volunteer mentors in the face of the pandemic.
17 The need of family in New York City became
18 immediately evident. The lack of technology,
19 connectivity and space with which children engage in
20 remote learning. Supports and services previously
21 received in schools among many others, all which
22 impact the education of our youth.

23 The achievement gap that existed pre-pandemic has
24 only widened in the face of COVID-19. One in four
25 youth we serve live in neighborhoods hardest hit.

1
2 Our organization supported program youth by providing
3 laptops, helped to navigate remote learning
4 environment and continues to support the mentoring.

5 The disruptions in schooling, lack of supports,
6 along with lingering uncertainty, has added stress
7 within the families and recent potential for safety
8 concerns within the home further jeopardize more
9 child's access to learning.

10 Big Brothers Big Sisters in New York City's
11 ability to pivot during this time to meet these needs
12 would not be possible without the support of City
13 Council and our community stakeholders. Because of
14 the support, our growing number of college and career
15 success participants can navigate through an already
16 difficult transition.

17 More than 85 percent of our youth who are matched
18 with a mentor prior to the pandemic remain matched
19 today. Volunteers continue to join us in driving
20 mentorship forward. It is important to support
21 programs dependent on a Sunday. It is imperative
22 that the New York City Council restores the full
23 funding of our organization and all programs that
24 provide essential services to our city's youth, to
25 ensure they thrive and are set up for success.

1
2 We must recommit to not make cuts -

3 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

4 JENNIFER KUNDLA: And be nothing in New York City
5 to be cheerleaders. Thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Thank you to this
7 panel. That concludes the testimony for this panel.

8 The next panel that we will hear from is Natasha Mir
9 from the Center for Supportive Schools, Kevin Dahill-
10 Fuchel Counseling in Schools and Marion White the New
11 York Foundling.

12 Following this panel, we will hear from Kimberly
13 Olsen the New York City Arts and Education
14 Roundtable, Maeve Montalvo the Museum of the City of
15 New York, Patrick Rowe the Bronx Museum of the Arts
16 and Paulette Healy.

17 So, we will first turn to Natasha Mir.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

19 NATASHA MIR: Good afternoon and thank you to the
20 Councils Committee on Education for this opportunity
21 to testify today. My name is Natasha Mir and I am a
22 Senior Community Schools Director at the Center for
23 Supportive Schools. Our organization is the lead
24 community-based organization for 20 community schools
25 across New York City and I work with our community

1
2 schools in Brooklyn and Queens. I also served as a
3 school-based community school director myself at
4 IS349, a middle school in District 32 in the Bushwick
5 section of Brooklyn.

6 Though we celebrate the restoration of the
7 remaining \$3.1 million of the original \$9.2 million
8 dollar Fiscal Year 2021 cuts to this City's Community
9 Schools Initiative, the initiative still faces a
10 devastating \$9.2 million cut for Fiscal Year 2022.

11 This comes after the Mayor and Chancellor's
12 announcement in December of an expansion to the
13 initiative to bring 27 community schools online by
14 the fall. As part of this expansion, we call on the
15 city to fully restore baselined funding for the
16 community schools initiative for Fiscal Year 2022.

17 We believe that community schools are the path
18 forward to ensure students' needs are being taken
19 care of and addressed during this crisis and beyond.
20 Make no mistake however, that we have long belief
21 that every school should be a community school even
22 before the pandemic.

23 As students are coming into their classes hungry,
24 living in temporary housing, receiving inadequate
25 mental or physical healthcare or are dealing with

1
2 social/emotional or economic hardships, exacerbated
3 by this pandemic, it will only be that much harder to
4 focus on academics.

5 The community school strategy addresses those
6 barriers by learning to partner with community-based
7 organizations like CSS in holistic and innovative
8 ways. During the course of the pandemic, in our CSS
9 community schools in Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx,
10 we have responded in ways that we never expected or
11 imagined. From setting up emergency food and
12 supplies pantries to delivering groceries to students
13 homes, to providing resources for internet access,
14 employment, immigration relief and bereavement. Our
15 community school directors are reaching as many
16 families as they possibly can during these trying
17 times.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

19 NATASHA MIR: Working through significant
20 challenges to ensure that students and families have
21 adequate access to not only remote learning, but also
22 teletherapy and individualized mentoring and tutoring
23 supports has also been a very critical aspect of our
24 work over this past year.

1
2 Community schools can lead the city through an
3 equitable trauma informed recovery process that will
4 be responsive to community concerns and will center
5 students social/emotional wellbeing as well as their
6 short and long term academic success. Fully funding
7 the Community Schools Initiative in New York City for
8 Fiscal Year '22 is vital to students recovering from
9 the trauma and learning losses of this crisis. Thank
10 you so much.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
12 hear from Kevin.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

14 KEVIN DAHILL-FUCHEL: Thank you Chairman Treyger,
15 Education Committee Members and all Council Members
16 present. I am the Executive Director of Counseling
17 in Schools. A CBO that supports the education of
18 over 7,000 students, their family members and
19 supports teachers and school staff in over 70
20 locations throughout the city. I am a Licensed
21 Clinical Social Worker and have worked with
22 Counseling in Schools over the past 27 years.

23 Knowing the work we do, is to lead the community
24 school strategy in 12 schools and provide
25 subcontracted mental health supports for ten other

1
2 community schools. I speak here today as a member of
3 the Steering Committee of the Coalition for Community
4 School Excellence and speak to lift up the need to
5 fully fund this strategy.

6 It is important to appreciate that community
7 schools advance in education strategy, rather than
8 implement a program. This important difference is
9 seen in the mission driven participation of CBO's by
10 Counseling in Schools, Center for Supportive Schools,
11 Good Shepherd Services and others, which provide on
12 the ground staff who relate to, connect with and
13 stand with students, their families and school staff
14 in all that they experience.

15 We were there before the pandemic and we did not
16 relinquish or connection during. In the face of
17 budget cuts on city and state level and through
18 significant funding delays, we have been there. I am
19 proud of our work. It is unfair and unjust that our
20 successful work continues to force us to look over
21 our shoulders for funding and to continue to fight
22 and advocate for an equitable distribution of funds
23 for students and families who historically do with
24 less.

1
2 I call on the Council to return the full funding
3 to the community schools strategy to pre-pandemic
4 levels and as the strategy expands to more schools,
5 that this funding be baselined to recognize the
6 supports that the strategy provides towards an
7 equitable education for all New Yorkers. Thank you.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
9 hear from Marion White, the New York Foundling.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

11 MARION WHITE: Good afternoon. My name is Marion
12 White and I am here on behalf of the Child Abuse
13 Prevention Program of the New York Foundling.

14 The Foundling is one of New York City's oldest
15 and largest nonprofit providers of union services and
16 our Child Abuse Prevention Program CAP educates
17 thousands of children each year about their right to
18 personal safety. First and foremost, I would like to
19 thank Chairman Treyger and the committee members for
20 their unwavering commitment to our communities
21 children.

22 For the past two years, CAP has been allocated a
23 generous grant of \$248,000 from the Initiative to
24 Combat Sexual Assault, which was crucial to our
25

1
2 ability to prevent abuse from occurring and from
3 going unreported.

4 The Foundling has requested renewed funding for
5 CAP to address the ongoing threat of child abuse at
6 this critical moment in our community. Changes
7 necessitated by the pandemic have left tremendous
8 stress on families and strain family relationships.
9 This places children at serious risk. Just last
10 week, ten-year-old Aiden Wolf was killed at home by
11 an abusive family member.

12 Increased online activity has also created a
13 dangerous opportunity for internet predators. At the
14 same time, children were cut off from teachers and
15 other mandated reporters who on the frontlines of
16 detecting and reporting abuse to the authorities.

17 CAP is designed to help 3rd and 4th grade children
18 recognize situations that may be abusive and assure
19 children that they have the right to seek help from a
20 trusted adult if they experience abuse. Our program
21 uses relatable child size puppets to discuss safe,
22 unsafe and confusing touches and after the workshop,
23 and this important, children have the opportunity to
24 stay and speak one on one with a trained counselor or
25 our prevention specialists who present the program.

1
2 This year, while we have been doing it remotely,
3 we have breakout rooms from Google Meet or from Zoom,
4 where the children can seamlessly speak to the school
5 counselor about any concerns that they have and they
6 are also given an activity –

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

8 MARION WHITE: If they would like to speak
9 privately with the counselors. In cases where a
10 child shares a serious case of abuse, our team of
11 prevention specialists are trained to respond
12 appropriately and work hand and hand with schools to
13 make reports to either the State Center Registry or
14 Law Enforcement.

15 We look forward to continuing our partnership
16 with schools and with the City Council to prevent
17 abuse from it continuing unreported in our community
18 as we emerge from this crisis. Thank you very much.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and that concludes
20 the testimony for this panel. I would like to thank
21 this panel. The next panel that we are going to
22 call, which has an addition, Liz Accles from the
23 Community Food Advocates, Kimberly Olsen New York
24 City Arts and Education Roundtable, Maeve Montalvo
25

1
2 Museum of the City of New York, Patrick Rowe the
3 Bronx Museum of the Arts and Paulette Healy.

4 Following this panel, we will hear from Leonie
5 Haimson Class Size Matters, Karen Sprowal Class Size
6 Matters and Rebekah Cook-Mack. We will go ahead and
7 start with Liz Accles.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

9 LIZ ACCLES: Thank you Chair Treyger and members
10 of the Committee. Thanks for the opportunity to
11 testify. I am Liz Accles with the Community Food
12 Advocates and also representing the Lunch for
13 Learning Campaign.

14 As you know, the Lunch for Learning Campaign
15 worked with the Council closely to get universal free
16 school lunch and I am here to talk about what we
17 think is the next significant building block to go on
18 top of the foundation of universal free school lunch
19 and that's the cafeteria redesign that was talked
20 about earlier by Councilwoman Gibson.

21 We think the cafeteria redesign model that makes
22 food court style cafeteria environments serving lines
23 more friendly, welcoming to students and addresses
24 two of the biggest barriers to school food
25 participation and that is food appealing cafeteria

1
2 environment. It makes it more like a college
3 cafeteria setting.

4 As Karin Goldmark spoke to earlier, there is
5 significantly higher participation in the schools
6 with cafeteria redesign and four times more fruits
7 and vegetables served. And yes, the students do love
8 it.

9 It is highly cost effective at about \$500,000.
10 It's a capital budget project, \$500,000 per school.
11 Although there is pre-planning, it's done over a
12 weekend and we are calling for the scaling up of the
13 cafeteria redesign. Over five years, \$150 million
14 investment in the capital plan to be rolled out to
15 half high schools and half middle schools over five
16 years.

17 We hope to have the Councils support in this and
18 thank you for your time.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
20 hear from Kimberly Olsen, the New York City Arts and
21 Education Roundtable.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

23 KIMBERLY OLSEN: Thank you Chair Treyger and the
24 Committee on Education for your leadership and
25 commitment to our students. My name is Kimberly

1
2 Olsen and I come to you today as the Executive
3 Director of the New York City Arts and Education
4 Roundtable. The Roundtable is a service organization
5 who builds our efforts around the values that arts
6 are essential and that Arts Education is a right for
7 all New York City students.

8 Our 120 plus member organizations have worked in
9 longstanding partnership with the DOE to ensure that
10 every child has access to quality arts learning. As
11 the city begins to rebuild and envision a post-
12 pandemic era, it's imperative that we invest in arts
13 education as part of the city's recovery process.
14 The long term impact of COVID-19 on students and
15 schools will take years to understand.

16 However, the trauma, systemic racism and lost
17 instructional times are stark realities that students
18 now face in the classroom every day. The need for
19 investment and equity in art ed access comes when the
20 need for arts in our schools has never been so clear.

21 Studies show that participation in arts education
22 translates to the development of social/emotional
23 learning skills, like self-management, self-
24 discipline and relationship building. Students
25 participating in the arts also – it leads to higher

1
2 levels of social tolerance and civic engagement. We
3 understand the tremendous financial impact that COVID
4 has had on our schools and the city. Yet this lack
5 of investment in Arts Ed has been recurrent. Prior
6 to the pandemic, 67 percent of principals noted that
7 funding for the arts is generally insufficient
8 according to the Arts in Schools report data.

9 Now, this current school year, 22 percent of
10 Certified Arts Teachers are spending more than half
11 their time teaching a different subject area. And we
12 have also lost a 70 percent cut to art services
13 including cuts to arts partnership grants that
14 directly serve students with disabilities and
15 multilingual learners. Via partnership with arts and
16 cultural organizations. We believe equity and
17 excellence in education means universal access to the
18 arts.

19 With that in mind, the city must restore the 70
20 percent cuts to arts services.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

22 KIMBERLY OLSEN: Make the supplemental funding
23 through Fair Student Funding standard requirement and
24 prioritize funding the Office of Arts and Special
25 Projects Strategic Arts Plan. Thank you.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
3 hear from Maeve Montalvo.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

5 MAEVE MONTALVO: Chair Treyger and Members of the
6 Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify.
7 My name is Maeve Montalvo, I am a Native New Yorker
8 and proud Bronx resident and a product of New York
9 City public schools and I am also now Director of
10 Education at the Museum of the City of New York.

11 I am here to provide testimony on the value of
12 cultural institutions for educational services and to
13 advocate for funding in the FY22 budget, so that we
14 can continue to be of service to the city.

15 The Museum of the City of New York is one of 33
16 organizations within the CIG, the Cultural
17 Institutions Group that are located on city owned
18 land or in city owned buildings. Throughout the
19 pandemic, CIG's have remained committed to providing
20 free offerings for nearly 10 million individuals.
21 Many of them seniors, school children or members of
22 other communities particularly hard hit by the
23 pandemic and ensuing isolation.

24 At the Museum of the City of New York, we engage
25 learners of all ages in examining the city's past, so

1
2 that we may understand the present and envision our
3 roles in shaping the future. This year, we launched
4 free culturally responsive and sustaining education
5 programming to support our city's students and
6 teachers. Examining equity in NYC features historic
7 examples of how New Yorkers have faced past crisis
8 and fought for justice. From New York's major role
9 in the Black Freedom Movement to the fights for
10 educational equity and accessible healthcare to LGBTQ
11 activism.

12 So that students can see themselves in their
13 communities represented in the curriculum, for years
14 we have partnered with the DOE's Social Studies
15 Department to produce the Hidden Voices Project. A
16 curriculum supplement that honors the numerable
17 people who are often hidden from the traditional
18 historical record. Who have shaped and continue to
19 shape our history and identity.

20 People like Wong Chin Fu, a Chinese American man
21 who in 1874 became one of the first people of Chinese
22 descent to gain American citizenship and who in the
23 face of the United State Governments Chinese
24 Exclusion Act, founded the Chinese Equal Right League
25 to advocate for the Chinese American community and

1
2 assert that Chinese Americans deserve equal right and
3 treatment.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 MAEVE MONTALVO: We honor and recognize him. In
6 this moment of trauma, cultural institutions across
7 the city are providing responsive representative and
8 yes, even joyful learning experiences. We can be
9 partners in creating equitable education environments
10 for all of our city's students. We are grateful for
11 the Council's continued support of culture and the
12 arts over the years and at a minimum, we ask that the
13 Cultural Budget be held harmless and maintained at
14 FY21 levels as we await further information, so that
15 we can continue to be key partners and players in
16 service of our city's students. Thank you.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
18 hear from Patrick Rowe from the Bronx Museum of the
19 Arts.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

21 PATRICK ROWE: Hi, my name is Patrick Rowe, I am
22 Director of Education at the Bronx Museum of the
23 Arts. Bronx Museum is a member of the Cultural
24 Institutions Group. A coalition of 34 cultural
25 institutions who share a public, private partnership

1
2 with the city. We are located in all five boroughs
3 and collectively employ over 11,000 individuals.

4 Founded in 1971, the Bronx Museum is the only
5 contemporary art museum in the borough. Since 2012,
6 we have offered a free admission policy to eliminate
7 barriers to entry and ensure communities who are
8 under resourced have unlimited access to arts and
9 culture.

10 One year ago in March 2020, we shifted priorities
11 and worked to deliver free, virtual arts education
12 programs and resources to K-12 students and families
13 under the umbrella the Bronx Museum at Home. To
14 ensure our students and families in all of our
15 programs can fully participate, we offer free, high
16 quality art materials for pickup at the Bronx Museum
17 or at a partners schools. Our school partnerships
18 have remained strong. For example, our 14 year
19 partnership with PS73 in the High Bridge neighborhood
20 of the South Bronx has continued through livestreamed
21 art instruction with over 400 students.

22 We have also continued our CASA afterschool
23 partnership with PS73, as well as our Art Catalyst
24 for Change programs at four partners schools, all
25 supported by the Council.

1
2 These are just some of the many art education
3 programs the Bronx Museum is committed to provide to
4 students the past year. The City Council's
5 unwavering support of cultural institutions and our
6 work as arts partners to New York City public schools
7 has made this work possible and we are very grateful.

8 The CIG's have contributed to the public services
9 of New Yorkers throughout COVID. And collectively
10 spent \$2 million to ensure New Yorkers have continued
11 access to quality virtual programming. These free
12 offerings reach nearly 10 million individuals, many
13 of them seniors, school children and communities hard
14 hit by the pandemic.

15 We are grateful for the Council's support and ask
16 that the essential arts education programs, our
17 institution, the other CIG's, the cultural community
18 at large have mounted this past year, continue to
19 remain viable to New York City students and families
20 who have come to rely on our offerings.

21 We also ask that the cultural budget be held
22 harmless and maintain the FY21 levels as we await
23 further information on COVID, federal relief that may
24 be made available to the city and state. Thank you.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNCIL: Thank you and next we will
3 hear from Paulette Healy.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

5 PAULETTE HEALY: Hi, can you hear me?

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, go ahead.

