

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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Thursday, September 18, 2025

Start: 1:06 P.M.

Recess: 4:04 P.M.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - 8th Floor -
Hearing Room 1

B E F O R E: Hon. Althea Stevens, Chair

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Rita C. Joseph

Linda Lee

Julie Menin

Chi A. Ossé

Nantasha M. Williams

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

A P P E A R A N C E S

Susan Haskell,
Deputy Commissioner for Youth Services
Department of Youth and Community Development
(DYCD)

Denice Williams,
Deputy Commissioner
Department of Youth and Community Development
(DYCD)

Daniel Guillen,
Assistant Commissioner
Department of Youth and Community Development
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Chelsea Baytemur,
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Greater New York

Annie Minguez,
Vice President of Government and Community
Relations at Good Shepherd Services

Sarah Jonas,
Vice President of the Youth Division at
Children's Aid

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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

Faith Behum,
Manager of Government and External Relations at
UJA-Federation of New York

Nora Moran,
Director of policy and advocacy at United
Neighborhood Houses

May DePierro,
Policy Associate at Advocates for Children of New
York (AFC)

Paula Magnus,
Deputy Director of Northside Center
for Child Development

William Jourdain,
Executive Director of Woodside on the Move (WOTM)

Jenny Ingber,
CEO and Founder of Chess in the Schools

Martha Soriano,
Student Participant at the Center for Family Life
Afterschool Program

Shanon Shaw,
Vice President for Strategic Partnerships at
HeartShare

Karen Jolicoeur,
Executive Director of Creative Art Works

Kimberly Olsen,
Executive Director NYC Arts in Education
Roundtable

Hannah Allen,
Program Director and Center for Family Life-
Sunset Park

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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

Jahad Hoyte,
Director of External Affairs at ExpandedED Schools

Whitney Thomas Toussaint,
Parent of Students in District 30—Western Queens

Nicole Touzien,
Executive Director at Dancewave

Christopher Leon Johnson,
Self

Jamie Ehrenfeld,
Director of Education at Belongó Afro Latin Jazz
Alliance

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

SERGEANT YEARWOOD: Good afternoon, this is a microphone check for the Committee on Children and Youth. Today's date is September 18, 2005 (sic) (***Transcription Note: September 18, 2025**), location is Hearing Room 1, recorded by Janelle Yearwood.

(PAUSE)

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good afternoon, and welcome to today's New York City Council Hearing for the Committee on Children and Youth. At this time, we would like to ask everybody to place all electronic devices on silent.

If you wish to participate in today's hearing, please fill out an appearance card with the Sergeant at Arms.

Moving forward, no one is to approach the dais unless you have been called.

Chair, we are ready to begin.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Good afternoon, I am Council Member Althea Stevens of the New York City Council's Committee on Children and Youth. I want to thank everyone for joining us for today's hearing on *Afterschool Expansion and the Department of Youth and Community Development's Concept Paper*.

In April 2025, Mayor Adams announced a \$331 million investment towards the mayor's vision of After-School for All, with a commitment that will grow afterschool funding to \$755 million annually to add 20,000 new seats for K-8 students over the next three years. This is a celebration. Our charge is to make sure the pace of this expansion is evaluated, whether rates are adequate, and to assess DYCD's readiness to effectively oversee this ambitious growth.

Today's oversight hearing will examine DYCD's recently released content paper and proposed framework for the forthcoming RFP. We will consider providers' concerns that the new rates do not support qualified programming, staffing needs, or inflationary costs.

As we look at these plans for expansion, it's important to reflect on how decisions are being made and who is included in the process. I was disappointed that just days ago, before this hearing, the Administration announced the creation of a new Commission on Universal afterschool. While the Commission includes many respected leaders, it was formed without meaningful input from parents and

frontline staff. This is a missed opportunity to engage families who will be directly impacted.

This hearing is particularly timely as the school year has just begun. Families are once again juggling school schedules, work responsibilities, and the high cost of raising children in New York City. Afterschool is not a luxury. They are a lifeline. They help make our city more affordable and livable for families, while offering students safe spaces for academic support, enrichment, recreation, and social and emotional growth, which should be available to all students, not just some.

While our focus will be on COMPASS and SONYC, I want to raise my concerns that we have not seen investments in Beacons and Cornerstone programs in years. Those programs are a major part of the afterschool ecosystem, and I want to uplift them as part of this conversation. A major misstep will be to continue not to address the issues and the isolation of programs, instead of including and looking at the entire ecosystem as a whole.

Our goals today are to evaluate the design of COMPASS and SONYC to understand where

improvements can be made and to ensure programs operate at their full potential. Strengthening afterschool programs is essential not just for parents seeking support, but for the future of our city and children.

I would like to thank the committee staff for their hard work in preparing for this hearing, Policy Analyst Elizabeth Arzt, and Committee Counsel, Christina Yellamaty, as well as the entire A-Team back in District 16.

And with that, I will turn over the committee staff to-- the committee counsel to swear in the Administration.

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

(PANEL AFFIRMS)

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. You may begin.

(PAUSE)

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: (UN-MIC'D)

(INAUDIBLE) the Committee on Children and Youth,
thank you, Daniel.

I am DYCD Deputy Commissioner for Youth
Services Susan Haskell. I am joined by Deputy
Commissioner Denice Williams and Assistant
Commissioners Daniel Guillen and Jessica Raithel. We
are pleased to discuss the COMPASS afterschool
program and our plans for its expansion.

As Commissioner Howard discussed in the
May Executive Budget Hearing, the COMPASS afterschool
program, which launched 20 years ago with an initial
investment of \$47 million, will grow to a record \$755
million program, with DYCD serving about 184,000
total youth by Fiscal Year 2028. On May 30, DYCD
released a Concept Paper that included details about
the expected program design.

For the benefit of the Committee, I will
share some background about the history of the
program. COMPASS, which was formerly known as the
Out-of-School Time (OST) Program, is comprised of
over 890 programs serving young people enrolled in
grades K-12. OST was the forerunner to COMPASS in
2014, which included a major expansion in programming

for middle school youth, renamed SONYC (School's Out New York City). COMPASS is offered at no cost to families and operates in public schools, community centers, and other locations such as private schools and public housing sites.

Through community-based organizations, COMPASS offers high quality programs that have a balance of enrichment activities, including recreation, creative arts, STEAM, and social-emotional learning to support and strengthen the overall development of youth. COMPASS aims to help young people build skills to support their academic achievement, raise their confidence, and cultivate their leadership skills.

This concept paper is a commitment to the investment made by the Adams Administration and is the precursor to the RFP that will be released this fall. This expansion plan began with an immediate \$21 million investment in Fiscal 2026 that will bring 5,000 additional K-5 seats online this fall. COMPASS funding will grow to \$102 million in Fiscal Year 2027 and \$36 million by 2028. The plan will also raise provider rates starting in Fiscal Year 2027, with the new RFP awards, to stabilize the non-profit

organizations operating COMPASS programs and to better support the workforce that serves New York City's children.

The Concept Paper proposes to raise the price per participant to \$6,800 for year-round elementary programs and \$3,900 for school year SONYC middle school programs. The Concept Paper also proposes to add program features, including: Social and Emotional Learning, Introduction to Career and College options, Mentoring and Life Skills, and Mental Health Support. The Concept Paper emphasizes inclusion to ensure that youth with special needs can fully participate in enriching and supportive programs alongside their peers. We are grateful to the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, along with disability advocates and subject matter experts. Their collaboration helped make this historic investment possible and informed the Concept Paper.

Between May 30 and July 11, DYCD conducted a robust stakeholder engagement process on the Concept Paper. DYCD facilitated 14 feedback sessions with 272 stakeholder attendees, including providers, advocates, arts organizations, parent

1 leaders, and most importantly, the young people
2 themselves. We also appreciated the opportunity to
3 engage this Committee. Additionally, DYCD received
4 567 submissions of written feedback. DYCD carefully
5 reviewed the feedback, and we intend to incorporate
6 stakeholder input into the RFP that will be released
7 this fall.

9 Earlier this summer, DYCD announced the
10 initial 40 program sites of this expansion,
11 prioritizing underserved communities, including New
12 Yorkers with disabilities or living in high need
13 neighborhoods. In consultation with NYC Public
14 Schools (NYCPS), DYCD utilized a data-driven approach
15 to select elementary schools for expansion.
16 Considered were schools without a DYCD-funded
17 program, schools with high economic need, and schools
18 in communities with geographic service gaps. The new
19 sites, on average, have larger concentrations of
20 students with high economic need than our existing
21 COMPASS portfolio and schools citywide. After these
22 criteria were met, DYCD selected experienced COMPASS
23 partners with the capacity to provide services this
24 Fall. We will follow the same process to site the
25 additional 10,000 slots for fall 2026. COMPASS

programs are complemented, as you noted, by our 92 Beacon and 100 Cornerstone afterschool programs in community centers.

Finally, we were pleased that on August 29th, Mayor Adams signed Executive Order 54, creating the Commission on Universal Afterschool. The Commission will bring together cross-sector leaders from community-based afterschool providers, advocacy groups, philanthropy, and the business sector to develop a strategy to deliver a universal afterschool system that is sustainable in the long term and ensures non-profit organizations have the tools they need to hire and train staff and deliver quality programming. We thank the members of the Commission, led by Chairs Grace Bonilla and Dennis Walcott, and Executive Director Michael Nolan, for helping achieve "After-School for All."

Thank you once again for the opportunity to provide details on this historic investment in afterschool programs. We appreciate the strong support of the Council and the Committee in achieving this important milestone. We are pleased to answer your questions.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you, Susan,
for keeping that short and sweet. And we're going to
jump right into questions, but I would like to
acknowledge my colleagues who have joined us. We have
Council Member Rita Joseph and Dr. Council Member
Nantasha Williams.

I'll jump right into some questions. How
did DYCD determine where to open new afterschool
sites? Is this based on school or neighborhood data,
or surveys, or were there surveys to determine this?
And can DYCD explain-- Could DYCD make public how
they will choose sites for the additional 10,000
slots to be produced by the RFPs?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Yes. I will
also open the question up to my colleague, Daniel
Guillen, starting initially to say we looked at every
single public and charter elementary school in
considering how to allocate these seats, and then
followed the data-driven approach I described. Daniel
can share more details.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GUILLEN: As part
of that data-driven approach, we looked at the
Economic Need index provided by New York City Public
Schools, which determines the likelihood of students

that are in poverty and is calculated by using the HRA eligible or young people living in temporary housing, uh, and looking at school population, looking at existing service gaps, identifying schools with limited or no DYCD funded afterschool programs, uh, school readiness, space availability, and administrative support to ensure a streamlined approach to the startup of a strong afterschool program and ensuring that we were addressing geographic gaps, taking into consideration the entire COMPASS portfolio.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I know some of the, I guess, critiques or issues, or when I was like talking to providers, some of them didn't even know that folks were like starting or whatever. How did you make this public so that not only could providers know, but other folks could know as you were rolling this out? I know I received a couple of calls when some were opening up, but it wasn't-- it didn't seem like it was, like, really streamlined. I know it was a fast turnaround, but that was my criticism. But you know...

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I mean to start, upped (sic) a page on the web,

nyc.gov/afterschool, which detailed, by borough, the new 40 sites would be... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: When did you--When did that get uploaded?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I would say the day of the mayoral announcement, which was a couple of months ago: nyc.gov/afterschool.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And you upload-- and they had the providers that were already chosen and the schools that you were going to be in when the announcement was made?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: At that time, we knew the schools, and we hadn't finalized the providers. Now, if you go to Discover DYCD, you can find those sites with their CBO provider.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: That's interesting, because some of the providers didn't even know that, so... So, we have to figure out how to make sure we are processing that information publicly and spreading it out.

Will new center-based sites be explored in an additional-- in addition to school-based sites?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: How will DYCD procure the 5,000 additional slots to be added in FY 2028? Will this be part of the formal procurement process? If not, why aren't those slots included in the formal procurement process in FY 2027?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Well, two things I think. In the first case, we really want to get this procurement out. We're working on, you know, the fastest schedule that we feel is reasonable and that will initiate new programs in Fiscal Year 2027, the funding for those additional 5,000 doesn't start till FY28. So we'll include the 5,000 from this fall, the 10,000 from next fall, into the RFP for awards for that fall. The final 5,000 will be allocated-- at that time, we will be able to reassess where changing needs are, uh, changing demands, we'll have a better sense of what demand is at the new sites that we've upped, and I think we'll have a fresh opportunity to look at allocation.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. I would like to acknowledge that Council Member Linda Lee has joined us.

How will DYCD ensure that the smaller community based organizations, who often have the

1 deepest, closest ties but the least financial
2 flexibility, are not pushed out of the system under
3 this new contract and cost structure?
4

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I think this
6 is, you know, one of the main goals of releasing an
7 RFP and allowing competition for our hundreds and
8 hundreds of COMPASS sites, is from the smaller
9 organizations we've heard from who said we want to be
10 part of this. And it had just been a really long time
11 prior to this administration's commitment to allow
12 for competition. So we've been working together with
13 MOCS (Mayor's Office of Contract Services), and I
14 know my colleagues in Planning and Evaluation may
15 have some details to share, but to ensure that people
16 are prepared for doing applications in the system,
17 and that we can encourage as much competition as
18 possible. Do you want to add anything specific?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: The only
20 thing I would add is that we have invested in-- I
21 oversee the Capacity Building Team, and we've been
22 proactively reaching out to small and emerging
23 organizations, some of whom are part of our portfolio
24 through discretionary or the Crisis Management
25 System, and promoting this opportunity, bringing in

MOCS to do-- had to create an account and some other issues, well, you have to be preregistered in order to apply. (BACKGROUND NOISE) So, we have been internationally...

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Reaching out to, uh, (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: What does the outreach look like? Have you just, like-- because, I know, honestly, uhm, obviously, like you said, most of the discretionary goes through DYCD, so you have some type of relationship, but what did that outreach actually look like?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Uh, going to contractor meetings for the discretionary or the Crisis Management System. We are actually about to do what I call "Road Shows" in the boroughs. We have a webinar that happened yesterday that 120 folks signed up for. And the outreach went to anybody in DYCD's portfolio, plus MOCS, who has a much bigger list than we have--that was like getting ready for this opportunity. And not just programmatically, like organizationally, are you ready? And inviting folks

to the robust capacity building offerings that we have.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I would just offer up, which I do all the time, we have 51 council members who are also on the ground, so use us. I think this is a good opportunity and moment where you guys could have reached out, as you're doing the capacity building and reaching out to organizations. There are a lot of organizations that we just kind of know offhand, who I know myself, I get outreach about, especially this RFP, all the time, but I'm sure my colleagues do as well. And so, whatever information you have about this with the outreach, please send it to us so that we can send it out to all the council members, so that as this thing is growing and rolling out, we can also be in-- have an active part in the work as well.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Will do.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Given the Administration's commitment to expanding afterschool access, why aren't Beacon or Cornerstones part of this rollout and the expansion? Because it's essentially, you know, talking about expanding, not just afterschool, but the enrichment universe. And I

1 feel like it-- one of the things that I'm struggling
2 with is like, we talk about all these things in
3 silos, right? So we've been talking about early
4 childhood for the last four years and how that needs
5 to be universal. Now we're talking about afterschool.
6 And we're talking about-- all these things are
7 connected, right? So if the kids are out of early
8 childhood, they need childcare, at some point,
9 they're going to need to go to afterschool, and at
10 some point, they're going to need to have some type
11 of workforce development. So how do we get to a place
12 where we're talking about this as an entirety and a
13 whole ecosystem, opposed to doing like this mitch
14 match? And for me, what ends up happening is we have
15 organizations that do the gambit, so you have
16 different departments kind of fighting for different
17 things. So I would love for us to get to a place
18 where we're talking about this more holistically and
19 not in sections. So, if you can talk to me about why
20 Cornerstones and Beacons are not a part of this, and
21 how we start to bring them into the conversation?
22 Because as we're expanding the afterschool piece,
23 these other pieces are struggling.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I appreciate very much what you're saying, and I want to share that this has been really a priority for Commissioner Howard, uh, working together and looking holistically at our program set in every way. And, my colleague, Daniel, oversees Youth Services Operations, which is really central to making sure that all the supports and guidance and communications and opportunities and resources are across the board. In my testimony, when I talked about 184,000 elementary students, we're including Beacon and Cornerstone. We're looking, as we plan this COMPASS expansion, at where our community centers are. So I think to some large degree we really are trying to take that full picture into consideration and welcome any suggestions about how we could do that better.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, they need an RFP, too.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Fair point. I think the models are different enough that, you know, we can't get them into this one. And some may say we've got a lot on our plate with this one.

