

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEES ON EDUCATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION

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January 19, 2012  
Start: 1:17 p.m.  
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HELD AT: Council Chambers  
City Hall

B E F O R E:  
  
ROBERT JACKSON  
YDANIS A. RODRIGUEZ  
Chairpersons

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
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Council Member Gale A. Brewer  
Council Member Margaret S. Chin  
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## A P P E A R A N C E S

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Council Member James Vacca

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Council Member Jumaane D. Williams

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

Shael Polakow-Suransky  
Chief Academic Officer and Senior Deputy Chancellor  
New York City Department of Education

Josh Thomases  
Deputy Chief Academic Officer for Instruction  
New York City Department of Education

John Mogalescu  
Senior University Dean for Academic Affairs and Dean  
of School of Professional Studies  
City University of New York

Gina Ortiz  
Student Representative  
CUNY Initiative

Lisa Coico  
President  
City College of New York

Felix Matos Rodriguez  
President  
Eugenio Maria de Hostos Community College

Mike Mulgrew  
President  
United Federation of Teachers

Randi Herman  
First Vice President  
Council of Supervisors and Administrators

Kate Pfordresher  
Director of Policy and Research  
Professional Staff Congress of CUNY

Zakiyah Ansari  
Advocacy Director  
Alliance for Quality Education

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

Sierra Stoneman-Bell  
Co-Director  
Neighborhood Family Services Coalition

Warren Gordon  
Professor of Mathematics, Chairman of the Department  
of Mathematics, Chairman of the Mathematics Discipline  
Council  
Baruch College City University of New York

Stanley Ocken  
Math Professor  
CCNY Math Department, CUNY Math Chairs Council

Michelle Yanche  
Director of Public Policy  
Good Shepherd Services

Leonie Haimson  
Executive Director  
Class Size Matters

Eric Pryor  
Executive Director  
Center for Arts Education

Chima Agwu  
Senior, Belmont Preparatory High School  
Member, Urban Youth Collaborative

Juan Paigon  
President  
Legacy High School Parents Association

Chang Sun  
High School Student, Member  
Public High School Students Coalition for Asian  
American Children and Families

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

Maura Flavin  
Policy Associate for Early Childhood Education,  
Education and Youth Services  
Citizens Committee for Children

Jerome Moore  
Leader  
Urban Youth Collaborative and Future Tomorrow

Carlos Martinez  
Member  
Make the Road New York and College of Educational  
Justice

Susan Crawson  
Co-President, President Association of PS126, SLT Core  
Member, Secretary of District 2 President's Council,  
Second Vice Chair of CPAC

Diana Laucer  
Member  
Urban Youth Collaborative and Sisters and Brothers  
United

Niasha Griffith  
Policy Manager for Child Welfare and Education  
Coalition for Asian American Children and Families

Karini Jimenez  
Senior, Leadership Institute High School  
Member, Sisters and Brothers United

Miaysha Scarborough  
Senior, Leadership Institute High School  
Member, Urban Youth Collaborative

Joseph Duarte  
Student, Samuel Gompers High School  
Youth Leader, Sisters and Brothers United and Urban  
Youth Collaborative

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[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Well, good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to this Education and Higher Education hearing. Let me just introduce our colleagues that are present before I begin my opening statement. Obviously, let's go from the right to the left, we got Larry Seabrook of The Bronx, Oliver Koppell of The Bronx, Charles Barron of Brooklyn, Lew Fidler of Brooklyn, and in front Jumaane Williams of Brooklyn and Karen Koslowitz of Queens. And of course we have staff of both the Education and Higher Education Committee. Obviously, my, Ydanis Rodriguez as the Chair of the Higher Education Committee, and myself, Robert Jackson, the Chair of the Education Committee. So, let me just say good afternoon and welcome to this joint hearing [background voice] you're not running? Okay. [pause] Continue from before? Good afternoon and welcome to this joint hearing of the Education and Higher Education Committees on the topic, "Are New York City public school students adequately prepared for college?" In June of 2011, the New York State Education Department released data showing that overall

1 graduation rate for New York City public school  
2 students were 61 percent in 2010. But only 21  
3 percent of City students who entered high school  
4 in 2006 graduated college ready four years later.  
5 For black and Hispanic students, the outlook is  
6 every more dismal. Statewide, 50 percent of white  
7 students and 56 percent of Asian students met  
8 college ready standards, compared to just 13  
9 percent for black students and 15 percent for  
10 Hispanic students. These statistics are extremely  
11 disturbing in light of increasing awareness that a  
12 high school diploma is not enough to succeed in  
13 the 21st Century global economy. In general, the  
14 more education you have, the more you will earn  
15 over your lifetime. According to the latest data  
16 from the U.S. Census Bureau, the difference in  
17 average earnings between a high school graduate  
18 and a college graduate is more than \$20,000 per  
19 year. The growing recognition that too many  
20 American high school graduates aren't prepared for  
21 college led to the development of a set of  
22 education standards in 2010, the Common Core State  
23 Standards, which have been adopted by 45 states so  
24 far, including New York City. Common Core  
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standards define the knowledge and skills students in grades K to 12 should have to be fully prepared for college and careers. The Department of Education has already begun to incorporate Common Core standards in City classrooms as a means to improve college readiness. Another component of the Department of Education's effort to boost college preparation is the development of college readiness metrics that are being phased in and will count towards grades on high school progress reports. The DOE's new emphasis on college readiness is welcome, and our schools have a lot to accomplish. Widening the focus to include the quality of education that students leave high school with, rather than simply the number of students graduating, is essential. Clearly, the majority of DOE's graduates are not ready for college level work. In fact, most of the students who met college ready standards attended small number of high schools. There were only 49 high schools in New York City where at least one-third of the students graduated college ready in 2010. Further, out of the City's nearly 500 high schools, just six of them--Stuyvesant, Bronx

1 Science, Brooklyn Tech, Francis Lewis, Midwood and  
2 La Guardia High School for Performing Arts--  
3 accounted for almost 25 percent of the college  
4 ready graduates in 2010, though these schools  
5 contain only seven percent of the freshman class  
6 in 2006. Some critics are concerned that DOE  
7 lacks a comprehensive college readiness plan, and  
8 is attempting to broadly link all its existing  
9 reform efforts, such as creating new districts and  
10 charter schools to college readiness goals.  
11 However, according to an October 2011 Daily News  
12 analysis, new schools founded by the Bloomberg  
13 Administration perform worse than older schools on  
14 college readiness measures. On average, the new  
15 school graduate, the new schools graduate  
16 approximately 70 percent of students in four  
17 years; but just twelve percent of those students  
18 who graduate are prepared for college. Charter  
19 schools are also of questionable value in better  
20 preparing students for college. According to the  
21 latest data, only 9.5 percent of charter school  
22 students statewide who graduated in 2010, met  
23 college readiness standards. There is also  
24 concern that an unintended consequence of trying  
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1 to hold schools accountable for new college  
2 readiness metrics is that it will result in  
3 schools attempting to improve their standards by  
4 either cheating or gaming the system. Already  
5 there have been allegations about widespread abuse  
6 of credit recovery. As schools try to boost  
7 graduation rates to obtain better progress report  
8 grades. And according to press reports,  
9 allegations of test tampering and grade changing  
10 by educators have already more than tripled since  
11 Mayor Bloomberg took control of our city school  
12 system. Another area of great concern is the lack  
13 of adequate counseling services to assist students  
14 with college preparation. There are two few  
15 guidance counselors and the student caseloads for  
16 each is way too high to able to help students stay  
17 on track with the needed coursework and college  
18 application process. It is our understanding that  
19 there are only about 3,000 guidance counselors in  
20 the entire system, and that some guidance  
21 counselors have caseloads of as many as 500  
22 students. Finally, there are concerns about how  
23 well DOE and CUNY are working together on college  
24 readiness initiatives and the level of support by  
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1  
2 DOE for these initiatives. As always, we are also  
3 concerned about the lack of information on the  
4 DOE's website on these issues. Today, we want to  
5 hear about DOE's new college readiness strategies  
6 and collaborative efforts with CUNY, as well as to  
7 hear from concerns of parents, students, advocates  
8 and community groups regarding the Department of  
9 Education's efforts to prepare public school  
10 students for post-secondary education. Now I'd  
11 like to turn to our colleague, the Co-Chair of  
12 this particular Committee, and the Chair of the  
13 Higher Education Committee, my colleague, Ydanis  
14 Rodriguez, for his opening remarks. Council  
15 Member Rodriguez.

