

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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February 27, 2018
Start: 10:11 a.m.
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HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: MARK TREYGER
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

- STEPHEN T. LEVIN
- ALICKA ARMORY-SAMUEL
- INEZ D. BARRON
- JOSEPH C. BORELLI
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- DEBORAH L. ROSE
- RAFAEL SALAMANCA, JR.

ERIC A. ULRICH
DONOVAN RICHARDS

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

Christopher Caruso
Executive Director of the New York City
Department of Education's Office of Community
Schools

Aimee Horowitz
Executive Superintendent of Mayor De Blasio's
School Renewal Program

Laura Feijoo
Senior Supervising Superintendent at the New York
City Department of Education

Cheryl Watson-Harris
Senior Executive Director of the Field Support
Centers

Karen Alford
Vice President of the United Federation of
Teachers Elementary Schools

Henry Rubio
Executive Vice President of the Council of School
Administration

Patrick Reynold Joseph
Senior Education Policy Analyst for the Manhattan
Borough President

Randi Levine
Policy Director at Advocates for Children of New
York

Kim Watkins
President of Community Education Council in
District Three

Leonie Haimson
Executive Director of Class Size Matters

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

Julia Daniel
Graduate School Resources at the University of
Colorado

Terrence Winston
Program Director for Counseling in Schools

Jeremy Kaplan
Senior Director for Schools and Community
Education at Phipps Neighborhoods

Robin Weenstra-VanderWeele
Chief Program Officer at Partnership with
Children

Terry Kim
Senior Policy Analyst at Children's Aid

Michelle Yanche
Associate Executive Director at Good Shepard
Services

Sajid Ciar
Student at the High School for Health Careers and
Sciences

Fe Florimon
Chair of the Youth and Education Committee of
Community Board 12

Samantha Alvarez
Senior at the High School for Health Careers and
Sciences

Lasandra Medina
Parents United

Pamela Stewart-Martinez
President of the Bronx High School Federation

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

Celia Green

Mother of six boys, President for the President's Council for District 75, Acting President for the Citywide Council on High Schools

Christine Schuch

Executive Director, New York City community Learning Schools Initiative

German Sosa

Senior at the High School for Health Careers and Sciences

Orose Momejia

Parent Leader for Health Careers and Sciences High School

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[gavel]

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CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Good morning. I'm

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Mark Treyger, the new Chair of the Education

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Committee and I'm pleased to welcome you today to, to

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today's...

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[applause]

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CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you... to

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today's oversight hearing on community schools and

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renewal schools. We'll also hear testimony today on

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Intro 262 sponsored by Council Member Donovan

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Richards, I'll talk more about this bill shortly

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after some opening remarks and then we'll hear from

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Council Member Richards directly. The notion of

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community schools that expand the link between

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schools and communities has been around for many

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decades. The basic idea of a community school is to

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serve as a neighborhood hub incorporating health and

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social services, educational, recreational, and

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cultural programs and other supports for children,

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families and communities. The community school model

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currently implemented in New York City and many other

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areas of the country also focuses on, on involving

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families and communities in improving student's

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education. In fall 2014 very early in its tenure,

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2 Mayor De Blasio committed to expanding the number of
3 community schools across the city through a community
4 schools initiative. Not long thereafter the Mayor
5 announced the school renewal program, a 150-million-
6 dollar initiative to turn around low performing
7 schools in part by transforming them into community
8 schools. Since that time in an unfortunate muddying
9 of the waters the city's community school model has
10 come under increasing scrutiny as a school
11 improvement strategy. The Department of Education
12 initially identified 94 struggling renewal schools to
13 participate in the program. In addition to
14 transforming them into community schools the Mayor
15 specified other key supports that renewal schools
16 would receive including an extra hour of
17 instructional time for students every school day,
18 extra seats in after school programs, and high
19 quality academically focused summer programs.
20 Additionally, renewal schools would get more
21 professional training and instructional support to
22 develop effective school leaders and teachers. I've
23 had the opportunity to visit many renewal and Rise
24 schools in the past weeks with my colleagues to speak
25 with students, parent leaders, school leadership and

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2 have had conversations with other schools in the
3 program. What I saw and heard was deeply inspiring,
4 many of these schools have made significant
5 improvements, demonstrate a strong school culture and
6 the importance of the integrated supports
7 particularly social workers raying resoundingly.

8 Students in these schools felt supported and safe. In
9 announcing the school renewal program Mayor De Blasio
10 said his administration would provide additional
11 supports and tools to help turnaround struggling
12 schools reserving school closure as a last resort in
13 contrast with the prior administration whose primary
14 strategy was to close or phase out underperforming
15 schools and replace them with new district or charter
16 schools. Yet since the renewal... since the school
17 renewal program launch in 2014 with 94 schools the
18 DOE has closed nine renewal schools, merged ten more
19 and truncated two others. At the start of this school
20 year there were 78 renewal schools citywide and the
21 DOE is proposing to close another eight, merge five
22 others and truncate one more. However, 21 renewal
23 schools have shown sufficient improvement to
24 transition out of the program to become Rise schools.
25 If all the proposals are approved by the panel for

1
2 educational policy, PEP at its February 28th meeting
3 there will be just 47 renewal schools in the 2018-19
4 school year. I have a number of concerns about the
5 way these programs are being implemented which I hope
6 will be addressed today. First, the concept of a
7 community school has now become confused with the
8 negative image of a low performing renewal school. I
9 believe that all schools should be community schools
10 and would like to decouple the identities of
11 community schools and renewal schools. In fact, I'm
12 very concerned about the negative branding of renewal
13 schools as the label signals that that school is
14 among the lowest performing in the city rather than a
15 school with greater investment, new programs and
16 opportunities. While many renewal schools had
17 previously been designated as priority or focus
18 schools by the New York State Education Department,
19 the renewal schools branding is much more salient
20 than either of the state designations capturing
21 significant media attention. This stigma has
22 contributed to serious enrollment declines at many
23 renewal schools which is often the reason cited for
24 closing or merging these schools. I also believe that
25 the stigma is a factor in the high teacher attrition

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2 rates at these schools. Beyond this I believe that
3 many... that the many overlapping sometimes competing
4 designations applied to these schools are cause for
5 confusion. Between benchmarks for renewal schools,
6 priority or focus schools and community schools,
7 individual school buildings must navigate multiple
8 layers of bureaucracy and accountability on a daily
9 basis. While all renewal schools are community
10 schools, improvements in renewal schools were
11 measured on a three-year horizon and yet by the DOE's
12 own community school's framework it takes four years
13 for a community school to reach the excelling stage.
14 The addition of the Rise designation this year begs
15 further questions about the vision for schools in
16 that program. As DOE has said they will transition
17 out of some renewal school program supports over
18 time. To me the idea of rewarding success with a
19 budget cut is unacceptable, at the same time the DOE
20 has stated that Rise schools will be held accountable
21 to more ambitious benchmarks for improvement without
22 providing clarity on what those benchmarks are and
23 what the consequences may be for a Rise school which
24 falls short of its benchmarks. We hope to learn more
25 today about the management and support structures for

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2 community schools and renewal schools as there is
3 very little information publicly available on this.
4 The committee is also interested in learning about
5 the benchmarks and standards used for renewal school
6 accountability. Additionally, the committee would
7 like to update... would like an update on the total
8 budgets for community schools and renewal schools in
9 Fiscal Year 2018 and the projected cost for Fiscal
10 Year 2019. Today's hearing will provide an
11 opportunity for the DOE to respond to the concerns
12 raised as well as for educators, advocates, unions,
13 adults, learners, and other stakeholders to share
14 their concerns and recommendations related to
15 community schools and renewal schools. As I stated
16 earlier we will also hear testimony on Intro 262
17 today. Intro 262 would, would require the DOE to
18 provide school level data regarding students
19 receiving special education services. The proposed
20 legislation would amend Local Law 27 of 2015 to
21 require the DOE to report on the number of students
22 enrolled who have an individualized education plan
23 desegregated by school. I'd like to remind everyone
24 who wishes to testify today that you must fill out a
25 witness slip which is located on the desk of the

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2 Sergeant at Arms near the front of this room, if you
3 wish to testify on Intro 262 please indicate on the
4 witness slip whether you are here testifying in favor
5 or in opposition to the bill. I also want to point
6 out that, that we will not be voting on Intro 262
7 today and to allow as many people as possible to
8 testify testimony will be limited to three minutes
9 per, per person. Sure, so I'd like to just recognize
10 my colleagues who, who are here; Council Member
11 Grodenchik, Council Member Cornegy, Council Member
12 Rodriguez, Council Member Deutsch, Council Member
13 Richards, Council Member Ampry-Samuel, Council Member
14 Maisel, Council Member and former Chair and Finance
15 Chair, Council Member Danny Dromm, Council Member
16 Cohen and Council Member Brannan and Council Member
17 Rose just.. thank you so much for, for being here. And
18 now I'd like to turn the floor over to my colleague,
19 Council Member Donovan Richards for his remarks on
20 Intro 262.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Thank you and
22 good morning and thank you Chair Treyger for hearing
23 this bill. I'd like to address my bill Intro 262
24 which would require the Department of Education to
25 provide school level data regarding students

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2 receiving special education services. As Council
3 Member of district 31 I always want to have my finger
4 on the pulse of what's happening in schools in the
5 district and through discussions with administrators
6 I've learned that some schools have been severely
7 overwhelmed by students with individualized education
8 programs or IEPs. The goal of this legislation is to
9 shine a light on schools that are desperately in need
10 of more resources to address the needs of our
11 students who have the greatest challenges. It's hard
12 to ignore the political rhetoric flying around these
13 days so let me just say, the only things we should be
14 focused on armoring our teachers with is more funding
15 and more resources, they hold the fate of our future
16 in their hands and we must make every effort to
17 ensure they are properly prepared for this tremendous
18 responsibility. Thank you Chair, I look forward to
19 hearing from the Department of Education on this
20 bill, thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you Member..
22 Council Member Richards and I'll just recognize the
23 first panel; we have Chris Caruso, Aimee Horowitz,
24 Laura Feijoo, and Cheryl Watson Harris and before I
25 ask you for the opening statement I'd like to just

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2 swear the panel in. Do you swear or affirm to tell
3 the truth in your testimony and to answer Council
4 Member questions honestly? Thank you, you may
5 proceed.

6 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: Thank you very much.
7 Good morning Council Member and Chair Treyger,
8 congratulations on becoming Chair of the Education
9 Committee and good morning and welcome to all members
10 of the Education and Council here today. Thank you
11 for the opportunity to testify on New York City's
12 work to support struggling schools and to bring
13 schools and communities together as partners to build
14 a better future for students and families. My name is
15 Christopher Caruso and I'm the Executive Director of
16 the New York City Department of Education's Office of
17 Community Schools. Here with me this morning are
18 Aimee Horowitz, Executive Superintendent for the
19 Office of Renewal Schools; Laura Feijoo, Senior
20 Supervising Superintendent; and Cheryl Watson-Harris,
21 Senior Executive Director of the Office of Field
22 Support. DOE's top priority is to provide all
23 students with access to a high-quality education that
24 ensures their future success as productive citizens
25 and critical thinkers. As part of this

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2 administration's commitment to equity and excellence
3 for all we have implemented a number of reforms to
4 improve instruction, streamline school support and
5 accountability and provide students with the academic
6 and social emotional supports necessary to help them
7 in school. The community school's initiative and the
8 renewal school program are strategies that embody
9 this commitment. In 2014 Mayor De Blasio released a
10 comprehensive strategic plan that launched and
11 sustained a system of over 100 community schools
12 across New York City. I am happy to report that we
13 have more than doubled our initial goal and now have
14 227 community schools in every borough serving over
15 116,000 students. I know firsthand the power of
16 community schools as I have spent my career at the
17 intersection of schools and communities. I started my
18 career in 1998 as a Program Director for the
19 Children's Aid Society at one of their early
20 community schools, PS8 up in Washington Heights. I
21 witnessed the power of family engagement and youth
22 voice, I saw the joy on parent's faces when we were
23 able to provide health and dental services in the
24 school building and I felt school culture improve as
25 relationships between students and adults deepened

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2 through mentoring and expanded learning time. I also
3 learned that this work is not easy that partnerships
4 and collaboration do not necessarily come naturally
5 and now it is a privilege to have my career come full
6 circle and have the opportunity to lead New York
7 City's efforts to scale the community school strategy
8 citywide. As of today, we have transformed 227
9 schools into community schools welcoming places that
10 provide students with the support necessary to
11 succeed on their journey both inside and outside the
12 classroom. This is thanks to the leadership of the
13 Mayor and the Chancellor, the advocacy and
14 partnership of the UFT and the city council and the
15 commitment and dedication of community-based
16 organizations and thousands of educators and students
17 across this city. Community schools as the Chair
18 mentioned are not a new concept especially in New
19 York City where we have deep roots in this work
20 dating back to settlement houses working with schools
21 to the Beacon School Program to the Children's Aid
22 Society's network of community schools and more
23 recently the UFTA's community learning schools. What
24 is new now is that this administration has built a
25 system to support the growth and quality of community

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2 schools. We have introduced a common approach and
3 increased funding and professional development. We
4 have defined community schools in New York City as a
5 strategy to organize resources and share leadership
6 so that instruction, health, youth development and
7 family engagement are integrated into the fabric of
8 schools. Community schools are more than a program or
9 a model or a set of wraparound services, they
10 represent a different way of thinking for both
11 schools and for communities. Community schools
12 recognize that in order for students to achieve
13 academic excellence we must support the whole child
14 and their family. New York City community schools
15 share common structures and services that unite them,
16 and they are grounded in the evidence that
17 collaborative partnerships are more likely to realize
18 results. These common elements include defined
19 partnerships with a community-based organization or
20 CBO, collaborative leadership practices and a
21 community school director, data driven continuous
22 improvement practices, expanded learning time both
23 after school and during the summer, robust family
24 engagement and health and wellness services. Our 227
25 community schools became the... receive that

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2 designation in several different ways, I'll name
3 three of them right now. In 2014 we invited schools
4 with the highest rates of chronic absenteeism, that's
5 children missing more than 20 percent of school days
6 or more, to apply to become a community school and we
7 selected 45. In 2015, 94 renewal schools also became
8 community schools as part of their school turnaround
9 strategy. And just this past year 70 schools in 23
10 districts were awarded federal 21st century community
11 learning center grants from New York State Education
12 Department and they became community schools this
13 past September. In addition to the 227 community
14 schools supported by our office, there are community
15 schools that operate independently outside the DOE's
16 network through philanthropic support, preexisting
17 relationships and or entrepreneurial leadership. When
18 you walk into a community school as the Chair
19 mentioned you immediately notice a difference, you
20 see educators and community partners working together
21 to meet students and families where they are
22 providing the supports necessary for students to meet
23 high educational standards. Our goal is to create a
24 warm and welcoming environment where all students
25 feel like they belong. The community school director

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2 role has evolved to become an important leader and a
3 key partner in our... to our principals. The CSDs
4 coordinate partnerships and target supports, they
5 provide the right interventions to the right students
6 at the right time and through these partnerships we
7 are providing more time for learning, academic
8 support, enrichment activities and health and
9 wellness services and more. For example, Fiorella
10 Guevara, a CSD with El Puente at MS 50 in
11 Williamsburg leads attendance meetings, coordinates
12 the health supports for students and families,
13 ensures culturally relevant learning opportunities
14 and supports student's leadership skills. Community
15 schools also facilitate a direct connection between
16 home and schools, school staff conduct home visits
17 and parents are invited into schools for classes and
18 workshops. We know that parents are a vital asset to
19 public education and we need their partnership. By
20 working closely with parents, we are empowering them
21 to become leaders in the school and support their
22 children's learning at home. Over 400 parents have
23 either completed or are currently participating in
24 our core leader program and 11,000 parents and
25 caregivers have participated in an event or taken

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2 action at one of their community schools. We are
3 encouraged by the early results in our community
4 school system. In the three years since the Office of
5 Community Schools was created chronic absenteeism has
6 dropped by almost six percent, English language art
7 scores are up over ten percent, math scores are up
8 four and a half percent and graduation rates are up
9 11.2 percent more... twice as much as the citywide
10 average and incidents and suspensions are down as
11 well but the results go beyond academic performance.
12 Social workers and mental health providers have led
13 groups and provided counseling for thousands of
14 students and legal professionals have met with 1,060
15 students and family members to advise them on their
16 immigration rights. Thanks to support from the city
17 council some schools have partnered with the Food
18 Bank of New York to create food pantries in our
19 schools so that hunger does not distract from
20 learning. At East Bronx Academy for the Future in the
21 Bronx, a partnership with Phipps Neighborhoods. Not
22 only do families have support, have access to food
23 and basic personal feminine hygiene needs but
24 students volunteer to work in the pantry and they
25 learn basic business skills. The council has also

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2 allowed us to expand adult education classes in
3 community schools, 76 new classes across 23 schools
4 are providing adult students with social services and
5 employment supports as they learn English, prepare
6 for their degree and, and improve their ability to
7 participate in their children's education. public
8 private partnerships play a key role in our community
9 school strategy, through a partnership Warby Parker
10 over 140,000 students have had vision screening and
11 35,000 children have received free eye glasses since
12 2015. Through a partnership with Sprint we are
13 providing high school students with free Wi-Fi
14 hotspots so that kids can complete their assignments
15 and study outside of the school hours at home helping
16 to address the homework gap. Students keep the
17 hotspots throughout their time in high school.
18 Renaissance School for the Arts in East Harlem
19 exemplifies how this strategy works, the school
20 leadership and faculty implemented new teacher
21 training in partnership with children social work
22 team has provided counseling services, facilitated a
23 parent support group and train teachers on social,
24 emotional learning strategies. As Margaret Crotty
25 from Partnership with Children reported by working

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2 together Renaissance and PWC have developed a
3 flourishing school culture where strong student voice
4 is developing and inside and outside of the
5 classroom. You see it in active student government, a
6 student run store and even the way that students
7 communicate and support their ideas when they're
8 interacting with adults. Since 2014 the percentage of
9 students proficient in ELA has increased 17 points at
10 Renaissance and the percentage of students proficient
11 in math has increased 13 points. Renewal schools are
12 New York City schools that need the most urgent
13 attention, the program was launched in November 2014
14 and currently 78 out of our 227 community schools are
15 also renewal schools. while the community school
16 strategy is an essential component of the school
17 turnaround efforts we do not believe that
18 implementing the community school strategy alone is
19 enough to turn around a persistently low performing
20 school. New York City community schools are just one
21 component of the renewal strategy so while all
22 renewal schools are community schools not all
23 community schools are renewal schools. the renewal
24 program is the most ambitious turnaround program in
25 the country, it provides unprecedented resources

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2 alongside targeted supports and increased
3 accountability to help long struggling schools change
4 outcomes for students. At the heart of the program is
5 a commitment to invest in communities that have long
6 been underserved. We also extended the school day at
7 every renewal school by five hours per week and
8 provided these students with 100 percent of their
9 fair student funding. These schools will have greater
10 autonomy and receive targeted supports as well as
11 continued monitoring in order to build on the
12 progress that they have made over the past three
13 years. Forty-seven renewal schools will be continuing
14 in the program, these schools have made some progress
15 and we believe that with additional time, support and
16 supervision they can reach their benchmarks and
17 become Rise Schools. Local Superintendents and field
18 support centers are working together with each of
19 these schools to ensure that they have a tailored
20 plan to achieve renewal success. As part of the
21 critical fourth year Superintendents are providing
22 additional monitoring to schools completing four
23 visits between January and May, directors of school
24 renewal are visiting schools at least twice a week to
25 provide additional feedback and guidance and each

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2 renewal school has clear goals in ELA and math that
3 will help them meet their benchmarks by next year.
4 Together Aimee, Cheryl and I and, and my team in the
5 Office of Community Schools have developed a model
6 that streamlines our processes, clarifies
7 expectations and improves communications in sharing
8 of resources between our office and schools. we have
9 more work to do but we are already receiving positive
10 feedback and seeing indicators of progress. We knew
11 when we set out on this journey that we wouldn't
12 succeed every time, there is no single formula for
13 school turnaround, it requires the right leadership,
14 hard work, investment, adjustment, doggedness and a
15 dedicated community. Not all of our schools are where
16 we wanted and as a result schools that have not made
17 enough progress and are not on track to meet their
18 renewal performance benchmarks and Rise criteria have
19 been proposed for school redesign. This includes
20 closure, grade truncation, mergers and in some cases
21 re-staffing. In each of these cases a careful review...
22 sorry, in each of these cases the careful review of
23 the school was conducted, and an individual plan was
24 developed based on what is best for students. School
25 closures is never our preferred option, but it is

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2 necessary in certain instances. The investments that
3 we have made in our community schools and renewal
4 schools are common sense and they make a difference
5 not only for the students attending these schools but
6 for their families and for the larger community. We
7 are proud of the progress that we have made to ensure
8 that each child has an equal chance to succeed and
9 thrive in the classroom and beyond. Finally, I would
10 like to turn to the proposed legislation, Intro
11 Number 262, which requires that the DOE provide
12 student level data regarding students receiving
13 special education services. We support this bill and
14 look forward to working with the city council. Thank
15 you again for the opportunity to testify before you
16 on this important issue and we will now be happy to
17 answer any questions that you may have.

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you very
19 much, we've also been joined by Council Member
20 Borelli. So, I... as I've mentioned in my opening
21 statement there is a stigma connected to the term
22 renewal school, does DOE have any plans to move away
23 from labeling schools as renewal schools moving
24 forward?

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AIMEE HOROWITZ: So, schools have... schools have throughout history always been labeled and so although we don't have plans to move away from labeling these schools as renewal schools we've worked with the schools on how to advertise the additional services that they're offering to students and the additional professional development and support that they're offering teachers from being community schools to the professional development and coaching the teachers get to the extra hour of instructional time plus the pleather of services that community schools offer to not only to students but to families and the surrounding community as well.

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But, but to be clear nothing in state law mandated the creation of this renewal school program, is that correct?

AIMEE HOROWITZ: That's correct but we are supporting our schools that were designated by the state as priority focused and schools in Chancellor's receivership, so they are part of the renewal program.

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right and I know... it's my understanding that the state requires notices be sent to families with regards to priority focus

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2 schools, is there any requirement from the state for
3 the city to send notices to parents with regards to
4 renewal schools?

5 AIMEE HOROWITZ: No and so the notices
6 that went to schools that are receivership schools
7 were the mandated notices, letters that went to
8 families from renewal schools talked about the
9 benefits of being in renewal schools including the
10 extra hour of instruction and the supports that their
11 students would receive, the targeted interventions,
12 the enrichment, the benefits offered from community
13 school whether it was social emotional services or
14 mental health support or physical health support,
15 eyeglass support so just to really inform the parents
16 of the wealth of services that their students could
17 be entitled to and could benefit from.

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, the DOE
19 notified families and communities with regards to
20 schools being designated as renewal schools through
21 what means; through a letter, through... what, what
22 kind of outreach was done to inform families about
23 what a renewal schools means?

24 AIMEE HOROWITZ: So, there was a letter
25 but Chris can totally speak more about the door

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2 knocking campaign that was engaged in where members
3 went out into local communities and visited parents
4 at home... at their homes to talk about the benefits
5 of, of community and renewal schools, phone calls
6 were made so I'll turn it over to him to expand on
7 that.

8 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: Sure, thank you
9 Aimee. Yeah, so in the summer after the renewal
10 announcement was made, summer 2015, the DOE did a
11 door knocking campaign to talk to families, to
12 explain to them what it meant for their school to
13 become a community school, we asked parents what
14 their dreams and aspirations were for their school
15 and we invited them to be involved, we wanted to know
16 directly from families what role they wanted to play
17 in their children's education and to explain to them
18 that their school would have additional supports
19 including a longer school day, more opportunities for
20 expanded learning time and mentoring and the health
21 and mental health services that we were providing.

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, you're saying
23 that that... this was done in the summer of 2015, the
24 roll out was during the 2014-2015 school year, is
25 that correct?

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AIMEE HOROWITZ: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, I, I see an issue here that the... one of the initial phases of a... of this program is the planning phase or the, you know gathering stakeholders and informing them of what's happening it seems that the outreach was done towards the end of this planning phase and I also believe that there was added confusion and, and I think to many families get, getting a notice from the state that your child attends a priority focus school and giving them options to transfer to other schools while at the same time getting notices or door knocks, celebrating the renewal school program I feel that there was not adequate time for school communities and families to process what all of this means because in one hand they're getting a letter stating that you have a right to transfer your child out of a school that is struggling and at the same time they're getting a visit from someone saying let's celebrate your child's school... [cross-talk]

AIMEE HOROWITZ: So... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: You... can you see... can you understand the confusion that some families face during this time?

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2 AIMEE HOROWITZ: So, with all due respect
3 the letter to families with the option to transfer
4 was to a limited subset of schools that were
5 designated priority schools by the state and the door
6 knocking campaign was not the initial engagement with
7 families so there was also a letter to families at
8 the start of the program once the Mayor made the
9 announcement designating the 94 schools and letting
10 families know about the extra services and what would
11 be coming down... you know what would be coming down
12 the pike so we at the DOE did our part to best inform
13 families prior to being able to engage with them in
14 person realizing that, that we needed to let families
15 know what was going down the pike... what was coming
16 down the pike and, and keep them informed being that
17 this was a massive effort, right, so the letters home
18 were one way, the door knocking was another way,
19 there were meetings at schools, PTA meetings and
20 other kinds of meetings at schools to let parents
21 know about the services, there were community
22 meetings at schools once the schools became community
23 schools to engage families to understand what
24 families wanted so there were many, many layers of
25 communication in addition to communication from City

1
2 Hall itself announcing the program and the schools
3 that would be participating in the program and
4 articles in the press and so forth.

5 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, I, I will just
6 follow up by saying that as you've mentioned not all
7 community schools are renewal schools but all renewal
8 schools are community schools and in the DOE's own
9 documents it says that schools in the community
10 schools initiative undergo four stages of
11 development; the first stage of development is the
12 exploring stage which occurs during the planning
13 year, at this stage the school team considers the
14 advantages of the community school's model and its
15 ability to organize resources that'll promote student
16 achievement so... but what I'm hearing is that some of
17 that process occurred well after the designation and
18 announcement of the community school model... [cross-
19 talk]

20 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: Yeah, it... [cross-
21 talk]

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: ...for, for these
23 schools... [cross-talk]

24 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: ...I think it's
25 important to note that the, the experience for

1
2 families when they really felt the change would have
3 been the '15-'16 school year and as we mentioned the
4 announcement was made in November of 2014 and so that
5 planning process happened from November 2014 through
6 the summer and that's when school leaders and
7 teachers and family members interviewed community
8 based organizations to think about what type of
9 community school partner they wanted and that's when
10 the completed their comprehensive education plans and
11 started to put the, the pieces into place. We will
12 acknowledge... this was an accelerated timeline, right,
13 there was a real sense of urgency for these schools
14 and the stages of development is a... you know a
15 nationally normed document that the National Center
16 for Community Schools has created in many school
17 districts when they're thinking about how they're
18 going to implement community school strategies refer
19 to. So, you know we acknowledge that this was
20 accelerated but the, the planning year was really in
21 that '14-'15... [cross-talk]

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right... [cross-talk]

23 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: ...year.