Uhm... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I'm not saying you don't have a lot on your plate.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Yeah, yeah,
(LAUGHS)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Nobody is saying that louder than me. But I just want to make sure that the Administration hears and understands that we cannot piecemeal this approach. Because it's not working, this is why we keep being in these situations. So if we're looking at it holistically, and we're looking at, okay, as we're expanding these slots-- and you did add the Beacons and Cornerstones and the slots, but they also don't have new contracts, which means their rates are going to be different, which means they are going to lose staff-- because as we know, this happen--when the rates change, they'll leave and go to other programs because they can make \$2-3 more.

And so those things have to be taken into consideration. And I think sometimes it's overlooked, because when you're not in the weeds of things and you don't know, most people don't know. So I have to make sure that we uplift that and think about what it looks like to make sure that we're investing in

things like Beacons and Cornerstones. Because we know, for those who don't know, Beacon is basically a community center in a school and brings the resources, not just for the young people, but for the families, right? And Cornerstones are community centers that come with a whole host of services. So we can't just talk about supporting young people. We need to be talking about the family. So, just want to make sure we have that up here on the record.

Providers' rate and financial stability-- so providers argue that the proposed price per participant rate in the Concept Paper is well below the actual cost of operating a substantial 12-month program. How did DYCD arrive at this rate?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: We have been for many years, as you know, working on this COMPASS RFP, engaging as this team did in such depth with different providers about their needs. And we have a comprehensive look at what a sample or model budget could be, incorporating many of the things we've heard from CBOs about rates in the workforce and, uh, additional staff needs, and professional development needs, and that kind of thing. We have achieved so much with these rates in terms of right-sizing

1 disparate elementary school rates, right-sizing the
2 elementary rate to the staff regulation ratios in
3 comparison to middle school, and also the middle
4 school rate is calculated by taking those into
5 consideration. So we've really achieved a lot of
6 equity in the rates that I think we don't currently
7 have at the moment. And I think, you know, we
8 continue to welcome feedback. I think that there has
9 been a lot of feedback saying, you know,
10 acknowledging that this rate is going to go a long
11 way toward the model that we developed. I know that
12 not everybody's happy with it, but we have heard some
13 positive feedback.

15 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah. I mean, it's
16 more, so I think it's a start, and it's a start in
17 the right direction. But, you know, just having run
18 these programs and some of the new requirements is
19 still going to be tight. So I think we have to make
20 sure we're understanding what we're going to get out
21 of it. (INAUDIBLE) are not in the requirements (sic).
22 So I have a couple more questions to go in depth
23 about that later on. But I just wanted to make sure
24 we're thinking about that, because it was one of
25 those things.

And I have another question, will DYCD be providing a sample budget of their expectations for the breakdown of the money so that providers could have a clearer understanding of what your thinking patterns were when we were coming up with this per participant rate?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: We will consider that.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I would love for you to consider that. I think that'll be really helpful for providers to have an understanding of, like, how this can be maximized and what the vision of DYCD is. Because I remember doing these budgets, and I remember my program manager sometimes pushing back like, "Oh, you're paying this person too much." "Oh, you're not paying this person enough." And so to avoid that back and forth-- have any other providers had that? Can you raise your hand? All right, I've-- oh, look at this, that has happened. (LAUGHS)

Providers have had this back and forth. So, I think-- going into this RFP, I think it's very important for us to make sure that we are very clear. So if there's a sample budget or sample rates of what folks should be making, and those things, I think that'll be

1 helpful to us all. And also, I think the program
2 managers will be happy, so they don't have to go back
3 and forth. So it's one less thing for them to do. So
4 I'm happy that you are considering it, and I will
5 follow up.

6 Will DYCD be committed to revisiting and
7 adjusting PP rates during the anticipated six-year
8 contract period, especially if inflation and wage
9 mandates or new requirements make the contract rates
10 unworkable? Are there plans to implement a COLA or
11 escalators?

12 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: We are not prepared
13 to make that commitment at this time, but we will
14 continue to get engaged with our providers throughout
15 the term of the contract.

16 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, I just want
17 to, because I don't want to be back out here on the
18 steps in two years, fighting for COLA, you know? I
19 have other stuff I would like to do for the next four
20 years. So we should definitely think about that now,
21 so they don't have to be out here asking for COLA
22 because we know we are. So we should definitely put
23 it on the list of things to do and to monitor because
24 it's going to happen. The cost of living in this city
25

is expensive, so that should definitely be taken into consideration.

Did DYCD consult with providers when developing PP rates? If so, how did you incorporate the input into the final numbers?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: We definitely consulted with a lot of providers. We got budget information shared from many of our providers, saying here's how we would budget, here's where our gaps are, here's where our needs are. As you know, some of the advocates shared documents... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, I know UNH did like a whole report on it, but I think it's like they said 10-- they were at 10,000 per participant. I see Nora. Was it at 10? Yeah, and I think you guys are at six. So (INAUDIBLE) yeah, a little off, you know. I don't even know if that's in the (INAUDIBLE) but...

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: We took all of that into consideration... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: (INAUDIBLE)

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: in developing the PP.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay. At this time, I'm going to turn it over to Council Member Joseph. I know she has a couple of questions, but she needs to run in a bit, so I turn it over to you.

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you, Chair.

Always good to see you both. So how did the DYCD and Administration work with New York City Public Schools principals to ensure that school-based programs are open to youth in a larger community instead of being exclusive to students enrolled in particular schools? What did that look like?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I mean, I would say how that looks now is COMPASS is available to students outside of the community. And I think the reality is that there are some sites that are in really high demand from students who are right there at the school. But we definitely encourage outreach to other local schools and community groups to let any young person know, especially if the program has the capacity to welcome in other students.

Transportation can sometimes be a challenge to get to those programs if you're not on site in school at

3:00, but we are absolutely encouraging, uh,
(INAUDIBLE)...

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Are you working
with superintendents, PTAs, SLTS, all of the
stakeholders in the community to make sure that
outreach is being done?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I think we
probably could take this question to do more of that
every fall as a reminder, uh, the principal's
turnover, superintendent's turnover, just a reminder
about what COMPASS is and that it's open to young
people outside the school.

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Can I just add to
that?

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Sure.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Even with the
principles, how are you, how-- how are you making
that clear with the principles? Because sometimes I
was in a school where they would not allow us to do
that. So could you talk a little bit about what that
looks like?

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Exactly.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I think, and I'll welcome input from my colleagues, but we work really closely with New York City Public Schools, and they're absolutely aware of our practices and policies in order to be able to communicate that. Every program is meeting regularly with the-- some school liaison, the principal, or their designee, and parts of the school partnership agreement require this kind of regular dialogue.

I will say sometimes there's a question that comes back like, hey, are we allowed to, uh-- you know, we'll get-- we do get inquiries that acknowledge I think that sometimes people are not sure, and we are always clear that you absolutely can enroll young people outside the school.

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Hopefully, that message is trickling down to folks who are doing that.

So both COMPASS and SONYC will rely on input and participation from schools and partner groups. How does DYCD intend to ensure that it's a working partnership between groups and schools? I know we talked about that a little earlier, but can you just give us an idea?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I mean, one of the-- I'll turn to my colleague Daniel if you want to add something to this, but like one of the main tools is the school partnership agreement. So in the beginning-- which outlines roles and responsibilities, expectations about the school and the offering space and food and security and maintenance and all those details, and the expectations of the provider to be running a safe, welcoming program, and also getting guidance around any referrals young people they think might benefit the program that CBO can reach out to.

So I think that is largely happening on-site between school personnel and CBO personnel. More and more recently, we have started convening school principals with CBOs as we're doing these kinds of trainings. That's something, you know, we always have talked to New York City Public Schools and to CBOs, but bringing them together is something in the last couple of years that we've done more of, and we probably can do even more of that.

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Yeah, you can do more of that, absolutely. And if you run into

hiccups, what do you normally do? What are the courses to remedy situations?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GUILLEN: Well, I think one of the benefits of having an assigned program manager per site allows program directors to connect with us and us to work centrally. Yes, and connect with New York City Public Schools centrally, as well as the districts. Like our team has done Road Shows and has met with multiple superintendents across the system to go over the model, go over expectations, so that when we do have those challenging moments, folks on the ground have the context and what those expectations are to navigate those relationships.

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Okay...

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: I would also say over the last four or five years, we've moved up. So we're not just focused on the principles, to your point about turnover, but working-- the COMPASS team works a lot with superintendents now and more centrally. And then through capacity building, we have a vendor that focuses on partnerships, not just school CBOs, but in our Cornerstones, the resident councils and the CBOs,

and on and on, to proactively develop and support partnerships over time. So we're trying to come at it in different levels.

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: I like that.

What lessons has DYCD taken from Summer Rising (TIMER) in its initial planning and framework for universal afterschools? Any takeaways? Any lessons?

UNKNOWN: (INAUDIBLE)

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: That... Yeah.

(LAUGHTER)

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: We thought it was a fire drill. I was ready to run.

(LAUGHTER)

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: You know, my colleague Daniel is largely leading Summer Rising operations with DYCD, so I will turn to him. But I will say, working in close collaboration with New York City Public Schools, we have gained a lot of traction in terms of our communication and our support and just people-- it's actually helped principals and school staff on the ground better understand our partnership, because it's been a required component each summer. Daniel?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GUILLEN: And

what's been great over the past number of years is that joint engagement, the joint training PD that's happening in leading up to Summer Rising, that has been a good practice and I think folks are using during the school year as well. We've created these tools, where it's a partnership guide, where it is kind of walking through all the different operational components that happen on the ground to ensure that both parties are clear on what those expectations are. And you know, we hope to bring a lot of those best practices into the afterschool and into the expansion.

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: I am happy a lot of that stuff is spilling over to this program.

So what factors went into the determination of the breakdown of our located-- allocated to each area, such as the decision not to set a minimum on physical activity for SONYC, but setting a minimum on STEM, social-emotional learning, and leadership development?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I think, uh, you mean in the Concept Paper?

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Yeah.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: That was a lot. I'm not sure if I got every component of that, but I know that you referenced the requirements of STEM...

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Physical education, STEM, and social-emotional learning. I've always said they cannot be separate; they must be embedded in the curriculum.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: And can you say your question again about that?

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Sure.

What factors went into the determination of the breakdown of hours allocated to each of these areas? For example, physical activities for SONYC, STEM, and social-emotional learning and leadership development?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Okay, great question.

I think-- I mean, one of the beautiful things about COMPASS in my mind is it's a comprehensive afterschool program, and every CBO and potentially every site, based on their staff, has unique skills and interests that they can bring to the activities in their classroom. So we leave a lot

of room for flexibility based on what the CBO and the staff are good at. Because if they're loving what they're doing, the kids are going to love what they're doing. So I think our interest in naming these is just to say these are really important components that we don't want to make sure every program (sic). So make sure that you're addressing this; we don't want it to be just this one thing. It is comprehensive programming. And a lot of this has come from young people and CBOs, and our stake-- Do you want to mention anything about our stakeholder engagement with respect to kinds of activities?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: I'll start. So we've been talking about stakeholder engagement post the Concept Paper. But what informed the Concept Paper was engagement. We've been doing it over the past, you know, five years with external resources—so evaluators. So it's not just us going out and asking, but we've heard from young people, from parents, especially from middle schoolers, right? Because elementary, they're pretty much stuck...

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Right.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS you know where you leave them. But the middle schoolers are

quite clear about the arts piece, the physical education piece, to your point, that the leadership in development, and we heard this from providers, needs to be integrated into what happens across the board, that it's not separate. And I would say that about the social and emotional piece as well, which you know, builds competencies around your own behavior, how you engage with others, and decision making. And there's no better place to learn than like being on a team.

COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: That's right.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Right?

Where you see how you contribute, how others contribute. So we learned a lot pre-releasing the Concept Paper that informed the design. And now we've gotten even more feedback from parents about more that they wanted to see a lot around arts.

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: And that was going to be my followup question as to...

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: A lot around arts, yeah...

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: What role does DYCD see arts playing? And this is why it's not included-- it's why it's not included as a

requirement core content area, given that not all schools have a dedicated art program. This would be an opportunity to embed that in there.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: It is fully under consideration, which is the sentence I'm supposed to say. But we did hear that from young people...

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: (LAUGHS) We didn't hear it from you.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: But we did hear that from young people...

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: (LAUGHS) We didn't hear it from you at all.

(LAUGHTER)

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: But we did hear it from young people, particularly parents that, you know, not just drama, but, you know, painting and all those things. And we've talked a lot to one of my favorite agencies, which is Cultural Affairs, to see how we can bring those that they fund, uh... (CROSS-TALK)

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Theater, music, Dance... (CROSS-TALK)

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: (INAUDIBLE)
from back in the day, right? We used to. (INAUDIBLE)

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: (LAUGHS) So you
still got CASA...

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: (INAUDIBLE)
got CASA (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: And SU-CASA
(LAUGHS)...

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: into our
programming, uh, was a big thing.

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Absolutely. It's
so important that we invest in arts, music, dance,
and theater.

So I'm going to go along with--and Chair
Stevens, I'll be wrapping up really soon--Supports
for students with disabilities. How is DYCD working
with DOE to ensure that students with IEPs receive
appropriate accommodations and are meaningfully
included in afterschool programs to serve this
population (INAUDIBLE) offer required special
training, trained staff, or other material resources?
How will DYCD fund programs to make them accessible
for young people in a safe environment?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I'm gonna kick that off and just say that we, you know, COMPASS is in schools and COMPASS is also in other locations. And so when we look at that, we're looking across the board at offering support to school-based programs and center-based programs.

And I think our collaboration with the Office of Special Education, with respect to Summer Rising, is one of those things that I think has really strengthened in a broader way to benefit all COMPASS, Cornerstones, and Beacon programs. And you know, we could take those partnerships even further—that partnership with the Office of Special Education, certainly staff training, resources, on-site coaching, and other supports, and finally, clear guidance for CBOs on how to approach interactive dialogue with families and understand what a young person needs to be successful in this program. That might be the first time that conversation, you know, despite what's happening in the school day, is discussed around afterschool. And that's really at the heart of what it takes for a young person to be successful. Do you want to add anything to that?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GUILLEN: Well, yeah, I think it's important to add that Summer Rising has played such a huge role in how we've really developed our thinking around providing the needed supports. So in collaboration with New York City Public Schools, we surface scalable strategies that are now guiding year-round implementation, and that's included cross-agency planning, embedded special education supports, which include personnel, paraprofessionals, and nursing supports. We had behavioral specialists that were made available throughout the summer to provide support, uh, virtual open office hours as well throughout the week. That's something you know, again, worth considering. There was an inclusive program design and feedback-driven improvement. You know, we did support a lot of our co-located sites that were part of District 75, and that was inclusive of Horizon, (INAUDIBLE), and really ensuring that students were safe, that they were able to get access to the needed activities and supports, and leveraging those partnerships. So that's something again what we're looking... (CROSS-TALK)

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: I know transportation for our students with disabilities has always been a huge issue. How is that being worked out for our students?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: We do hear that as a barrier for some students who are entitled to busing and are not able to access that resource at the end of the afterschool day. We are definitely taking in all of that stakeholder feedback and looking at available options to support families in that way.

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. Just real quick, I want to go back to some of the school partnerships, the school building. I remember when this was an issue sometimes; schools would have issues with the vacation camp hours and giving providers a hard time with the permanent process. And we know that there are required hours. How are we making sure that this is more streamlined, and principles are very clear and aware of making sure that these are the hours that they're committing to,

and it has to be done? And what does that process look like?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GUILLEN: So, going from a macro to micro approach, working even more closely and intently with New York City Public Schools Central on our agreements on space and hours of service, and what's required in order to make this program work. And then really engaging at a much more localized level, and what those expectations are going through the model, what we anticipate on the ground, the types of (INAUDIBLE) that folks will get, and ensuring that the permit is reflected of that, that is all written down and it's agreed upon, right? And that's kind of the basis of the school partnership agreements, along with the extended use permits that allow them to utilize the space to ensure that all are aware of what's expected.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah. I mean, I was happy to hear that you guys are doing more meetings with principals and superintendents. I think that this is something that needs to be addressed every single time because I know from myself that it used to be an issue. And I'm sure in certain schools, sometimes that still becomes an issue. And I know

even DYCD, that was an issue for you guys, because then you would be left to try to figure out locations for programs that weren't able to get the hours because of some of those issues that we were just talking about. So I just wanted to make sure we talked a little bit about that.

