

Committee on Youth Services
jointly with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES JOINTLY WITH THE
COMMITTEE ON MENTAL HEALTH, DISABILITIES & ADDICTION

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MONDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2023

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HELD AT: COMMITTEE ROOM - CITY HALL

B E F O R E:

COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES
HON. ALTHEA STEVENS, CHAIR

COMMITTEE ON MENTAL HEALTH,
DISABILITIES & ADDICTION, HON.
LINDA LEE, CHAIR

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

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CHI A. OSSÉ,
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Committee on Youth Services
jointly with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction

A P P E A R A N C E S

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2 the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 4
3 SERGEANT LEWIS: Mic check, mic check, this is a mic
4 check! Mic check on today's hearing of the Committee
5 on Mental Health, Disabilities and Addiction in the
6 Committee Room. Today's date is November 27, 2023,
7 recorded by Walter Lewis.

8 [PAUSE]

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning, and welcome to
10 the Committees on Mental Health, Disabilities and
11 Addiction jointly with Youth Services. At this time
12 we ask if you can please place all electronic devices
13 to vibrate or silent mode. Thank you for your
14 cooperation. Chairs, we are ready to begin.

15 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS:

16 [GAVEL SOUND] [GAVELING IN]

17 Good morning, I am Council Member Althea Stevens,
18 Chair of New York City Council Committee on Youth
19 Services. I am joined by Council Member Linda Lee,
20 Chair of Mental Health, Disabilities and Addiction.
21 And we are also joined by Council Member Chi Ossé and
22 Council Member Shaun Abreu.

23 After-School Program provides an essential layer
24 of support to students, and it has been proven that
25 students who participate in these programs do better
academically in school. Thus it is essential that

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 5
3 all young people have access to After-School Program
4 regardless of their disabilities. Studies have shown
5 that the After-School Program benefits students by
6 strengthening their connections with peers,
7 increasing their confidence and developing important
8 workforce skills. Those programs are also imperative
9 to for families, as they provide reliable child care
10 that allows parents to remain in the workforce.
11 However, New York City families with children with
12 disabilities face a unique burdens [INAUDIBLE]
13 participating in after school programming. Parents
14 struggle to identify local programming dedicated to
15 supports for their children, difficulties ensuring
16 that the program has appropriately trained staff,
17 complications securing transportation to and from
18 afterschool programs. We must erase the burdens on
19 parents by strengthening and expanding after school
20 programs for students with disabilities. And I
21 believe one way to do that is by improving the City
22 programming by giving after school program providers
23 the tools that they need to do their jobs
24 effectively.

24 As a former After-School Program provider, I
25 speak to the direct engagement, education, and

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 6
3 discipline students who require personalize attention
4 and dedicated services (sic). In conversations with
5 DYCD (City Department of Youth and Community
6 Development) contracted after school providers, staff
7 said central challenges to servicing students with
8 disabilities are skilled staff and poor communication
9 between DOE (Department of Education) and DYCD.
10 Providers are struggling to identify, hire, and train
11 paraprofessionals to serve those students, even
12 though Department of Education has a pool of
13 paraprofessionals and substitute paraprofessionals.
14 Additionally, because providers are denied access to
15 students with IEPs (Individualized Education
16 Programs), which contain critical information about
17 their mandated accommodations, parents must
18 proactively share the child's IEP or voice the
19 necessary modifications to ensure childrens needs are
20 met.

21 The onus of accommodating a student's needs
22 should not lie with the parent but with DOE and DYCD.
23 My goal for today's hearing is to facilitate and
24 encourage greater collaboration between those
25 agencies to ensure afterschool program providers have

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 7
3 the recourses they need to meet the needs of students
4 with disabilities.

5 I would like to thank committee staff for their
6 hard work in preparing for this hearing: Elizabeth
7 Arzt, Senior Policy Analyst and Christina Yellamaty,
8 Legislative Counsel, as well as the A-Team back in
9 the district office.

10 I would also like to acknowledge Council Member
11 Riley.

12 I will now pass it off to Council Member Lee for
13 her opening statements.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEE: Good morning, thank you Chair
15 Stevens. Good morning, everyone, My name is Linda
16 Lee, Chair of Committee on Mental Health,
17 Disabilities and Addiction. I would like to begin by
18 thanking my colleague, Chair Althea Stevens of the
19 Committee on Youth Services, and everyone else for
20 joining us today for this important hearing on *After
21 School Program Support for Youth with Disabilities.*

22 I think we all know the value of after school
23 activities - and out of school, also known as OST
24 Programming - cannot be overstated. We know that OST
25 programs positively impact educational outcomes and
26 they have been shown to increase social and emotional

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 8
3 learning for students with disabilities. In my first
4 year of grad school, I interned at a Beacon program,
5 so I know personally how important these programs are
6 and how much they add value to the students as well
7 as the families that they serve.

8 But, we also recognize the barriers that
9 providers face when trying to accommodate students
10 with disabilities into after school programs. And
11 this is something that Council Member Stevens and I
12 know all too well coming from the Social Services
13 sector prior to our roles here.

14 It is a heartbreaking conversation to tell
15 families that despite wanting to help, they just
16 don't have the level of training, supports, and
17 resources to adequately care for some of these
18 students safely. No family and no provider should
19 have to face this decision, and it is imperative that
20 city agencies communicate with each other so that
21 these students and their families receive the proper
22 support, so that they can participate equally and
23 effectively in the City's After-School Program.

24 I look forward to learning more about the process
25 and ways that the Committee and Council can best
 support the agencies that work with this population

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2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 9
3 to improve access for students with disabilities to
4 these vital After-School Programs. And I will say I
5 understand how siloed and complicated the systems can
6 be in both the City versus the State, and what we can
7 do as a City versus the State, and that funding is
8 always going to be a challenge. But even with that,
9 I am excited to have this hearing today specifically
10 to talk about ways, even despite those barriers, that
11 we can find ways to improve and provide better
12 services for our students.

13 So, I want to thank representatives from the
14 Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, the
15 Department of Youth and Community Development, and
16 Department of Education, along with other interested
17 stakeholders and members of the public including
18 advocates, volunteers, and any individuals with lived
19 experience who have taken the time to join us here
20 today, we look forward to hearing from you. And
21 finally, I would like to thank the Mental Health,
22 Disabilities and Addiction committee staff who worked
23 to prepare this hearing: Sara Sucher, Legislative
24 Counsel, sitting right next to me, Cristy Dwyer and
25 Senior Policy Analyst; Alicia Miranda, Principal

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2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 10
3 Finance Analyst. And I will now turn it back over to
4 my colleague, Chair Stevens.

5 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I would like to acknowledge
6 Council Member Alexa Avilés, who just joined us. And
7 will turn it over to committee counsel to swear in
8 the Administration.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We will now hear testimony
10 from the Administration. Before we begin, I will
11 administer the affirmation.

12 Panelists, please raise your right hand. Do you
13 affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and
14 nothing but the truth, before this committee, and to
15 respond honestly to council member questions?

16 [ADMINISTRATION AFFIRMS]

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, you may begin when
18 ready.

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Good morning, Chairs
20 Stevens and Lee, and members of the Committees on
21 Youth Services and Mental Health, Disabilities, and
22 Addiction. I'm Susan Haskell Deputy Commissioner for
23 Youth Services for The Department of Youth and
24 Community Development. I'm joined by Wanda Ascherl,
25 Assistant Commissioner for Community Centers and my
 colleagues from DOE. On behalf of Commissioner Keith

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 11
3 Howard, thank you for this opportunity to discuss
4 after school program support for youth with
5 disabilities.

6 DYCD greatly values the importance of after
7 school programs for the City's young people. We know
8 that after school programs provide many benefits,
9 such as development of positive self-esteem,
10 identification of skills and interest, and social
11 emotional growth. Our dedicated network of nonprofit
12 provider serves youth with range of diverse abilities
13 in their programs.

14 As you know, DYCD's three largest afterschool
15 programs are Beacon Community Centers, COMPASS, and
16 Cornerstone Community Centers.

17 COMPASS is the largest after school program area
18 and offers a mix of academic, recreational, and
19 cultural activities for young people in the
20 afternoons, on holidays, and during the summer,
21 serving elementary, middle, and high school aged
22 youth. The nearly 900 programs are located in
23 schools, community centers, Parks, and detention
24 facilities, and NYCHA centers.

25 In addition to COMPASS, Beacon and Cornerstone
Community Centers offer comprehensive programs during

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 12
3 the school year and summertime and include services
4 for adult and families. Launched under Mayor Dinkins,
5 Beacons Community Centers have been national model.
6 Beacons are collaborative school based community
7 centers operating service after school, in the
8 evenings, and on weekends. They were created in the
9 early 1990's in response to concerns about crime in
10 New York City. Currently there are 92 Beacons.

11 Cornerstone Programs offer services for public
12 housing residents on all ages in 99 New York City
13 Housing Authority Community Centers (NYCHA).
14 Cornerstones help youth participants by offering
15 academic and enrichment activities to help them
16 thrive including to graduate from high school,
17 succeeded in the workplace, and developed leadership
18 and civic engagement skills to give back to the
19 community. Activities include homework help, STEAM
20 activities, high school and college, prep, community
21 beautification, mentoring, performing arts and
22 sports.

23 Last year, COMPASS, Beacon, and Cornerstones
24 enrolled nearly 200,000 youth. These programs are
25 complemented by other DYCD funded initiatives, for
example, Saturday Night Lights (SNL) Program. SNL is

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 13
3 a summer program that provides access to free youth
4 sports programming on Saturday nights at 140
5 locations throughout the City.

6 In addition, this past summer the City enrolled
7 more than 110,000 young people in Summer Rising 2023
8 - a partnership between New York City Public Schools
9 and DYCD. Students in Summer Rising receive both
10 academic and enrichment programming over the course
11 of the day including field trips, arts, activities,
12 and outdoor recreation.

13 After-School Programs must provide *all* children
14 an equal opportunity to participate in services.
15 Equity and access to services is a Hallmark of a
16 Commissioner Howard's vision for DYCD.

17 Commissioner Howard has met with Commissioner
18 Curry, from the Mayor's Office Of People With
19 Disabilities (MOPD), about training for nonprofit
20 organizations, such as how to build accessible
21 programs space. We are pleased to be joined by their
22 General Counsel, Emily Sweet.

23 As the Committees know, disabilities take many
24 forms and include physical, learning or developmental
25 challenges. Some young people, for example, have
 special education needs, mobility challenges, and

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2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 14
3 visual and/or hearing impairment. A student's
4 disability classification may not impact services or
5 programs participation, rather, in compliance with
6 applicable laws, DYCD and its providers focus on how
7 each student can best be served in a program, and if
8 necessary, what each youth requires as an
9 accommodation in order to participate successfully in
10 the program. Parents and caregivers are in the best
11 position to help programs understand their child's
12 needs.

13 To best meet those needs, upon application to
14 program, applicants have the opportunity to share
15 information about their child, including in response
16 to a series of health and disability questions so our
17 providers can tell service delivery. This includes
18 whether their child has a disability, any allergies,
19 asthma, special healthcare needs, takes medication,
20 and whether there are activities the applicant cannot
21 participate in, or if they will benefit from an
22 accommodation. Parents may choose to share the
23 students individual education plan, if they feel it
24 will be helpful in better understanding their child's
25 needs.

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2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 15

3 All DYCD funded program serve youth with
4 disabilities. Some of DYCD's programs are funded
5 specifically to serve students with special needs,
6 and DYCD also funds organizations which specialize in
7 serving youth with disabilities.

8 DYCD offers trainings and resources to support
9 programs to engage all young people actively in
10 programming. DYCD has provided training to providers,
11 free of charge, through Our Capacity Building Unit
12 including through providers like Vibrant, PASE, and
13 IncludeNYC.

14 DYCD also partners with city agencies, including
15 New York City Public Schools Special Education Office
16 (SCO) to train and support providers. For example,
17 this spring, SCO provided coaching on site and in
18 person professional learning, including how to
19 develop a plan for working with students with
20 disabilities. One focused on students on the autism
21 spectrum; and a second session focused on related
22 services and sensory supports.

23 New York City Public Schools has a range of
24 webinars available to CBO staff, including
25 Introduction to Verbal Behavior, Executive Function,

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2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 16
3 Creating Safe Spaces, and Strategies that Support
4 Attention.

5 New York City School's Office of School Health
6 also supports DYCD programs assisting to facilitate
7 that 504 processes were student may be entitled to
8 additional support in COMPASS school-based programs.
9 DYCD created a Disability Research Guide to help CBO
10 staff, youth, and families access support in our
11 range of areas from education and housing, mental
12 health, and professional development.

13 As noted earlier, Summer Rising is a partnership
14 between NYCPS and DYCD that enrolled more than
15 110,000 participants this past summer in a model that
16 provides both academic and enrichment activities,
17 guided by teachers and CBO staff. Summer Rising
18 offered new opportunities to expand summer services
19 for students with disabilities including students
20 with extended school year services and in District
21 75.

22 Roughly 30,000 students with disabilities
23 enrolled in Summer Rising this year, including
24 students with autism spectrum disorder and ESY, and
25 District 75 students who participated in CBO-led
 enrichment activities.

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2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 17
3 DYCD and New York City Public Schools, including
4 through a partnership organization, Change Impact,
5 offered a range of live and self-paced workshops to
6 support CBO line staff and leadership to better
7 understand and accommodate special needs such as
8 Understanding Disability and introduction to Autism
9 Spector Disorder, Behavior and De-Escalation
10 Strategies, and Modifying Environments for All
11 Learners. Trainings cover topics such as how to
12 communicate successfully, how to use materials to
13 make activities inclusive, how to establish routines,
14 and how to break down tasks for students and help
15 them organize information.