16 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you,  
17 Chairman Jackson, and good afternoon everyone. My  
18 name is Ydanis Rodriguez, and I'm the Chair of the  
19 Higher Education Committee, and I am a supporter  
20 of the Occupy movement. This is a landmark day in  
21 the history of the City Council. This is the  
22 first time that Education Committee and the Higher  
23 Education Committee have held a joint hearing, but  
24 when we look at the size of the problem we are  
25 trying to solve, it is, it is only make sense that

1 we should combine our efforts. The title of this  
2 hearing asks whether New York City public school  
3 students are adequately prepared for college. But  
4 unfortunately, everyone in this room already knows  
5 that for the majority of the students, the answer  
6 is no. You might know the answer from seeing the  
7 Department of Education data. You might know the  
8 answer from working at CUNY community college and  
9 seeing the overwhelming need for remedial classes.  
10 Students are here today might know from talking to  
11 their friends at schools who feel prepared to move  
12 into college level work. Regardless on how you  
13 find out, find out, the fact that you are sitting  
14 in this room, show that you are recog--that you  
15 recognize the crisis facing our, our public  
16 education system, and I thank you for coming here  
17 today. We in the Higher Education Committee, and  
18 I can say the Education Committee, also recognize  
19 this crisis. And this hearing is part of the  
20 series of hearing and we hope, in order to first  
21 understand the program and to then come out with  
22 solutions. The benefit of a college education  
23 become more clear with, with each year. The  
24 bottom line for most people is that the more  
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1  
2 education a person receive, the higher the income  
3 are likely to be. Beyond there's a bigger  
4 benefit, our City benefits as a result of having a  
5 highly trained workforce. We can attract more  
6 business, create more innovations, and help drive  
7 a stronger economy that will benefit everyone.

8 The reality today is that a high school degree is  
9 not enough for the average student to compete for  
10 the jobs that are being created, especially as our  
11 City continues to attract more technology based  
12 jobs. However, it's not enough to just say, "You  
13 need to go to college." If we really want young  
14 New Yorkers to have the opportunity to get to  
15 these jobs, we have to make sure that our schools  
16 not only prepare them to enroll in college, but  
17 actually prepare them to succeed. However, the  
18 reality is that most student in the public schools  
19 are not receiving the preparation that they need.

20 You will hear today that nearly 80 percent of CUNY  
21 community college freshman require some level of  
22 remedial classes. The majority of these students  
23 come from New York City public schools. You will  
24 hear that of those student in CUNY who require  
25 remediation, only 25 percent of them will actually

1 graduate within six year in those community  
2 college. You will hear that less than 50 schools  
3 in the entire Department of Education system have  
4 more than over a third of its graduates be college  
5 ready. But for some community, they say that this  
6 you'll be hearing paint even worse picture. Only  
7 13 percent of black and Latino public high school  
8 graduate are prepared for college level work, as  
9 compared to 50 percent of white students. Black  
10 and Latino young people [pause, background noise]  
11 black and Latino young people in New York already  
12 face higher unemployment and higher rates of  
13 incarceration. So by preparing such low number of  
14 student from this community for college, we are  
15 sending the message that we don't expect for them  
16 to go to college. We have to change this message,  
17 that message is unacceptable. While this change  
18 might be difficult, it's not impossible. And  
19 there's so much to give us hope. As a former  
20 teacher, I know the potential that students around  
21 this City have. I know the work that my fellow  
22 teacher were willing to put in, and I know the  
23 dedication of the parent in our community. All  
24 that we've been missing is the political will to  
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1  
2 make the kind of policy change that need to happen  
3 so that we have not just 50 percent of student  
4 being college ready, but every graduate have the  
5 skills necessary to succeed in college. This is  
6 why I'm asking something of everyone gathered here  
7 today, whether you are from the DOE, CUNY, UFT,  
8 PSE, an advocate group or whether you are a  
9 student yourself, let's make a commitment here  
10 today, as you come out to testify I'm asking you  
11 to make a commitment to developing a plan within  
12 your institution or organization on how they will  
13 contribute to greatly increase the college  
14 readiness of student in our public schools. We  
15 see that the problem exists, and we know that the  
16 resources are out there to tackle this problem.  
17 They are in our teachers, our administrators, and  
18 our community. All it takes is the will to make  
19 the change, and so I ask all of you here today,  
20 "Will you make a commitment to create the change  
21 and help all the young people to be ready to sit  
22 in college?" Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Well, thank  
24 you. Clearly, that commitment, everyone as you  
25 indicated, should ask themselves whether or not

1  
2 they're willing to make that commitment. Our  
3 colleagues, some additional colleagues have joined  
4 us. Council Member, in front of us, Gale Brewer  
5 of Manhattan. I mentioned Jumaane Williams  
6 before, of Brooklyn--again, he said do it again.  
7 [laughs] Vincent Ignizio is sitting next to  
8 Karen, Vincent Ignizio is from Staten Island. Dr.  
9 Mathieu Eugene of Brooklyn is sitting next to Gale  
10 Brewer. And Steve Levin of Brooklyn and Dan  
11 Garodnick of Manhattan. With that, we'd like to  
12 now turn to the witnesses from the Department of  
13 Education--I'm sorry, yeah, I'm sorry, our  
14 colleague Lew Fidler held a hearing this morning  
15 on Youth Committee, and he wanted to say a few  
16 things relating to this particular subject.  
17 Council Member Fidler.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Thank you,  
19 and I appreciate everyone's indulgence. And we  
20 just completed a hearing in this room a half an  
21 hour ago that was incredibly shocking to me, and I  
22 think would be to all of you, and is directly in  
23 my view related to the topic of this hearing, was  
24 whether or not our children come to college,  
25 college ready and career ready. That hearing was

1 on OST, or afterschool programs, in the City of  
2 New York. And while we had many, many folks here,  
3 we didn't have the media here, we didn't have all  
4 of you here. The Department of Youth and  
5 Community Development right now has an RFP out  
6 seeking applicants for the afterschool programs in  
7 the City of New York. Preparation for that, they  
8 did a study, and it should be very, very  
9 significant to everyone in this room on this  
10 topic, that shows that when kids participate in  
11 the afterschool programs, they succeed better in  
12 our schools. The one documentable fact is that  
13 kids in OST programs have a better attendance  
14 record in schools. What does that tell you? It  
15 tells you that when they leave in the morning to  
16 go to school, they go a little bit more eager, a  
17 little bit more anxious, a little bit more ready  
18 to learn and eventually succeed in our school  
19 system. Many of our providers testified as to the  
20 high percentage of their students that graduate  
21 and go on to two and four year colleges, because  
22 they were in afterschool programs. At the height  
23 of our OST program, we served 85,000 children.  
24 That wasn't enough, but we served 85,000. DYCD

1 testified this morning that based upon their  
2 current budget expectation, the afterschool  
3 program in the City of New York will serve 27,000  
4 children, leaving 60,000 children on the street at  
5 3:00 o'clock. That to me is an outrage. And I  
6 would ima--yeah, it's pretty dark. And I  
7 [laughter] and I would imagine that if there are  
8 any of you in this room who care about children,  
9 anybody here care about children?  
10

11 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: One second.

12 [background noise]

13 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Right. Any  
14 of you who care about children need to raise--

15 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Turn that  
16 light up over there, please, if you don't mind.  
17 Thank you.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: --need to  
19 raise your voice about this right--

20 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: You can't  
21 lean against the light, brother. Okay?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: --right  
23 now.

24 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thanks.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Right now.

1  
2 Because if you're telling me that we are closing  
3 half of the afterschool programs in the City of  
4 New York, I'm telling you whatever we talk about  
5 here at this hearing today, will be repeated over  
6 and over and over again. And I would say to  
7 Deputy Chancellor Suransky, Chancellor Walcott,  
8 when he was Deputy Mayor, crafted the OST program.  
9 He in fact should be proud of the fact that the  
10 same study that provided that data said that the  
11 OST program in the City of New York is the number  
12 one afterschool program in the nation. We work  
13 together on that. I know that you and I  
14 occasionally have differences of opinion, but the  
15 one thing I know is that you recognize that when  
16 something works, we ought to continue to do it.  
17 All right, we know afterschool works and I am  
18 asking you to ask your Chancellor to speak to his  
19 Mayor and tell him that when this budget comes  
20 out, if we're closing half of the afterschool  
21 programs we're shooting our kids in one foot,  
22 asking our teachers to work with one hand tied  
23 behind their back, and the progress that we try to  
24 make in education will be set back by decades if  
25 we don't restore those cuts. I ask for your help

1  
2 I ask for the help of everyone in this room, this  
3 fight begins today. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.

5 So let's turn to our panel. We have a joint panel  
6 from the Department of Education and CUNY, and  
7 we're going to ask everyone to identify themselves  
8 and their position within whatever agency you're  
9 with. So, starting off with the, the Deputy  
10 Chancellor, if you don't mind.

11 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Shael  
12 Polakow-Suransky, Chief Academic Officer and  
13 Senior Deputy Chancellor at the Department of  
14 Education.

15 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay. Next,  
16 please.

17 JOSH THOMASES: Josh--I'm not on.

18 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: You got to  
19 press, press it again, Josh.