7 PAULETTE HEALY: Okay, Lucas just wanted to say
8 hi real quick Councilman Treyger.

9 LUCAS: Hey Councilman Treyger and thank you for
10 your support.

11 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: It is so great to see you
12 and thank you so much for being here and I think I
13 saw a pretty cool picture of a recent adventure that
14 - were you on a nice hike or nice travel recently?

15 PAULETTE HEALY: No, it's all virtual. He has
16 become quite the master at green screening and photo
17 shop, so.

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Well, he got me and you
19 will have to teach me how to do that because I still
20 don't know how to - So, it is so great to see you.
21 It's such a pleasure. Please, the floor is all
22 yours.

23 PAULETTE HEALY: Well, I actually took him away
24 from afterschool today. So, he won't be testifying

1
2 today but he will at the next hearing. So, thanks
3 buddy.

4 Thank you again for providing this platform for
5 parents to be able to elevate the concerns that we
6 are having within our community. I wanted to just
7 refer to the testimonies and elevate everything that
8 our fellow community advocates, Randi, Lori, Maggie,
9 Chris, Ellen and my sister Rasheedah has said about
10 the challenges that our vulnerable children have been
11 having this entire time during COVID. With special
12 emphasis on prioritizing funding to PreK for students
13 with disabilities, our students attending 4410
14 schools and special supports for our students that
15 are aging out.

16 In the testimony that I have submitted, I did
17 refer to healing centered schools and the healing
18 centered approach throughout our entire city in terms
19 of addressing not only the "achievement gap" and
20 learning loss that our children are facing but also
21 how to talk to our children through their grief.

22 Earlier this week, I sat in an IEP meeting of a
23 parent who was pleading for -

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.
25

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The clock didn't start at the
3 right time, so go ahead.

4 PAULETTE HEALY: Okay, thank you. Earlier this
5 week, I attended an IEP meeting with a parent who was
6 asking for counseling services for her daughter
7 because she was struggling with grief and loss. She
8 had lost over ten people in her family from COVID.
9 And she was struggling with her studies and was not
10 consistent with her attendance. And the school
11 psychologist told the parent that in order for her
12 child to receive counseling, she would need to be
13 classified as an emotionally disturbed students.
14 This is unacceptable. Especially with the citywide
15 grief we are all suffering from with all of the loss
16 of our colleagues, our teachers, our para's, our
17 family members. This is not how we want our students
18 to be welcomed back into the building.

19 So, healing centered schools need to be done now.
20 They need to be done quickly and they need to be done
21 systemwide.

22 Also, in terms of School Construction Authority,
23 they have time and time again have not prioritized
24 D75 accommodations in their newly built buildings,
25 which is a travesty, considering all of these new

1
2 buildings will be in line to ADA accessibility and
3 they are not prioritizing the students that need it
4 the most.

5 Whenever we have had these conversations with
6 SCA, it's always told to us that it's too hard or
7 it's going to take away from the other kids. Well,
8 our students with disabilities are our kids and they
9 have not been prioritized. They should not have to
10 continue being busted out of their communities in
11 order to continue their education.

12 We are only getting a high school, a new high
13 schools setting in Brooklyn as of now in District 16.
14 Centrally for all of our Brooklyn D75 students to go
15 to and that is unacceptable. They should be able to
16 go to a school within block of where they live.

17 Lastly, I wanted to emphasis what Maggie had said
18 about lifting the hiring freeze to allow hiring of
19 more social workers, more behavioral specialists and
20 more guidance counselors because we need to make sure
21 that all of these stakeholders are in place in order
22 to properly transition our kids back into the
23 schools.

24 And we need to reinstate our ENL who have been
25 excised because of compliance. Did you know that

1
2 because of the accommodations made during COVID, the
3 compliance rates are going up because if you put an
4 ICT child into a class of 60 or more, that is
5 considered being in compliance.

6 If you provide related services once to a family,
7 that is considered compliance. If you have a content
8 teacher with an extension in ESL, that fulfills ELL
9 compliance and therefore can demote ESL teachers that
10 are specified in culturally responsive ENL
11 instruction to be demoted to Para's, teachers
12 assistants, schools aids or excised all together.

13 We need to prioritize those how are experts in
14 their field to address the supports that our children
15 with learning challenges need.

16 Lastly, I just wanted to say, I stand in support
17 of all of our youth who came out to speak against
18 further policing and to ask for police free schools
19 because as a city, we cannot continue to fully fund
20 NYPD at the expense of our schools and our students.
21 Thank you so much for the time.

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I thank you and I would be
23 happy to get a lesson on how to create beautiful,
24 great virtual backgrounds because I am so jealous
25 because you travel to new places all the time and I

1
2 just of course want to thank you. Also, if the
3 parent would like, the parent that was told that
4 outrageous thing about – if they could maybe email me
5 what happened and school details. I would be happy
6 to follow up with DOE directly.

7 In any case like that, please bring it to my
8 attention because that really is outrageous and
9 again, thank you so much. Truly appreciate your
10 time. Thank you.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and that concludes
12 testimony for this panel. The next panel that we
13 will hear from will be Leonie Haimson Class Size
14 Matters, Karen Sprowal Class Size Matters, Rebekah
15 Cook-Mack and Fatima Geidi.

16 The panel after this one Marcus Romero, Osvalde
17 Velasquez, Khia Duncan reading for Isha Ejaz[SP?],
18 Alyssa Figueroa and Kate McDonough. We will start
19 with Leonie Haimson.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

21 LEONIE HAIMSON: Thank you for holding these
22 budget hearings today Chair Treyger. Sorry, my name
23 is Leonie Haimson, I am the Executive Director of
24 Class Size Matters.
25

1
2 We are advocating for \$1 billion out of the
3 estimated \$2.5 billion in federal funds from the
4 American Rescue Plan to be used next year and the
5 year and the year after to lower class size. Which
6 is specifically mentioned in the law as a priority
7 for these funds. For the sake of a safer and more
8 positive learning environment. That amount could pay
9 for the salaries of about 10,000 new teachers which
10 could reduce class sizes in as many 40,000
11 classrooms. As adding a new teacher lowers class
12 size for all the other students in a school in the
13 same grade or subject.

14 In addition, we propose that the DOE hire more
15 than 1,000 more school counselors and about 1,500
16 more social workers, which would increase the number
17 of these positions to one for every 250 students, the
18 recommended guidelines for these professions.

19 This would cost another \$365 million, which would
20 still leave over \$1 billion of these federal funds
21 for other uses. If New York City children ever
22 needed smaller classes, they will need them more than
23 ever next year to make up for the myriad losses they
24 have suffered over the course of the last year and
25 the inherent deficiencies of remote learning.

1
2 Even in normal times, research shows smaller
3 classes lead to better outcomes for all kids and more
4 engagement especially for those who need the help the
5 most. There is now enough funding for this and there
6 is no possible excuse for not doing it. Moreover,
7 the need for smaller classes for the sake of social
8 distancing is clear. According to most experts, it's
9 very unlikely that that younger children will have
10 been vaccinated by next fall. Even with three feet
11 of social distancing, the current guidelines of the
12 CDC, we estimate that most New York City students
13 will not be able to attend school daily. A standard
14 classroom is defined by DOE as 750 square feet and
15 only about 20 students can fit into a 500 square foot
16 classroom and about 25 in a 750 square foot room.

17 Charts showing how many kids would be able to fit
18 in these rooms are in my written testimony. During
19 the 2019-2020 school year -

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

21 LEONIE HAIMSON: 58 percent of elementary school
22 students, 74 percent of middle school students and 81
23 percent of high school students were in classes of 20
24 or more. And more than one-third of elementary
25 school students, nearly two-thirds of middle school

1
2 students and 70 percent high school students would
3 not fit in classrooms of 750 square feet.

4 Just one more issue to add. In October, Chair
5 Treyger you wrote a letter to DOE urging them to
6 report disaggregated class size data by the legal
7 deadline of November 15th in different categories for
8 in-person learning versus blended versus remote.
9 Since many parents and teachers had complained of
10 huge remote online classes. To this day, the DOE has
11 not provided any disaggregated data, even though they
12 had access to that information since October. And I
13 very much hope you will continue to demand that they
14 provide it. Thank you so much.

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Well and Leonie, I will go
16 a step further and say that I was not particularly
17 pleased with the inadequate answers today about class
18 size from DOE. That's a question I ask every new
19 Chancellor and I am not sure if we got a clear answer
20 and you know, I deeply – and again, I value your work
21 Leonie, you have been on this from the beginning.
22 But I also speak from personal experience that the
23 impact on class size being important in a classroom.
24 It does make a difference and this is a proven
25 strategy. We don't have to reinvent the wheel here.

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It's a proven strategy that it does improve outcomes and it needs to be seen as a priority. And this is going to require greater investments to hire more teachers and to make sure that we build out additional space and you have been on this. I just want to publicly thank you Leonie for always highlighting this need. A proven strategy, we don't have to have a study or a theory class on it, it's a proven strategy.

So, I want to publicly thank you Leonie for that.

LEONIE HAIMSON: Yeah, I thank you so much Chair Treyger. I think this year, less than any other year in my long history of advocating for this issue, we have no excuse. The money is absolutely there and if we are ever going to reduce class size, next year is the year to do it. I was disappointed as well by the Chancellor's testimony where she said this is contractual issue. It is a contractual issue but it is also an issue in terms of affording all the kids in the city to a truly equitable education and I think the previous Chancellor was pretty forthright about this and I was disappointed that the new Chancellor wasn't as well.

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2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah and in closing that
3 the painful stories I have heard about classes going
4 to 60 kids virtually. ICT classes, which you know
5 again, speaking of mandates have to be lower going to
6 40, 50 kids. There is no way. That is not
7 education. That is called crisis management at its
8 worst but that is not education.

9 So, thank you Leonie. Thank you.

10 LEONIE HAIMSON: Thank you.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
12 hear from Karen Sprowal.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

14 KAREN SPROWAL: Am I unmuted?

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

16 KAREN SPROWAL: Can you hear me?

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

18 KAREN SPROWAL: Okay, hi, hi, thank you Chair
19 Treyger. You know we love you. You have been an
20 ally for us for many, for a long time and I just
21 appreciate you, really do.

22 So, I just want to put a personal spin on and
23 reinforce what Leonie has said. First of all, my
24 name is Karen Sprowal and I was going to say good
25

1
2 morning but good afternoon. I am the mother of three
3 with one school aid son with special needs.

4 Together, we all have attended New York City
5 Public Schools in every decades since the 1960's.
6 But it wasn't until 2007 when my youngest child
7 entered kindergarten that I became deeply involved
8 with public education advocacy.

9 I am also here to provide testimony on behalf of
10 New York City Kids Pack, which is a political action
11 committee that myself, that includes myself and
12 parent leaders from all five boroughs that informs
13 electorates and support candidates for office who
14 have demonstrated a commitment to improving our
15 public schools.

16 I am here to advocate for \$1 billion. I know
17 that's a big number but hear me out. Of the more
18 than \$2 billion that city schools will receive in
19 both the next two years to spend on lowering class
20 size. Both for the sake of safety and social
21 distancing but also to improve the education that New
22 York City children receive.

23 We know from countless as you just mentioned,
24 countless research studies, that lowering class size
25 leads to enormous health and economic benefits, which

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2 we will desperately need after this. We, as well as
3 substantial savings and most importantly it enhances
4 the chances of successful academic outcomes
5 especially for disadvantaged children like my son.

6 When my son entered kindergarten in 2007, he was
7 first enrolled in a Charter school that pushed him
8 out saying that they could only provide for him –
9 they could not provide the smaller class size that he
10 needed and public school that he was transferred to,
11 he was fortunate enough to be put in a classroom with
12 only 20 kids.

13 His class size remained between 18 and 23
14 throughout 3rd grade. Despite the difficulty
15 learning challenges that he faced with ADHD –

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

17 KAREN SPROWAL: He thrived during those years.
18 Both in general and inclusion classes. At one point,
19 he was well above grade level and the teacher
20 suggested that we apply to the gifted program.

21 I am going to jump to my last paragraph, just
22 hear me out. At the same time, the number of public
23 school students diagnosed with having special needs
24 have increased rapidly to more than 224,000, at the
25 cost of \$2 billion annually. Yet nearly a quarter of

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2 these students with disabilities did not receive all
3 of their mandated services.

4 I am convinced that fewer children would be
5 diagnosed with special needs in the first place if
6 class sizes were smaller. I would like to suggest to
7 the DOE, the City Council the following: The city
8 allocate at least \$1 billion to lower class sizes,
9 which will likely save millions more on special
10 education course for private placements. We also
11 support the proposal to spend \$365 million for
12 additional counselors, social workers which would
13 leave at least \$1 billion of federal funds for other
14 uses. Thank you for the opportunity to testify
15 today.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
17 hear from Rebekah Cook-Mack followed by Fatima Geidi.
18 Rebekah.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

20 REBEKAH COOK-MACK: Hi, I am the parent of two
21 public school students and I also attended New York
22 City public schools myself. Thank you for holding
23 this hearing and for you know, listening to so many
24 people for so long today.
25

1
2 This system is critically important to my family
3 and countless others. Yet for far too long, our
4 schools have been underfunded. At my wonderful
5 school, we fund raise for arts, science, music and
6 basic school supplies, paper. This should not be.
7 This underfunding is a policy choice. It is one that
8 this city has made and it drives inequity. We can do
9 better.

10 We have been given an opportunity to invest in
11 our schools. We should seize it. The city should
12 commit to making at least half of estimated \$2.25 to
13 \$2.6 billion of federal rescue funds available for
14 hiring teachers that are chosen by schools. This
15 money should be used to support teaching and reduce
16 class sizes.

17 The pandemic has revealed just how overcrowded
18 our classrooms have been for years. Research shows
19 and you have heard others talk about smaller class
20 sizes lead to better outcomes for all kids. They
21 result in better grades. Certainly more engaged
22 students, fewer disciplinary referrals and less
23 teacher turnover. Class Size Matters. As a parent,
24 I see it. This year has made that so clear and it is
25 time to say enough to the inequitable system that is

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2 meant small classes available to only those with
3 extra funds to support them or private schools. We
4 can do better.

5 The city should champion longstanding advocacy by
6 groups like AQE and embrace the Campaign for Fiscal
7 Equity to hold Albany accountable for fully funding
8 our schools. We should invest now with these federal
9 dollars and we should fight for what our kids deserve
10 from the state. We should have a student funding
11 formula that doesn't disinvest in our schools.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

13 REBEKAH COOK-MACK: And I am going to finish up
14 really quickly. Not one penny of these funds should
15 be spent on standardized testing. We test too much.
16 Not one cent should be spent on policing our schools,
17 they are over policed. And not a single penny should
18 be spent on the ridiculous contract that the DOE is
19 pursuing to do a survey of wellness of our students
20 when they return.

21 Teachers will meet the children and figure out
22 what the kids need and we should invest in teachers.
23 As Congressman Jamaal Bowman has argued and he is
24 right, this is the perfect time to lower class sizes
25 when we return to schools. These federal recovery

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2 funds should be spent on classroom teachers. Schools
3 should be given a flexibility in determining who to
4 hire and class sizes should be reduced for all.

5 Thank you very much for having this hearing.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and finally, we
7 will hear from Fatima.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

9 FATIMA GEIDI: Hi everyone. I hope everyone is
10 doing well. Good afternoon. My name is Fatima
11 Geidi. I have two children that in public schools.
12 One is in the 1st grade and one is in high school. I
13 am speaking to ask you to allocate funding towards
14 class size reduction, especially when schools go back
15 to normal, whatever that means.

16 But too often, what is considered normal in New
17 York City is not good enough. My older son has ADHD
18 and IEP. He has been in ICC classes since he was in
19 the 4th grade. He was supposed to have them in the
20 1st grade but he went to Success Academy and they
21 never gave it to him until we went to public school.
22 These classes are way too large and they always have
23 been. And were unable to provide him with the
24 attention he needs, even with two teachers.

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2 Sometimes he would get alone time in elementary
3 school and they would have to go into closet. With
4 28 or 30 students, his classes are too crowded, too
5 noisy and too distracting. Stimulation is not
6 overstimulating a child with ADHD is not conducive
7 for learning at all and it is a known fact.

8 It would be far better if they split the classes
9 in half and put 15 students in each. As a mother, I
10 am often overwhelmed with just two children on my
11 own, so I can't imagine how this feels for adults,
12 even if they had training with 30 kids.

13 With these massive classes, it is impossible for
14 teachers to provide the quite atmosphere my son needs
15 or other children need to focus. This is especially
16 difficult as some of the other students in the class
17 may act out or be disruptive because they are
18 overstimulated themselves. But I don't blame the
19 students because that's normal you know. What I do
20 blame is the fact that these classes continue to grow
21 and they are overcrowded.

22 I am also concerned about sending my children
23 back to school next fall unvaccinated, given the
24 COVID crisis to be -

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

1
2 FATIMA GEIDI: I am almost finished, sorry. And
3 then they are going to cram them all back together.
4 This is the first time sadly that my son has been
5 able to get one on one attention because less kids
6 are showing up because of lack of access to the
7 internet. So, he gets more one on one time. When he
8 was in school, he would have to stay after school to
9 get one on one time even with teachers in the
10 classroom.

11 I support Class Size Matters and the effort to
12 allocate \$1 billion of federal funds toward reducing
13 class size next year, both for social distancing and
14 to provide my sons and other children with the
15 attention they need to achieve academically and give
16 them a better chance to succeed in their lives and
17 future careers. Thank you.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and that concludes
19 the testimony for this panel. The next panel that we
20 will hear from is Marcus Romero, Osvalde Velasquez,
21 Khia Duncan, Alyssa Figueroa and Kate McDonough.

22 Following that panel, we will hear from Chauncey
23 Young, Grisel Cardona, Raenette Summers[SP?],
24 Chaplain Sandra Mitchell, Jennifer Stewart and
25 Tanesha Grant. We will start with Marcus Romero.