16 Thank you once again for the opportunity to
17 testify, we are pleased to answer your questions
18 today.

19 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. So, I am
20 actually going to start with DOE. I have some
21 questions for you. Mayor Adams has ordered all City
22 Agencies to make significant cuts to their annual
23 budgets. Among the recent announcement proposed are
24 the reduction of Summer Rising hours, cutting \$20
25 million in funding from the programming. Summer
Rising is a joint effort between DOE and DYCD, which

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 18
3 served 110,000 students last year. How are the
4 agencies planning to address the upcoming challenges?
5 And do the agencies have plans or resources to
6 replace, supplement, or offset the proposed cuts to
7 Summer Rising?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Thank you, Chair...

9 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: That was a DOE question.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Oh, thank you.

11 [LAUGHTER]

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: You're always ready.

13 You get to be in the hotseat right now.

14 DIRECTOR LUO: Thank you, Chair Stevens. My name
15 is Jay Luo, and I am the Director of Strategic
16 Partnerships in the Office of Support and Wellness at
17 New York City Public Schools. I don't want to
18 misspeak, so I will actually have to look into this
19 and get back to you on it.

20 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, wait, what do you have
21 to look into?

22 DIRECTOR LUO: I'm sorry?

23 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: What... What do you mean
24 you have to look into it? Because, this was...

25 DIRECTOR LUO: [INAUDIBLE]

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with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 19

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: This was proposed last week,
and so you guys should know the answers of like what
the plan is and how you are planning for these cuts.
So, this actually, to me it's... We should know the
answers to this.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Well, Chair, if I
may chime in...

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Mm-hmm?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: And by the way, Jay
was an esteemed staff member at DYCD until very
recently when he came to DOE... [CROSS-TALK]

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Oh, he jumped ship? Okay...
[CROSS-TALK]

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: It always helps...
[CROSS-TALK]

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: [LAUGHING]

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: our collaboration
and our coordination...

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Mm-hmm.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: when we have teams
coming from what place to the other. This is still
going to be... planned to be the biggest summer
enrichment programming. There were proposed cuts to
hours for middle school students. I think we'll make

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 20
3 the best of those available resources. And I don't
4 have any... We don't have any additional information
5 about supplementing or offsetting that. We are just
6 going to make the best of the resources that we have.

7 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And what does that mean
8 "make the best of it"? Because ,you know, I have
9 seen... And even talking to providers for the last
10 two summers, are we thinking about looking at
11 possibly going back into a model that we were pre-
12 COVID, where it was a more focused with providers and
13 not so much of this collaboration with DOE. Because,
14 I know that that was a big part of the budget. I
15 think that when if first started out, it made a lot
16 sense, because young people had not been in school
17 for about a year. But, now us being back into the
18 rhythm of things, are we looking to go more towards
19 where providers were canceling summer and having less
20 DOE intervention?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I think the final
22 model will look similar to years past and also
23 include... incorporate some changes. And we are
24 still working on the details and processing the
25 changes to the budget that have just recently been
 announced.

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2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 21

3 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Mm-hmm

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Uh, but we will be,
5 again, maximizing the resources and the experience,
6 to your point, for young people.

7 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yes, because I am really
8 concerned about... especially with the cutting of
9 middle school students. I think ,you know, when you
10 think about years ago when there was a big thing
11 around, like, we needed to have the After-School
12 Program for all middle school students. And then we
13 are looking at a time where we have are having
14 Juvenile Justice Center at 95% capacity. Those are
15 the young people we should be reaching. And, so, how
16 are we making sure that the programs that we have are
17 serving the kids that need to be served? Right? And
18 understanding that we are in budget constraints, so I
19 am very concerned with that in thinking about how we
20 ensure that these young people are not lost in the
21 shuffle. Right? Especially because we know with
22 Summer Rising, a lot of middle school students were
23 not interested in that. And, then, because of the
24 model in which SYEP is set up and the fact that they
25 are only getting a stipend, a lot of young people
 have been signing up for that, and then we have our

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 22
3 juvenile justice systems filling up at that same
4 time. And, so, I think that we need to have a much
5 more clear, concrete plan of what the summer looks
6 like specifically for middle school students,
7 especially during this time. So, I know these
8 announcements were just made, but these are not new
9 announcements around, we were going to have to
10 tighten our budget, so we really need to make sure
11 that, in the next couple of weeks, we have an actual
12 plan that we can be rolling out. Because, as you
13 guys know, planning for summer starts in January.
14 So, time is ticking and definitely need to make sure
15 that we have plan moving forward.

16 And this is another DOE question, according to
17 providers, DOE says that agencies cannot share a
18 students IEP with DYCD After-School providers, unless
19 a parent or guardian voluntarily consents to it.
20 Providers explained that without access to IEPs, they
21 are denied critical information that helps
22 accommodate the students with disabilities. Does DOE
23 inform parents or guardians that they must
24 voluntarily consent to sharing their children's IEP
25 with CBOs?

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2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 23

3 And have DOE and DYCD explored creating a space
4 on DYCD After-School Program applications where
5 parents or guardians can share the child's IEP
6 information?

7 DIRECTOR JAFFE: Good morning, Chair, My name is
8 Ariana Jaffe, I am the Director of Research and
9 Policy Development in the Special Education Office of
10 New York City Public Schools.

11 There were a number of questions in there. At
12 the outset, uhm, we are not permitted by law to share
13 student's Individualized Education Programs with
14 outside agencies or external partners, both health
15 privacy and educational privacy prevent us from doing
16 so without the parent's consent.

17 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Mm-hmm?

18 DIRECTOR JAFFE: With respect to the providers
19 having the information they need to appropriately
20 serve the student, there are a number of sources for
21 information that should sufficient for them to
22 accommodate the student from a number of sources.
23 And they can always ask...

24 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And what are those sources?

25 DIRECTOR JAFFE: Uh, so, in the first place, when
this parent signs up the student for the After-School

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 24
3 Program, Susan may be able to speak better to this..

4 [INAUDIBLE].... [CROSS-TALK]

5 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Could you please list the
6 sources, because I need to know where they are.
7 Because they are not on the application.

8 DIRECTOR JAFFE: Yes, so there is... I'm sorry,
9 could you repeat what you just said?

10 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I am asking you to list the
11 sources where the parents can... [CROSS-TALK]

12 DIRECTOR JAFFE: Yes...

13 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: give this information.

14 DIRECTOR JAFFE: So, the parent must provide an
15 application.

16 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Mm-hmm?

17 DIRECTOR JAFFE: or an intake form.

18 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yes.

19 DIRECTOR JAFFE: and that contains a number of...
20 A great amount of information, and I will let Susan
21 [INAUDIBLE]... [CROSS-TALK]

22 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I am just asking to list
23 where they are. Because that information isn't on
24 the application.

25 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: The application does
ask for information about whether a student has a

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 25
3 disability. It also explores some of their health or
4 medication needs...

5 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Mm-hmm?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: asthma, et cetera. I
7 think the most important thing on the application is,
8 is there something your child... is there
9 accommodation that your child needs? Are there
10 things that we need to know about your child that
11 will help us serve them better? Does your child
12 require any... [CROSS-TALK]

13 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yes, but...

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: [INAUDIBLE]
15 accommodation?

16 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: That is not the same
17 question. Because the question that I asked was, on
18 the... Is there a place where we are letting parents
19 know that if they wish to share the IEP, that those
20 things could happen? Because I know that is not on
21 the application. And even with listing things like
22 health issues is not the same as an IEP for
23 accommodations as we all know. So, those are not the
24 same things. And, so, I am asking why we are not
25 looking to have, on the application where we are
26 letting guardians know that if there is an IEP or

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 26
3 some disabilities, to be able to share that
4 information. Because that is not shared. And lot of
5 times providers have to produce a supplemental
6 application to get that information, because it is
7 not on there. So, yes, we understand that DOE cannot
8 share that information, but I am asking why isn't
9 this something that we are explicitly saying up front
10 to parents, of saying, like, *Hey, does your child*
11 *have a disability?* or things like that, so that
12 providers could better support them in that way?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I think that that is
14 something that we can explore and take back the
15 suggestion to a parent, right up front on the
16 application, that if they feel that it is valuable,
17 they could share the IEP voluntarily with the
18 program.

19 But, I also want to take the opportunity to say
20 that I think that the IEP may not always, or even
21 usually, be suited to helping the young person
22 succeed in After-School. Whereas, in the school day
23 a child's classification, and they are very detailed,
24 like, plan...

25 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Mm-hmm?

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2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 27

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: multiple pages,
4 around how to help the child meet the academic goals,
5 is rarely, I would say, necessary for... [CROSS-
6 TALK]

7 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I would... [CROSS-TALK]

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: A young person to be
9 successful in After-School... [CROSS-TALK]

10 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I am going to say that I beg
11 to differ. Being in After-School and not being able
12 to, one, when you have staff who actually Zoom a lot
13 of educational support in supplementing the
14 education... And, so, I think when we say things
15 like that it kind of like takes away from the work
16 that they are actually doing in After-School
17 Programs. Because we all know, and you know this
18 better ,you know, than most know, that After-School
19 isn't just babysitting. Right? There are
20 educational activities going on. And, so, sometimes
21 it is important, and, yes, an IEP is really hard to
22 read. That is another problem, but that is not a
23 street we are about to go down now... But, it is
24 hard to... it is hard to read. But, I do think that
25 there are sometimes things on there that are
 important for a provider to know. Right? To have a

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 28
3 better understanding. And, so, yes, the IEP, I think
4 that we need to figure out what that looks like,
5 whether that is just sharing it or having a
6 conversation. But those are critical. And I think
7 that it's important, as folks who are doing education
8 supplement, they should be aware of, like, what those
9 disabilities are and how they can actually help
10 support. Because we know that a lot of times they
11 are doing supplemental reading work with these young
12 people; they're doing ,you know, all of these other
13 things, and really should be supplementing what they
14 are learning in the day. And a lot of times,
15 especially with school-based they are sometimes
16 working with the teachers with those things. I
17 think to say that it is not necessarily necessary, I
18 think it is, one, we should probably get IEPs at a
19 place where normal people can read them. That is part
20 of the problem, because even parents struggle with
21 reading them, but also we should be thinking about
22 how we then extract the information that would be
23 helpful to the After-School Program for them to be
24 able to get access to it.

24 Next question is, uh, Local Law 76-2023 sponsored
25 by me, requires the Department of Education to issue

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 29
3 an annual report on District 75 After-School
4 Programs, which provide critical support to students
5 with behavioral challenges, including autism spectrum
6 disorders and other sensory impaired disabilities.
7 The report was due on August 30, 2023. As of last
8 week, the DOE informed us that the report was done
9 but needed internal signoff. Is there an update on
10 the timeline for when the Council will receive this
11 report?

12 DIRECTOR LUO: Unfortunately I am not familiar
13 with this report, but thank you for your question.
14 But I will follow up with the Office of
15 Intergovernmental Affairs and get back to you
16 shortly.

17 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Hmm, that is disheartening.
18 It doesn't feel like they sent you here to be
19 prepared, so that is really disheartening. But, yes,
20 please get back to us as soon as possible about when
21 we would get the report. I think that ,you know, it
22 is about to be December, it's two months. And to say
23 that it is done, but it just hasn't been signed off,
24 to me sounds ,you know, inappropriate. How long does
25 it take for a report to get signed off on, so that we

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 30
3 can get... It's two months overdue. So, to me,
4 that's really unacceptable.

5 What information does DOE share with families of
6 students with IEPs or 504 plans about after school
7 programming to ensure they are aware that the program
8 will accommodate their students? How is this
9 information made available to them?

10 DIRECTOR LUO: Thank you for your question, Chair
11 Stevens. So, our After-School programs serve all
12 students. And we are working together with DYCD to
13 provide additional guidance for schools and CBO
14 leaders to ensure that families are aware of their
15 options for support. And principals understand the
16 process for requesting paraprofessionals and nursing
17 services... or nursing services for students during
18 the After-School Program or other extracurricular
19 activities consistent with the student's IEP or
20 section 504 plan. So we do make sure... Well we
21 are...

22 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: What does that look like in
23 real time?

24 DIRECTOR LUO: So, we inform the families along
25 with DYCD itself...

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 31

3 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I know you guys inform that
4 families of the program, but I am asking what it
5 looks like in real time for DOE to really kind of be
6 able to share the information so that families can
7 have an understanding of what information they should
8 share with the providers - so that we can make sure
9 that they accommodate? So, I know, for example, I
10 know that in some programs where there are good
11 partnerships, especially ones that are in school-
12 based, there are principals who would say things
13 like, *I don't know if this program will be a good fit*
14 *for your child*, and be able to kind of walk those
15 things through. But, how are we, as agencies, giving
16 parents information so that they understand what
17 these programs could provide and what kind of
18 supports?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: One thing I would
20 like to say there is when we are marketing After-
21 School, whether we are doing it at the DYCD level,
22 speaking with community groups, or at the local
23 level, sometimes between schools and CBOs, marketing
24 directly to students through parent coordinators, or
25 at the community base level reaching out to local
schools and doing... We are marketing to all

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 32
3 students. And students with disabilities are
4 everywhere. They are in our programs... [CROSS-
5 TALK]

6 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: [INAUDIBLE]

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: And they are
8 marketing to... Marketing After-School, generally we
9 are marketing to all students. I think there could
10 be a suggestion about how we can continue to do even
11 more targeting marketing. We have been working more
12 closely with the DOE Special Education Office than
13 ever before over the last couple of years. And I am
14 sure we can look for additional ways to do more
15 targeted outreach.