20 JOSH THOMASES: Josh Thomases,  
21 Deputy Chief Academic Officer for Instruction at  
22 the New York City Department of Education.

23 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay.

24 JOHN MOGALESCU: John Mogalescu,  
25 CUNY Senior University Dean for Academic Affairs,

1 and Dean of our School of Professional Studies.  
2  
3 And we have three people in the back if--who will  
4 be part of our panel, I'll ask them to identify  
5 themselves as well.

6 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Sure, why  
7 not.

8 GINA ORTIZ: Gina Ortiz, Student  
9 Representative of CUNY Initiative.

10 LISA COICO: Lisa Coico, President  
11 of the City College of New York.

12 [background noise]

13 FELIX MATOS RODRIGUEZ: And Felix  
14 Matos Rodriguez, President of Eugenio Maria de  
15 Hostos Community College in the South Bronx.

16 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay.  
17 Anybody else? That's it? Okay. So, whoever's  
18 decided to give the testimony first, please just  
19 identify yourself again and go right ahead.

20 SHAEEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Good  
21 afternoon, Chairman Jackson and Chair Rodriguez,  
22 thank you for inviting us here, it's an honor to  
23 testify on this issue. It's something that this  
24 group of folks has been working closely together  
25 on over the past three or four years, and we're

1  
2 glad that it's now become an issue that's at the  
3 forefront of both the Department of Education,  
4 CUNY and the City Council's agenda. And Chair  
5 Rodriguez, I would definitely make that  
6 commitment, it is at the heart of the work that  
7 we're doing, and I applaud your efforts on your  
8 end and look forward to working together as we  
9 move forward. I started my work in this system as  
10 a teacher teaching sixth grade, eventually became  
11 a high school teacher. Have lots of experience as  
12 a teacher and then as a principal working with  
13 kids around exactly this question. And I think  
14 that as we approach this, we have to remember that  
15 the heart of the matter is in the classroom. What  
16 happens every day between teachers and students  
17 and the quality of the work that they're doing  
18 together, is what's going to make or break the  
19 chances of our kids as they move on to post-  
20 secondary options. And so, we're going to spend a  
21 little bit of time sharing some data and sharing  
22 some of the programmatic initiatives that we've  
23 been working on. But as we talk, we're going to  
24 try and keep on bringing it back to, "What does  
25 that mean for kids? What does that mean for

1 teachers as they go through their days in school?"

2 Because that's really where the change has to  
3 happen. For those of you who have it, there's a  
4 deck that I prepared, and I'm not going to just  
5 read my testimony, I think that's often slow and  
6 boring for you guys. I want to speak to you and  
7 share some information and get through it as  
8 quickly as possible. So, I'm going to start on  
9 slide two, and I apologize for members of the  
10 audience if not everyone has a copy, but what this  
11 slide shows is data around four elements that we  
12 are measuring now, for our kids. The number of  
13 kids that don't graduate in four years, the number  
14 of kids who graduate with a local diploma, the  
15 number of kids who graduate with a Regents  
16 diploma, and the number of kids who graduate  
17 college ready. And you'll see as you move to the  
18 right, over the past six years, that the data is  
19 moving in the right direction. We were at 50  
20 percent of our students not graduating and we're  
21 now at 34 percent of our students not graduating.  
22 We were at 16 percent college ready a few years  
23 ago; we're now at 25 percent college ready.  
24 Clearly, those numbers leave much to be desired,  
25

1 which is why we have extensive plans that we want  
2 to share, but progress is significant, and it's  
3 important to acknowledge where we've come from.  
4 On the second slide, it breaks down that  
5 information by different ethnic groups. And this  
6 is taking it to the next step. What happens to  
7 kids when they leave school and go into the CUNY  
8 system? And how many students are graduating and  
9 going on to CUNY. And it's not all of our  
10 graduates go to CUNY, it's about 58 percent of our  
11 graduates. But it is the majority. And those  
12 students that do go are increasingly--

14 [background noise, yelling]

15 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Chill, can  
16 you hold on a second, please.

17 [pause, protesting]

18 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay. So,  
19 you can continue, please.

20 SHAEEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Okay, so,  
21 looking at slide three, what you see is the  
22 increases in kids going to college. And so, one  
23 of the things that's really important, as we talk  
24 about this data, is that it's a relatively new  
25 goal nationally and in this City, for people to

1  
2 talk about college readiness. This is not  
3 something we were talking about in, in this City  
4 five years ago. We were talking about how many  
5 kids are graduating and how many kids are dropping  
6 out.

7 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I'm shocked--

8 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: And the  
9 fact that--

10 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I'm shocked.

11 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: You're  
12 shocked--

13 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I'm shocked.

14 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: --that  
15 that's a new goal?

16 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Yeah, because  
17 in fact, you know, all throughout anyone as far as  
18 any parents looking at goals, college was talked  
19 about decades ago. And I'm shocked to hear you  
20 say that it was something that we didn't think  
21 about five years ago. I'm really shocked.

22 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Yeah, but  
23 it's true, I think it's true for, for the City  
24 Council, it's true for the, the broader system as  
25 well. And I think it's--

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CHARLES BARRON: [off mic] - -  
think about graduating, you got that by yourself.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: You know, I'm just saying it's shocking because quite frankly, you know, I'm a parent, with three kids, in college, and they, and my girls are 36 and 31 and 25, college was an automatic situation from them, and I'm going back when my kids were graduating from the school system--

SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Yeah, and the, and as a--

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --over 20 years ago.

SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Yeah, and as a teacher, when I started 17 years ago, I was working on that, too, but it doesn't mean that there was public data that was being shared in forums like this one.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: [off mic]  
Okay.

SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: And it doesn't mean that it was making its way into the broad conversation publicly about what do we want our kids to do in this City. And I think that

1  
2 that's an important change. And it's something  
3 that came out of the work of getting more kids to  
4 graduate in the first place. I think that the,  
5 the progress on that first slide is significant,  
6 it's something to be proud of, and now we're  
7 setting a higher goal. And that goal is  
8 important, too. So, just breaking down  
9 specifically, like what do we mean by "college  
10 readiness"?

11 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: [off mic]

12 Yes.

13 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: The State  
14 has set a measurement and we're using a very  
15 similar measurement, CUNY's using a very similar  
16 measurement. Basically, it links back to how high  
17 kids score on the Regents exams. So in order to  
18 graduate, you need a 65; in order to be college  
19 ready you need a 75 or 80. And that difference is  
20 what accounts for the many kids that go into  
21 remediation. And if you get a 65, you can  
22 graduate, but you're going to go into remediation;  
23 if you get a 75, then you graduate and you don't  
24 go into remediation. And that difference is  
25 really important. And what it signifies, those

1                    ten or 15 points, is an amount of information and  
2                    concepts that kids are able to master when they  
3                    take those exit exams at the end of courses in  
4                    high school. But I would say that it's not just  
5                    about getting to a number on a test, it's about  
6                    resilience, persistence, being able to use your  
7                    mind well, being able to think critically, being  
8                    able to write well, being able to defend your  
9                    ideas orally, being able to solve unfamiliar  
10                    problems, and those things are things that our  
11                    country is just starting to acknowledge as it  
12                    starts to change assessments. The national work  
13                    that you mentioned in your testimony around the  
14                    common core standards, if you had asked three  
15                    years ago, "Will every state in the country agree  
16                    that we should all have the same standard for what  
17                    college readiness looks like, for the skills that  
18                    kids need to know and be able to do?" most people  
19                    would've laughed, because it had never happened in  
20                    the history of this country, that everyone adopted  
21                    the same standard. That's a big accomplishment.  
22                    It's something we can work with because it means  
23                    that we can partner across cities and across  
24                    districts around the country, as we are doing now,  
25

1  
2 to develop really strong curriculum, to develop  
3 better assessments so that we actually, when we  
4 test kids on those Regents exams, are measuring  
5 those deeper skills, not just the skills that are  
6 the most basic skills. The next slide goes  
7 directly to this question of remediation that I  
8 was just talking about. So you can see since  
9 2002, the remediation rate, even though there are  
10 thousands and thousands more kids going to CUNY,  
11 the remediation rate has been basically flat.  
12 It's gone down a tiny bit, from 56 to 51. CUNY's  
13 colleges started to increase the rigor of their  
14 standards, and they'll talk more about that, in  
15 2008, and that work is continuing. But what is  
16 important to note here is even as thousands and  
17 thousands more kids went to CUNY, we did not see  
18 that this remediation number changed  
19 significantly. It actually went down slightly.  
20 And that's also promising, because it means that  
21 even as we were graduating more and more kids, and  
22 more and more were going to college, that an equal  
23 percentage, or just a little bit less, were in  
24 need of remediation. I also want to point out on  
25 this slide that there are two colors on the bars.

