

**Testimony of New York City Schools Chancellor Kamar H. Samuels:
FY27 Executive Budget Before the NYC Council Committees on Education and Finance**

June 8, 2026

Introduction

Good afternoon, Speaker Menin, Education Chair Dinowitz, Finance Chair Lee, Early Childhood Chair Gutiérrez, the Committees on Education and Finance, and the Subcommittee on Early Childhood Education. Thank you for inviting me to testify on the Fiscal Year 2027 Executive Budget. I am New York City Public Schools Chancellor Kamar H. Samuels, and I am joined by First Deputy Chancellor Danielle Giunta, Chief Financial Officer Seritta Scott, and other members of my senior leadership team.

The Mayor’s FY27 Executive Budget for NYC Public Schools, which totals \$44.9 billion, will both sustain critical programming and enable us to enact a new vision for our schools—one shaped directly by our communities and aligned to the administration’s plan for a vibrant, equitable, and affordable New York City.

Progress and Priorities

Since my last testimony, I have continued to engage deeply with our students, staff, and families. I visited schools in all 45 superintendents’ districts and completed a 10-stop Chancellor Conversations tour; soon we will publish a report detailing what we heard on that tour and how those insights will inform our work. We’ve also gathered extensive community feedback on high-priority topics like AI, held listening sessions specifically with students and families residing in shelters, and more.

These conversations have continued to shape my educational vision—one focused on safety, academic rigor, and true integration, with a consistent throughline of family empowerment. I’m proud to share that we’ve already hit the ground running:

- We are launching 2K and expanding 3K—both incredibly exciting milestones toward universal child care and a more livable city.
- We are opening five new schools in the Bronx and Queens, offering unique, high-quality models focused on the arts, STEM, and more.
- We are growing NYC Reads and NYC Solves, including bringing NYC Solves to elementary schools, where many math habits—and mindsets—are formed.
- We have released our first-ever bus vendor scorecard, to strengthen transparency and accountability around school transportation.
- We have published a Know Your Rights comic book to teach immigrant students—and all students—about their legal rights.
- We have hosted new celebrations to uplift our community, from a New York State Seal of Biliteracy convocation to Parent Coordinator Appreciation Week.

This is just the start. I am eager to continue listening and partnering as we advance our vision.

Executive Budget Investments

The Mayor's FY27 Executive Budget also furthers this vision, investing deeply in the next generation of New Yorkers.

That starts with a focus on our most vulnerable, including our students in temporary housing. This budget will expand support, resources, and access to caring adults via Every Child and Family is Known, thanks to a \$7.2 million investment in FY27 that grows to \$10 million in FY30. This work will promote attendance, physical and emotional safety, mental health, and a sense of belonging.

The Executive Budget also invests in our youngest; the administration's commitment to early childhood education—\$81 million annually—is momentous and game-changing. This is especially true for our students with disabilities; in addition to the overall early childhood investment, the administration has committed \$67.5 million, growing to \$82 million by FY30, to expanding special education pre-K. This investment gives our students with disabilities a strong start, fosters true integration, and allows us to better serve them *within* the NYCPS system.

Additionally, this budget bolsters rigorous academics via NYC Reads and NYC Solves, with a \$17.3 million investment that will transform reading instruction for an additional 104,000 students and math instruction for an additional 102,000 students. This funding includes \$6 million to improve culturally responsive practices and teacher preparation, building on this Council's support for the Black Studies Curriculum, the Latinidad Curriculum, and Hidden Voices. We are bringing high-quality, truly integrated instruction to classrooms across the city.

Our focus on student support extends to college and career pathways as well. In partnership with community providers, we are preparing over-aged, under-credited students for economic mobility through Learning to Work, which will now be funded with an additional \$31 million in baselined funding.

I also want to address a topic that I know is on many principals' minds: hold harmless. Providing schools with stability and predictability is a top priority, and to that end, as we prepare to allocate schools' initial FY27 budgets, which will be released early next week, schools will continue to be held harmless. As I've mentioned, engagement is critical to my vision, and I look forward to opportunities to engage with schools, community members, this Council, and others about how our school budgets work—to ensure both long-term fiscal sustainability *and* comprehensive school support.

And finally, this budget also reinforces the essential operations that undergird our programmatic priorities and keep our ~1,600 schools open, safe, and running smoothly, with over \$390 million in baselined funding toward IT, school cleaning, leases, utilities, and facility maintenance.

While we are extremely grateful for these tremendous investments, I'm proud to say that this budget does not only invest—it also saves. In line with the Mayor's Executive Order 12, the

FY27 Executive Budget advances a comprehensive savings strategy that streamlines workflows, strengthens fiscal discipline, and better aligns resources with student needs—together generating significant savings of nearly \$1 billion in FY27.

Today I'd also like to speak to budgetary and legislative decisions from the State that impact NYCPS. On Foundation Aid, we deeply appreciate the increased ELL weight and new weight for students in temporary housing and foster care. We will continue to advocate and partner with the State for further changes to the formula, including a regional cost index increase and an increased weight for students with disabilities.

On class size, the extension of the implementation timeline will allow us to execute our capital and hiring strategies sustainably and with fidelity, building on the progress we have made since my last testimony. Specifically, we have worked shoulder to shoulder with SCA to create a multi-year plan for all schools with class size-related space needs. This work, which strategically blends capital and non-capital strategies, will be detailed in the class size reduction plan, which we plan to release this week. Additionally, we are continuing to bolster staffing to meet the mandate. This includes allocating funding to hire more teachers and investing nearly \$17 million in FY27 for teacher recruitment, enabling us to expand programs like the NYC Teaching Fellows—the same pathway I took to become an educator.

I also want to thank the State for its extension of mayoral control, an essential ingredient for equitable, transformative leadership of our schools. But let me be clear: the other critical component is family partnership. The Mayor's Executive Budget reflects that, with \$3.2 million allocated in FY27 toward family empowerment initiatives. Engagement is core to who I am as a leader, and I believe mayoral control and local decision-making, both vital to effective school governance, must complement each other here in New York City.

Conclusion

I want to thank this Council for your continued partnership and support of our schools. I've had the privilege of meeting with many of you and seeing you at schools and community events; your dedication is making a positive impact every single day. I want to especially thank Chair Dinowitz for his leadership of the Education Committee. Thank you all for your commitment to our young people, and I look forward to answering your questions.