24 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right but
25 respectively, you know schools are not robots,

1
2 they're not just machines you just... you don't, don't
3 just press the button and it just processes a change
4 or output so this is a lot of information and a lot
5 of process to, to really digest and to make sure
6 school communities under, understand and I understand
7 that the state has it, it's accountability measures
8 although we will remind the state of their
9 accountability to children in New York city and to
10 make sure that they fully fund New York City schools
11 and... but we should not be adding any additional
12 confusion or frustration for our families and so I,
13 I, I do believe that the roll out of the program
14 unfortunately muddied the promise and the potential
15 of the community school because I do... I do think that
16 these schools were not given the adequate opportunity
17 to fully process and digest what the community school
18 model is, is all about. Moving forward, in the DOE's
19 community school's framework there is as I mentioned
20 a four... there's a four year horizon for schools to
21 move from exploring to the emerging to the maturing
22 to the excelling stage. Yet under the renewal school
23 program the schools which were supposed to receive
24 the community schools model were given a three-year
25 timeframe for turnaround, given this can renewal

1
2 schools properly be considered to be receiving the
3 full benefit of the community school model?

4 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: Absolutely, the
5 renewal schools that have been implementing the
6 community school strategy, the partnerships, the
7 services that are being provided, the change in
8 mindset between those school leaders and the way that
9 they interact with their communities, we're seeing
10 at, at a very mature stage for having been working on
11 this program for three years. As we... as I said in my
12 testimony the, the turnaround window, the original
13 three year time frame that the Mayor announced was
14 not reliant solely on a set of supports and social
15 services being implemented, it was not about only
16 implementing the community school strategy but it was
17 really intensive academic and instructional supports,
18 a set of leadership development opportunities for
19 principals and coaching for teachers coupled with the
20 community school strategy that was to accelerate the,
21 the trajectory of those schools and as we've
22 announced we're... you know we're continuing the
23 program for another year to make sure that the
24 schools have the time to show results and meet their
25 benchmarks.

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2 LAURA FEIJOO: Could I just add here, I,
3 I think a key portion of the conversations about
4 making sense of all of this I think that that's what
5 you're alluding to in terms of the opening of the
6 program, our superintendents and community education
7 council and PTAs who always ask questions of us, who
8 always ask for more information so while there's a
9 lot of information coming out centrally I don't want
10 to discount all of the community meetings
11 superintendents have had, CECs have had, PTA meetings
12 where the Director of School Renewal will go to PTA
13 meetings or school leadership team meetings to really
14 explain not only the broad strokes, I think what
15 we're talking about here in terms of renewal schools
16 and community schools and all of the big ideas, there
17 are things we want to accomplish and I think we have
18 accomplished but individually school by school,
19 district by district really said what that meant for
20 the school, what were the supports this school needed
21 and this school was going to get as a result of these
22 things. So, there were tons of conversations across
23 that because as things roll out, yes, it seems a
24 little confusing, people don't really understand what
25 does that mean for me as a school, what does that

1
2 mean for me as a student or a family or a district
3 but those conversations happened a lot in the early
4 roll out of the community schools and the renewal
5 schools and I just want to put that out there so it
6 wasn't just paper, it was a lot of local
7 conversations and engagement.

8 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right but, but
9 doesn't the DOE recognize the conflicting
10 expectations of the, the four... at least the four to
11 five year horizon for schools to move from the
12 exploring all the way to the excelling stage which in
13 your own document state that it takes four to five
14 years to, to get... to get a grasp or to, to kind of
15 put this in, into motion but yet these schools were
16 only given a three year time frame for, for
17 turnaround... [cross-talk]

18 LAURA FEIJOO: So... [cross-talk]

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Doesn't the DOE
20 recognize that that is a... that's a clear conflict of
21 expectations?

22 LAURA FEIJOO: We haven't just cut it off
23 at three years, we have each year looked at where
24 schools are and made some key decisions and you said
25 it in your... when, when you spoke before, each year

1
2 we're making decisions on progress and trajectory and
3 all of the factors that go into making a successful
4 school. I'm sure schools that have not made that
5 progress, those are schools that we're possibly
6 proposing for closure, schools that have made
7 sufficient progress and have really demonstrated that
8 sustained over three years are in a Rise school
9 program and schools that were still... have made
10 progress but maybe not enough to release them from a
11 renewal schools program are staying in the renewal
12 schools program. These are not... these are... every
13 single year we assess schools and where they are, what
14 else... supports we can provide, how we can adjust some
15 things we did to make it even better and certainly
16 for schools that have demonstrated that they are
17 continuing. So, the renewal school program is not
18 over, we're going into year four because we believe
19 those schools will make the success... the progress
20 that they need to make.

21 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But it appears that
22 the DOE gave itself flexibility in the assessment of
23 these schools without giving individual schools
24 flexibility to adjust to this new reality as well
25 because you have closed schools or merged them or

1
2 truncated them, so it appears that there, there were
3 rigid expectations given to them while giving
4 yourselves the flexibility which those schools
5 needed. I also would, would point out that there has
6 not been an even roll out of the community school
7 program because of contractual issues, some CBOs
8 needed time to... for partnerships, does DO... DOE
9 recognize that, that there were some holdups or some
10 hiccups in the contracting... in the... in the
11 contractual process to get the CBOs up and running in
12 these schools?

13 LAURA FEIJOO: I'll let Chris talk about
14 that, I just want to say we are them, the... they're
15 not the schools and the central office, we are the
16 schools, we are helping to support and move forward
17 on each and every school, our success is their
18 success and their challenges are our challenges so
19 we're not doing to them, we believe we're supporting
20 them so that they can be successful and in
21 opportunities where there haven't been or there are
22 challenges greater than could be overcome in a
23 reasonable timeline we're doing other things like
24 consolidations or truncations or closures because
25 kids have the right to that solid education each and

1
2 every year not after a certain amount of time, every
3 year they have the right to that. I'll let you answer
4 the... [cross-talk]

5 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: Thank you Laura. I'd
6 just like to add one more point on the, the timeline
7 as well because one of the challenges that, that
8 we've been facing is the distinction between renewal
9 and community schools that you had pointed out in
10 your opening remarks and I think that it's really
11 important to be clear that the four year window for
12 those stages of development is about a school
13 evolving into a full community school, it's not about
14 a school turnaround window, right, that is... it's...
15 that's very clear that that's about the time it takes
16 to deepen the trust in communities, to build
17 relationship, to establish partnerships often times
18 the amount of time it takes to raise funds which
19 we've been investing and so I just want to be really
20 clear that that's a separate discussion than the
21 sense of urgency that we had to show academic
22 improvement for the students that were enrolled in
23 the renewal schools and so they... it is two different
24 things. I think what sets the renewal school program
25 apart and what a lot of districts around this country

1
2 have not embraced yet is the idea that this is not
3 just about instruction, this is not just about
4 principal leadership but we need to engage
5 communities, we need to bring families on board and
6 what's the best way to do that, through the community
7 schools... [cross-talk]

8 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But respectfully
9 there's a difference between what is discussed here
10 and said here and what's processed on the ground.
11 Just like I learned as a teacher, the difference
12 between the taught curriculum and the learned
13 curriculum and so for many of these schools, again
14 they're not robots, staff... there's a lot of staff
15 uncertainty, a lot of staff confusion, frustration,
16 parents, families do not know what this designation
17 meant, enrollment suffered, the data shows that,
18 enrollment did suffer. Now I, I recognize that
19 enrollments were an issue even prior to these
20 designations but in some cases, it accelerated these,
21 these issues and I understand that if the DOE sees a
22 school with enrollment dropping below 250 that they
23 are now in this warning zone that they, they might
24 face immediate, immediate closure. Having said that
25 with regards to staff morale, to what extent does the

1
2 retention of teachers factor into how schools are
3 measured?

4 AIMEE HOROWITZ: So, through the renewal
5 program we've worked to build teacher leadership
6 positions, career ladder positions so that our
7 schools can not only retain their highly qualified
8 teachers and provide them with additional leadership
9 training so that they can work with colleagues but so
10 that they can also attract highly qualified teacher
11 leaders into their schools and as a matter of fact
12 we've seen teacher retention in renewal schools
13 increase because teachers are aware of the additional
14 supports that they receive and the additional
15 leadership opportunities that they have and the value
16 of being part of a community school as well where the
17 whole community is embraced as part of the change
18 effort and that teachers are respected as leaders so
19 we built... we've prided ourselves on building strong
20 distributive leadership structures as we build
21 principal leadership capacity, building strong
22 teacher distributive leadership structures because we
23 recognize the importance of having teachers on board
24 in turning around the school and we know that it
25 takes a village really to turn around the schools.

1
2 So, we've really seen teacher retention increase
3 actually at renewal schools.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But the, the
5 question was that whether or not this is measured,
6 whether or not... are they being held accountable for
7 their teacher retention rate?

8 AIMEE HOROWITZ: So, when considering..
9 are you talking about like when considering whether
10 we're going to redesign a school or something like
11 that?

12 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right, is it a
13 benchmark that they have to... [cross-talk]

14 LAURA FEIJOO: So... [cross-talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: ...meet... [cross-talk]

16 LAURA FEIJOO: ...in the framework for
17 great schools a part of what we look at is trust and
18 factors of collaboration that are part of... [clears
19 throat] excuse me... the survey. So, we review the
20 framework for great schools in our overall school
21 review, it is not... teacher retention is not a
22 benchmark for school success, we pay close attention
23 to it, we look at it, it's very important to us that
24 we pay attention to all of the factors in the
25 framework for great schools but teacher retention is

1
2 not necessarily a benchmark or an indicator of
3 whether a school has been successful or not.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, none of you
5 have heard from school leaders that they have
6 difficulty filling vacancies in renewal schools?

7 LAURA FEIJOO: We have areas in which in
8 certain neighborhoods and in... citywide we struggle
9 with ensuring that we have sufficient teachers in
10 certain categories but not filling particular
11 vacancies as... at a particular school because it's a
12 renewal school.

13 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But is there any
14 data on the turnover rate for teachers in this
15 program?

16 LAURA FEIJOO: Sure, the state has it on
17 the website, teacher turnover is a factor that is
18 public, I couldn't point to it right now where to
19 click but it is a public factor... [cross-talk]

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I, I, I would... I
21 would like to... for us to, to have that data and...
22 [cross-talk]

23 LAURA FEIJOO: We can get that
24 information.

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CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And when a school...
when a renewal school closes what happens to the... to
the... to the faculty that, that worked there, how does
the DOE support for example former teachers of
renewal schools with finding another teaching
position?

LAURA FEIJOO: We actually have a robust
protocol in place now where a team goes out and talks
to teachers about resumes, about opportunities, about
their license area and helps and supports them in
finding positions in other schools. if you talk to
very savvy principals, very savvy principals will be
the first ones to try to recruit teachers from
renewal schools knowing how well they were trained
and how strong they are because of their background
and expertise and because how carefully we hire in
renewal schools that those are prime places to find
very strong staff members but there is a team that
goes out and, and works with teachers to ensure even
before the open market period occurs that they are
supporting them in finding placement either in the
district or in the borough depending on if it's
elementary, middle or high school and supporting them
in that process as well as with the administration.

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CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And do we have any data about the percentage of... what percentage of the ATR pool are teachers from renewal schools, do we have that?

LAURA FEIJOO: I don't have that with us, but we certainly can provide that to you.

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I, I, I would... I would appreciate that.

LAURA FEIJOO: Sure.

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: How many principals at renewal schools have been replaced since the beginning of the program and have any of the district superintendents who oversaw the hiring of those principals been replaced?

AIMEE HOROWITZ: So, there have been 70 principal changes in 56 of the 94 schools and of the current 78 schools there have been 57 principal changes at 45 schools and I'm going to turn it over to Laura to speak about the superintendents.

LAURA FEIJOO: Yeah, sure. I apologize but can you repeat that second part of the question?

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right, the second part of the question, has any of the district

1
2 superintendents who oversaw the hiring of those
3 principals been replaced?

4 LAURA FEIJOO: Whether or not they were
5 it didn't have to do with the renewal school program
6 so I think in district 7 we had a superintendent
7 change, in district 1 we had a superintendent change,
8 he came to work at central, the district 7
9 superintendent went to work in the field support
10 center, I mean superintendents have changed but not
11 related to decisions on hiring of... [cross-talk]

12 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: It, it just...
13 [cross-talk]

14 LAURA FEIJOO: ...principals... [cross-talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: ...seems that there's
16 a significant number of leadership changes that were
17 made and I'm not... I'm saying in some cases I believe
18 the changes were, weren't necessary... [cross-talk]

19 LAURA FEIJOO: Yeah... [cross-talk]

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: ...but the question I
21 have is that the folks that put those leaders in
22 place in the first place what... how many of them have
23 been replaced or changed?

24 LAURA FEIJOO: Superintendents have
25 changed not as a result of decisions related to

1
2 renewal schools and might I say in fairness, the
3 principals that left all left for different reasons,
4 maybe some left because it wasn't the work that they
5 were cut out to do but in some cases others retired,
6 you know there are a variety of reasons in which
7 principals leave the job and as a result of that we
8 do watch very closely every single principal leader
9 going into a renewal school to ensure that they're
10 ready to take on this role and that hiring up process
11 is very important to us.

12 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Alright, I have a
13 couple more and I'll turn it to my colleagues in...
14 for, for some of their questions. As part of its
15 contract for excellence plan the DOE has said that
16 class size reduction funding would be focused on
17 renewal schools, can you provide data on how many
18 renewal schools have reduced their class sizes and by
19 how many students?

20 LAURA FEIJOO: So, I believe that because
21 of the renewal schools program there is so much
22 additional staff in the school that the ratio of
23 students to adults is much less, very focused on
24 academic intervention, smaller classes in terms of
25 intervention services both pull out and push in and

1
2 that has been a significant factor in supporting
3 student's individual growth and school's growth over
4 time. I think that teacher's preparedness to do this
5 and the intervention services provided has reduced
6 that. I can say that there is an average of 24
7 students in... across renewal schools, it doesn't speak
8 individually to each and every class size but the
9 average across schools is that number, across renewal
10 schools.

11 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: This is a former
12 teacher who believes class size does matter and the
13 reduction of, of class size must be a priority across
14 the entire DOE portfolio. Many schools that have been
15 targeted for closure are questioning why their
16 schools were selected for closing siting other
17 schools with lower performance levels that are not
18 being closed, what are the criteria used to make
19 decisions regarding school closure and are they being
20 applied consistently to all renewal schools?

21 LAURA FEIJOO: They are being applied to
22 renewal schools, the significant investment both in
23 time and resources and the work we've done with
24 supporting leaders and teacher leaders across the
25 schools dictates that we should ensure that schools

1
2 are moving in the right direction and so across all
3 renewal schools we have looked at each and every
4 school, is it a straight number metric, if this plus
5 this equals close or this plus this equals Rise, we
6 look at the entire capacity of a school, we don't
7 just look at numbers anymore, we look at the, the
8 capacity of the leaders, the preparation of teachers,
9 yes, we look at student outcome, we look at the
10 framework for great schools, all of the factors that
11 make a school a success are the things we looked at
12 and we were very careful in selecting the 21 Rise
13 schools that both met a certain threshold but had all
14 of the factors necessary that made us feel confident
15 that they are definitely moving in the right
16 direction for a gradual relief and this is the same
17 for school closings, schools that met zero percent of
18 their benchmarks, schools that are not in a place
19 where they are continuing to improve each and every
20 year in enrollment, in attendance, in all of the
21 factors that we consider an important component of
22 the school those are schools where we made those
23 decisions.

24 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I, I just want,
25 want to just point out that the feedback that, that

1
2 I've received and just again I think also just common
3 sense dictates this that these school leaders as you
4 mentioned many of which are new in these renewal
5 schools have a district superintendent, have a, a
6 director of school renewal, have a borough field
7 support center, have the Office of School Renewal and
8 a variety of other interventions and a community
9 school director and others there are many
10 expectations, there are many visions, there are many
11 agendas, I'm concerned with the ability of a school
12 leader and his or her vision and... because they have
13 in my view an obligation to let... to carry out their
14 instructional agenda when there are so many different
15 folks that they have to talk to, hear from, report to
16 on a daily basis... [cross-talk]

17 AIMEE HOROWITZ: Sure, so... [cross-talk]

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: ...creating a very
19 complicated system particularly for a new school
20 leader of, of a... of a renewal school, yes.

21 AIMEE HOROWITZ: So, let me just clarify,
22 they report to their superintendent, that is the one
23 person that they report to, their director of school
24 renewal works for the superintendent and is an arm of
25 the superintendent and then the three offices, the

1
2 Office of School Support which are the
3 superintendents, the Office of Field Support and the
4 Office of Renewal Schools work collaboratively along
5 with the Office of Community Schools to support the
6 schools, to provide professional development based on
7 the principal's vision and based on needs assessments
8 conducted at the schools. In fact whole processes
9 were developed to ensure that there was coherence
10 around all of this where all stakeholders were at the
11 table with the principal driving the conversation
12 around the particular support they needed and we
13 worked very closely together to ensure that the
14 support is coherent with... both with what the
15 principal sees as their vision for school improvement
16 along with what the data is showing and we've worked
17 with principals to help them to reflect on their data
18 so that we have common areas of, of support and so
19 that we all agree on what the supports should be in
20 particular schools.

21 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I, I would like to
22 just point out I, I do believe that it... this has been
23 a lot for these schools to process and I have said
24 this... I, I alluded to this in my opening statement
25 but I, I will... I will clarify that I think that for a

1
2 variety of reasons the administration care deeply
3 about its own optics with regards to school policy
4 without full regard to the optics on the ground in
5 these individual school communities and I'll... take
6 for example a school that I visited that I was very
7 much impressed with their strong school culture,
8 Brooklyn Collegiate High School with my council... with
9 my colleague, Council Member Ampry-Samuel where State
10 Senator from Albany actually in addition to the
11 advocacy on the ground from my colleague asked the
12 Mayor at, at a hearing in Albany about the city's
13 plans to open a criminal justice center in
14 Brownsville yet they wanted to close down Brooklyn
15 Collegiate High School and the Mayor seemed to
16 backtrack and indicate that he's giving the school a
17 one year reprieve, those words I think are also
18 damaging to the school community because as I
19 mentioned before they're not robots, they're human
20 beings and being told that you're... that you have a
21 one year reprieve and by the way the way the
22 information trickled down was also not acceptable in
23 my opinion but it's, it's damaging as far as school
24 morale, it's damaging as far as I think teacher
25 retention, student enrollment, it, it, it becomes

1
2 this self-fulfilling prophecy where schools will
3 inevitably have, have to go through very difficult
4 changes because of these words that, that our leaders
5 need to be mindful of and so I actually want to be on
6 record and I'm pretty sure my colleague would like to
7 be on record as well that a school like Brooklyn
8 Collegiate High School should not be faced with a one
9 year... just a one year extension that this reprieve
10 should be indefinite and that... allow... give them time
11 to develop their own identity, give them time, they
12 have a new school leader whose worked very, very hard
13 to build a very strong culture there but with this
14 one year window or cloud hanging over their head it's
15 very difficult for that school to move forward so
16 that's why I'm just... I'm very, very mindful of our
17 words and our language when it comes to schools. I
18 remember clearly from my teaching days the damaging
19 words that the Bloomberg Administration had for
20 public schools and how much damage they did to staff
21 morale, to, to school communities and we also need to
22 be mindful of the words that we use as, as well. I
23 want to be... just to turn to my colleagues for some of
24 their questions. Oh, and I'd like to call... our... I

1
2 think our Public Advocate here has a statement to
3 read, Public Advocate Letitia James.

4 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: I apologize Mr.
5 Chair they didn't connect my microphone.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Oh sure.

7 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: So, good morning
8 everyone. I want to thank Chair Treyger and his staff
9 and the committee staff for holding today's hearing
10 on the fate of some of our most vulnerable public
11 schools and school children and I just have a
12 statement out of respect for my colleagues in the
13 city council I will not answer... ask any questions.
14 So, the renewal schools program was announced with a
15 great fanfare in November of 2014 and three and a
16 half years and hundreds of millions of dollars later
17 it is hard to argue that this program has been
18 success. Many of the renewal schools had failed to
19 close the achievement gap in any meaningful way and
20 seven in nine enrolled fewer students now than they
21 did when the program began but just because a program
22 is performing poorly doesn't mean that we should give
23 up on these schools and so the announcement that nine
24 renewal schools will be shuttered and others
25 consolidated it feels like a troubling return to the

1
2 last administration's policy of closing schools that
3 could be saved through and with better policy. My
4 office as you know has oversight and we heard from
5 parents and teachers and advocates about how renewal
6 schools effort is plagued by a number of problems
7 including disorganization and inefficiency and
8 burdensome, burdensome bureaucracy that impedes real
9 progress at many schools and in November of 2016 my
10 office hosted a forum on renewal schools and we
11 issued detailed recommendations that could have
12 helped and still could... and could still help turn
13 this program around. Just this month in the wake of
14 the announced closures I sent a letter to the
15 Chancellor urging policy changes and leadership and
16 alignment and metrics and accountability, academic
17 strategy and resources and sustainability and these
18 schools can be saved, this program can be saved but
19 it will take real commitment. We need to aggressively
20 recruit the most talented principals and I'm really
21 concerned about the number of principals who have
22 left the number of schools and it begs the question
23 why. I know your answer was for myriad of reasons and
24 perhaps part of the reason is, is, is because they
25 did not get the proper support that they needed. We

1
2 need better communication with other city agencies
3 such as the Youth... DYCD, ACS, H... HRA and... as well as
4 more alignment between various DOE offices that
5 interface with renewal schools. We also need smarter
6 less rigid performance and accountability metrics
7 that consider more than just test scores and
8 attendance. We must provide more tools for teacher
9 recruitment and retention and closer analysis of the
10 unique needs of individual schools. In particular
11 school demographics must be analyzed to identify the
12 types of teachers such as special education,
13 bilingual, STEM or literacy, we obviously need to
14 focus on diversity and there are... and what we... and
15 then in addition to STEM and literacy that are needed
16 to serve that student population and then targeted
17 incentives created... to recruit individuals with those
18 qualifications. We also need more transparency and
19 accountability as was mentioned by the Chair.
20 Basically, in some renewal schools need long termed
21 sustainable funding and not premature closures.
22 Research shows, shows that schools do not turn around
23 in two or three years, it often takes five to ten
24 years of stable sustained effort for student outcomes
25 to show significant improvement and multiple sources

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2 of funding; city, state and federal and private must
3 be blended and aligned around a unified community
4 school plan. Turning a school around is long, it's
5 hard, it's anxious work but it is worth it and
6 shutting down a school because your first plan didn't
7 work will always be a wrong approach, we can do
8 better, we must do better and I look forward to
9 continuing to discuss a path forward today. I thank
10 the Chair for allowing me to say a few words, I look
11 forward to the testimony and to the answers to some
12 of the questions that are needed to address the fact
13 that we have closed so many renewal schools and it
14 continues to be a problem. I also want to give a
15 shout out in, in the balcony to the Compass School, I
16 want to thank them they come from my former council
17 district and in the absence of Council Member Cumbo
18 she sends her, her regards, thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you Public
20 Advocate and I'll turn it to my colleagues for some
21 questions, I'll ask that... make sure that we have
22 three minutes on the... on the clock for each... for each
23 Council Member beginning with Council Member
24 Grodenchik who is sitting very patiently.

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COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Council Member Grodenchik is going to cross Broadway right now with Councilman Donovan Richards so we can make a quorum at the Land Use hearing, but I will be back to ask some questions in a few minutes Mr. Chairman, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you, thank you, Council Member... next Council Member... also we just... we've, we've been joined by Council Member Salamanca, Council Member Lander, Council Member King. Next for questions Council Member Rodriguez.

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you Chair. First of all, I would like to acknowledge all the parents from the Washington Heights Health Academy who are here, please stand up, they're fighting to keep their school open at the George Washington Campus. Washington Heights Health Academy that they're fighting so hard to keep the school open. I also would like to acknowledge the students from the high... Yeshiva University High School for boys in Washington Heights who are also here with us, please stand up, they meet once a week, they meet once a week during lunch for 45 minutes and they also discuss issues happening around the community and

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2 work on various issues so what is... no... what is most
3 important issue than fighting together to keep your
4 school open, let's call it what it is, segregation,
5 that's what we should take in a pillow so we can go
6 to sleep, you know and when we go to sleep every day
7 just think about that the most important pipeline
8 that we can put in place to make every single child
9 in New York City middle, middle class is education.
10 We have 1.1 million students in the city, we have
11 6,000 per school, schools should not look like Yale,
12 schools should have enough social workers, psychology
13 and guidance counselors, the only thing that we need
14 to do is to make every single school in the city
15 similar to a school where the upper middle-class kids
16 go. They are a community school, they have all the
17 services, think about chess, think about music, think
18 about what sport, think about anything that is
19 important to compliment a child development you will
20 find it in a school where the parents association is
21 able to raise half a million dollars to compliment
22 the services that sometimes we, the city who knows
23 that music and art is important for the development
24 of the child are denied and that's happening under
25 our watch. I always say that if my great liberal

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2 progressive in New York City we would take 50 percent
3 of the energy that we all suspend to fire Donald
4 Trump at the local level to fight for every single
5 child to have quality education the problem will,
6 will be fixed. However, you don't want to share your
7 benefits, you don't want to share your privilege, you
8 have a school district that center schools about
9 those doing better are those with the middle.. upper
10 middle-class schools. So, my call is one, children in
11 society, you come from there, you know children in
12 society the best role model, the first role model,
13 you know what happened in the previous
14 administration, they took most of the spaces for
15 services and turned it into classrooms, today that
16 school will be closed because we fail. So, I'm
17 calling the Chairman to continue working DOE, we have
18 6,000 school, it's poverty counts in the formula to
19 those 6,000 school when we distribute the budget, no
20 so if we want to prevent to get into renewal school
21 let's get... let's provide similar services to the
22 6,000 school counting poverty as one of those factors
23 when we distribute the resources and please don't
24 even think about cross... closing Washington Heights
25 Academy. Thank you.

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2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Alright, alright,
3 thank, thank you. I'd like to now recognize the
4 Council Member who joined me on a visit to her
5 district in her school which again I was so deeply
6 impressed by the amazing students, the amazing
7 culture that has been built in that school and we do
8 not support the closure of Brooklyn Collegiate High
9 School, that school should be open and strong for
10 that school community, Council Member Alicka Ampry-
11 Samuel.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPRY-SAMUEL: Thank you
13 so much Chair Treyger. So, in particular since I am
14 talking about Brooklyn Collegiate and the Chair
15 mentioned it a few minutes ago, with this particular
16 school and the other... and, and other renewal schools
17 that were listed with the state Department of
18 Education as a focus school, a priority school is
19 there any kind of consideration taken when the state
20 declares that the school has improved and is removed
21 from their list but according to the New York City
22 Department of Education this school still needs to
23 improve based on your standards and is slated for
24 closure because Brooklyn Collegiate was a focus
25 school of the state and the state determined that

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2 they have done what they needed to do as far as
3 improving but yet they received a, a notice on
4 December 18th that they were slated for closure so
5 can you explain the difference between what you look
6 for and what the state looks for and how you work
7 together in any kind of way and with that as I stated
8 the school received a notice on December 18th and
9 this is about notice, the elected officials in the
10 district received notice maybe a few days before the
11 school and so if it takes a village to actually help
12 the entire student and the family and the school
13 community and also it... there's no single formula for
14 how to go about improving, how do you work with your
15 community leaders, community stakeholders and elected
16 prior to slating a school for closure?