1                   The, the remediation for two year community  
2 programs is the lighter blue, and the remediation  
3 for four year programs, which often happens in the  
4 summer before kids start, is in the darker blue.  
5 On the next slide, I have the new college  
6 readiness index that the state and we started to  
7 publish this year. Our index is almost the same  
8 as the State's index, there are some small  
9 differences. The differences are we account for  
10 SAT scores, and we account for how many math  
11 courses kids took. But the numbers come out very  
12 close. And what you see there is a troubling  
13 fact. About 25 percent of our kids in four years  
14 meet the college readiness goal of 75 and 80 on  
15 the Regents, or 480 on the SAT. That's up from 16  
16 percent in 2005. If you look at how many of the  
17 graduates, and that's a different number, because  
18 some of the kids who enrolled in four years might  
19 go for five or six years, but in, if you look at  
20 the number of graduates in the four year programs,  
21 it's 37 percent of our graduates are meeting that  
22 number, up from 32 percent a few years ago.

24                   CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: A quick  
25 question before you continue. Why does the slide

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start in 2005 and not earlier?

SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Because the State graduation rate was established in 2005. And so this data is based on that.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: [off mic]  
Okay.

SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: On slide six we have some data on AP tests. And this has been another big goal, is to increase the number of kids taking advanced coursework in our schools across all different ethnic categories. And you'll see that we've had significant increases both in the number of students taking the exams and the number of students passing the exams. And that's something that we're continuing to expand. And then, the last data slide summarizes the progress that I think we've seen over this period.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: What slide number is that, seven?

SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Seven.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay, thank you.

SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: So, we've gone from 16 to 25 on college readiness, from

1  
2 10,000 to 16,000 on AP passing, from 16,000 to  
3 25,000 on college enrollment, and from 56 to 51 on  
4 CUNY remediation. All of those are moving in the  
5 right direction. The challenge that we've set for  
6 ourselves is how do we move much more aggressively  
7 and accelerate this trend? And we believe that at  
8 the heart of doing that, is improving the quality  
9 of what's happening in our classrooms, and  
10 improving the supports for kids and families as  
11 they go through this process. Chairman Jackson,  
12 you mentioned in your testimony the life chances  
13 of kids who don't have a college degree are really  
14 different to kids who just graduate high school or  
15 have a four year degree. On slide nine, you see a  
16 high school dropout, their average income is  
17 \$23,000; someone with a two year degree is  
18 \$39,000; someone with a four year degree is  
19 \$53,000. So, this is not an academic exercise,  
20 it's really important for kid and families to earn  
21 a sustainable living, and to be able to support  
22 themselves and have successful lives, to get to  
23 this level. And that's also relatively new in our  
24 country. If you look back 20 years, 30 years,  
25 only about 30-35 percent of the jobs required a

1 college degree. Now we're looking at over 60  
2 percent of the jobs requiring a college degree.  
3 So there are many fewer jobs available that are  
4 well paying jobs that don't involve a college  
5 degree, and that's even true in some of the areas  
6 we don't currently think of as academic, some of  
7 the career and technical areas, which Josh will  
8 talk about in a second, because our CTE strategy  
9 is connected to our college readiness strategy.  
10 So on slide ten, let me just talk, at a high  
11 level--  
12

13 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay, CT--  
14 CTE, everybody knows that means--

15 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Sorry,  
16 career and technical education.

17 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: That's right.

18 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Thank you.  
19 On slide ten, there are four big things that we're  
20 working on around this issue. One is improving  
21 the quality of what's happening in classrooms by  
22 implementing the common core standards and  
23 changing the curriculum; increasing educational  
24 and career opportunities, which has to do with the  
25 information that kids are parents have about the

1  
2 steps to successfully going into their post-  
3 secondary college or career options; strengthening  
4 the career and technical options which also are  
5 very important; and the rich partnership that  
6 we've started to build with our colleagues at CUNY  
7 to make sure that we are doing as much as possible  
8 together to make as few as possible kids end up in  
9 a situation where they don't succeed. And so that  
10 you'll hear a lot about as we go through this,  
11 this presentation. Let me just briefly, for folks  
12 who aren't familiar with the common core  
13 standards, explain why they're so important. So,  
14 on slide eleven, really what this is, is a road  
15 map that doesn't just start in high school, it  
16 starts pre-K, all the way up to high school, and  
17 we're working with kids at every grade level, to  
18 start to develop the skills that they need to  
19 actually be in a position when they finish high  
20 school to be college ready. And so in literacy,  
21 what that means is we need kids to learn literacy,  
22 not just in English classes, but across every  
23 single class that they're in. They need to get  
24 used to reading more complicated texts, they need  
25 to get used to reading nonfiction texts. A lot of

1  
2 the challenges that kids face is they get into  
3 high school and college, is that they don't  
4 actually have exposure to academic language. And  
5 when they are confronted, for example, in ninth  
6 grade, with a biology research paper, or in  
7 freshman year with an independent project that  
8 they have to do, if they haven't learned the  
9 vocabulary and they haven't gotten used to  
10 independently working with those texts, then they  
11 really struggle. Research skills and the ability  
12 to go into something you're reading and pull out  
13 the evidence that's important and craft that  
14 evidence into an argument, is also a critical  
15 skill. When you think about what you do every  
16 day, what most professional do who have graduated  
17 college, it's, it's a lot about taking evidence  
18 from outside in the world, from the media, from  
19 texts, from data, crafting it into an argument and  
20 making your case, and defending your ideas. And  
21 then when you write, the writing can't anymore  
22 just be personal narrative type writing. You  
23 know, when you go into a college classroom or into  
24 a job, they don't want to know your story. They  
25 want to know what do you think about an issue and

1  
2 how well can you defend your position? And so  
3 learning to write to, to inform, learning to write  
4 so that you can argue a case--you know, when we  
5 talk to college professors, that's one of the  
6 things they're most frustrated by, is our kids  
7 haven't been exposed to enough writing, and we  
8 need a lot more writing and a lot more experience  
9 with kids, doing that kind of writing early on.

10 In math, it's a little bit different. So, if you  
11 look at the successful countries in math around  
12 the world, go to South Korea, Singapore, Japan, in  
13 their math curriculum, they don't do 30 or 40  
14 topics every single year, the way we do. They do  
15 five or six. And they go deep. And they learn  
16 them the first time. So when I used to teach  
17 sixth grade math, none of my kids came into sixth  
18 grade knowing fractions. They had studied it,  
19 three or four times before, because it starts  
20 being taught often as early as third grade. But  
21 it's a hard. It's a hard concept to understand a  
22 ratio and a proportion. It's not the easiest  
23 thing, but you need it in order to do algebra, so  
24 if you don't get it in sixth and seventh grade,  
25 you're very unlikely to be successful in high

1 school. And one of the big gatekeepers to college  
2 is high school level math. So, learning those  
3 fractions matters a lot. But if you're rushing  
4 through that every year in two or three weeks,  
5 then you're not going to learn it. And so one of  
6 the big changes in the Common Core is to focus, is  
7 to slow down, go deeper, cover fewer topics, and  
8 actually master the topics before you go on.

9  
10 Another big change is to get kids to understand  
11 what it is they're doing. It's fine to learn your  
12 multiplication tables, but then if you can't apply  
13 the information when you're in an unfamiliar  
14 situation, you're not going to succeed when you  
15 have to operate independently. And so, actually  
16 getting kids both that fluency and that procedural  
17 type of understanding that you need in math, but  
18 also the ability to explain their thinking, and  
19 defend their ideas, is important. And I have two  
20 examples that I wanted to share of the kinds of  
21 changes I think we're going to see in the State  
22 assessments, as a result of the Common Core. So  
23 the first one is a literacy example. Here's an  
24 English question from the 2009 Regents exam, it's  
25 a multiple choice question about computers and

1  
2 there's four answers and you have to bubble in the  
3 correct one. That is the majority of the  
4 questions on the current State exams. The State  
5 is committed to starting an effort that will  
6 culminate over the next few years to change that.  
7 It's very, very important that they're doing that,  
8 because teachers take their cue from what's on the  
9 Regents exams, because they know kids need that in  
10 order to graduate high school. And so they're  
11 going to make sure that they teach what's on those  
12 exams. And if the exams are multiple choice  
13 bubble tests, that don't actually push on these  
14 deeper skills that we've been talking about, then  
15 they're not going to get as--taught as often. And  
16 so look at the second question. It asks the  
17 student to look at information from several  
18 sources and do research about media in your own  
19 life and in the world, and consider what are the  
20 gains, what are the dangers, what is the impact on  
21 the society. And then write a real essay about  
22 it, explain your position, defend it with real  
23 evidence, draw on the research you did, show why  
24 your conclusions are right. That kind of skill is  
25 what we need our kids doing. And that's why we've

1 worked so hard with the State, to adjust those  
2 assessments because we know that's a powerful  
3 signal to our teachers, and it helps them create  
4 space in their curriculum to do the real work.