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

MARCUS ROMERO: Hi, my name is Marcus Romero, I am a part of Sisters and Brothers United. I am currently a Sophomore at LaGuardia High School of the Arts and live in Council District 12.

Let me take you back to June 6th of 2020. In the midst of the Black Lives Matter protests and I performed my first ever speech with others on the steps of Tweed where we called for justice and countless who have been killed and harmed by the police of our country.

And more specifically called for a fraction of the police budget to be repurposed to help out schools, to help out committees, to help out the dreamers of New York. Not to limit schools, oppress communities and prevent treatment of dreamers as a delusion.

We call for the complete removal of police from our schools and you cannot believe my reaction the next day where a stimulus was released, where the City of New York was going to repurpose the budget to help everyone instead of just the police. But then I waited and I waited and I waited. At the end of a tiring budget process, the Council voted on a budget

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2 that would transfer the School Safety Division AKA
3 school cops from NYPD to DOE and we were devastated.
4 Our vision for a police free schools was already
5 being coopted by a false and harmful vision for real
6 school safety. Fast forward, some more here, we are
7 on March 2021 as they are finding out their plans for
8 the city to continue to funnel money into the school
9 budget specifically to 475 new School Safety Officers
10 in school. The MTA down services and the police is
11 not getting robot dogs and tell me why do I continue
12 to find myself yet again calling to the Council to
13 what's best for students. Why is it so difficult?

14 Our visions for schools is that we would
15 dismantle school police in fractures, culture and
16 practice and in school militarization and
17 surveillance and building a new liberatory education
18 system. This vision can be possible if the City
19 Council will simply make bold decisions that make our
20 budget reflect the -

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

22 MARCUS ROMERO: I yield my time. Thank you very
23 much.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
25 hear from Osvalde Velasquez.

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

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OSVALDE VELASQUEZ: Hi everyone, my name is

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Oswalde Velasquez, I am from the Bronx currently

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attending to college and I would like to talk about a

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huge problem we have at hand.

7

We have no necessity for police in our schools.

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It is very unreasonable for Mayor de Blasio to spend

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\$20 million to hire 475 school cops. How many times

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do we need to cry for help? We are not okay. We

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need to be nurtured and guided through these

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difficult times. We must make room for trained

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professionals in mental health and RJ and conflict

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resolution and antiviolence work.

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Mayor de Blasio will fail us once again if he

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moves forward with a plan to keep and not more police

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in our schools and communities. This money can be

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invested in hiring more guidance counselors

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throughout New York City. The schools, currently the

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Mayor has cut \$700 million from this year's education

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budget. New York City itself already spent \$450

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million on school cops.

23

We have more school cops than guidance counselors

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and social workers combined together. That should

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tell you something. Why do we need more school cops?

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2 There is no legit evidence of the effectiveness of
3 what cops in helping us thrive in schools. We cannot
4 ignore the fact that police act out in violence ways
5 in schools. There is the existent police violence
6 and transferring them to different department will
7 not change nothing about the harm that they have
8 caused to students.

9 New York City cops have been reported from time
10 to time to verbally, physically and sexually abuse
11 young people under their power. As long as there is
12 cops in school, I don't feel safe. It's neglect to
13 have them involved in supporting or assisting any
14 mental health related circumstances.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

16 OSVALDE VELASQUEZ: Lastly, please don't send the
17 message to Black and Brown students that New York
18 City would rather police us than invest in our
19 education and future. Please stand in solidarity and
20 push for police free schools. Thank you. No more
21 cops in schools.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
23 hear from Khia Duncan.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.
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2 KHIA DUNCAN: Hi, reading for Khia Duncan who is
3 reading for Iesha.

4 Hi, name is Iesha Ijaz[SP?], a Youth Participant
5 with Future Tomorrow at Urban Youth Collaborative. I
6 am 16-years-old and from New York City. Personally,
7 I am honored to give my testimony about our school
8 policing system. I am here to speak out against the
9 DOE transfer and any additional funds for recruitment
10 and placement of cops in our schools.

11 As a high school student, I have seen that our
12 schools are missing out on so many so facilities that
13 are really needed by the students, while we spend so
14 much money on policing. This keeps other facilities
15 from being provided to students and teachers.

16 Schools are institutions dedicated to students,
17 teachers and education, therefore that's where
18 students should go. My school is full of many
19 students who may come from poor and not so supportive
20 backgrounds.

21 Dealing with family issues on a daily basis
22 affect our mental health, our great performance and
23 our attendance rates. I understand that there is a
24 difference between safety and security.

1
2 When I first attended Franklin K. Lane Campus,
3 the first people I encountered at the front desk were
4 cops and equipment that did not resemble what I
5 understood to be a school environment.

6 As a person of color, what would make me feel
7 safe is more funding for mental health, as well as
8 more funding for youth activities and spaces where
9 youth voices are amplified. Our schools need more
10 laptops, calculators and other technological
11 products, not hand me downs. We need more teachers
12 and afterschool help for students.

13 At Franklin K. Lane, I had no art teacher, only
14 one Spanish Teacher and minimal access to college
15 programs and facilities. All this can change if we
16 increase the school funding by investing in the
17 school safety division and honor the demands of the
18 police free schools movement. Why do we have 5,245
19 School Safety Agents in our New York City public
20 schools? How can we justify the need for security
21 when students are suffering from intermittent dangers
22 which can lead to suicide? Why does the city plan on
23 spending \$20 million to hire 475 new school cops
24 while the Mayor continues to cut funding for public
25 education. Do we care more about police and bodies

1
2 than we do about the safety, the wellbeing of
3 students? The Youth Collaborative is requesting a
4 significant reduction in the NYPD school safety
5 division budget, which is vastly funded by the
6 Department of Education.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

8 KHIA DUNCAN: As well as the case funding for
9 support staff and resources in our schools. We must
10 not confuse the message of police free schools. More
11 funding should be allocated for the wellbeing of the
12 students. Thank you.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
14 hear from Alyssa Figueroa.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

16 ALYSSA FIGUEROA: Hi, my name is Alyssa Figueroa
17 and I am the Coalition Coordinator of the Urban Youth
18 Collaborative. The Urban Youth Collaborative is
19 coalition made up of youth leaders from across the
20 city. We have worked together since 2004 to fight
21 for racial and social justice in schools. I am
22 testifying today on behalf of this coalition in favor
23 of reallocating the school policing budget from the
24 school safety division and invasive security measures
25 to creating a new paradigm for safety by investing in

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2 social, emotional and mental health supports for
3 underfunded and marginalized school communities.

4 The movement for police free schools in New York
5 City and across the country is not just about what we
6 are removing from schools. It is about what we are
7 adding to schools. We want to add the support staff
8 and resources students need to address the whole
9 student. We want to add guidance counselors,
10 restorative justice coordinators, nurses, school
11 psychologists, social workers and programming that
12 creates a nurturing, learning environment.

13 New York City should have police free schools
14 because school policing is racist. School policing
15 has a racist history, born out of resistance of
16 integration in the 1960's. It was, is and always
17 will be racist and we see the effects of this racist
18 legacy play out today.

19 Black and Latinx students in New York City make
20 up 90 percent of all youth arrests, issued summons
21 and juvenile reports. New York City should have
22 police free school because school policing also makes
23 schools less safe. To date, there has been no
24 substantial evidence that school cops make school
25 safer. Instead, it just feeds Black and Latinx youth

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2 into the school to prison pipeline. Experiencing an
3 arrest for the first time in high school, nearly
4 doubles the odds of a student dropping out. A court
5 appearance nearly quadruples those odds.

6 New York City should have police free schools
7 because school policing also wastes money. Students
8 need supportive staff and programs, especially right
9 now and yet the city continues to spend \$450 million
10 on school cops.

11 \$450 million -

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

13 ALYSSA FIGUEROA: Funded over decades worth of
14 restorative justice programs in schools. Intro. 2211
15 and any other plan to transfer school cops from the
16 NYPD to the Department of Education does not change
17 these facts. Instead, it just invests precious funds
18 into new school policing infrastructure further in
19 the criminalization of Black and Latinx students.
20 And spending \$20 million to hire new school cops is a
21 slap in the face. \$20 million could hire 224 social
22 workers, 208 school psychologists or 197 guidance
23 counselors. These positions are what students have
24 been calling for and need now more than ever as they
25 attempt to learn and live through a global pandemic.

1
2 The city should permanently prohibit hiring any
3 new school cops. The city is pushing a false
4 narrative that dismantling the school policing
5 division, it means mass layoffs. This narrative
6 irresponsibly hides a legacy of school-based police
7 violence behind shallow arguments of economic
8 justice.

9 A true concern for economic justice would mean
10 fighting to end a policing system that by design
11 displaces Black and Latinx students from their
12 schools compromising their employment trajectories.
13 This narrative also avoids any accountability from
14 the city for its lack of investment in accessible
15 pathways to employment in the public service sector,
16 while instead pouring billions into the creation of
17 jobs that criminalize people of color.

18 We call on Council members to stop using this
19 false argument as an excuse for an action. Numerous
20 cities have already taken to completely removing
21 police from schools. New York City needs police free
22 schools and we need them now. We urge you to reject
23 the transfer of school cops between departments,
24 block the hiring of any new school police and instead
25 invite you to work on real solutions that make New

1
2 York City a more equitable place to live, learn and
3 grow. Thank you.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next we will hear
5 from Kate McDonough.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

7 KATE MCDONOUGH: Thank you. My name is Kate
8 McDonough, I am Coalition Director for Dignity in
9 Schools Campaign New York. Which is a coalition of
10 over 20 New York City-based organizations consisting
11 of students, parents, educators and advocates who all
12 work for education justice and ending the school to
13 prison pipeline.

14 I was in 8th grade at an under resourced school in
15 the Bronx with no windows when the NYPD took over
16 school policing. I don't really have words for what
17 it feels like to work with young people who weren't
18 even born. When that decision happened and to be
19 calling for something radically different.

20 I don't even know if I have the words to fully
21 address the pain of having their visions not be taken
22 seriously. To be having their pain be overlooked
23 when we propose bills like Intro. 2211. And I think
24 it is important to note that young people did not
25 create this system and that we owe them better and we

1
2 can do better. And we can create something that
3 actually invests in supportive well-paying jobs that
4 care for young people.

5 So, with that, I will use the rest of my time to
6 sit in silence in support of all of our youth leaders
7 who have been calling for so long, for many decades
8 for police free schools in hope that we actually get
9 there. [SILENCE 7:05:34-7:06:07].

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And that concludes testimony
12 for this panel. Thank you to that panel. Next, we
13 will be calling up Chauncy Young, Grisel Cardona,
14 Raenette Summers, Chaplain Sandra Mitchell, Jennifer
15 Stewart and Tanesha Grant.

16 Following that panel, we will be calling up
17 Anthony Tassi, Lisa Schwartzwald, Daryl Hornick-
18 Becker, Leah Van Halsema and Lena Bilik. We will
19 start with Chauncey Young.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

21 CHAUNCEY YOUNG: Good afternoon. My name is
22 Chauncey Young, a Bronx parent in District 9 and the
23 Director of the New Settlement Parent Action
24 Committee.
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PAC is a Steering Committee Member of the Healing Centered School Working Group, the Dignity in Schools Coalition and New York City Coalition for Educational Justice. PAC has been a leading organization, the equity work in the Bronx in New York City schools for almost 25 years and help formed the Bronx Equity and Access team that we co-facilitate with then Executive Superintendent Meisha Ross Porter bringing together all Bronx districts, parents, student leaders to work for a more equitable Bronx community.

First, although it was not mentioned today's SCA report with the Bronx in District 9, I would like to thank former SCA president and current COVID-19 Czar Lorraine Grillo, Interim SCA President Kubota and Council Member Gibson and Chancellor Meisha Ross Porter for addressing a demand of the Hybridge Community for over 15 years and committing to repair the play yard and rooftop play area of the public school 126.

126 is built, it is the first project that the New York City Education Construction Fund in 1970, a precursor to the new School Construction Authority. We worked with Lorraine Grillo on this project for

1
2 nearly ten years and she made a commitment to funding
3 this project prior to departure and she has done so.

4 We thank her and Council Member Gibson for making
5 this a reality. PAC stands in solidarity with youth
6 advocates across New York City who have long demanded
7 police free schools and who have been silenced by the
8 DOE.

9 I am here today to talk about how we can make
10 healing centered schools a reality. Our working
11 group is determined to create an environment for all
12 students, which is fiscally, psychologically and
13 emotionally safe. We know that SCA's and metal
14 detectors do not create safety but instead often
15 inflict harm on our students, particularly our Black,
16 Brown and queer students. Moving SCA's under the
17 leadership of the Department of Education will not
18 change that fact, nor will more training or money. A
19 more supportive school requires reducing harmful
20 practices and investing in a healing centered
21 practices and resources for students.

22 Last year, when we heard so many –

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

24 CHAUNCEY YOUNG: People say they could not
25 support, that we gave that position and that is our

1
2 healing centered school, working group roadmap.

3 Please look at the roadmap and help us adopt this as
4 many cities have across the country. Thank you.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
6 hear from Grisel Cardona.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

8 GRISEL CARDONA: Hi everyone, my name is Grisel
9 Cardona, I am a Single Mother of three. I current
10 reside in the Bronx, specifically in District 9. I
11 wanted to touch base on a few things as a few and
12 many of my, I am going to say colleagues here on this
13 call.

14 Let's remember that 85 percent of the student
15 population is either Latinx, Black or Asian and yet
16 there are no comprehensive curriculum that respect or
17 affirm our students. Last time here the Department
18 of Education had promised to commit to purchase a K-8
19 culturally responsive curriculum. And sorry for my
20 children in the background.

21 But didn't due to COVID and I am asking that all
22 do commit, including the Department of Education to
23 commit to this and not wait another year and prolong
24 because being culturally responsive is super
25

1
2 important to our students in the New York City public
3 school system.

4 The other thing I do want to say is that I wanted
5 to thank Council Member Barron on bringing up the
6 talk on social workers and principals being the one's
7 to run the schools. Remember running the schools and
8 I say that for a reason. We do need social workers
9 in our schools. It is very difficult for one social
10 worker to deal with five plus schools in one building
11 and in the Bronx, we have overcrowded schools and
12 again, I am so with those on Class Size Matters
13 because again, it is too much for one person to deal
14 with the whole entire building.

15 Another thing that I wanted to touch on was the
16 students with disabilities. We need to stop leaving
17 them in the back end. Our kids are very much just as
18 important as others in the New York City public
19 school system. I have a son in D75, my other son in
20 CSE and my daughter in District 9, they all have
21 IEP's. So, please let's invest money in our students
22 because they will fill your seats -

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

24 GRISEL CARDONA: Thank you.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
3 hear from Raenette Summers.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Raenette, you should see a
6 ask on your screen to accept the unmute.

7 Okay, we can come back. Let's call on Chaplain
8 Sandra Mitchell.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

10 CHAPLAIN SANDRA MITCHELL: Can you hear me?

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, you are unmuted. Go
12 ahead.

13 CHAPLAIN SANDRA MITCHELL: Thank you so very
14 much. Whew, my name is Chaplain Sandra Mitchell. I
15 am a Mental Health Advocate and Mental Illness and
16 Substance Abuse Counselor and a Proud Member of the
17 Parent Action Committee and the Collaborative. Which
18 includes but not limited to Dignity in Schools and
19 the Healing Centered Schools Working Group.

20 I want to thank you Chair and Council Member
21 Treyger for being a champion for our youth and
22 community schools and the safety and wellbeing of our
23 children and fighting valiantly while you were a
24 public school teacher and yourself and also
25 generation, your dad for Safe School Climate and

1
2 tackling the budget in order to make sure that we
3 have equity and the necessary tools that our children
4 deserve to attain an excellent education.

5 I also stand in solidarity with the youth that
6 have stated that they have been slighted in silence
7 while not being allowed to assist in the creation of
8 their own educational experience. I stand in
9 solidarity with them. I also want to embrace the
10 opportunity and thank Vanessa, Council Member Vanessa
11 Gibson and her phenomenal work in buildings and
12 making sure that we have infrastructure for the
13 sustaining of the buildings and safe environment for
14 our children in school.

15 I just want to cut to the chase; I am here to ask
16 and to stand before God and man to ask for a
17 permanent budget for schools. No negotiating against
18 cuts. No more meetings, hearings to fight against
19 what should be given. No more cuts. We need these
20 hearings to be so that we can make things better and
21 that's would be a better use of your time, of your
22 precious time.

23 Also, I am standing here asking for police free
24 schools. Our children are not criminals. They are
25 not growing up criminals and it hurts my heart when I

1
2 hear that children are being led out in handcuffs
3 because they are having a bad day. They are allowed
4 to have a bad day.

5 Also, I am here to stand for trauma responsive
6 care and best practices and be centered in healing.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

8 CHAPLAIN SANDRA MITCHELL: I'll wrap up. Hire
9 psychologists, not psychiatrists who seek to focus on
10 what is wrong and to medicate and label and medicate,
11 no. We need psychologists who seek what's working
12 good and build on that to create person centered
13 supports in healing centered schools and be a support
14 also for our social workers, nurses, guidance
15 counselors, because they are dealing with social
16 emotional issues and they need help and healing. And
17 then also, wrapping up, we need to reinvest in our
18 global education and economic future by becoming
19 student centered for Latinx, African American, also
20 we call them Blacks, indigenous and Asian population.

21 Also, lastly, I will say, we need antibias
22 training and cultural competency training to be
23 understood and implemented and also, I just want to
24 thank Paul Forbes from the Department of Education,
25 LaShawn Robinson and Natalie of NYU. I thank you for

1
2 your time. Peace and blessings and I know we can do
3 this. Thank you.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
5 hear from Jennifer Stewart.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

7 JENNIFER STEWART: Hi, my name is Jennifer
8 Stewart and my son is in Pre-K at Hard share, a 4410
9 preschool special education program. I can tell you
10 that kindness is in abundance in 4410 school but
11 funding is not.