So I am going to move on to-- with the first afterschool procurement in 10 years and a growing system, a five-week turnaround time to submit a proposal seems insignificant. Will DYCD consider extending the timeline to account for providers submitting multiple proposals as well as precise issues-- yeah, precise issues with PASSPort?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I think, as you said, like early on, like we have-- this is an incredible, massive investment in administration. We are definitely motivated to operationalize this as soon as possible, and all of us are working on a really, really quick timeline that would include community-based proposers. You know, I think in every RFP we consider extensions where appropriate, but we really want, you know, our goal is to have an additional 10,000 seats operationalized by next September, as you know. And that's just about a year

from now. And if all of the tasks leading up to that are going to happen, we really need everybody who's part of this to work as quickly as possible.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah. Have you guys taken into consideration the many issues that we all have with PASSPort, and this being such a big RFP, and what that actually could mean to the system?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I mean PASSPort has been such an amazing partner. I think...

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: (LAUGHS)

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: PASSPort meeting with...

(LAUGHTER)

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Sorry, MOCS. I've been...

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: (LAUGHS) I was going to say, I know you don't mean PASSPort...

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Yeah, I don't...

(LAUGHTER)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: That can't be possible.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: No, no, no, MOCS has been such an amazing partner. I think they're meeting daily.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, we love MOCS, but that's not the issue. I'm talking about PASSPort, the actual system that gives us all issues. This is going to be a huge RFP with a fast turnaround. So, how are we preparing for the issues that we know are going to happen with PASSPort?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GUILLEN: So as an administration, we're having real intensive conversations on all of the potential hiccups, right? So it's not just planning for what we would anticipate, but also planning for what we may not anticipate, right? And MOCS has been a great partner in communicating with us their progress in making sure that the system is ready when the RFP is released.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Hmm...

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: System design, modifications, testing, all the things that are required.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: All right, when we have this joint hearing in December with Contracts,

1 because PASSPort done collapsed, I just wanted to be
2 on the record that I'm saying it now. So hopefully
3 there is another plan, because we all know the issues
4 that we have when it was smaller RFPs, and this is
5 probably the biggest one since we transitioned to
6 PASSPort, and I am very, very concerned.

8 The Concept Paper is not clear on what
9 the summer programming model will be. Will Summer
10 Rising be continued in the future, where there'll be
11 an option for CBOs to operate alternative summer
12 models?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: The Concept
14 Paper discusses, you know, year-round programming for
15 elementary age students. And the City's model for
16 that right now is Summer Rising. So that would be
17 full-day, 8:00 to 6:00 programming in the Summer
18 Rising model that we implement now.

19 And then, yeah, I'm sorry, I didn't hear
20 the rest of your-- I can't remember the rest of your
21 question.

22 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And will CBOs have
23 options to operate an alternative summer program as
24 if-- because it's not clear in the Concept Paper if
25 it's Summer Rising or they will have options to be

like, "Hey, we wanna do something different, is that an option?" Is there any flexibility in it?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: For K-8 programs, if you're in a school building, you'll be operating Summer Rising. Center-based programs will be operating, you know, outside of public schools on their own model, but school-based programs, so we'll be operating Summer Rising.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: What is the future of the SONYC Summer program? The Concept Paper stated that the summer program model for middle schools will not be contracted through the coming RFP. How will those seats be contracted, and what will be the model used?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Similarly, for school-based middle school SONYC programs, they'll be funded for a 10-month school year program. At this time, we fund roughly 50,000 middle school seats, and in the summertime, we fund something more like 30,000 to meet that demand. So, for sure, not every school year SONYC program is going to be funded for summer, but we maintain our commitment to providing summer enrichment programs for middle school students. And the way our team has approached

that is responding to demand, responding to where we see the highest demand for middle school seats to ensure that's where the seats are going. And so we'll probably deal with that during amendment, maybe at some point in the future, though that demand becomes more stable, and we could baseline those. But at this time, we really want to maximize the use of available programs. And in that way, we're placing the programs where the demand is.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: The Concept Paper requires hybrid programming, and it does not have clear defined expectations. Can you clarify whether DYCD intends for providers to offer both in-person and remote services spontaneously, and if so, will you be supplying providers with the equipment and an example of how those programs will be conducted?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I might ask my team if they want to share something on that about stakeholder engagement. We certainly heard questions and responses.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RATHIEL: Yeah, we certainly heard that there was some clarity needed. So we will definitely be providing that clarity in the upcoming RFP. And, you know, I think I want to

point to that really, this is not that any remote components, as it states in the Concept Paper, it is really meant to enhance, not replace in-person programming, which we know is really a core component of afterschool.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, but I mean, we've also gone through COVID, and none of us expected that... (CROSS-TALK)

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RATHEL: Well, sure...

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And so I'm assuming that is why that is try-- that is thinking like, okay, if something happens again—And so that's why I think the clarity is necessary, right? And so even when you're thinking about snow days, they're no longer snow days. They have to go to school remotely. So is that what you're thinking? I would love to hear where the thinking is around that.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RATHEL: Yeah, 100%. We learned a lot from COVID, obviously, and we want to be able to meet the need if anything were to happen again. I think we also learned that there can be creative ways to use asynchronous or online pieces that could complement regular, required in-person

hours, and so we will be providing clarity on that in the RFP for sure.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I will be watching.

Will DYCD be providing funding for the technology, staffing, and space costs that hybrid programs require, seeing that you're going to put this in the RFP?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RATHEL: Correct. We will provide clarity on that in the RFP.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: No, I asked, are you going to be providing additional funding?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RATHEL: I think we will-- we will provide clarity on what the requirements are, and I think then, we...

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I'm just going to go on record saying if you're putting this in as a requirement, funding should be attached to it. And so we can't expect people to be able to shift and have technology and not have funding for it. And so I just would like to point out, if that's going to be a requirement for programs to do that, we need to make sure that there is money to match that.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RATHEL: We hear you. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Will DYCD provide a list of approved social-emotional curricula for prospective providers?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RATHIEL: DYCD has been doing a lot of research and learning over the last few years. We've been piloting a measurement tool for social-emotional learning, been doing some research on best practices and alignment. We also got a lot of feedback around, you know, making sure that there is flexibility. And so we will be taking all that into consideration for the RFP.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, but that's not what I asked. Will you have a list for-- because that's another requirement, a component, will you have information to make sure providers have options? Because that's not a RFP thing, this is an ongoing program. So, is that something you're working on as you're putting this together? Will providers be able to say, "Hey, can you give us a list of curricula that are approved by DYCD?" So that they can provide this service?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RATHIEL: Right. As it is listed in the Concept Paper, they will be

required to use a curriculum. We will make it clear how that approval process will work in the RFP.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: That's not my question. I asked you, will you have a list of curricula from them to choose from, not will you have a process for how it's approved?

Because even if it's how it's approved, where are they going to get the information from? Are you just going to say you need to have this, go on, and then now they're going to come back and now you're approved or disapprove it? So, are you working on that currently?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: I would say, "Yes, and". So there's the part where we will have a list of things that we've reviewed and heard from other providers that they use, but we will also urge strongly about mandating curriculum... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah...

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: So, we will have (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I didn't say mandated. I'm asking, do you have a list now? (CROSS-TALK)

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: No, no, I'm just saying, what Jess was referring to is that we will review for folks who want to propose. So yes, we will have recommendations, and we will review for CBOs who want to propose things that are not on the list that we have. So I was just saying, "Yes, and."
(CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Oh, no, I was just saying, I agree with you, and that's the question I was asking, but that's not the answer I was getting.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Right.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So that's why I was confused. Other than saying, like, "Oh, it'll be a process in the RFP." We know that. I want to make sure that there are options for providers to be able to say, "Hey, I don't have this experience. Could I have a list of something?" And I want to make sure you guys are working on that so that you can be ready to go. Because we all know that's going to happen. So that's it.

Will providers be allowed to standardize social-emotion tools across all contract sites, or will the SEL tools be decided by school staff?

Because a lot of times, just so we are clear, a lot of times, most providers have multiple contracts, and sometimes schools will be like, "Well, we're not doing that, this is what we're doing." So how will that process work, too? Because sometimes it's harder for providers to have a different system here and a different system there, around, like whether that's incentives or whatever, and schools are saying something different. So how are we working through that as well?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RATHIEL: For the past few years, we've been piloting one tool, and that's grown over-- we are now in year three of piloting with a tool for SEL measurement. Our goal really is to be able to use one tool across the whole system so that we as a system can come here, can go to, you know, wherever we need to, and be able to talk about growth in SEL across the whole system. So really our goal is to have a centralized system so everyone is using the same platform and able to speak the same language about the growth and competencies that are gained.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay. I have a couple more questions, but I'll stop here for Council

Member Menin, who has joined us. Thank you for joining us. She has questions.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Thank you so much, Chair.

So first of all, I just wanted to follow up on a question that was asked by my colleague, Council Member Joseph, who was talking about students with disabilities. One of the answers that you gave to her focused on paraprofessionals. My concern is that there's currently a vacancy rate of 1,600 at DOE for paraprofessionals. So how are you addressing that? And can you be very specific about what you're doing about that and how the paraprofessionals fit into this equation?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I think that's a great question. I appreciate that question. And I think it comes down to what each young person who may need an accommodation needs to be successful in afterschool. And that may or may not be different than what they need a paraprofessional in the school day. And so in that interactive dialogue between, like a CBO leadership and the family, it really comes down to what do we need here? It may be, for example, that it's just a swing staff at the program who needs

1 to be a second person in the room to make sure that
2 young people are safe and not leaving the classroom.
3 It might be that it's behavioral issues that come up
4 in afterschool, and it could be about coaching
5 techniques for de-escalation or having, you know,
6 certain parts of the classroom-- some of the things I
7 think you mentioned where people, young people can,
8 you know, calm down...

10 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Yeah, but my
11 question—I don't feel like you're answering it—is
12 that we've got a vacancy rate of 1,600
13 paraprofessionals. What is the Administration doing
14 to address that?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Well, I
16 mean, I don't want to speak for New York City Public
17 Schools. I know they're working on vacancy rates and
18 filling all of their positions. In community based
19 organizations, I think that we can take those
20 afterschool situations, student by student, and
21 understand what they need. It doesn't-- We don't
22 necessarily need to draw from the same pot that New
23 York City Public Schools are (INAUDIBLE) different
24 hours of the day. It could be somebody works 8:00 to
25 3:00, and then they're also interested in working

3:00 to 6:00. It doesn't require an additional person. It could be the same person. So if we kind of take it student by student, based on their needs, the qualifications of the paraprofessional that might be available, and meet those needs individually.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Another topic I want to ask about, and I know this was addressed earlier, the Mayor's Executive Order 54. So this new Commission, when is it first meeting? How many times a year is it meeting?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: We are currently, uh, support-- DYCD staff for supporting the Commission. We've met on a monthly basis in the very recent past, and I think the goal is to continue that traction with some additional work group or smaller group or by industry groups, conversations in between. The goal is really to come-- I can't remember the outer term of the Commission, but it's really to come up with a plan for this vision of Afterschool for All that could be something we pursue over (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: So, when can we expect to see the first deliverable? What is the timeline on that?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Well, I think the deliverable would be, for lack of a better word, maybe a blueprint or a plan for what it would take and what our vision is for universal afterschool for all. I understand that would be like a final product of the Commission.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Okay. Then no more specifics, though, on that other than the blueprint? I mean...

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Can you say more about the deliverables? I mean, we are looking at data, we're examining different models, we're discussing what components could potentially be barriers and what components could be potentially opportunities.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Mm-hmm?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: So I think the Commission is going to lift up these, you know, these are experts in New York City, they're going to be lifting up all kinds of considerations. And, yeah, I'm open to hearing more about deliverables...

(CROSS-TALK)

COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: And when you say it's universal, what will that mean?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Well, I think we acknowledge that this is the biggest expansion of elementary school that we've had in a really long time, of the already like the biggest municipal system in New York City. But we acknowledge that there will be people who still have trouble accessing afterschool. Because we're not in every single school. And we don't right now have seats for every single student in New York City who wants a free afterschool program. So we want to get there. And we've taken this really ambitious goal, 5,000 seats this fall, as Chair Stevens noted, on an ambitious timeline, 10,000 seats the following fall, again on a super ambitious timeline. So it's creating a plan for how you could get there.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you, Council Member Menin.

I would like to lift up that UNH already did a report on getting to universal afterschool. So I don't know why we would have a commission to do that when there are a lot of providers already doing it. And I'm almost positive you guys are super busy getting these programs up and running, to now have to

1 be on a Commission. But there is some data out there
2 that they did, and it was pretty extensive. So maybe
3 we can share that with the Commission so they can
4 focus on something else. Because they did a pretty
5 extensive plan of what it would look like, what it
6 would take, and the funding costs. And it was a whole
7 breakdown. So I just would like to lift that up that
8 there are actual folks doing this work currently. And
9 again, even with the Commission, I'm disappointed
10 that we don't see families represented on their
11 frontline staff. Like, yes, our executive directors
12 are important, but I am positive none of them are
13 running these programs currently. And so it's going
14 to look very different. And again, I think you guys
15 already got stuff to do. And so I don't think this is
16 where you guys should be focusing your time at.

17 I'm going to pass it off to Council
18 Member Williams, who has a couple of questions.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you. Good
20 afternoon, I have a few questions. My questions are
21 in relation to the state implications of afterschool.
22 So how did DYCD account for schools with documented
23 waitlists or those that lost afterschool funding
24 under learning and enrichment afterschool program
25

1 supports, but we're still excluded from new
2 allocations?

3
4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Well, I
5 think—and I appreciate my colleague outlining more
6 of this process in detail—but we looked at every
7 single New York City public school, including
8 charters, in examining where we need to start this.
9 This is just the first 5,000 seats of a 20,000-seat
10 expansion. We looked at schools with the highest
11 economic need without a DYCD-funded afterschool
12 program. And so, like, to the point we just made
13 earlier, we know that not everybody has a program at
14 this time, and there will be challenges to get to the
15 ultimate vision of universal afterschool. But we're
16 going, you know, communities have changed since we
17 last did an RFP, and so we're looking at where there
18 may have been deserts or geographic gaps and where
19 the highest needs are, that's how we made our
20 decision.

21 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GUILLEN: And it
22 wasn't just limited to the DYCD funding. You know, we
23 worked really closely with New York City Public
24 Schools on identifying as many assets as we could on
25 the different funding types and models, right? Some

funding models are not as comprehensive as others are. And trying to make the best assessment in making sure that those first 40 schools were really thought out and really strategic in ensuring that it's not just about where the gaps are, but that the school was also prepared to receive a new afterschool program, as well as, again, in consideration for the future RFP.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Did you consider at all potential state funding in your assessment, or was it just solely based on need and gaps?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GUILLEN: I would say a combination. Not just limited to a single data point, but the best comprehensive picture of all. Inclusive of... (CROSS-TALK)

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay...

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GUILLEN: school population, inclusive of the rates of young people and students in temporary housing, students with disability, as well as where they are operating geographically.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay. DYCD has acknowledged that New York City lost more than 6,700 afterschool slots under LEAPS, with the Bronx and

Queens hit the hardest. How is DYCD coordinating with the state to mitigate the loss of slots in precisely the neighborhoods where demand is highest?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I mean, I'll start by saying like we-- This city is again making a massive investment, right? The 5,000, the 10,000, and the 5,000. We understand there is a need, and I think you mentioned the Bronx in Queens, which are the boroughs that had the biggest gaps and the highest needs, and that's where we allocated the highest numbers of programs in this first 40 batch of 5,000 seats. So we just kept our focus on which schools need afterschool the most. And that was largely our consideration. We, you know, we don't have a ton of coordination. We have communication with the State for sure, but we don't have a ton of coordination with them on where they're making their awards. Regardless, we're looking each time at all the public schools and where the program is needed the most.