5 Let me give you one more example, just to take it  
6 out of the high school level, to the, to the  
7 elementary school level, because this has to start  
8 earlier. It cannot just be for the high school  
9 kids, we have to start with our younger kids.

10 This is a math question about pizza. It's got  
11 fractions involved. One of them is again a  
12 multiple choice question that's relatively easy.

13 The second is a performance task. And what it  
14 asks is for a student to unpack a pretty  
15 complicated problem. Bear with me and I'm going  
16 to just read it for you. "Tito and Luis are  
17 stuffed with pizza. Tito ate one-fourth of a  
18 cheese pizza, he ate  $\frac{3}{8}$  of a pepperoni pizza, and  
19 one-half of a mushroom pizza. Luis ate  $\frac{5}{8}$  of a  
20 cheese pizza, the other half of a mushroom and all  
21 the pizzas were the same size. Tito says he at  
22 more pizza than Luis because Luis did not eat any  
23 pepperoni. Luis says they ate the same amount.  
24 Who's right? Show all your mathematical  
25

1 thinking."

2  
3 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And what  
4 grade is this?

5 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: This is  
6 fifth grade.

7 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: You already  
8 lost me. [laughter] I don't need to write it  
9 down, I need to see it.

10 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Yeah, it  
11 is, it's hard.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: I guess  
13 you're not smarter than a fifth grader.

14 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I guess not.

15 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: No, it,  
16 you could do it, though, if you, if you drew it  
17 out. And it's, they actually ate the same amount,  
18 they each at one-and-one-eighth of a pizza. And,  
19 and the thing about it is there, there's three  
20 different ways you could solve this problem. You  
21 could translate it into straight fractions and  
22 convert them and add them up; you could diagram  
23 it; you could use manipulatives. And then, what  
24 we ask the student to do though is, however they  
25 decide to solve it, they have to show it. And

1  
2 that means that it's not a guess. You know, it's  
3 not something you can test prep for. You know,  
4 there's a lot of talk about how the whole  
5 curriculum is test prep, and this is what's  
6 changing that. We are moving away from test prep  
7 to deep analytical tasks, where kids have to use  
8 their minds well. That's the goal. And that is  
9 hard work, it's not something that you can snap  
10 your fingers and it happens. It's something that  
11 you have to prepare teachers to do, and you have  
12 to prepare students to do. And Josh is now going  
13 to take it from here, and talk about the work  
14 we're doing to prepare people for that. And then  
15 go into some detail about the counseling and  
16 college advising, once kids get to that stage.

17 JOSH THOMASES: So, good afternoon  
18 Chairs Jackson and Rodriguez, Members of the  
19 Committee and assembled ladies and gentlemen. I'm  
20 also pleased to be here today. First a quick  
21 history. I was a founding social studies teacher  
22 and ultimately leader of El Puente Academy for  
23 Peace and Justice in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. I've  
24 been in the system for nearly 20 years. I came to  
25 the Central Department of Education to take my

1  
2 expertise at El Puente and help it, and work to  
3 help develop the new small schools. Currently, in  
4 my current role, I serve as Deputy Chief Academic  
5 Officer for Instruction, and my job is to shape  
6 and frame and drive the instructional work for the  
7 City of New York, working with Shael and  
8 Chancellor Walcott. What I'm going to try and do  
9 in relatively short order is answer the question  
10 that both Chairs asked during their initial  
11 comments, which is essentially what are we doing?  
12 What is the comprehensive effort to move the data  
13 that Shael just went through from the progress  
14 that we've gotten to date to anything that we  
15 would celebrate, as Chair Rodriguez mentioned  
16 earlier? And I would echo your comments, Chair,  
17 it does require teachers, it does require  
18 administrators, it does require community. The  
19 school that I helped found was based on that  
20 principal. And absolutely the strategy that I'm  
21 about to discuss is founded on a deep commitment  
22 to the support and capacity building of all the  
23 adults that work with kids, so that our students  
24 can get to a higher level. So, if you turn to  
25 slide 14, you see a calendar that reaches out to

1  
2 the 2014/15 school year. I'm not going to walk  
3 through the lines on this calendar, but the reason  
4 why it's here is because in '14/'15, the State has  
5 told us in, as part of a national partnership of  
6 dozens of states, to expect the new assessments.  
7 And so the important change to understand here is  
8 that we started early, we started the moment they  
9 got released about two years ago. And we started  
10 early on purpose, even before we had inklings of  
11 what the new assessments would look like, before  
12 any of our, any vendors had produced curriculum  
13 aligned to it, because we knew that the  
14 conversation to have with faculty, with  
15 administrators, with communities, around the  
16 changes that Shael talked about, was a multi-year  
17 process. That the, that the system change mistake  
18 that school district after school district has  
19 made for decades, is to wake up in April, say  
20 "We've got a new X that we're going to do by  
21 September," and think that the all the adults can  
22 change. And that, to actually learn how to help  
23 students read deeply on informational text  
24 requires reteaching, helping teachers learn how to  
25 do this differently. I was a teacher of high

1 school social studies, I was not trained on how to  
2 teach people how to reach. My training was  
3 presuming that they knew. And I was expected  
4 within my school community to figure it out. We  
5 need to mobilize the effort of the system to help  
6 people, help our faculty, help our administrators,  
7 figure out what they need to change in their  
8 pedagogical practice, in order to shift the kind  
9 of work towards the kind of reading and writing  
10 Shael was talking about, and the kinds of  
11 mathematics. And so we've done that deliberately  
12 over time. We started by piloting this in a 100  
13 schools and about eight months ago started a  
14 conversation citywide around the instructional  
15 work we would do to get there. We understood that  
16 you can't do this all at once, but rather that  
17 what needed to happen was that everybody needed to  
18 learn how to do this differently and we needed to  
19 do it deliberately and slowly over time. And so  
20 what you see on this page are, we start with 100  
21 schools, we are working with all of the faculty  
22 and staff outside of schools, to help their  
23 development in it, and then, and now going system  
24 wide within schools. What we're doing in schools  
25

1 is going to broaden and deepen over the course of  
2 years, 'cause we want to respect the need for the  
3 adults to learn how to do this better, we want to  
4 support them in that, and we want to make sure  
5 they have everything they need. So at the point  
6 of full implementation in the 2014/15 school year,  
7 at the point at which the exams have switched, our  
8 teachers, our schools, our children, are ready.  
9 So, last March, we went out to every network of  
10 schools in the City, Shael, myself and two members  
11 of my staff. We met with over 1,500 principals in  
12 the course of three weeks, to talk to them about  
13 what we named the Citywide Instructional  
14 Expectations. What you will see page 15 is a  
15 description of what those were, and it's designed  
16 to get people focused on these key pieces. You  
17 will note that it does not, the progress reports  
18 still are in place, this is not about test  
19 accountability, this is about the work schools  
20 needed to do to meet this new standard. The  
21 expectation was that every student experienced two  
22 Common Core tasks embedded in a unit of study, one  
23 in literacy and one in math. The Mayor in this  
24 remarks last week mentioned that the goal is that  
25

1  
2 by April at parent/teacher conferences, that  
3 schools are having the conversation with parents.  
4 "Here's the work your child did that's connected  
5 to the Common Core. Here's what we're learning  
6 about what he or she is good at. Here are his or  
7 her challenges. And here's what we're doing as a  
8 school to address those challenges." The teachers  
9 work in teams to review that work. There's, as--  
10 I'm going to keep saying it, there's an enormous  
11 amount of learning, and the most powerful  
12 learning, and if you read education research--I'll  
13 drop some names: Mike Schmoker, Rick DuFour, Dick  
14 Elmore--the power of teams of teachers looking at  
15 student work that their kids produce and thinking  
16 about what it needs to change within their lessons  
17 and their pedagogical practices, is the most  
18 powerful driver of student achievement. And we've  
19 been helping schools develop that for four or five  
20 years, and are building on it here. And then  
21 working with school leaders to get into classrooms  
22 more and provide meaningful feedback to teachers  
23 about what they need to move in their practice,  
24 and what needs to change. Not simply evaluative  
25 feedback, that's pursuant to collective

1 bargaining, of 3012-c, that has obviously been in  
2 the news. But around helping teachers get better  
3 at their jobs. this is the work that we've been  
4 engaged in, this is the work that our networks  
5 have been engaged in across the City. In support  
6 of that work, if you turn to the next page, we  
7 created something we affectionately called  
8 "instructional bundles." Essentially, it's the  
9 bundle of items that a teacher or school might  
10 need to help them understand what would need to  
11 change to meet the new standards of the Common  
12 Core. There is one on every grade level, in  
13 literacy and math, K to 12, there are two each for  
14 the high schools. These bundles include sample  
15 tasks, student work, supports for students with  
16 disabilities and English language learners, the  
17 scoring guides, and, and all of the set of  
18 supports so that schools can use this. They've  
19 used it in a variety of ways. They've used it to  
20 compare their current curriculum to this and asked  
21 what needs to change. Where they haven't had as  
22 strong a curriculum, they've actually used it to  
23 implement it. We've had 40,000 unique users on  
24 the Common Core library website that uses this  
25