17 LAURA FEIJOO: So, I'm going to start in
18 a different order, I'm going to talk about the
19 benchmarks first. We ensure that when... because
20 there's a lot of metrics schools have to pay
21 attention to, we ensured when we created benchmarks
22 that the benchmarks were tighter and superseded all
23 of the state benchmarks so that those were the
24 benchmarks that schools paid attention to they would
25 automatically meet all of their state benchmarks. So,

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2 in order to streamline what schools had to pay
3 attention to we ensured that the benchmarks would
4 allow a school to meet all of their other
5 designations from the state and so that's why the
6 renewal school benchmarks are a little more
7 challenging but the decisions are made based on a
8 variety of factors and those... the proposed closure
9 was after a review of the school. In, in terms of
10 notice there is a... [cross-talk]

11 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPER-SAMUEL: So, be...
12 before you go to the... [cross-talk]

13 AIMEE HOROWITZ: Sure... [cross-talk]

14 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPER-SAMUEL: ...get in
15 those parts. So, on a state level you can meet the
16 benchmarks, right, for a school but on the city level
17 you use those same benchmarks but may not necessarily
18 meet...

19 AIMEE HOROWITZ: So, the city benchmarks
20 are aligned to the state benchmarks, but the city
21 benchmarks are a bit more rigorous than the state
22 benchmarks so if you meet the city benchmarks you've
23 automatically met your state receivership benchmarks
24 for our schools that were receivership or priority or
25 focus schools.

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2 LAURA FEIJOO: So, things like four-year
3 graduation rates, six-year graduation rate,
4 attendance those things that we'd prioritize are part
5 of the benchmarks and part of what is reviewed in
6 making a decision about a school.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPER-SAMUEL: So, what
8 would be helpful... what would be helpful is to have
9 some clarity around how do you... how do you... how are
10 you removed as a school on a state level and the
11 state says that you are doing what you need to do as
12 far as providing a solid education for your student
13 but then right after that the city will decide to
14 close the school, there just needs to be some
15 discrepancies with, with that.

16 AIMEE HOROWITZ: So, the state might
17 remove you not saying that you're necessarily
18 providing a solid education but that you've made some
19 improvements... [cross-talk]

20 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPER-SAMUEL: Some
21 improvement... [cross-talk]

22 AIMEE HOROWITZ: ...but, but schools that
23 were part of the renew, renewal school program were
24 infused with so much support, with teacher coaching,
25 with leadership coaching, with tools to be able to

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2 analyze data, with professional development, with all
3 of the community school resources that the city felt
4 that that little bit of improvement that the state
5 looked at would not be sufficient improvement to
6 demonstrate that the school is on a solid trajectory
7 of improvement and so while we didn't want to provide
8 additional metrics we aligned our benchmarks to the
9 state's metrics but we made them a little more
10 rigorous to ensure that our schools were really
11 improving and, and were on a continuous trajectory of
12 improvement so that's, that's another thing that is
13 looked at in the multitude of factors that are looked
14 at in deciding or making the difficult decision about
15 whether or not to close or to redesign the school. In
16 addition to whether the school is meeting its
17 benchmarks we look at are they on a continuous
18 trajectory of improvement and then many other
19 qualitative and quantitative factors so a lot of
20 these decisions are also local decisions and the
21 superintendents play a very big role in the decisions
22 because they are the boots on the ground that are
23 closest to the school that are in the school
24 regularly and so they are... their opinion and voice
25 and their perception of the school based on their

1
2 evaluations of the school are also extremely
3 important.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Okay, we'll, we'll
5 save for round two, that... they, they... if that's okay
6 Council Member... [cross-talk]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPER-SAMUEL: Okay, I
8 just wanted her to respond to this... [cross-talk]

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah, please...
10 [cross-talk]

11 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPER-SAMUEL: ...the notice
12 piece.

13 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Alright, last item
14 then... [cross-talk]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPER-SAMUEL: Uh-huh...
16 [cross-talk]

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: ...next...

18 LAURA FEIJOO: So, so just in terms of
19 notice we are on a timeline to ensure that there is
20 notice given to schools about these decisions and I
21 just wanted to point out A-190, whether or not you...
22 community members were notified in sufficient time,
23 could it have been a longer wait time, there's, you
24 know always more conversations that should be had in
25 schools but we expect schools over the course of...

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2 course of the year to be very clear about where they
3 are with both benchmarks and their status and we're
4 ensuring that in schools moving forward that we have
5 community meetings that families and community
6 members know about where a school is at related to
7 their benchmarks and their state accountability.

8 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you so much.
9 Next, we have Council Member Borelli.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Morning, thank
11 you very much. I just... I see another school in the
12 gallery so... see you all waving at me so I'll wave
13 back. Compass Charter, welcome guys, thank you for
14 coming. So, how many of the 227 schools are on Staten
15 Island?

16 LAURA FEIJOO: You mean the... for
17 community schools... [cross-talk]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Yeah... [cross-
19 talk]

20 LAURA FEIJOO: ...how many community
21 schools are on Staten Island, do you know?

22 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: I, I believe it's
23 five, I can confirm that.

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COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: I think it's two, do I... do I have the wrong information or is the website wrong?

CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: We... the, the... three schools were added in September so... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Okay... [cross-talk]

CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: ...the... I believe the website has the updated list of 227 schools.

COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Okay, I, I just looked, yeah. Anyway... that's it.

CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: Okay, I say... it's actually six.

COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Six... [cross-talk]

CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: Thank you for your question.

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Council Member Borelli would... that's, that's...

COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: I looked it said two.

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I... no, I think... I think you've set a record... Council Member Lander.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you Mr.
3 Chair. It's, it's my understanding although I don't
4 think I've seen data that the renewal schools have
5 high concentrations of, of, of low income students,
6 of kids... of homeless students, of kids of
7 incarcerated parents, of kids with IEPs, of kids with
8 disabilities, am I right is that data that you have
9 and can share with us?

10 AIMEE HOROWITZ: So, it is... it is true
11 that renewal schools have higher concentrations on
12 average of students with special needs and of
13 students who are English language learners as well as
14 students in temporary housing, which is one of the
15 reasons why we felt that it was important as part of
16 our strategy to turn them around that they become
17 community schools and be able to provide that
18 plethora of services; mental health, physical health,
19 food pantries, all of those things.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: So, so that, that
21 makes sense of course but I, I guess I want to follow
22 up on, on some of the issues that Council Member
23 Rodriguez raised and ask to what extent we're looking
24 at this in relationship to the work that the DOE is
25 also doing on segregation, what you guys continue to

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2 call diversity but I'm going to call it for what it
3 is, we've got a segregated city so that's not on the
4 DOE that our city is segregated and look kids and
5 families who are in those renewal schools are smart
6 and creative and can succeed so this is not... but a
7 school that has an extremely high concentrations of
8 kids who are low income, who are homeless, who have
9 special needs, whose parents are incarcerated it is
10 harder for that school to succeed at educating all
11 its kids and it doesn't... and, and so... and on the one
12 hand it's good to give those schools additional
13 resources partly because they need them and partly to
14 offset the resources that schools in my district have
15 for a lot of the same things but I also think we're
16 clear, its, it's not enough like the reason
17 segregation means unequal schools is that schools
18 that have extremely high concentrations of kids with
19 that whole extra set of needs just have a harder time
20 meeting the needs of all kids than schools that have
21 a mix of kids across the economic and social and
22 needs spectrum and that's not because low income kids
23 learn from high income kids or black kids learn from
24 white kids it's because concentrated poverty makes it
25 harder for a school to succeed so are we looking at

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2 all in our thinking about renewal schools at what
3 we're doing about segregation and integration which
4 is something that the DOE is also doing, is that
5 conversation somebody is having to think about what
6 we might learn if we looked at those two things in
7 relationship to each other?

8 LAURA FEIJOO: So, I would just share as
9 you know the DOE has a diversity plan in which part
10 of it is to go out to have town halls and to listen
11 to thinking around concerns locally of diversity.
12 That's one part of the strategy for the diversified
13 piece of the school but we compare schools to similar
14 schools, to similar demographics, there's not a
15 comparison to a renewal school to a school in another
16 district that doesn't have similar demographics as
17 well as comparing renewal schools to renewal schools
18 and the progress schools that are similar make across
19 the program that we've infused with so many resources
20 and supports and professional development for staff.
21 You, you look like you want to say something else, so
22 I paused.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Well I, I guess
24 I'm not totally sure what you mean by benchmarking
25 against other schools because if what you're saying

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2 is we don't expect renewal schools to have the marks
3 of schools with kids of higher socioeconomic
4 demographics than you're proving my point that
5 segregated schools can sign our kids to, to, to... low
6 income kids to our schools so... I mean I'm not on the
7 side of closing them and I guess I'll just stand with
8 this. This... in, in district 15 we had a, a, a
9 beautiful town hall two weeks ago that Sadie Campinar
10 represented the DOE brilliantly, she for the first
11 time in my experience of a DOE staffer used the word
12 segregation and integration out loud, you could say
13 them and that... we had a couple of hundred people talk
14 about these hard issues of segregation and race and
15 inequality and education and our dreams for our kids,
16 I'm excited about what is happening in the district
17 15 middle school process and I'm, I'm glad that's
18 taking place but I guess I would stipulate the
19 following, I do... I think we're just having two
20 separate conversations and I don't think it's the
21 right way to think about it, diversity is not a
22 lovely thing that we should curate more of in
23 excellent community meetings, segregation is a big
24 part of the reason that our schools fail our... a lot
25 of our kids and in particular low income kids and

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kids of color and these two things have to be put together and we can't think about segregation and its consequences over here like it's a diversity problem and renewal schools over here like it's a let's give a few more resources to school's problem, this... it ought to be one conversation, I don't think we're yet there and I'm going to keep pushing because I think it's a... it's one critical way we should be looking at this issue. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you Council Member Lander, next we'll have Council Member Brannan.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Thank you Chair. Has the DOE discontinued any contracts with CBOs?

CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: We have, we've changed... we've assigned contracts from one CBO to another in a number of cases and that happened... it's, it's happened by mutual consent between both parties when the relationship was not working, when the capacity of the organization might not have been right.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Okay and then if, if a contract is discontinued what are the... what

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2 sort of continuity or support is provided for those
3 families?

4 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: And just to be
5 technical because I know that you're on the Contracts
6 Committee and you understand it, so we actually don't
7 discontinue the contract, we assign the contract so
8 that there's no break in services so if organization
9 A has the contract through June 30th we work with
10 organization A to assign the rights and
11 responsibilities of that contract to organization B
12 effective July 1st and what that means is that
13 there's no break in services, there's, there's
14 continuity between the... over that time period.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Okay. This was
16 touched on a little bit before but how do you
17 anticipate the, the federal budget impacting
18 community schools?

19 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: So, we're, we're
20 proud of the fact that we have a diverse funding
21 network to support our 227 community schools. often
22 times city government asks our non-profit
23 organizations to diversify their funding from
24 philanthropy, state, federal and local dollars and we
25 try to mirror that at the... at the system level, right

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2 now we rely on about 25 million dollars per year in
3 federal funding from the 21st Century Community
4 Learning Center Program that funds the 70 new
5 community schools at this... that started this past
6 September including the three new ones in Staten
7 Island, that funding stream has been in place since
8 1998, it's faced threats from... through multiple
9 administrations including the first... the second Bush
10 Administration and in the Obama Administration and
11 given the fact that that funding stream has such deep
12 roots nationally in rural and urban areas we feel
13 confident that in spite of whatever else the
14 president might be thinking about that that's a
15 secure funding stream that will sustain our community
16 schools in New York City.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Thank you.

18 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: You're welcome.

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you and
20 returned is Council Member Grodenchik.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Thank you, I,
22 I did the dash, I survived crossing Broadway. Thank
23 you, Mr. Chairman, good morning everybody, it's still
24 morning, right? My time is wasting. Good morning
25 everybody. I am concerned among and other things, I

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2 have a wonderful school district, I have district 29,
3 I have district 26 but I do have one renewal school
4 which is Martin Van Buren High School which has made
5 tremendous progress so much so that the Mayor visited
6 the school for his town hall when he came to my
7 district on November 2nd, how do we get more school...
8 students into this school because the students are
9 coming from so far away, the first period starts at
10 eight a.m., I'm usually not at my desk at eight a.m.
11 I confess but, but these kids many of them come from
12 the Rockaways which is at least an hour... they have to
13 be on a bus before seven a.m. to get to school and
14 that concerns me?

15 LAURA FEIJOO: So, I think Sam Sochet has
16 done a really good job of rebranding a lot of things
17 at the school which has benefited him and seen an
18 influx of students, it's actually a good thing that
19 students want to travel so far to get to school and
20 to get there and he's at his desk close to seven
21 o'clock... [cross-talk]

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: He's there
23 earlier than I am... [cross-talk]

24 LAURA FEIJOO: Yeah... [cross-talk]

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Yes... [cross-
3 talk]

4 LAURA FEIJOO: He has to beat that
5 traffic. And I see a lot of things that go on there,
6 I've been there any number of times, I see the
7 branding he's done, the signs he's done, little
8 things about where cars park and where people meet
9 and what the perception of the community is, he's had
10 any number of school meetings with just community
11 members, people who lives within a stone's throw of
12 the school to ensure that they know the great things
13 that are going on because he knows in that community..
14 [cross-talk]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Yeah, I, I
16 absolutely agree with you there's been a C change
17 over the last five years, the previous principal
18 basically locked herself in her office and refused to
19 come out which is really what hurt Martin Van Buren
20 because it, it had been one of the best high schools
21 in the city of New York... [cross-talk]

22 LAURA FEIJOO: I know... [cross-talk]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: ...it's
24 produced two Nobel prize winners in its' history and
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it's not even that old a school, it's only 60 years
old... [cross-talk]

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LAURA FEIJOO: And he celebrates the... I
just want to add, I'm sorry... [cross-talk]

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COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: That's okay...
[cross-talk]

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LAURA FEIJOO: ...he celebrates those
people every year... [cross-talk]

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COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Yes, we do...
[cross-talk]

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LAURA FEIJOO: ...he does an alumni...
[cross-talk]

14

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

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LAURA FEIJOO: ...program that happens
every year to re-invite and re-invigorate the school...

18

[cross-talk]

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COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: So, what I'm
concerned about is that it's still a renewal since
you, you led into this, you... I don't want to Segway,
it's still... [cross-talk]

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

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COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: ...a renewal
school... [cross-talk]

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LAURA FEIJOO: Yep... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: ...it has lost the receivership and priority designation that it had from the state of New York which is excellent, I know I've had personal conversations with Chancellor Farina about this and I know she's happy with the progress the school's making. What I am concerned about are two things and the first one is I don't want to lose the progress, what happens if he's not a Rise School come September, that's what I'm really worried about because the community's invested... we've gone from six percent local students to 15 percent and that may not seem like a lot but it's a... you know it's a... it's a large increase and I know if I can just... if I could just move it a little we will have them pouring in from 172 and 109 and, and other places because nobody wants to send their child to a school far... this is as far away as we get in Eastern Queens so that concerns me that... I, I really want this to be a Rise School come September.

LAURA FEIJOO: So, if I can alleviate a little bit of that concern that school did meet their benchmarks... did meet their state status and has a little bit more growth to do, we measure in benchmark

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2 things, it has a lot of the components of a Rise
3 School if there's such a term, it's almost a Rise
4 School and their data is headed right there in the
5 right direction although they didn't meet everything
6 they needed to be a Rise School, we are confident in
7 most of these 47 schools but extremely confident in
8 Martin Van Buren that they are in that direction to
9 be there for next... [cross-talk]

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Well I'll
11 invite you to the press conference then when we make
12 that announcement but... [cross-talk]

13 LAURA FEIJOO: I go there frequently, you
14 can ask... [cross-talk]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: We, we... okay...
16 [cross-talk]

17 LAURA FEIJOO: ...the principal.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: I'll be happy
19 to take you to breakfast, that'll get me out early.

20 LAURA FEIJOO: Alright.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Last question
22 Mr. Chairman, I know it's busy. Mr. Sochet and I've
23 had discussions, he was due about 1.9 million dollars
24 for technology and tennis courts and all that and it
25 hasn't come yet so I don't want to ask you to answer

1
2 that question here not but if you guys could get back
3 to me I would greatly appreciate that.

4 LAURA FEIJOO: I'll be in touch with him
5 as well if that's... [cross-talk]

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Okay,
7 alright, thank you very, very much.

8 LAURA FEIJOO: Sure.

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you, thank
10 you Council Member. We've also been joined by Council
11 Member Barron. I'd like to just continue with my line
12 of questioning, during the third year of the renewal
13 school program, 2016-2017, each school had to
14 demonstrate significant progress does that factor in
15 project-based learning or is that solely based on
16 test scores?

17 AIMEE HOROWITZ: Yes, I have the
18 microphone. So, we look at not only their benchmarks
19 and benchmarks by the way are not based solely on
20 test scores, they are benchmarks based on leading and
21 lagging indicators so there are benchmarks based on
22 the quality review and the survey, there are
23 benchmarks based on attendance, there are benchmarks
24 based on graduation rates, progress to graduation,
25 percent proficient and then we also always take into

1
2 account a multitude of other factors so
3 superintendent's visits to the school and their work
4 with the DSR and the DSR collaborates with their
5 superintendent so there are a multitude of factors
6 that are taken into consideration before any decision
7 about any school is made.

8 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But do the schools
9 have flexibility in creating their own assessments or
10 working with the DOE and all of their, you know
11 support service folks to create project-based
12 learning opportunities that can be... [cross-talk]

13 AIMEE HOROWITZ: Of course... [cross-talk]

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: ...factored into
15 their assessments, you're stating that's... [cross-
16 talk]

17 AIMEE HOROWITZ: Yeah, of course... [cross-
18 talk]

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: ...correct?

20 AIMEE HOROWITZ: Of course. And we
21 encourage schools to provide students with real world
22 hands-on project-based learning experiences because
23 that's when the best learning takes place.

24 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Agreed. Do the
25 renewal schools have the opportunity... because we've,

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2 we've heard before that there's been a number of
3 master teachers hired and other teacher titles hired,
4 do they have an opportunity to have a teacher center
5 because teacher centers from personal experience and
6 just my own knowledge of the system are very useful
7 to help deliver professional development in a school
8 particularly with many new teacher I believe in these
9 schools so do they have teacher... do, do, do these
10 schools have teacher centers?

11 AIMEE HOROWITZ: So, some of the schools
12 do and as you know the Chancellor is a great fan of
13 teacher centers as, as are we and believe in, in the
14 power of a good teacher center and we have increased
15 teacher centers at renewal schools, not every renewal
16 school does have a teacher center but we have
17 increased those teacher centers at renewal schools
18 along with the master model and PR collaborative
19 teachers so there are over 200 master model and PR
20 collaborative teachers currently at renewal and Rise
21 Schools... [cross-talk]

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So... [cross-talk]

23 AIMEE HOROWITZ: ...and that's part of the
24 funding actually that our schools get the
25 differential for... [cross-talk]

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

AIMEE HOROWITZ: ...for those teacher...

[cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Because when you mentioned some of them, is there a percentage of how many renewal schools have them?

AIMEE HOROWITZ: I don't know honestly off the top of my head, but we can get that to you.

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: That's important and for folks, you know in, in the... in the audience and, and those paying attention that particularly in, in schools that have seen turnover changes in addition to all the changes and new mandates and expectations, as I mentioned before schools are not robots, they need a, a place and time and personnel to process these changes and to actually translate them into quality instruction in the classroom and take feedback from the classroom and process that feedback, it's the cycle of data and feedback and again we think that these things happen by us most is they don't and so teacher centers are critical components for these schools and I would like to just get that data on how many of them have teacher centers. Are the... let's, let's... I know my colleague

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2 touched upon Rise Schools, I have some questions
3 about Rise Schools. Are the DOE's 21 Rise Schools
4 Rise Schools now or they will become Rise Schools in
5 the fall?

6 CHERYL WATSON-HARRIS: I think it's still
7 good morning, Cheryl Watson-Harris, I'm the Senior
8 Executive Director of the Field Support Centers and
9 work in close collaboration with Laura Feijoo and the
10 superintendents to provide coherence supports to all
11 schools. I'm also the proud mother of three DOE
12 students so I appreciate the time to speak about our
13 efforts to create excellent schools for all students.
14 The 21 schools that has met 67 percent of their
15 benchmarks and will be graduating out of the renewal
16 program will enter the Rise Program in July of 2018.
17 So, we will spend the next few months as you alluded
18 earlier creating a thoughtful process for creating a
19 program that will truly serve as a partnership with
20 these school leaders as they continue to accelerate
21 their progress for all students.

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But to be clear
23 they're not Rise Schools right now?

24 CHERYL WATSON-HARRIS: No... they've been
25 identified as schools that will become part of the

1
2 Rise Program, but they will have a gradual release of
3 responsibility out of the renewal program into the
4 Rise Program.

5 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I just don't want
6 us to repeat the same... [cross-talk]

7 LAURA FEIJOO: So, can I answer what I
8 think... [cross-talk]

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes, please...
10 [cross-talk]

11 LAURA FEIJOO: ...is your question... so,
12 we've already had a summit with the principals from
13 the Rise Program, it is official on July 1st because
14 that's the way school years work but in preparation
15 for that to answer your question we've already
16 identified the schools, we've sent them a letter, we
17 had a meeting with them, we continue to engage with
18 them to identify what we think are the six key levers
19 to move the school and support the school as it
20 transitions out so we're already doing things in the
21 prework to have them understand what it means to be a
22 Rise School, what the expectations are and we're
23 rolling that out as we move towards July 1st but it
24 will be officially a Rise School come July 1st.

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CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Which leads me to my next question because there's some follow up to this, I understand that Rise Schools are being given a two-year horizon to meet their benchmarks, is this year being counted as their horizon... as a horizon year or is it next year?

LAURA FEIJOO: So, Rise Schools will have benchmarks but... because we want to ensure that they're keep... moving in the right direction, they are more rigorous benchmarks but each year we evaluate schools so there is no like in two years this is going to happen... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But are there different benchmarks for Rise Schools, you just mention they're more rigorous so when does the... when does the clock begin?

CHERYL WATSON-HARRIS: Yes, so the Rise Program is a two-year program and we have full confidence that all of the Rise Schools will meet their benchmarks by the end of 2019 and we'll set up constant monitoring of those... of the progress of those schools...

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: You said the end of 2019?

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2 CHERYL WATSON-HARRIS: The, the end of
3 next school year.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right but I'm
5 saying... [cross-talk]

6 CHERYL WATSON-HARRIS: So, it begins this
7 year, the clock... to answer your question the clock
8 begins now.

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: The clock begins
10 now even though they don't become Rise Schools on
11 July 1st?

12 CHERYL WATSON-HARRIS: Yes... well the...
13 these schools have already demonstrated substantial
14 progress and we believe... that was one of the criteria
15 for exiting the renewal school program and entering
16 the Rise Program, by all measures we believe that
17 these schools are well on their way and with some
18 additional supports and oversight that we have full
19 confidence that they will meet their benchmarks at
20 the conclusion of the Rise Program.

21 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And what if they
22 don't meet their benchmarks as a Rise School?

23 CHERYL WATSON-HARRIS: We have full
24 confidence that they have shown every indication that
25 they will meet their benchmarks and we will continue

1
2 to support them in a very targeted and strategic way
3 to ensure that that happens.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But will a... will a
5 school... a Rise School that does not meet benchmarks
6 return as a renewal school?

7 LAURA FEIJOO: We, we didn't pick these
8 schools lightly, we were very careful about the
9 schools that are moving into the Rise Program, they
10 have the trajectory to do well and we are confident
11 that they will do that and we are going to be
12 ushering them along the way and benchmarking to
13 ensure that happens. Every year we always take an
14 assessment of where schools are, we don't anticipate
15 drop backs, we anticipate the 47 renewal schools will
16 do well and move into the Rise Program, we don't
17 expect that to happen but each year we take a look at
18 where schools are because we have a commitment and a
19 responsibility to make sure kids are in a good school
20 each and every year and we work really hard to do
21 that with schools not making decisions from on high
22 but really being in schools and figuring out what
23 they need to be successful and we have no intention
24 of letting these schools go or anticipating anything
25 negative in the reverse to happen.

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2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But if they're... if,
3 if you're saying the clock has started and they're
4 still working with benchmarks from the renewal school
5 program but you're saying that the Rise benchmarks
6 are more rigorous is that fair to begin the clock
7 when they're... [cross-talk]

8 LAURA FEIJOO: No... [cross-talk]

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: ...when they still
10 have to process what those new benchmarks... [cross-
11 talk]

12 LAURA FEIJOO: I think... [cross-talk]

13 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: ...rigorous
14 benchmarks are... [cross-talk]

15 LAURA FEIJOO: ...I think what we're saying
16 is that we've created benchmarks for the Rise Program
17 that begins on July 1st, the school has now been
18 identified based on their current status that they
19 are in that place and that during this time we're
20 talking to the schools about what those things are
21 that they will need to do, what supports they'll
22 have, what feedback they'll have for us, we heard
23 clearly that community schools are important,
24 strategy that's being maintained across all of the
25 schools into the future, into perpetuity, we are

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2 paying close attention to what these schools need so
3 we craft a program that we think is important and
4 they also feel have the right elements to continue
5 them on the trajectory. If the school continues to do
6 well it will be a school with no status, right, it
7 continues to rise, it continues to grow and that
8 school will not be identified as anything because it
9 continues to head in the right path just like any
10 school that we've talked about that has been really
11 successful over time, these are... this is a bridge at
12 a gradual release over two years so that a school can
13 be like other schools that have no status.

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I, I have to state
15 that I, I, I myself am not clear on the future vision
16 for, for these Rise Schools and their... the
17 expectations up, upon them but this... I have a follow
18 up question. The, the DOE has promised that all Rise
19 Schools will continue to be community schools and
20 will retain their 100 percent fair student funding
21 allocation, but they will transition out of other
22 renewal school program supports over time, will Rise
23 Schools continue to receive support from the Office
24 of Renewal Schools?
25

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2 CHERYL WATSON-HARRIS: So, the Rise
3 Schools will receive, continue to receive their
4 support from the community school's office as well as
5 100 percent fair student funding permanently. We at
6 the conclusion of last year surveyed all of the
7 renewal school principals and superintendents as well
8 to identify the resources that they felt were most
9 instrumental in helping them accelerate their
10 progress and we've taken into account those services
11 and will continue those throughout the Rise School
12 Program. In addition, we are attempting to co-create
13 the Rise Program with those school leaders giving
14 them greater autonomy and greater voice in the
15 development of their support program.

16 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, so you've
17 stated that a Rise School has shown progress.. [cross-
18 talk]

19 CHERYL WATSON-HARRIS: Yes.. [cross-talk]

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Is that correct?

21 CHERYL WATSON-HARRIS: Yes.

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And what I'm
23 hearing is that the relationship between that school
24 and the Office of Renewal Schools is coming to an
25 end, is that correct?

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LAURA FEIJOO: Yes, not completely
because... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Well she just said...
[cross-talk]

LAURA FEIJOO: ...they still have... [cross-
talk]

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: ...yes, you're saying
not completely so what is the... what is the answer?

CHERYL WATSON-HARRIS: Yes, because I...
what, what we're attempting to do is create a more,
more coherent approach to supporting all of our
schools and so the Rise Schools will continue to
receive support from their local field support center
in collaboration with their superintendent.

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: If there have been
relationships that have benefited the school in the
proper intervention services and guidance services
and support services I'm concerned about the
relationships ending here if they have shown that
type of progress because as I've heard that they
will... they will have to rely on the borough field
support centers, do you feel that the borough field
support centers have adequate staff to support these
schools?