16 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yes, I mean, so, and
17 honestly one of the reasons why this was one of the
18 hearings that has been on my list since I got here,
19 is because one of the most challenging things that I
20 ever had to deal with was telling parents that this
21 wasn't a good fit for their kid. And then, at them
22 saying, *Oh, so can you give me a suggestion on where*
23 *they could go?* And then that is nonexistent. Right?
24 In the sense of thinking about, yes, there are
25 students who have severe disabilities, and so there
 are programs for them, but sometimes, especially with

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 33
3 some of our young people who might have ADHD or
4 behavioral issues and things like that, the setting
5 just isn't conducive to that. And we have not, one,
6 provided other spaces for them to go into in those
7 cases. And we also are not really preparing parents,
8 because they are, like, *Well, what do you mean?*
9 *They're fine in school.* And, then, it's like, *Well,*
10 *this is a different environment, and it looks*
11 *different.* And, so, we are not doing a good job of,
12 one, like, kind of letting parents know, like, I have
13 had a lot of conversations where parents were crying,
14 like, *Oh, my god, what am I going to do with my*
15 *child? I have to work,* and all of these other things,
16 and they did not have other options, and we also
17 didn't set them up to understand what some of those
18 challenges were. And, so, I think, as an agency, we
19 need to do better at bridging the gap and also having
20 more options for students with disabilities - and not
21 just students with severe disabilities. And so that
22 is why I think it is important for us to be really
23 thinking about what this looks like in real time,
24 especially when we know we have so many students with
25 so many different needs. And, so, programs should be
 able to accommodate the needs. And providers do that

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 34
3 all the time, but there is a struggle and a
4 disconnect around some of that.

5 DIRECTOR JAFFE: Chair Stevens, I think that you
6 make a very good point about there being programs
7 ,you know, that there are some special programs for
8 students with some severe disabilities, and then,
9 uhm, there are a lot of students, you know, obviously
10 students with IEPs fall under a great continuum.

11 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Mm-hmm

12 DIRECTOR JAFFE: And also one of the goals of
13 these extracurricular activities is to be as
14 inclusive as possible and to provide the support that
15 students need in order to participate fully. I think
16 that one of... And I have seen a number of these
17 escalations also of parents saying ,you know, that
18 they are concerned that their child won't be able to
19 participate in one of these programs. And a lot of
20 it, I think comes down to, and this is something that
21 ,you know, I feel very passionately about parents
22 knowing what they're rights are. And to know that at
23 least ,you know, as far as... And this goes along
24 with what Susan mentioned earlier in her testimony,
25 that programs that take place in Department of
Education buildings, in school buildings, they cannot

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 35
3 discriminate against students with disabilities.

4 They cannot exclude students with disabilities. If a
5 student has needs that cannot be supported with the
6 current staffing or ratios that the After-School
7 Program or the CBO provides currently in their
8 program, we can work with them to see whether they
9 can better support the student. And under certain
10 circumstances, if necessary, we will also work with
11 the family and the CBO to provide additional support,
12 in the form of personnel, if a student has medical
13 needs like diabetes... [CROSS-TALK]

14 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And I just want to say this:
15 Those things are... Yes, those things are often said
16 that they could be provided, but it is not done
17 often. There... It is very rare where programs are
18 given paras. A lot of times the kids are dropped at
19 2:30 or three o'clock, and it is now the providers
20 responsibility on how to facilitate that program.
21 And as... I have worked in programs where we have
22 requested paras, and they are, like, *We don't have*
23 *any paras to give you.* And then it comes out of the
24 school's budget. It is a lot of back and forth. And,
25 so, I think that, yes, all of things are in place,
 and it is written down that we should be doing those

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 36
3 things. But those accommodations are not often met
4 in those fashions. And ,you know, even when we are
5 thinking about the providers, they're also not given
6 the tools or training to actually then deal with
7 them. Because it does require special training to
8 deal with students with certain behavioral issues.
9 And, so, I don't necessarily think it is about
10 discrimination, I think it is about us making sure
11 that we are providing a safe space. And I know when
12 I have had to have those tough conversations, it was
13 because it was no longer *safe*. Because we couldn't
14 provide additional support. And so think about a
15 young person who has a paraprofessional, has a one-
16 to-one para all day long, and then at three o'clock,
17 now they are in a room with 25 other kids, and are
18 expected to stay focused and all of the things, when
19 that is not what they have been doing all day. And,
20 so, I think that, yes, those are the safety nets that
21 we say are in place, but we know that those things
22 are not happening.

22 DIRECTOR JAFFE: And perhaps that may be something
23 that we need to provide greater awareness for
24 principals and school staff, so that they know that
25 they can submit requests for paraprofessional support

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 37
3 for students who are attending After-School Program
4 in their buildings, and that those paraprofessionals
5 are centrally funded. They do not come out of the
6 school budget. [INAUDIBLE]... [CROSS-TALK]

7 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: When I tell you it is so
8 hard to get a paraprofessional in an after school
9 program. Like, I think I have... I ran an
10 afterschool program 12 years, I had a
11 paraprofessional for one student, one year, and that
12 was it. And after that, we ended up having to hire
13 the paraprofessional on staff, because the school
14 said that they would no longer provide it.

15 DIRECTOR JAFFE: I think because of... partially
16 because of stories like that and the history of that,
17 that is why we have really worked to improve our
18 process for...

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Yes.

20 DIRECTOR JAFFE: hiring and assigning
21 paraprofessionals, centralizing the process,
22 simplifying the process, and I think a lot of it is
23 now to try to make... get the word out to make sure
24 that people know that it is available. Because I
25 take your point, and I don't doubt that that

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 38
3 happened. And that is something that we are trying
4 to prevent from continuing to happen.

5 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, no, I know that is
6 just really important for us to really make sure that
7 this, one, is done in a much more seamless way, and
8 also, if we are ready know that the student needs a
9 paraprofessional, why should we have to apply for it?
10 Or why isn't that... When the parent signs up, it
11 should be something that is automatic. And we should
12 really be thinking about how we make this process a
13 lot more seamless - because it really isn't.

14 I just have a couple more questions, and I will
15 pass it to Chair Lee, and then I will give space for
16 colleagues, and we will come back. Because you guys
17 know I always have a lot of questions.

18 In the November modification it contained a
19 reduction of 3,538 COMPASS spots in Fiscal Year 25.
20 How did you determine the number of spots to be cut?

21 [SILENCE]

22 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: This is for DYCD, I'm sorry.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Uh, we... We make
24 every effort to minimize any impact of service in the
25 reductions. Again, I think I mentioned we are still
 working out exactly how the reductions will

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 39
3 implemented. But we will do our best to minimize
4 program impact. For example, if there are seats that
5 are unallocated, we would look to that funding first.
6 If there are underutilized seats, we will look to
7 those program areas first. There may be some
8 programs that acknowledge they have... that they are
9 funded for more seats than they need in that specific
10 location, we are going to do our best to minimize
11 impact on service delivery.

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, because ,you know, I
13 think even when we are thinking about under
14 enrollment, uh, that gets really tricky, especially
15 because we haven't had an RFP in so long, and
16 thinking about ,you know, it reminds me of last year
17 when we were talking a lot about 3K and rightsizing.
18 And we clearly have a child care shortage. And like
19 I mentioned earlier our juvenile justices are filling
20 up. And, so, really thinking about, these cuts, how
21 is this going continue to impact the City in this
22 way? And I think that is important. And, obviously,
23 I'm sure you guys don't take it lightly, but I think
24 that it's really crucial for us to really think about
25 this. And we also need to think about a lot of the
other mitigating factors that we know are

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 40
3 contributing to some of these programs that have low
4 enrollment. I had a hearing last month about DOE and
5 being able to clear staff fast enough. Like I said,
6 we haven't an RFP in a number of years. So, we have
7 not been able to move slots around in the way that we
8 necessarily needed. So, I think even like saying low
9 enrollment, it becomes really tricky, because we know
10 that there are all of this other mitigating factors
11 that are contributing to low enrollment - and it's
12 not just that students aren't interested [INAUDIBLE].
13 I am definitely going to be keeping a watchful eye on
14 this, because I am really concerned about what this
15 looks like and how this is really going to impact
16 young people and families across the City.

16 What is the rate for reimbursement for DYCD
17 contracted COMPASS providers who serve students with
18 disabilities?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: We... In COMPASS
20 there are different rates based on which are PPP
21 funded on, which grade level you're serving. There
22 are a handful of programs, more than a handful, who
23 responded to one RFP where they were offered
24 additional funding the PPP in that RFP to serve
25 students with disabilities. But I would... I think

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 41
3 I would answer that by saying students with
4 disabilities are being served in every program
5 upon... [CROSS-TALK]

6 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Agreed.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: every RFP...
8 [CROSS-TALK]

9 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I agree with you, which is
10 why I think they all should just be funded at the
11 higher rate. But, you know...

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: And their... Their
13 contract funded with the expectation that they will
14 be serving all students.

15 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, the... So, like you
16 said, there are providers that did this RFP
17 specifically for students with disabilities. Are
18 there specific trainings that they are receiving
19 because they went after that specific RFP? And what
20 does that training look like?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I would say not so
22 much. I think we do a lot of training. We have been
23 doing more and more training, working very close with
24 Ariana and the team at DOE. But I would say the
25 training is necessary, again, across the board. We
know that youth with disability are being served in

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 42
3 all programs. So, the trainings that we are offering
4 are open to all of the Beacon, Cornerstone, and
5 COMPASS programs that we fund.

6 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: But, why are we not doing...
7 And, this is just because of what you just said,
8 obviously we know already that there are students
9 with disabilities - across all of the programs - that
10 are being served. So, then why are we not doing
11 specific training for that for everyone. Right? And
12 what do those trainings look like? And is that part
13 of a series? Because I think that it's important
14 that we are equipping our staff, and group leaders,
15 and youth educators to really be able to handle some
16 of the challenges that they do face - which are often
17 different than general education students. So, what
18 do those trainings look like?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I think that's an
20 excellent question. For example, in Summer Rising
21 over the past couple of years, when have worked
22 together to look at sites where there is a District
23 75 school collocated, and we know District 75
24 students have enrolled in the afternoon session with
25 a CBO, then we have planned some specialized

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 43
3 trainings - we have done many to support those
4 programs. But we don't limit it just to those...

5 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Mm-hmm

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: We will say, here
7 are all of the programs that are going to be
8 collocated with District 75 schools, and everybody is
9 invited to this training, because we all need it.
10 Some of the fundamental ways that you can respond to
11 students with disabilities helps all students --
12 behavioral issues, for example, or making
13 accommodations for how an activity is presented. So,
14 when there are thoughts that we have about how to
15 target the training, it always ends up being
16 something that is going to be beneficial to all
17 providers and open to providers.

18 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay. And how often are
19 those trainings provided?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I think we have
21 probably done a dozen trainings at least within...
22 just in 2023.

23 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And do you guys work with
24 the MOPD? Do you guys work with that office as well
25 when you are doing these trainings?

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 44

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: We have been
3 connecting with MOPD recently to discuss in
4 particular, trainings for nonprofit organizations
5 specifically and how to successfully sort for
6 employees including at DYCD. At this time, we have
7 not been working specifically on trainings to After-
8 School providers, but we are connected with MOPD
9 about how, uh, what steps DYCD can do better across
10 the board to be more [INAUDIBLE]... [CROSS-TALK]

11 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, you guys just recently
12 started working with that office? You know, I feel
13 like that is one of the most underserved offices
14 here. And we definitely need to figure out how to
15 get them some more money, because there are so many
16 New Yorkers with disabilities, and that office is
17 underutilized and under resourced. And I think it
18 would really be helping to guide some of this work,
19 uh, that we are talking about right now. But, as we
20 know it is very limited. But I think that we should
21 be using them in all of the things that we are doing,
22 because we know, like you said, in all of our
23 programs, we are serving students with disabilities.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I totally agree. I
25 know Commissioner Howard has been committed to that.

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 45
3 And they have been working on issues to support a
4 five-year plan of strengthening our work to support,
5 uh, young people and families with disabilities.

6 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yes, it is just really
7 surprising that we are just... That those offices
8 are just working now. It just drives me crazy that
9 we have all of these agencies that don't work
10 together. And if we were just better at working
11 together, all of our lives would just be so much
12 easier.

13 I am going to hand it over to Chair Lee right now
14 for some questions, and I will be back in a little
15 bit.

16 [PAUSE]

17 CHAIRPERSON LEE: Thank you, Chair Stevens.

18 I just actually wanted to go back to a question
19 that Chair Stevens had asked earlier about - why not
20 put the question about the IEPs right up front on the
21 application, so that parents know that it is an
22 option? And, again, I do think that, as Chair
23 Stevens mentioned, the question of whether those
24 applications are well understood or ,you know,
25 comprehended by a lot of the parents is a separate
issue. But is there an incentive, and I am just...