12 I would like to also emphasize that 4410
13 preschool programs are the only public option for
14 parents and preschoolers of disabilities. Today, I
15 heard the word for all our children, equity and 3k
16 and PreK for all thrown around a lot by Council
17 Members but preschoolers with disabilities were the
18 elephant in the room.

19 They were not included in this all and I wish you
20 could all understand the gravity of this feeling as a
21 parent. It's an absolute constant feeling that my
22 child is being treated differently and I know I am
23 not the only parent who feels that way. I am
24 disappointed in my city, a place that prides itself
25 on being tolerant, inclusive and progressive. It's

1
2 easy to just pass the buck and say it is a state
3 funding issue. But at what point does the city look
4 at the blatant neglect by our current governor and
5 say, this is not okay?

6 When you say things like all young children will
7 have a seat, you are blatantly ignoring the 1,000 to
8 1,900 preschoolers with disabilities that don't have
9 any seat at all. All young children do not have a
10 seat but I guess our young children don't count.

11 My child was almost one of those that left
12 without a seat by a New York City Department of
13 Education district employee. Her job was to ensure
14 my son had a seat. She had that one job and almost
15 left my son without a seat but I bet she makes a lot
16 more money than his current teacher, who was
17 breathtakingly dedicated to her job.

18 As a former PreK teacher it makes my sink to hear
19 that they are getting paid what they are worth. But
20 what about our teachers? We aren't asking for more,
21 we are asking for equity and in 2021, we shouldn't
22 have to ask you for equity. We shouldn't have to
23 jump through hoops for equal treatment.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.
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JENNIFER STEWART: I want to know what you are going to do to stop this discrimination against the disabled community. You have to do something because what do you expect to transpire in the next five years?

In the past five years, 31 4410 schools have closed because our teachers are the lowest paid in the entire city. Where do you think those current 4410 teachers will go with the salary incentives NYC is offering to 3 and PreK for all teachers? Do you really think 4410 schools can hold on to teachers and recruit new ones while competing with a \$30 wage gap? They can't. So, if this keeps up, in five years, there won't be anymore 4410 schools. Have you thought this out at all? Where will children go after they age out of early intervention? How can they succeed in the New York City Department of Education without preschool? And until you prove otherwise by investing in our children via their teachers and schools, we can only assume that you don't want to invest in their futures because you don't believe in their present.

This is a slap in the face. The city has decided that our kids are not even worth mentioning. The

1
2 city has actively chosen to invest in literally every
3 other three and four-year-old in New York City, as
4 long as they are not disabled.

5 So, please show us you believe in our children by
6 acknowledging their existence and then by investing
7 in their teachers and schools. If you don't step in
8 now, these schools will close. Please don't let this
9 be your legacy. They are not just our kids; they are
10 your kids too. Thank you.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next, we will
12 hear from Tanesha Grant.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

14 TANESHA GRANT: Hello, my name is Tanesha Grant,
15 I am the CEO of Parent Support in Parents New York
16 and I am the lead on the Laptop Initiative where we
17 have given over 150 children the laptops that they
18 deserve. Chair Treyger, always appreciate you doing
19 your job because so many don't.

20 I am a big believer in letting people tell their
21 story, so I am going to tell mine. I am a survivor
22 of public education. A survivor because I come from
23 something called the closed adoption. So, before I
24 went to school, this country, this city, this state,
25 said that I could never know where I came from. I am

1
2 45-years-old and I don't know what my mother or
3 father looks like.

4 And then I was thrown into a system that sent me
5 straight to the prison pipeline. I was in handcuffs
6 at 11 because I was hangry, unnourished and a Black
7 little girl. Let's be clear, this education system
8 is created on hurting Black people. Let's be clear
9 on that. It is based in inequity to keep Black
10 children from learning. Since it was created, let's
11 be clear on that. It has now affected all Black,
12 indigenous people of color.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

14 TANESHA GRANT: I am a generation behind my
15 children. My 27-year-old had bald spots at 12
16 because of school. We cannot fix a system that is
17 built on inequity Chair Treyger. It all has to
18 change. Every program that comes out Chair Treyger,
19 has to be built in equity. Has to be for every
20 child. The person before me talked about her child.
21 I have a four-year-old autistic nonverbal grandson.
22 You are all preaching to the choir.

23 Why do we need healing centered schools? Because
24 I am traumatized that I have to be on this call all
25 day. I am triggered in ways that most of you will

1
2 never understand. So, let's stop having all of these
3 conversations Chair Treyger and let's do something
4 about it. Because our children are hurting.
5 Generations of children like me are hurting. Thank
6 you.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and now we will go
8 back to Raenette Summers and see if she is able to
9 join us.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, it looks like we have
12 lost her. We do a catch all at the end for anybody
13 who has logged in, logged off or logged back and may
14 have missed their name. So, we will return to that.
15 So, that concludes the testimony for this panel.

16 The next panel that we are going to call is
17 Anthony Tassi Literacy Partners, Lisa Schwartzwald
18 New York Immigration Coalition, Daryl Hornick-Becker
19 Citizens Committee for Children of New York, Leah Van
20 Halsema Committee for Hispanic Children and Families
21 and Lena Bilik Children's Aid. We will start with
22 Anthony Tassi.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

24 ANTHONY TASSI: Thank you Chair Treyger and
25 member of the Committee for convening this important

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2 hearing. As you have heard from many witnesses,
3 there are many, many, important issues that you are
4 facing today in this budget and I want to commend the
5 Chair of this Committee, Council Member Treyger for
6 being everywhere at all time during this pandemic,
7 having your eyes on the issues in your district and
8 across the city. So, I really commend your tireless
9 advocacy on behalf of the students of the public
10 school system.

11 As a public school parent, I can tell you this
12 has been obviously an unprecedented situation that we
13 faced and many people are trying very hard but we
14 obviously have some structural issues that we need to
15 address.

16 The top of the list for me and I think for many
17 people is the treatment and engagement of parents in
18 the system. We do have a fundamentally unique and
19 unprecedented opportunity to change how we integrate
20 parents into the system. The thought process we use
21 to understand that parents are at the start of the
22 process of educating children, not a nice to have,
23 not a should have but a must have in every way.

24 So, I would advocate that this committee ensure
25 that the family engagement role at the Department of

1
2 Education is fully funded, is expanded with new funds
3 that are becoming available from the federal
4 government and that its role be understood as
5 essential to children having a decent shot at
6 academic achievement. That the role of parents is
7 essential to addressing the equity issue, the very
8 serious equity concerns that many other witnesses
9 have testified about today and I would also recommend
10 that the Department of Education's platform, the
11 Parent University, be taken a look at as a golden
12 opportunity to expand access to meaningful parent
13 education opportunities.

14 Not as a means to communicate information about
15 what's happening in schools but as an opportunity to
16 partner with parents and caregivers and help them
17 build the skills that they need, not only to back
18 their children's education but to succeed in today's
19 economy.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

21 ANTHONY TASSI: So, Mr. Chair and members of the
22 Committee, thank you for convening this hearing and
23 please do ensure that the family engagement function,
24 DOE moves into the 21st Century and takes advantage
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1
2 of this once in a lifetime opportunity we have before
3 us. Thank you so much.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
5 hear from Lisa Schwartzwald.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

7 LISA SCHWARTZWALD: Good afternoon and thank you.
8 My name is Lisa Schwartzwald and I am a Senior
9 Manager of Education Policy at the New York
10 Immigration Coalition. An advocacy and policy
11 umbrella organization with more than 200 multiethnic
12 multiracial and multisector groups across the state
13 working with immigrants and refugees.

14 For a year now, we have seen how public education
15 has undergone a seismic shift. With school closures,
16 remote and hybrid learning and numerous changes in
17 leadership, including at the highest level with the
18 most recent transition of the new Chancellor.

19 Unfortunately, throughout these changes, immigrant
20 students have been left behind and families have been
21 left in the dark. Much more needs to be done by the
22 city to support families complex and intertwined
23 academic, emotional and economic needs.

24 We request that City Council and the DOE work
25 together to first urgently develop and implement a

1
2 plan for catching up L's, L's with disabilities and
3 students with limited English proficient parents.

4 According to 2020 data, L's continue to have the
5 highest dropout rate of any subgroup in the city at
6 23 percent. Second, fund grants to community-based
7 organizations and schools, already well-positioned to
8 support L's and immigrant families. Third, fully
9 fund and implement the NYIC's Education Collaborative
10 Communications Plan, to ensure that families have
11 reliable access to important and timely information.
12 And four, restore \$12 million in adult literacy
13 funding to address the multigenerational root causes
14 of inequitable remote learning.

15 Our recommendations offer a comprehensive
16 response to address the gaps in services and supports
17 identified by findings from our education
18 collaborative survey of 100 immigrant parents and
19 more than 20 immigrant students from New York City
20 public schools.

21 They reported that the main barriers to academic
22 success since March 2020 were one, a lack of
23 appropriate communication and language access. Two,
24 academic regression and learning loss. Three,
25 inadequate and insufficient family engagement and

1
2 Four, lack of access to English technology and
3 systems navigation skills necessary to meaningfully
4 support and engage in online learning.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

6 LISA SCHWARTZWALD: Thank you.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Lisa, I apologize. I know
8 your name and I always get it wrong.

9 LISA SCHWARTZWALD: Everybody does, it's fine.
10 Everybody sees it as Lisa, don't worry.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I apologize and any other
12 names, believe me, my last name, people mess it up,
13 so I apologize.

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And I just want to just
15 give a public shout out. Thanks to the New York
16 Immigration Coalition. First of all, for
17 highlighting these issues even before the pandemic
18 but certainly the need is even greater but also, when
19 the DOE rolled out their technology iPad
20 distribution, NYIC immediately pointed out the
21 barriers that many of our immigrant students and
22 families faced in getting the technology and we had
23 to advocate to break down those barriers and there is
24 still more work to do but thank you for being on this
25 from day one.

1
2 This is a stellar, stellar organization that
3 helps all of our families. Thank you so much.

4 LISA SCHWARTZWALD: Thank you so much Council
5 Member.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, we will hear from Daryl
7 from the Citizens Committee for Children of New York.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

9 DARYL HORNICK-BECKER: Good afternoon. My name
10 is Daryl Hornick-Becker and I am Policy Associate
11 Assistance Committee for Children of New York. Thank
12 you Chair Treyger and all the members of the
13 Education Committee for holding today's hearing.

14 For our full set of recommendations, I refer you
15 to my written testimony. Today, I will highlight
16 just a few areas where action is needed.

17 First, the city must restore cuts and invest in
18 wrap around supports including summer programs and
19 community schools. After this year, students will
20 require the academic and social engagement that
21 summer programs offer. And yet despite the focus on
22 summer enrichment that we heard from the Chancellor
23 today, the Preliminary Budget eliminates Summer SONYC
24 camps.

1
2 The Administration must restore and baseline
3 these funds for summer youth programs and as the DOE
4 develops new summer opportunities, CBO's must be
5 included in the planning of those programs.

6 Also, the city cannot place an emphasis on
7 recovery while cutting holistic student supports like
8 community schools. Community schools still face a \$9
9 million baselined cut for Fiscal Year '22, even after
10 the Mayor announced an expansion to bring 27 new
11 schools online this fall.

12 We urge the Administration and Council to fully
13 restore and baseline funding for community schools
14 and call on the DOE to fully fund the new expansion
15 RFP.

16 Second, vulnerable student populations continue
17 to need targeted supports. We urge the department to
18 develop and fund a recovery plan specifically for
19 English Language learners that includes what we just
20 heard. Robust academic and language supports,
21 including over the summer. Direct grants to CBO's
22 well-positioned to support immigrant families and a
23 new communication plan that prioritizes immigrant
24 families.

1
2 CCC also urges the Administration to take several
3 actions to support students in temporary housing.
4 Including expedite its Wi-Fi installation at
5 shelters, provide reliable tech support and fill the
6 vacant positions dedicated to students who are
7 homeless within the department.

8 Lastly, the city must invest in behavioral health
9 supports for students. We were pleased to see the
10 budget include \$35 million for students mental health
11 but the city cannot prioritize mental health while
12 also funding and possibly expanding police presence
13 in schools. The city should redirect the budget for
14 school policing and use new federal funds to hire
15 more trained staff including social workers and fully
16 implement schoolwide restorative justice practices.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

18 DARYL HORNICK-BECKER: Thank you for this
19 opportunity to testify.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
21 hear from Leah.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

23 LEAH VAN HALSEMA: Good afternoon. Thank you to
24 Chair Treyger as well to the members of the Committee
25 on Education for this opportunity to present

1
2 testimony today. My name is Leah Van Halsema and I
3 am with the Committee for Hispanic Children and
4 Families known by its acronym CHCF.

5 To our work as a childcare resource and referral
6 agency and as one of the contracted DOE networks,
7 focuses on overwhelmingly supporting early educators
8 in residential settings. Family childcare providers
9 who are mostly Spanish speaking women of color.

10 Under DOE contracted networks, we have seen that
11 the provider rate still do not reflect the actual
12 cost of care and that pay is dependent on enrollment
13 leaving network providers exceptionally vulnerable in
14 a time when enrollment has plummeted during the
15 pandemic. Further, significant delays in improving
16 family subsidy eligibility and family placement and
17 programs led to severe disruptions in enrollment for
18 providers whose businesses already function on
19 extremely razor thin margins even when fully
20 enrolled.

21 It is also important to note that there are
22 thousands of independent family childcare providers
23 either by choice or necessity beyond the scope of the
24 DOE's funded programming. The city must recognize
25

1
2 that these unaffiliated providers are essential to
3 New York City's infrastructure for working families.

4 The city cannot afford to let existing childcare
5 deserts grow by depriving families that are – I am
6 sorry, depriving programs that are open and available
7 to offer care throughout the city. An additional
8 city program that CHCF has continued to proudly
9 participate in while adjusting to the realities of
10 the pandemic is City's First Readers. CFR has given
11 CHCF and our partner agencies and libraries the
12 crucial capacity needed to engage families and
13 providers in rich, flexible early literacy work to
14 enhance and strengthen connections between young
15 learners and their care givers and to prevent the
16 long term consequences of this year's learning loss
17 from hobbling a generation of learners.

18 In addition, we also serve 300 students at the
19 Bronx High School of Business as the partners CBO for
20 this community school.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

22 LEAH VAN HALSEMA: This model has been proven to
23 be so effective for student engagement and academic
24 growth. We echo our partners who have already
25 testified in terms of baselining and restoring the

1
2 funding for community schools this next year. Please
3 see our written testimony for full detail but we call
4 on this Committee to continue supporting and growing
5 the program that we know work for children and
6 families. Thank you very much.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and finally on this
8 panel from Children's Aid, next we will hear from
9 Lena.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

11 LENA BILIK: Hi, my name is Lena Bilik Policy
12 Analyst at Children's Aid and Steering Committee
13 Member of the Coalition for Community Schools
14 Excellence. Thank you to Chair Mark Treyger and the
15 members on the Education Committee for allowing us to
16 testify today.

17 For over 168 years, Children's Aid has been
18 working to ensure there are no boundaries to the
19 aspiration of the young people. Our 2,000 staff
20 empower 50,000 young people and their families across
21 the city. For 25 years, we have also operated
22 community schools with DOE and we currently partner
23 with 19 schools.

24 During the pandemic, community schools have
25 stepped up to provide crucial support to students and

1
2 families. At our partner schools, we have provided
3 wellness checks, mental health and social, emotional
4 support, delivered food, supported with remote
5 learning and device access, the list goes on and I
6 could be here all day.

7 This is what community schools are designed to do
8 and community schools are needed now more than ever.
9 Despite this and despite knowing this, the Mayor's
10 Administration cut \$9.16 million last year from the
11 DOE's Community Schools Initiative. After a month's
12 long campaign against the cut lead by advocates,
13 students, parents, principals and our champions on
14 the Council like Chair Treyger, the city issued a
15 restoration of the cuts for FY21.

16 Though we celebrate that restoration, we want to
17 be very clear, community schools still face a \$9.16
18 billion cut for FY22. These cuts would negatively
19 impact 30,000 students and their families. This,
20 after the Mayor announced his expansion to add 27 new
21 schools to the initiative by the fall.

22 We are calling on the city with our partners to
23 fully restore all cuts to community schools, baseline
24 the funding and fully fund the expansion. The
25 community school strategy holistically addresses

1
2 barriers to learning and success, often caused by
3 systemic and historical racism and inequality and
4 worsened by the pandemic.

5 To cut these programs –

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

7 LENA BILIK: With one hand while claiming
8 expansion of the initiative with the other is
9 unacceptable. Community schools must be fully funded
10 and invested in for an equitable path to recovery for
11 New York City students. Thank you so much.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and that concludes
13 testimony for this panel. Thank you to all the
14 panelists. The next panel that we will be calling up
15 is Carlos Castell Croke from the New York League of
16 Conservation Voters, Farah Ahmed, Natasha Capers
17 Coalition for Educational Justice, Madeline Borrelli
18 and David Chung.

19 The panel we will be calling after that is Tajh
20 Sutton and then from the Sisters and Brothers United
21 Brian Aju, Geo Ayala, Crystal Reyes and Gabrielle
22 Reyes. We will start with Carlos Castell Croke.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

24 CARLOS CASTELL CROKE: Good afternoon, my name is
25 Carlos Castell Croke and I am the Associate for New

1
2 York City Programs at the New York League of
3 Conservation Voters. NYLCV represents over 30,000
4 members in New York City and I would like to thank
5 Chair Treyger for the opportunity to testify today.
6 NYLCV supports a Fiscal Year '22 budget that secures
7 progress on many environmental transportation and
8 public priorities Mayor de Blasio has committee to
9 and One NYC and beyond.