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2 CHERYL WATSON-HARRIS: The Borough Field
3 Support Centers have been working in collaboration
4 with the superintendents to provide a tiered level of
5 support for all of the schools within a district and
6 so we have to prioritize and maximize on the
7 resources that we have to make sure that we're
8 providing adequate supports to the schools that need
9 it the most.

10 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: See I am concerned
11 because these are schools that are still vulnerable
12 for a variety of reasons many of which are not their
13 fault... [cross-talk]

14 CHERYL WATSON-HARRIS: Yeah... [cross-talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: ...and if a Borough
16 Field Support Center has a person designated for
17 budget support so to speak... [cross-talk]

18 CHERYL WATSON-HARRIS: Uh-huh... [cross-
19 talk]

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: ...and now that
21 school has to compete with other schools in other
22 districts for that same budget person because... take a
23 borough like Brooklyn which has a Borough Field
24 Support Center with the other boroughs, they have
25 many school districts in Brooklyn, superintendents

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2 will call that Borough Field Support Center and say I
3 want that budget person to help my school in my
4 district and that person from a different, different
5 district will say I want that person to help my
6 school in that district, I am concerned that the
7 strategies and the relationships and the
8 interventions that have shown progress... have shown
9 evidence of progress in these renewal schools to
10 become rise are somehow now going to be interrupted
11 and broken and left to a very unclear, unreliable
12 system and framework which my concern then is will
13 they then return to a renewal school status or to
14 some unknown status, whatever is working we need to
15 continue that's as simple as that and I, I, I do have
16 concerns about adequate and appropriate staffing with
17 folks from the Borough Field Support Centers to
18 adequately support these schools and all the schools
19 that they are supposed to, to, to serve.

20 CHERYL WATSON-HARRIS: Yes... [cross-talk]

21 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Would you like to
22 respond, sure please...

23 CHERYL WATSON-HARRIS: Yes, please. The
24 Office of Renewal Schools and the Field Support
25 Centers have been working very closely for, for the

1
2 last year and a half providing the individual
3 student's school success plans for all of the renewal
4 schools, this work will continue, it will just be
5 more targeted to the individual needs of each school,
6 we have developed or are in the process of developing
7 a well thought out support plan for the Rise Schools
8 that mirrors what we've learned from the research on
9 turnaround practices as well as the feedback from the
10 principals themselves and so we've identified six
11 keys that we believe if we focused on these six keys
12 and assure that we're working in close partnership
13 with the school leaders and monitoring their progress
14 along the way that we do not anticipate any slip
15 backs, we're very proud of these 21 Rise Schools that
16 have done this very difficult work of turnaround and
17 we have no intention of stepping away from them, we
18 want to ensure that we continue to build their
19 capacity so that they themselves, the principal, the
20 school community along with their community schools
21 partner can continue to accelerate their progress. We
22 believe in them, we're going to stay with them and we
23 can assure that they're going to continue on this
24 trajectory towards acceleration.

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2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But to be clear
3 when I'm told... when, when you initially... when the
4 panel officially said to me that Rise Schools will
5 not see any loss, or they won't miss the beat they
6 are...

7 LAURA FEIJOO: Can I just add one little
8 piece that I... [cross-talk]

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes... [cross-talk]

10 LAURA FEIJOO: ...think is worth just
11 restating, the, the superintendent remains the same
12 and the director of school renewal who has supported
13 the school through this process remains in place as a
14 support system in the superintendent's office so all
15 of this... it... that is the consistent thread that comes
16 through, the superintendents monitoring and support
17 of schools across every school that they have,
18 schools where there are some concerns, schools where
19 there are a lot of concerns all of that is in
20 partnership with Field Support Center and they
21 identify those things very early on in the school
22 year, over the summer in fact so that we make sure
23 that schools... we've identified the areas where there
24 are concerns or not or supports to be able to provide
25 them so the consistent thread that I don't want to

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2 get lost is the superintendent and the
3 superintendents team... [cross-talk]

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I, I am just
5 expressing concern I'm hearing in general not just
6 with, with regards to renewal or rise or community,
7 all schools, I don't believe that there's adequate
8 key staffing in Borough Field Support Centers to
9 adequately support all schools in the boroughs and my
10 concern is multiplied by the fact that renewal
11 schools turn Rise Schools are still very vulnerable..
12 [cross-talk]

13 LAURA FEIJOO: Yeah... [cross-talk]

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: ...and whatever
15 support structures we have in place for them need to
16 continue and that is something that I, I am concerned
17 about... [cross-talk]

18 LAURA FEIJOO: You're right.

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I, I would like to..
20 I think... I think we did touch upon with regards to
21 the differences in the benchmarks for, for Rise
22 Schools and renewal schools, can you just quickly
23 summarize or just list for us key differences in the
24 benchmarks between... for renewal school or, or a Rise
25 School?

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2 CHERYL WATSON-HARRIS: Sure, the Rise
3 School benchmarks are grounded in the renewal
4 benchmarks but hold the Rise Schools accountable for
5 progressing at the same rate as the non-renewal
6 schools. The Renewal School benchmarks provide a
7 range of, of performance and the Rise Schools are an
8 absolute for the.. for the Rise Schools.

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Okay, I, I'm, I'm
10 going to.. I have.. I'm going to circle back to this
11 because I have questions on the community schools,
12 but I just want to just state for the record, I say
13 this.. I said this three years ago, over three years
14 ago when the Mayor first rolled out this program and
15 I'm going to say it again, these schools did not
16 become struggling overnight and you're not going to
17 solve every issue overnight either and I understand
18 that the state of New York holds a lot of
19 responsibility in why some of our schools face
20 challenges, I do believe however that we've added
21 unnecessarily further confusion and challenges in the
22 renewal school program, I take issue with the
23 branding of these schools, there was not quite
24 frankly in my.. in my opinion enough process time for
25 folks to adequately plan out what, what a renewal

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2 school means, I'm, I'm also concerned about the
3 future support structures for them to make sure that
4 they don't slip back and that we continue making,
5 making that, that key progress. I want to turn to
6 community schools because I did... I have visited a
7 number of them and... so we understand that many
8 requirements for DOE's community schools are not
9 consistent because of the different funding streams
10 for schools in differences in each community school's
11 needs, what are some of the core requirements of all
12 DOE's community schools?

13 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: So, our community
14 school strategy is grounded in a set of common
15 elements that all community schools embrace, that
16 includes a partnership with a lead community based
17 organization, a community school director that serves
18 as a partner to the principal, it includes the
19 addition of expanded learning opportunities which
20 happened in the summer or during the after school
21 hours, it includes health and wellness services, more
22 robust family engagement and then a really targeted
23 and inclusive data driven continuous improvement
24 process. Any community school in New York City
25 embraces those key elements and our office supports

1
2 schools and communities to work together to implement
3 those key components.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: You had mentioned
5 about the, the health centers or the health clinics
6 what percentage of students either by school or by
7 total have been enrolled in the health programs at,
8 at the schools?

9 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: So, 100 percent of
10 the students have benefited from health services in
11 our schools. Our health interventions range... take a
12 range in, in, in... based on the grade level of the
13 school and some other factors and so if you'll
14 indulge me I'll kind of go over the different health
15 interventions that we're doing in schools... [cross-
16 talk]

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Well I just wanted
18 to specify that there's a difference between
19 benefitted and enrolled and so is... do you have data
20 on how many students actually have enrolled in these
21 health clinics and health centers?

22 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: Can you define in
23 what you mean by enroll?

24 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Well before they
25 can be seen by a health professional in these

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2 facilities there has to be paperwork filled out, is
3 that correct?

4 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: Depending on the
5 service, yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: How many of those
7 students in total in the community school program
8 have returned that paperwork?

9 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: So, we have had over
10 the course of the last three years 143,000 students
11 have received vision screening, they've had to sign
12 off on, on, on the vision screen for each of those,
13 that's the standard health service that's implemented
14 across all of our community schools... [cross-talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But, but have you...
16 have you heard any concerns or complaints about the
17 enrollment process?

18 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: I Have not and I'm
19 happy to, to, to discuss any individual concerns that
20 there might be but in terms of enrolling in the
21 vision screening the fact that we've brought this
22 into schools, in the past the DOE has offered this
23 service in kindergarten and first grade, we've
24 expanded it to be K through 12 every year in every
25 school we screen all students in every school and

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2 then any child that fails that screening gets an exam
3 and then is outfitted with glasses if they so need.
4 In addition to the vision, vision screening we have
5 an asthma case management program in our middle
6 schools, we have reproductive health services in our
7 community school high schools and we have 75 school-
8 based health clinics... health centers, excuse me, that
9 operate with physician services within school
10 buildings.

11 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: The reason why I
12 ask this is because I remember being an educator some
13 families expressed concerns about returning learning
14 surveys for a variety of reasons particularly
15 immigrant families and I know that many of our
16 schools are serving English language learners, very
17 vulnerable communities and so I was curious to hear
18 have you heard from any of your schools with regards
19 to concerns about the paperwork, who sees the
20 paperwork and has that been communicated to you at
21 all?

22 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: Not specifically
23 around health services, we do know that immigration
24 concerns are a factor that many of our children and
25

1
2 families face across the city. One of the.. [cross-
3 talk]

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But are you aware
5 that a health professional will not see the, the
6 child unless that paperwork is filled out and
7 returned?

8 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: So, for our vision
9 screening program it's an opt out program so we
10 actually... if parents don't actively opt their child
11 out they are able to receive their screening and
12 their exam, I am not familiar with other concerns for
13 other services.

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, there could be
15 schools in theory that without... you know if, if a
16 child does not return the proper forms the health
17 professionals separate from eye care might not see
18 the child and that school might not even have a
19 school nurse and in theory we're supposed to be
20 providing these health and wellness programs and in
21 theory some students are not receiving. So, I'd like
22 for the DOE to circle back on this and to make sure
23 that families are being given the adequate support
24 and understanding about these forms and that in no
25 way they should be endangering the status of, of, of

1
2 their children. I'd like to also go, go into with
3 regards to some of the oversight mechanisms, what
4 oversight mechanisms does DOE provide if any to
5 ensure that community schools are working for
6 students and their families, are there any surveys
7 administered to community schools and their families
8 and if so can you share some of the key findings?

9 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: Sure, similar to all
10 public schools in New York City students and families
11 complete an annual... are asked to complete an annual
12 school survey, we survey teachers, principals, family
13 members and students and so that's, that's one
14 measure that we have. In addition to that the
15 Department of Education has invested in an
16 independent evaluation of the community schools work
17 with the RAND Corporation. This will be a two-part
18 evaluation, the first being an implementation study
19 that was released this past September and then we'll
20 be receiving the results of an impact study next
21 year. The results of the implementation study were
22 very promising, the RAND Corporation found that
23 community schools, almost all community schools that
24 started three years ago were implementing those core
25 elements that I spoke about just a moment ago with

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2 fidelity, they found that the schools were on the
3 right track to mature into effective community
4 schools, many were there already and that they are
5 providing a well-balanced support of student supports
6 and academic interventions.

7 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And have there been
8 cases of CBOs and schools having to detach be... do you
9 have any data on that?

10 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: I do, as I mentioned
11 to Council, Council Member Brannan we have had a
12 couple of... we have had several instances when
13 partnerships have changed, 13 in total, 13 out of the
14 227 have changed their community based organization
15 and that was done through a mutual agreement between
16 the school leadership team, the existing community
17 based organization and the new community school... the...
18 sorry, the new community based organization...

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Is there anything
20 that we learned from these detachments that we could
21 share amongst the rest of the schools about making
22 sure that we don't have to go through that process
23 again?

24 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: Again... [cross-talk]
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2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And by the way are
3 those 13 schools renewal schools?

4 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: Nine of the 13 are
5 renewal.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, nine of the 13
7 were renewal which means they have to go through a
8 new contractual process, new CBO, is that correct?

9 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: I would say that... I
10 mean they don't have to go through a new contractual
11 process, they assign the contract, they... we work
12 together to... [cross-talk]

13 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But it takes time
14 for contracts to get started as we know in
15 governments and they have to now meet with the new
16 community school... with the new, new CBO and, and
17 that's why, you know I mentioned earlier whether or
18 not these schools were given a... the full benefit of,
19 of, of the roll out of the community school program,
20 it's not clear to me, it's... quite frankly I'm, I'm
21 more concerned that they have not been given the full
22 benefit of, of these promised benefits particularly
23 if you're saying nine out of the 13 schools that had...
24 that had to detach from their CBO partners were
25 renewal schools that makes it even, even more, more

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2 concerning and can you just summarize for us what are
3 some of the key reasons for why they had to detach
4 from the public school?

5 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: Sure, it varied, in
6 some cases the CBO was at capacity and was working
7 with other schools and felt like they no longer had
8 the capacity to serve that geographic neighborhood,
9 in other instances a principal determined that the
10 supports that that particular CBO was providing were
11 not fully aligned with their vision and the school
12 leadership team's vision for the school. This city as
13 you know is blessed with an amazing network of
14 community based... [cross-talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Wait... [cross-talk]

16 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: ...organizations...
17 [cross-talk]

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: ...respectively
19 you're saying that their visions did not align,
20 weren't they supposed to meet in the beginning to
21 discuss visions, why did they learn about their
22 visions conflicting afterwards?

23 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: And I think that's
24 all part of the stages of development that you spoke
25 about, this is new work and it's really challenging

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2 work, partnerships do not come easy and so I think
3 when principals and community based organizations sit
4 down for the first time they talk about what their
5 visions are, they can agree in theory and then when
6 the action actually happens, right, when the work
7 starts to take fold and you start learning and you're
8 seeing where your progress are and you learn more
9 about what this work is... [cross-talk]

10 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Correct and, and
11 the reason why I'm, I'm saying this is that I
12 understand building these relationships are, are... is
13 not easy work but these schools are being measured
14 for everything during this time so as I mentioned
15 before is the DOE and, and others give itself
16 flexibility to make changes and tweaks and
17 adjustments to these schools particularly renewal
18 schools are not given that flexibility and time to
19 make tweaks and adjustments because every single
20 moment, every day, every year is being measured and
21 they are fearful that their school might close or get
22 truncated or, or go through staff changes that's the
23 point I'm making. We promised them that they will
24 have the benefit of a community school and I don't
25 think we've kept our word to some of these schools,

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2 that's my concern, that's my challenge, that's the
3 issue I'm, I'm raising.

4 [applause]

5 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Folks... thank you,
6 I'm, I'm, I'm the new Chair, I think we, we do this
7 but, but thank you, thank you very much for that. So,
8 research shows that unlike many other initiatives it
9 can take community schools more than three years...
10 actually I think more than four or five years
11 actually to show progress, we understand that DOE
12 operates 227 schools but we are interested in data at
13 some of the original 45 schools which became
14 community schools back in 2014, do we have data with
15 regards to attendance for these 45 schools in the
16 past four years, is there data that you could share
17 with us or...

18 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: Yes, the average
19 daily attendance rate in the schools that have been
20 with us for three full years since the baseline year
21 is up 3.3 percent and chronic absenteeism is down by
22 9.4 percent.

23 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Okay and is there...
24 [cross-talk]

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2 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: And that well
3 surpasses citywide averages just as a point of
4 reference.

5 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And is there data
6 with regards to academic progress?

7 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: There is, our four-
8 year graduation rate is 11.3 percent in the high
9 schools just under double the citywide average, ELA
10 scores are up 10.7 percent and math scores are up 4.5
11 percent.

12 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Okay and data with
13 regards to teacher, student, parent satisfaction?

14 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: We have data on
15 parent engagement and participation that I referred
16 to in my testimony, I think... I can go back to the
17 number of parent leaders that have signed up and get
18 involved in the schools, so we have the... we have the
19 numbers on that, we also have the school survey data
20 that shows parent perceptions, I don't have that data
21 with me right now.

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah, one last
23 piece and then I have some... I have a few budget items
24 and as my colleagues has been very patient as well.
25 Every school, my understanding of a community school

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has a community school team but in the documents that I have reviewed I have noticed that there are no students on the team, why is that?

CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: Schools are able to structure their teams, it's, it's a local decision like, like you talk about... I'd have to look into to let you know the number of schools that do include students on their teams, I know many of our schools, Renaissance School of the Arts in East Harlem for example has a really active student voice component engaging student, student leaders. We think making sure that students feel welcome in these schools and have an opportunity to express their voice and show leadership is a really fundamental role.. [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right and don't you think it... the best way to welcome them is to put them on the team?

CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: Yeah, I mean I, I think that the... our role is to provide guidelines and supports for schools and to give them encouragement on what the best practices are so I, I, I would take that under consideration.. [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Because I have to tell you I think the students at Brooklyn Collegiate

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2 High School in my Council... colleague's district not
3 only will they be excellent on that team they are
4 future Council Members there that... they, they are
5 extraordinary... [cross-talk]

6 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: I, I... [cross-talk]

7 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And I think that
8 their voice should be factored in and counted and...
9 [cross-talk]

10 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: I, I, I have no
11 doubt and we have amazing student leaders across our
12 schools and I have... would not be surprised if most of
13 the community schools do formally have student
14 leaders on their leadership teams.

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: What is the total
16 budget for community schools in Fiscal Year 2018 and
17 the projected cost for Fiscal Year 2019?

18 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: This year our budget
19 is 195 million dollars to support the 227 community
20 schools and next year we're expecting the same
21 budget.

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Next year you're
23 expecting sorry?

24 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: The same budget.
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2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, you don't
3 anticipate any expansion of the program, you think
4 that that amount is, is adequate?

5 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: We've expanded
6 rapidly over the past four years. As you know we
7 started with 45 schools in 2014, this past year we
8 almost doubled going from 150 schools... or sorry,
9 almost increased by 50 percent going from 150 schools
10 to 227 schools so we really want to make sure that
11 we're focused on quality and continuity of program
12 implementation, making sure that there's fidelity to
13 the work so right now we don't have any plans to
14 expand next year.

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: That's
16 disappointing because I, I do believe that we should
17 be working to make sure that every school becomes a
18 community school and gets... and gets services and I,
19 I, I'm not... I'm not even sure if, if this amount is
20 adequate to fully meet the needs of the existing
21 schools in the program because as we mentioned
22 there's a lot of adjustments and tweaks that have to
23 be made but certainly the vision forward should be
24 all schools should be provided these, these
25 opportunities and these are choices the

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2 administration makes, these are choices, these... so
3 there's a decision not to expand the program and it's
4 a decision that this council disagrees with. What is
5 the total budget for renewal schools in Fiscal Year
6 2018 and the projected cost for Fiscal Year 2019?

7 AIMEE HOROWITZ: So, 2018 is... [cross-
8 talk]

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Make sure the
10 microphone is on.

11 AIMEE HOROWITZ: Oh sorry. So, 2018 is
12 191.6 million and we anticipate that the cost will be
13 the same next year, the budget will be the same.

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And that includes
15 the renewals and the schools in the Rise portfolio..
16 [cross-talk]

17 AIMEE HOROWITZ: Yes, it includes the
18 fair student funding, it includes the community
19 school resources for those schools, it includes
20 extended learning time so the additional hour of time
21 for every student, it includes summer school and
22 summer bridge programs... [cross-talk]

23 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: What I'm not
24 hearing it include is an expansion of for example, a
25 teacher center in all these schools because if the

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2 amount is the same that tells me the supports might
3 not be the same either.

4 AIMEE HOROWITZ: So, that's a,
5 principal and school leadership team driven decision
6 as to whether they have the need for a teacher center
7 and whether they want a teacher center, we certainly
8 support schools that wanted a teacher center. For
9 example, at Automotive High School they had a teacher
10 center and they wanted to beef up the quality of that
11 teacher center and we worked hand in hand with the
12 principal and with our colleagues at the UFT to
13 ensure that they had a robust teacher center that met
14 the new principal's vision, that met the teacher's
15 needs so we always work with schools to help them
16 expand teacher centers.

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Did the DOE provide
18 a capital funding stream particularly to renewal
19 schools to make sure that when we're encouraging
20 students in classrooms to use technology, to
21 supplement instruction, to you know do coding and
22 wonderful programs and often I hear from schools that
23 they don't have the band width, they don't have the
24 capacity, they don't have the wiring so I know that a
25 lot of money, this money that we've been talking

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2 about has been expense money but has there been a
3 dedicated stream of capital funding to improve... to
4 address the capital needs of these schools, many of
5 them are quite old and, and are in aging buildings
6 and campuses?

7 LAURA FEIJOO: I will just say that the
8 capital school's plan is a five year plan targeted on
9 schools in need across the districts and didn't have
10 a specific emphasis, you know to renewal schools
11 beyond looking at that capacity across the system and
12 we're aware in some places it's a challenge and we've
13 been working to address it. I couldn't give you
14 specifically each renewal school, but we can look at
15 the capital plan and overlay that information to
16 provide it to your office.

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right, I mean I, I,
18 I do believe that, you know clearly the schools and
19 we welcome a lot of the, the increased expense
20 funding to these schools but if, if they don't have
21 adequate wiring you can't operate a computer lab, you
22 can't operate basic functions of a school that
23 they're being measured on and, and that's... and, and
24 so when, when, when folks from the... from the DOE or
25 from the state visit the school and, and look for

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2 these things that becomes a challenge and these
3 schools don't have monies laying around for them to
4 fix... these, these could be multimillion dollar
5 investments that, that are critical and I... and I
6 would say that there should have been an emphasis to
7 expedite the capital improvements in these schools.

8 LAURA FEIJOO: So, some of the... some of
9 the plans are things we can do with the funding and
10 some are capital improvements that have to be done
11 over time that have to be in the plan, we'll
12 certainly send it to you, I don't discount that
13 wireless is exceptionally important but there are a
14 lot of other ways that they can provide services that
15 are not, you know just wireless in terms of
16 technology, certainly important but certainly
17 something we're looking at across schools.

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I, I think that...
19 respectfully I, I disagree that... this, this is a...
20 this is a critical piece to instruction in the 21st
21 century... [cross-talk]

22 LAURA FEIJOO: Sure... [cross-talk]

23 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: ...we're being... we're
24 holding schools accountable to 21st century level
25 standards, never have standards been this high and

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2 they're not seeing 21st century level funding to
3 address very basic needs in schools, wiring should
4 not be an issue, bandwidth should not be an issue in
5 New York City public schools in the year 2018 but
6 they remain an issue for far too many schools
7 particularly the most vulnerable schools, that is not
8 acceptable, with a budget of over 85 billion dollars
9 there is no reason why our public schools don't have
10 adequate wiring, bandwidth and basic capacity to
11 fulfill these functions and just to wrap up on, on
12 the budget item because I know my colleague has a
13 question. How much has been spent on the school
14 renewal program up to date this far?

15 AIMEE HOROWITZ: So, in Fiscal Year '15
16 it was 30.7 million, in Fiscal Year '16 168 million
17 and in the last two years 191.6 million in each year.

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And this accounts
19 for the schools that have been removed or added into
20 the... into the renewal school program... [cross-talk]

21 AIMEE HOROWITZ: So... [cross-talk]

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: ...Rise program...
23 [cross-talk]

24 AIMEE HOROWITZ: So, no schools have been
25 added, it accounts... it accounts for all schools that

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2 were originally designated as renewal and the schools
3 in the Rise Program and more than 50 percent of that
4 funding is reflected in school budgets or dedicated
5 to resources going directly to schools.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, to be clear no
7 school since 2014 was added to the renewal school
8 portfolio, is that... is that correct?

9 AIMEE HOROWITZ: Correct.

10 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Okay, I know my
11 colleague Council Member Ampry-Samuel has been very
12 patient for her round two questions and she'd like to
13 follow, sure.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPRY-SAMUEL: I just have
15 a follow up about the renewal schools, the number of
16 renewal schools that have been closed, that are on
17 the list to be closed, the truncated schools and the
18 mergers how many of those are co-located with charter
19 schools and I'm just kind of trying to figure out the
20 number of schools that are closing like the actual
21 classrooms and the seats and how many of those
22 buildings have... are co-located with a charter school?
23 Brooklyn Collegiate has a charter school in its
24 building and the Greg Jackson School, 284 that's
25 going to be truncated with Brownsville Collaborative

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2 in another building also has the same charter school
3 in that location as well and so I'm just trying to
4 figure out how many of those schools that are going
5 to be closed have already been closed, truncated or
6 merger... or merging with another school out of its
7 building have a charter school in it?

8 AIMEE HOROWITZ: Okay, I know Longwood
9 Prep and Holcombe Rucker that are slated to be merged
10 and they're both renewal schools, there is no charter
11 school in that building. I... [cross-talk]

12 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPER-SAMUEL: So, I'm
13 just looking for the ones that have... [cross-talk]

14 LAURA FEIJOO: So, we don't have exactly
15 the... we can get that to you, how many of the current
16 renewal schools out of the 47 plus the 21 Rise
17 Schools have a co-located charter school in them. I
18 just want to spend one minute saying about the
19 allocation of space so if a school is truncated and
20 there's additional classrooms proportionately that
21 remaining space is shared among the existing schools
22 that are there. I, I thought that's where you
23 question might be... [cross-talk]

24 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPER-SAMUEL: Uh-huh...
25 [cross-talk]

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2 LAURA FEIJOO: ...heading so I just want to
3 make sure and only four of the... [cross-talk]

4 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPER-SAMUEL: So, what
5 does that mean?

6 LAURA FEIJOO: So, let's say there are
7 three co-located schools, two are district schools,
8 one is a charter school, one school gets truncated
9 that allows for seven additional classrooms not being
10 utilized, those seven would be proportionately given
11 to those three schools in some of the truncations,
12 each situation is different... [cross-talk]

13 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPER-SAMUEL: Uh-huh...
14 [cross-talk]

15 LAURA FEIJOO: ...but that one we review
16 the space to see how much it is, two in the immediate
17 future the thing would be the largest school might
18 get a slightly larger proportion of the seven
19 classrooms versus the other two schools but we would
20 work out that space and just in terms of the 18
21 proposals that are out there only four will be
22 charter backfilled.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPER-SAMUEL: Okay, so do
24 you know how many of those charter schools that are
25 within those same renewal buildings how many of them

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2 have applications to increase their classroom sizes
3 or increase their... increase their seats?

4 LAURA FEIJOO: Yeah, just the four.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPER-SAMUEL: Just the...
6 okay. Okay, thank you.

7 LAURA FEIJOO: Welcome.

8 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I just want to also
9 just mention that we recognize... we've also... we're,
10 we're... we've been joined by Council Member Ulrich and
11 Council Member Gibson and next for questions we have
12 Council Member Barron.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you Mr.
14 Chair, I look forward to serving with you under your
15 leadership, I know you bring an extensive background
16 in education, we share having served with the
17 Department of Education and to the panel I have lots
18 of questions. Just the first follow up on my
19 colleague's questions, how many renewal schools that
20 have been closed are now charter schools, space used
21 by charter schools, her question was a little
22 different so of the schools that have been closed,
23 renewal schools... [cross-talk]

24 LAURA FEIJOO: Since 2014... [cross-talk]
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2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: ...how many of
3 them... whatever number have been closed?

4 LAURA FEIJOO: We'll, we'll have to...
5 we'll have to get back to you over the course of
6 multiple years how many ended up using the space for
7 charter schools... [cross-talk]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Correct... [cross-
9 talk]

10 LAURA FEIJOO: We'd have to get that
11 information to you.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And... I would look
13 forward to that information... [cross-talk]

14 LAURA FEIJOO: Sure... [cross-talk]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: ...and I would
16 think that it's a, a large number. The benchmarks for
17 renewal schools were very specific now I'm thinking...
18 I'm hear... I think I'm hearing that the Rise Schools
19 will not have specific targets but will have a range,
20 is that accurate?