Whether or not they were... (CROSS-TALK)

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: So, you're saying you don't... (CROSS-TALK)

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: impacted by the State.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: You don't coordinate with the state on where they're making awards?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: We-- LEAPS (Learning and Enrichment After-School Program) is the State's program, right? And we're working on COMPASS here. We coordinate with the State 100%, because they are the oversight of school-aged childcare regulations. So our ties with the State are super close. Uh, but... (CROSS-TALK)

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: But not specific to where they're making awards on LEAPS?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Yeah, and in terms of where DYCD's focus and investment is, it's like, which schools in New York City need this program the most? That was the driving question.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay, I do get that perspective. I also do feel like big government, like, with a big "G" like, which includes like everybody sometimes, uh, especially, I'm always a little annoyed by the lack of coordination between the State and localities on many different issues. That's so crazy. Not just with afterschool. I can give you a ton of examples, like bill reform. That's

another issue that required state and local coordination. But to me, it doesn't seem like there is true coordination around what is actually happening. So yes, the City is focused on what the City is focused on, and the City has made an analysis that they feel confident in. But to not consider or even have a sense of what the State is doing, to me, I think, creates overlap-- could create overlap or could create further gaps in certain areas. And so I don't think that's a good practice, only essentially to be in coordination-- Because we have to, we're creatures of the State.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Yeah.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: And so there is a level of, like, obligation that we have to the State, but it doesn't seem like that obligation carries through when it comes to specific programs and initiatives.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I agree with you 100%. And Daniel just said we looked at all of that. We looked at all of that information--where our LEAPS programs are now-- we looked at a whole collective set of information. And then I just wanted

to lean back on, at the end of the day, it was like, where are these programs needed most?

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Yes, because when you said, like, we coordinate, but we don't coordinate. I was like...

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I withdraw. We don't coordinate...

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay, I was like that's crazy, okay.

New York City...

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I actually know what you meant by that. They don't tell us. Yes, I said it.

(LAUGHTER)

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: And to be fair, and maybe it seemed like I was more so being harsh with you, but to be fair, I agree. I think that a lot of times, the State is like, "Oh, we're the State," and it's--I feel like we have these unfunded mandates or these requirements that we are obligated to comply with, but there isn't a lot of coordination from the State.

So, again, I always use the bill reform situation where it's like, yes, it was a state law,

but there was little to no coordination or assessment, or even the State analyzing whether or not the City specifically had the infrastructure to really do bill reform in the right way.

And so I feel like it's the same thing here, they're making these decisions at the state level and not really coordinating with the City in a way that allows for you, for us--because you know, I'm just a council member, I'm part of the City, for us to make intelligent decisions about what we're doing. So it's a little frustrating.

New York City is investing heavily in universal afterschool, but without state partnership, families are left behind. How is DYCD ensuring that the City's expansion does not simply mask or absorb the State's disinvestment?

I think it's so important that we highlight the State's disinvestment because they are the first to tell us that we're able to do all these things because they give us money, but when it comes to disinvestment, they're very quiet on that.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Yeah, I'm going to stick to the previous answer...

(LAUGHTER)

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: about, like, you know, taking into consideration what was happening at the state level and keeping our mission focused on where the schools were needed most.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay, I have another question unrelated to the State, just about your assessment.

So for COMPASS programs, what metrics were used to evaluate the success of an off-school site location compared to programs based in the schools where students remain in the same building? Are providers rated or scored differently depending on whether their site operates inside a school building versus at an external location?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RATHEL: So DYCD does have evaluation and monitoring metrics that we use to assess all of our programs, including our COMPASS programs. And so, you know, our COMPASS programs are held on enrollment, and the rate of participation or our average daily attendance depending on the program. And so those are metrics that are clear in contracts and that all COMPASS programs are held to and assessed based on the slots that are allocated to each program.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Yeah, additionally, like there are minor-- you know, there are minor differences between the center-based programs and the school-based programs. So in a school-based program, there's, I think, a higher expectation that you're coordinating with the school staff on the site. In a center-based program, you may have to be looking like broadly at all the schools in the community and look at those with higher needs. You also-- Yeah, you have-- you have slightly different, you have a slightly different situation. But as Jessica mentioned, there's like a set of rubrics that are super standardized between both of them— Are young people engaged in activities? Are there a safe number of staff to complete the ratio? Is the space free of hazards? Those things are common across both sets.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you.
Thanks, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. I just-- I know--I want to also just piggyback really quickly off of just some of the comments that my colleague made around the State, where it's like, I just wanted to also just take into consideration that the State

1
2 did shrink their numbers. And so as we're expanding,
3 it might not be felt the same because they shrank
4 their numbers. And so I think that is important to
5 highlight because, with us expanding, the State is
6 not talking about how a lot of their LEAPS programs
7 were closed, and we lost funding.

8 I'm just as frustrated as Council Member
9 Williams, Dr. Williams, around again, this is-- we
10 are always here to absorb a lot of the things that
11 the State does, and we don't get the credit for it.
12 And so I just want to make sure that I'm giving you
13 guys the credit for this expansion, in the absence of
14 the State continuing to provide the services that we
15 need. I just want to make sure we have that on
16 record.

17 I would like to pass it over to Council
18 Member Lee.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Hi, everyone. I'm so
20 sad because my 6th grader actually did not get into
21 his SONYC program, because there was a wait list, and
22 I thought I did all the directions and everything. I
23 followed everything to the T. So fingers crossed that
24 he'll get in if someone else drops out. But there's
25 definitely a need. I can say that for sure as a

parent. So I was actually telling them, "Hey, did you know that DYCD is expanding their seats? So you should look into this."

But in terms of the RFP, I was just wondering if you have any more, and forgive me if this was gone over earlier, but if you have any more specific dates or timing in terms of fall 2025 for when the RFP is supposed to come out?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: We would love for it to come out as soon as possible. I think we're feeling really optimistic that it'll be more like the early side of fall.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: (UN-MIC'D) What does that mean?

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Like now? This is the first week of fall, right?

(LAUGHTER)

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Not technically. (LAUGHS)

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay, and will you be funding or will it fund the pre-award onboarding or extend the startup beyond the first month in terms of the funding?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Can you say that one more time?

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: So...

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: I think you're referring to contract startup.

UNKNOWN: Yes, okay...

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: They're aiming for July start-up for September programming. So they were trying to build in lead time, because it's... (CROSS-TALK)

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: The lead time, yeah... (CROSS-TALK)

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: (INAUDIBLE), but that's why we're all going crazy to go as fast as possible.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay. And then just in terms of some of the feedback we've been hearing from some of the providers for the hybrid and summer clarity, just to clarify that, will hybrid be required? And if so, what funding line covers tech/staff, and what's the SONYC summer academic versus recreation split?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RATHIEL: Sure. So for hybrid, you know, we don't intend for that to

1 replace. It's really about having complementary
2 enhancements, you know, enhancements. But really, we
3 know the importance of in-person afterschool
4 programming. And so you know, we heard the feedback
5 certainly about clarity, and we'll provide that in
6 the RFP to make sure the requirements around that are
7 clear at contract time.

8
9 Susan, you want to talk about
10 (INAUDIBLE)?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: And the
12 model--the summer enrichment model for middle school
13 students, or...

14 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GUILLEN:
15 (INAUDIBLE) just in general.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: In general?
17 Yeah, in general, as we were saying a little earlier
18 in the hearing, for summer enrichment in schools, we
19 are following the Summer Rising model. We are
20 committed to Summer Rising. And so we've generally
21 continued to improve the model year to year. There
22 may be tweaks or additional resources and supports,
23 and all that will be communicated to providers. But
24 generally speaking, we're following the Summer Rising
25 model in summer 2026.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay. And just in terms of capacity and oversight, because obviously with a lot of new seats-- How is your staffing plan internally going to change to make sure that the contracts are being kept up with and that the payments are made on time? Because I know it's also a lot of work for the (INAUDIBLE) that have to interface with a lot of the nonprofit organizations. So, just wondering if there are plans on your side internally to staff up?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GUILLEN: Yes. And that's across the board, from program management to contract development across the agency.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Can you have a breakdown on how much more staff you are looking to add on?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Yeah, I don't have that breakdown. We can get it to you. We are looking at a phased increase in personnel support to align with the phased increase in seats.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And have those seats already-- those positions already been approved by the (INAUDIBLE)?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Many of them have.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GUILLEN: Yes.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Yeah.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GUILLEN: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay, interesting.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Hmm, okay. And just sort of piggybacking off something that Council Member Williams mentioned, uh, in terms of the off-site SONYC and COMPASS programs, are those being looked at as well in terms of expansion sites as well, or are you focusing more on the school locations first and then looking outward from there?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GUILLEN: We're taking into consideration schools and communities where there are gaps and there's high economic need.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay, perfect. Because I know that sometimes, for whatever reason, the schools may not have the capacity to have the program, are there fellow nonprofit organizations or other places where it could be housed?

And then I guess that was my other question because I know that just from having applied to want to get a SONYC-- or yeah, that's (INAUDIBLE)

(LAUGHS) Yeah, from getting a SONYC or COMPASS program-- we had a site at my former nonprofit, and were looking to get it in. But, obviously, it's based on the relationship with the school principal and their willingness to do it. And we had so many meetings with some of the local principals. And, you know, at the end of the day, they just want to stick with the location, uh, the partnerships that they have.

And so if we're looking at expanding this, is there a way to incentivize principals to be able to work with other groups? And also, how do we support them to be able to handle the increase?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I think that's a great question. There was a lot-- there's a lot in there. I mean, I think the RFP is an opportunity, first of all, to open the field to additional partners, bring in additional capacity. That would be a wonderful outcome, something we're really looking forward to, uh, not just additional capacity for additional seats, but also just more providers to help us continue to build this system and grow.

And to your question about, uh, coordination, I think we, as we were talking about a little bit, and Denice was alluding to working with-- more and more, working with the superintendents and the executive directors in the school districts to make sure that there's like a holistic understanding about what COMPASS offers and how important afterschool is. And that will help to navigate, because principals have a ton on their plates. Do they always fully understand what the program is? You know, some better than others, so it's our job to keep working together with them to make sure everybody understands the value to families.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Yeah, because I just want to make sure, you know, because being from Queens and it being such a diverse neighborhood, like for example, there are a lot of growing emerging communities in my area, especially in the South Asian community, and they speak all sorts of different dialects and languages. And so just as an example, there's an elementary school across--and then right across the street, there was a new mosque that was built, and I think they have been partnering very well together. And in that instance, I wonder if--

1 because there's definitely a need in that area of
2 Queens. And so I wonder if there's an opportunity--
3 and I don't know if the imam at the mosque knows
4 about the fact that he can apply for these programs,
5 right? So, how do we help to reach out if we were to
6 build some of those partnerships, so that the
7 students could get served and possibly expand or
8 create a program there? Because I know the principal
9 in this instance would be willing to partner with
10 them. And so I just wanted to see if there was room
11 for that or if you guys are looking for the cultural
12 linguistic pieces in addition to the economic as
13 well?
14

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I think I
16 understand, like, we are going to have a school-based
17 part of the RFP release, and there'll be a center-
18 based part of the school RFP. So would non-schools,
19 but like nearby working with a school student, be
20 able to apply and run programming on-site? Is that
21 kind of what you're getting at?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Yes, that and then
23 also to make sure again, that, you know, we're
24 looking at the diverse needs of the areas that we're
25 serving, because I think in a lot of instances

there's a lot of immigrant families who may be dealing with certain issues in their community that perhaps other areas of the city may not need to deal with and just so to be sensitive to that. You know?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: That's an excellent point. And I think you know, as we move forward with the RFP, we'll be taking into consideration, like, being able to serve the broadest lens of New York City across the board.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Yeah, okay. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you, Council Member Lee.

And, just to piggyback, I think that is a really good point to highlight as we're thinking about the RFP, because I know the commissioners come to my district a number of times, because we have a huge West African population that's been growing in my district. And they have been expressing a need to have something or programs that were a little bit more culturally specific, especially for our Muslim population, who sometimes, you know, have to be separate and need prayer and things like that that are not sometimes considered. So thank you for

bringing that up. Because I definitely agree 100% that as things are changing, we should definitely be looking at like, what are some of those other partnerships that we could be thinking about to embed in it to ensure the inclusivity? But I know it gets hard because we want to make sure we are as broad as possible. But I do know that there have been conversations when the Mayor and the Commissioner came to my district with some of the Muslim and African growing populations in my district.

I have some questions around staffing. We're almost done. You guys are doing great. How are you feeling? Everybody feel okay? All right.

The Concept Paper raises qualification requirements for nearly every staff category. Why do content specialists who are part-time need to meet the qualifications as a program director, including a four-year degree and supervised experience?

How does DYCD expect providers to recruit for those roles, given the mismatch between part-time pay and high qualification requirements? Will DYCD consider making the supervisory requirement optional or provide flexibility for equivalent experience?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RATHIEL: So, yeah, I think we certainly heard this feedback from providers, from all of our stakeholder engagement, and you know, taking things into consideration for the requirements for the RFP. I do think, you know, we certainly want to make sure we have high-quality staff, the content specialist in particular. There are a lot of areas that we want to make sure we have high-quality programming, and we value that experience. But definitely heard and are taking into consideration, you know, what makes sense for all the different requirements for the RFP.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, because we-- listen, I remember the education specialist, it is so impossible to hire for that role, and then when you hire a teacher, the per teacher rate, we can't afford it. So I think as we are reimagining, those are the little nuances we have to make sure we're addressing and not adding additional burden. Because, yes, a degree, yes, it's nice, but is it always required? And so, how do we make up for those different things?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GUILLEN: I think it's also important to add that, through the Concept Paper, you know, we're really trying to align with

the OCFS school-age childcare regulations

(INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yes, don't even get me started with that...

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GUILLEN:

(INAUDIBLE) there's consistency.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: That's a whole other fight.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GUILLEN: That's a whole other party, but what we want to make sure is that there's consistency between what the State expects from DOHMH and DYCD.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, I mean, what the State expects and what they pay for is two different things. But don't get me started. Didn't I just tell you that I don't like the State at this moment, because they cut those programs? All right? I'm just saying.

But we also need to push back on the State because I remember they said I didn't qualify for the SACC license, although I had a minor in education, and it didn't make sense. And so we know that sometimes it don't make sense, and this is one of the places. So I think maybe we should go to the

State folks. And so maybe that's something we'll do, and I'll add it to lobby for that on our State Agenda.

The Concept Paper listed the proposed qualification for group leader as at least two years of direct experience with children under 13 years of age, and preferably an associate's degree. Group leader positions have traditionally been entry-level roles that bring young adults into the youth development field. Why is DYCD adding a new degree and experience requirements that shrink this pipeline?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I think-- look, it's a hard job, right? Working with young people, we know we want to have a certain level of experience and qualification. The group leader is required to have a high school diploma or equivalent. On top of that, we're looking for people who have experience with young people. That could include personal experience. It doesn't necessarily have to be professional experience. And you have to have-- like, here in the Concept Paper, it's calling for, you know, "content knowledge, experience, and skills to effectively implement activity". Like that's the

1 minimum of what we need so that if there's a room
2 full of young people, they're going to be engaged in
3 meaningful activities. And they could be supported,
4 and they should be and will be supported by program
5 leadership, including the concept specialists and the
6 program director. But I, you know, and again, aligned
7 with the school-age childcare regulations that, you
8 know, say more about what we could do differently
9 with the group leader because that feels like a good
10 set of qualifications for that role.

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: They're a good set
13 of qualifications, especially with you guys being
14 DYCD and understanding the crisis we're having with
15 young people not being able to get jobs.

16 And what I've been saying is that we have
17 to reimagine the workforce for young people. We
18 should not be shutting young people out from being
19 able to have easy access to these places. Because
20 this is part of the problem—no one is hiring them.
21 And now we're putting in requirements that are going
22 to block out people who would be better off in that
23 program doing activities and working with those young
24 people than outside on the street. And so I get,
25 again, the State has some issues, and I'm going to

1 add it to the list of things that we're going to
2 advocate for, because they don't understand. But we
3 have a crisis where young people can't find jobs. And
4 so I am not okay with us not trying to figure out how
5 to make sure that we're opening up the pathway for
6 young people—especially a lot of times-- and I know
7 when I was there, providers (INAUDIBLE) wrong. A lot
8 of times, our kids also come back and work in the
9 programs. So, we gotta have these accommodations,
10 because for me, again, all of this is about how we
11 are being holistic. So we should not be shutting out
12 any opportunity for young people to get jobs. They
13 can't go to McDonald's for a good job, because you
14 gotta be 18. They can't work at Foot Locker, they
15 can't work at the supermarket. And now we're saying
16 they can't work in their community centers and their
17 schools because of a requirement. So we have to
18 figure it out as a city, how to make sure we're
19 opening it up. And so that's gonna be my pushback,
20 and for us to figure it out, because that is a real
21 thing, and we can't not realize that.

22
23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I appreciate
24 that. I want to add that there is space in this
25

concept paper for those young people as activity...

(CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Oh no, we're gonna go down, because I have some issues with that, too...

(CROSS-TALK)

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Okay, great. I mean (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Oh, let's keep going! (CROSS-TALK)

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: (INAUDIBLE) youth worker and peer (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: (INAUDIBLE) Keep going...