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2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 46

3 I am not asking this to sound, whatever, you know,
4 suspicious... make it sound... But, I am just very
5 curious, like what is the incentive for not asking
6 that question on the application? Is it because it
7 will sort of open a Pandora's Box, because once you
8 ask that question, there have to be... it triggers
9 something else? Like, then you need to follow up and
10 have resources, and then follow up with the parent...
11 Like, what would be the reason not to ask that
12 question?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I think this is
14 something that we can revisit and discuss. But, the
15 goal of the program is to be as inclusive as
16 possible. I... And again, we can revisit whether
17 this is something to put on the form. I don't want
18 families to feel that it is their responsibility to
19 disclose a disability classification. That is not
20 important in coming to the program. It is an
21 inclusive program, everybody is welcome. What the CBO
22 really needs to know is how can we support your
23 child? There is a lot of information on the IEP that
24 a family probably or may not want to share. There is
25 very personal information about the family; there is
psychosocial information or there can be. I don't

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 47
3 know if we are in a position where we really want
4 to... we welcome a parent. I think what we need to
5 let the parent know, is that we welcome any
6 information that you have, that you want to make
7 available to the program to help them serve the young
8 person better. I don't know if we want to focus on
9 the IEP.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEE: But, I... Okay, so, but that
11 response seems a little counterintuitive to me,
12 because I think in order to be inclusive and serve
13 the students the best way that we can, it is good to
14 have that information available. And they can choose
15 not to answer it. Right? But the fact that the
16 question is there, it triggers, to me as a parent for
17 example, to know, oh, okay, so maybe this is
18 something will provide better coordination or
19 services for my kids in the after school setting. So,
20 I guess I am just... I don't know, I am just... The
21 way I think of it is actually the opposite, is that
22 it would be more informative or helpful to the
23 student. And also to Chair Stevens' point, I worked
24 in nonprofit settings, that is where I spent my whole
25 career, so if I as a social worker am walking into a
classroom, and I don't know that this student has an

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 48
3 IEP that could have been made available if the
4 parents knew about it, I think that would be very
5 helpful for me to know that in terms of how to
6 approach... Because I don't think it is exclusive,
7 meaning that we are not going to accept them. It is
8 just a question of, well, then, how we do better
9 prepare for meeting their needs in the after school
10 setting, right? Or is it... Sorry?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: It is something we
12 could consider... [CROSS-TALK]

13 CHAIRPERSON LEE: Okay.

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: And encouraging
15 families to share all information, including if they
16 think information on the IEP would be helpful, then
17 we would want them to share that.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEE: Okay. Yes, I was just wondering
19 if there was... Because I know the workforce, which
20 actually I will jump into that question, because I
21 know that, for example, in the mental health sector
22 workforce it is a huge issue. I would say it is one
23 of the biggest issues that we have right now, because
24 there is just simply not enough professionals in the
25 field to accommodate the cases and the needs that are
out there. And, so, regarding the struggle to hire

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 49
3 paraprofessionals, and this could be either for DOE
4 or DYCD, but how can you share... Or what is the
5 way, in your opinion, to tackle this? And I guess I
6 am just going to ask a series of questions, because I
7 am just trying to understand what the core issue is.

8 Is it a lack of professionals? In other words,
9 are there currently enough professionals to begin
10 with - paraprofessionals - to accommodate the
11 students that are in the school system now with
12 disabilities, number one. And, I guess my followup
13 question to that is, uh, what is the challenge? Is
14 it the licensing? Is it the pay? Is it both? And,
15 then, if it is the licensing aspect, are there things
16 that DOE can consider to alleviate that challenge of
17 getting more people onboarded? And, so, I just
18 wanted to put that out there in terms of why...
19 Like, where is the roadblock, I guess, the barrier?

20 [PAUSE]

21 DIRECTOR JAFFE: Uh, I am not aware of
22 paraprofessionals able to serve students in After-
23 School Programs. From my understanding is that
24 every... any request for a paraprofessional has been
25 filled. I can certainly take back any concerns or
 specific situations that you may have encountered.

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 50
3 As far as hiring trained staff for the DYCD programs,
4 I will have to defer to Susan, but as we mentioned
5 before we do provide training and support for all
6 of... both new and existing staff in helping to
7 support students with disabilities. And they are...
8 And staff can take advantage of these training
9 programs even when they are not being held in person.
10 We have asynchronous trainings, webinars, that they
11 can take advantage of as well-being

12 CHAIRPERSON LEE: Okay, and, then, I am assuming
13 that... And the process is relatively smooth, so,
14 for example, if there is a DYCD After-School program,
15 they need a paraprofessional, if they reach out to
16 you all, then that is something that they would be
17 able to send over if requested, right? Okay.

18 Okay, so, I am going to transition a little bit
19 to the... Our favorite topic, which I know has been
20 past hearings about the schools buses. So, there are
21 about... Nearly 100,000 students with disabilities
22 who ride city run school buses every day. And it was
23 reported that more than a dozen New York City
24 families of students with disabilities filed a
25 federal lawsuit against DOE for failing to provide
26 them with reliable service. And we know that bus

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2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 51
3 delays for students result in absenteeism, lost hours
4 in the classroom, and after school activities. So,
5 could you talk a little bit about the reason and the
6 cost for these delays in terms of the bus services?

7 DIRECTOR JAFFE: We can't speak to specific
8 instances on behalf of OPT; however, I can say that
9 ,you know, our mission in the DOE is to ensure that
10 students arrive to school safely and on time and
11 ready to learn. And it is unacceptable when that
12 doesn't happen. And they strive to ensure that it
13 happens as little as possible if at all.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEE: For the incidents that you have
15 heard of or do know about, uhm, what has been done to
16 remove some of the barriers that are preventing the
17 students, such as bus paraprofessionals, from
18 participating in their daily educational and after
19 school activities? And have there been any issues,
20 if they need to be transferred from school to another
21 for their school setting versus after school, are
22 there cases where there were issues with the bus pick
23 up and drop off there as well?

24 DIRECTOR JAFFE: That I would have to take back to
25 OPT. You're asking about students being picked up
 from school and then taken to an After-School

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 52
3 Program? I will have to go back to OPT to ask if
4 there have been issues with that. And I know that we
5 are constantly working with our related service
6 agencies and within the Department of Education to
7 ensure that we have a sufficient number of
8 transportation paraprofessionals to support students
9 with disabilities who need them.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEE: Okay, great, thank you.

10 I actually had some questions for MOPD, which I
11 know we have... oh, okay, they're going to swap for a
12 second...

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Hi, good morning, please raise
14 your right hand. Do you affirm to tell the truth,
15 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, before
16 this committee, and to respond honestly to council
17 member questions?

18 EMILY SWEET: [NO MIC] [INAUDIBLE]

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEE: Hello, thank you for joining us,
21 Emily. And I just want to echo what Chair Stevens was
22 saying, which is something that I have brought up in
23 the past Disabilities hearings, which is that we know
24 your agency is severely underfunded. And I think it
25 went up from \$800-something thousand to about \$2.3 or

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 53
3 5 million, which is good, but still not enough. So,
4 you know, given the challenges with the funding of
5 your agency, it is something where I would like to
6 hear more from you on the challenges of the trainings
7 or what we can do to better try to advocate for those
8 trainings. Because the way I see it in my head, and
9 correct me if I am wrong, is that MOPD, you guys are
10 the experts when it comes to a lot of the disability
11 issues in the City, and, so, given that it is a
12 challenge, how do we better streamline this process
13 of perhaps you all overseeing the training, and even
14 having like a "train the trainer" type of model -
15 where if you guys do the training for some of the
16 DYCD staff to better serve the students, then how
17 does... What would you need? I guess is my
18 question. I am kind of going off script a little
19 bit, but what would you need in order to have a
20 better process to be able to train... And this goes
21 also for DYCD and DOE, right? How would you see that
22 relationship better working? What is it that you
23 would need from MOPD in terms of guidance?

23 EMILY SWEET: Do you want to speak to this? Okay,
24 you were looking at both of us. But, I will just say
25 that our agencies have, as Susan testified, have

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 54
3 recently started discussing this and exploring how
4 MOPD can best support DYCD in this process, and also
5 coordinate with DOE. So, these are all things that
6 we are exploring. So, I don't think that we are
7 really have specifics to speak to right now. But, we
8 can report back at some point.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEE: Okay. I mean, are there... I
10 mean, not that you have to go into detail, but what
11 are some of the types of programming that you are
12 thinking about, or trainings, I guess, to improve how
13 the After-School Program can serve the students
14 better?

15 EMILY SWEET: I really don't have any specifics on
16 that. I know that Susan did testify as to making
17 program space accessible is one thing that did come
18 up. But we are certainly open to exploring ,you
19 know, how we can support DYCD in any way.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEE: Okay, great. So, could you
21 elaborate, I know that there are legal protections
22 that youth with disabilities are provided under
23 federal, state, and local laws, so can you elaborate
24 on the legal protections when it comes to
25 participation in After-School Programs and
 extracurricular activities?

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with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 55

EMILY SWEET: So, I think it is pretty well
outlined in the Committee Report, which I just took a
quick look at. But, basically, as was stated in the
Committee Report, federal, state, and local laws
protect youth with disabilities from discrimination
based on their disability, on a record of disability,
or even appearing to have an disability. And the
laws also require reasonable accommodations, which we
have been talking a lot about to be made to enable to
a youth with a disability to participate - if that
can be provided without posing an undue hardship on
the provider.

CHAIRPERSON LEE: And in what you have seen so far
through some of the programming and your feedback,
that maybe you have been hearing from students or
parents, what are some common barriers to
accommodating students under these federal laws in
academic and nonacademic settings?

EMILY SWEET: So, I can't speak specifically to
that today.

CHAIRPERSON LEE: Okay.

EMILY SWEET: I can't.

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with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 56

2 CHAIRPERSON LEE: Would you be able to get a
3 response back to us if we followed up with you? Can
4 you get a response back to us... [CROSS-TALK]

5 EMILY SWEET: Absolutely. Yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEE: Okay.

7 So, this is... I sort of jumped ahead, because
8 my first question was actually the next one. But,
9 let me dig in a little deeper. So, I think you
10 answered the first part of the question, which is
11 currently, it seems like you guys are just starting
12 to talk with DYCD and DOE for conducting any sort of
13 trainings? Is that something you have been doing or
14 not yet?

15 EMILY SWEET: So, we have, uhm, conducted, uh,
16 there was a training for DYCD senior staff, but
17 nothing to my knowledge specifically for providers
18 or... right

19 CHAIRPERSON LEE: Okay. Do you... I mean, I am
20 hoping that this is something that can be included in
21 part of your discussions. Because I know that,
22 especially the provider... On the provider CBO side,
23 they may not have as much training as needed. And,
24 so, if that can somehow be incorporated into that
25

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 57
3 plan, I think that would be great for us to be able
4 to see that.

5 EMILY SWEET: Sure, we will definitely take a look
6 at that.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEE: Okay. Do you also... Do you
8 have a list of providers that serve students with
9 disabilities that you can share with DYCD? And I
10 think this sort of alludes to what Chair Stevens was
11 saying, is that I think oftentimes information may
12 get lost. And, so, if there are parents and families
13 who are part of the After-School Program, is there a
14 way that that could list of providers could easily be
15 shared?

16 EMILY SWEET: So, I believe DOE or DYCD may have
17 testified to a list of providers who had provided
18 assistance, and training, and resources. We can take
19 a look at that list and see if we can supplement
20 it... [CROSS-TALK]

21 CHAIRPERSON LEE: Okay...

22 EMILY SWEET: in any way.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEE: Yes, that was going to be my
24 followup, if you guys can sort of crosscheck each
25 other's lists, because I am sure that there may be
26 some additional resources that we can add on to

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 58
3 there. And, so, if that is something that can be
4 looked at, and then also shared with the families
5 when they apply, that would be great, too. Okay,
6 thank you. I am going to hand it back over to Chair
7 Stevens.

8 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I would like to acknowledge
9 that we have been joined by Council Member Bottcher,
10 Council Member Hanif, Council Member Cabán, and
11 Council Member Mealy.

12 And before I hand it over to colleagues for
13 questioning, I just wanted to go back to bussing
14 really quickly. Because I know that there have been
15 challenges in the past with students who took the
16 bus. And I know that they are not here, but I am just
17 trying to figure out, has the policy been changed?
18 Because I know that a lot of students were not able
19 to participate in after schools, because, if they
20 took the bus, there is a certain time that it has to
21 leave, and, so, a lot of times they would have to
22 leave early. Has that policy been changed? Are
23 students allowed to stay in After-School now, and the
24 buses are picking them up at, like, 5:30? Is that...
25 Have we worked that out? I just wanted to get a
 followup around that - riding the bus.

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with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 59

DIRECTOR JAFFE: My understanding is that
concurrently there are no, uh, contracts with bus
companies to provide service at 5:30.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Mm-hmm

DIRECTOR JAFFE: Uh, if students... for After-
School, they will be provided a Metro Card to be
accompanied home. But, the DOE will fund
transportation home in a form of a Metro Card. And,
my understanding from OPT is that they are looking...
still assessing other possibilities to facilitate
transportation home for students with disabilities.
I understand that this is a need.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yes, because it's
[INAUDIBLE]... [CROSS-TALK]

DIRECTOR JAFFE: and I will make a personal plug
for Access-A-Ride also, that will [INAUDIBLE]...
[CROSS-TALK]

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yes, let's make that plug!
[INAUDIBLE] Access-A-Ride, too. They had one of them
waiting outside the other day. But, yes, I
definitely think that that is really important for us
really look at that. Because I know there are a lot
of students who do take the bus. And, so, parents
then have to decide if they are going to the bussing

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 60
3 service or if their child is going to be in After-
4 School. And, like I stated before, After-School
5 isn't just for kids to hang out or babysitting
6 services, it is actually education enrichment, and we
7 know that students who are in the After-School
8 Program actually do better in school and at life and
9 all of these other things. So, we need to make sure
10 that we are making it truly assessable to all of the
11 students in the City.

12 I have more questions, but I am going to pass it
13 off to my colleagues.

14 Council Member Avilés?

15 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Thank you, Chairs, for
16 this important hearing. Thank you all for being
17 here.

18 I wanted to go back to the discussion around
19 paraprofessionals. I was truly surprised to hear
20 that you were not aware of any para shortage.
21 Because, on the ground, it takes months and months to
22 find a para, and sometimes much longer than that.

23 So, can you tell us how many paras does DOE
24 currently have on its roll? Would you be able to
25 provide the Council with also their distribution
26 across the City by borough?

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 61

3 DIRECTOR JAFFE: Are we speaking about
4 paraprofessionals during the school day?

5 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Yes, and, then, what is
6 available for After-School?

7 DIRECTOR JAFFE: We can come back and give you
8 those numbers.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Great, because I have had
10 a number of children not be able to be served because
11 there are no paraprofessionals for them during After-
12 School time - and including during school which is a
13 huge problem. So, it is shocking to hear that you
14 are not aware of the shortage.

15 DIRECTOR JAFFE: And we can certainly work on any
16 escalation that you have heard of where there is an
17 issue with finding a paraprofessional. Because we
18 also do have a cascade for providing
19 paraprofessionals if there are not ,you know, if
20 paraprofessional isn't available who is a DOE staff
21 member to look to our contract agencies to provide
22 paraprofessionals. So, wherever there is a need, a
23 gap in service, we look to fill it. So...