10 It is unacceptable and unsustainable for the
11 Department of Education to continue allowing bus
12 companies to pollute our air with diesel buses.

13 A transition to cleaner fuel technologies is
14 necessary of the health and safety of our most
15 vulnerable populations. In addition to greenhouse
16 gas emissions, diesel school buses omit harmful
17 particulate matter into the air and the cabin of the
18 buses that damage the respiratory systems of
19 children.

20 NYLCV states that there would be a reduction of
21 roughly 18 million pounds of 74,000 pounds of PM 25
22 and 29 million short tons of greenhouse gases over 16
23 years which is the average lifetime of a bus. If we
24 replaced New York City diesel school buses with all
25 electric models.

1
2 That would be the equivalent of removing 62,000
3 passenger vehicles from the road. Asthma is also the
4 leading cause of school absenteeism in New York City.
5 A disturbing metric that illustrates how poor air
6 quality and particulate matter can directly affect
7 early learning and childhood development.

8 We ask for \$30 million in the Fiscal 2020 Budget
9 for the purchase of electric school buses. This
10 funding along with grants from the New York Truck
11 Voucher Incentive Program will cover the difference
12 in cost of replacing 15-17 diesel buses with Type A
13 electric school buses, along with the necessary
14 charging infrastructure.

15 This relatively small number of buses and not as
16 large amount of an investment as we should be making
17 to protect our children from the harmful effects of
18 particulate matter and climate change. But the city
19 must take steps to start electrifying in school bus
20 fleet so that we can work towards full
21 electrification.

22 In addition to the current investment needed to
23 start transitioning away for dirty diesel buses to
24 clean buses –

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

1
2 CARLOS CASTELL CROKE: Council to consider
3 passing legislation such as Intro. 45 to mandate that
4 all school buses be electrified by the year 2040.

5 Lastly, real quick, NYLCV helped to launch the
6 New York City Clean School Bus Coalition to bring
7 together environmental organizations, parent
8 advocates and community groups to help fight for this
9 important issue. And our coalition will continue to
10 advocate for the electrification of school bus fleets
11 and look forward to working alongside the Council in
12 this effort. Thank you.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
14 hear from Farah.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

16 FARAH AHMED: Hi everyone. Can everyone hear me?

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

18 FARAH AHMED: Great. Chairman Treyger, member of
19 the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to
20 speak on our city's Education Budget for the upcoming
21 year.

22 My name is Farah Ahmed and I am a Community
23 Organizer with Jobs to Move America. We work in
24 coalitions here in New York and across the country to
25 fight for a just climate and worker centered economy.

1
2 We alongside our allies from the Clean School Bus
3 Coalition urge the Committee to make a critical
4 investment of \$3 million in electric school buses in
5 the upcoming year. As others will testify, there is
6 simply no good reason to continue poisoning kids,
7 school bus workers and the communities that host bus
8 depots with toxic diesel fumes, when cleaner
9 technology exists.

10 The transition to electric buses is causing major
11 changes in the industry and we believe are important
12 for the Council to consider. From the operation of
13 the buses to the installation of electrical
14 infrastructure and the manufacturer of the school bus
15 and its components. The Department and its
16 contractors must work closely with its union partners
17 who operate our school bus fleets to ensure that
18 drivers and technicians receive the training and job
19 protection they need.

20 Technicians in particular may need specialized
21 training to ensure that the maintenance of the buses
22 is not outsourced. We also urge the Committee to
23 plan for much greater investment in the coming years.
24 If we get the policy right, this is an opportunity
25 for the city to create good green jobs in the bus

1
2 manufacturing industry while helping lower electric
3 school bus prices at the same time.

4 Just yesterday, our organization published a
5 report which discusses in detail how we can deploy
6 clean buses in New York state and here in the city
7 while creating good jobs. We have included this
8 report in our testimony as an exhibit. We are happy
9 to provide additional assistance and information to
10 the committee as needed in collaboration with our
11 coalition and union partners.

12 Parents, unions, environmental justice advocates
13 and community groups want to see -

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

15 FARAH AHMED: Electric buses on our streets. It
16 is time for our city to take the lead. Thank you
17 very much for your attention to this critical issue.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
19 hear from Natasha Capers from the Coalition for
20 Educational Justice.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

22 NATASHA CAPERS: Hello, I am Natasha Capers,
23 Director of the New York City Coalition for
24 Educational Justice and mother of two New York City
25 public school students. I would like to start by

1
2 saying that this very body that claims to uphold
3 culturally responsive sustained education and
4 language access has violated every principle of those
5 beliefs.

6 Not having simultaneous interpretation throughout
7 the entirety of this hearing is beyond wrong and this
8 body must immediately implement practices that would
9 eliminate the barriers for all New Yorkers to be able
10 to fully take part in the democracy of their city.

11 And none of you have called up this hypocrisy. This
12 is not what language justice, racial justice or
13 democracy is. The hypocrisy and lack of respect for
14 not English speaking New Yorkers is shameful. And
15 while everyone went over, they are allotted two
16 minutes. The only two people urged to wrap it up
17 were the two Spanish speaker using consecutive
18 interpretation. Do better.

19 In 2016, parents across race, language, religion,
20 came together for CJ's launch of our Culturally
21 Responsive Education Campaign. Calling on the
22 Department of Education to invest in curriculum,
23 books, resources and professional development that
24 would allow students to have the better, richer, more
25

1
2 fulfilling historically accurate education that they
3 deserve. This promise has still yet to be fulfilled.

4 From our report in 2020, that Council Member
5 Rodriguez cited, received that five out of the nine
6 curriculums have more books featuring animals as
7 characters. The Latinx, Black and Asian people
8 combined on covers of books.

9 A 42 text in PreK for All only zero are Black
10 authors, zero native authors, zero middle eastern
11 authors. One Latinx author, one Asian author and 40
12 White authors.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

14 NATASHA CAPERS: Of the 110 books in McGraw Hill
15 Wonders 6th grade curriculum, every single author we
16 could identify as White. Let us be clear, CRSC is
17 not about celebrations, heroes, holidays or known a
18 few trivia facts. It is deeply insulting to hear it
19 bald out in this way today and over and over. It is
20 about the humanity that doesn't just live or exit
21 within White bodies. We are human too. Our humanity
22 matters. Black, Latinx, Asian, Muslim, indigenous
23 and immigrant people are human and we deserve to be
24 seen in all of our intersections of gender, religion,
25 sexuality and ability. And spoken about and we

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2 shouldn't have to beg to do so. Yet, here we are
3 again begging for our system to do what is right to
4 make the investment in the humanity of New York City
5 student including the 85 percent who identify as
6 Black, Brown and Asian.

7 New York City must make the investments of half a
8 billion dollars to make this a reality. To make CRS
9 the curriculum a reality and ethnic studies
10 programming happen in New York City schools now.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next person we will hear
12 from - I lost the page. The next person we will hear
13 from is Madeline Borrelli.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

15 MADELINE BORRELLI: Good afternoon. My name is
16 Madeline Borrelli, I am a District 21 Special
17 Education Teacher, a proud public school parent and a
18 member of Teachers Unite.

19 In my career with the DOE, I have witnessed
20 first-hand the dramatic effects of school policing on
21 students of color. And that is nothing compared to
22 the actual lived experiences of Black and Brown
23 students. Some of those experiences you heard shared
24 with you today.

1
2 Alternatives to school policing exists. Many of
3 the brilliant young folks and community organizers
4 who have heard from today have put hours into
5 creating and outlining alternatives to violence
6 policing. There alternatives require imagination,
7 radical community care and ultimately funding.

8 I mentioned in a previous testimony that budgets
9 are moral documents. So, when a school loses a
10 counselor or social worker due to funding cuts during
11 a pandemic but the city has the money to hire 475 new
12 school cops, it is clear where our morals lie.
13 Imagine the radical shift that 475 more counselors or
14 social workers could have in our schools. Or 475
15 more youth advocates, parent coordinators,
16 translators and nurses. 475 more paraprofessionals,
17 Black and Brown educators or restorative justice
18 coordinators.

19 We have to let go of this tired notion that cops
20 keep us safe. We have seen time and time again that
21 the only thing they protect and serve is the property
22 of the rich and White and this is no different in our
23 schools. The fact that so many New York City
24 students educational experiences are marked by
25 othering and pushout is directly related to the fact

1
2 that we constantly prioritize policing over students
3 wellbeing.

4 So, I am here today to demand a just budget that
5 fully divests from school policing and one that
6 invests in students mental, emotional, cultural and
7 physical health. Why is it that when one of my
8 students is in crisis, they are more likely to be met
9 with a cop in a uniform than a counselor? Why is it
10 that in my seven years in the DOE, I have seen more
11 students placed in handcuffs than I have seen engaged
12 in restorative circles?

13 So much talk today about equity but what is
14 equitable about the fact that 90 percent of all NYC
15 students arrested are Black and Latinx. So, if you
16 truly care about equity, then you City Council
17 members will not only vote no on Intro. 2211 but you
18 will demand an FY22 Education Budget that divests
19 from policing and reinvest in our communities and in
20 the culturally sustaining practices that we need to
21 reach and teach all students. Thank you.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and the next person
23 that we will hear from is David Chung.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.
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2 DAVID CHUNG: Hi everyone. Hello, my name is
3 David Chung, I represent Teachers Unite, Park Slope
4 United Methodist Church, Church of Life after
5 Shopping, PS15 Patrick Daily and PS20 Clinton Hill,
6 where I am a proud parent, teacher and SLT member.

7 I am here to urge you all to let go of policing,
8 imprisoning and punishing and instead adopt a
9 restorative justice approach to safety citywide. And
10 in the DOE, it means investing in teachers,
11 administrators, counselors, psychologists,
12 paraprofessionals, school aids, nurses, therapists
13 and school programs.

14 If you are not familiar with restorative justice,
15 please look it up. I don't have time to explain it
16 to you in two minutes. Thank you for spotlighting my
17 video, sorry my camera is not working but we don't
18 want people who do wrong to change because they live
19 in fear of being shamed or punished. We don't need
20 to put others down to empower ourselves. That
21 weakens us all because we all make mistakes. We want
22 wrong doers to change their behavior because why?
23 Why do we want wrong doers to change? Because we
24 care about them.
25

1
2 We deeply, truly, care about them. It's not
3 about us against them. If we don't care about wrong
4 doers, than we can just lock them up and keep schools
5 as a policed state for our children but we can't
6 expect improvements. We can't expect children to
7 care because intimidating, imprisoning and policing
8 sends that message loud and clear. We don't care
9 about you. Are you with me?

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

11 DAVID CHUNG: Now, if we are a city that really
12 cares about each other, than we all can understand
13 each other. We all can examine our own mistakes and
14 repair harm without intimidation, fear and
15 punishment. Because wrongs are committed by us, we
16 all make mistakes. We are them; they are us.

17 So, let's stop intimidating and policing. Let's
18 start to listen, breath, talk, think, prayer
19 together, play together, learn together, work
20 together. That is how restorative justice makes
21 progress. Look up restorative justice please.

22 The day we give into fear, distrust and division,
23 is the day we lose. No matter what side we are on,
24 no matter what the issue is. Thank you.

1
2 COMMMITTE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
3 hear from Caitlin Delphin who wasn't on when I had
4 announced the panel but she was on this panel, so I
5 see she is on now if we can unmute Caitlin please.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

7 CAITLIN DELPHIN: Hi, I am Caitlin Delphin and I
8 am a Special Education Teacher at a high school in
9 Bensonhurst Brooklyn. I am also a member of Teachers
10 Unite and I am here today to speak in opposition to
11 the continued funding of policing in our schools, in
12 opposition to Intro. Number 2211. We need action now
13 to fund more teachers, counselors and social workers
14 as well as restorative justice professionals and
15 community outreach providers and we need to reduce
16 policing in schools.

17 Budgets speak volumes about where we place
18 priorities and right now, the DOE budget is
19 prioritizing policing and surveillance over the
20 health, welfare and actual safety of our students.
21 This has been a long hard year for all of us and our
22 children have been impacted in huge ways as well.
23 Despite this past years difficulties, we have had
24 moments of connection, joy and students letting their
25 true selves shine through, which unsurprisingly has

1
2 been at sometimes easier for them when they are able
3 to be at home and away from the oppressive and police
4 environment of the physical school building. We need
5 to be building on these positive moments moving
6 forward to help our students begin to heal.

7 My students have gained so many important skills
8 in the last year. Self-motivation, time management,
9 multitasking on top of the academic skills and
10 learning or doing, despite the schedule changes and
11 uncertainty that we have all been faced with. But I
12 am not at all concerned about an achievement gap
13 arising among my students. I am so proud of
14 everything that they have accomplished and I am
15 amazed at the independence and persistence that my
16 high schoolers have shown. I have seen the, build
17 skills and continue to learn in this very difficult
18 environment. But I am extremely concerned about a
19 care gap. These students are seeing a city that is
20 beginning to slowly recovery from the last year.
21 However, rather that resources for their recovery at
22 school, they are seeing the prioritization of
23 policing over their health and education.

24 This will be apparent to students from the very
25 moment they walk through the doors in my school.

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They will not be welcomed by additional counselors or social workers or teachers to help them with the traumas of having to care for sick family members or feeling the weight of the family's finances on their shoulders or the social isolation they face. They will not be welcomed by more teachers to help refocus students who have had to be more involved in their young siblings school work than their own or who still don't have access to adequate technology.

They will not even be welcomed back to the school by working technology, which they still need to access their classes, since due to resources and limited numbers of teachers. Classes are still being taught remotely, even to students who are coming into the building at this time. As is true in every other high school I have heard about.

Instead, when they get to the school, they will be welcomed by scanning, which persists at our school despite a lack of violent incidents, the discontinued existence of the school which prompted the scanning in the first place. And the documented use of metal detectors, primarily in outer borough schools serving majority Black and Brown students.

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2 Right now, my students do not need that scanning
3 and surveillance and oppression. My students need
4 love and support. They need additional counselors
5 and teachers to help begin the healing process and
6 support them in moving forward. They need staff
7 trained in restorative justice who see them as whole
8 people. We know and my students know that the
9 current daily budget does not prioritize them. They
10 know this because they see the news and they see that
11 other cities are defunding policing in their schools
12 and other times they are supporting the return to
13 schools.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

15 CAITLIN DELPHIN: And they feel it because there
16 is always scanning there to greet them. There is
17 always a school security agent around the corner but
18 there is a long wait for an appointment with a
19 counselor and their teachers are trying but stretched
20 thin. Let's not miss another chance to show our
21 children that they are the priority.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and that concludes
23 the testimony for this panel and Chair, just for the
24 record, so for folks watching at home, the New York
25 City Council website, the registration page and the

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invitation email that comes out by Committee Staff

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for every hearing is very clear that the City Council

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offers accessibility, accommodations and non-English

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Language interpretation and how to access all of that

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is on our website. The registration page for

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hearings and the hearing invite. So, if anybody ever

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needs anything, that information is disseminated out

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there to the public.

10

The next panel that we are going to call is Tajh

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Sutton, Brian Aju, Geo Ayala and Crystal Reyes.

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Following that panel will be Gregory Brender,

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Nora Moran, Mary Cheng and Hope Cannady. We will

14

first hear from Tajh Sutton.

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

16

TAJH SUTTON: Thank you. Can you hear me?

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COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, you are unmuted, go

18

ahead.

19

TAJH SUTTON: Fantastic, thank you. Wow, there

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is so much to say. I think because I have been to a

21

lot of these City Council hearings and there are so

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many friends represented here and so many wonderful

23

organizations led by educators and parents and

24

students. And something that I have noticed

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throughout this pandemic is that we continue to say

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2 phrases like student voice and parent engagement and
3 that we support our educators. And then when they
4 come on these meetings and they wait for hours and
5 hours to amplify the voices of the students and
6 communities and staff that they represent, the budget
7 does not reflect their desires, their needs or their
8 morals.

9 I think the pandemic has made it very clear that
10 budgets are moral documents and although we have
11 heard a couple people say that they don't believe the
12 additional policing is necessary right now, that's
13 not enough. Because what that means is that you
14 might decide that it is necessary later and I don't
15 know about other folks on the call but I haven't
16 forgotten the City Council budget where the entire
17 city asked City Council to defund the police and you
18 emphatically as a body said no.

19 I know there were individual fights and struggles
20 but in the end, the people, the students, the
21 parents, the educators, the para's, the grocery store
22 workers, the MTA employees, we didn't get what we
23 wanted because what we wanted was the resources to
24 back up the supposed values that we have in this so-
25 called progressive city. And what we got was an

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2 increase to the budget and policing by the Education
3 and Hospital Budgets were slashed. Which during a
4 global pandemic is unconscionable and will be
5 unconscionable any other time.

6 What I would really like to point out is that a
7 lot of these Councils are comprised of individuals in
8 seats congratulating themselves and each other on a
9 job well done. I would love to see that energy spent
10 really listening to families, really listening to
11 educators, really listening to the dozens and dozens
12 of students that came here and it doesn't matter if
13 you as an individual didn't have a bad experience
14 with a school safety officer.

15 The entire world watched George Floyd get
16 murdered, watched Breonna Taylor get murdered,
17 watched Tony McDade murdered and if we don't think
18 that that has an impact on education, on students, on
19 families, we are living in a dream world.

20 Please honor the call for police free schools
21 from the Urban Youth Collaborative and all of their
22 partners on the call today. Thank you.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next we will hear from Brian.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

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BRIAN AJU: My name is Brian; I am a Leader at Sisters and Brothers United and the UIC and I strongly agree. I encourage the panel, not the panel. I encourage everyone including Treyger to hear and understand what every single person here from UIC and DSC is asking for, which is police free schools and divestment from police and implement more money into students for their mental health and social/emotional health.