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: and continue to develop your career path in our programs...

(CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah... (CROSS-TALK)

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Let's keep going, because I have some issues with that, too.

Has DYCD (INAUDIBLE) considered the increasing hiring costs and vacancy risks that come with raising the bar for the group leaders? Because

we already know everybody's already struggling. So how do we even solve for that? And we can go to the youth workers too, because even with the youth workers, they have to be 16 years old and hold a high school diploma.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Or a year of working with young people. I mean, I... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Well, at 16, you can get your working papers at 15, no one's hiring you...

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: How do you have that experience?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I mean, we are not-- Look, we hire young people all the time. It doesn't have to be professional experience. Some people have worked in the daycare at their church while people are in service. We have people who have extensive experience with babysitting. Nobody is saying this has to be professional experience necessarily, but we do want programs staffed with people who are responsible for working with young people. And I think that's what we're asking for here. I think we've built a role for every young person in a community who is interested in working

with young people. I think we have created a pathway for every young person who's interested in working with young people to work in a COMPASS program and continue to build their education and their skills and create a career path.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Again, I just wanted to make sure the language that we're putting out there, this will deter people because they'd be like, "I don't have experience with kids." "I've never worked with kids," and then I'm sitting in an interview-- because I've had to do this like, "All right, have you ever babysat?" "Have you ever done that?"

We are a Department of Youth. That's part of it. So we should be thinking about how we are making these attractive to the young people and not throw them off. And so what does that look like? And so I'm, I'm very clear about what this looks like. And we have to do that often. Be like, "Have you ever babysat?" "Oh, did you not watch your brother and sister at the park? We've had to coach them through those things, but understanding that if we didn't coach them through, they wouldn't even know to come in. So we have to make sure that as we are putting

this out, it is clear, which is why I'm asking the question.

So everybody heard that right? They said they don't have experience. So if the program managers say you can't hire them, you're going to email Susan to let her know that she said it at the hearing that we are creating this pathway, so...

COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I completely take that point. And I will say, "CBO, are you creating volunteer opportunities for young people as you're coming up within programs?" We can work this out. We will work together to support our CBOs.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Y'all heard it right? Now it's on the record.

The Concept Paper includes three additional staff requirement positions for the center-based program—and this is not new—this has always been a thing—security guard, front desk reception, and janitor. Will additional funding be provided to center-based programs to hire those positions? If no additional funding is provided for those positions, how does DYCD expect providers to be able to run sustainable programs without the resources of school-based programs?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GUILLEN: Well, I think-- I just want to start with the fact that, yes, these are roles that we've been asking for that we see on the ground. We wanted to establish it as a requirement moving forward, because it's not true for all. And in some cases, it's one person doing all three roles.... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Oh, I know...

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GUILLEN: And we wanted...

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: It's usually the program director.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GUILLEN: Yup, and sometimes it's the program director.

We wanted to make sure that in the concept paper, we're clear on what the vision is, and taking into consideration what that would mean in terms of rates.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, is there more money in it for those programs? Because I didn't hear that. No? Okay. No?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GUILLEN: We are taking into consideration... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Ya'll are taking it into consideration?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GUILLEN: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay, you're taking consideration.

I would like to point out that I ran three community centers and two school-based programs, and there was always a deficit. The school-based program would have money to buy supplies and go on trips. And then my center-based programs were struggling with crayons because they had to have a front desk person, and often a janitor and a food person to do the food. And there were all these extra requirements. So, we have to look at how those models are different and make sure that we are funding them adequately. But I remember my school-based programs, they'll be like, "Oh, we're going on a trip," and my community center is like, "Yeah, could we borrow crayons?" It was a real thing.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: You have been a consistent advocate for center-based programs. And we appreciate it... CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Because nobody else does.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: We are definitely taking that feedback (INAUDIBLE)...

(CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: No one else does...

(CROSS-TALK)

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: (INAUDIBLE)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: It's a different space where it's triple the work, where you were the janitor, you were the cook, you're doing all the things—you're building furniture, like, it's all the things. I'm very good at multitasking, because I had to be running three centers.

Working the three weekly hours of professional development required for the concept paper, some providers are concerned that this will push some staff over their threshold to qualify them for benefits. While this itself is not an issue, it increases the staff costs for providers. Has DYCD considered this? Like the additional three hours?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RATHIEL: Yeah, we did hear feedback around this. I think everyone certainly values-- and to the point around creating career pathways, we want to make sure that we're building in time to support professional development

across the board. We certainly heard feedback around wanting flexibility and what this looks like and how it's provided to make sure everyone can meet it in a way that makes sense for their programs.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Mm-hmm. The Concept Paper includes mental health components for afterschool programs. Can DYCD clarify what specific responsibilities contractors are expected to fulfill?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RATHIEL: Sure. Yeah, I think, you know, as we all know, there is a mental health crisis among young people. So DYCD wanted to be intentional about calling out that really folks who are in—and staff who are in afterschool programs are on the front lines and make sure they're prepared with training and connections in the community and schools to be able to support that (sic). So, you know, as we lay out-- in the concept paper, there are training requirements to make sure folks have knowledge of some of the most common things that they might be encountering on the ground. And in addition, have the program director do kind of intentional work to make sure that they're building out referral plans and kind of have a plan in place to be able to do that referral, either with

school partners, if they're in a school setting, and it's available, or with community-based partners.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: How will DYCD support contractors in understanding and complying with HIPAA and other privacy regulations while dealing with sensitive mental health information?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RATHIEL: DYCD currently does provide-- we have a capacity building provider who does do some mental health support trainings. And as these requirements roll out, we intend to make sure we're supporting folks with the rollout and working with our capacity building provider to make sure they're aligned with the new requirements.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Will DYCD provide a citywide referral list of youth mental health providers to help contractors make timely and appropriate connections?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: That was feedback that we've gotten that we're taking back about whether the centralized, you know, curation and keeping that up to date is something that can be taken on at DYCD. We got feedback about how challenging it would be to handle locally, so we

heard it, and we're factoring that into our deliberations.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, it's super challenging. And are you guys looking to take advantage of-- maybe even with the mental health stuff? I know Chair Lee did a lot of work around peer-to-peer mental health, peer-to-peer mental health services for young people, and that's available. I know we passed the bill a couple of months ago, which allows us to get young people trained and qualified through DOHMH. Is that something you guys are looking to take advantage of and make sure that young people-- to even kind of help support some of this mental health capacity stuff that you're looking to do?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Absolutely. And we have a strong-- we've designated a new position within DYCD. I can't remember the title, but (INAUDIBLE) to be like the senior advisor on mental health supports. And Shonda (phonetic) has been a great liaison to the Office of Community Mental Health. I think there may be an article today in Politico about a unique training called EASE (phonetic) that they implemented at some of the

community centers and Cornerstones in Brooklyn that helped to work with middle school students around improving their peer network with adult supports around behavioral mental health... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Oh, so they're doing (UNINTELLIGIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Yeah. We're definitely exploring all options around.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And so there's a new position where there's someone dedicated to do mental health supports for providers and give them guidance?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I would say to coordinate those activities within DYCD to ensure that we're tapped into the resources, like Denice described, so that we can be responsive to CBO needs.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay. Yeah, just, you know, sometimes we have all these great ideas and initiatives, and then everyone's not taking advantage. So I know, like I said, the peer-to-peer stuff, and we're going to be in a lot of schools, we want to make sure kids are, you know, able to access that and use that and all the things.

The next question is around MWBEs (Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises).

1 The Concept Paper requires contractors to purchase
2 30% of goods and supplies and services equipment from
3 MWBEs. How did DYCD determine this percentage, and is
4 it realistic to achieve from all the contractors? And
5 I just want to go on record for saying that I love
6 MWBEs; they're super important, but I know that it
7 has been challenging sometimes with the list of MWBEs
8 not being able to provide all the things. So I know
9 this is not your fault, but this is something I know
10 Council Member Williams has been talking about, and
11 Council Member Won, who've been really pushing around
12 MWBEs. It's just that the list isn't even
13 comprehensive. And so a lot of times, I know I've
14 heard stories where providers will go on and they
15 think they're looking at a STEM contractor, and
16 they're like, HVAC systems. They're like, "Well,
17 you're not a STEM provider. Like, I don't understand
18 how you are in this category." But if this is going
19 to be a requirement, how's the City actually building
20 out a comprehensive list so that providers can get
21 the things that they need? Because you're requiring
22 30% of goods to be bought from MWBEs.

24 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RATHIEL: Yeah, so
25 just to clarify, the requirement in the Concept Paper

is that the maximum is 30% of the total budget that could be subcontracted, and we strongly encourage the use of MWBE. So it's not a requirement in the Concept Paper that 30% would be subcontracted to MWBEs.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, but the City really needs to build out that list because we want to go to MWBEs to support the work. And there are so many across the city, but one of the requirements to get on that list is daunting, and it is just not comprehensive. So I really would love for the City to work on having more of a comprehensive list so that providers can be using that.

I think those are all of the questions that I have. Council Member Williams, do you have any more questions? I think there is no one else here.

Well, with that, I think I'm done with you. Thank you, guys, for coming in. We appreciate you being open and honest with all of the questions.

I do have-- when we have looked at the site for the list of providers, it has a list of schools, but it doesn't have the providers attached. So, if someone could send me the list of providers that were chosen for the schools, that would be really helpful.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: We can do that, thank you.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GUILLEN: Yes, we can do that, mm-hmm.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you, guys, so much.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GUILLEN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I ask for Lara Lai to come to the dais.

LARA LAI: Thank you, Chair.

Good afternoon, Chair Stevens and members of the City Council Children and Youth Committee. My name is Lara Lai, and I am the Senior Policy Analyst and Strategic Organizer for Education in the Office of NYC Comptroller Brad Lander. Today I'm going to review the findings and recommendations from the two recent afterschool reports published by our office and the survey of 627 school leaders. Following up on Council Member Joseph and Menin's comments, I will focus on afterschool for District 75 and students with disabilities.

Our analysis found that in the new rollout, there are no District 75 programs that

received any of the newly allocated afterschool seats. The lack of D75 seats follows the findings of our report in June that children with disabilities face disproportionate lack of access to afterschool.

The lack of afterschool bus transportation is the major barrier to afterschool care citywide and a particular challenge for the 62,000 students with IEP-mandated school bus transportation, as well as students in temporary housing.

Another barrier is that District 75 programs do not have access to the primary source of afterschool funding in the city, and that is DYCD-funded programs. None of the District 75 programs in our surveys has any DYCD-funded programming compared to nearly 50% of all the other respondents.

In a letter sent to the Comptroller on September 8th, DYCD Commissioner Howard indicated that the COMPASS program will expand access to afterschool programming for students with disabilities. We appreciate DYCD's commitment to equity, as we heard earlier, but we believe this is very likely to be limited in scope. Saying that it's

inclusive and making it inclusive are not the same thing.

There are also inequities in City Council CASA grant allocations; only 6% of D75 schools have CASA programs compared to 15% of other respondents.

To advance equity and access to afterschool, we recommend that the City Council increase their investment in CASA for District 75 schools by \$10 million, that the City create dedicated afterschool funding explicitly for District 75 programs, and that the City accelerate rebidding DOE school bus contracts to allow for afterschool bus transportation. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you.

The Comptroller's Office completed and analyzed the initial 5,000-seat rollout of the Mayor's DYCD Universal Aftercare expansion. According to the analysis, not a single neighborhood-- not a single neighborhood public school in Manhattan or any DYCD school was awarded new seats. A large swath of them were in Brooklyn and Queens and appeared to be underserved. In your analysis, which district showed

the largest mismatch between communities and seat allocations?

LARA LAI: Thank you for that question, Chair. We did not do a deep dive into where the current seats are. We simply looked at the allocation of the 40 schools and the 5,000 seats. To say that there is not a single public school in Manhattan that needed more seats in this rollout seemed strange to us. That's not to say that the seats that were allocated went to communities that weren't in need and schools that were in need, but there were just some striking disparities in that rollout. For example, there were no seats in public schools in Central Brooklyn. Most of the seats in Brooklyn were in neighborhoods like Decker Heights and Bensonhurst. There was one charter school in all of Manhattan that got new seats. We heard some testimony about schools that lost their LEAPS funding, for example. We know of at least three schools, one in Upper Manhattan, two in District 30 in Queens, that lost their LEAPS funding and did not receive any seats. So, that, you know, questioning about whether there was really a serious effort to address schools that lost that state funding, and we can go back and forth about,

well, that's the State and we're the City, but the fact is that those are programs that had seats but longer have them and they were not part of the rollout. So, those were the types of issues that we flagged in our analysis.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Your report shows that no District 75 schools received any of the newly allocated seats despite high needs. Did your office receive any explanation from DYCD or City Hall about this exclusion?

LARA LAI: We did not. We have heard from advocates and parents that the currently contracted CBOs that DYCD uses simply do not have the staff and the capacity to meet the needs and challenges that District 75 students face, in terms of having to provide, as we heard earlier, paraprofessionals, trained paraprofessionals, having to provide related services—children who may need services as part of their afterschool programming. Most CBOs do not necessarily have that capacity. So it's a combination of a mismatch in the currently contracted CBOs and the needs of District 75 programs, as well as just the overwhelming barrier that the lack of transportation provides. And there, this is really a

DOE issue, and I'm not sure how aware this committee is of this, but those bus contracts that DOE has are from 1979.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Oh, I'm aware.

LARA LAI: They do not provide for afterschool.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Mm-hmm

LARA LAI: They do not ensure that every student has air conditioning. They're so problematic, and we are in a situation right now where those contracts need to be extended. They expired in June. We are in a state of emergency contracts right now to keep those buses running, and we have an administration that looks like they are going to try to do a five-year extension because they say the bus companies won't settle for anything less. And that will take us into the next decade before we resolve this problem.

So we need the political will. We have a great legal department in this city. We need them to get with the program and get us some new bus contracts, the way DYCD did with their contracts. I mean, that's to be applauded that they are rebidding those contracts. The bus contracts have to be rebid

as well. And until that happens, there won't be universal afterschool.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah. I mean, listen, it took us 10 years to get this RFP, so I don't know how well we did there. But I do hear and I know Chair Joseph has been pushing hard on that topic. And I feel like Dr. Williams said in one of the hearings that it's like we could probably start up our own bus company as a city and save money as opposed to contracting it out.

LARA LAI: Well, and also, I mean, I'm just throwing this out there, this is not, you know, you may remember when we set up that horrible shelter out on Flatbush Avenue for families seeking asylum, that the City actually contracted Coach Buses, there was a hearing on it, they contracted Coach Buses to provide transportation to the families that were living in those tents out there. And we need to be creative, we need to do something to ensure that children who have IEP-mandated bus transportation, children who, by statute, by McKinney-Vento, who are living in temporary housing, have legally mandated bus transportation, so that those students can do the afterschool play, they can play on the soccer team,

they can go to Lego robotics in afterschool. And it is just simply unacceptable that this city cannot do that for those children.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I mean, I agree, it's really unfortunate. I remember there were so many young people who wanted to be a part of the program but would not have had a way to get home. So they weren't able to go, or they would come in for the first 30 minutes and then have to be pulled away because the bus was coming to pick them up. And so, you know, we would do creative things, like if there was a half-day and we're doing a, you know, vacation camp, we would always try to include them. But it is really unfortunate for those who have those issues. And a lot of times, these are some of our foster care children who need to have additional resources....

(CROSS-TALK)

LARA LAI: Yes, foster care children as well.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: enrichment. So I'm in total agreement and in support of us trying to come up with a real solution for that.

LARA LAI: And you're probably aware that children with mandated bus transportation have to leave Summer Rising when...

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Oh, I know.

LARA LAI: the DOE portion is over, because they cannot stay. So imagine being a student who relies on bus transportation, all your friends are now going off on a field trip to the pool, and you have to get on your bus and go home. I mean, this is like an inequity that we as a city should be able to solve.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, I mean, it's one of those things that we have to continue to push to the front of the conversation.

LARA LAI: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And I will say this, I think before Summer Rising, because everybody knows that it is not my favorite program, but what it has done is highlight how when we want something to work, we will figure it out.

LARA LAI: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, we can figure this out in that same way. Before that, a lot of students with disabilities were not even in camp

because there was no option. So we were able to figure that out, so we can figure out how to keep them there for full-day programs. So I fully understand, and I want to make sure that we continue to push it to the front of the conversation.

I just have a couple more questions. Did your office identify any patterns in which neighborhoods or school types were favored, for example, charter school versus traditional schools or low needs versus high needs districts?