24 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Right, we would love to
25 see those breakdowns. And also to see, uhm, how many
requests you receive on an annual basis for paras -

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 62
3 both one-to-one paras, and the other
4 classifications...

5 DIRECTOR JAFFE: For After-School?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: For both.

7 I know this hearing is in the context of After-
8 School, and I can come back to the Education
9 Committee and ask you the same question again, but I
10 am going to ask it again for during school and After-
11 School. Both have gaps. We have seen them on the
12 ground all the time. And I am really curious why
13 your presentation does not acknowledge that there are
14 gaps?

15 DIRECTOR JAFFE: And I am sorry for my... if I
16 hesitated before. I got caught when you said for...
17 about requests for paraprofessionals during the
18 school day, because if a student has an IEP, it would
19 be an IEP recommendation, and that is something
20 not... something that would have to be requested
21 separately. [INAUDIBLE]... [CROSS-TALK]

22 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Yes, but we know...

23 DIRECTOR JAFFE: recommendation... [CROSS-TALK]

24 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: We know that children with
25 IEPs have a large amount of mandated services that
 the City are supposed to be providing, that are still

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 63
3 very much unmet on multiple fronts. So, I guess I am
4 reacting to the part where DOE "is not aware" of a
5 para shortage. I am just utterly surprised by that.

6 But, let's move on. In terms of the, uhm,
7 students with disabilities that are enrolled in DYCD
8 contract programs, do we know how many students were
9 either told to move to another program or were not
10 able to be accommodated because of their IEP status
11 or special needs?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I don't have that
13 information. I am not aware of any student who was
14 turned away. I acknowledge that there may be
15 situations on the ground, but I am not aware of any
16 situation like that. I would like, to Ariana's point,
17 would like to hear about situations where the CBO is
18 struggling, especially if there are safety concerns.
19 We can hear about it through Community Connect,
20 through 311, very often issues are escalated from the
21 CBO to the program manager where the DYCD staff
22 person says, hey, we need help with this or someone
23 can reach out to the DYCD ADA coordinator. We are
24 going to continue to make every effort in those
25 instances, to find accommodations to make sure that
 that young person can be successful.

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2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 64

3 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: I appreciate that. I have
4 seen, on the ground, the parents being turned away
5 because the program couldn't reasonably accommodate
6 their child, but they were never offered an
7 optional... offered an option in the Bronx or
8 somewhere that parents couldn't get to with no bus
9 service, and all kinds of other things. So, I would
10 love to maybe follow up around that.

11 In terms of... One thing you mentioned, our DOE
12 partners, was a Parent Bill of Rights. Do you
13 actually provide a Parents Bill of Rights to parents
14 when they are enrolling in these programs so that
15 they that are aware of their rights - proactively?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: That's a question
17 for After-School, right? [CROSS-TALK]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: I guess, our DOE colleague
19 noted the importance of parents [TIMER CHIMES]
20 understanding their rights. So, I was wondering if
21 that is something that is provided with the package
22 of information? For either of you, I guess DYCD, I
23 have seen the packets many times. I have never seen
24 a Parent Bill of Rights anywhere to be found.

25 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I think ,you know,
 through the application process we want to get from

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 65
3 parents, like, where their... where their child's
4 needs are... where their accommodations are. I
5 think that there was a good point lifted up earlier
6 about marketing, making sure we are doing more
7 targeted marketing to students with disabilities.
8 And maybe also we need to do more targeted
9 notification about the opportunities people have to
10 reach out for support... [CROSS-TALK]

11 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Or just their rights.
12 Just offering parents clear articulation of what
13 their rights are upfront, I think would probably help
14 that conversation as well.

15 Chair if I may, just one more... Actually I have
16 a ton of questions.

17 In terms of the training that is provided, can
18 you give us a clearer sense of what the mandated
19 trainings? How often do they occur? So,
20 essentially, what I have... What I see is perhaps
21 one senior staff member at a site has had...
22 received the training. And all of the other youth
23 workers are very untrained. Wonderful people and
24 trying to do the best they can. But, they really
25 don't have the tools that they need in order to
 really successfully engage with children with special

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 66
3 needs. So, could you tell me how the training goes.
4 Is it mandatory? Does everybody get trained? How
5 does the program, DYCD, follow up to ensure that
6 folks are receiving the supports? And do you utilize
7 these District 75 teachers who are truly experts and
8 have an incredible range of tools in these trainings?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: We have relied on
10 our colleagues at DOE to do trainings. New York City
11 Public Schools is probably the best resource we have
12 for doing trainings for providers. If you are an
13 After-School provider who is school aged child care
14 licensed with OCFS, there are mandated trainings that
15 are required, including around behavioral management.
16 And, as I mentioned, throughout the year we will
17 offer a range of training and support through some
18 nonprofit partners as well.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: But, is everybody at the
20 site mandated to be trained? And how often do the
21 follow ups... Like, I am thinking about the youth
22 workers that I have seen engage, and they really had
23 very little ongoing training. And they are the ones
24 who are directly interacting with young people.

25 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Each site, each
 program for their [BACKGROUND NOISE] [INAUDIBLE]

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 67
3 license with OCFS is required to have mandated
4 trainings, yes.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: And how often are they
6 revisited? Is it... And what is that mandated
7 training look like? Is it a two hour online course?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: That's a good
9 question. I know OCFS has a menu of trainings
10 available online for staff to participate in. I don't
11 think that we feel that we are looking to try seek a
12 minimum. We feel responsible to provide ongoing
13 trainings for CBOs to support them in their own
14 efforts to train staff - with DYCD pulling
15 centralized training together just to help facilitate
16 that coordination and reach as many of the staff
17 people in each program as possible.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: So, is it just by zip
19 code? I don't understand what that means.

20 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER ASCHERL: I would add that
21 we encourage... Because the landscape of CBOs is
22 huge, right? There is tons of staff. So, we
23 encourage providers to send at least three staff
24 members by site. The idea behind that is that there
25 is at least some... Because there is turnover, we
 want to make sure that there is some form of

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 68
3 retention. And because we offer trainings

4 throughout, they can rotate around the number of
5 staff that they send to these sessions. But we
6 encourage to send at least three ,you know, more than
7 three people at a time.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Got it. So, I guess... I
9 hear that, and I understand the capacity constraints
10 for the providers. But, at the same time it doesn't
11 offer a good... a basis of quality control for
12 everyone to have a sufficient amount of training that
13 is necessary to really fully competent in the schools
14 and tools. Thank you

15 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you, and I just want
16 to also just mention, I know that when I have had to
17 have some of those difficult conversations in working
18 with my program manager, even with them having a hard
19 time, too, because they understood the limited amount
20 of programs that did provide support for students
21 with disabilities... And, so, you know, we have to
22 really get to a place where we are thinking about how
23 we make sure that there are other options if one
24 program doesn't fit. Because, sometimes it might
25 even just be *that* program and things like that, and
 sometimes we are not giving them options. But, I

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 69
3 would say that my program manager was very diligent
4 around trying to help and support. And even with the
5 families, and a lot of these providers, it is a
6 really hard decision to have to have... To even
7 make the decision around asking a young person not to
8 be in a program. And like I said, that was probably
9 one of the hardest things that I had to do when I had
10 to ask the parents to leave, because it just wasn't
11 safe. But, I think that it also puts the provider
12 and DYCD in a really interesting position, because we
13 are not... We don't have other options. So, we
14 really do need to get to a place where we are
15 thinking about where some of these other options are.

15 Council Member Hanif?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Thank you, Chair Stevens,
17 and thank you so much for being here.

18 I want to understand, going back to one of Chair
19 Stevens' earlier questions about the DOE about the
20 annual report on the D75 After-School Programs. Are
21 you able to share findings at least?

22 [PAUSE]

23 DIRECTOR JAFFE: [NO MIC] [INAUDIBLE]

24 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: That's right. The report
25 was supposed to have been released earlier this

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 70
3 year, and, then, uh, it was shared with us that it is
4 available, but not yet released to the public.

5 DIRECTOR JAFFE: [NO MIC] [INAUDIBLE]

6 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: [INAUDIBLE] your microphone.

7 DIRECTOR JAFFE: I did it again.

8 [LAUGHTER]

9 DIRECTOR JAFFE: When I'm in a team meeting, and
10 I'm talking with mute on for about five minutes.
11 Sorry about that.

12 I will have to go back to... As Jay said, I will
13 have to go back to the Intergovernmental Affairs team
14 and find out what the status is. And, we are going to
15 be getting the report to you as quickly as possible.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Got it. And, then, who
17 would be sort of like available to speak to the
18 Council on those findings? Because it doesn't seem
19 like you are. Is that true?

20 DIRECTOR JAFFE: That is correct.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Okay.

22 DIRECTOR JAFFE: That is correct. And I was not
23 personally involved with the report. I know that it
24 was vetted and signed off on by a number of high
25 level DOE staff members, including Superintendent
 Louissaint. But, I will get the information for you

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 71
3 about who ,you know, who would be the best person to
4 speak to the contents.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: That would be great. I
6 would really like to push on making sure that that
7 report is released before the end of this year, and
8 that findings are shared with us urgently as
9 possible. And if you can put us in touch with the
10 point person at the DOE, that would be really helpful
11 to us. This is really critical, and a number of
12 supported that legislation to ensure that we better
13 understand our learning from the lessons of District
14 75 schools, and can better prepare as we move
15 forward.

16 Uh, I wanted to highlight an elementary school
17 with my district, uh, The Brooklyn New School, which
18 has an active disability awareness club. It
19 encompasses students with disabilities across the
20 spectrum of physical, invisible, uh, ADHD, to
21 developmental and in includes their friends. And I
22 had the honor of recently sitting with me, and even
23 more surprised to witness the teacher who facilitates
24 the club, Kristel Kubart, who is the school speech
25 and language teacher. And she has also, on her own
 accord, a disability activist. And the school at BNS

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 72
3 has been... The club at BNS has been advocating for
4 an elevator. That's why I had come in, they wanted
5 to pitch that project. So, I am trying to... I
6 would like to understand ,you know, as much as we
7 talk about After-School Program being inclusive, can
8 you share any updates on just our work for schools to
9 be much more accessible by students? And what can
10 you share about the progress of ensuring that our
11 schools are physically made to be able to be
12 welcoming, uh, from the front of the gates to inside
13 the halls and the classrooms.

13 DIRECTOR JAFFE: I can certainly bring that back
14 to our Building Accessibility Team who are constantly
15 working to improve the accessibility of both existing
16 and new DOE buildings. And I can back to you about
17 that building specifically. And also the... If you
18 could give me the name of the [INAUDIBLE] I'll get
19 the details from you [INAUDIBLE]... [CROSS-TALK]

20 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: I am happy to share that
21 for sure. I just wanted to make a broader point that
22 the work to make sure that our after school
23 programming is accessible, also should include the
24 conversation of our school buildings being
25 accessible... [CROSS-TALK]

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with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 73

2 DIRECTOR JAFFE: Of course.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: So many are inaccessible.

4 And what I loved hearing from these students at this
5 club was they're sad or they are like... They know
6 that so many students can't be in their school,
7 because of their disability. And to know that these
8 students so compassionately are thinking about those
9 who are not even in their classroom was really
10 touching. But I think it really speaks to the work
11 that needs to be done by our city to ensure that from
12 After-School Programs to the physical buildings, like
13 the urban planning of our schools must change to make
14 sure that students feel like they belong and that we
15 are doing everything in our power as leaders and as
16 school administrators to ensure that that... [TIMER
17 CHIMES]... that future is possible.

18 And a final question, are you able to share just
19 highlights from like an agency perspective, an
20 interagency perspective on schools that are models
21 for students with disabilities? And I know PS 15 in
22 Red Hook was highlighted earlier this year as sort of
23 piloting something that is new and unique, but would
24 love to learn from you sort from you, sort of where
25 are you all learning about how to make our schools

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 74
3 top notch and the best for students with
4 disabilities? And which schools represent those
5 needs? Thank you.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I think that is a
7 great question. And I want to get back to you with
8 some specific examples. But I certainly know that
9 New York City Public Schools and DYCD saw some really
10 beautiful examples in particular in the past couple
11 of summers of students working together on
12 activities. After-School is a great environment.
13 Summer enrichment and After-School is a great place
14 for inclusivity. You can have people of varying
15 levels, varying groups, varying ages coming together
16 to work on an activity with everybody contributing
17 from their own personal skills. So, we have seen
18 some great activities, and I would love to get back
19 to you with specific examples.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: I would appreciate that,
21 thank you so much, thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you, uh, look who's
23 back, Council Member Chi Ossé.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: I have been here all along.

25 Good morning, I have a staffer whose parents used
 to work in special education, and a question that was

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 75
3 raised when we were... When I was getting briefed
4 for this hearing, is how is DYCD helping parents and
5 guardians whose primary language is not English? And
6 how are they helping parents and guardians navigate
7 through getting some of these services?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Thank you for that
9 question, that's a great question.

10 We have ,you know, we have for a parent who is
11 exploring services and discovered DYCD, for example,
12 they can access that platform in multiple languages.
13 We also use the support of the Language Line through
14 Community Connect, so some people can call 1-900-246-
15 4646, get access to, uh, translation supports in
16 many, many languages including emerging languages
17 here in New York City, and, uh, they can use that for
18 a tool for a CBO staff trying to help support a
19 parent to translate, let's say, with a parent, uh, in
20 the example.

21 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I would just like to also
22 plug in that a lot of CBOs hire and should be hiring
23 locally from the community, and a lot of times it
24 reflects the community, so more often than not, they
25 kind of speak the languages. And, so, even, I know
26 for a fact that a lot of the group leaders and youth

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 76
3 leaders often speak multiple languages, and they
4 often have sessions for parents to do the
5 applications. So, I just wanted to plug that in as
6 well.