21 AIMEE HOROWITZ: So, the benchmark... the
22 remaining 47 renewal schools will have benchmarks
23 that are a range, the Rise Schools will have
24 benchmarks that are a specific target.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Why is that?

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2 AIMEE HOROWITZ: Because we want the
3 renewal schools... [cross-talk]

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: What... you said
5 the remaining renewal schools will have... [cross-talk]

6 AIMEE HOROWITZ: A range... [cross-talk]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: ...a range, was it
8 initially a range?

9 AIMEE HOROWITZ: No.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: No, so why is it
11 that it's been changed?

12 AIMEE HOROWITZ: So that schools can
13 demonstrate that they're on a continuum of progress.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. When I was
15 a principal I was asked to take a principal of a... to
16 become a principal of a school that was a designated
17 school in need of improvement and the state had
18 identified that the school was on a downward
19 trajectory and needed to meet specific targets for
20 each of the next three years in both reading and
21 math, there weren't any other factors, it was reading
22 and math so I accepted that challenge and thanks to
23 god and to a dedicated staff and to a lot of
24 resources we met the target for each of the three
25 years, I'm looking through this list now and I see

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2 that that school is now on this list which it appears
3 is... I don't know if it's a renewal school or... it's PS
4 81 to be specific. So, my point is that the Chair has
5 raised the issue that when schools succeed and when
6 they excel and when they improve they're then
7 penalized because they no longer get the finances,
8 the support, the continued resources to keep them at
9 the level that they have achieved, so can you speak
10 to that question?

11 AIMEE HOROWITZ: So, one of the things
12 that we're doing as we provide schools with resources
13 is also building capacity and building... so building
14 teacher capacity through the use of teacher leaders,
15 building leadership capacity, building the capacity
16 of teacher teams as we work with... [cross-talk]

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Right, I'm
18 talking about dollars, specifically I'm talking about
19 dollars.

20 AIMEE HOROWITZ: So, they will be
21 retaining as Chris said in his testimony they will be
22 retaining their fair student funding in perpetuity,
23 their 100 percent fair student funding and their
24 designation as community schools along with all of
25 the resources that come... [cross-talk]

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COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: But isn't it true that the objective is to have all of New York city schools come to 100 percent in the fair student funding so that's... I don't think that that's something... aren't you moving to have all schools... I believe it's now 87 percent that schools are at for the funding and all schools... I thought I heard the Chancellor say all schools are moving towards 100 percent of the fair student funding so if they're only going to be getting what all other schools are getting I don't see that as an advantage?

AIMEE HOROWITZ: So, currently they are getting 100 percent fair student funding ahead of all other schools and yes, obviously we would love to have every school funded at over 100 percent of fair student funding but they will also retain their designation and all the services that they get; the mental health services, the physical health services as community schools as well so those additional supports along with in addition... [cross-talk

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay... [cross-talk]

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AIMEE HOROWITZ: ...to the dollars benefiting from the increase in capacity that, that they've had as a result... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: My, my time has run out and I hope that I can get a second round, but I do want to ask you, in terms of... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Ask, ask one last question now Council Member and then we'll have a round two, go ahead.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Say again?

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Could... you could ask your question now.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Oh okay, great, thank you. So, in terms of the renewal schools what input does the principal have in deciding how additional money designated for that school can be spent?

AIMEE HOROWITZ: So, that is... principals are... create their own school budgets along with their school leadership teams and so they are the ones that determine how, how their school budgets are spent. Obviously with the council of their superintendent if that's... if that's needed but schools are in control

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2 of their own budgets and this administration has been
3 a believer in principal autonomy... [cross-talk]

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I, I, I don't
5 think that that's accurate because I've asked
6 principals what is it that they wanted in their
7 renewal school and they told me no, we had to have
8 our teachers go to a particular training and
9 participate in training and it really caused a lot of
10 havoc in the school because there were only I believe
11 eight teachers and when two of them have to go for
12 training it's more disruptive than what the principal
13 would like to have seen as a benefit to the school...

14 [cross-talk]

15 AIMEE HOROWITZ: So... [cross-talk]]

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So... [cross-talk]

17 AIMEE HOROWITZ: That's a... [cross-talk]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I've, I've been
19 told that principals were forced... [cross-talk]

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right... [cross-
21 talk]]

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: ...in some degree
23 to take the cookie cutter, everybody's got to have
24 this and everybody's got to have that and that they
25 did not have the ability to as I did when I was the

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2 principal to say listen Madam Superintendent I need
3 this, I need this, I need this if you're asking me to
4 meet these targets and I was able to get that..

5 [cross-talk]

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, you could
7 respond, and this will be... then we have to move onto
8 the next... [cross-talk]

9 AIMEE HOROWITZ: Okay, so, that's a
10 different question, right, one was a question of, of
11 budget but principals have not been mandated to go to
12 professional development, there are... there is...

13 [cross-talk]

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: No, their staff...

15 [cross-talk]

16 AIMEE HOROWITZ: Their staff is not
17 mandated and they always make that decision in
18 consultation with their superintendent, there are
19 many professional development opportunities provided
20 and schools selected from different professional
21 development opportunities, we did strongly encourage
22 schools to attend for example teachers college
23 writing professional development or the Hochman
24 Writing strategies professional development for high
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2 schools but professional developments were not
3 mandated, schools were... [cross-talk]

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay, then I, I...
5 [cross-talk]

6 AIMEE HOROWITZ: ...encouraged... [cross-
7 talk]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: ...would like to
9 follow up on that because I was told that they had to
10 send their teachers to a particular training and it
11 totally wreaked havoc with their school day so I will
12 put it in writing and get it to you so that you can
13 respond that that's not the case or that you can say
14 well okay it did happen and we, we'll look to that.
15 Thank you, Mr. Chair... [cross-talk]

16 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you, thank
17 you Council Member and next Council Member Gibson.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you so much
19 Chair Treyger and I first want to congratulate you on
20 becoming chair of education and as this is your very
21 first hearing how appropriate that we're talking
22 about renewal schools. Good afternoon to all of you,
23 it is great to see you. I am the representative of
24 district 16 which includes district 9 that is no
25 stranger to DOE, no stranger to the Chancellor and I

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2 know a lot has been asked from our chair and I, I
3 simply wanted to first make a, a very brief statement
4 in just acknowledging that in 2014 when we started
5 the renewal program at 94 schools since that time
6 we've had a Mayor and a Chancellor that have been
7 very passionate about public education that vowed to
8 not close schools as an option unless that was the
9 only option and since that time we have closed
10 schools, we have merged schools, we have truncated
11 several schools and we are left with 21 renewal
12 schools that are now becoming Rise Schools that have
13 in the last four years shown significant improvement,
14 that leaves us with 47 renewal schools that are
15 remaining and I guess my question is and I preface
16 this with the understanding that as legislators we
17 work with the Department of Ed, we have expectations
18 and we set forth priorities that the Department is
19 going to do what it says it's going to do. I have
20 struggled, I have challenged this Chancellor on
21 district 9, I have called out and criticized when
22 necessary to make sure that my school district gets
23 the attention it needs, my school superintendent has
24 the highest number of renewal schools in the entire
25 city of New York, we had one campus, the Teller

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2 Avenue campus that had the nerve to have three
3 renewal schools on the same campus and so talk about
4 challenge, every category you could think of from
5 ELLs, students with disabilities, students in
6 temporary housing, I have them all and they like
7 everyone else deserve quality education. So, what I
8 struggle with moving forward tomorrow is a PEP
9 meeting and it's probably in this administration the
10 largest number of proposals of truncation, mergers
11 and closures on tomorrow's PEP agenda and what I'd
12 like to know from this administration is what we are
13 going to do to focus on the remaining schools in the
14 renewal program, are we going to really demonstrate
15 our commitment to children, I have a high
16 concentration of students that are foreign born that
17 are coming to the city with no background in English
18 proficiency, we know that but yet we're not prepared.
19 I talk about Latino students and West African
20 students because they're all a part of ELL students
21 not just students that are coming from Spanish
22 countries, we finally got that understanding but I
23 still am not clear on what types of resources we're
24 giving to Rise Schools because let's understand while
25 these schools may have shown improvement they are not

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2 out of the woods completely and so while they have
3 been improving we do not want to lose sight nor lose
4 priority on these schools and so I want a commitment
5 because I still today represent the most number of
6 renewal schools in my school district that this
7 department is going to demonstrate its commitment to
8 my children, that's what I want. Tomorrow I have
9 another renewal school that's on the agenda for
10 closure and then I'm left with seven in my district,
11 seven and a part of that are Rise Schools so I want
12 to understand just like the Chair what does it mean
13 to be a Rise School, what types of teacher support,
14 development and resources are coming with this Rise
15 Program so that we can be assured that this program
16 is actually going to be successful?

17 CHERYL WATSON-HARRIS: Thank you, if I
18 could just respond to that. One, I, I, I hear your
19 passion and echo your commitment to making sure that
20 we are making these schools our highest priority.
21 You're right that the Rise Schools have made
22 significant improvements and we're very proud of
23 those Rise School leaders and their school
24 communities, but we also know that there's much work
25 to be done. In the Bronx we have the Field Support

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2 Center which has prioritized the renewal four schools
3 as well as the Rise Schools and we have devoted the
4 larger majority of our borough instructional lead
5 support as well as our instructional coaches to make
6 sure that they're in these schools every day
7 supporting both the vision of the principal as well
8 as the improvement strategies identified by the
9 superintendents. We, we will definitely continue this
10 work as part of the Rise Program. During the next few
11 months we hope to learn more about the Rise Schools
12 as our colleague said earlier that these principals
13 have identified and earned greater autonomy for their
14 schools, they know exactly what their schools need in
15 terms of supports, in terms of resources to continue
16 to accelerate progress and so we're going to be
17 working side by side to help them develop their
18 school improvement plan for the future. All of the
19 DOE, all of the central offices, all of the offices
20 that represented our... that are represented on this
21 panel will be working side by side with those
22 principals to make sure that they receive the
23 resources that they need in addition to identifying
24 benchmarks along the way so that the school if it's
25 showing any signs of slipping back that we can

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2 intervene immediately and make sure that the schools
3 receive the support and services that they deserve.
4 I, myself was a principal of two turnaround schools
5 and a superintendent supporting principals in
6 turnaround so I recognize how extremely difficult
7 that this work is, I have walked in the shoes of
8 these principals and know that we need to drown out a
9 lot of messages coming to the school and make sure
10 that we know exactly the needs of each school
11 community and create a sound and coherent plan that
12 allows them the supports needed to accelerate the
13 progress and continue this hard work to ensure that
14 most importantly the children who are attending these
15 schools are receiving the education that they
16 deserve.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: I, I agree with
18 you and I guess I will just say that what we're doing
19 now is not enough.

20 CHERYL WATSON-HARRIS: Yeah... [cross-talk]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: If principals are
22 calling asking for resources and more support it's
23 not enough, we have got to do more. The Office of
24 Student Enrollment continues to send students to our
25 school districts that our principals are not prepared

1
2 for and that has been concerning. When a student
3 comes in at level one it's a great challenge to get
4 them to level two and level three and we recognize
5 that but if we keep getting more level ones and we're
6 not getting more support along with that then the
7 challenges will remain. The enrollment issues, we're
8 competing with charter schools that are coming in our
9 communities that are taking our school children so
10 all of these things I just need DOE to recognize on
11 the ground that the principals are struggling, and
12 they need the support. It's one thing to talk about
13 it but it's another thing to actually demonstrate it
14 with resources to make sure that it's going to
15 happen. We have a lot going on, there's a lot more to
16 talk about but please rest assured that I will be on
17 this administration and I will be on the DOE for the
18 next three years and ten months that I'm in office
19 about district 9's numbers getting better. We deserve
20 it as a borough, the Bronx has struggled consistently
21 all of you know that, district 7, district 8 and
22 district 9 have always been the bottom three, that is
23 unacceptable and I refuse to accept that my school
24 children can't learn and access resources just like
25 anyone else and so I know your staff, all of your

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2 colleagues, the Chancellor knows this but please
3 understand I will be on you guys even more to make
4 sure because I do my part, I give tons of funding to
5 support after school, technology upgrades and
6 everything you can think about and if we all do our
7 jobs we can really make a difference, there's a lot
8 going on, there's a lot that needs to be further
9 discussed but I expect more for my school district
10 and I want the department to give them the support
11 that they need.

12 CHERYL WATSON-HARRIS: Much appreciated,
13 thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you, thank
15 you very much Council Member. This is what happens
16 when you sit next to Chair Treyger the, the passion
17 and the fire, it's, it's great. Just to, to wrap up
18 you mentioned we have 227 community schools I
19 understand that there are a variety of community
20 school models of, of the 227 community schools how
21 many are DOE community schools versus other community
22 schools?

23 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: So, there are 227
24 community schools that are supported by the
25 Department of Education directly, on top of that

1
2 there are a number of community schools that have
3 been implementing this strategy either through
4 philanthropic sources, through entrepreneurial
5 leadership, through pre-existing partnerships.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right, so.. but
7 there are other community school models, is that
8 correct?

9 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: So, we have I would
10 say a big tent-view on this and I talked earlier
11 about the components of our strategy, the 227
12 community schools I am confident to speak to that
13 they are all implementing the key elements that
14 research has proven to be as essential for an
15 effective community school strategy, there are
16 additional organizations, there are additional
17 schools that are implementing elements to that
18 community school strategy, some may be doing every
19 element.

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Well, I mean but
21 there are.. the UFT has its' model as well, right and
22 you know I've, I've been reading up on the variety of
23 models out there across the, the city and the country
24 and so for example one key distinction that, that I..
25 that I read was that in the DOE community school

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2 model the community school director is hired by the
3 CBO, is that correct?

4 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: Yes, I'm, I'm
5 pausing because we don't consider this a model,
6 right, this is a strategy to support schools in
7 communities. In the schools that we support the
8 community school directors are employed by the lead
9 CBO though, that's correct.

10 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And as in other
11 models the community school director is hired by a
12 school-based team with stakeholders embedded, is that
13 correct?

14 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: I know that the city
15 of Philadelphia, the Mayor's Office has hired the
16 community school directors, I know that in Cincinnati
17 the school district has hired community school
18 directors, in Oakland local community-based
19 organizations employ the community school director.
20 So, I think there's a lot of different approaches to
21 how community organizations and schools work
22 together, what's consistent there is the need for
23 resource coordination and shared leadership, which is
24 consistent across all of those.

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2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But I, I do think
3 that it, it hits on an issue that when you mentioned
4 about why some schools had to decouple from their CBO
5 partners with the vision conversation I think some of
6 these issues could have been addressed at the
7 formation or the explore, exploration stage when, you
8 knew these relationships are being formed that these
9 things are happening so... but I just want to recognize
10 for the record that there are different models out
11 there or approaches or strategies so I, I just... I
12 just want, want to note that. Are... since these CBO
13 service providers encounter sometimes very high needs
14 cases, complex cases are they mandated reporters?

15 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: They are.

16 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: They are and is
17 there a mechanism to... that monitors accountability
18 and progress, making sure that these cases are being
19 followed up on and whose responsible... ultimately
20 responsible for that?

21 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: The, the DOE has a
22 set of rules and regulations around reporting and
23 regardless of whether it's a school employee or a CBO
24 employee they're all bound by the same regulations,
25 we track that very closely with our office of Safety

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2 and Youth Development, with our Superintendent
3 Offices and the Field Support Offices.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And are they, they,
5 they communicate with the school principal as well?

6 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: They do..

7 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: ...because ultimately
8 if something, you know god forbid happens in a school
9 particularly if, if it's a case that involves... with
10 regards to the service providers it's usually the
11 school principal's name or the school leader's name
12 that's in the paper and so I just want to make sure
13 that that communication, that engagement and that
14 follow up is actually... is actually happening and I, I
15 am pleased to hear that these are in fact mandated
16 reporters and I think accountability and... is, is very
17 key. I just want to leave this panel with a couple of
18 just some of my own reflections in visiting the
19 schools that I think that... I think the public really
20 needs to also just, just hear. As we visited schools
21 we asked questions about budget, instruction,
22 pedagogy, support but the things that I... that I took...
23 I took that really hit me personally was how the
24 students gravitated to the social workers, how
25 students gravitated to counselors that was very, very

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2 important for us to see with our own two eyes and,
3 and to hear their experiences, you cannot script
4 that, that was real. Some of these students stated
5 how because of the climate they were in nationally
6 how some of them are afraid to walk in, in the
7 community out of fear that their families might be
8 deported and they mentioned that their school and
9 particularly their... the offices where their social
10 workers were, were in or their guidance counselors
11 and their other support staff were sanctuaries where
12 they felt safe, where they felt welcomed, where they
13 felt that there was trust, that is critical to
14 education and to... and, and to our democratic way of
15 life, students need to feel safe and welcomed and
16 embraced in their schools, in their communities and
17 if we don't establish that trust and that feeling of
18 basic safety it is very difficult to learn, you
19 cannot... to all the bureaucrats whether they're at the
20 city, state, or federal level you cannot divorce the
21 realities that our students are facing on a day to
22 day basis during the course of their lives, that
23 travels with them inside the school so this has been
24 very important for us to see and to process and, and
25 to understand that every single school, every single

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2 school needs to have this support system, every
3 single, single school needs to have social workers,
4 adequate guidance counselors, support staff, all
5 forms of support to meet the social emotional
6 learning needs of our kids, it is very, very
7 difficult to learn in a classroom when on your mind
8 is a fear that your family might be hurt or taken,
9 it's difficult to learn in a classroom when you're
10 not sure if you're going to have a warm meal that
11 night, it is difficult to learn when you know that
12 you might be facing a multi-hour commute to get to a
13 temporary housing location and not sure if you're
14 going to see the same place the next day and so these
15 support structures I think have been critical but as
16 far as the other things I've observed that I think
17 that we do have control over and need to address and
18 I've hit on some of this before but I'm going to
19 mention it again, some of the schools I visited which
20 are renewal schools or now Rise Schools where the
21 students feel welcomed and safe and they want to go
22 to their school and experience opportunities they,
23 they might not experience at home don't have a gym,
24 some of the students cannot do 21st century coding
25 because they don't have a, a computer lab that has

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2 the wiring and the bandwidth to support them, that is
3 not acceptable and so we're not giving them the full
4 benefit and the full experience, the fullness of, of
5 what these promises are, are all about and that is
6 within our control and that message is not just for
7 the city, it's for the state of new York. We need to
8 end some of this bickering and to make sure that we
9 are addressing the basic needs of schools, basic
10 needs of kids and who has suffered the most, schools
11 that have historically been in communities that have
12 not been serviced and invested in for decades
13 systematically, it's no coincidence that some of
14 these schools that, that are struggling are also in
15 communities that have not seen their fair share of
16 resources, respect and attention whether it's housing
17 needs... one of... one of the items that, that I saw was
18 very, very profoundly, you know so important to see
19 is the importance of food pantries which the council
20 made sure that they put resources in, making sure
21 kids don't leave school hungry, that they have basic
22 nourishment, these are basic things that some folks
23 take for granted. And the last piece I'll leave you
24 with is this, these schools faced an onslaught of
25 criticism particularly during the era of the last

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2 administration and it's very difficult for them to
3 get the word out at... in, in an effective manner about
4 the great things that are happening inside them and I
5 think the DOE needs to look very deep into how to
6 provide adequate public relations support to
7 effectively get the good news out there because
8 certainly bad news travels faster than good news and
9 I don't think these schools have the capacity or the
10 wherewithal, the means to effectively get the... their
11 words and their good deeds out into communities and I
12 know that people say well let them visit different
13 meetings that's not enough, the DOE has a significant
14 budget, it's the largest departments that we have in
15 the city of New York, I am confident that there is
16 adequate resources within the DOE right now to
17 provide additional public relation support to these
18 schools, they are facing an onslaught of criticism
19 from competing interests as we heard about enrollment
20 issues where you have other schools that are
21 competing for, for that same student population,
22 they, they are still facing the impact of, of decades
23 of neglect and, and, and disinvestment and they're
24 left to their own devices to, to say good things are
25 happening and I, I think the DOE needs to really

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2 examine how to adequately support these schools and
3 get the word out to parents and to... and to the
4 communities and to the multi-ethnic communities they
5 serve as well. So, I, I will... I will end there and
6 if, if there's no other further questions I will
7 excuse this panel...

8 LAURA FEIJOO: Could I... could I just
9 thank you... [cross-talk]

10 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes... [cross-talk]

11 LAURA FEIJOO: ...I just... I just want to
12 take a minute to, to let you know that today's
13 hearing and these conversations, the, the feedback is
14 taken very seriously and on behalf of all the
15 principals and the teachers and the parents and the
16 communities and the children working really hard each
17 day I just want to thank you for the opportunity to
18 allow us as a team to answer some of these questions,
19 I know we have some things to get back to you about
20 but certainly that feedback is taken very seriously
21 and we appreciate the opportunity today.

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you very
23 much.

24 LAURA FEIJOO: Thank you.
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2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: The next panel I'd
3 like to call up Karen Alford, Henry Rubio, Christine
4 Schuch from the Community School Director and also
5 Patrick Joseph representing Manhattan Borough
6 President Gale Brewer. Also, just for the record I
7 just want to note that Council Member Steve Levin
8 joined us as well. Just, just a reminder that each
9 witness has three minutes and I guess we'll start
10 with Karen Alford.

11 KAREN ALFORD: Good afternoon everyone,
12 congratulations Chair Treyger and thanks so much to
13 the city council for your continued support in being
14 an anchor partner with the UFT Community Learning
15 Schools. After listening to, to the DOE's testimony I
16 have to just give you just a little piece of my
17 background. I was a teacher in Ocean Hill-Brownsville
18 for many years in a school that had over 100 homeless
19 children, children in temporary housing, a food
20 desert, very, very few high-quality fruits,
21 vegetables, food in the community and children in
22 crisis and it was a very difficult situation teaching
23 in an under resourced community. And then I'll fast
24 forward to 2012, the UFT began the community learning
25 school's initiative and if I bring you up to where we

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2 are now we have 29 schools in our community learning
3 school's portfolio, we work with over 18,000 students
4 and we like to think of our work centered around four
5 key tenets. One is children's wellbeing, we have to
6 make sure that there are wraparound services to help
7 support our students so that my children in
8 Brownsville and other communities have access to
9 vision and dental and mental wellness and all these
10 other supports. It's also very key that our school
11 communities and our learning.. community learning
12 schools you will see powerful teaching and learning,
13 that is a core tenet of ours, you will see that our
14 teachers are receiving job embedded professional
15 learning, we have nine teacher centers within our
16 schools and we are also paying for model teachers to
17 help work with teachers so that teachers are building
18 capacity and it's so key that we remember our
19 educators in this.. in this equation because often
20 times when you hear about community schools rarely is
21 empowering the educator mentioned as part of the
22 process and once we build capacity within our
23 educators then you certainly see more of the powerful
24 learning happening within our students. Another key
25 role for us is the, the presence of partnerships and

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2 collaboration, it is so key to us this work can't get
3 done without partners and the UFT has very few direct
4 services because it's so important to us to work with
5 a multitude of partners in the school. So, if you
6 walk into one of our community learning schools you
7 will see upwards of 30 to 40 partners in one school
8 because it takes all of those different kinds of
9 groups to bring a school along to where they need to
10 be and then lastly, I'd like to mention our community
11 school directors. This work doesn't happen without
12 those folks on the ground and we put a lot of stock
13 in how we get them on board, our vetting process.
14 When a school comes to us we let them have two to
15 three candidates and they do the interviewing and
16 they find the match that works best for them. We
17 give... we make sure there's professional learning
18 every month with our CSD's constantly building their
19 capacity and one key fact that we are so proud of and
20 I don't know that you see this everywhere because
21 there are lots of models and we're all very different
22 and we're all there to service children but with our
23 model what you will see is that you have community
24 school directors, we invest 100,000 dollars all in
25 for these folks and what you get is a six to one

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2 return so you get a return of 600,000 dollars for
3 every 100,000 that we invest for services and
4 programs for schools.

5 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you very
6 much.

7 HENRY RUBIO: Good afternoon. My name is
8 Henry Rubio and I'm the Executive Vice President of
9 the Council for School... of School Administrators. We
10 presently represent over 6,000 principals, assistant
11 principals, educational administrators, supervisors
12 of and daycare directors. I'd like to take a moment
13 to commend our newly elected Chair of the Education
14 Committee for scheduling this important hearing on
15 behalf of CSA, I thank you for the opportunity to
16 present testimony concerning community schools and
17 renewal schools. Now while you have our testimony I
18 have been listening since ten a.m. to the testimony
19 presented here today so I will share some additional
20 concerns and points that I think I want to share with
21 you this morning. And CSA would like to first
22 acknowledge the countless school administrators that
23 have led enormous stride to community and renewal
24 schools some of them were mentioned already this
25 morning and applaud Mayor De Blasio and Chancellor

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2 Farina, Farina for providing additional resources to
3 schools in need. These additional resources help to
4 rebuild and transform specific schools through its
5 renewal program and community school program. For
6 example, two that I... two key, key resources are the
7 additional hour of, of, of instruction that was
8 mentioned this morning and 100 percent funding of
9 fair, fair student funding. While the DOE has
10 confirmed this morning that all Rise Schools will be
11 funded at 100 percent I think we, we're not clear or
12 we haven't been assured yet that all schools that are
13 Rise Schools will continue to get the extended
14 learning time they essentially need to also continue
15 to, to show improvement. I think Mr. Chairman those
16 are concerns that you expressed this morning and that
17 we as CSA share with you. Let me also say that while
18 CSA believes that all 1,800 schools must be funded at
19 100 percent we are pleased that the renewal schools
20 are receiving the funding that the DOE determines is
21 required to provide a sound and basic education. We
22 strongly believe in high quality CBO's, community-
23 based organizations because they have the potential
24 to provide an educational, educational experience
25 customized for every student along with the

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2 comprehensive services that promote physical health,
3 mental wellbeing and address the after-school needs
4 of families. These are also the kinds of resources
5 that all 1,800 schools need, and all our 1.1 million
6 students deserve. But in order for CBO's to be
7 successful school principals and their leadership
8 teams must play an important role in all of the
9 above. No one is better equipped than the principal
10 to guide and evaluate organizational partners. It's
11 currently unclear what if any role principals play in
12 evaluating and when necessary replacing the CBO, we
13 heard a little bit today about the term of divorcing
14 or, or separating the two. Today you've heard that
15 schools and CBOs should have shared leadership for
16 resource coordination, but the reality is that there
17 is no shared accountability, accountability shares
18 only on the shoulders of principals. The DOE and
19 superintendents carefully choose and vet every single
20 one of our principals especially those prioritized to
21 lead community and renewal schools, as a result
22 principals must be trusted to be decision makers,
23 this should include supervision and selection of CBOs
24 as well as the assurance that Field Support personnel
25 and directors of school renewals are laser focused on

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2 agreed upon goals. In situations where this is not or
3 where this has not been clear the CBOs should be
4 accountable to school leaders and leadership teams.
5 The school renewal program has not been as successful
6 as it otherwise might have been. CSA has consistently
7 taken the position that school leaders are best
8 suited to evaluate and assess the effectiveness of
9 their particular CBO and we reiterate that stance to
10 you today. There must be plausible data gathered and
11 analyzed, rubrics must be established and determined
12 if community-based organizations are, are to
13 contribute or are contributing in any way to student
14 achievement, attendance, or the other agreed upon
15 roles.