LARA LAI: No, what we identified, and there's a map in that report that you can refer to, is simply that there are very high needs neighborhoods that did not receive any seats. That's not to say that the neighborhoods and the schools and the communities that did receive seats didn't have high needs as well. But I, you know, I'll use Upper Manhattan and Central Brooklyn, uh, if you look at the map in terms of the agency testified earlier that the ENI, Economic Need Index, was one of the metrics that they used to determine whether they should allocate seats. And those two areas of the City have very high ENI values across the board. So it begs the

question as to why there were no seats allocated there.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: What steps do you recommend that the City Council take to ensure future allocations are transparent and equitable?

LARA LAI: I think having-- announcing what the metrics are upfront in terms of the evaluation, I think just as an example, the Department of Education this past year, sent out a survey to principals to ask them how they would like to meet class size. The Department of Education allocated additional funding this school year to schools that had a plan for meeting the new class size law. And it was a very deliberate process; they sent the survey out in December, and principals had to fill out an application. They responded, saying, "This is what I'm going to do to resolve class size at my school. I need 10 more teachers." And that plan was evaluated by the Department of Education, and many, many schools got that funding. There should be a deliberative process that takes place. There should be public engagement, stakeholders such as parents and principals, and it should be as public and transparent as possible. We heard from a number of

1 parents who reached out-- their first inclination was
2 to reach out to DOE and say, is our school getting
3 more afterschool seats, or why didn't we get more
4 afterschool seats? And there was nobody who could
5 answer their question as to what the metrics were
6 that were used, and why some schools got them in one
7 school, while some schools didn't.

8
9 So I think having an intentionality and a
10 deliberative, transparent process around the future
11 rollout of seats would, you know, alleviate a lot of
12 the questions that came about as a result of the way
13 it was done this time around.

14 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, no, I agree. I
15 mean, you can hear the questions I had. I was very
16 clear about how they were chosen, and what, and how
17 did that even become public? And, like, they said
18 they have put it on the website, but we looked and it
19 wasn't there. So, it is important for there to be
20 transparency. And here's the thing: we want all of
21 our kids to have access to this. And I think it's
22 not, you know, good versus bad or whatever. It's just
23 like, how do we make sure we have all the
24 information, so that-- and also take feedback?

So I agree with you there, but thank you for coming in to testify. I don't know if Council Member Williams has any questions. So thank you for coming and testifying.

LARA LAI: And, thank you, Chair, for your attention to this. It is so important, and we really appreciate your work in this space.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Ah, it's my job, you don't have to thank me for doing my job, but thank you.

I now open the hearing for public testimony. I remind members of the public that this is a formal government proceeding and that decorum shall be observed at all times. As such, members of the public shall remain silent at all times.

The witness table is reserved for people who wish to testify. No video recording or photography is allowed from the witness table.

Further, members of the public may not present audio or video recordings as testimony, but may submit transcripts of such recordings to the Sergeant at Arms for inclusion in the hearing record.

If you wish to speak today, please fill out an appearance card with the Sergeant at Arms and

wait to be recognized. When recognized, you will have two minutes to speak on today's hearing topic: *Afterschool Expansion and DYCD's Concept Paper.*

If you have a written statement or additional testimony you wish to submit for the record, please provide a copy of that testimony to the Sergeant at Arms.

I will now call our first panel: Chelsea Baytemur, Nora, Sarah Jonas, Annie Minguez, and Faith Behum. I know I butchered all of your names, so please state your name for the record when you come to the front.

(PAUSE)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Oh, you guys are waiting for me, that's okay, yeah, go, do the thing.

(LAUGHTER)

CHELSEA BAYTEMUR: Good afternoon, Chair Stevens, and Members of the City Council. My name is Chelsea Baytemur, and I am the Director of Policy and Advocacy at the YMCA of Greater New York.

The Y is one of the City's largest human service providers with 24 branches and more than 100 community sites. Every day, nearly 15,000 children and teens come through our afterschool programs at

Beacons, COMPASS, SONYC, Cornerstones, and community schools, where we provide academic support, enrichment, and a safe, nurturing space for our youth.

We are grateful to the Chair and the City Council for your steadfast advocacy and partnership in securing a historic investment in afterschool. And while the Administration made this preliminary commitment, we urge DYCD to use this upcoming RFP as an opportunity to strengthen a severely outdated system. Well, I'm the first one, but echoing our colleagues at the Campaign for Children, who will also highlight these issues, we remain deeply concerned that outdated rates, unfunded staffing mandates, and unclear summer planning will strain providers and jeopardize program quality. A stable workforce, flexibility with requirements, and fully funded programs are essential if we are to deliver on the promise of high-quality afterschool. As you all shared earlier, at the state level, New York City lost nearly 7,000 afterschool slots under LEAPS, with the greatest impact in the Bronx, Queens, and Staten Island. At the federal level, funding for 21st Century Community Learning Centers and other key

youth programs is also threatened, not to mention other essential streams like SNAP, Medicare, and Head Start, which are also at risk. And these programs work in tandem to holistically serve families and support the continuity of care. Any disruption ultimately harms our communities with negative repercussions for years to come, and we cannot afford to shortchange our children in any way.

The Administration has a critical opportunity right now to step up, invest, and create a stronger afterschool system that truly meets the needs of New Yorkers. (TIMER)

Very quickly, on the topic of summer, which is one of the Y's most cherished programs, we served more than 17,000 children last year, including 5,600 through Summer Rising. The Concept Paper leaves major gaps, offering little clarity on SONYC summer programming rates and whether providers will have ownership over summer models. We need this information; we cannot wait until the last minute. We also need stronger coordination between DYCD and NYCPS, like you mentioned earlier, Chair, especially for the continuous support of our children, especially those with disabilities, who should be

receiving their mandated supports beyond the academic day.

There is more of this in my submitted testimony, and the YMCA looks forward to working with you to make sure every child and family in New York City has access to afterschool. Thank you.

ANNIE MINGUEZ: Good afternoon, Chair Stevens and the Members of the Children and Youth Committee, for hosting this-- and thank you for hosting this oversight hearing. My name is Annie Minguez. I'm the Vice President of Government and Community Relations at Good Shepherd Services. We operate over 100 programs that support over 33,000 children and families across the Bronx, Manhattan, and Brooklyn.

Good Shepherd Service is also part of the Campaign for Children and shares in the concerns outlined in the letter we sent to the Administration about the Concept Paper, which has been submitted for the record. Good Shepherd Services also submitted a response to the Concept Paper, which we will also include for the record, that really outlines our concerns about the proposed staffing model and role qualifications.

I wanted to focus my testimony, my verbal testimony, on this goal that we as a city have around reaching universality. This expansion that the Administration is attempting to do is just another way for us to possibly get there. And yet the proposed cuts to 21st Century federal funding stream, which supports afterschool programming, and the changes to the LEAPS program threaten our progress. We will need to work together to advocate to the State so they understand the need for them to support afterschool programs in the budget next year.

For the record, I am including the budget priorities for the New York State Network for Youth Success, which is one of 50 statewide afterschool networks.

I would like to highlight the following State challenges with implications that implicate New York City with the changes from LEAPS:

New York City lost almost 7,000 state-funded afterschool slots through LEAPS. Losses are concentrated, as Chelsea mentioned, in high-need boroughs: the Bronx, Queens, and Staten Island. We will continue to work with you and the City Council to address these inequities.

SARAH JONAS: Thank you to Chair Althea Stevens, the Children and Youth Committee, and the New York City Council for the opportunity to present testimony today. My name is Sarah Jonas, and I am Vice President of the Youth Division at Children's Aid.

For over 170 years, Children's Aid has worked to ensure that 50,000 young people each year face no limits to their aspirations or potential. In service of this mission, we operate 17 COMPASS and SONYC afterschool programs across New York City, serving more than 3,100 youth annually in our five community centers and the majority of our 19 Community Schools. These programs are a critical lifeline for families, but they can only be successful if contracts cover the true cost of staffing and operations. Years of stagnant rates and repeated contract extensions have left providers stretched thin, making it harder to retain qualified staff, a challenge that will only intensify amid federal and state funding uncertainties.

We are encouraged that City leaders have highlighted afterschool expansion as a priority for working families and emphasized the importance of

skilled staff and mental health services. Yet the proposed rates in DYCD's Concept Paper fall short of what providers need to sustain programs, let alone expand staff qualifications and mental health programs.

A 2023 analysis by United Neighborhood Houses found that the actual cost of compliant afterschool programs is \$10,700 per participant for full-year COMPASS and \$5,500 for school-year SONYC programs. By contrast, DYCD's Concept Paper proposes just \$6,800 for full-year COMPASS and \$3,900 for school-year SONYC programs for the entire six-year contract. At these levels, providers will recover only 60-70% of the cost in year one, with the gap widening over time. (TIMER) We urge the Agency to both raise the base rate in year one and to incorporate annual adjustments tied to a benchmark or through modest increases built into the contract term.

Regarding mental health, we ask that DYCD either define and adequately fund a staff role equipped to provide these services or to scale back direct requirements and instead support providers in building strong referral protocols and networks.

Without these corrections, the City risks weakening the very programs it seeks to strengthen, leaving families without reliable afterschool options and widening inequities across our communities.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. We look forward to continuing to partner on expanding and strengthening our city's network of afterschool programs and are happy to answer any questions. Thank you.

FAITH BEHUM: Thank you, Chairperson Stevens, and Members of the Committee on Children and Youth, for holding this oversight hearing and for the opportunity to submit testimony. My name is Faith Behum, and I am a Manager of Government and External Relations at UJA-Federation of New York.

UJA supports an expansive network of nearly 100 nonprofit organizations, including those that oversee COMPASS and SONYC programs. UJA is grateful that the Adams administration has recognized the importance of afterschool programs by increasing COMPASS slots, introducing a COMPASS/SONYC Concept Paper that aims to improve the system.

When the Concept Paper was released, we met with nonprofit partners in the UJA network who

oversee COMPASS and SONYC programs to discuss their thoughts on the paper. There are 11 different topics detailed in our written testimony, and we also submitted those to the Administration back in July for feedback, which we are concerned about. And I'm just going to highlight a few here:

First is the timeline, so contracts are proposed to begin on August 1st, 2026, with programming to begin on September 1, 2026. Just finding staff and training them in four weeks is extremely difficult, let alone all the other planning that running a new afterschool program entails. Because, as we all know, we can't pay people before the contract starts. Contracts must begin to allow sufficient time for developing programs. And we're also urging that programs be awarded contracts so people can simply find out that they've been chosen to oversee programs at least four months before programming starts to provide enough time for non-profits to secure SACC licenses.

Timeliness of compensation was not addressed in the Concept Paper. Currently, many nonprofits with DYCD contracts have been waiting for years to be compensated for completed work. DYCD must

include language in the RFP that will detail their commitment to COMPASS contracts receiving prompt payment.

How attendance will be defined is also an issue. The Concept Paper states that COMPASS and SONYC programs will maintain 100% enrollment throughout the school year. How is DYCD defining 100% enrollment for school-year programs? It is sometimes difficult to have families commit to attending programming five days a week due to their child being involved in other afterschool activities. Will there be any flexibility for providers with meeting 100% enrollment target?

The Concept Paper is a good starting point towards developing an afterschool system that more sufficiently rewards providers for their work and will strengthen programs for children. We thank you for this opportunity to testify, and we look forward to working with the City Council and Administration on improving afterschool programs for all New York City children and youth.

NORA MORAN: Hi. Thank you so much for the chance to testify. My name is Nora Moran. I'm the Director of Policy And Advocacy at United

1 Neighborhood Houses. We represent New York City
2 settlement houses that are serving thousands of youth
3 through COMPASS, SONYC, Cornerstones, Beacons, you
4 name it, they do it.

5 Our comments are really in our testimony,
6 largely mirror what we submitted in our concept
7 paper, and largely mirror what a lot of my colleagues
8 said already. A couple of things we'd like to uplift,
9 you know, we agree that the time for a concept paper
10 and an RFP is now. We have waited way too long. We're
11 operating on a very outdated system. However, we have
12 to do it the right way to build a system up for
13 success if we're ever going to get to a point where
14 we have universal afterschool.

15 A couple of specific comments around the
16 price per participant: We agree that it's too low. We
17 did a lot of research into what a model budget would
18 look like. This proposed model budget falls short.
19 That directly ties to some of our concerns around
20 staffing and the staff qualifications, just
21 specifically to that line of questioning earlier
22 around, you know, we're coaching young people through
23 helping them understand what's experience and DYCD
24 kind of giving that clarification.
25

We also need to keep in mind that if the employer doesn't know what one year of experience is, we don't want them interpreting that really narrowly and saying, well, you know, I can't hire this young person because maybe their experience is something that DYCD isn't going to consider to be experienced. It's going to be an issue down the line. So having those requirements out would be ideal. If they're going to be in there, they need to be really clear about what that means.

For summer, we're glad to see that we're including 12-month elementary contracts, and we're really concerned about the middle school piece, and that that's not defined. UNH has also been on the record for many years raising concerns around the Summer Rising model, wanting there to be choice and options for providers and families, and for schools to work out what is the best summer programming for them to do. Our members run alternative summer models. They would love to be able to, you know, do those in their school-based (TIMER) sites, and they cannot because of the rigid adherence to Summer Rising.

And then the last piece, we'd say, around mental health, we agree that those roles and expectations need to be very clearly defined. There's no funding right now to have a social worker and really provide robust mental health programming. So either there needs to be strong referrals or looking at, you know, the Department for the Aging actually has some interesting models around putting mental health programs in senior centers. Are there things to be learned there when we're looking at putting mental health programs in schools and afterschool programs? So encouraging that bigger thinking would be great. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. I guess I have a couple of questions, and I know, Annie, you had spoken a little bit about some of the state challenges that you guys have faced. Could you go into a little bit more detail around what it has looked like for the State to kind of shrink their program and how that has been felt? And I am sure everybody has State problems, so everybody can chime in. But I know she had brought up the State specifically.

ANNIE MINGUEZ: Thank you for that question, Chair. I think one of the pieces that we continue to uplift is that LEAPS, as it exists right now, excludes students between the ages of 13 and 17. So this is really leaving older young people without sufficient support. In New York City, we did the universal middle school program. I remember when we finally got that baselined...(CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I know.

ANNIE MINGUEZ: But as Nora mentioned, we still don't know about summer. And then there's a new RFP that the Office of Children and Family Services put out, which is called the Boost Pilot, and that's really narrow in scope, and it excludes New York City except for specialized high schools. So that's really one of the, uh, in addition to the pieces of the communities that have been most impacted and now have seen this void, it's this piece around who's being served that we're very concerned about.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, I would really like for us to work on an advocacy plan with the State folks this year, holistically around just talking about the gaps that we're seeing from the state side around funding, because I do believe it's

1 super important that we're holding them accountable
2 as well. Especially again, as the City is expanding,
3 we want it to be felt, and for me, it doesn't feel
4 like it's going to be felt because we're kind of just
5 filling in the gaps that the State kind of pulled out
6 from us.

7
8 The other question I had was, I know
9 everyone talks specifically around the per
10 participant rate and why that is going to be
11 challenging with this new RFP. If folks could just
12 like succinctly go into a little bit more detail,
13 like what you foresee with that issue, and where you
14 think the deficits will fall?

15 NORA MORAN: I mean, I think the biggest
16 issue is that providers are going to hire staff at
17 wage points that are just not competitive with the
18 broader labor market. Right? If you can earn a
19 minimum wage in an afterschool program, but \$20 an
20 hour at "insert retail store here", you know? Young
21 people are going to take those other jobs. We have
22 had this conversation with our members a lot.
23 Working with kids is hard. It is rewarding, but it's
24 hard, it's exhausting. And... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I miss it, but it was a lot of work.

NORA MORAN: Yeah! You have to go through a background check, you know, it's not just a sort of simple, like, we'll hire you tomorrow sort of thing. It is really important if we are ever going to have a pipeline of people who are, you know, program leaders, teachers, right? Who want to work-- mental health counselors who want to enter into a service profession working with young people, whether it is afterschool or something else, we find that the first job in an afterschool program is really important. But if it is not made to be attractive or just viable and workable for young people, they are going to work somewhere else. It's the same, the higher up you go, right? Our members have a hard time hiring program directors and other supervisory-level staff. And that kind of translates into, okay, if we don't have strong staff there, you're not going to have someone really coaching an entry-level field of people to move up into these other positions. So, is our program run deficits? I don't know, right? I would hope they would have a balanced budget, but I think

we are just losing an opportunity to have a solid pipeline of people entering the field later on.