With that being said, I would like to use the remainder of my time to stand in silence to symbolize how you are silencing students calls for police free schools. Thank you. [SILENCE 7:58:54-8:00:19].

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will hear from Geo Ayala.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

GEO AYALA: Hi, my name is Geo Ayala, I am a Former alumni of Sisters and Brothers United. I am here to ask for the removal of police from public schools in New York City, specifically those predominantly PLC Black and LGBTQ youth.

As someone who grew up with an IEP and a parent whose predominant language was not English, I found

1
2 it really difficult to be able to attend my classes
3 when I was younger, just because I was always told
4 that I couldn't be part of the group, as someone who
5 didn't know English.

6 English not being my first language made it
7 really hard for me to get all of the information I
8 needed. Even applying to high school was such a
9 difficult task for us. I ended up going to high
10 schools that I didn't even know. I was applying to
11 because no one provided the assistance that my mother
12 and I needed in order to move forward with that task.

13 Eventually, with the passing of time, it got much
14 harder when my mom tried to get information for me to
15 join, even things as college access programs. I was
16 told that I was unable to go to those programs
17 because there was no language information for me in
18 Spanish. And it's not just Spanish language that I
19 am asking for, it's everybody, any language that some
20 of us speak. They should be able to speak in their
21 native language.

22 If New York is a progressive city, why aren't we
23 giving people the opportunity to give themselves the
24 voice and not always have to have - to go through
25 other channels in order to get what they need and I

1
2 would like to use the remainder of this time to sit
3 in silence and I am again asking for the removal of
4 police from schools. [SILENCE 8:02:11-8:02:44].

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
7 hear from Crystal Reyes.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

9 CRYSTAL REYES: Hello, my name is Crystal with
10 Sisters and Brothers United, the Program Director and
11 I am also with the Urban Youth Collaborative and
12 Dignity in Schools.

13 I am also going to use my time, my two minutes to
14 sit in silence in solidarity with the call for police
15 free schools and symbolize what the Council has been
16 doing in silencing the voices of young people for all
17 this time. Thank you. [SILENCE 8:03:18-8:04:59].

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and that concludes
20 testimony for this panel. The next panel that I am
21 going to call up is Gregory Brender from the Daycare
22 Council of New York, Nora Moran United Neighborhood
23 Houses, Mary Cheng Chinese American Planning Council,
24 Hope Cannady Sheltering Arms, Tralane Haynes and
25 Diana Cruz. We will first start with Gregory.

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You are not unmuted Gregory.
You should see – there you go.

GREGORY BRENDER: Is it working now? You can
hear me?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, go ahead.

GREGORY BRENDER: Thank you so much. Good
afternoon and thank you so much for the opportunity
to testify. My name is Gregory Brender and I am here
on behalf of the Daycare Council. The Daycare
Council greatly appreciates this Committee's
continued support of Early Childhood Education. As
you know Chair Treyger and many others on this
Committee fought hard to get salary parity for the
Early Childhood Workforce and we continue to count on
this Committee and the Council to be a strong ally of
Early Childhood Education.

The Early Childhood System is in a period of both
great opportunity and crisis. We face crisis because
of the huge changes that operating during a pandemic
and changing procedures face but we also have
opportunity because President Biden has led the
largest new investment in Early Childhood Education

1
2 in more than a generation with the American Recovery
3 Plan.

4 With the city's support and with the city and
5 state lays the reason the federal funds. We believe
6 we have the opportunity to strengthen early childhood
7 education and to make it so that it can truly support
8 New York City's recovery, especially for our working
9 families and particularly working mothers who have
10 been most impacted by the pandemic.

11 I want to run through a few of the
12 recommendations that is in our written testimony is
13 ways that we need to invest in Early Childhood
14 Education now. One is to continue to pay the full
15 value of Early Childhood contracts based on capacity,
16 not enrollment. Enrollment is fluctuating due to the
17 pandemic and also in many cases artificially low
18 because of backlogs at the city's end in processing
19 applications from families seeking to obtain
20 childcare.

21 We also want to ensure that the city guarantees
22 equity and access to health and safety procedures
23 that between what's happening in public schools and
24 what's happening in community-based organizations
25 providing early childhood. This includes access to

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2 onsite nurses, professional cleaning, training around
3 health and safety protocols and incentive pay for
4 staff who come in when their own health may be at
5 risk to keep programs open.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

7 GREGORY BRENDER: Thank you. The last thing I
8 just want to say, we support the many organizations
9 looking to maintain their capacity of net loss or
10 lost contracts in the birth to five RFP and we
11 support them and thank you again for the opportunity
12 to speak to this Committee.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Gregory. Next we
14 will hear from Nora Moran.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

16 NORA MORAN: Thank you so much for the
17 opportunity to testify. My name is Nora Moran, I am
18 the Director of Policy and Advocacy United
19 Neighborhood Houses, where the membership
20 organization of New York City Settlement Houses with
21 40 members in New York City providing early childhood
22 education programs, running Learning to Work
23 programs, community schools, lots of afterschool
24 programming, a lot of educational supports.
25

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2 Our testimony is broad. Our written testimony
3 focuses on a couple of things but I will highlight a
4 few here. The first is on early childhood education.
5 I certainly want to echo all the comments from the
6 Daycare Council. You know, we certainly need to make
7 sure we maintain full funding for contracts right now
8 and center-based and family childcare networks. We
9 have seen a significant fluctuations in enrollment
10 due to the pandemic and city delay and processing
11 applications. We want to make sure that that system
12 is stable as we move forward.

13 We are also very concerned looking ahead about
14 the birth to five procurement in the Settlement House
15 Network. We saw lots of shifts and slots and
16 coverage. Our reduction in infant and toddler slots
17 as well as a reduction in hours, being able to serve
18 families.

19 You know we know that there are sort of new
20 investments made in other neighborhoods but that
21 can't come at the expense of you know, existing
22 centers and their capacity. We need to make sure we
23 are growing the network overall and serving more
24 families given how crucial the need is for subsidized
25 childcare in the city.

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2 On Learning to Work, we have several Settlement
3 Houses who are running Learn to Work programs. I
4 certainly want to call for the full restoration of
5 the Learning to Work Program. We are very concerned
6 that at this time when we are seeing greater rates of
7 disconnection among New York City's Youth, that we
8 are you know, not investing in this population and
9 not making sure that they are served.

10 And our last point is just on summer. You know,
11 it is very heartening to hear the Chancellor mention
12 you know a summer of fun and mention wrap around
13 supports for students. However, community-based
14 organizations need to know the plan now. Right now,
15 they think that there is no Summer SONYC funding for
16 middle school students and that we have no middle
17 school programming this summer.

18 So, it's really important that decisions be made
19 as soon as possible.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

21 NORA MORAN: They cannot be last minute and that
22 the planning really involves CBO's, so that way we
23 have a smooth summer that is able to serve as many
24 children as possible. Thank you.

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
3 hear from Mary Cheng from the Chinese American
4 Planning Council.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

6 MARY CHENG: Thank you. Thank you Chair Treyger
7 and members of the City Council for the opportunity
8 to testify today. My name is Mary Cheng, I am the
9 Director of CPC's Childhood Development Services. I
10 oversee 12 early childhood and school aged
11 programming's and as a former CPC student and now
12 staff, I can truly say that CPC strives to empower
13 our community members of agents of social change.

14 CPC's early childhood programs have been a
15 critical safety net for thousands of working class
16 AAPI and immigrant families. Under COVID, childcare
17 programs have been extremely stressed and under
18 pressure and now the community is faced with
19 additional fears with increased hate crimes.

20 With the city getting federal investment money in
21 childcare, we urge the City Council to support
22 restoration through a CCBG, state and federal
23 sources, so that DOE has stabilized providers looking
24 at losses under the birth to five grant.

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2 The first round of birth to five are P awards
3 through the DOE resulted in our Coalition of
4 Settlement Houses sites. Looking at a loss of 39
5 percent of all slots and 72 percent of all extended
6 days, toddler slots and 3K slot losses.

7 Since January we are happy to announce that the
8 DOE has partially restored slots one to one on
9 providers in professional awards; however, many of us
10 are still facing the prospect of partially funded
11 centers and closed classroom, making it difficult to
12 remain open long-term.

13 I also wanted to highlight some of the recent
14 birth to five RFP Preliminary Budget concerns. There
15 were caps placed on fringe rates, which will impact
16 our unionized staff and also DOE and police are in
17 budget lines as indirect. These costs were
18 administered for electricity as well as for health
19 and safety measures like janitorial cleaning supplies
20 were also classed as indirect.

21 Those are already important during normal time
22 but during pandemic, we must have adequate access to
23 cleaning supplies and maintenance staff in order to
24 be really protecting our children.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

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2 MARY CHENG: We are continuing to be concerned
3 about the transition for families into the new birth
4 to five as CBO's start date at July is near and
5 closer to us. Our current process of educating
6 families on the different categories of care, like 3K
7 half day versus extended day, which is subsidized has
8 been truly confusing.

9 We are hoping that the process of eligibility
10 because it is currently very severely delayed as well
11 as HRA cases that have been ignored for families.
12 Parents and Directors are frustrated and confused by
13 the continued delays and worried about the future.

14 The city needs to prioritize investing in working
15 class families of color and community led efforts of
16 recovery in order for New York City to be fully
17 recovered from COVID-19 and from hate crimes. We
18 hope that the City Council will help us advocate for
19 restorations in the upcoming year.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
21 hear from Hope Cannady from Sheltering Arms.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

23 HOPE CANNADY: Good afternoon. My name is Hope
24 Cannady and I am the Educational Site Director in
25 Corona Queens. One of Sheltering Arms ten early

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2 child education centers throughout New York City,
3 South Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens and Harlem. Thank you
4 Chair Treyger and member of the New York City Council
5 Committee on Education for the opportunity to testify
6 before you today.

7 Sheltering Arms serve nearly 15,000 children,
8 youth and families each year and employ more than
9 1,100 staff from across the city. I am here today to
10 speak about three key issues under the oversight of
11 the Committee on Education. The DOE RFP Birth to
12 Five and Head Start, Early Head Start services, the
13 need for increased investment in mental health and
14 academic support for students and parents and the
15 needs of students.

16 The Department of Education began the process of
17 rebidding the entire early childhood education system
18 in 2019. We are now three months away from contract
19 start dates. Enrollment for 2021 and 2022 school
20 year has already begun and there is considerable
21 confusion for both providers and parents. While we
22 know the DOE is trying to meet the needs of our
23 communities, we are concerned that the process is
24 being rushed, including the calculation of need in
25 our communities.

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2 We are not confident that our contracts will be
3 registered by the start date of July 2021. We do not
4 have any finalized contracts for Preliminary awards
5 that are set to begin in just three months. Many
6 providers, including Sheltering Arms, receive partial
7 awards for far fewer seats at some of our sites than
8 we currently serve. Including in communities that
9 have now been identified by the DOE as high need
10 communities where they need additional seats.

11 Proposes for the DOE's most recent RFP which will
12 award additional seats in these high need communities
13 most impacted by COVID-19 are due next week for
14 contracts that are scheduled to begin in just three
15 months.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Stop.

17 HOPE CANNADY: The City Council must ensure that
18 contracts for the city's Early Childhood Education
19 system, which is absolutely vital for the recovery of
20 our communities are completed in a timely and
21 transparent manner, that gives both providers and
22 families the confidence and stability we need as we
23 enter the 2021-2022 school year.

24 Mental health and academic support, we urge the
25 City Council to invest additional resources including

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2 onsite mental health counseling in our ECE Centers to
3 support the growing mental health needs of staff and
4 families, especially BIPOC mothers. Research
5 continues to point to the increased need of mental
6 health support in communities especially BIPOC woman.

7 Our programs decide to work with parents and New
8 York City has recognized that the trusting
9 relationships parents have with their children, with
10 their childcare provider makes us an effective access
11 point to needed care.

12 Similarly, we know that the impact of the
13 pandemic has caused many students to fall behind in
14 school. From the earliest years of development all
15 the way through high school. Even in preschool, some
16 children are receiving one on one tutoring to ensure
17 they are ready to enter kindergarten. Children of
18 all ages are going to need additional support in the
19 coming school year and beyond. The city must invest
20 additional resources to support children and their
21 parents, including tutoring and expanded afterschool
22 services to ensure the learning gap between families
23 who can afford additional support and those who can't
24 does not continue to grow.

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Lastly, students in foster care, Sheltering Arms also provide foster care services serving more than 220 school aged children and youth each year through our family foster care program and two group homes. We stand with nearly 30 foster care agencies, child advocacy organization and calling on the city to include \$1.5 million to establish a DOE office focused on supporting students in foster care. \$5 million to provide bus transportation for students in foster care from kindergarten through sixth grade.

This funding is vital to supporting the wellbeing of students in foster care. At minimum, the City Council should ensure that the Fiscal Year '22 Budget includes funding for at least one DOE staff member focused full time on students in foster care.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify and for fighting for our children, families and staff. I am happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will hear from Tralane Haynes followed by Diana Cruz.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Mr. Haynes, you are not
3 unmuted. You should see a message saying accept the
4 unmute. Okay, now go ahead.

5 TRALANE HAYNES: Good evening, my name is Tralane
6 Haynes, I am a Staff Attorney at Legal Services NYC
7 in our Brooklyn office. Thank you Chairman Treyger
8 and members of this Committee for the opportunity to
9 testify before you today and for supporting our
10 efforts to ensure equal access to justice for all New
11 Yorkers. To that end, Legal Services Education
12 Advocacy Project is requesting an allocation of
13 \$500,000 for Fiscal Year 2022 in support of expanding
14 assistance to students with disabilities to receive
15 compensatory educational services.

16 As Chair Treyger stated this morning, students
17 with learning disabilities have suffered tremendously
18 during this pandemic and it is our goal to assist as
19 many families as possible in securing compensatory
20 educational services for their children. We also
21 want to expand representation of students who have
22 experienced trauma and will need social/emotional
23 support. LSNE has worked with the DOE this past
24 year to bring the healing centered schools approach
25 to our public schools given the trauma that students

1
2 have experienced since the pandemic began, it is
3 imperative that we have adequate resources to assist
4 families with accessing support in this area.

5 We also want to expand our assistance to students
6 and parents who do not speak English as their first
7 language. English Language Learners and limited
8 English parents have faced tremendous obstacles
9 navigating the school landscape, both online and in
10 person. LSNY is currently litigating a federal
11 lawsuit regarding the DOE's failure to provide
12 mandatory interpretation services to these parents.
13 We must expand our efforts to ensure that those
14 students are accommodated and educated properly.

15 We also need to expand our disciplinary work in
16 all boroughs to ensure that students are not harshly
17 penalized or suspended for COVID related infractions
18 or other offenses.

19 Trauma in children manifest itself in many
20 different ways. We are dedicated to representing
21 families in disciplinary hearings and advocating to
22 challenge and eliminate on campus arrests where no
23 imminent threat of bodily harm exists.

24 And last but not least, we must end the technical

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

TRALANE HAYNES: Among our children in New York City. Statistics have shown that a lack of technological devices and Wi-Fi has led to unequal academic achievement for low-income students.

So, therefore, we must make sure that we advocate for children in low-income communities, children in homeless shelters and children living in foster homes to ensure that they have access to high quality Wi-Fi and technological devices.

Again, Legal Services Education Advocacy Project is requesting an allocation of \$500,000 for Fiscal Year 2022. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and finally for this panel, we will hear from Diana Cruz.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

DIANA CRUZ: Thank you Committee Chair for taking the time to listen to our testimony. My name is Diana Cruz and I am here representing Hispanic Federation and the Latino Education Advocacy Director's Lead Coalition.

Created by Hispanic Federation, this coalition consists of over 35 leading education advocacy

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2 organizations committed to improving Latino academic
3 outcomes and opportunities in New York State. We
4 cannot echo enough the immediate need for our
5 families and students for a center from our advocate
6 partners here today.

7 During the past year, educators, students and
8 parents navigated a set of exceptional challenges and
9 we commend the city for outlooking in resources to
10 support the digital divide with relief across New
11 York City social/emotional supports and summer youth
12 employment. However, we know it is not enough and
13 now with the passage of the American Rescue Plan, the
14 city will receive additional funding to address
15 educational inequities and learning loss.

16 The Hispanic Federation and the lead coalition
17 strongly believe that the funds must be used to
18 implement the following: One, intentional outreach
19 to push for parent and students engagement.

20 Two, opportunities for further technology
21 training's to improve digital access for students,
22 parents and educators.

23 Three, improve hiring practice for bilingual and
24 diverse teachers.

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2 And Four, target support for college and career
3 readiness for underserved students to fulfill their
4 future goals.

5 Improving communication practices means that the
6 city must continue to invest in supports that engages
7 families, prioritizing immigrant families and
8 families with students with disabilities. By
9 involving trusted community-based organizations,
10 pairing groups and other to disseminate information
11 barriers to languages across the city.

12 As for the digital divide, it is not enough to
13 have connectivity to internet and a device when
14 individuals do not know how to use technology. We
15 highly recommend that the city allocates funding to
16 create cultural irrelevant and linguistically
17 appropriate professional development trainings
18 focused on remote instruction.

19 The pandemic has also impacted many teachers of
20 color who may lead the profession. We ask the city
21 to invest in resources that will focus on the
22 recruitment, hiring and retention of diverse
23 educators.

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2 Now more than ever post-secondary and career
3 readiness is center connected with economic
4 opportunity.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

6 DIANA CRUZ: We must redesign courses and create
7 more clarity on pathways that lead to thriving
8 careers. Our final ask is that the city must focus
9 on summer planning now, as the pandemic continues to
10 worsen the academic apps for students of color. We
11 must ensure that equitable summer opportunities are
12 available, communicated properly and timely with
13 families. Thank you so much for your time today.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and that concludes
15 testimony for this panel. The next panel that we
16 will hear from is Luis Porto New York Roadrunners,
17 David Garcia-Rosen Fair Play NYC, Jenny Veloz Fair
18 Play Coalition, Devaun Longely Fair Play Coalition
19 and Quadira Coles Girls for Gender Equity.