1 work. The feedback on this has been very  
2 positive, and it's getting us to that step of  
3 moving schools in the direction towards meeting  
4 the new Common Core standards. We've mobilized  
5 our efforts of our network teams to support this  
6 work. And if you turn to 17 you'll see a summary  
7 of, that just simply says a couple key things.  
8 Every network has five instructional staff,  
9 targeted towards supporting the work of students  
10 and supporting the work of teachers that at least  
11 one of those, what we call the achievement  
12 coaches, is focused particularly on our special  
13 education students, and works across the others.  
14 That they are working with this group of schools  
15 to drive the work within those schools and to  
16 support principals in helping move the  
17 instructional change within schools. The  
18 takeaway, before I move off the instruction work,  
19 that I would like you to take from this, is that  
20 there's a systematic effort to provide both the  
21 instructional support to schools, teachers and  
22 administrators, to provide the material support in  
23 the form of what we've called bundles, that help  
24 guide schools where to go, so if they don't know  
25

1  
2 what else to do, they can do the things that we're  
3 giving them, while we begin to transition the  
4 curriculum. That it's not something that needs to  
5 happen overnight, that it's something that needs  
6 to happen as everybody, our students, our  
7 teachers, our administrators, get better at their  
8 work towards meeting this new and higher standard.  
9 I want to quickly review, and my colleague John  
10 Mogalescu, will do so in more detail, a couple of  
11 the other efforts specifically targeted towards  
12 high schools and the bridge towards college. I  
13 cannot emphasize enough the power of the data  
14 sharing agreement that we've built with the City  
15 University. It allows us within, with the, an  
16 enormous degree of competence to know, 'cause we  
17 do it based on distinct student identifiers, to  
18 actually track our students' at City University,  
19 to understand who persists, who does not, and to  
20 be able to frame the challenge that you both  
21 framed so well today. It gives us a picture of  
22 the task ahead, and allow--and has allowed us to  
23 target our programs, our supports and our  
24 strategies to the need as we've understood it.  
25 Cities across this country are coming to our data

1  
2 folks on both sides to understand and build  
3 systems that model it. We are foremost in the  
4 country on it. To that end, there are a series of  
5 collaborative programs that are, in some cases  
6 ubiquitous in our high schools, and in other cases  
7 growing, at home and college, and the college now  
8 programs. We have started a group of early  
9 college high schools under the leadership of John  
10 and Cass Conrad, that are a dozen of our schools  
11 that offer college credits and moving towards an  
12 Associate's Degree. We opened one school this  
13 past year, a 9 to 14 model, in collaboration with  
14 the City University and IBM, called P-Tech. And  
15 as you heard last week, the Mayor's committed to  
16 open three more over the course of the next two  
17 years. This is all part of the, of a partnership  
18 that obviously has been around for decades but has  
19 really ramped up in the course of the last four  
20 years. That we received a grant, as I testified  
21 about 18 months ago, from the National League of  
22 Cities, entitled "Graduate NYC," that has served  
23 as a mobilizing effort and has strengthened the  
24 relationship between our two organizations, so  
25 that we're partnering on data, we're partnering on

1  
2 programs, they're helping us and thinking through  
3 the work at the K-12 level; we're working with  
4 them to bring the common core to college and to  
5 bridge our students into college. I want to  
6 quickly talk about career and technical education  
7 simply to make a couple key points. First of all,  
8 you heard the commitment from the Mayor to open  
9 twelve new CTE schools. Career and technical  
10 education, the City is experiencing a renaissance.  
11 We have come to und--we have come to both  
12 understand and celebrate the power of technical  
13 pathways, to create pathways for students, to both  
14 college and careers. We are strengthening the  
15 program approval process to make sure that every  
16 CT pathway--and we currently have about 100 plus  
17 thousand students in them--results in a  
18 certificate and results in pathway to a college  
19 and career. We are strengthening the partnerships  
20 with industries across, you heard the announcement  
21 of the new--across the City you heard the  
22 announcement of the new software engineering  
23 school, to be sited in lower Manhattan in  
24 partnership with Fred Wilson. You--and as I think  
25 you know, and we've discussed before, there is

1  
2 ongoing work in support of learning to work  
3 programs, YABCs and GED. The reason why we're  
4 investing this is on the next page. It's--

5 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: [off mic]

6 Page 18?

7 JOSH THOMASES: --page, I'm sorry,  
8 I'm on page 20, my apologies, Councilman.  
9 Essentially the takeaway is this: We've been  
10 reading of studies about this over and over again,  
11 for the last decade or so, but we are  
12 transitioning out of manufacturing economy in this  
13 country. If you look at the fastest growing  
14 occupations in New York, and in the country, eight  
15 of ten of them require some post-secondary work.  
16 Some, some as high as Master's Degrees, and some  
17 just a technical certificate. You can't just love  
18 carpentry and be a carpenter. You need to  
19 understand how to do applied geometry. And our  
20 schools need to mobilize their effort around that.  
21 Finally, I want to note a couple other key things  
22 that we're doing on the high school level. First,  
23 Shael mentioned the notion of college preparatory  
24 academics, it's in our progress report. We are  
25 looking increasingly at making sure that every

1 student has access to the kinds of coursework like  
2 AP courses, like Algebra II that the City  
3 University requires, that would put them on a path  
4 to college and careers. And we are walk--we are  
5 mobilizing effort to make sure that that's  
6 happening in every school. We have a national, we  
7 have a partnership around financial, around  
8 financial aid forms. We leave millions of dollars  
9 both at the K-12 level and at the post-secondary  
10 level, our students leave tens of millions of  
11 dollars in financial aid on the, on the table. We  
12 now have data that allows our schools to know  
13 who's completed the financial aid, who's started  
14 the financial aid, who has not even started. So  
15 that our schools can mobilize effort around  
16 students who are eligible for financial aid and  
17 are not pursuing it. We have built within that  
18 supports for schools. We are training every  
19 school, we have a partnership with Goddard  
20 Riverside, probably one of the foremost leaders  
21 in--

22  
23 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [off mic]

24 Options, options.

25 JOSH THOMASES: --in college couns-

1  
2 -Yes, ma'am--in college counseling in this City.  
3 They are going to make sure every high school has  
4 at least one person trained. There are a set of  
5 mistakes that our schools make when they don't do  
6 college counseling well. They end up researching  
7 them on their own the difference between York and  
8 La Guardia. They end up researching on their own  
9 HEOP and EOP programs. They end up spending an  
10 enormous amount of time there, rather than, and  
11 trying to figure out what's the next step, rather  
12 than doing what is now well documented about the  
13 logical steps that schools need to do, to mobilize  
14 efforts to make sure that kids have access to City  
15 University, state university and privates. We are  
16 going to train schools on that, and going to work  
17 to build benchmarks so that schools can know and  
18 track, am I--and then ultimately parents--are we  
19 on track towards college? Are we on track in  
20 terms of our academic preparation? Are we on  
21 track in terms of our financial aid preparation?  
22 Are we doing the things to build a portfolio that  
23 would allow us to apply for college? And we're  
24 doing that both with guidance counselors and  
25 across schools. Our best schools, be they our new

1 schools like Wheels, or some of our best older  
2 schools like Telecommunications, mobilize the  
3 entire effort of the whole school community.  
4 Parents, teachers, guidance counselors,  
5 administrators, school aids, paraprofessionals.  
6 Mobilize the effort of everybody involved to have  
7 it be a college conversation. And we are  
8 surfacing those successes, sharing them, and  
9 disseminating across the system. Finally, I want  
10 to call out the Young Men's Initiative, that we've  
11 spoken about before. We got a grant from the Open  
12 Society Institute, and we'll be investing in our,  
13 40 of our best schools, that work with high  
14 poverty, black and Latino boys, that get them to a  
15 high school diploma, but not yet to college  
16 readiness. And working with those schools that  
17 have done the best by our black and Latino young  
18 men, to break the paradigm that it's not possible,  
19 and to show that this be the first city in the  
20 country that has scores of schools graduating high  
21 poverty black and Latino young men, college ready.  
22 We did it around high school graduation over the  
23 last decade, and we're now ready to do it around  
24 college readiness. Thank for the time, I look  
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forward to questions.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And John,  
before you begin--

JOHN MOGALESCU: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --if you  
don't mind. Let us introduce our other colleagues  
that have joined us. We had our colleague from  
The Bronx, Jimmy Vacca; and obviously to me, our  
left, is the Council Member from Queens, Mark  
Weprin; and also the Council Member from Queens,  
Danny Dromm, a former teacher/educator for 25  
years; our colleague, all the way over to the  
right of me, David Greenfield from Brooklyn; our  
colleague from upper Manhattan in front of us,  
Council Member Gale Brewer from the Upper West  
Side; and our colleague from Queens, Eric Ulrich.  
Okay? And so, John, before you begin--

JOHN MOGALESCU: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --let me just  
say, Shael and Josh, I'm telling you, the  
presentation is great. And clearly that's what we  
want to see. So, obviously you can talk the talk.  
The question is, whether or not the system can  
walk the walk, in order to achieve what we're

1  
2 talking about. That's the real question. So, I  
3 just want you to think about that. We're going to  
4 let John give a presentation, then we're going to  
5 come back and hit you with some questions. Some  
6 hard Q&As, and see if you can hit the home run on  
7 behalf of our children. Thank you.