And, then, also, this has been hard to quantify, but how many providers have times when they can't open because they can't safely meet ratio? That is another thing that the State ties our hands around. They have certain ratios that they need in place in terms of staffing, so if that's the case, we need to (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And it's (INAUDIBLE) requirement. And...

NORA MORAN: Yes, we need to pay for that.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah.

ANNIE MINGUEZ: I'll just add, there are new requirements that are going to be coming down. So when we look at the UNH report, and we are at the 10,000, and we land at 6,000, and providers are already struggling with what they had, I don't even know that we're breaking even at 6,000. I just want to make sure that I say that. So we are going to find ourselves navigating hiring more people, probably, to meet some of those requirements. And we are already having a shortage of staff who are able to do this work. And as Nora mentioned, and I think that's

really important, is that these are professionals, youth and family development professionals who later go on to work in different positions throughout our agency. And I can think of-- and we probably-- all of us can think of so many people who have done that. And you mentioned that, Chair. And I think that with all of these new requirements, we might be losing the mark on ensuring...

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Mm-hmm.

ANNIE MINGUEZ: that that's what's happening in these programs.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: (INAUDIBLE)...

(CROSS-TALK)

SARAH JONAS: If I could just add very quickly, I think another important part of this is that when we talk about delivery and the high-quality programs that our young people, our young New Yorkers deserve, there is also that piece around professionalizing this whole-- this is a career, right? And what it means to professionalize it is, like, you know, we are demanding more, too, (INAUDIBLE) providing training and sort of professional development for these young people as part of this pipeline. And I think that also then

begs the question, like, are we paying these folks at the rate that they deserve, where we are asking for this level of professionalism —and demanding it— because that's what young people deserve. Right? So, I just wanted to make that point as well.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I guess my last question, and this is to Nora, who I know is at UNH, and this executive order that came out on 5-A around the Commission on Universal After-School. I just wanted to uplift the report that you guys have done and released on how to get to universal afterschool. So, if you could talk about that work and how, hopefully, that is being used as a guideline for the work that this commission will be doing?

NORA MORAN: Yeah. So our Executive Director sits on the Commission, you know, we will be in any place and space where we're talking about afterschool, and we'll come and share our work and our research. You know, I think that the report that we wrote really looks at mapping and space and trying to highlight neighborhoods where there's no access right now to make sure that as we're planning for the future, we're really looking at those areas. You know, we found that we're much closer to achieving

1 universal access for middle school programming than
2 for elementary school programming. And I think we
3 were there for middle school under de Blasio, and you
4 know, backslid. But elementary is certainly where
5 there's a really big gap. And looking at maps,
6 they're all kind of linked in the report, the
7 majority of neighborhoods in New York City have
8 limited access to afterschool for elementary school,
9 uh, elementary age children, and there are 22 NTAs in
10 New York City that contain an elementary school that
11 have no publicly funded afterschool program. So that
12 is really a concern. Right? Like, there are just
13 parts of the city that just simply have no access.

14 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah.

15 NORA MORAN: And even though that, you
16 know, we know there's higher levels of economic
17 hardship, there are a lot of NTAs in the Bronx that
18 have very limited access to elementary and middle
19 school afterschool programming. And that is the
20 borough that we saw some of the biggest divestment
21 from with the new LEAPS awards. We had a couple of
22 Bronx providers who just lost out, right? And they
23 were approved but not funded, wherever that
24 designation was. So the bids were quality, and they
25

1 said, you know, if we had enough money, we would put
2 it here, but they just didn't.

3 So, you know, that-- our concern is
4 really making sure that as we're doing a new RFP,
5 we're really looking at neighborhoods where there's
6 not a lot of access, that we're taking the steps to
7 actually build provider capacity there. You know, we
8 can't just kind of say, okay, we'll put-- we had a
9 similar issue with the literacy RFP a couple of years
10 ago, right? Prioritizing certain neighborhoods, there
11 wasn't necessarily a qualified organization there.

12 So we hope that as we're looking toward
13 expansion, the City also takes steps in coordination
14 with the Council, since you all are often really
15 closely connected to smaller organizations, trying to
16 build up some of that capacity in areas where there's
17 little access.

18 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah. I mean, that
19 was one of the questions I was asking today, you
20 know, I wish they had reached out to the council
21 members around this expansion, and if they're doing
22 capacity building for some of the smaller
23 organizations. I've had so many colleagues reach out
24 to me with that same request. And so, you know, I'm
25

always urging city agencies to work in partnership with us because, you know, sometimes we just have access that they might not or they overlook.

But thank you guys so much for your testimony. I really appreciate it. And I will be calling the next panel.

May DePierro, William Jourdain, Paula Magnes, and Jenny Ingber. Please repeat your names when you get up here because I know I'll be butchering everyone's name, and I apologize in advance.

(PAUSE)

MAY DEPIERRO: Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is May DePierro, and I am a Policy Associate at Advocates for Children of New York. We are pleased that the City has committed to expanding access to afterschool programs with the goal of adding 20,000 more seats over the next three school years. However, for many students who are currently left out of afterschool programs, adding seats is not sufficient to provide access. We have heard from families of students with disabilities who have been turned away from afterschool programs with the explanation that the

providers are not able to meet their needs. This type of exclusion is unacceptable and illegal.

While the DYCD Concept Paper noted that contractors should provide additional supports or services to enable full participation by those with special needs, the City must do more to ensure students with disabilities can participate. The City should develop well-publicized systems for parents to request and the City to provide any accommodations and supports a student with a disability may need to fully participate in afterschool programming.

We recommend that responsibility for this process lie with the City and not individual community-based organizations in order to standardize the process. The City should also ensure that afterschool programs are available to students attending District 75 schools.

We also hear from families of students with disabilities, students in temporary housing, and students in foster care who rely on bus service to get home and cannot participate in afterschool programs because bus service is only available at the end of the regular school day. The City must provide these students with bus service or alternative

workable transportation from afterschool programs, as it is legally required to do. The City has indicated that it must rebid the 45-year-old school bus contracts in order to add afterschool bus service, and we urge the City to do so as soon as possible. The city will not be able to realize the Mayor's vision of After-school for All unless it ensures that programs are equipped to meet the needs of all students. (TIMER) My written testimony includes some more information and recommendations. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

PAULA MAGNUS: Chairperson Stevens and esteemed Members of the Council, thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Paula Magnus, and I am the Deputy Director of Northside Center for Child Development, one of the community-based organizations. We are 80 years old, and we are a behavioral health clinic and community-based organization providing a broad range of services, including afterschool programming for children with special needs. We serve thousands of children and families annually across the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Harlem. And at Northside, we have experienced firsthand DYCD's commitment to quality through their

oversight of our afterschool and summer day camp programs. We have children from ages five to 12, again, those with special needs, and they collect data on our program to see what the outcomes are (TIMER), and as we know, that is extremely important to make sure our programs are productive. We all know what the research has shown, how it improves the outcome academically, and all of the other things that are beneficial from these types of programs.

So we respectfully urge the Council to review, as you've been doing, and it is great to hear the questions and the comments, Chair Stevens, that you have made, because, clearly, you know what you are talking about. So we really understand that we have to be cost-sensitive to what is going to be the outcome, and we want to make these few points:

Ensuring full cost coverage of services; one cost doesn't fit all; annual rate adjustments in line with cost-of-living increases; and allocating for start-up uptime more than what has been allowed.

So, again, we just wanted to testify to encourage you to continue doing what you are doing and making sure that we can serve the children and

the families in New York City in a proud way, with quality and respect. Thank you for this opportunity.

WILLIAM JOURDAIN: Good afternoon, Honorable Chair Stevens, blessings to you all, Council Members, and distinguished guests. My name is William Jourdain, and I am the Executive Director of Woodside on the Move, a nonprofit that provides afterschool programming, housing services, tenant advocacy, and community development for families across Queens for nearly five decades.

Every September, parents breathe a sigh of relief as school begins, but for working families, the hours of afterschool remain a challenge. Afterschool programs are not a luxury; they are essential. They reinforce academics, provide safe environments, deter risky behaviors, and allow parents to fully participate in the workforce. They are infrastructure for families, as we all know here. Yet too many neighborhoods remain "afterschool deserts." While the City expanded seats to 220,000 students this summer, nearly 392,000 children remain without access. At Woodside on the Move, our waitlist alone exceeds 100 students annually, which is a clear sign of unmet need.

Universal afterschool would be transformative. With adequate support, we could serve up to 150 more students, hire 10-15 additional staff members, including guidance counselors and social workers, while also improving salaries so we can retain the educators our students depend on.

For universal afterschool to succeed, systemic barriers must be addressed. Too often, nonprofits are forced into competition for limited funding instead of being supported to collaborate.

Last year, Woodside on the Move worked tirelessly to launch an afterschool program in a new school within our community. We invested significant time, energy, and even absorbed a revenue loss because we knew how critical it was for the students, families, and the principal to have this resource. We moved forward with the understanding that a future RFP pipeline through DYCD would help sustain the program. Instead, DYCD relocated another provider into the same school without our knowledge. The contract was split between us and a much larger nonprofit with far greater resources. The outcome was not one strong, cohesive program serving 120 students, but two diluted programs in the same

building, leaving families confused and children underserved.

This practice pits nonprofits against one another, wastes resources, and ultimately undermines program quality. We have to appropriately strategize and implement equitable actions for universal afterschool. In order for it to succeed, universal afterschool must be: Accessible to all students, regardless of income or grade level; equitably funded so that nonprofits can collaborate instead of compete; supported with timely payments; and have access to school facilities after hours.

I'm laughing because I think we all know what we're talking about here. Thank you, Chair, because you are at the helm, and you know what you're doing and talking about.

PAULA MAGNUS: Mm-hmm, that's right.

JENNY INGBER: Hi, thank you, Council Member Stevens and Committee. I am Jenny Ingber, and I work with Chess in the Schools, and I am CEO and President. Thank you for also being incredible supporters of our work in NYC Schools. I am testifying today as an afterschool provider with the niche expertise of teaching chess to children.

In looking at this RFP and trying to imagine where we fit within this ecosystem—you had talked about the enrichment universe—the RFP very much targets, as William suggested, these large organizations who could provide a lot of different kinds of content in multiple areas focusing on STEM, literacy, social-emotional learning, and then there's a small little bucket of other activities. We fall into that "other activities" category. Last year, across our 48 schools, we worked with nearly 1,000 students. Twenty-four of our schools are on the COMPASS list; the rest are not, and there are about 29 different CBOs that we counted up who serve-- I mean, I was just trying to do my research based on what is available—29 different CBOs that work in the different schools that we're in. So, I am coming to you as a potential contractor, fitting into that narrow 30% of the total budget of what other folks would be applying for, and asking that there also be some direction around subcontracting. You referred to the mental health support referral process, but I think there are also some of us out here within the ecosystem who provide really rich, high-quality programs for students that would fit into that same

bucket. And I would love to see some matchmaking and opportunities for us as people who do receive funding through you all, through a DYCD passthrough, to be able to continue our work in this afterschool space.

The other two items that I have that I just want to mention—providing flexibility for CBOs that do obtain funding to change their subcontractors annually, assuming that they may find new opportunities and new partners as they go, especially given the current timeline, and allow for us to serve as both professional development providers and direct service in this space along side these larger organizations.

Thank you so much for your time, for listening, and for your continued support of our organization.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you all for your testimony. I don't have any questions for this panel. Thank you guys so much for being here, and your work is very much appreciated.

Kimberly Olsen, Karen Jolicoeur, Martha Soriano, Shanon Shaw, and Hannah Allen. For those who have come to my hearings before, we know that young people get deference here. So you will be able to

start the panel, so they get deference. Sorry, that's just my rule.

MARTHA SORIANO: Good afternoon, my name is Martha Soriano, and I'm an eighth grader at Charles O. Dewey in Sunset Park, Brooklyn. I've been participating in the Center for Family Life Afterschool program at my school since 6th grade. Some of my favorite parts of afterschool have been performing and using my voice through acting. I love becoming characters and seeing others' perspectives and how they compare to mine. Since the 6th grade, I've performed in four shows with the Center for Family Life, and I am planning to audition for Performing Arts High School next year.

What I love most about my afterschool program is the variety of clubs and the program offers. Some people like sports, some like to perform, some like visual arts or STEM, and at my program, they all have those options, and we all get to experience all the choices.

I feel like middle school kids won't be happy about going to an afterschool program where they follow a set schedule at all, because kids are interested in different things, like sports or arts,

and some kids are good at certain things and want to explore certain things. We should be given the opportunity to get to know more people and not have to stay in the same group all day, like we did in elementary school programs. To me, a good afterschool program for middle school kids looks like a wide variety of sports and arts, including culinary arts, allowing people to pick what they want and not making people to go to a set schedule for activities because that's forced.

Also, there should be a summer camp for middle school students. I have participated in the last two summers at the Center for Family Life, but I don't come to the academic part of the day because it's too early, and I didn't need the help or support that was being offered because I had learned all the subjects in the school year. The camp activities gave me more experience in building communication skills and helped me build stronger bonds with my friends and participate in the activities I like.

Thank you, Chair Stevens and the New York City Council on Children and Youth, for the opportunity to express my opinion about what middle

school kids would like to see in afterschool and summer programs.

SHANON SHAW: Good afternoon, Chair Stevens and the rest of the Children and Youth Committee. Thank you for hosting me today. My name is Shannon Shaw, and I am Vice President of Strategic Partnerships at HeartShare. HeartShare is a Human Services agency that's been around for 150 years. We serve over 10,000 children and families across New York City every year. We provide a continuum of services, including foster care, mental health supports, housing, education, and afterschool programming. Afterschool is a critical component of our work, ensuring children are safe, that they have enriching environments outside of school hours, while supporting parents who are navigating poverty, burnout, complex family dynamics, justice involvement, and employment schedules that often do not align with school hours. As a mom, I think it's the greatest scam that school lets out at 3:00 p.m. and then work lets out at 5:00 p.m.

So, for us, I believe that youth and youth in foster care, and people with disabilities need and deserve significantly more opportunities for

In response to DYCD's COMPASS and SONYC Concept Paper, it is an important step in the City's commitment to expand afterschool access. However, we encourage the Council and DYCD to prioritize adequate funding rates. So the rates must fully ensure and cover staffing, supplies, and facilities. Currently, DYCD's per student rate is between 30 to 40% below the cost of running quality programming.

According to the Afterschool Alliance, 48% of afterschool programs are at risk of closing. And these were a 2024 stats. And we want to, of

course, uplift a lot of what my colleagues have said before about the continuity and the sustainability of this. The transition times that have been outlined in the Concept Paper should not disrupt services.

Additionally, I believe providers need a more reasonable and stable preparation time—more than a month to recruit and retain qualified staff and plan programming effectively. For our individual disabilities and also our kids in foster care, we want to make sure that we're being culturally competent in our hiring practices, and this takes a lot more time than a month.

In conclusion, afterschool programming is not an add-on. For many families across New York City, it is a lifeline. And on behalf of HeartShare, St. Vincent's, and the thousands of families we serve, I urge the Council to ensure that the RFP and implementation of the afterschool expansion reflects the real needs of the communities, providers, and children—most importantly, the youth and children we serve. Thank you.

KAREN JOLICOEUR: Good afternoon. I'm Karen Jolicoeur, Executive Director of Creative Art Works, a 39-year-old youth development nonprofit

working in the visual and multimedia arts. It's my pleasure to speak with you today about arts education and creative youth development as vital, necessary components of high-quality out-of-school-time programs.

We were delighted to learn about the forthcoming expansion of meaningful enrichment for NYC kids outside the school day. After all, study after study corroborates our own experience employing the arts as a catalyst for every one of the goals outlined in DYCD's Theory of Change: civic engagement, youth empowerment, pro-social behaviors and connection, literacy, family engagement, and employment access and skills development.

The heightened emphasis on partnerships with other community-based organizations outlined in the Concept Paper is prudent-even inspired. Nonprofits like ours-which can't qualify as MWBEs, by the way-bring not only greater capacity and additional financial resources, but also expertise-and truly, quality matters. Our professional teaching artists bring not only well-developed artistic practice to the table, but also receive ongoing professional development and guidance from our

programs staff in curriculum development and lesson planning, positive and creative youth development, and social-emotional learning.

It's no surprise that this past academic year, 93% of our elementary and middle school students attested to being more excited to come to school on days when they had Creative Art Works in or after school. We know that quality arts experiences outside the school day are correlated with positive academic behaviors and, further, are a vehicle for every one of the six goals outlined on page seven of the Concept Paper. Our assets-based approach embeds and enhances creativity, collaboration, cross-cultural communication, critical thinking, and workforce skills.