7 [PAUSE]

8 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Oh, I'm back, hi, guys.

9 [LAUGHTER]

10 I just have a couple more questions to go
11 through. Okay, so, and just to go back to thinking
12 about the programs that are funded, because I know we
13 spoke a little bit specifically that there was an RFP
14 for a programs that was specifically funding students
15 with disabilities. Where is that located at?
16 Because it is apparently not on the DYCD website.
17 So, how do parents make the distinction between those
18 programs and programs that are for general education?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I think to answer
20 that question, we want to be... We're not
21 necessarily distinguishing between programs. All
22 programs - every program, must serve students with
23 disabilities. So, every program on our site is
24 available and open to students with disabilities.

25 [INAUDIBLE]... [CROSS-TALK]

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 77

3 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, then my question would
4 them be... And this goes back to the rate, there is
5 a higher rate for students with disabilities to serve
6 those students. So, then how do we distinguish who
7 is getting a rate for working with those students

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Well that was, as I
9 mentioned, that were groups that were funded through
10 CBOs, so in that case, those contracts allow for
11 additional funding to... To... [CROSS-TALK]

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Right, so that doesn't make
13 sense, then.

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: [INAUDIBLE]
15 supports.

16 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: That doesn't make sense. We
17 just literally said, like you just said, all programs
18 serve these students, but there is a handful of
19 programs that are getting additional funding to serve
20 students with disabilities. So, then, technically
21 everyone should be at this higher rate. Or, then why
22 don't we have two separate RFPs that went out? And
23 this is not at you, this is just thinking, like,
24 this... this doesn't make sense.

25 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I mean, there are...
There are some programs that are more targeted

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 78
3 towards students with disabilities, and they are
4 among that menu of programs. Like, or... It is not
5 only students with disabilities, sometimes it is just
6 students with some special needs... [CROSS-TALK]

7 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Mm-hmm

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Like Children of
9 Promise or InnovateEDU or Children's Aid Society has
10 a program targeted toward students with disabilities.
11 So, I... [CROSS-TALK]

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, how is it different than
13 regular programs? So, what is the difference?
14 Because I... I want to... I am trying to get at...
15 I am confused about this higher rate. Because, what
16 is there to distinguish, if they are all doing very
17 similar work, but they are doing ,you know, maybe a
18 little bit more outreach to that community, what is
19 the difference? And so how do we then distinguish
20 these rates for this. And how many programs were
21 awarded from the RFP to serve students with
22 disabilities?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: There are 64
24 programs.

25 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, there are 64 programs?
26 And what is the rate?

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 79

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: The rate would vary
3 based on what the needs of the program were expressed
4 in their application, in their proposal.

5 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So...

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Varying rates. So,
7 it varies on... Oh, I didn't even know that one. I
8 thought it was one for all. Okay, well, that... So,
9 in the regular RFP, there were no varying rates for,
10 like, you couldn't say, I am going to serve 20% of
11 students with disabilities to get this rate, or it
12 was just two separate RFPs. And, so, when we are
13 thinking about, obviously when we come out with a new
14 RFP - hopefully in the next ten years. I don't know
15 at this point - are we thinking about changing that
16 model, because it just seems disproportionate at this
17 point. I definitely think we are going to welcome
18 input on how to structure models to ensure
19 accessibility across the board. I definitely know
20 that DYCD looks forward to getting input, including
21 from our agency partners about how to structure
22 services and contracts.

23 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Because even thinking about
24 when we you are looking at school buildings, and if
25 you were going... If you are getting a school

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 80
3 contract, if we know that ,you know, that 65% of the
4 students in the school building have an IEP, why
5 wouldn't we think about giving a percentage of...
6 Making sure the designate a percentage of those slots
7 to students, so that ,you know, we can at least to
8 try to even these rate differences and things like
9 that. So, I definitely look forward to giving a lot
10 of feedback for the RFP when it comes out. Because I
11 think that we do need to get to a place where there
12 is equity amongst how we are making sure we are
13 serving these you people, and even when we are
14 thinking about trainings, about how what that will
15 look like, and how do we make sure... Like you said,
16 all programs have it. So, then, how are we making
17 sure that everyone is equipped to be able to serve
18 these young people?

18 I know before, uh, you mentioned that DYCD does
19 advertise to everyone and that it is really
20 inclusive, but how do we... For those 64 programs,
21 how do we pretty much advertise those accommodations
22 and how do we reach out to those parents? What
23 does... how does that advertisement distinguish
24 amongst the other programs... like, from the other
25 programs?

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with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 81

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I think that is a
fair question. Like I said we have ,you know, CBOs
will do their own targeted... [CROSS-TALK]

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Mm-hmm?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: outreach and
marketing campaigns. And if you are working with a
specialized population, your marketing is probably
more targeted and specialized. DYCD really does
generalized marketing about After-School. So, we
don't have a specialized approach. That is something
that we can consider.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay, and, so, just to go
back to your 64, how is this broken down amongst
boroughs?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I can get you the
detail on that. I can get... [CROSS-TALK]

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, because I think that
is going to be really important, because even
thinking about the distinction between boroughs and
which ones have higher IEPs, we need to be making
sure that there are options available across the
City, and not just concentrated in a few places
throughout the City. So, I definitely look forward
to getting that breakdown amongst the boroughs.

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2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 82

3 How many students with IEPs or 504s are currently
4 in DYCD After-School Programs? And does DYCD
5 consistently have a mechanism to track those
6 students?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: No, we don't have
8 that information at DYCD.

9 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, we don't even track that
10 information around how many students we are serving
11 with IEPs and 504s and... So, that is not even
12 tracked?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: No, I think with...
14 And sometimes when we have a partnership program, for
15 example Summer Rising, I was able to share in my
16 testimony early 30,000 of the more than a 110,000 of
17 young people who enrolled were students with an IEP.
18 Because DOE has [INAUDIBLE]... [CROSS-TALK]

19 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Mm-hmm?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: data that can
21 provide that level of detail.

22 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I think ,you know, DOE is
23 still our partner. And even beyond Summer Rising
24 they should still be sharing that information.

25 Because I think it also important for DYCD to have
this information, so that when they are providing

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 83
3 trainings and all of those things they can also be
4 helping providers in that way. So, I think we should
5 not just share information when we are doing
6 collaborative programs, but they should be sharing
7 this information consistently with DYCD.

8 How does DOE include After-School Program
9 providers on their IEP teams? We have heard that
10 this practice is mostly independent on the school and
11 the school's principals. And, so, we know we have
12 these IEP teams, but how are we including them? I
13 know specifically in some of the programs that I have
14 worked in ,you know, some of my directors were on the
15 IEP team, and they would meet with the principals
16 regularly and have these conversations. Because the
17 principal felt like is it was important for them to
18 be a part of this education team for these students.
19 But, this is really dependent upon the principal and
20 that relationship. How are we - I haven't said that
21 in a long time - forcing collaboration? Because I
22 think that in some places it works really well and
23 some places it does not.

24 So, how are we trying to figure out how to have
25 more forced collaboration so that these young people
 can get the support they need?

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2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 84

3 DIRECTOR JAFFE: I think that to the extent that
4 an After-School provider can provide information that
5 is, uh, useful and relevant to the students - the
6 development of the student's IEP, which is you in
7 place during the academic school day, then they can
8 certainly be invited. Whoever is the student's...
9 The case manager for their IEP team, and ,you know,
10 if the parent thinks that that person can provide
11 useful information, they can be... They can join as
12 an optional member for the IEP team.

13 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: One, I think we should not
14 look at the school day ending at 2:30. The school
15 day ends when that child is picked up with their
16 parent - whether that is at 2:30 or 5:30 or 6:00 or
17 whenever that is. And I think that when we start
18 seeing it in that way, the collaboration would be
19 seamed a lot more seamlessly. Because the After-
20 School Program does provide support for these
21 students, and I think that we need to get to a place
22 where we are not seeing them as separate entities.
23 We see it as separate entities, but parents and
24 students do not see it that way. So, especially when
25 it is the school building and it's the After-
School... And most directors are there all day from

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 85
3 9:00 to 5:00 in the school building, and they are a
4 part of the school. And, so we need to think about
5 what it looks like to really make sure that, again,
6 forced collaboration is happening in a way that we
7 are best serving our students.

8 How is DYCD made aware that a student who is
9 enrolled in an After-School Program has a disability
10 that requires behavioral or physical accommodations?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: The family enrolling
12 would share that information with the community based
13 provider or with the program staff, so they can
14 provide accommodations. Sometimes that doesn't
15 happen at the point of allocation. There are a lot
16 of reasons parents don't want to share information up
17 front. They... [CROSS-TALK]

18 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yes, they don't want their
19 kid not to be accepted.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Sure. I think it is
21 much better for everybody involved if that
22 information is shared up front, so we don't have to
23 have safety challenges, as you described, before we
24 make every effort to provide a safe environment, a
25 successful environment for that young person.

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with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 86

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And I think it is even something that Council Member Avilés was saying earlier, that it is important that... When they spoke about parents knowing their rights and things like that, I think having parents know their rights up front, and having an understanding of that that sharing this information doesn't exclude them from the programs. Because, I think a lot of times parents don't include that information, because, they are, like, *Oh, they're not going to be allowed to come*, but realizing that if ,you know, if providers were able to get this information up front, it will be a lot easier to for them to actually accommodate and then work with the school - whether they need a paraprofessional or things like that. And, so we need to be thinking about how we are educating our parents a little bit better about the services that they can get and require. And I think, again, if we have directors on IEP teams and things like that, that is a point of entry where they can be having those conversations and going over those things at the point of enrollment. So, I think we... There is definitely some grace here where we have room to grow

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 87
3 and build this out, so that we can better accommodate
4 our young people in these programs.

5 Providers have shared that sometimes a student
6 with disabilities enrolls in their programs who they
7 cannot reasonably accommodate, are then forced to be
8 released from programs and referred elsewhere. How
9 many students with disabilities enrolled in DYCD-
10 contracted programs, how many of those programs could
11 not reasonably accommodate such students in the 2022
12 to 2023 school year?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I don't have that
14 information. I am not aware of any situation where a
15 young person was turned away. I really think that
16 DYCD is going to... Wants programs to understand
17 that we want to be part of the solution with that.
18 We want to them reach out with us. We want them to
19 access the ADA coordinator. That we really want to
20 play a role. If the provider is struggling to find
21 those levels of support, we want them to reach out to
22 us and see if there are things we can, sometimes
23 together with New York City Public Schools, try to
24 find... to continue to work through those
25 challenges. Like, *we tried this accommodation, this*
 wasn't successful, but this part of it worked, and we

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 88
3 *are going to try this different approach,* that we
4 would love to be supportive to the CBO to figure that
5 out.

6 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, I mean, I could
7 imagine it.. Most CBOs wouldn't want to reach out to
8 say that they could not help a kid, because it seems
9 like it is a failure on their part. Right? So, that
10 is the... And this this a something that I have
11 spoken about a lot before, it does become hard for a
12 provider to come to their funder, whether we like to
13 believe that or not, to their funder and, say, *I*
14 *can't accommodate this kid, it's too hard,* because
15 you are their funder. So, I think there definitely
16 needs to be a firewall around what that looks like
17 and what the process looks like, because it can feel
18 like, *It looks like I am not doing my job, and so I*
19 *don't want to tell my funder I can't do my job,*
20 *because it looks crazy.* But this is happening, and
21 we cannot pretend like it is not happening. And, so,
22 we need to really... This is another place where
23 there is a clear gap. But we need to be tracking it,
24 because we can't help folks if they are not able to
25 really have these conversations. But, I understand
 why they wouldn't, because you're their funder. And

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 89
3 that is kind of a hard conversation. And, so, yes,
4 as much as you want to be supportive, that becomes
5 really hard in those moments. So, I could see why a
6 provider wouldn't say that, but I do think that we
7 need to get to a place where we are tracking this so
8 we better accommodate and support.

9 And does that... Well, you said that you have
10 never heard of this, so you wouldn't be in contact
11 with families who might reach out, who weren't...
12 who ,you know, were asked to leave a program or were
13 not able to be accommodated and what those
14 conversations looked like?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I am aware of a
16 handful of situations where we are trying to provide
17 additional support... [CROSS-TALK]

18 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Mm-hmm, okay...

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: to get the
20 student... So, I am defiantly aware of situations
21 where we are trying to support... Wanda has actually
22 been supporting a program and DYCD has been
23 supporting the family. Do you want to share a little
24 bit about the efforts there?

25 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER ASCHERL: In that
 particular example, uh, I am going to tap in to some

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 90
3 of what Susan shared earlier. There were
4 different... There were multiple points of contact:
5 One, the parent did reach out to our DYCD ADA
6 Coordinator. The provider reached out to me, to the
7 program, and, then, on the ground the provider was
8 navigating... It was one of those situations where
9 they do have a good working relationship with the
10 school principal. And, so the principal was able to
11 kind of figure out, like, okay, let me see, ,you
12 know, yes, and shared some content... Uhm, but the
13 provider is still serving that young person. They
14 are still... They have not turned that young person
15 away. In fact, they have been successfully having
16 positive conversations with the family to talk about,
17 okay, what are the points during the day where there
18 may be triggers? And, so, they have been able to
19 kind of talk through and navigate and learn a little
20 bit more, without the IEP...

21 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Mm-hmm?

22 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER ASCHERL: And is it more
23 contextual, because it's... [CROSS-TALK]

24 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah...

25 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER ASCHERL: because it's
more, like, [INAUDIBLE]. So, then, they were able to

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 91
3 ,you know, they purchased manipulatives, because...
4 you know, the widgets, they have added additional
5 staff to that... It's not a paraprofessional,
6 because some of them just don't have [INAUDIBLE] but,
7 it is an extra person in that space... [CROSS-TALK]

8 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Did you guys provide
9 additional funding for that additional staffer?