20 We will first hear from Luis Porto from the New
21 York Roadrunners.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

23 LUIS PORTO: Good afternoon Chair Treyger. My
24 name is Luis Porto and I serve as a Youth Program
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1
2 Coordinator at New York Roadrunners. Thank you for
3 the opportunity to testify today.

4 New York Roadrunners mission is to help and
5 inspire people through running. While we may be best
6 known for organizing the New York City marathon, our
7 organization is one of the largest nonprofit
8 providers of free youth fitness programs in New York
9 City.

10 We are asking the City Council once again
11 generously to fund our service for our youth on their
12 physical education in this initiative, which is
13 critical to NYRR's ability to bring our program at no
14 cost to roughly 800 New York City educators and
15 100,000 students in every single City Council
16 District annually.

17 Representing this testimony today, being born and
18 raised in Spanish Harlem, my first exposure to
19 running was through NYRR's free youth programming,
20 nearly 20 years. I could personally attest to the
21 lasting impacts of this program. Participating in
22 this program took me from being a shy asthmatic kid
23 to the outgoing athletic person I am today. It built
24 the confidence and the desire to be physically active
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1
2 for life and it is what enabled me to eventually earn
3 a division one track and field scholarship.

4 As an employee at NYRR and have come full circle.

5 And now I work to empower teachers with the quality
6 fiscal fitness programs support and equipment as they
7 strive to shape our city's youth. My colleagues and
8 I work hard to adapt our youth program to address
9 unique challenges faced in teachers in 2020.

10 Creating hundreds of new activities that safely can
11 be used while kids are learning in-person or
12 remotely. NYRR remains committed to supporting NYC
13 teachers, the school and beyond.

14 The importance of this seemingly simple job
15 should not be underestimated. Helping kids be
16 physically active and empowering those who teach them
17 has long lasting effects. I respectfully thank and
18 ask the City Council to reinforce the importance of
19 keeping students active by renewing funding under its
20 Physical Education and Fitness Initiative, so that
21 NYRR may continue to at no cost, help youth across
22 the five boroughs today. Thank you and have a great
23 day.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
25 hear from David Garcia-Rosen Fair Play NYC.

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

DAVID GARCIA-ROSEN: Hey, my name is David Garcia-Rosen, I am the Director of School Culture and Athletics at Bronx Academies of Letters Urban Assembly. This year's public schools athletically budget will once again fund world class sports programs at the city's Whitest high schools, while leaving Black and Latino students, the city's most segregated high schools begging once again for athletic crumbs.

This years Proposed Budget will fund 44 teams at the city's Whitest high school for a quarter of a million dollars including badminton and table tennis while tens of thousands of Black and Latino students will continue to have no funding for soccer, basketball, football at their segregated schools.

This year once again, White students will have access to an average of 25 teams, where Black and Latino students all across the city will have no sports to play when the last bell of the day rings at their school. This has to be the year we finally bring an end to this racist systems and policies of the PSAL by supporting and funding the vision of

1
2 Deputy Chancellor LaShawn Robinson for equity at the
3 PSAL.

4 Ten years ago, we had CEO Eric Goldstein, who
5 famously said there will be no marks as
6 redistribution of sports in NYC. He has thankfully
7 gone through the DOE and now we have a new PSAL
8 leader Seth Schoenfeld who meets with Teens Take
9 Charge, Fair Play, Integrate NYC and supports their
10 vision for equality of the PSAL through shared access
11 and umbrella programs.

12 Ten years ago, we had Deputy Chancellor Grim who
13 wouldn't even look at a presentation about the
14 inequitable distribution of sports, dismissing it
15 with a shrug, saying we have no money for this.

16 Today, we have Deputy Chancellor Robinson who has
17 a plan to bring equity to the PSAL but just needs the
18 support of this Council and the Mayor to make it
19 happen. We now even have a Chancellor who is a
20 Principal at a school in the Bronx with only 13
21 teams, 12 less than the average White student at a
22 New York City public high school.

23 This Council cannot approve \$1.00 in this years
24 budget for the PSAL unless they agree to stop
25 violating the civil rights of Black and Latino

1
2 students in New York City's public high schools and
3 provide every student in New York City with equal
4 access to high school sports.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

6 DAVID GARCIA-ROSEN: This is the year we can make
7 it happen and this is the year we must make it
8 happen. We can't wait any longer. Let's do it,
9 let's make it happen. Council Member Treyger do it.
10 Let's do it.

11 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I am in and this is the
12 year for us to get it done. It's a major priority.
13 Thank you.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
15 hear from Jenny Veloz from the Fair Play Coalition.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

17 JENNY VELOZ: Hi, good afternoon. My name is
18 Jenny Veloz, I am the Community Organizer with New
19 York Lawyers for the Public Interest and I am here
20 representing the Fair Play Coalition.

21 The Fair Play Coalition is a coalition of
22 students, teachers, coaches, principals, parents,
23 activists and advocates standing together for all
24 high school students in New York City public schools
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2 to have equitable access to the PSAL and to athletic
3 fields and courts controlled by the DOE.

4 Thank you to the New York City Council for
5 allowing us the opportunity to speak on this critical
6 issue of access to after school sports and how the
7 Department of Education allocates PSAL resources.
8 Due to the COVID pandemic, students have been without
9 afterschool sports for a full year.

10 With the return to sports on the horizon, we want
11 to emphasize that a return to the status quo is not
12 acceptable. A return to sports and let's take
13 health, safety and equity into consideration. We are
14 hear to ask that the Council assure them when the DOE
15 Budget is finalized. Any and all money allocated for
16 restoring PSAL sports when it is safe to do so only
17 be given to the DOE under the condition that it be
18 distributed in an equitable manner citywide.

19 We should look at the current suspension of in-
20 person school and PSAL sports as an opportunity to
21 fix what we all know has been broken. This is not
22 our first time addressing this issue. We have also
23 provided similar testimony over the last few years.

24 Unfortunately the same inequities still remain.
25 The PSAL continue to treat public high schools

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unequally providing more resources to large more integrated schools while smaller schools that are predominantly Black and Latinx are left with scraps. So, today we humbly ask the Council to ensure that the PSAL doesn't simply do the easy thing of bringing back bad habits. But that it takes advantage of the pause on all sports to reinvent the system to ensure that equity is at the core of the PSAL as it comes back as much as health and safety are.

And I want to echo my Fair Play Coalition partner David Garcia-Rosen saying that the time to do it is now. We have the opportunity, let's get it done.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will hear from Devaun Longely from the Fair Play Coalition.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

DEVAUN LONGELY: Hello, my name is Devaun Longely, I am a Senior at Bronx Academy of Letters. I am an artist and a class representative for the Fair Play Coalition.

In my time advocating for Fair Play Coalition, I learned more about society and what it means to fight for sports we love. In this past year, all schools around the city, like all schools around the city, my

1
2 school completely shutdown sports. For the first
3 time, students around the city felt what we had to go
4 through. No ability to practice or play the sports
5 that we love. Because even though all students were
6 equal in a total lack of sports in most of 2020,
7 before COVID we already understood what it meant to
8 be deprived by – sorry. What being deprived of
9 playing the sports we love felt like. The severity
10 of this inaccessibility have led students into a
11 spiral, damaging students mental and physical states.

12 In 2019, my school had to forfeit all of its
13 soccer games due to lack of resources. Even though
14 our team included students from another school, who
15 also couldn't support a team of their own. As a
16 result, students with a passion of soccer were unable
17 to enjoy the feeling of playing the sport they love.
18 And how to find an alternative means to play the
19 sport.

20 But most underfunded schools in New York City
21 don't have that option for students. Often times
22 they use sports as an escape such as men who were
23 part of my soccer team. This is meaningful to me
24 because I want to enable the future for generations
25 to have access to sports because you cannot replicate

1
2 the feeling of playing competitively alongside
3 teammates and having that experience.

4 I personally have always wanted to play
5 volleyball but my school applied for a boys
6 volleyball team even before I was a freshman and was
7 denied a team. This is why we have to discuss what
8 policies and changes we need to make, so that we can
9 have a trusted equitable system going forward.

10 School is reemerging along with sports and we
11 should take this opportunity to make our voices heard
12 and educate those who are unaware of this. I grew up
13 not knowing of the lack – sorry. I grew up not
14 knowing of the lack of opportunity we had –

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

16 DEVAUN LONGELY: Time oh.

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: No worries. Take your time
18 Devaun. I would like for you to finish your
19 testimony.

20 DEVAUN LONGELY: Okay. Now that students and
21 athletes all around New York City understand what it
22 means to not have the experience and inaccessibility
23 of playing their favorite sports, everyone knows what
24 inaccessibility means. We should return back to
25 normality with the access and equity of sports no

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2 matter the parity of the school or the student. When
3 I became a class representative for the tours that
4 represent this issue, it became my mission to ensure
5 that my voice is heard by those in our community and
6 by the PSAL. We will ensure to have equitable
7 opportunity for Black and Brown students even after
8 my role is over.

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Devaun, that was excellent.
10 I am very proud of you. I was a former high school
11 teacher, I taught seniors. It is not easy to come
12 out at even virtual City Hall government and you did
13 a phenomenal job. And you spoke a lot of truth to
14 power just now. And Devaun, did I hear correctly
15 that you attend Bronx Academy Letters, is that right?
16 That's where Principal Erin Gary's school, is that
17 right?

18 DEVAUN LONGELY: Yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: My condolences to your
20 entire school community. I had the honor of speaking
21 with her at the height of pandemic and she was
22 fighting so hard for her students and I will never
23 forget that. And actually her story and the story of
24 other schools is what led us to prioritize the Single
25 Shepherd Program to save those vital Single Shepherd

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2 Counselors and Social Workers and we are going to
3 fight for them again this year but this is the year
4 once and for all to make that much of an impact on
5 PSAL equity. Because when the Mayor talks about
6 reopening the programs, it's not reopening the
7 programs for all kids, it's just some kids.

8 This is the year that we provide opportunities to
9 all the zip codes across the City of New York for all
10 of our children. This is a top priority for me and
11 for this Council and we are going to get something
12 very big done this year. Thank you Devaun for your
13 great work. Very proud of you.

14 DEVAUN LONGELY: Thank you.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
16 hear from Quadira Coles from the Girls for Gender
17 Equity.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

19 QUADIRA COLES: Good evening Chair Treyger and
20 members of the Committee. My name is Quadira Coles
21 and I am the Policy Manager at Girls for Gender
22 Equity. We are here again to demand that the Council
23 prioritize police free schools and invest in students
24 in education with services, programs and support that
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2 addresses the inequities that were laid bare by the
3 pandemic and transition to remote learning.

4 There is a citywide consensus that the emotional
5 and mental wellbeing of students as well as support
6 and preparedness of school staff should be a top of
7 the city's education priorities. Neither school
8 communities nor students were prepared for the major
9 changes brought on by the pandemic and these
10 experiencing will continue to shape how students show
11 up in their new educational settings now and in the
12 future.

13 The Mayor has misled the public into believing
14 that he defunded the NYPD by \$1 billion when in fact,
15 he did not. And now with the Fiscal Year 2020
16 Budget, we are reminded that the reductions were not
17 only modest but nonrecurring. In addition, despite
18 the Mayor's map including the transfer of school
19 safety division to the DOE the division is still
20 operating under the NYPD's budget.

21 The Fiscal Year 2020 Budget plan has the NYPD's
22 school budget larger than ever. These are just a few
23 instances where city government has promised one
24 thing to the public in the name of police reform and
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2 done the complete opposite in practice and
3 implementation.

4 As plans come to the light and decision making
5 remains nontransparent to the public aside from
6 comments captured during oversight hearings, we call
7 on the Council to reject any potential new hiring of
8 school cops in the Fiscal year and in the years to
9 come. We want to use this education budget oversight
10 opportunity to raise components of the Mayor and
11 Council's police reform, reinvention proposals that
12 will require newer or additional expenses.

13 To start the proposal reforms by City Council and
14 Mayor further intrenches policing in schools instead
15 of meeting the needs of school communities. This
16 culture, a surveillance of criminalization pushes
17 students out of schools and forces them into the
18 carceral system.

19 You all have the opportunity through budget
20 negotiation process to eradicate violence at the
21 hands of law enforcement in schools and redirect the
22 money spent —

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

24 QUADIRA COLES: To transform our schools in a
25 direction of healing support rather than expediting

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2 this guided reforms through compliance with executive
3 order 203. We strongly encourage again the City
4 Council to reject the Mayor's attempt to codify
5 school safety [INAUDIBLE 8:37:57] Executive 203 as
6 described in his draft. This transition will require
7 an opaque and potentially boundless financial
8 commitment that could otherwise go to building
9 something that more closely mirrors what we need
10 rather than what is convenient or the lowest possible
11 lip. These proposals are skewed toward priorities of
12 NYPD instead of new big, sustained investments in the
13 whole school community.

14 We are grappling with a long legacy of police
15 violence, refusing to dismantle the division means
16 that police complicity and police in culture will
17 continue to be an interruption of young people's
18 education. If the Mayor and City Council close the
19 COVID achievement gap and make sure that students and
20 staff are supported next year, the focus should be on
21 supporting pathways to young peoples leadership
22 employment and resources in your school and
23 community, not policing.

24 Finally, I want to reiterate that the public
25 deserves an honest and quick response regarding the

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2 475 new hires to the School Safety Division. Thank
3 you for the opportunity to testify.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and that concludes
5 the testimony for this panel. The next panel that we
6 are going to call is Rachael Gasdick from the New
7 York Edge Afterschool Programming, Carly McCallow
8 from Ramapo for Children, Solangel Almonte Goug the
9 Brotherhood Sister Sol and Naa-Shorme Aidoo. And we
10 will start with Rachael from the New York Edge
11 Afterschool Programming.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

13 RACHAEL GASDICK: Thank you Chair Treyger for
14 your leadership on behalf of our city's youth and for
15 the Council's longstanding support of New York Edge,
16 formally known as Sports and Arts in Schools
17 Foundation.

18 I am here today on behalf of our Fiscal Year '22
19 citywide funding request of \$1 million under the
20 Councils Afterschool Enrichment Initiative. 29-
21 years-ago, New York Edge was created at the
22 suggestion of the New York City Council to provide
23 free wraparound summer camps for children attending
24 summer school. From these beginnings, we have grown
25 into the largest provider of afterschool and summer

1
2 programming in New York City. Traditionally serving
3 over 40,000 students a year at 134 locations
4 throughout the five boroughs. Our mission is to help
5 bridge the opportunity gap among students in
6 underinvested communities by providing programs to
7 design, to improve academic performance, health and
8 wellness, self-confidence and leadership skills for
9 success in life.

10 It's a base of our board and staff that every
11 child is gifted and talented if only given the
12 necessary tools, resources and supports. And our
13 name implies we strive to provide every student in
14 our program with the edge that they need to succeed
15 in the classroom and life. Fiscal Year '21 Council
16 citywide funding is also supporting our current
17 afterschool programming. Currently, we are running
18 107 programs including seven Learning Labs throughout
19 the five boroughs and as the public school system
20 resumes in-person instruction, more of our staff will
21 return to the classroom.

22 This year has brought new collaborations with
23 partners including T Trock[SP?] founding Legendary
24 Guitarist of Steven Van Sant, Mets on the Moves, US
25

1
2 Olympic Handball Team, the New York Nicks, Author and
3 Illustrator Tay Digs and Shane Evans.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 RACHAEL GASDICK: New York it's students and
6 families are extraordinary grateful for the support
7 provided by the New York City Council these past 29
8 years. We are now looking for you to meet the needs
9 of the next generation of young people by supporting
10 Fiscal Year '22 citywide funding requests of \$1
11 million. Which will bring us back to our Fiscal Year
12 level of funding. Thank you.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and the next
14 panelist we will hear from is Carly McCallow from
15 Ramapo for Children.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

17 CARLY MCCALLOW: Good evening. I am Carly
18 McCallow, I am here representing Ramapo for Children,
19 which is an organization that provides capacity
20 building for parents and any adult who works in our
21 schools. Thank you for everyone present for this
22 opportunity to share our testimony.

23 I am the Director of Resilience and Trauma
24 Informed Initiatives and I am here today to echo what
25 has been shared many times to this body to continue

1
2 funding for restorative justice in our schools. The
3 funding does exist in this budget but it needs to be
4 allocated as such. And we have heard countless times
5 on this panel that the school safety officers are an
6 easy way to find this funding that actually supports
7 our schools.

8 Our restorative justice team promotes the values
9 and practices of restorative justice, which has the
10 potential to transform our schools and our
11 communities but only with long-term and systemwide
12 commitment. When restorative justice that usually
13 looks like a five year commitment per school.

14 Restorative justice provides a foundation for
15 strong relationships and strong supportive learning
16 environments. Much of that support and strong
17 relationships we severed over the last year but
18 trauma informed restorative schools are designed to
19 get everyone; teachers, staff, students, admin, food
20 people, facilities and families through these trying
21 times. People are not well across all levels of
22 education. Without support for intentionally
23 building and sustaining community resilience, we
24 could easily see an increase in unaddressed secondary
25

1
2 trauma for young people and their families that could
3 last generations.

4 At Ramapo for Children, we have had the honor to
5 see firsthand how restorative justice initiatives
6 that are currently taking place funded by OSID in the
7 middle schools in all five boroughs have already
8 helped those school communities reintegrate into
9 hybrid learning as they reenter schools.