Where the contemplated structure falls short, then, is in excluding the arts from the program requirements, and relegating these instead to the "extra, optional, if-you-can-squeeze-it-in-after-the-rest" section of the proposal. Why STEM and not STEAM? Can applicants not incorporate literacy-based arts integration to fulfill the literacy component? Could creative youth development programs with

demonstrated impacts on social-emotional learning
fulfill the SEL requirements?

New York City is one of the cultural
centers of the world, and even so, access to
meaningful creative education and experience remains
a pronounced issue of equity and disparity. In
furtherance of DYCD's own stated goals, we urge you
to incorporate the arts as a required component of
OST programs. Thank you.

KIMBERLY OLSEN: Thank you, Chair Stevens,
for hosting today's Oversight Hearing. My name is Kim
Olsen, and I am proud to be the Executive Director of
the NYC Arts in Education Roundtable. We are a non-
profit arts service organization that works with
thousands of artists and arts educators, as well as
hundreds of organizations across our city. I'm here
to advocate for the crucial role of arts education in
our afterschool programs.

Arts, as you've heard, are a critical
access point for guiding student inquiry, dialogue,
critical thinking, career readiness, and literacy
development. I myself was a teaching artist in
afterschool programs for many, many years. I can
attest to having students who would come to school

merely because they knew we were going to rehearse "School House Rock Live! Junior", the musical, or to work on our original play about Rosa Parks.

New York City has really excellent existing arts and cultural infrastructure that could be a vital resource, and is a vital resource, in this work. Existing models like New York City Public Schools Arts Partnership Grants, as well as CASA, provide strong examples of how artists and our city's world-class arts organizations can be partners in creating enriching afterschool programs.

We know at the Roundtable from surveying our community that artists are seeking sustained work opportunities, and I can't think of something more sustained than afterschool, on a daily basis, throughout the school year, and have the background to provide high-quality instruction, but simply don't know that these subcontractor opportunities exist.

We urge the City Council to consider the following recommendations to ensure arts education is a central component of afterschool expansion. Those include: Shifting from STEM to STEAM; ensuring that the arts play a vital role in student development and engagement in this opportunity; soliciting proposals

with robust arts components; and recognizing the full cost associated with providing professional arts instruction, and encouraging partnerships with artists and arts organizations, filling those activity specialist roles with highly-qualified teaching artists; and uplifting available opportunities to subcontract through opportunities such as an afterschool matching fair, through targeting information campaigns, (TIMER) and/or partnership with New York City's Department of Cultural Affairs. And, of course, I will also say to uplift nonprofits in equity initiatives. When uplifting the call to engage Minority and Women Business Enterprises, also uplift nonprofits, many of whom are historically founded and/or led by individuals of color, but are unable to earn MWBE status as it exists currently. Thank you so much for your time.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. I don't have any questions for this panel at this time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. I just want to do one last call and make sure that there is no one in the room that we didn't call who wanted to

testify. Oh, Hannah, did you call Hannah? Sorry, go ahead.

HANNAH ALLEN: Thank you, Chair Stevens and the Committee, for the opportunity to provide feedback on the upcoming RFPs and DYCD-funded afterschool programs. My name is Hannah Allen, and I'm a program director at the Center for Family Life in Sunset Park, which you got to hear a little bit about from Martha. We have successfully run three COMPASS elementary school programs, two COMPASS/SONYC programs, and, until its sudden termination, a high school COMPASS Explorer program. And we're deeply invested in making sure we have robust and great afterschool programs available to our youth.

We are glad that the City is investing in the youth through the expansion of afterschool slots and by releasing a new RFP, and we are grateful to have the opportunity to share some concerns and recommendations we have after reviewing the Concept Paper released in May.

Our main points of feedback are on the proposed staffing model, the budgeting and funding model, and designing a revised SONYC model to meet

the unique developmental needs of middle school students.

First of all, we strongly urge DYCD to remove the educational requirements for group leaders and youth workers. Our current group leaders, who lead and supervise participant groups, perform exceptional work, bringing high-quality content, knowledge, and skills to our students, allowing our organization to deliver excellent outcomes. Our group leaders, often young adults from our community who are former participants themselves, include seniors in high school who do not yet have their diplomas but have the necessary skills, experience, and aptitude to begin their journeys as leaders in our community. And we are hopeful that this requirement can be clarified to include high school seniors in the upcoming RFP.

Additionally, our recommendation for changes to the proposed funding model includes:

First, increasing the price per participant to the rates outlined in the comprehensive report published by UNH in November 2023.

Second, including the 3% cost-of-living adjustment. This is applied annually, years two through six, to keep pace with municipal worker raises and the current budgeting structure, which does not provide any increases to COLA or inflation; our organization will have to adjust our staffing and anticipate retaining fewer staff at the end of the contract period.

Third, we would like to see the 10% minimum subcontractor requirement to be made optional. While we believe there are benefits for a partnership involving subcontractors, our current budget, which is mostly allocated towards direct service staff members (TIMER), would not have the capacity to retain our activity specialists and group leaders if the change were effectuated. Retention of in-house specialists allows our participants to build lasting, meaningful relationships with students, in large part because the students have access to our supports five days a week.

Lastly, as Martha said, making sure that we have a SONYC contract that addresses the unique developmental strengths and needs of middle school students is deeply important to us. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you for your testimony, and I do not have any questions at this time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We will now switch to remote testimony. Once your name is called, a member of our staff will unmute you, and the Sergeant at Arms will set the timer and give you the go-ahead to begin.

Our first panelist will be Jahad Hoyte.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

JAHAD HOYTE: Thank you, Chair Stevens and the Members of the Committee on Children and Youth, for the opportunity to speak on behalf of Expanded Schools. My name is Jahad Hoyte, and I'm Director of External Affairs at Expanded Schools. Expanded Schools applauds the Committee, the DYCD, and the Mayor's Office for their commitment to city-funded afterschool programs.

While Expanded Schools celebrates the City's efforts to expand high-quality afterschool programs, in some key ways, the Concept Paper falls short of the bold steps needed to address fundamental shortcomings of the existing system.

First, it is essential that funding reflects a real cost of providing quality programs. The proposed rates of \$6,800 for elementary programs and \$3,900 for SONYC middle school programs are not enough to cover the actual expenses of the service provisions outlined in the Concept Paper. Providers are expected to offer extended hours, evidence-based curriculum, mental health support, and meet various staffing needs, but without increased funding, providers simply cannot afford to pay competitive wages.

Second, we believe that STEM, literacy, and career readiness activities should be integrated into all programs. The Exploring Futures Initiative is a promising step, and these opportunities should be mandatory across all grade levels to adequately prepare students for life after high school.

Third, we must invest in capacity building for our programs. Many providers and educators lack the resources necessary to improve their skills and competencies. We urge the City to allocate at least \$5 million for professional developments in these areas, such as mental health, SEL, literacy, STEM, and career-connected learning.

Finally, Expanded strongly urges DYCD and the City to ensure year-round programming for middle school students. The loss of SONYC summer programs has left many young people without vital support during a critical time in their development.

Expanded is proud to have collaborated with DYCD since the beginning of citywide afterschool initiatives, and we... (CROSS-TALK)

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you. Your time has expired.

JAHAD HOYTE: Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next, we have Whitney Thomas Toussaint.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has begun.

WHITNEY THOMAS TOUSSAINT: Thank you, Chair Stevens, and Members of the Committee. My name is Whitney Thomas Toussaint, and I currently serve as the Co-President of the Community Education Council of District 30 in Western Queens. However, today, I'm speaking as a parent of two NYC Public School students in District 30.

On July 22nd, the mayor announced the inaugural schools listed in the rollout. We were disheartened to see that no schools in District 30

were selected. We just heard testimony that high-need districts were selected; however, District 30 is a high-need district. We serve NYCHA populations that include Astoria Houses, Woodside Houses, Ravenswood Houses, and Queensbridge Houses, which is the largest housing authority on the continent of North America. So, we were disappointed that we were not included.

In Queens, there were six schools from District 22, four from District 27, one from District 25, and one from District 29 that were included. They had economic need indexes ranging from 65% to 93%. I am not asking that the current awardees change, but we need more information to see why two of our higher-need schools, PS 171 and PS 76, in Queens, with economic need indexes of 93%, and who lost their afterschool programs with the LEAPS restructuring, the very circumstances that were discussed here, why they were not included.

I also spoke out in a Daily News article after the Comptroller's report came out, and again, we heard that there are existing COMPASS programs in our district. However, they don't serve these two schools, which lost their afterschool programs with LEAPS. Someone from DYCD told a parent in our school

(BACKGROUND NOISE) (INAUDIBLE) schools that they could go to an existing COMPASS program, but the ones that were listed in our district were over two miles away from either school, and over 20 minutes to get there on public transportation. They also included two middle schools, a charter school, and a community center. PS 171 and PS 76 are K-5 schools. How could they go to a COMPASS program in a middle school? They also serve children with autism. There is a Horizon Program at 171 and a NEST program at 76.

These schools should have been included. I have emailed Commissioner Howard and Ms. Altus from the mayor's press team, as they made comments in the (TIMER) in the same article I spoke in on August 28th... (CROSS-TALK)

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you. Time has expired.

WHITNEY THOMAS TOUSSAINT: I have not gotten a response yet. So, I am just asking for transparency and collaboration, and again, what you all have asked for in relation to the criteria and data for the inaugural schools, and why our two high-need schools that I have highlighted were excluded. And also...

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you again. Your time has expired... (CROSS-TALK)

WHITNEY THOMAS TOUSSAINT: (INAUDIBLE) and District Superintendents be included. Thank you for hearing me today. Have a nice day.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

Next, we have Nicole Touzien.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has begun.

NICOLE TOUZIEN: Thank you, Chair Stevens and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of Dancewave, where I have the privilege of serving as Executive Director.

For 30 years, Dancewave has advanced positive youth development through a holistic approach to dance education that emphasizes both technical excellence and the life skills young people need to thrive. Our programs intentionally measure growth in creativity, social-emotional learning, and leadership, helping young people broaden their horizons, build lasting connections, and prepare for success in higher education, the workforce, and beyond. Today, Dancewave's reach extends across all

five boroughs, creating intergenerational bridges and strengthening communities citywide.

The arts are not extracurricular—they are essential. They open doors to inquiry, dialogue, and critical thinking; deepen literacy; build career readiness; and provide young people with safe, inclusive spaces to discover their voice. By fully integrating the arts into afterschool programs, New York City has the opportunity to provide students with 21st-century life skills that will serve them in every area of their lives.

I have seen firsthand how transformative this can be. At Brooklyn International High School, Dancewave bridges in-school arts programming with preprofessional training after school, free of cost to families. One graduate, Amarah, recently secured a Brooklyn Arts Council grant and is now producing her first community dance project and film. Another, Jesús, is pursuing higher education at BMCC and exploring employment opportunities at Dancewave. Both are first-generation New Yorkers whose pathways were shaped by the mentorship, training, and community they found through arts education. Their stories

demonstrate how investment in the arts yields lasting returns for individuals, families, and neighborhoods.

To build on this success, we urge the City Council to adopt the following recommendations:

First, shift from STEM to STEAM: Formally recognize the Arts as integral to student development, ensuring STEAM—not STEM—frames afterschool expansion.

Second, require Professional Arts Instruction in DYCD's RFP: (TIMER) Mandate that DYCD explicitly solicit proposals... (CROSS-TALK)

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you. Your time has expired... (CROSS-TALK)

NICOLE TOUZIEN: with robust arts components... Thank you for your time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next, we have Nicole (sic) (***Transcription note: Jamie**) Ehrenfeld.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has begun.

(NO RESPONSE)

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, we will have Christopher Leon Johnson.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has begun.

CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Yeah, hello. My name is Christopher Leon Johnson. Can you hear me?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We can hear you.

CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Hello? Yeah, hello, my name is Christopher Leon Johnson. And I want to make clear that the thing with the afterschool situations that the Department of Education, including DYCD, is not allowing many of these schools to keep themselves open after the school hours to allow these kids to congregate in there for afterschool. And then won't even open the parks up for the kids. I understand that Shekar Krishnan and Kevin Riley have a bill within the Parks Committee to allow the schools to start-- for people to start using the school playgrounds. And I support that bill, like, early this summertime-- the school playgrounds for the programming, but they-- it should be law. They should be common-sense rules. Why do you have to make a law for this? And I want to make clear that we need to start, uh, putting more afterschool programs back into the schools and allow the Department of Education (INAUDIBLE) to the Department of Education and DYCD to do this type of work instead of relying on the nonprofits to do this. Uh, why is

1 the City, the DYCD, allowing-- is allowed to give
2 money to a nonprofit like Brooklyn United, that has--
3 whose founder, and I think he's still part of the
4 nonprofit, was accused of congregating with, uh, I
5 think a nine-year-old girl—the founder of Brooklyn
6 United. And he was at the White House. And the reason
7 (INAUDIBLE) the White House because of that
8 situation. You know, I think that it's disgusting how
9 the City itself and DYCD are allowed to give money to
10 a nonprofit whose leaders are corrupt and immoral.
11 The old days, if you was accused of doing that stuff,
12 you would never get no government funding (sic). Now,
13 they celebrate it to the point of, we give people who
14 shouldn't have any government funding millions of
15 dollars in government funding through DYCD contracts
16 for afterschool programs and programming contracts.
17 And it should stop in the city. But, like I said
18 before, all this stuff should go back to the
19 Department of Education itself. (TIMER) All that
20 money should be funded back to the... (CROSS-TALK)

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you. Your time
23 has expired.

24 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Department of
25 Education. And thank you so much. Enjoy your day.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Nicole
(sic) Ehrenfeld?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has started.

(NO RESPONSE)

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Jamie Ehrenfeld?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has begun.

JAMIE EHRENFELD: Hi, thank you so much
for having me here today. My name is Jamie Ehrenfeld,
and I am the Director of Education for Belongó,
formerly known as the Afro Latin Jazz Alliance.

Belongó performs, educates about, and
preserves the music of the Americas, rooted in
African and indigenous traditions through the entry
point of jazz. Since 2007, we've served more than
20,000 students and are currently partnered with more
than 20 public schools across all five boroughs.

Programs like the Afro Latin Jazz
Academy of Music, Global Rhythms in our Tribe, and
our citywide Youth Orchestra, The Fat Cats, bring
free, culturally grounded music education programs to
hundreds of young people each year, many entering our
school-based programs as complete beginners on their
instruments.

Learning to collaborate as an ensemble and developing one's personal relationship to music is an opportunity that should belong to every child. These programs don't just teach music; they put the "A" in STEAM, helping students develop creativity, problem-solving, and critical thinking, alongside academic success. Importantly, they are led by professional teaching artists who reflect the diversity of New York City. And our organization at large is led by an Afro Latina.

We've seen how this work transforms lives. Alumni of the Fat Cats have gone on to conservatories like Juilliard and Berkeley, with many now working as professional musicians and educators both within our organization and throughout the field. Others have chosen different careers, but credit Belongó with instilling discipline, teamwork, and confidence, skills that carry into leadership roles and future endeavors throughout life.

Research confirms what we see every day—students engaged in music education score higher on standardized tests and are more likely to graduate high school and pursue higher education.

I am going to echo the recommendations advanced by the Arts and Education Roundtable—make the arts a core part of STEAM learning, ensure the DYCD RFP funds professional instruction by qualified teaching artists, encourage partnerships with local arts organizations, recognize the role of arts in social and emotional learning, and include nonprofits led by people of color in equity initiatives.

Thank you so much for your time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We have a few people who registered but don't seem to be online. So, I will call their names now: Kamada Lechandra (phonetic).

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has begun.

(NO RESPONSE)

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: William Jourdain.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has begun.

(NO RESPONSE)

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And Cordelia Estelle?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has begun.

(NO RESPONSE)

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No one?

Seeing no one else, I will turn it back over to the chair.

CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I would just like to say that today's hearing was very informative. And although we had a lot of questions and concerns with DYCD, I do not want to overshadow how excited we are that, after over a 10 years, we are getting an RFP, and young people are getting the expansion that they deserve. I also want to make sure that we are also highlighting that, you know, this administration has made huge investments in young people for the last four years, and I am honored that, as the chair, I have been able to fight to make sure that we are getting our just due. So I am really excited about the continued work. And, like I said, with all the criticism that we have, we are still excited to be able to serve even more young people this school year and for the next three years.

So, thank you. And with that, this hearing is now closed. [GAVEL]

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date October 12, 2025