10 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER ASCHERL: No, they were
11 able to use it through their existing funds - in that
12 particular example... [CROSS-TALK]

13 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I would say that's nice when
14 you're able to do that, right? Because we know that
15 that's not always the case, and, so, that shouldn't
16 be the expectation either. I'm just saying, you know?
17 Some people can do it...

18 UNKNOWN: [INAUDIBLE]

19 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: because their program ,you
20 know, don't have enrollment, all these different
21 things. But, you know, I think that we shouldn't
22 leave that on the providers to kind of figure out
23 what the additional staff. Especially when it was
24 said that there is not paraprofessional shortage.
25 So, we should be able to get a paraprofessional for
 this young person. So, we should definitely connect

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 92
3 with DOE today, so they can get a paraprofessional,
4 so that they can use that funding for something
5 else. I'm just saying.

6 So, we're almost home; we're almost done with my
7 questions.

8 [LAUGHTER]

9 So, we know that in Summer Rising, the first year
10 with students with disabilities, there were a lot of
11 hiccups. But, I know last year we addressed many of
12 those hiccups. And, so, but, some of the issue is
13 still around the training - the lack of training that
14 was provided. Providers were saying that they were
15 given a two-hour virtual training on aiding students
16 with disabilities. Providers also shared that
17 committees that they had - they did not have hands-on
18 training to learn best practices to engage, educate
19 and discipline students with disabilities.

20 So, can you talk about some of the changes that
21 you made this year around ensuring that staff was
22 prepared to serve those students in Summer Rising?
23 What did those trainings look like? And were those
24 all virtual? Did we bring them in-person this year?
25 What did that look like? So, we can...

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2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 93

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: We... Again, we
4 continue to strengthen our relationship. We did *many*
5 trainings through Change Impact. As I mentioned,
6 like, I can count them up, but roughly a dozen
7 trainings - some in-person at DYCD at 2 Lafayette,
8 some live but virtual, some asynchronous. We offered
9 a lot of training to CBO provider staff. I
10 acknowledge that we have to keep that up. We have to
11 continue to have staff trained. Sometimes you're not
12 seeking out training until you are in a position
13 where you really realize that you need some
14 additional supports. So, we do feel that it is our
15 duty to keep that training ongoing to make sure that
16 staff have the support they need.

17 Also, I want to say that Ariana's team over at
18 DOE, they offered - this was in the Summer Rising
19 Guide available everybody, onsite coaching. I think
20 despite the fact that we said that again and again,
21 it was probably underutilized. There were programs
22 that said, please come out to our site, tell us
23 specifically what this should look like, what
24 approach we should take, help model what we are going
25 to... how we deal with a young person. So, I think
 we acknowledge that it has to be provided in a lot of

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 94
3 different ways, and as we try to strengthen those
4 approaches, we want to make sure that providers know
5 and take advantage of it.

6 DIRECTOR JAFFE: And I think with the on-sight
7 coaching was especially... can be especially
8 valuable, because, as you mentioned earlier, Chair, a
9 lot of the people who staff on the ground, these
10 programs come on board very shortly before the
11 summer... [CROSS-TALK]

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Mm-hmm

13 DIRECTOR JAFFE: starts, and they might not be
14 able to participate in training in May or April or
15 whenever we start rolling out these trainings that
16 mainly go to the program directors who are meant to
17 turnkey it. But, sometimes that doesn't happen, and,
18 so, we really want to make sure that we are targeting
19 the staff that are... you know, the young people
20 that are actually going to be working with these
21 children - and making sure that they have the tools
22 to feel confident and secure in providing the
23 support. And, so, we will continue to strengthen the
24 support that we provide them to make sure that they
25 have all of the tools at their disposal.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, no, definitely. Like I said, for the first year, I know that that was probably one of the complaints that I heard the most - around this surge or population of young people, that they had never served before at that there was this expectation that, *all right, well, you'll just get online*. And it was challenging, and to me it didn't feel safe. Right? And ,you know, because providers are always leading with their heart, and just always want to accommodate people, and it never easy to tell a parent no. And, so, they did it, you know, did it to the best of their abilities. But, I think that we definitely need to make sure that we are consistently looking at this and evaluating it. It was better this prior summer, there were less complaints, obviously. Because I think we were a little bit more prepared. But, I think as we are moving forward, and also understanding that summer is going to look different than it did these last two years, we need to think about how we are going to prepare for those changes and what that is going to look like, and really start to answer some of these questions sooner rather than later. Because it does become very difficult.

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2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 96

3 Those all of the questions that I have. Chair
4 Lee, are you all right? And, so, those are all of
5 the questions that I have. I'll turn it over to now
6 Christina.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, we will now turn to
8 public testimony. We will be limiting public
9 testimony today to three minutes each.

10 For in-person panelists, please come up to the
11 table once your name has been called.

12 For our virtual panelists, once your name has been
13 called, a member of our staff unmute you, and the
14 Sergeant At Arms will set the timer and give you the
15 go ahead to begin.

16 Our first in-person panel will be Nora Moran and
17 Molly Senack.

18 [PAUSE]

19 You may begin when ready.

20 NORA MORAN: Thank you, so much. My name is Nora
21 Moran, I am the Director for Policy and Advocacy at
22 United Neighborhood Houses. We represent New York
23 City settlement houses. I feel like a lot of the
24 points I was going to make have already been made
25 through Q&A, so I am not going to go into too much
detail. Our settlement house providers provide a lot

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 97
3 after school programming in school buildings, in
4 community based settings, we are Summer Rising
5 providers, a provide a whole other host of youth
6 development programs.

7 This is an issue is very important to them. I
8 really glad we are having this program. I think
9 overcall CBOs really want to enter access for youth
10 with disabilities, right? We need to make sure that
11 families who need after school supports can get it.
12 It is often challenging for a lot of the reason that
13 came up in Q&A.

14 We have a couple of things just to highlight.
15 First, in our most recent memory, I think the most
16 intentional effort to include youth with disabilities
17 in after school and summer program was Summer Rising,
18 which was really good. It was a positive thing that
19 families knew this was available to them. It was
20 messaged in the programing and made very public.
21 But, providers often felt like they were very
22 unprepared and did not have the right resources and
23 supports to adequately serve these students.

24 Some of the specific ways that we can improve
25 upon that next year are:

Committee on Youth Services jointly
with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 98

Exploring some way for providers to get access to IEPs. We know that there are a lot of legal concerns, maybe there is some way we can explore asking parents proactively to share that information. But, providers said consistently ,you know, that they didn't know that it was in the IEP of a young person in our programming that maybe they were a runner or had some other kind of issue - a lot of unsafe safety situations, dangerous things. And ,you know, there needs to be some way try and clear that up from the beginning, so we don't wind up with problems down the line.

More ongoing training for providers. We know that there was some training given last year in the spring. We know that there was onsite coaching, which was definitely really helpful for providers who took that up. But, throughout the year ensuring that there is consistent training supports, things that are in person, right? Some times people just learn better when they are not on a Zoom and they're doing 20 other things on a Zoom.

And, then the last thing is really making sure that the DOE has an adequate pool of paraprofessionals. That was something that providers

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 99
3 reported. There just wasn't enough paraprofessionals
4 particularly at the start of the program. And, so,
5 sometimes a young people would go maybe two weeks in
6 before getting assigned a paraprofessional, and it
7 just was not good.

8 We know that DYCD has another RFP coming up, and
9 that is going to be a really important opportunity to
10 explore how to support this population? Some things
11 to explore are making sure that there is the right
12 rates for providers working with youth with
13 disabilities, maybe if there is a specific program
14 that is tailored for students, making sure that is
15 available to the public. I don't know that our
16 providers always know that there are specific after
17 school programs that are designed to serve youth with
18 disabilities. So, making sure that that information
19 is also really public to all providers is important,
20 so that way ,you know, if maybe one provider feels
21 like they can't accommodate [TIMER CHIMES] somebody,
22 they know where to refer folks to. Council can also
23 renew its Autism Awareness Initiative - very
24 important way to support this population. And, the
25 last thing I will just say, is that we are deeply,
 deeply concerned about the mayor's November mod,

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 100
3 which included the PEG, the cut to After-School
4 Programs. There are over 3,500 slots that are set to
5 be eliminated in FY25. We cannot talk about access
6 for youth with disabilities if we can't make sure
7 there is access for all youth to begin with. So, we
8 encourage the Council to look closely at that. Thank
9 you.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEE: Thank you for summing all of our
11 main points for the hearing.

12 MOLLY SENACK: Good morning, My name is Molly
13 Senack, and I am testifying today on behalf of the
14 Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York
15 (CIDNY) as their Education and Employment Community
16 Organizer.

17 The challenge of providing students with
18 disabilities all the related services they are
19 entitled to predates the pandemic. With ongoing and
20 widespread shortages in school psychologists,
21 students and their families struggle to receive the
22 evaluations needed to determine eligibility and
23 placement in related services. The shortages in
24 special education teachers severely limit access to
25 those related services. And the shortages in
 administrators and hearing officers result in

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 101
3 students and their families struggling to obtain the
4 compensatory services they are owed, when the initial
5 related services are not fully provided.

6 While these problems existed before the pandemic,
7 virtual and remote learning greatly exacerbated them,
8 resulting in a 57% drop in special education
9 evaluations, and 24,000 students unable to fully
10 receive services like physical and occupational
11 therapy that are impossible to deliver remotely.

12 After school programs, whether launched by
13 individual schools or centralized, like SEED (Sensory
14 Exploration, Education & Discovery), are designed to
15 fill gaps amid chaos. They provide services that are,
16 for whatever reason, inaccessible during the school
17 day. They may address children's academic needs, they
18 might fill the gaps for therapies the schools cannot
19 provide, and they might address sensory needs that
20 might not otherwise have a designated place within
21 the school system to be addressed to begin with.

22 Many New York City public school families *cannot*
23 *afford* private tutors, therapists, or lawyers to
24 navigate the compensatory service hearings process.
25 These programs are a necessary option for families,
especially as budget cuts and expiring federal funds

Committee on Youth Services jointly
with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 102
forced even greater reductions of what is offered
during the school day. So, that being said, the only
questions we should be asking is how we can support
these programs - not on whether or not they deserve
support, obviously. What that could look like is to
expand initiatives that encourage teachers to enter
the field of special education in the first place.
That way teachers are not at the risk of burning out
as they are forced to work overtime. We need to
improve transportation to and from these programs.
We need to improve communication and transparency
between the providers of these programs and the
parents of the students who will benefit from them.
And we need to make funding available to outside
organizations like, CIDNY, to help provide the
evaluations that will identify students in need of
these programs in the first place. With these
supports, you will be helping to safeguard programs
that ensure that students with disabilities actually
receive an education that is substantive, appropriate
to their needs, and evens the opportunities for
success with their non-disabled peers. [TIMER CHIMES]
Thank you for your time.

Committee on Youth Services jointly
with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 103

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Just really quickly, and I
know... Nora, do you know the programs or the
breakdown for the programs that are specifically to
serve students with disabilities? Because ,you know,
they said it's 64, and I was interested to hear that.

NORA MORAN: I mean, I know of a few that are run
by providers in our network, because I know they
are... [CROSS-TALK]

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yes, yes... [CROSS-TALK]

NORA MORAN: [INAUDIBLE] providers, but beyond,
like, I even learned a couple that were mentioned on
the panel that I didn't know about. And I think,
too... I think it was shared that those were not on
Discover DYCD.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yes, they do not distinguish
on DYCD specifically, which I found fascinating,
especially because they are being paid additional
money to do this. And I don't know why they just are
not mixing them all in like Skittles - pick which
one.

NORA MORAN: Yes, and I know a lot of times
Discovery DYCD is used by providers... [CROSS-TALK]

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Mm-hmm

Committee on Youth Services jointly
with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 104

NORA MORAN: to help families navigate, *let me find you another service or program*, and, so if they are maybe looking for, uh, ,you know, something that is... if they have a child who they can't serve, because it's not a safe setting, how are they going to find somewhere else that might be able to serve this young person if that online access isn't...

[CROSS-TALK]

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yes... [CROSS-TALK]

NORA MORAN: If they are not... if it's not distinguished on Discovery DYCD.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yes, like I said, that was one of the hardest conversations that I had to have when I had to dismiss a student and was not able to provide options. And ,you know, even in the provider network, I know a lot of providers and knew folks, but still didn't know where that could be located. And, honestly, I don't really know what the distinguishing of the programs were. It seemed very similar. It was like they are kind of shuffling the young person to another program. So, just thinking about that. So, definitely, I am interested to see that when the next RFPs come out how we ensure that ,you know, if we know that the school has a high

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 105
3 number of students with disabilities and IEPs, why
4 are we not then setting aside specific numbers, so
5 that we can do things like they said, oh, yeah, they
6 were able to provide another support in the room.
7 Yes, sometimes that is the case, we might need more
8 support. But that is not fair for the onus to be on
9 the provider. It should be a part of the contract.
10 But, those are the questions I had.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEE: First, thank you, Nora and Molly
12 for both being here. And I love everything that both
13 of your organizations do. And thank you for
14 everything and all of the services you provide for
15 the City. We are very grateful.

16 Just out of curiosity, just based, I don't know
17 how much you both heard about, uh, from the earlier
18 part of the hearing, but one of the questions that we
19 were asking the agencies was around the
20 paraprofessionals. Because, I think they were saying
21 that they had an adequate amount. But, then,
22 according to ,you know, a lot of the testimony and
23 what Council Member Avilés' question was around, is
24 there does not seem to be enough and the wait time is
25 extremely long. I am just wondering, based on your
 experiences and what you are hearing from your

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 106
3 families and providers. How is... There seems to be
4 a discrepancy.