16 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Mr. Rubio did you...
17 did you provide written testimony because we could
18 definitely take that because I do have some follow
19 up, I just want to hear from the whole panel first
20 and then we'll have some... [cross-talk]

21 HENRY RUBIO: Absolutely... [cross-talk]

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: ...follow up
23 questions, I, I appreciate you're your... next, I think
24 we hear from Christine Schuch.

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2 CHRISTINE SCHUCH: Good afternoon Council
3 Member Treyger and all the Council Members. I'm
4 actually not speaking I'm going to be supporting any
5 questioning for, for the UFT, thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Well thank you,
7 you, you helped... you helped more time for them.
8 Please, next we have Patrick Joseph from Madame
9 Borough President's Office.

10 PATRICK REYNOLD JOSEPH: Thank you. Good
11 afternoon, I am Patrick Reynolds Joseph, Senior
12 Education Policy Analyst for the Manhattan Borough
13 President. I'm delivering these remarks on behalf of
14 the Office of the Manhattan Borough President. Today
15 I wish to offer testimony concerning the renewal
16 schools program and how it might better serve the
17 various communities of New York City. I believe that
18 there are three factors deserving of closer
19 inspection, at least three, which may be the source
20 of such improvement including enrollment, resource
21 and supports management and accountability. First
22 enrollment as we all know is driven by nuanced
23 complex, some demographic, bureaucratic and even
24 perception-based factors all of which are
25 attributable to adult decision making and not to

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2 student performance. Yet enrollment numbers are often
3 cited in decisions regarding significant school
4 utilization changes such as closures and truncations.
5 Given its status as a deciding factor for such
6 changes a clear and explicit strategy to improve
7 enrollment in our renewal schools seems necessary.
8 Second the DOE uses evidence-based strategies to
9 support renewal schools, but they should also take
10 into account the specific challenges present when
11 these strategies fail to improve the needle on
12 student performance or fail to move that needle I
13 should say. When an intervention strategy and its
14 associate resources prove ineffective there must be a
15 mechanism for recognizing efficacy. The same is also
16 true when an intervention strategy is effective.
17 Lastly, the DOE should communicate an explicit
18 evaluation model and theory of change that explains
19 the mismatch between budget inputs, interventions and
20 their outcomes. Every effective system design
21 includes feedback loops that sustain an evaluation-
22 based effort to continually improve and provide
23 better outcomes, the renewal schools program should
24 be no different. The case of Wadleigh School fully
25 exemplifies these last two points concerning resource

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2 management and accountability partly because the
3 school has had a couple of years of zero percent
4 proficiency scores in math despite the DOE's
5 supports. If there were a recognition of the in-
6 efficacy of the supports that were used there's no
7 doubt that the DOE would be able to better equip the
8 school with the resources and supports that would
9 improve that proficiency level. Therefore I ask that
10 all of us push the DOE to use more analytical
11 approaches to, to renewal school intervention
12 strategies. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you so much.
14 I do have some very quick follow up questions for
15 both the UFT and, and CSA. With regards.. with.. for
16 the UFT first, we've, we've heard the exchange with
17 regards to the difference in the models particularly
18 in the hiring of the community school director where
19 the DOE or their, their term is strategy and by the
20 way they, they also I think they have shifted from
21 the term wraparound services to integrated services
22 just, just to be clear that that person's hired by
23 the CBO as opposed to the UFT model or the UFT
24 strategy, a school based team that's.. and hires, can
25 you speak to the, the.. and feedback or analysis you

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2 could share with us about the, the effectiveness of
3 that approach more so than the approach of the DOE?

4 KAREN ALFORD: I can tell you with our
5 approach we find that schools have to be invested in
6 the process and so if you want schools to take
7 ownership of the process they have to be able to work
8 with the person that's there so in fairness to the
9 school we want to make sure that they have the
10 opportunity to have that match to be able to talk to
11 a host of different candidates to see who is the best
12 person because that person's going to be responsive
13 to the parents, to the students, to the teachers, to
14 the administration that person's going to be there
15 every day and so we think that they're better suited
16 to make that decision than we are as a the essential
17 team.

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right and, and, and
19 do you share my concern with regards to how
20 professional develop, development is being delivered
21 particularly in the renewal schools, I mean obviously
22 to me it's a... it's a key part of any school but where
23 you have some turnover, so you have some new staff
24 not just leadership but even teacher turnover, you
25 have so many changes to process, educators are not

1
2 robots, they need a place in time and personal
3 resources to process this and to translate those
4 changes into progress in the classroom and we didn't
5 have data today by the DOE with regards to the number
6 of the schools and their renewal school portfolio
7 that have teacher centers, I don't know if, if you
8 have that... any, any further information about that
9 and speak to the importance of teacher center in
10 schools in general?

11 KAREN ALFORD: I don't have information
12 regarding how many teacher centers they have in
13 renewal schools but we know that the educators have
14 to be supported in this process and as students and
15 families are so important in a community learning
16 school process so are the educators and we always
17 want to make sure that we're building capacity and
18 that we're bringing ourselves to our students and so
19 it's important to make sure that we're constantly
20 working on our professional learning and so for the
21 UFT community learning schools it's been important to
22 us to make sure that we have community... that we have
23 UFT teacher centers wherever we can and we know that
24 sometimes it may not be fiscally available at some
25 schools and... especially where there are lower numbers

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2 of students, they may not have the dollars to do this
3 and so we're also looking at master and model
4 teachers but how do you make sure that you have a
5 gatekeeper there that's working with staff and we
6 know what our... we know what our UFT teacher centers
7 can do, we know the training that they receive, we
8 know that they know how to turn key, we know that
9 they are certainly there on the job doing job
10 embedded every day, they live there in that school
11 and that's important for trust, for continuity and,
12 and just to understand the folks that you're working
13 with and what's needed in that particular school so
14 we certainly value the work that our UFT teacher
15 centers are doing particularly in our schools that
16 have been under resourced and that are struggling.

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Alright and to your
18 credit the UFT formed models or strategies but you...
19 for the DOE's model and you are hitting... the UFT was
20 addressing and hitting on things that educators knew
21 way before folks now, now are, are talking about so
22 thank you I just want to thank the UFT in that. With
23 regards to the CSA you heard before that CBO
24 providers are mandated reporters I, I, I have... would
25 like to follow up with the DOE about the

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2 communication levels between the CBO parts and the
3 schools just because as we know if something happens
4 in the school ultimately this principal is
5 accountable and that's made clear here and its made
6 clear in the media everyday so can you speak to the,
7 the level of engagement and communication to the
8 extent that there is adequate communication between
9 the CBO and, and the school leadership and with
10 regards to issues that might come up during a service
11 providers' meeting encounter with the student, are
12 principals and AP's stating that that feedback is
13 getting back to them because it's, it's not clear to
14 me about, about that, that... this nebulous of, of, of
15 accountability and, and dialogue and exchanges that
16 should be taking place so if you could just speak to
17 this I, I'd, I'd appreciate it?

18 HENRY RUBIO: Right, so, so without
19 speaking to any specific situations I think that
20 these coordinators are working in most situations
21 very closely with the principal or assistant
22 principals in making sure that they're meeting
23 regularly and discussing any concerns that might be
24 happening during after school. There might be
25 instances that... of things that have happened that

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2 haven't been reported and, and those become
3 problematic, right but those avenues of communication
4 must stay open. I just want to piggy back on a
5 comment that was made by my colleague here about the
6 ownership of the process, right and so school
7 leaders, the principals and assistant principals need
8 to be involved in that process of identifying and
9 matching CBOs with schools that make the best fit
10 and, and that really begins to eliminate and smooth
11 out the, the, the collaboration process as opposed to
12 what's happened in the past where the department has
13 identified a match so I'm the principal of the school
14 and this is the CBO you're working with and sometimes
15 that works and sometimes it's, it's a little bit more
16 difficult.

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And you heard that
18 schools that graduate from renewal to Rise will have
19 to rely on Borough Field Support Centers for support
20 services, one of... and one of the concerns I'm hearing
21 on the ground... again I, I don't just, you know work
22 out of here I visit schools quite frequently, I'm not
23 going to live in a bubble here at city hall, I, I do
24 get feedback that at time there's not adequate key
25 staffing and I say key staffing in areas like budget

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2 and certain programming, certain areas and now
3 renewal schools will have to rely on Borough Field
4 Support Centers where the existing school districts,
5 existing schools in districts already compete for
6 those same resources and personnel, can you speak to
7 this concern?

8 HENRY RUBIO: I think what you just
9 articulated is extremely consistent with what our
10 members tell us, right and so reaching out to the
11 Field Support Centers they're not getting the
12 resources they need in, in a timely fashion. You
13 heard testimony this morning that renewal schools are
14 being prioritized when these needs happen well when
15 something is prioritized that means that another
16 school is not getting their... those resources, right
17 and so you know you can read into that but that is
18 consistent with what we've heard from our principals
19 that on many occasions they're not getting... they're
20 not getting responses back as timely as they'd like
21 to and that's an area that we're working with the
22 Department on to increase that, that communication
23 and make that smooth and more, more timely.

24 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And we also heard
25 today that school leaders particularly in renewal

1
2 schools have flexibility to design project based
3 learning opportunities and I, I question this because
4 with all the layers of oversight and interventions
5 and, and bureaucratic structures I don't see where
6 they have some of that flexibility when you have a
7 director of school renewal, a superintendent for
8 school renewal, your district superintendent, your
9 Borough Field Support Center and the list goes on,
10 do, do the schools feel that they have flexibility to
11 meet the... you know meet the diverse learning needs of
12 their students with that... you know with all of these
13 different agendas and visions that they have to
14 adhere to?

15 HENRY RUBIO: I think you'll, you'll read
16 this in my testimony as well that this, this
17 supervision needs to be streamlined because
18 principals are being asked to do so much from so many
19 different people and the school year starts off with
20 the term we used today, benchmark goals and sometimes
21 these benchmark goals, goals are then reprioritized
22 with other goals that need to be met and so the
23 allocation of time and resources and coordinating
24 with my, my teaching staff and my... and my... all of
25 this is, is changing over time and, and again it's

1
2 not, not, not effective so I think that's consistent
3 with some of the concerns that we have as well.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right and I... and I
5 quite frankly think the DOE itself is not consistent
6 amongst their own leadership about what those
7 benchmarks are because I'm deeply concerned about how
8 they're dealing with these schools now called Rise
9 Schools and some of them don't even realize that
10 they're Rise but they've been called Rise even though
11 Rise starts July 1st and today's February. So, there,
12 there is some follow up that, that we have to do
13 there but I, I thank... I thank all of you, I thank the
14 entire panel for your leadership and advocacy.

15 PATRICK REYNOLD JOSEPH: Thank you.

16 HENRY RUBIO: Thank you for having us.

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Sure.

18 KAREN ALFORD: Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Oh, I'm sorry,
20 Council Member Gibson had a question to the panel,
21 I'm... I apologize.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Just a quick
23 question. And thank you so much and I apologize, I
24 know we have other panels but I guess I just had a
25 very quick question specifically for UFT and CSA, I

1
2 agree with Chair I don't have a lot of confidence
3 that the Department of Ed is going to invest more
4 resources in Borough Offices like mine in the Bronx
5 that district seven, eight, and nine will get
6 sufficient resources for our renewal schools, Rise
7 Schools what I'm, I'm asking of all of you and
8 certainly we need your help, I've heard from
9 teachers, I visited schools, we have a high
10 concentration in our district of new teachers that
11 need even more support. I visited one of my renewal
12 schools and saw two teachers, co-teachers in the same
13 classroom and both teachers had less than three years
14 on the job, that was very concerning for me so I
15 guess my question is the Chancellor has talked about
16 incentives in terms of principals, hiring from the
17 pool early in April before the school year begins and
18 other sorts of incentives, enrollment centers located
19 in... within district nine in the Bronx but that's
20 simply not enough, what are your thoughts on better
21 recruitment opportunities that we could have to
22 recruit the best and the brightest but also not just
23 the recruitment effort it's even more challenging
24 when we get them to keep them, many, many of your
25 members do not want to work in renewal schools, they

1
2 don't want to work in Rise Schools, I get it but
3 someone has to do this public service and so I guess
4 I'm appealing to both CSA and UFT to help me in
5 district nine and in the Bronx so that I can not only
6 provide a better more aggressive recruitment effort
7 and demand this of the Department of Ed that we do
8 resource fairs and other things in our school
9 district and in our borough but also how we can keep
10 teachers. I want to make sure we continue to raise
11 the level of expectation of our schools, of our
12 scholars and what we expect but I have to tell you it
13 has been downright frustrating for me in the four
14 years I've been here in looking at district nine and
15 where we've been, we've made a lot of progress but
16 we're still far behind compared to our other school
17 districts so I'd just like your thoughts on that, I
18 mean have you seen a lot of new teachers coming into
19 our districts especially districts like mine in the...
20 in the Bronx and certainly what are your thoughts on
21 what we can do and what the city council can be in
22 support of?

23 HENRY RUBIO: Council Member Gibson I
24 started my career as an administrator in district
25 nine in a high school that later was a high school

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2 administrator so I'm very aware with the need of
3 teachers in the Bronx. It is... there are districts
4 there where again the highest number of schools with
5 the highest percentage of poverty, highest number of
6 percentage of ELLs, need... schools... students with
7 special needs, poverty. Again, it's... they're all
8 concentrated in one place and the resources right now
9 are not there primarily now talking about teachers
10 and in cases where... you know it's, it's just an
11 incredibly hard job, our Chairman Treyger was a
12 teacher, this is time... it, it, it takes the life out
13 of you and I have so much respect for our teachers, I
14 was a teacher, my wife's a teacher, we have four
15 children in New York City public schools, we do this
16 for a living, we're passionate about it, I'm getting
17 passionate now but yes, in, in the Bronx we... our
18 administrators lose... our... the turnover rate is so
19 high and when they get a lot of this training from
20 renewal schools it is just... they get burnt out and,
21 and... the first moment they have an opportunity to
22 transfer to the open market many of them do, right,
23 to go somewhere else in the city where the, the work
24 is not there. Perhaps something that the department
25 and I cannot speak for them and, and, and this is

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2 something the council might want to consider is that
3 the Chancellor has the ability to determine which
4 schools are hard to staff and, and many of your
5 schools in your district are hard to staff and, and
6 that would result in perhaps being able to provide
7 teachers with a higher salary to attract teachers to
8 stay in, in those districts that would be something
9 to consider, it has a price tag on it but for
10 principals their retention is so important, you've
11 invested time and training, building community and
12 then you start all over again and the students get
13 hurt, right, you have these vacancies and I'm sure
14 Council Member Gibson you're familiar with this, you
15 have a classroom with 30 kids and no teacher for
16 weeks, months and an inconsistent sub coming in and
17 out of that classroom and what that does for teaching
18 and learning is more than I can speak about today,
19 look... yes.

20 KAREN ALFORD: This has certainly been on
21 the UFT's radar for a while and we actually began a
22 new teacher initiative about two years ago to address
23 these efforts, we see more turnover in the Bronx than
24 any other borough, you're correct retention is
25 certainly not where it should be in the Bronx and so

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2 in our small way what we've been trying to do is that
3 we have paired up new teachers with retired teachers
4 to serve as an extra source of mentoring for folks so
5 that they have this extra layer, this extra person to
6 talk to when things start to become overwhelming.
7 We've also outfitted our member assistance program,
8 our MAP program with social workers so again when
9 teachers are feeling a little overwhelmed
10 particularly in the beginning there is someone there
11 also, another resource to talk to. We have created a
12 battery of workshops so that new teachers can avail
13 themselves of about 20 different workshops over the
14 school year if there are issues about content not
15 being sure how to teach something so we're again
16 always looking at their professional development. We
17 have actually started planning as of yesterday,
18 thinking about the Bronx and keeping the Bronx in
19 mind on how do we do even more so we actually had our
20 first meeting yesterday to talk about how do we start
21 working with new teachers as soon as they.. as soon as
22 they hit the door so beginning for.. I don't know...
23 this pilot is starting July 15th to work with new
24 teachers because retention in the Bronx in particular
25 has been such a heavy lift for folks and we're also

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2 working with universities to figure out how do we
3 start to do an apprentice program. People should be
4 able to see what it is before you are on the job and
5 why isn't... student teaching is not enough and how do
6 we do it better so that perspective teachers are
7 working in schools particularly community schools or
8 renewal schools, places to see what it looks like
9 because what you've learned in theory isn't always
10 what happens on the ground, right, and so we are... we
11 are working now with universities to get them to
12 think about how do you do apprentice programs and
13 then I guess from you all if there is a way to
14 somehow help us incentivize teaching for new teachers
15 not in terms of merit pay or anything like that but
16 how do we make sure that they have resources when
17 they come in that will help them in their classrooms
18 so that that's one less worry to think about and how
19 do we get folks in, in the summer when they are not
20 necessarily on the job yet but how do we get them to
21 come in, in the summer to do some of this kind of
22 pre-training that's not mandatory but certainly
23 helpful.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you. So, I
25 guess as I close I am asking all of you to help me

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2 and I'm going to ask the Chair if we can do something
3 to work on this effort in all of what you just
4 described because the Bronx has a lot of challenge
5 but no challenge, you know is impossible and I refuse
6 to give up, I'm willing to fight the good fight with
7 all of you and make sure that we do our part and, and
8 hire the best, retain them and make sure that the
9 Bronx, you know no longer has that distinction so I
10 thank you and I charge my chair.. [cross-talk]

11 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Alright.. [cross-
12 talk]

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: ...to work with me
14 on this effort, thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you and look
16 I, I, I have ideas and I, I think the, the answer to
17 some of the challenges whether it's in the Bronx or
18 in Brooklyn or other boroughs is within those
19 boroughs and so I'm, I'm already.. I'm working with
20 the DOE on an early childhood teaching academy high
21 school in my district and.. because I believe that we
22 have a lot of talents and, and.. talents and skills
23 and opportunity.. and, and, and students with amazing
24 capability within our.. my community that will become
25 our future teachers and future leaders and I think

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2 the same is true in the Bronx, there's amazing kids
3 in the Bronx and they will become the amazing
4 teachers that will serve their students and I also
5 think we need to partner with teaching preparatory
6 institutions and create pipelines, if, if there are
7 teachers within the CUNY system or teachers, college
8 and other systems that they recognize as, as ready to
9 roll on day one let's partner up with some school
10 districts that historically have had challenges in
11 finding, finding a teacher. So... and speaking of
12 teachers I just want to give a quick shout out to
13 some educators in the audience, my parents, my, my
14 father Norman who's a retired special education
15 teacher and my mother who's a retired
16 paraprofessional who serve... who served English
17 language learners...

18 [applause]

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: We'll have... we'll
20 have a post observation debriefing following,
21 following this hearing where I'll, I'll have to face
22 my, my rating officers but I thank, thank you very
23 much and I thank the panel for their time and work,
24 thank you.

25 KAREN ALFORD: You're very welcome.

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HENRY RUBIO: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Okay, next I'd like to call up Randi Levine, Kimberly Watkins, Julia Daniel, Leonie Haimson, and Neftuli Moster. Okay, so I'll guess we'll start with Randi Levine, sure.

RANDI LEVINE: Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you. My name is Randi Levine and I'm the Policy Director at Advocates for Children of New York. For more than 45 years Advocates for Children has worked to ensure a high-quality education for New York students who face barriers to academic success focusing on students from low income backgrounds. Every year we help thousands of individual families navigate the New York City education system. We would like to start by congratulating Chair Treyger on your new leadership role as well as the new and returning members of the Education Committee. We look forward to working with you over the next four years to strengthen education in New York City. ASC supports the growth of community schools and our executive director is proud to serve on the city's community schools advisory board. Many of the students and families we serve have needs that fall outside the scope of educational

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2 programs that schools have traditionally offered.
3 Community schools help to connect students with the
4 health, mental health and social services they need
5 to be successful learners and they recognize the
6 important connection between family involvement and
7 student success. Community schools provide services
8 to the students we serve in a variety of ways
9 including a pilot program that the office of
10 community schools launched in the community schools
11 with the highest numbers of students in temporary
12 housing to connect these students with mentors, offer
13 attendance support, food and clothing and social
14 services. While it is critical for students and
15 families to have access to the social services
16 community schools provide these services must go hand
17 in hand with a focus on high quality instruction and
18 academic intervention in order to produce better
19 educational outcomes for students. In addition, in
20 the coming years as the administration continues its
21 work on community schools it will be important for
22 the city to focus on how to sustain and expand this
23 work so that more students will be able to benefit.
24 Given our limited time today I would like to make one
25 key point about the renewal schools that are closing.

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2 Based on past experience school closings can be
3 detrimental to current students decreasing stability
4 and separating them from the program services and
5 support they need. Our understanding is that the DOE
6 has promised to work one on one with families to find
7 new placements. The city council can play an
8 important role in monitoring what actually happens to
9 students in closing schools and holding the city
10 accountable for ensuring a thoughtful process for
11 moving these students merely providing a student with
12 a placement in a different school is insufficient
13 rather the DOE must provide schools that have the
14 programs, services and supports that students need.
15 For example, if a student's IEP recommends a 12-
16 student special class the DOE must find a school that
17 has a seat available in an appropriate 12 student
18 class and can't merely assume that every school will
19 be able to meet every student's IEP needs but this is
20 an issue that is far reaching that goes far beyond
21 students with disabilities. We urge the council to
22 monitor this process and ensure that the DOE provides
23 students who must leave their schools with new
24 placements where they will have the greatest chance
25 of school success based on their individual strengths

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2 and needs. Just quickly I want to add that we support
3 Intro 262 which would require the DOE's annual
4 special education data report to include the number
5 of students with IEPs in each school, we also support
6 a related bill Intro 559 introduced by Chair Treyger
7 which would require the DOE to report on each
8 school's compliance in providing students with their
9 mandated special education services. We're glad to
10 see this focus on special education early in the
11 session and hope that these bills move forward. Thank
12 you for the opportunity to testify, I'd be happy to
13 answer any questions that you have.

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you very
15 much, next please.

16 KIMBERLY WATKINS: Good afternoon, I'm
17 Kim Watkins, I am the President of Community
18 Education Council in District 3. Congratulations
19 Chairman Treyger and it's nice to meet you and talk
20 to you. My remarks are excerpts from a letter that
21 our council wrote to Chair.. Chancellor Farina last
22 month regarding the truncation proposal for Wadleigh
23 Secondary School in Harlem, it's a really good
24 example of some of the, the discussions that we've
25 been having today on resource allocations and, and

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2 accountability in, in these two sort of sister
3 programs. Wadleigh is a renewal school, Wadleigh
4 Secondary is a community school, about a quarter of
5 its students have IEPs, 100 percent qualify for free
6 and reduced priced lunch, a lot of the students come
7 from foster care, temporary housing, etcetera but
8 despite these statistics and the stigma that you
9 referenced today which we definitely feel in our
10 district as well, Wadleigh 6th grade enrollment more
11 than doubled this current school year, demand for
12 this districts three middle school to 6th grade
13 actually ranks higher than more than half of the
14 other middle schools in district three yet it's on
15 track for a truncation vote in the April PEP meeting.
16 Our letter, which is lengthy and I'm... I won't go into
17 all the details in it but it's gone and answered
18 completely our sole response has been basically that
19 it was read but it basically points out the
20 inconsistencies with the resource allocations and
21 supports that were promised to the school, the middle
22 school and, and then separately to the high school
23 but the... they were either not delivered or really
24 poorly managed. I urge you to read this document so
25 that you can see how the Harlem community is being

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2 affected by this process. The renewal school program
3 failed Wadleigh, while in the same building Success
4 Academy secretly expanded its charter in the same
5 building just this past year. These two programs, the
6 renewal school program and the community program
7 while laudable in their goals and their ambitions
8 they are not properly managed on the ground in
9 district three. I want to just point out two other
10 things that I invite you to, to look at if you're
11 interested, we compiled an analysis of funding via
12 the Galaxy reports for all 94 schools in the program
13 and we were only able to flag 200 million of the 582
14 million dollars spent supposedly on the renewal
15 school program so that's an analysis that one of our
16 parent volunteers did if you're curious. Also, I want
17 to point out that earlier Dr. Feijoo stated that the
18 Rise Schools officially entered the Rise School
19 Program on July 1st, now I find this interesting
20 because she said that that is the start of the school
21 year however the DOE manages A-190 process using the
22 six month timeline and the first day that kids report
23 to school in September that is why, that is how
24 they're able to get away with managing the current A-
25 190 processes that are going on and the, the PEP vote

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2 which got delayed twice for Wadleigh to April means
3 that they will find out about the future of their
4 school just a few months before the year begins but
5 it's within the six month time because the EIS is
6 supposed to go out before the end of this month, we
7 find that pretty extraordinary.

8 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Nothing ceases to
9 amaze me these days but thank you for, for that
10 testimony, next please.

11 LEONIE HAIMSON: Yes, well Chair Treyger
12 thank you for providing me with the opportunity to
13 speak today. My name is Leonie Haimson, I'm the
14 Executive Director of Class Size Matters. The DOE
15 refers to the renewal program as a call to action,
16 action is desperately needed to improve these
17 struggling schools, but the program by and large has
18 been a disappointment. An analysis by Aaron Pallas of
19 Columbia shows that the schools have not performed
20 better than comparable non-renewal schools. Why has
21 the program not lived up to expectations, why are
22 many of these schools not improving? Reducing class
23 size is the education intervention most strongly
24 supported by rigorous evidence shown to be especially
25 effective for students with disadvantaged

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2 backgrounds. Since 2007 DOE has promised to reduce
3 class sizes in many of its most struggling schools as
4 part of the contracts for excellence obligations. For
5 the first seven years or so this was focused on a
6 list of 75 low performing schools yet many of these
7 schools never did reduce class sizes. Promises have
8 been repeatedly made to these students, to their
9 parents and to the state that were repeatedly broken.
10 Starting in 2014 DOE has promised to focus its class
11 size reduction efforts more specifically at the
12 renewal schools as part of the contracts for
13 excellence, this hasn't happened either. According to
14 our analysis in nearly half or 42 percent of renewal
15 schools there has been no reduction in average class
16 size between November 2014 and November 2017 of the
17 schools that did reduce class did not reduce class
18 sizes, the average increase in class size was more
19 than two students per class. Not one of these schools
20 capped class sizes at the levels in the city's
21 original contracts for excellence plan and worse yet
22 in 73 percent of these schools there were maximum
23 class sizes of 30 or more. Turnover in teaching staff
24 was not helped either, you've talked about this today
25 and not... in this fall the DOE announced that two of

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2 the renewal schools, Flushing High School and DeWitt
3 Clinton all teachers would have to reapply for their
4 jobs, that both schools were... are still struggling is
5 not surprising given that the previous year they had
6 the highest and the third highest class sizes of any
7 of the renewal schools, hiring inexperienced teachers
8 and having large classes are a sure fire way to
9 undermine any school's progress. DOE had promised the
10 states since at least 2013 to reduce class sizes at
11 PS 50, Vito Marcantonio in district 4 and yet that
12 has not happened either and they continue to have 28
13 per class in 1st grade and 30 in 2nd grade which are
14 far too large especially with the high needs
15 population it serves. In contrast another renewal
16 school PS 15, Roberto Clemente has seen great strides
17 and is removed, removed off the renewal list into the
18 Rise list, this school reduced class sizes from an
19 average of 18.3 students per class to 15.7 this fall
20 with most classes far below 20. According to the
21 DOE's performance dashboard this school also
22 demonstrated the second highest positive impact of
23 any public elementary school in New York City in
24 terms of its achievement when adjusted for the need
25 level of its students. Our analysis shows a

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2 significant correlation between each school's
3 positive impact as measured by the DOE and its
4 average class sizes meaning the smaller the class
5 size the larger the school's positive effect on
6 achievement. The New York Times estimates that the
7 four year cost of this program at the end of this
8 year will be 582 million dollars for the same amount
9 every year an average of more than 15 additional
10 teachers per school could have been hired to reduce
11 class size which would have given these kids a better
12 chance to succeed instead by closing these schools
13 many capable teachers will be put on the absent
14 teacher reserve used as substitutes or roving
15 teachers and never assigned to a permanent class and
16 never available to reduce class size, this is truly a
17 tragedy. I want to make one additional point if I
18 have the time about a school that is now slated for
19 closure which is not on the renewal list, PS 25,
20 Eubie Blake in Brooklyn. According to the DOE's own
21 analysis it is the second best elementary school in
22 the borough of Brooklyn and the fourth best public
23 elementary school in the entire city when the need
24 level of its students is taken to... into account, that
25 means it also outperforms every single charter school

1
2 in the city except for one, Success Bronx Charter and
3 if the school is closed it will leave the entire
4 building to Success Bed-Stuy three which is now co-
5 located with the school. The Chancellor says she
6 wants to close the school because of low enrollment
7 yet part of the reason they are able to have such
8 great success is they have very small class sizes
9 because of the low enrollment and the DOE has refused
10 to align its school capacity formula with smaller
11 classes... [cross-talk]

12 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Wait a minute, I'm,
13 I'm going to review this... [cross-talk]

14 LEONIE HAIMSON: Yes... [cross-talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I, I made a
16 notation of this and we'll definitely we'll follow
17 up...