8 JOHN MOGALESCU: I think we're  
9 ready for some hard Q&A. I am not the only  
10 speaker on the Q&A panel, and we have a couple of  
11 others as well who introduced themselves, to  
12 start. But I am John Mogalescu, thanks Chairs  
13 Jackson and Rodriguez for, for hosting this  
14 hearing, and Members of the two Committees. Just  
15 a personal note to start, I've worked at CUNY for  
16 40 years, hard to imagine. But before that, I was  
17 an elementary school teacher for three years. And  
18 I have forever been saying that the hardest thing  
19 I ever did was teach elementary school. There is  
20 no comparison, and I think I'm a hard worker and  
21 have had a successful career at CUNY. I have  
22 enormous respect for the people who are teaching  
23 in this City, in the public school system, and for  
24 the work that Shael and Josh and other people are  
25 doing. I have a daughter also who was a middle

1  
2 school teacher in this public school system, who  
3 is now a high school teacher in this system, and I  
4 know how hard she, she works as, as well. So I  
5 just wanted to start with that personal note.  
6 CUNY's deeply connected with the City's public  
7 schools, and that's how it should be. The  
8 connection goes back to CUNY's beginnings, as the  
9 Free Academy, established in 1847 by the New York  
10 City Board of Ed President, Townsend Harris. The  
11 Free Academy was meant to serve the children of  
12 immigrants and poorest city residents, the  
13 children of the whole people, as described by  
14 Harris Webster, its first President. This  
15 commitment continued through the Free Academy's  
16 evolution into City College of New York, and the  
17 later establishment and growth of CUNY into the  
18 largest urban university system in the country.  
19 We remain distinctive for the diversity of our  
20 students. Half of our students were born outside  
21 the United States mainland, 29 percent of them are  
22 Latino, 27 percent African-American, 18 percent  
23 Asian. Almost half of our students are the first  
24 in their families to attend college. And if we  
25 look closely at the level of preparation of

1 students coming into CUNY, it becomes clear that  
2 there are really two stories to tell. One is of  
3 our university senior colleges, which are  
4 enrolling increasingly more qualified and better  
5 academically prepared students. Students at our  
6 senior colleges largely do not need any  
7 remediation, 72 percent of them are graduates of  
8 the New York City public high schools. At the  
9 same time, as community college enrollments have  
10 increased by 34 percent over the past ten years,  
11 the number of students who come to us in need of  
12 remediation, has also grown significantly.

13 Graduation rates at our senior colleges have risen  
14 while graduation rates at the community colleges  
15 have remained for the most part flat. And this  
16 unfortunately is a, is a national trend. And I  
17 believe one that CUNY's at the forefront of, of  
18 addressing. We've taken several initiatives aimed  
19 at ensuring that students who need to improve  
20 their academic skills can succeed in college. I'm  
21 going to very briefly, and Josh alluded to a few  
22 of them, but I'll describe them briefly. We  
23 recently testified by the, before the Higher Ed  
24 Committee about our ASAP Program, stands for

1 Accelerated Studies and Associate Programs. ASAP  
2 has shown that it can work effectively with  
3 students who have some remedial needs.  
4  
5 Participants in this program have much higher  
6 graduation rates than peers who enter CUNY with  
7 similar levels of academic skills. The program  
8 has a 27 percent two year graduation rate for  
9 students with some remedial needs, and we just  
10 have our first cohort study of that group. Well,  
11 a comparison group has a graduation rate of only  
12 seven percent. We're in the process of expanding  
13 ASAP from its current 1,300 participants to serve  
14 over 4,000 by 2014. ASAP works with students  
15 throughout their time in college. CUNY also has  
16 two university wide programs that help prepare  
17 individuals for college level academic work before  
18 they begin degree studies. The CUNY language  
19 immersion program works with immigrants whose  
20 language skills need improvement before they take  
21 college level coursework. The students who've  
22 been admitted to CUNY actually defer their  
23 matriculation on a voluntary basis in order to  
24 enroll in this fulltime program, for one or two  
25 semesters, for which they pay only \$75 per

1 semester in fees, and preserve their financial aid  
2 for credit bearing coursework. The program serves  
3 more than 3,000 students per year. A new program,  
4 CUNY Start, is modeled on the language immersion  
5 program and works intensively with students who've  
6 been admitted to CUNY, but are not yet ready for  
7 college level study. We developed this program  
8 initially to address the fact that students who  
9 came to CUNY, having earned a GED, often struggled  
10 with required remedial coursework and rarely  
11 earned a degree. Initial results from the program  
12 have been strong, students start college degree  
13 programs needing significantly less remediation.  
14 And many test out of it entirely. Based on this  
15 early success, CUNY has expanded the program from  
16 four to seven colleges, and more than doubled its  
17 enrollment to almost 700 students this past  
18 semester. In addition, CUNY's increasingly  
19 focused on working with local community  
20 organizations and other nonprofits to support  
21 their efforts to successfully prepare young people  
22 for college success. Among these efforts are the  
23 Urban League's recently published college  
24 readiness and success guide, and our Lumina  
25

1 Foundation supported partnership with the Hispanic  
2 Federation. Our work to improve students'  
3 academic skills once they come to CUNY is  
4 important, will continue. At the same time,  
5 working closely with the City Department of  
6 Education, to ensure that students leaving the  
7 system are better prepared for college level work,  
8 will result in students needing less support and  
9 remediation when they enter CUNY. 70 percent of  
10 incoming CUNY students each year are graduates of  
11 the City's public schools. And Josh mentioned  
12 Graduate NYC, our college readiness and success  
13 initiative, supported by the Bill and Melinda  
14 Gates Foundation. CUNY and DOE have together  
15 committed to increasing both systems graduation  
16 rates significantly, and to ensuring that high  
17 school graduates leave better prepared for  
18 college. We are working together to better align  
19 high school graduation and college entrance  
20 requirements, to educate the public about what it  
21 takes to be ready for and to succeed in college,  
22 and to share our data so that we're able to track  
23 the educational progress and better support them  
24 in both high school and college. And I would  
25

1  
2 reinforce what Josh said about the importance of  
3 our data sharing agreement, bringing us  
4 information. And I've been in this system for 40  
5 years, that we've absolutely never had before. In  
6 addition, we seek to better align curriculum in  
7 the senior year of high school and first year of  
8 college, and to intervene earlier in high school  
9 to boost the academic skills of students at risk  
10 of needing significant college remediation. Last  
11 year, 20,000 students from 390 City high schools  
12 participated in college now. Our largest program  
13 offered in partnership with the DOE and operating  
14 across every one of our CUNY colleges, the  
15 majority of participants take college credit  
16 courses, but we also offer remedial and other pre-  
17 college coursework. About half of the college now  
18 participants who eventually attend college enroll  
19 at a CUNY college after high school graduation,  
20 and they're distributed, you know, pretty much  
21 half and half between our senior colleges and  
22 community colleges. Our research has shown that  
23 College Now alumni earn more credits and higher  
24 grade point averages than their peers, and are  
25 less likely to leave college. Because enrolling

1 students in college credit course through College  
2 Now helps high schools meet the new college  
3 readiness accountability measures set by the DOE,  
4 we have received numerous requests from existing  
5 partner schools that want to expand opportunities  
6 for more studies to participate, more students to  
7 participate, and from new schools that want to  
8 begin a partnership, we would love to be able to  
9 expand this program. CUNY also administers 12  
10 early college high schools. Josh mentioned a few  
11 of those, as well, in which students may earn one  
12 to two years of college credit in addition to high  
13 school diploma. I was going to mention P-Tech but  
14 it has been mentioned already. The high  
15 expectations that are fundamental to early  
16 colleges have a major impact on outcomes for their  
17 largely low income and minority students. And I'm  
18 sure the President of Hostos may allude to this,  
19 as well, but 40 percent of the first graduating  
20 this, class this spring at Hostos Lincoln Academy  
21 High School, earned both a high school diploma and  
22 an Associate Degree from Hostos Community College.  
23 An additional 38 percent of those students earn  
24 between 12 and 60 college credits, what I believe  
25