5 MOLLY SENACK: There is a dearth of
6 paraprofessionals. There are not enough
7 paraprofessionals. There are not even close to an
8 enough paraprofessionals. Parafessionals are not
9 paid enough. And, so, often times, also, you're
10 not even necessarily attracting candidates who are
11 going to care enough, because the ones who do care,
12 and the ones who are doing it because they care,
13 are likely going to be forced out. I can't
14 remember the exact number, but I know that Council
15 Member Avilés has a resolution for a prevailing
16 wage during in which she mentions that something
17 like 75% of paraprofessionals who are planning to
18 leave the profession are doing so because they are
19 underpaid. And, frankly, these numbers are going
20 to get worse, because a part of the push to
21 encounter more people to enter the field of Special
22 Education, is creating a better pipeline to get
23 more paraprofessionals into teaching positions.
24 Which, obviously, great, we love to see more
25 Special Education teachers, but you don't want to
take from... [CROSS-TALK]

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 107

2 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Right.

3 MOLLY SENACK: one supply in order to fill
4 another.

5 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: It is so interesting when
6 you even say that. Because, it is like a pipeline
7 with their... even the After-School folks, they
8 literally pull from that pool and pull them into
9 the paraprofessional, that then pulled them into
10 teaching. And, so, it is this weird line that we
11 have going, where everyone is just, like, oh, okay
12 that's great. Because, I know I lost a lot of my
13 youth educators to become paraprofessionals,
14 because it is more than what we can pay and it is
15 more hours.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEE: And, then, one of other
17 quick... Oh, I'm sorry, go ahead, sorry.

18 NORA MORAN: I can't speak to September to June
19 8:00 to 3:00 whether there is a shortage there, but
20 for our providers, the biggest place they come into
21 contact with paras is during Summer Rising or has
22 been in the past few years. And they have shared
23 there that there are not enough paraprofessionals.
24 And I think the big challenges for youth who only
25 have an IEP for the school year and not a 12-month

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 108
3 IEP, so, then those young people, if they go into
4 Summer Rising, would need a paraprofessional assigned
5 to them, and those are the ones who are waiting
6 awhile. And last year, it was very uneven in terms
7 of access. Some folks were matched right away, other
8 youth had to wait. And, so, having an adequate pool
9 is really important. Everything you said about,
10 like, creating a professionalization at these
11 careers, right, that we want people to start in them.
12 It's a good job, grow to ,you know, maybe move on to
13 maybe be a teacher at some... But, we have to make
14 sure that we are not just robbing from the pool of
15 lowest paid workers, and not replenishing that.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEE: Just a really quick question,
17 because in here is says the 50... The 57% drop in
18 special education evaluations, that seems like a lot.
19 And that was due to ,you know, the virtual and remote
20 learning, which greatly exacerbated... It
21 contributed, it was already there, but it
22 contributed. So, has that gone back up to more
23 normal-ish numbers?

24 MOLLY SENACK: There has been a slight uptick
25 since the first year of the pandemic. However, as I
am sure everyone here is aware, with the expiring

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 109
3 federal funds, a huge part of what that \$7 billion
4 was going to was the school psychologists. And now,
5 that, unless more funding, unless there is a way to
6 replenish that funding, either at the city level or
7 the state level, those psychologists are going to be
8 cut *again*. Which means that not only are we going to
9 lose any momentum we gained in fixing a problem that
10 was exacerbated during the pandemic, we are going to
11 be going... We are going to be going even further
12 backwards. The problem is going to get worse, not
13 better.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEE: Correct me if I am wrong on
15 this, but is it... Is it only, my question I guess
16 is, is it only psychologists, or is it any mental
17 health professional that can do the evaluation?

18 MOLLY SENACK: That is a great question, it does
19 not... [CROSS-TALK]

20 CHAIRPERSON LEE: Psychologists are hard to come
21 by. That's why...

22 MOLLY SENACK: They are... [CROSS-TALK]

23 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: A lot of schools share them,
24 I thought that with school psychologists...
25

Committee on Youth Services jointly
with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 110

MOLLY SENACK: It does not have to be a school
psychologist, but obviously the problem is what
families have access to.

CHAIRPERSON LEE: Right.

MOLLY SENACK: And, so, having an additional
person within the school system who is able to
provide those evaluations and is able to help
families... They can get an evaluation from a number
of different professionals. It is just about what
families have access to. And the point is that even,
like, schools are going to be cutting a lot of those
professionals. They are cutting social workers.
They are cutting therapists. They are cutting school
psychologists. They are cutting nurses.

CHAIRPERSON LEE: Yes, and that is something I
know on the Council last year and the year before,
those were things that we really fought hard to make
sure that were fully funded. And it was crazy,
because I think at some point - when we were talking
to DOE during one of the hearings - they had not yet
met their numbers, and all of a sudden, in a few
months, they all of the sudden had mental
professionals in all the schools. Which seemed like
a little of a reach to me. But, then, I know that

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 111
3 they do share, because at my son's school, for
4 example, they have the social worker there who goes
5 to two or three different schools during the week.
6 So, I know that they have that model, but still I
7 guess it is better than not having one at all. That
8 is something we need to look for with the budget cuts
9 coming up.

10 MOLLY SENACK: Yes, with the fixes they found are
11 still imperfect.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEE: Right.

13 MOLLY SENACK: And the fact that ,you know, it is
14 always very difficult to remember what having a
15 stuffy nose feels like when you can breathe clearly.
16 And, so, because the programs are imperfect, I think
17 a lot of people are not realizing how bad it is going
18 to get once those are gone.

19 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, I know that DOE talked
20 about today that they were not aware of a
21 paraprofessional shortage, and that if families need
22 them, that they can get one for After-School. And
23 today they made it seem very easy like you can just
24 call, and they will say, *all right, the*
25 *paraprofessional is on their way.* I mentioned here
that I ran after school for over 12 years, and that

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 112
3 in that 12 years I only a paraprofessional one year
4 and that was it. I ended up having to hire them,
5 because I needed to keep them on, because DOE
6 wouldn't. So, can you guys talk to me a little bit
7 about what... around programming and debunking that.
8 Because, I am know I'm not crazy. There have not
9 been... That hasn't been an easy process to get
10 paraprofessionals in the After-School Program. And I
11 know I am not crazy, but it seemed like I was.

12 [LAUGHTER]

13 MOLLY SENACK: What I will say is that oftentimes
14 the... And a lot of these stories are anecdotal
15 rather than data based, just because a lot these
16 [INAUDIBLE]... [CROSS-TALK]

17 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Because no one is tracking
18 it...

19 MOLLY SENACK: No one... [CROSS-TALK]

20 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And it is intentionally not
21 being tracked, which we got to today.

22 MOLLY SENACK: Yes, exactly. So, a lot of what we
23 hear parents and students talk about is the fact that
24 usually After-School Programs are tailored to the
25 student's needs based on what the school has rather
 than based on what the student needs... [CROSS-TALK]

Committee on Youth Services jointly
with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 113

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: The student's needs, yes...

MOLLY SENACK: Exactly. And, so, again, I am
just speaking anecdotally, I cannot speak for what
the official process is if a school does not have a
paraprofessional, then whether or not the student
needs one, they will not be able to offer a
sufficient number of paraprofessionals.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yes, I mean, like I said,
anecdotally, I know that this is true.

[LAUGHTER]

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Because I experienced it.
And I am, like, did something change in the last two
years? And I don't think it has.

NORA MORAN: I would say that before this hearing
we asked a lot of our providers, what does this look
like for you? And I it was think very similar to
your experience when you were a provider. Sometimes
it happened, but rarely... not... And I think
over... I mean, the thing we heard from our
providers overall is that with school year, After-
School, with Summer Rising, the really biggest
variable is your relationship with your principal.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Mm-hmm.

Committee on Youth Services jointly
with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 114

NORA MORAN: And, so, if you have that solid
relationship with your principal and school
leadership, support for all students, but especially
for students with disabilities, is to going to look a
lot better than in schools where that relationship is
not as strong, or maybe it is just nonexistent. And,
so, yes, I mean, I don't... That has not been what I
have heard from our providers. Not has not
necessarily been their experience. Three o'clock
comes, this child needs a paraprofessional, you call
up and the person is there right away. It has not
been like that.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: The way that they mentioned
it, it seemed very seamless and effortless. And I
was just, like, what? Am I crazy?

[LAUGHTER]

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, I'm not, thank you.

NORA MORAN: Right, but, it also... You know,
our providers shared that sometimes they are just not
equipped to serve... [CROSS-TALK]

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yes.

NORA MORAN: youth with disabilities in After-
School, especially.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yes.

Committee on Youth Services jointly
with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 115

NORA MORAN: And, so, we have to refer families
elsewhere. And, so... [CROSS-TALK]

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: The referring elsewhere also
always gets me, because no one knows any of these
programs. And, honestly, they seem like the same
program.

NORA MORAN: Yes. So, right, and referring
elsewhere isn't necessarily going to be like, *I am*
referring to this other COMPASS provider. It might
be trying to explore - I don't know what other kinds
of supports you might be able to find for a young
person. But it is hard. There is not really a lot
of support out there for these families.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yes, that has been my
experience. And, like, I had mentioned before, this
is one of the things that I think we don't talk about
enough. And it has been in the closet for a while.
And I definitely want to make sure we continue to
explore this topic. But, I don't have any more
questions for this panel. Thank you guys so much, I
really appreciate you being here, it's very helpful.

PANEL: Thank you

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: That concludes our in-person
testimony. We will now transition to remote

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 116
3 testimony. And our first virtual panelist will be
4 Niisa Jones. You may begin when the sergeant starts
5 your clock.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

7 NIISA JONES: Hi, my name is Niisa Jones, I am a
8 student at the CUNY School of Public Health, and I
9 just wanted to steer your attention to a different
10 issue, more so the [INAUDIBLE] state children in my
11 neighborhood. The battle against childhood obesity
12 has been an ongoing one in the United States as
13 health agencies, political officials, and community
14 activists work together in order to develop policies
15 to tackle the phenomenon head on. Overwhelming
16 amounts of research has proven that the main driver
17 of preventable illness from diet related diseases and
18 premature death in children and young adults, is the
19 over consumption of sugary beverages that are high in
20 calories, unhealthy foods, and a lifestyle that lacks
21 physical activity, and the use of misleading and
22 predatory marketing. The food industry exerts a heavy
23 influence on the physical and social environment
24 where children spend most of their free time,
25 including social media spaces, that is influencing
them to make unhealthy nutritional choices on a

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 117
3 consistent basis, both inside and outside of the
4 school settings.

5 The childhood obesity epidemic in the United
6 States has been on a steady climb for the last two
7 decades, with children of Black and Latinx
8 communities being disproportionately affected with
9 15% to 19.4% of the children in New York are
10 overweight, and an additional 22% to 27% are
11 considered obese. While children do not maintain to
12 ability to decipher between marketing that is factual
13 and those that are not, and while it is inherently
14 the responsibly of parents and guardians to enforce
15 healthy practices, it is very hard for parents to
16 compete with the compelling and illuminating
17 advertisements that are constantly being presented to
18 their children in and out of their presence. So, as
19 technology advances, the ways in which big food
20 companies connect to their children also advances,
21 thus making it harder for both children and parents
22 to identify. Introduced by Assembly Member Karines
23 Reyes, there is currently a bill under review, Bill
24 84224-B (sp?), that provides enforcement and provides
25 a private right of action. The program helped to
 receive recommendations from the Department of

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 118
3 Agriculture, Health and Human Services, and the CDC
4 in order to promote nutritional education in the
5 household and in After-School Programs, and prompt
6 regular physical activity.

7 I would like for you guys to all consider
8 supporting the bill. And as it gets into the state
9 level, it will help to discourage the [INAUDIBLE] of
10 false food marking across New York State, and
11 encourage healthier lifestyle choices by youth. I
12 hope to gain community and policy support in order to
13 help with the fight to eradicate childhood obesity.
14 Thank you.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

16 We have two more virtual panelists signed up, but
17 I am not sure if they are on, so I will just call
18 their names.

19 Diane Colonna and Tamine Ula (sp?)?

20 [NO RESPONSE]

21 [PAUSE]

22 We are just going to pause for a brief five
23 minutes.

24 [PAUSE]

25

Committee on Youth Services jointly
with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 119

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I would like to acknowledge
Council Member Williams, thank you for joining us,
and apparently, she has a comment.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you, Chairs. I
just wanted to talk about the fact that I do have a
staffer, who was part-time for pretty much a year,
and she was a paraprofessional. And she was very
stressed out and burnt out, and decided to come work
with me fulltime. So, it is very real. And she is
still very traumatized from being a paraprofessional.

[PAUSE]

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, that concludes our
virtual testimony. If we have missed anyone who would
like to testify virtually, please raise your hand,
and I will call on you in the order in which you have
raised your hand. Seeing no one else, I would like
to note that written testimony, which will be
reviewed in full by committee staff, may be submitted
to the record up to 72 hours after the close of this
hearing by emailing it to testimony@council.nyc.gov.

I will now turn it back to the chair for closing
statements.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Like, I have mentioned a
number of times today, this hearing was very near and

1 Committee on Youth Services jointly
2 with the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction 120
3 dear to me, because when I was a provider this was
4 something that I did not feel like was being
5 addressed. And even from today's hearing, I think
6 there is so much work to be done at making sure that
7 we are providing support to students with
8 disabilities - to receive After-School support and
9 also that we are making sure that the providers are
10 adequately trained and staffed in order to provide
11 this service. Like, I said, there is a lot of work
12 to be done, and I think that we are going to continue
13 to work with DYCD, DOE, and MOPD to really think
14 about how we are going to dig in to provide a service
15 that should have been provided for all of these
16 years. So, I look forward to the continued
17 collaboration with Chair Lee - thank you for your
18 hard work, as well as all committee staff.

19 This is the conclusion of this hearing. However,
20 not the conclusion of this topic, and we will
21 continue to work to ensure that students with
22 disabilities have the same access as all students
23 throughout the City. So, thank you everyone who was
24 here. And, with that, I conclude this hearing.

25 [GAVEL SOUND] [GAVELING OUT]

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 December 13, 2023