18 LEONIE HAIMSON: Thank you very much.

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Absolutely, thank
20 you, sure.

21 JULIA DANIEL: Hello, I'm Julia Daniel,
22 I'm a graduate student researcher at the University
23 of Colorado and thank you for allowing me to speak.
24 I'm going to speak a little bit to the research on
25 community schools as an effective strategy for

1
2 addressing educational inequities. I recently co-
3 authored a review of 143 research studies on
4 community schools and on the various component
5 pillars that make up a school and in each area the
6 research shows and this was high quality rigorous
7 research, they show that a well implemented community
8 school does lead to improvement in student and school
9 outcomes and it contributes to meeting the
10 educational needs of low income or low achieving
11 students in high poverty schools. Our analysis
12 produced specifically the following relevant
13 findings, the evidence based on community schools and
14 their pillars justifies the use of community schools
15 as a school improvement strategy that helps children
16 succeed academically and prepare for full and
17 productive lives. The evidence base also provides a
18 strong warrant for using community schools to meet
19 the needs of low achieving students in high poverty
20 schools and to help close opportunity and achievement
21 gaps for students in low income families, students of
22 color, English language learners and students with
23 disabilities. Integrated student supports which many
24 of the community-based organizations in this room
25 provide, provide, provided by community schools are

1
2 associated with positive student outcomes. Young
3 people receiving such supports including counseling,
4 medical care, dental services and transportation
5 assistance often show significant improvements in
6 attendance, behavior, social functioning and academic
7 achievement. Thoughtfully designed expanded learning
8 time and opportunities provided by community schools
9 are also associated with positive academic and non-
10 academic outcomes including improvements in student
11 behavior, attendance, achievement and notably the
12 best designed studies show the strongest positive
13 effects. Meaningful parent and family and community
14 engagement that's found in community schools is also
15 associated with positive outcomes such as reduced
16 absenteeism, improved academic outcomes and student
17 reports of more positive school climates.

18 Additionally, this engagement can increase trust
19 among students, parents and staff which has positive
20 effects on student outcomes. And finally,
21 collaborative leadership practice and relationships
22 that are found in community schools can create the
23 conditions necessary to improve student learning and
24 wellbeing as well as improve relationships within and
25 beyond the school walls. The development of social

1
2 capital and teacher peer learning appear to be
3 factors that explain the link between collaboration
4 and better student achievement so there's ample
5 evidence that community schools as a strategy and the
6 various components making up schools are evidence-
7 based strategies to reduce opportunity and
8 achievement gaps. I think particularly for New York
9 City schools and what some of the renewal schools are
10 facing it's important to pay attention to evidence
11 that effective implementation and sufficient exposure
12 to services increases the success of a community
13 school's approach and research shows that longer
14 operating and better implemented programs yield more
15 positive results for students in schools. In order to
16 see gains in student achievement whole school reforms
17 such as the community school strategy often need at
18 least five years of high quality implementation. And
19 so I think we really need to think about what is
20 sustainability and for community organizations to
21 have an, an impact they need to know that they can be
22 in a school for a long amount of time, they need to
23 know that funding is going to be available in a
24 timely manner so they can continue to provide the
25 important services they do.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you and I'll,
3 I'll just, just quickly say to... thank all of you for
4 your critical advocacy, your testimony because it has
5 been very helpful in shaping some of the committees
6 focus today and also I think we heard today from the...
7 from the DOE that... we, we, we are... the, the schools
8 that have... were selected in the renewal school
9 program were not given the full promise, the full
10 benefit of the community school, you know promise.
11 They, they... as, as we heard from them they said that
12 there, there are still tweaks and adjustments and
13 changes that have to be made, some rollouts happened
14 way, way, ways late and so I think every single
15 decision to potentially close a school, merge or
16 truncate has to be greatly scrutinized and high... and
17 highly questioned since many of the schools were
18 never even given the adequate chance to process the...
19 or get the resources and to process the resources in
20 any meaningful way and I think the points that were
21 made about the students that get impacted by
22 potential school closures making sure what follow up
23 is done because if we have identified certain needs
24 and if the school potentially closes or merges how
25 does that... how do we make sure that that need... that

1
2 need is addressed in, in the new location as well and
3 I'm, I'm not going to rely on just bureaucrat to say
4 don't worry about it, that's, that's not... it's not
5 sufficient for us. So, I think the points that were
6 raised here today were critical and class size does
7 matter so we agree 100 percent on that. Thank you
8 very much, thank the panel. Next panel Jeremy Kaplin,
9 Terrence, Terrence Winston, I'm usually good at
10 reading names from Delany cards so I'm just... Michelle
11 Yanche, Yanchel, Yanch... Yanche, I'm sorry, Robin
12 Veenstra-VanderWeele and Terry Kim. Great, so I guess
13 we'll start with Jeremy and then we'll work our way...
14 sure.

15 TERRENCE WINSTON: Thank you. So, good
16 afternoon Mr. Chair, congratulations... [cross-talk]

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you...

18 TERRENCE WINSTON: Good to see you again,
19 thank you. My name is Terrence Winston, I'm a Program
20 Director for Counseling in Schools, a proud lead CBO
21 supporter of Brooklyn Collegiate, nice to be here. To
22 my right is Michelle Yanche, Executive Director for
23 Government and External Relations at Good Shepard
24 Services; to my right... far right is Terry Kim, Senior
25 Policy Analyst for Children's Aid Society; Robin

1
2 Veenstra-VanderWeele, the Chief Program Officer for
3 Partnership with Children and Mr. Jeremy Kaplan the
4 Senior Director for Phipps Neighborhood. So, my... I'm
5 up here to represent the coalition for community
6 school excellence which is a cohort of... comprised of
7 61 lead CBO representatives that have come together
8 that works in collaboration with the Office of
9 Community Schools and the three-year relationship
10 between this coalition and the Office of Community
11 Schools has been fruitful. A primary goal of our
12 collaboration has been to elevate the level the level
13 of service delivery and community engagement, so it
14 can be effectively in response... and responsively
15 respond to the needs of the schools that we serve.
16 Together we're more productive providing a large
17 assistance level thinking approach to the needs of
18 the underserved learning communities in the five
19 boroughs, we serve as an advocacy, advocacy and
20 accountability cohort because we want to make sure
21 that each school should not feel like they're working
22 in isolation but to know that they have substantive,
23 faithful, nimble and responsive system level support.
24 And some of the examples of what we do is clarity
25 around the core components of community schools, the

1
2 advocacy around differentiated professional
3 development support for community school directors
4 because we realize that some have longer tenure in
5 the role than others and we want to make sure that
6 the process is as fluid as possible moving forward.

7 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you very
8 much, I'll have some commentary afterwards, I just
9 want to hear the whole... the whole panel... [cross-talk]

10 TERRENCE WINSTON: Thank you... [cross-
11 talk]

12 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: ...next please.

13 JEREMY KAPLAN: Good afternoon Chairman
14 Treyger and council members, I'd like to thank you
15 for the opportunity to testify today. My name is
16 Jeremy Kaplan, I'm the Senior Director for Schools
17 and Community Education at Phipps Neighborhoods. I'm
18 testifying today as a representative of my
19 organization, as a representative of the coalition
20 for community school's excellence and also as a
21 former school teacher and community school principal
22 with over 16 years' experience working in New York
23 City public schools. Phipps Neighborhoods works
24 towards a New York City in which no one is caught in
25 the cycle of poverty, our programs serve over 12,000

1
2 children, teens and adults each year. We are
3 currently the lead community school partner in nine
4 community schools supporting approximately 3,000
5 students in the Bronx and I'd like to... I'd like to
6 add something before I, I, I read my prepared
7 testimony, a comment that I... in response to a comment
8 that I heard earlier. We, we would like to make sure
9 that it's, it's noted that community-based
10 organizations are held accountable by
11 superintendents, by principals, by the Office of
12 Community Schools, by parents and by students. In the
13 lead CBO strategy which we implement in New York City
14 principals and community-based organizations work
15 together with community school hiring panels to
16 select community school directors and often the
17 principals have the final say in who those directors
18 are. We are held accountable to the Department of
19 Education and we can lose our contracts if we don't
20 perform, we regularly review student level and, and
21 partnership level data on progress. Now because
22 lasting change most often requires more than one
23 service or agency we focus on connecting our
24 participants to the full scope of services they need
25 including through partnerships with other community-

1
2 based organizations. These services are provided in a
3 comprehensive, integrated manner streamlining
4 students and family's experiences to minimize
5 barriers and maximize benefits to them. In order to
6 make this menu of programs and services available to
7 children and their families it has been essential to
8 have funding that not only directly supports the
9 community schools but also the funding that supports
10 the additional services that are so critical to our
11 participants. Just over the last school year the
12 funding provided to support the DOE community school
13 strategy has enabled us to reduce incidents that lead
14 to student suspension by over 80 percent at East
15 Bronx Academy for our future which is Phipps
16 Neighborhood's first community school. We've
17 increased parent and family engagement by hosting
18 over 2,000 family members at community events and
19 connecting those families to much needed services.
20 We've provided over 50,000 meals to families in need
21 through our school-based food pantry and we teach
22 over 80 adults English through DOE funded adult
23 education classes. We urge the city council to
24 continue prioritizing funds that support programs
25 within community schools. We also urge you to

1
2 thoroughly examine the timing and funding periods and
3 contract terms and contract restrictions associated
4 with, with accessing and utilizing these various
5 community school funding streams. Despite being one
6 of the most diverse cities in this country we are
7 still the most segregated school district in this... in
8 this country, community schools and community school
9 partnerships assist public schools in beginning to
10 address the inequities that contribute to the
11 achievement gap for low income students of color.
12 Phipps Neighborhoods believes that this initiative
13 has been one of our city's strongest efforts to
14 combat the sizable inequity of resources that fall so
15 clearly along racial inequity lines. We strongly urge
16 the council to continue its support and to ask
17 really, really tough questions of all the entities
18 that are involved.

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I think... I just
20 want to note a couple of things, first of all the,
21 the schools that I, I visited had amazing
22 relationships with their CBO partners so I want to
23 credit the, the entire, you know this, this is
24 critical work, this is not easy work and because of
25 what you just mentioned was it contractual

1
2 bureaucratic hurdles, some folks don't even get paid
3 in a... in a timely way for that work and they do the
4 work regardless because they care about kids. I, I, I
5 do want to just note that I, I have seen how students
6 gravitate to the providers, gravitate to the workers,
7 gravitate to them, they feel very safe and welcomed
8 and, and that's I think contributed greatly and, and,
9 and academic and progress. With regards to
10 segregation, it is a... it is a real problem, it, it
11 exists however I don't think even you're going to
12 solve it in isolation, it, it is a problem that has
13 risen through... by design through many... through
14 housing policies, zoning policies, land use policies,
15 school policies, school zoning policies all of which
16 have to be thoroughly examined so I, I, I am very
17 interested in working with other committees within
18 this council that oversee housing policy because
19 sometimes when I hear politicians talk about this
20 issue but yet approve land use decisions that
21 exacerbate segregation in New York City that to me is
22 hypocritical. So, we, we... if, if we're honest about
23 this problem, there's a difference between managing
24 and solving, we're looking to solve the problem, it's
25 going to require a multipronged approach, but I thank

1
2 you so much for your passion at work and for your
3 advocacy. Next please.

4 ROBIN VEENSTRA-VANDERWEELE: Thank you
5 Councilman Treyger, we really appreciate the
6 opportunity to talk with you about renewal schools
7 and community schools today. My name is Robin
8 Veenstra-VanderWeele and I'm the Chief Program
9 Officer at Partnership with Children. Partnership
10 with Children provides a combination of mental
11 health, social and emotional supports and
12 comprehensive community school leadership across 30
13 schools covering all five boroughs; elementary,
14 middle and high school. We currently are the lead CBO
15 in 14 community schools, nine of which are renewal
16 schools. We have an additional seven schools where we
17 are the lead mental health provider in those schools,
18 so our community school portfolio covers 21 schools
19 within the network currently. I'm going to focus my
20 testimony on the mental health and, and integrated
21 student supports work because I have many capable
22 colleagues here at this table who are in partnership
23 with me and, and with Partnership with the Children
24 in the coalition and in this work and we are grateful
25 to have not only their expertise in helping us build

1
2 our strategy but also to build the strategy across
3 the city and have a great partnership with the
4 Department of Education in that regard. Partnership
5 with Children is proud to have two of our current
6 renewal schools transitioning into the Rise School
7 category and while I think there's lots of
8 conversation about what, what the labeling can mean
9 for communities I can certainly testify that in our
10 Rise Schools it has been an encouraging and exciting
11 opportunity for schools to recognize real and
12 demonstrated progress. You heard Chris Caruso testify
13 to one of our schools which is Renaissance School of
14 the Arts in East Harlem where we have seen
15 demonstrated, demonstrative achievement and... on
16 behalf of our students and that's led in large part
17 to a really passionate and dedicated school leader
18 who's redesigned the school faculty in the way that
19 in which they teach and with the way that the
20 students learn but I'd be remiss to say that it also
21 has a lot to do with our integrated student supports
22 and our full time social work team there. Our... last
23 year our school staff provided over 960 student
24 counseling sessions in individual and group
25 counseling and a variety of other integrated student

1
2 supports resulting in every student in that school
3 receiving some version of integrated mental health
4 and social and emotional learning supports and beyond
5 the students every teacher and every parent has
6 access to a support group that we convene before and
7 after school as well as a variety of school climate
8 and culture building activities which resulted in as
9 Chris testified to a really reinvigorated sense of
10 collective efficacy on behalf of parents, teachers,
11 and students with an, an enthusiastic and robust
12 student voice which is so exciting for us at
13 Renaissance. Similarly at PS 67 in Fort Greene we
14 have an integrated student supports program that's
15 working in classrooms creating spaces for students to
16 do some of the work we, we hear so much around,
17 around meditation in classrooms and setting aside
18 time to manage their own emotions without being
19 removed from the classroom and the consequences that
20 we're seeing increase on task, increase learning time
21 and we're seeing the... those results academically as
22 students are making exponential gains in ELA and math
23 at Port... at PS 67 as well. We're also seeing great,
24 great strides in terms of school climate and culture
25 because our school is leading weekly school

1
2 assemblies for parents, teachers and students to come
3 together around their school being a community school
4 and what that means for them and how that manifest in
5 their weekly and monthly activities. I offer this
6 testimony to say that I think New York City is unique
7 within the nation in its comprehensive commitment to
8 mental health services and I urge the council and
9 with your leadership to continue to look at the
10 impact that integrating high quality, highly trained
11 mental health professionals into schools means in
12 this model. One of the things that we've seen in the
13 renewal school and the AIDP funded schools is that
14 when you set aside dollars for mental health you're
15 able to see these services become a critically
16 infused factor and without that set aside some of our
17 other community schools are missing that resource.

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, we're going to
19 circle back because I have a quick question, but I
20 just want to hear from the rest of the panels...

21 [cross-talk]

22 ROBIN VEENSTRA-VANDERWEELE: Yep... [cross-
23 talk]

24 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: ...and then we'll...
25 thank you.

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TERRY KIM: Good afternoon, my name is Terry Kim, Senior Policy Analyst at Children's Aid. I would like to thank Chair Mark Treyger and the members of the Education Committee for the opportunity to give testimony on the state of community schools in New York City. For 165 years Children's Aid has been committed to ensuring that there are no boundaries to the aspirations of young people and no limits to their potential. For 25 years we have partnered with the New York City Department of Education on community schools and currently we partner with 22 schools serving nearly 10,000 K through 12 students. We believe that community schools are a strategy to remove the barriers to learning that get in the way of children and youth being able to succeed academically in school but it's a long term approach and so, you know we ask that the city continue to commit investing in all community schools and continue to strengthen the infrastructure needed to sustain the progress schools are making in New York City. So, I wanted to highlight a few budget areas that we do have concerns with as a coalition. Beginning in 2013 two cohorts of three-year grants were awarded to community-based organizations who

1
2 affirmatively choose the community school strategy
3 through a state request for proposal known as the
4 community schools grant initiative or CSGI. Once this
5 grant had sunset the DOE brought 20 CSGI schools
6 under the city's initiative but for one year only.
7 Through this grant Children's Aid has successfully
8 implemented City Connects, a national program that
9 provides each identified child a tailored set of
10 supports and indicators suggest that students are on
11 track for long term positive outcomes. Without
12 continued funding these 20 community schools will not
13 be able to continue to make the progress and meet the
14 needs of their students. After two years of
15 investment the DOE has made no indication that there
16 is a commitment to keep these schools in the city's
17 initiative for the next school year, so we request
18 that the 20 CSGI community schools be equitably
19 funded and permanently exist as community schools
20 under the DOE's Office of Community Schools. With our
21 community school's work, we've also found that
22 several targeted services and strategies when
23 implemented well succeed in alleviating barriers to
24 learning for children, after school and summer
25 programs play an essential role in keeping children

1
2 engaged and safe. So, as you heard 70 community
3 schools have become community schools through the
4 21st century community learning center grant. Funding
5 for after school and expanded learning is an integral
6 part of the community school strategy but it is not
7 the core source of funding, lead agencies leverage
8 education and non-education dollars to provide those
9 essential programs and services and so to maintain
10 fidelity to the community school strategy 21st
11 century grants alone cannot sustain the work
12 therefore we recommend that the 20 community schools
13 funded under the 21st century grants are equitably
14 funded and adequately resourced to exist as full
15 service community schools. We are committed at
16 Children's Aid to ensuring that our children and
17 families have the best opportunity available to
18 realize their full potential. Children's Aid
19 sincerely thanks the New York City Council for their
20 vigorous support of children, youth, families, and
21 communities in New York City and thank you for the
22 opportunity to testify.

23 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you very
24 much, oh great timing, great, great job. Thank, thank
25 you.

1
2 MICHELLE YANCHE: She already set the bar
3 high. Hi, I'm Michelle Yanche, I'm Associate
4 Executive Director at Good Shepard Services and I
5 wanted to start of course by thanking you for this
6 opportunity to testify and also congratulating you on
7 your Chair, Chairmanship of this very important
8 committee and we look forward to a long term working
9 relationship with you on these critical issues. You
10 may have noticed that my colleagues and I have sort
11 of coordinated our testimony and divided up the
12 topics so that we could make the best use of, of our
13 time here with you. My topic as one of the pieces of
14 the strategy is attendance. Before I get that... get to
15 that I just wanted to sort of make a point about what
16 I see as a somewhat dangerous conflation of the terms
17 of community schools and renewal schools and just to
18 make sure that we're all very clear about what we're
19 talking about. Community schools is... was... as was said
20 earlier is not a model, it's a strategy, it is a
21 school and student high engagement improvement
22 strategy, but it was never designed to be a failing
23 school turnaround strategy. When we talked about the
24 renewal school model there are multiple pieces of
25 strategy that make up that model, community school is

1
2 one piece of that but when we're really talking about
3 turning around a failing school the... we're really
4 talking about strategies like the teaching and
5 learning strategies, the professional development
6 strategies and unfortunately sometimes community
7 schools and renewal schools and unfortunately also in
8 the media get used as if they're interchangeable and
9 they're not. So, I'm, I'm here to talk about the
10 community school strategies that we employ in... we
11 are... we are the lead can... lead partner in seven
12 community schools including two in... two of them in
13 Brooklyn, Bushwick leaders and boys and girls high
14 school which are part of the cohort that Terry spoke
15 about, the community schools grant initiative that
16 the city council has been really pivotal in making
17 sure that continued funding exists for these to keep
18 these schools going after the state removed it's
19 funding and we will certainly be asking to partner
20 with you again to make sure that that continues and
21 ultimately that DOE baselines the funding for this
22 cohort. Using Boys and Girls as one example just
23 wanting to talk about attendance and what our
24 strategies are. I won't go through all of my
25 testimony but I have provided some information about

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2 the specific... the specific pieces of our work at Boys
3 and Girls around attendance and, and some data around
4 our results and how the impact of that strategy has
5 been but the most important thing I want to get
6 across is... and why the... we as partners are important
7 in this school is that when we speak to the young
8 people themselves about what has... what makes a
9 difference for them in terms of reengaging in their
10 own education and reengaging in school it's... the, the
11 number one thing that they point to is the
12 relationship that they have with someone at the
13 school and so when we talk about attendance we're
14 talking actually about a very big umbrella that
15 includes a lot underneath it but the most important
16 thing is what we call the primary person model which
17 is that all of our staff have a group of young people
18 that they connect to that they make sure attend, that
19 they reach out to, text, phone call and even home
20 visits to find out if the young person's not in
21 school and to bring them back and so really making,
22 making that personal connection and a young person
23 being able to say, you know if I'm not there someone
24 notices, that's, that's a game changer.

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2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right and, and I
3 just want to just echo a couple of things I, I agree
4 100 percent that there has been a lot of conflation
5 between the community school strategy and the renewal
6 school model and program and, and that is... that was
7 one of the... that is one of the areas of focus I
8 wanted to really hone in today was to try to decouple
9 that because... and quite frankly it's frustrating for
10 us to hear that the schools that were designated as
11 renewal schools did not actually get the full promise
12 of a community school for, for a variety of reasons
13 and still have not but yet are being deemed for
14 potential closure or truncation or, or merger. So,
15 just a quick... some quick follow ups again thank you
16 to all of your amazing workers and CBO partners
17 because they have been very, very helpful to our
18 schools. You mentioned about the mental health
19 service providers, you heard... I don't know if you
20 heard me earlier talk about a particular health
21 clinic where concerns were raised about if a child
22 does not return paperwork that they cannot be seen by
23 the clinic, can you... can you... have you heard this
24 concern as, as feedback on the ground yourselves from
25 your providers, I'd be interested in hearing that?

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2 ROBIN VEENSTRA-VANDERWEELE: So, there's...
3 there are sort of two ways in which we provide mental
4 health supports in schools, some are through Medicaid
5 funded traditional health clinics that are focused on
6 mental health and then what Partnership with Children
7 does is focus on an integrated student supports
8 model. In a different way but similarly we also
9 require parental consent for services, but the
10 parental consent is part of the process wherein we
11 create the change relationship. So, you know as a
12 parent of children in schools like I wouldn't be so
13 excited about somebody providing that kind of
14 services to my child without having some consent and
15 some information about that and so similar to how
16 Michelle described the outreach that we do around
17 attendance we do the same kind of outreach around our
18 services and we find that from our experience using
19 home visits, using phone calls, using the kind of
20 relationship building work that we need to do with
21 parents that we don't have a lot of barriers getting
22 the consents we need in order to see students, that's
23 how we get to see every single student in Renaissance
24 School of the Arts is because we're able to make
25 those kinds of connections with parents around this

1
2 is what it means to be in the community school and
3 this is who we are and why we're working with your
4 child. I can understand that for some of the
5 traditional medical model clinics that challenge
6 exists because they don't have the kind of
7 flexibility to send staff into communities in the
8 same way that a program like Partnership with
9 Children has or many of our CBO partners do. So,
10 there's, there's some flexibility about the way in
11 which we can staff that program that is more
12 challenging in a... in a clinic model.

13 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And, and the
14 schools in your portfolio have large numbers of
15 English language learners?

16 ROBIN VEENSTRA-VANDERWEELE: It's a
17 variety of... the schools have a variety of that but
18 that is certainly the case in several of our schools
19 that we have a large number of English language
20 learners, we have many students... we have... several of
21 our schools are in the cohort of schools that has the
22 highest percentage of students in temporary housing
23 so getting in contact with parents can be no small
24 task but it is part and parcel to our model and how
25 we do the work.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Well because I... you
3 know I encountered a case where the student did not
4 fill out the required paperwork, it was a health
5 clinic in school and they could not see the child and
6 the school didn't even have a school nurse so, I mean
7 that's, that's problematic... [cross-talk]

8 ROBIN VEENSTRA-VANDERWEELE: Yes... [cross-
9 talk]

10 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: ...and the... when you
11 dig deeper as far as what's happening there, there is
12 sometimes a lack of clarity or concern from the
13 family about what they're being asked to sign.

14 ROBIN VEENSTRA-VANDERWEELE: Right.

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Particularly
16 immigrant families as well. I, as a former teacher I
17 remember how difficult it was to get learning surveys
18 back about... just questions about does your child feel
19 safe in school those... they were concerned about that
20 and the last thing I'll, I'll point out you heard me
21 talk about the issue of capital needs in these
22 schools and I imagine your, your, your CBO... your
23 service providers probably need access to a computer
24 during the course of their day and they probably need
25 access to internet during the course of their day,

1
2 have you heard concerns from your providers about
3 these issues?

4 JEREMY KAPLAN: Yes.

5 ROBIN VEENSTRA-VANDERWEELE: Yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Spoken like a true
7 educator, yes and, and that's why I am concerned that
8 there is not a... an emphasis of capital improvements
9 in these schools that great... in all schools, I mean
10 in the 21st century, 2018 we should not be talking
11 about a lack of bandwidth or a lack of wiring, this,
12 this is just not acceptable and again I thank all of
13 you for your... for your amazing work, this is... this
14 is... and I thank you for the clarification that this,
15 this is definitely a strategy although I'm learning
16 that there's many different strategies or some, some
17 advocates call them models by the way but I, I fully
18 appreciate your, your work, I think every single
19 school should have the community school strategy
20 implemented it... implemented in it and we cannot do
21 that without you and, and your service providers so
22 thank you so much for your partnership. And we'll
23 have a budget hearing by the way March 22nd FY,
24 thanks.

25 ROBIN VEENSTRA-VANDERWEELE: Thank you.

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TERRENCE WINSTON: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Okay, next we have Sajid Ciar [sp?], German Sosa, Samantha Alvarez, and Fe Florimon. Okay, you may, may begin.

SAJID CIAR: Okay, good afternoon.