10 Continued funding demonstrates a commitment to
11 the wellbeing of our communities, the future of our
12 city and an opportunity to heal from the systemic
13 racial and social inequities that are plaguing our
14 schools.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

16 CARLY MCCALLOW: We ask the City Council, DOE and
17 all stakeholders to prioritize a commitment to the
18 continued funds for restorative initiatives. If we
19 don't find or reallocate the money now it has the
20 potential to have vast and long-term consequences for
21 this school going generation. Thank you.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
23 hear from Solangel Almonte Goug[SP?] followed by Naa-
24 Shorme Aidoo.

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2 SOLANGEL ALMONTE GOUG: Hi, my name is Solangel
3 Almonte and I am a Youth Organizer at the Brothers
4 and Sisters Sol. I am a high school student at
5 Community Health Academy in the Heights. A proper
6 education begins outside the school. In one of the
7 worlds richest cities, providing housing and food to
8 low-income public high school students should not be
9 left as a choice but mandatory. Many NYC public
10 school students are homeless and barely surviving.
11 These students and their families struggle
12 financially while being criminalized for being low-
13 income, Black and Latinx.

14 NYC must provide students with technology, food,
15 physical and mental healthcare whether we are in a
16 pandemic or not. The people who are always left
17 behind have not been considered during this pandemic.

18 What is being done for homeless students? What
19 is being done for homeless students? What is being
20 done for students who live in financially, unstable
21 homes without food, heat or Wi-Fi? What is being
22 done for students who live in abusive homes? The
23 same thing that was being done for them before the
24 pandemic. Nothing.

1
2 There is a lot New York City needs to do for its
3 public school students inside the school building.

4 In the Good Shepherd we [LOST AUDIO 8:45:41-8:45:48].

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: It looks like your connection
6 has cut off. Are you still there? Okay, we will go
7 to the next panelist. Try logging out of the Zoom
8 and logging back in and then we will come back to
9 you.

10 So, let's go ahead and unmute Naa-Shorme.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

12 NAA-SHORME AIDOO: Good evening, my name is Naa-
13 Shorme Aidoo, I am the Policy Director for Expanded
14 Schools. We are a local intermediary that supports
15 local nonprofit organizations for afterschool
16 programs via funding and coaching MTA support. I am
17 here today to specifically speak with you about our
18 program called The Middle School Expanded Learning
19 Program, also and well known as MS Extra.

20 This work is coordinated by the New York City's
21 Middle School Quality Initiative which is an
22 invaluable investment in supporting students in
23 schools as they work towards equity and education and
24 amelioration of literacy. And middle schools
25 particularly as students have experienced COVID

1
2 learning loss as they continue to adjust to remote
3 and socially distant learning.

4 We know that proficient literacy skills in middle
5 school are essential towards building out the lives
6 that we all want for our young people that 66 percent
7 of New York City's children from low-income
8 communities do not receive the support needed to
9 achieve proficient literacy skills. Which then has a
10 positive correlation with high school dropout rates
11 and has detrimental effects on their post-secondary
12 and career endeavors.

13 And so, we are here today to ask that funding for
14 the middle school expanded learning program, also
15 known as MS Extra, is fully restored at \$1.5 million.
16 Along with other programs associated with the Middle
17 School Quality Initiative. What makes MS Extra
18 different from other programs is that it focuses on
19 the lack of comprehension for students who do know
20 how to read fluently throughout their middle school
21 years.

22 Students who struggle with reading comprehension
23 spend an hour per day engaging in small group
24 tutoring, led by trained professionals in which they
25 analyze variance culturally relevant tests.

1
2 Throughout the implementation, they are able to see
3 themselves mirrored in literature as a way that they
4 can eventually find windows for discovery of other
5 cultures and experiences. Participating schools also
6 extend the learning day by 2.5 hours, so that young
7 people can engage in arts, sports, academic and
8 social/emotional learning.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

10 NAA-SHORME AIDOO: To build their skills. Again,
11 this is a resource that was completely critical prior
12 to COVID and just continues through this relevant and
13 important as it is a really critical tool towards
14 COVID recovery.

15 So, we ask that you do support this in the
16 upcoming budget, along with the many other needs that
17 we see for young people in our most vulnerable
18 communities. Thank you for your time.

19 COMMMITTE COUNSEL: Thank you and it looks like
20 we got back Solangel, so we will go ahead and unmute
21 and we will try one more time to get the testimony.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

23 SOLANGEL ALMONTE GOUG: There is a [INAUDIBLE
24 8:49:00-8:49:04] and the need for trustworthy support
25 for students, support staff in school [INAUDIBLE

1
2 8:49:08-8:49:10] for a healthy school culture. One
3 Social Worker and one Counselor in school is hard
4 enough, being a teenager is hard enough. Being in
5 New York City is hard enough. Being a teenager in
6 New York City is not easy, especially when you have
7 no one to talk to. These students are going through
8 their own personal and family issue. Each student
9 deserves the attention and time from professional
10 adults. Some students go through high school never
11 meeting their counselor or social worker. And if you
12 don't meet the counselor or social worker, the only
13 professional adults outside of the classroom that
14 speak at young children are school safety agents and
15 these police officers are not listening, they are
16 policing us.

17 Trust needs to be honored. Trust takes time and
18 student support staff replace safety agents with
19 student support staff. Thank you.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and that concludes
21 the testimony for this panel. Next, I will be
22 calling on Tamara Gayer, Kemala Karmen from New York
23 City Opt Out, Iman Hamby from Sisters and Brothers
24 United and Jennifer Finn Teachers Unite.

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2 The panel after that will be Travis Mariani[SP?]
3 Sisters and Brothers United, Wesley Guzman Sisters
4 and Brother United, Leopold Spungellor[SP?] OFNEY and
5 Nia Morgan Urban Youth Collaborative. We will first
6 start with Tamara Gayer.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

8 TAMARA GAYER: Hello, can you hear me?

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, you are unmuted, go
10 ahead.

11 TAMARA GAYER: Amazing. So, first of all thank
12 you Chair Treyger and thank you for the Committee in
13 general for the opportunity to testify. My name is
14 Tamara Gayer, I am a parent and a Parent Association
15 President from South Williamsburg and I am really
16 happy to see you hear so long on this call and so
17 involved although I do look forward to the day when
18 our civil servants who are supposed to listen to us
19 from the DOE actually go after the public and hear
20 all of these comments first.

21 Anyway, I am here to talk about, as many have
22 before, the budget as a moral document, right? We
23 all know that this Committee knows it more than
24 anyone else. You guys have acted on that very often,
25 even in the recent past, but what these dual

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2 pandemics have illuminated is that there are certain
3 items which can't be half stepped, can't be
4 reevaluated, can't be put off for later and we have a
5 very limited amount of money to work with.

6 So, starting on the recent history started by the
7 PEP that did not extend the Pearson Contract for DNT,
8 we need to exam all high stakes testing. We cannot
9 use the language we hear coming out recently of
10 learning loss to institute more high stakes testing
11 to investigate this. We know what student needs.
12 They need small class sizes. They need counselors.
13 They need school where there are no cops in them,
14 right? These are all places where we can save money
15 and return our school to a much more human, one on
16 one culturally responsive atmosphere that will craft
17 a generation that will grow up not only to do us
18 proud but to really sort of save us from all the
19 mistakes that we have made.

20 So, I am not here to tell you today what to spend
21 money on because I think that's very clear. I am
22 telling you that there are some things -

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

24 TAMARA GAYER: That we should not spend money on.
25 The previous speaker said, not \$1.00 to testing, not

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2 \$1.00 to policing. We have an opportunity here to do
3 so much better for all of us and thank you for your
4 time.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
6 hear from Kemala Karmen from New York City Opt Out.

7 KEMALA KARMEN: Hi, my name is Kemala Karmen and
8 I am a public school parent. I am also a Cofounder
9 of the Grassroots Organization NYC Opt Out.

10 I testified before this Committee about two years
11 ago. It was a memorable occasion because Anthony
12 Ramos and his former high school teachers Sara
13 Steinwise also testified at that meeting and the
14 point of their testimony was that had Steinwise not
15 been able to look past Anthony Ramos's pretty poor
16 standardized test scores to see him holistically, he
17 may never have gone on to acting conservatory and
18 then on to being in the original Broadway Cast of
19 Hamlet.

20 Steinwise's story didn't have such a fairytale
21 ending. She felt so hamstrung by the strictures of
22 teaching in a test-based environment that this
23 talented teacher left the system, which is a loss for
24 our city's school children, including any future
25 Anthony Ramos's.

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2 So, it was ironic and deeply disappointing when
3 at that same hearing shortly afterwards Linda Chen,
4 who is the NYC DOE Chief Academic Officer confirmed
5 that the city would be imposing further testing,
6 standardized testing on our children. In this case,
7 the MAP test.

8 Then as now, we are told that we need these tests
9 to know how our school are doing. How our children
10 are doing and Council Member Treyger, I specifically
11 recall that you said, if you really want to know what
12 they are doing – this is what you said to her. You
13 can pick up the phone and call them. You can speak
14 to the schools, you can speak to the principals, you
15 can speak to the teachers. And you were exactly
16 right because our teachers, like Steinwise have
17 expertise. They have master's degrees, sometimes
18 they have doctorates and they are trained in crafting
19 assessments for the students who are in front of
20 them. Not that reflect those students. Not some
21 theoretical student –

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

23 KEMALA KARMEN: That's for the you know, the off
24 the shelf product assessment like the MAP. So, at
25 this budget hearing, I ask that not one penny be

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2 spent on the MAP or similar testing instruments. You
3 have heard all the good ways we could be spending
4 that money. Don't use it for something as
5 inessential as the MAP.

6 This coming year will be more crucial than ever
7 that we see our children as more than data points.
8 Not to mention that the U.S. Department of Education
9 in a study found that the MAP has no statistically
10 relevant impact on student achievement.

11 Finally, on the subject of another set of tasks,
12 the federally mandated state test, I bring your
13 attention for Former Chancellor Carranza's outgoing
14 promise that all parents be given information about
15 Opt Out in multiple languages. I want everyone on
16 this call to be aware that they have the right to opt
17 their children out of these tests and for the DOE to
18 honor this promise in a timely manner.

19 And this year that extends to the Regents Exams
20 as well as the 3rd through 8th grade tests because the
21 Regents Exams are not graduation requirements this
22 year. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And I want to thank you
24 publicly for reopening Anthony Ramos's story, which I
25 am going to continue to also amplify during my career

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2 because a child that our system labeled as
3 underperforming is now one of the top performers
4 globally. He just came back from Budapest recently.
5 This summer, we are going to finally see in the
6 Heights, which I cannot wait to see and I am so proud
7 of him and he inspired me and challenged me to invest
8 more in the arts and theater in my district and
9 across the city. And we recently announced that we
10 made a significant \$7.5 million investment in John
11 Dewey High School to build a beautiful Broadway
12 Theater Auditorium. But the bigger story here to
13 your point is that the system failed him. The system
14 tried to label him as underperforming through the use
15 of standardized exams inadequate supports when in
16 reality, this kids a shining star and we should have
17 brought that out in him much sooner, earlier.

18 And I also want to say for the record, that
19 because New York State is still – or the federal
20 government and the state requiring the Administration
21 of State Exams next year. That is contributing to
22 significant stacking demands of our schools because
23 when the Mayor announced about the opt in period
24 again being reopened, one of the initial things I
25 heard from principal again, schools want – principals

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want schools to safely reopen. They want to help

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their children but one of the demands is to

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administer the exams. And they don't know how to

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make this work with inadequate staff and support.

6

So, just imagine, we are prioritizing exams over

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services for children. It is outrageous.

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KEMALA KARMEN: It's outrageous and other

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districts are letting their parents know that they

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can opt out and our district, we are the biggest one

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in the state, we need to do it.

12

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And quite frankly, it would

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allow, if they could just get rid of these testing,

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it would allow actual services for children rather

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than people scrambling on how to administer this test

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that quite frankly, the results are meaningless quite

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frankly. And so, I just - I applaud you for

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amplifying this even before the pandemic and I also

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am on the record saying that as far as the high

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school Regents again, never really measured student

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performance and work and there are proven models,

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project-based learning, which I have always been

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supportive of.

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So, thank you for always amplifying that. Thanks

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for your testimony today.

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KEMALA KARMEN: Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will hear from Iman Hamby.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

IMAN HAMBY: Hello, can you hear me?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, you are unmuted, go ahead.

IMAN HAMBY: CDC and I attend Bronx West High School. I live in the Hunts Point area of the Bronx and I am here in support of police free schools.

The Council needs to focus on increasing money for support systems that help young people in different circumstances. And mental health professionals should support youth when dealing with a mental health crisis. Social workers or counselors can help lower tensions when a fight happens. The police are an armed force and should not be who school rely on for safety because students are scholars not criminals.

For me and my other classmates, it would reduce a lot of stress and we would feel a lot safer at school. I know a lot of you think that putting police in schools is the most secure method to keep them safe, it's not. And in fact, it puts them at

1
2 more risk. I assure you that even minor offenses
3 like late attendance have led to countless arrests of
4 Black and Brown youth. This needs to end. Black and
5 Latinx students in New York City have consistently
6 been targeted for harsher punishments than their
7 White peers and arrested at a higher rate.

8 As a result, Black and Latinx students make up 90
9 percent of all youth arrests, court summons and
10 juvenile reports issued by school police. The
11 representative here today have an opportunity to end
12 decades of abuse first sent into motion by Former
13 Mayor and seditionist Rudy Giuliani.

14 Today, I call upon the Council to stop funding
15 the school to prison pipeline and make our schools
16 free from police. Invest in us and invest in all the
17 New York City students. Thank you.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
19 hear from Jennifer Finn Teachers Unite.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: It looks like we lost
22 Jennifer, so we will now go to our next panel. The
23 next panel is Travis Mariani from Sisters and
24 Brothers United, Wesley Guzman Sisters and Brothers
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2 United, Leopold Spungellor OFENY and Nia Morgan Urban
3 Youth Collaborative. We will start with Travis.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we will come back to
6 Travis. We will go to Wesley Guzman from Sisters and
7 Brothers United, if we can go ahead and unmute
8 Wesley.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

10 WESLEY GUZMAN: Hello, my name is Wesley Guzman,
11 I am a Youth Leader from Sisters and Brothers United
12 and I would like to use my two minutes to sit in
13 silence to symbolize how you are silencing students
14 and calls for police free schools. [SILENCE 9:02:24-
15 9:04:14].

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
18 call on Nia Morgan before we go back to Travis. Nia
19 Morgan.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

21 NIA MORGAN: Thank you Chair Treyger and City
22 Council. I will be brief. I just echo a lot of what
23 youth and advocates have said today opposing police
24 in schools, as well as the inequities that exist
25 throughout our New York City public education system.

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2 I will just add a point that folks haven't
3 highlighted yet today and that is how much New York
4 City is an outlier in New York City public school.
5 Like, an outlier in having police in school and I am
6 speaking as an individual, not in my official
7 capacity as a staff member at the Urban Youth
8 Collaborative.

9 The fact that our city spends \$450 million on
10 police in schools just to the Executive Budget, not
11 even through all the money that goes towards metal
12 detectors and surveillance equipment is an outlier.
13 The next largest school system that uses police is
14 school is Los Angeles United School District. And
15 they just cut their budget 35 percent from \$70
16 million to \$35 million. Yeah, so \$35 - \$45 million,
17 they cut it \$25 million. And that means that the
18 next largest school district not only cut it but it
19 is so much smaller than our policing budget that it
20 is almost unconscionable. In fact it is
21 unconscionable the fact that we spend so much money
22 on this.

23 This system did not appear out of nowhere. It
24 was designed to act this way and to actively police
25 Black and Brown youth in particular. It also is a

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2 way to funnel resources away from the students who
3 need it the most. It is a way to control students
4 and not to actually educate and support them.

5 So, I just would also like to echo the needs of
6 the most marginalized students and for them to be
7 centered in all of conversations. It's not just
8 Black and Brown youth. It's folks who have
9 disabilities, folks who identify as queer. It's
10 folks who need language access. They deserve more
11 than equity, they deserve justice and it is far past
12 time for that. Thank you.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and now we will go
15 back to Travis Mariani.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, he is not accepting the
18 unmute. So, there have been a lot of people that
19 have been coming on and dropping off throughout
20 today's hearing. Some people who I have seen on our
21 registration list. So, if anyone has dropped off and
22 is now back on the Zoom and has not testified, please
23 use the raise hand function now and I will call on
24 you in the order that you raised it.

1
2 Seeing no hands, that concludes the public
3 testimony for this Executive Budget Hearing Chair
4 Treyger and I turn it back to you.

5 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you. Thank you
6 Malcolm and thank you to the entire Council Staff for
7 your help for preparing us for today's important
8 hearing. So much work happens behind the scenes, on
9 the scenes and I really appreciate the Council. My
10 staff and the Education Committee Staff.

11 We have a lot of work to do. We still need a lot
12 of more information. We didn't get a lot of answers
13 from the DOE today. As you know, we welcome the new
14 Chancellor but the staff there at the DOE just for
15 the public record, you know we did submit a list of
16 questions in advance to get answers today and we will
17 follow up to get those answers.

18 I also, you know, a couple questions came up
19 during the course of the hearing with regards to the
20 Administrations proposal or idea of hiring additional
21 School Safety Agents, which for us in the Council is
22 a nonstarter. I made that clear at the previous
23 hearing. I will repeat that position and you know,
24 the Mayor's Office sent me messages that folks were
25 not supposed to say that. Well, we want that off the

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2 table and we want that money invested in our school
3 communities in meaningful ways towards social
4 workers, counselors, restorations of programs,
5 community schools, ITW, PSAL, a whole host of things
6 that we know our kids actually need and actually make
7 a difference in school communities.

8 So, we will be following up and again, thank you
9 everyone for your testimony and folks who have
10 emailed testimony over. We do review it and I thank
11 everyone for their time. And this hearing is
12 adjourned.

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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 May 30, 2021