Congratulations on your position Chairman Treyger. My name is Sajid Ciar, I'm a student at the High School for Health Careers and Sciences. This school is being proposed for closure in the upcoming school year and I'd just like to give some context on this school. I've been in school for... I came as a freshman and I've been in school for four years now I'm a senior who's about to graduate soon and I have... I hold the school in pretty high regards because it's a school that I knew looking into this high school that it didn't have much high graduation rates but because of its activities in this school that I would come to school and one of those activities would be the JROTC Program in that high school. So, despite that context I just wanted to speak on the academic proficiency in the school and coming in from this school the difference from my freshman year and my, my senior year the disparity is so great that I've seen students go from coming in as ELL learners and they

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2 progress at such a high rate that now they are able
3 to speak proficiently in the English language and the
4 notion that is put forth is that a budget is able to
5 determine our academic proficiency. If I was to give
6 you some numbers, the budget that we have gotten for
7 the 20... for the Fiscal Year 2017 was five million...
8 I'm sorry, 571,000 dollars and Chancellor Farina once
9 said in a town hall in January of '16 that for the...
10 for this school year that we've gotten double the
11 amount that the other four schools in our campus have
12 gotten and this is... this notion is harshly false
13 because based on numbers and statistics we've only
14 gotten 11 percent more than the average and although
15 it is not more... not much, I don't think that academic
16 proficiency should be based on how much money that
17 our school gets like I understand that the money that
18 the school gets is allocated because of our
19 enrollment and how many students we have and I... and
20 academic performance but the proficiency of students
21 should not be leveled because of a number, you know
22 you have students that struggle at home just like you
23 said in this conference with the DOE, you have so
24 many outside factors that could sort of... that could
25 affect student proficiency that a budget shouldn't be

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2 able to determine whether or not our school is closed
3 or not and that's, that's all, thank you.

4 FE FLORIMON: Okay, good afternoon. First
5 and foremost, I would like to thank our Chairman Mr.
6 Treyger and congratulations on your new post. I also
7 would like to congratulate your parents. For one
8 minute I wanted to beat them as I was looking at you
9 but thank you for having us or allow us to say, you
10 know our testimony. My name is Fe Florimon, I am the
11 Chair of the Youth and Education Committee of the
12 Community Board 12 and also I am the former president
13 for the community locations council in district six
14 and also former borough president appointee at the
15 council but more than anything I want to clarify that
16 I'm here as a concerned parent, concerned citizen on
17 this issue in defense of the... of course to keep our
18 school open and I would like to share a brief note
19 which I would... states as follow. So, the following
20 brief is a written and a strong opposition to the
21 proposal closure of the High School for Health
22 Careers and Science, Sciences and will serve as an
23 attempt to shift the narrative in which the data
24 being used to support the proposal for the closure of
25 this school is viewed. The rational for closure

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2 provide to the panel for education policy deals with
3 three key school metrics; enrollment, graduation
4 rates, academic performance including college
5 readiness. This document will address each of these
6 metrics but first it is important to become more
7 familiar with the population this school serves and
8 to also to view the school performance not only up
9 against the citywide and borough average but as part
10 of the George Washington Educational campus and also
11 the renewal schools. Before I proceed I would like to
12 highlight something that is very important for us and
13 for this body to acknowledge. Our whole community
14 including elected officials not only from our
15 community but outside of our community I can say for
16 example Borough Presidents also our congressman, City
17 Council Ydanis Rodriguez, Senator Alcantara and also
18 the State Assembly De La Rosa they all been in
19 opposition, you know to this proposal because this
20 shouldn't be a subject for discussion knowing how
21 well their school is.. their school is doing compared
22 to what it was four years ago. So... and I wanted to
23 make acknowledge that this council take in
24 consideration this. We see that there is a persistent
25 resistance in the Department of Education presenting

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2 in closing this school basing that of our old data
3 but they... there is a lot of facts that the department
4 is basically ignoring and we would like to for the
5 Chancellor Farina and the Mayor De Blasio to
6 reconsider this proposal because we really... they
7 really... we, we urge them to think about it that they
8 shutting down to almost 500 students and, and it's
9 vital that they keep this school close... so, I would
10 like to continue and then to proceed and read and
11 give you some of the context about this..

12 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, we'll, we'll
13 take the testimony, I just want to hear from the rest
14 of the students and we'll circle back, ask some
15 questions afterwards, if that's... [cross-talk]

16 FE FLORIMON: Okay.

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Sure... [cross-talk]

18 FE FLORIMON: Absolutely.

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank, thank you so
20 much.

21 FE FLORIMON: Thank you, no, thank you..
22 [cross-talk]

23 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: No, no, my
24 pleasure... [cross-talk]

25 FE FLORIMON: Yes... [cross-talk]

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2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Sure, thank you so
3 much, sure.

4 FE FLORIMON: Okay.

5 SAMANTHA ALVEREZ: Good afternoon, my
6 name is Samantha Alvarez, I am a senior at the High
7 School for Health Careers and Sciences. And I will be
8 talking about the graduation rates.

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah, just make
10 sure you speak into the mic, thanks so much.

11 SAMANTHA ALVEREZ: Thank you. There are
12 ten high schools located in, in district six which
13 only one which is my high school is classified as a
14 renewal school. Of those ten high schools six are
15 classified screen or limited screen schools in terms
16 of high school admission methods. There are only four
17 educational option admission high schools in district
18 six and all four are in shared space at the George
19 Washington Educational Campus. It... in my opinion it
20 is very unwise to compare an educational option
21 admission school like mine to like screen or limited
22 screen schools. For example, the City College Academy
23 of Arts is a screen school in district six with 2016-
24 2017 four year graduation rate of 90.4 percent and it
25 offers priority to continuing eight graders so I

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2 believe that to compare our school to that school
3 would... unfair and I feel like we should be compared
4 to the other four... to the other three schools in our
5 campus to like make this decision. I started at the
6 high school as a freshman and then during my mid
7 freshman year I transferred to Pennsylvania and it
8 was a terrible experience and then once I came back I
9 said I wanted to go back to my high school because it
10 felt like home and I feel like I've, I've
11 accomplished a lot of things in the course of these
12 four years and I realize that a lot of students have
13 a lot of opportunities and it's not fair to them to...
14 you get the school compared to other schools that are
15 not even at the same level and it's fair to just like
16 shut it down. A fair comparison... I'm sorry, I'm going
17 to reread, a fair comparison would be to the other
18 three schools and in this case we have... one of the
19 schools that had a graduation rate of 60.7 and
20 compared to the building average it was a 57 percent
21 so our school in 2015-2016 had a higher graduation
22 rate by itself compared to the graduation rate of the
23 building all together which was 57 percent. Thank
24 you.

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2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you very
3 much.

4 GERMAN SOSA: Hi, my name is German Sosa,
5 I'm a senior to the High School for Health Careers
6 and Sciences. The plan of 22 percent in student
7 enrollment at my high school is being used in the
8 original for the post closure at the school. Again,
9 it is important to understand the contents in which
10 this metric should be viewed. Washington Heights has
11 historically had a rich history of immigrants and
12 currently home to the largest Dominican community in
13 New York City. According to the data from the New
14 York City Comptroller Office the population of
15 Washington... of Washington Heights grew by more than
16 50 percent between 1970 and 2000. The population
17 filtrated erratically between, between 2000 and 2010
18 and then resumed growing by six percent to reach the
19 record of 218,500 in 2013. This current population
20 can be directly corelated to the highest... to the
21 highest enrollment at this school when this school
22 had 657 students enrolled during the 2012-2013 school
23 year. While it is true that the school has to... has
24 seen a decline in enrollment, so has Washington
25 Heights seen a decline in demographic change in

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2 population since 2013. According to the annual
3 compilation of New York City Comptroller Office data
4 about 10,000 people lived in Washington Heights in
5 2015. On average renewal high schools saw a decrease
6 in enrollment of 33 percent. Chancellor Farina and
7 Mayor De Blasio have to bear some responsibility to...
8 for enroll, enrollment drop at renewal high schools
9 furthermore district six which includes Washington
10 Heights has seen a drop-in enrollment as well. Since
11 2012-2013 school year district six has seen an, an...
12 unlimited decline in high school enrollment. Due to
13 the decline in enrollment of... out of general contents
14 of changed neighborhood population is not a viable
15 metric if we're judging school quality. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I have to say as a...
17 as a former high school civics teacher it was not
18 always easy to get kids to participate in class or to
19 raise their hands or to speak but to... Sajid, is that
20 correct?

21 SAJID CIAR: Yes, sir.

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Sajid to German and
23 Samantha I am so impressed with your courage to, to
24 speak up and it was so passionate and so effective,
25 and I just want to just commend, commend you all for

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this, this, this is not easy to do. I, I am just curious to hear... if you heard my prior questions to the DOE about these community school teams that are supposed to be part... this is... your school is, is a renewal school, is that correct and each school... each renewal school is supposed to be a community school, were you invited to be a part of some sort of community school team to discuss the work of the... [cross-talk]

SAJID CIAR: Yes, I have, the entire like the school leadership team so yeah.

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, the school leadership team... [cross-talk]

SAJID CIAR: Yeah... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: ...which is not the same as the... [cross-talk]

SAJID CIAR: Yeah... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: ...community school team, correct. And how many students now are enrolled currently in your school, I don't know if I heard that clearly?

SAMANTHA ALVEREZ: 460.

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Four... 460.

SAMANTHA ALVEREZ: Yes.

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2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And enrollments...
3 when you... we, we began three years ago...

4 SAMANTHA ALVEREZ: Yes...

5 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I don't know if you
6 have that in front of you, has enrollment declined,
7 has it stabilized?

8 SAJID CIAR: 657 students were enrolled
9 in... three years ago.

10 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: See you got, got...
11 you got back to me faster than the... than the DOE on,
12 on... so thank you, thank you so much for that. It's
13 because one of my concerns is the stigma attached to
14 the branding of, of, of our schools and our schools
15 face challenges before there's no question about it
16 but the schools I think welcome the support and
17 welcome the resources but I don't think they welcome
18 the stigma or the... any added perception of, of, of
19 problems and as you heard before these conditions do
20 not happen overnight and they're not going to all be
21 solved overnight either and I think you've heard me
22 mention before that many of our schools were not
23 given the full benefit of this community school
24 strategy promise... [cross-talk]

25 SAMANTHA ALVEREZ: Correct... [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: ...and, and so I think that every single... every, every decision to potentially close or merge a school has to be greatly scrutinized and I'm, I'm very interested to learn more about your school situation and follow up with the DOE about that but I, I just want to commend all of you for your courage, for your advocacy and I hope to see you all running for city council or some office in the near future, I, I am greatly impressed, thank you so much. Thank you all.

SAMANTHA ALVEREZ: Thank you

SAJID CIAR: Thank you.

FE FLORIMON: If I may say just one very last thing and thank you. All that I wanted to say our Mayor which he actually stated on his last state of address that he wanted to promote more fairness and I want that he be mindful and hopefully our Chancellor echo that... those words and just think about it that displacing, you know 460 students is a very sad thing and where they wanted to send in the school... or another school is not in concert with the present mission of this school so I highly urge you along with Ben that they consider keeping our school open and that... realize that they may give resources

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2 and they may give funding but if they don't give
3 time, you can have all the money in the world but if
4 you don't have the time to use it properly you have
5 nothing and I want to thank you and praise our
6 appreciation and thank the students and their parents
7 that are here and also the parents at home, thank you
8 so very much.

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you, great
10 job to students and to the parents and families,
11 great job, thank you... [cross-talk]

12 SAMANTHA ALVEREZ: Thank you... [cross-
13 talk]

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: ...so much... [cross-
15 talk]

16 SAMANTHA ALVEREZ: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Sure. And the final
18 panel we have Pamela Stewart-Martinez, Celia Green,
19 Lasandra Madina, Maritza Polanko, and I believe the
20 last name is Mahia. Okay, you may begin.

21 OROSE MOMEJIA MOMEJIA: Good afternoon,
22 my name is Orose Momejia [sp?] , I am parent leader
23 for Health Career and Science, I have two children
24 there and we are here because we oppose to close our
25 school why we are opposed because we think that is

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2 not fair, it's not fair because our school is, is not
3 part of the DOE is saying and we in our experience we
4 are seeing each year the increase that our school is
5 doing and also we have the opportunity, our children
6 have the opportunity... great opportunity to continuing
7 become stronger there and we don't want the DOE
8 destroy our family so this decided need a strong
9 family not a destroyed family and we are here to, to
10 ask you and the, the DOE must consider this proposal
11 to close because we need our school kept open and
12 its' not fair too because in, in a moment our
13 Chancellor said that, that our children... if the... our
14 school was... were closed our students will be in
15 another school that is doing better than our, our,
16 our school but in our building we have four schools,
17 we are the second only school that had, had the
18 highest in, in graduation and another time our
19 superintendent said that our students can go to the..
20 another school that is doing under us so we say it's
21 not fair because the Chancellor and the
22 superintendent are... the Chancellor say one thing and
23 the superintendent say another thing so we as parents
24 we are thinking that they are seeing our children
25 like a business not like a family so we say what is

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2 the plan it's possible that they don't have a real
3 plan for our children so we, we say please try to
4 consider this because it's not fair. I say it again
5 United States needs a strong family not destroy
6 families, thank you so much.

7 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you very
8 much.

9 LASANDRA MEDINA: Good afternoon,
10 congratulations on your appointment sir. I am... I am
11 with Parents United, my name is Lasandra Medina, my
12 son Silas Waller is in attendant at the George
13 Washington High School complex, the High School for
14 Health Careers and Sciences. I wanted to address a
15 few things, I am opposed to the school closure for
16 several reasons. Firstly, this is a community
17 resource and this school serves greater.. the greater
18 upper West side including West Harlem, pretty much
19 anything North of West 96th Street all the way to, to
20 Inwood. Secondly this will displace about 460
21 students and it's a pass the buck issue. Thirdly, a
22 lot of these students do come from failing schools
23 and on average children who do come from failing
24 schools are about two grades behind, you can't expect
25 them to perform and on que meet these benchmarks

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2 which by the way were very unrealistic and about
3 three of those benchmarks are actually within state
4 and national levels now and we're not closing those
5 schools but I digress. Thirdly, this will take a
6 resource away from disenfranchised students, students
7 with disabilities, minority students, students who
8 are undocumented and this is setting them up for
9 failure. Sometimes especially with students who have
10 a temporary living situations, we were one of those
11 for quite a while and sometimes school is one of the
12 most stable things for a student even though the
13 school's not perfect it's... that's one form of
14 stability, to yank that from underneath students who
15 desperately need this resource would put them at a
16 very great disadvantage, it's not going to make them
17 college ready and if anything dispersing students who
18 aren't performing to other schools is going to drop
19 their numbers too because they don't... this... again
20 this didn't happen overnight and this isn't a magic
21 wand, we're okay... we're going to put you in a new
22 school and you know you're going to get 100 instead
23 of a 60, it doesn't work that way, it really doesn't.
24 Now the second issues that, that I wanted to address,
25 the superintendent was very unprofessional with the

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2 way he handled this, most of the parents did not
3 receive the notification in the mail, I was one of
4 them and when we did find out and when he did address
5 us at the school meeting, at the school town... at the
6 school meeting he ignored a lot of students and
7 parents, went to address the press and then came back
8 and pretty much told us it was a done deal. With
9 Farina I have witnessed her sentiments with regards
10 to if she's not satisfied with the parent involvement
11 that she is going to err to the way of charter
12 schools, she did it at PS 130 even though her words
13 say one thing, I don't have that trust anymore and
14 she's also due... you know due to retire pretty soon, I
15 don't even think this, this vote should take place
16 tomorrow, I think it needs to be reevaluated and, and
17 postponed at, at best. The school shouldn't close but
18 it's not fair that she gets to have the say or they
19 get to have the say and she exits with her pension
20 that's just not fair. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you very
22 much, thank you, next.

23 PAMELA STEWART-MARTINEZ: Hello, my name
24 is Pamela Stewart-Martinez, I'm President of the
25 Bronx High School Federation and I'm also the Special

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2 Education appointee to the citywide council's high
3 school. I want to thank you... I want to congratulate
4 you on your recent appointment, well deserved sir.
5 And the reason that I'm here today is I am the mom of
6 seven. Clearly, I'm involved actively in my
7 children's schooling as well as the care and the
8 consideration of other students and their families
9 within the, the school system, the Department of
10 Education. My concern... the reason I'm speaking today
11 is for New Explorer High School in the Bronx they..
12 there is a proposal to close that particular school.
13 It's, it's supposed to appear... there... that proposal
14 is supposed to appear before the PEP tomorrow
15 evening. We had about 25 to 30 students prepared to
16 come in and speak on behalf of their school but
17 unfortunately their school hours they don't get out
18 until 3:45 so they wouldn't be able to make it here
19 so I'm speaking on their behalf. This school has had
20 a lot of transition, it, it had about four different
21 principals in a two-and-a-half-year time period. This
22 is the first year that they had a stable principal
23 who has been able to actually implement programs that
24 benefit the students and in the year and I would four
25 to five months that she's been there she's increased

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2 the graduation rate by ten percent but that's not
3 going to be shown in the paperwork that is presented
4 to the PEP tomorrow, they're not going to see that,
5 they're only going to see the paperwork or the data
6 pertaining to the temporary acting principals that
7 were in place prior to. This particular school has a
8 30 percent special education population and about a
9 24 percent ELL population. What frustrates me most is
10 if you look at the number of schools that are closing
11 that are renewal schools they are schools that have a
12 high number of students with IEPs and ELLs, they're
13 our most vulnerable students, they need stability and
14 the mere fact that we're closing the school and
15 displacing them sends a negative message to not only
16 the students but the parents as well and earlier you
17 spoke of a stigma, well there's a stigma happens as
18 soon as a proposal is sent out because at that point
19 parents get scared and nervous and they start pulling
20 their students out of school and then they talk about
21 low enrollment and to me that's a problem and also
22 they cut off the enrollment even before they notify
23 the schools that there is a proposal in place so that
24 also prevents enrollment from going up and so with
25 that I have an issue with the closing of this school

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2 in particular, the school just needs more time, the
3 principal is dedicated, is the only school that has...
4 and I'm sorry to go over the time but I just want to
5 point out a couple of things, it has licensed
6 teachers in the art, in drama, drama tech, visual
7 arts, music and dance. The principal has been
8 teaching math herself to the students, she creates a
9 curriculum and she goes in the classroom and she's
10 implementing it, she opens up on the school on
11 Saturdays for the students to come in and, and, and
12 get additional help. The Regents has gone up, when
13 she started I think there were about 40 students who
14 maybe were close to on track with Regents now she has
15 over 125 students that are on track for their
16 Regents. So, I think if we just fight a little bit
17 harder for the school and thank you for your time,
18 sorry to take up so much.

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you for your,
20 your advocacy, thank you so much, next then I'll...

21 CELIA GREEN: Good afternoon and
22 congratulations. My name is Celia Green, I am the mom
23 of six boys four of whom are on the spectrum of
24 autism, so I am a D75 parent several times over. I'm
25 a parent that's been in the DOE since 1994

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2 continuously, I'll still be here for a while because
3 my last one just got into high school. I am also the
4 President for President's Council for District 75 as
5 well as being the acting President for the Citywide
6 Council on High Schools. I am really perturbed at
7 certain patterns that I'm seeing and full disclosure
8 I'm also a part of the AQE, the Alliance for Quality
9 Education as well as the Coalition for Educational
10 Justice who did a lot of work around trying to get
11 the city to adopt the renewal programs. So, imagine
12 our surprise that low and behold just before the
13 holidays there are 15 schools slotted for closure
14 which in and of itself is bad but on the, the high
15 schools particularly the timing is awful because they
16 know that these kids now have to go on and do January
17 Regents, there are a lot of kids that do January
18 Regents. If I was a kid doing a January Regents I
19 don't think I'd be fairing as well as if I thought my
20 school was running until June at least. That being
21 said the schools all have in common at least the ones
22 on the closure list with the exception of two that
23 they are filled with students that have higher needs
24 so they have more English language learners, they
25 have more special needs and special education

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2 children, there are two of the schools that at least
3 60 percent of those two schools that are slated for
4 closure have a combination of English language
5 learners and special needs children that is high
6 enough to be 60 percent of the school, okay, that is
7 not the norm. The norm might be ten percent in the
8 rest of the city in combination with, maybe 15
9 percent but definitely not 60. So, these are schools
10 that need more supports and more help. Like I said
11 the timing for the closings is really bad because if
12 you tell me in December then there's a break there's
13 no chance for a school to rebut or to at least defend
14 itself because there's no time to get together,
15 everyone is out of school. Enrollment is another
16 thing, when they're going to cap enrollment it would
17 be nice if they would tell the schools. From the time
18 that every single one of these schools has gotten
19 renewal and this is not one principal this is
20 multiple principals because I go to every school that
21 is on that list, multiple principals will tell you
22 that enrollment was capped and they tried to take a
23 kid over the counter and found that they, they
24 couldn't enter them in the system and no one told
25 them in advance. So, when they tell you oh well

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2 nobody's enrolling in that school, enrollment is
3 telling them and there's certain cases where
4 principals have pointed out that they have spoken to
5 enrollment and the enrollment office will tell them
6 well you know or sent people down to enrollment they
7 told them well that's a renewal school you don't
8 really want to send your kid there. This is what is
9 said. I believe a lot of this is down to
10 implementation because the plans were great but
11 implementation was not followed up on so there's some
12 schools that did it really well, they're at least 21
13 of these renewal schools that are doing well enough
14 that they're on their own and they're moving forward
15 and then there are those schools that did not get the
16 support and I find it very interesting that a couple
17 of these schools have a principal in common, you know
18 so why would you pass a bad principal from school to
19 school to school and then all of a sudden it's
20 closing so much so that there's even supposedly a
21 picture online of this person with a t-shirt that
22 says closer, not a good thing, not something that
23 builds confidence in the DOE, at least not parent
24 confidence.

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CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Alright, you're... you are... you have many valid, valid points and I just want to wrap up by saying that whether they close schools, whether they change their names whatever approach they take it does not make the needs disappear and that is something that I said during the Bloomberg Era when they had the turnaround model and that's what I'm saying here again today. This, this is... this might be good for some bureaucratic optics, but this is not good for kids and as, as you pointed out that the, the needs are real, and the needs historically have not been addressed and your... I, I think you, your, your valid points are... first of all when I heard I think one of the panelist mention that... I, I think it was New Explorer High School that I think you have a new principal this past year, is that correct?

PAMELA STEWART-MARTINEZ: Yes... [cross-talk]

LASANDRA MEDINA: Uh-huh...

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So... [cross-talk]

PAMELA STEWART-MARTINEZ: A year and a half.

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CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: A year and a half..

[cross-talk]

PAMELA STEWART-MARTINEZ: Yeah, a little over... a little close to a year... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And, and, and New Explorer is a renewal school?

PAMELA STEWART-MARTINEZ: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, a year and a half in you have a new principal in the middle of the renewal school period where every, every, every minute, every day, every month, every year is being measured and counted so they change leadership midway and, and the new leader I'm sure has her... has her own vision and her own instructional agenda and this, this is... this is my criticism that... where I think every single school decision with regards to closures or mergers or truncations has to be greatly scrutinized and questioned and I thank you for coming out here to do that because I don't believe many of these schools were given the full promise of the community school strategy. It, it takes... it does take time and we heard the DOE's own words today say that they've had to make tweaks and adjustments along the way but yet didn't give schools the time to make

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2 tweaks and adjustments along the way. So, there's
3 this double standard that we I think identified here
4 today and again I just want to thank you because I
5 know that you speak not just for yourselves and for
6 your children and for your families but you speak for
7 thousands and thousands of, of, of community members
8 so again I thank you so much for your passion and
9 advocacy.

10 PAMELA STEWART-MARTINEZ: Could I say one
11 other thing?

12 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes, final... [cross-
13 talk]

14 PAMELA STEWART-MARTINEZ: Real quick...
15 [cross-talk]

16 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: ...final exchange.

17 PAMELA STEWART-MARTINEZ: Okay, so also I
18 want to point out one other thing because I don't
19 want to name names because I don't want to point
20 fingers at one school versus another but there are
21 schools that are not part of the renewal programing
22 you can do the research or call me up and ask me
23 about it who are not meeting even close to the
24 benchmarks of some of the schools that are on the
25 list to be closed but they're still allowed to stay

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open and the renewal schools that we're speaking of today are not so that doesn't show a commitment to making the renewal school program work and New Explorer was one of the schools that had that acting principal with the special t-shirt, I just wanted to let you know that.

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I... Its... again nothing ceases to amaze me anymore so... thank you... thank you... [cross-talk]

CELIA GREEN: Can I... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Final word because we do have to... [cross-talk]

CELIA GREEN: Okay, one other... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: ...leave the room... [cross-talk]

CELIA GREEN: ...thing... [cross-talk]

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

CELIA GREEN: One of the things that, that we noticed when we went from... because this is my colleague as well, so we've been to quite a few of the schools, I am a Brooklynite, but I go everywhere, I don't care... [cross-talk]

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2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Alright... [cross-
3 talk]

4 CELIA GREEN: ...as long as there are
5 students there and one of the things that's a pattern
6 in a lot of these schools is when the offerings were
7 given because the things... the, the lines to the DOE,
8 oh we're going to give them a higher performing
9 school, all of these kids are going to higher
10 performing schools, well guess what if you're already
11 at the bottom everything is higher performing than
12 you now on top of that every single school that the
13 kids were offered at least at one of the ones in
14 Brooklyn, okay and that... I could... you know send you
15 towards that principal for that information they were
16 all offered over capacity schools, priority schools
17 and focus schools, how is that higher functioning
18 schools?

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah, I, I could
20 just say that... and I... from a parents perspective I
21 could just imagine the utter confusion that must of
22 happened when you got a letter from... about... that the
23 state mandates that your... that your child goes to
24 priority or focus school and that here are your
25 options to transfer and then someone might knock on

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2 your door a day later or a week later and say let's
3 celebrate things and, and I, I could just imagine
4 that type of confusion and so again everything I've
5 heard today has reinforced or reaffirmed some of the
6 concerns that we've already heard and I... again I
7 cannot thank you enough for your advocacy and I
8 thank... I thank the entire panel and I wish your
9 school communities luck. It's, it's, it's a continued
10 fight, thank you very much.

11 CELIA GREEN: Thank you... [cross-talk]

12 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I appreciate it...
13 [cross-talk]

14 LASANDRA MEDINA: Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I do want to just
16 before we close I have to give... you know any school
17 leader will tell you that they are nothing without
18 their school faculty and staff and I am nothing
19 without the amazing, amazing staff here at the city
20 council, I just... I have to read their names the
21 Senior Legislative Council to the Education Committee
22 the outstanding Smita Dishmukh, thank you for... they,
23 they... staying here the, the entire time, to the
24 amazing Senior Policy Analyst Jan Atwell, amazing
25 Senior Policy Analyst Joan Povolny, great amazing

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Policy Analyst Kalima Johnson, amazing Principle
Financial Analyst Elizabeth Hoffman, amazing
Financial Analyst Kaitlyn O'Hagan, my amazing Chief
of Staff Anna Scaife, my great Policy Director
Vanessa Ogle and also Millie Bonilla, amazing Council
Central Staff as well for the Education Committee. We
have a great team here in the council that deeply
cares about kids. I want to thank everyone and with...
and Eric Feinberg from my staff who stayed here the
entire time, thank you Eric you're also amazing Eric
and with that this first hearing is adjourned.

[gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date

March 9, 2018