1  
2 is a remarkable accomplishment. Lastly, let me  
3 just mention At Home In College, a program funded  
4 by the Robin Hood Foundation, currently working  
5 with 1,800 high school seniors from 62 partner  
6 schools whose grades and performance on  
7 standardized tests indicate they'll likely need  
8 remediation in college. Students at home get help  
9 with preparing for CUNY placement exams, college  
10 applications and enrollments, filing for financial  
11 aid, college visits, and learning about college  
12 majors and careers. This support continues  
13 throughout their first year of college. Early  
14 results are good with program participants testing  
15 better on our placement exams and needing  
16 significantly less remediation than when they  
17 start college. College enrollment rates in the  
18 program are particularly strong for African-  
19 American and Hispanic males. Our work with DOE to  
20 support college readiness and the transition to  
21 college from New York City public high schools is  
22 keeping with the university's origins and remains  
23 fundamental to our mission. I would say that no  
24 other city in the country, no other city in the  
25 country links its educational systems at such a

1  
2 scale and with such deliberate effort. In fact,  
3 the current partnership between DOE and CUNY, it  
4 is the strongest that it has ever been, and I've  
5 been at CUNY for a very long time, and I've  
6 overseen programs with the DOE for not quite as  
7 long, but a pretty long time, as well. And we  
8 believe that this partnership is vital to ensuring  
9 the success of both of our systems of education.  
10 I don't think you can have a great urban  
11 university, that puts his head in the sand when it  
12 comes to the larger issue of linking to the public  
13 school system and in the City that it resides. I  
14 think we do that particularly well. And I'm now  
15 going to turn it over to Lisa's--

16 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: So, John, let  
17 me, you know, my question to you is for other  
18 speakers of CUNY, who do you have that wants to  
19 speak on this subject, John?

20 JOHN MOGALESCU: I have the  
21 President of City College, President Lisa Stoico  
22 [phonetic], I have the President of Hostos  
23 Community College, Felix Matos Rodriguez, and I  
24 have Gina Ortiz, one of our students.

25 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay, well,

1  
2 quite frankly, I think that we, my colleagues are  
3 biting at the bit to ask questions. So, I'm going  
4 to ask the other speakers, we have your testimony  
5 for the record, but I'm going to ask the other  
6 speakers to just summarize quickly. We're going  
7 to hear from all three of them, just summarize,  
8 because we have your testimony. Understanding  
9 that members are waiting to ask questions of all  
10 of you. Okay? So, President Lisa--

11 [pause, background noise]

12 LISA COICO: Good afternoon and  
13 thank you. It's a pleasure to speak with members  
14 of the City Council and to see you, my friends,  
15 and Council Members, and City Council alumnus,  
16 Ydanis Rodriguez, and Chair of the Committee  
17 Higher Ed, and also Councilman Robert Jackson,  
18 Committee of the Chair, Chairman of Committee on  
19 Education. I also want to invite you all uptown  
20 to Harlem to come and visit and tour our campus.  
21 I just really want to summarize the pipeline  
22 programs. Must has already been said by the  
23 previous speakers. But I'd like to talk a little  
24 bit about City College of New York. And also in a  
25 personal note, I am a high school graduate of New

1  
2 Utrecht High School in Brooklyn, where I was very  
3 well prepared. Yeah, Brooklyn's always in the  
4 house. And, and very fortunate to find my passion  
5 at Brooklyn College for Science, and I am a  
6 scientist. The students who are coming to City  
7 College today are really--and meeting our  
8 admissions criteria--are smart, talented and  
9 capable students. They are not always, however,  
10 prepared for the rigors of science technology  
11 engineering and mathematics, or the STEM  
12 disciplines, has been alluded to by Shael. They  
13 sometimes don't have the laboratory and research  
14 experiences, nor do they have the in-depth writing  
15 colleges, writing experiences, that would make  
16 them able to succeed. I just want to highlight a  
17 couple of our programs that we have working in  
18 collaboration to help high schools students.  
19 Since 1992, we have a STEM Institute, supported by  
20 NASA, for 9th to 12th graders. Again, very active  
21 in supporting and working together to help  
22 students prepare for life. Just this last month,  
23 we received a \$4 million grant, to work with our  
24 sister colleges, La Guardia Community College and  
25 Hostos, to help students again go from community

1  
2 colleges into City College to graduate in the STEM  
3 disciplines. We have an urban scholars program,  
4 we have a gateway pre-college education program,  
5 and I'd just like to highlight one program which  
6 shows the success, I think, that we've been  
7 having, and that's our CCAPP program, the City  
8 College Academy for Professional Preparation. It  
9 brings admitted science and engineering students  
10 to City College, the summer before they  
11 matriculate in provides them career development,  
12 tutoring, mentoring, to really prepare them to go  
13 forward. And in the latest issue in national  
14 rankings of diverse higher issues in higher ed,  
15 City College was ranked nationally number 19, for  
16 the total number of minority students with master  
17 degrees in education; number 15 for African-  
18 American masters in engineering; number 20 for  
19 Hispanic master's degrees in engineering; number  
20 14 for African-American baccalaureate degrees in  
21 physical sciences; number 32 for African-American  
22 baccalaureate degrees in biological and biomedical  
23 sciences; and number 36 for African-American  
24 baccalaureate degrees in engineering. In  
25 addition, the American Association for medical

1  
2 colleges has ranked City College number 38th in  
3 the country in sending minority students to  
4 medical schools. I don't want to take any more of  
5 your time, most of it is in the testimony, and I'd  
6 be happy to respond to questions.

7 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you,  
8 President Lisa. President of Hostos Community  
9 College.

10 FELIX MATOS RODRIGUEZ: Thank you,  
11 Chairman Jackson, Chairman Rodriguez, delighted to  
12 be here to be able to share a little bit about  
13 what we do at Eugenio Maria de Hostos Community  
14 College in The Bronx, to talk about our programs  
15 within CUNY and our partnerships with the New York  
16 City Department of Education, and it's always a  
17 delight to be able to talk to the members of the  
18 City Council and to have a distinguished Hostos  
19 alum who's going to follow in my testimony. As  
20 you know, community college is, and also  
21 particularly, it's a place that is about achieving  
22 the full potential of our students and moving  
23 individuals to be able to achieve the, the  
24 American Dream. I wanted to give you a little bit  
25 of a sense of who our students are. Hostos over

1 the past eleven years, has been the CUNY school  
2 that has experienced the highest growth of any  
3 other colleges in the CUNY system, it's been 127  
4 percent growth. We had 3,118 students in the fall  
5 of 2000 and we have 7,182 students that started  
6 this fall. Of that group in the fall, 72 percent  
7 of our students are female, the other 28 percent  
8 are male. The average age is about 25 years-and-  
9 a-half. 59 percent of the students coming to  
10 Hostos come fulltime; the other 41 come part time.  
11 In terms of the ethnicity and race, their  
12 background, the two largest groups coming to  
13 Hostos are Hispanics who make up 58 percent of our  
14 student body in the fall, and African-Americans  
15 who make up 27 percent of our student body. The  
16 programs that have the highest enrollment are  
17 liberal arts and sciences, nursing, teaching  
18 education, business management, and dental  
19 hygiene. Over 65 percent of our students live in  
20 The Bronx; another 20 percent come from Manhattan,  
21 mostly coming from upper Manhattan and El Barrio.  
22 77 percent speak a language other than English at  
23 home. Around 38 percent of all our students are  
24 supporting children under 18 years of age. 82  
25

1 percent come from households that have incomes  
2 that are less than \$30,000 per year. And about 20  
3 percent of all our students work more than 24  
4 hours a week. In terms of college readiness,  
5 which is something that has been addressed here  
6 today at the hearings, our first year students  
7 last fall, 88 percent of those students had to  
8 take at least one remedial developmental course  
9 starting at Hostos; in that same full class, 66--  
10 16 percent of all our students came with a GED.  
11 And, and a majority of about 45 percent of all our  
12 students last fall were the first ones in their  
13 families to attend college. College readiness,  
14 and we've emphasized here the student proficiency  
15 in math, in reading and in writing, but it also  
16 requires the ability to navigate the college  
17 system, to understand college culture and  
18 expectations, and to gain access to the resources  
19 that are necessary for that success. Hostos was  
20 created and has always worked to serve populations  
21 that historically have been excluded from higher  
22 education, and we have implemented a number of  
23 programs that are targeted to improving the  
24 academic success of our students. They're in the  
25

1 testimony, I am not going to mention them all.  
2 They also, I'd be happy to take any questions  
3 about any of the programs there. The Hostos  
4 Academic Learning Center, the HALC, which is our  
5 main tutoring program, working year round, getting  
6 students ready for developmental courses and  
7 writing and reading and some of the other courses.  
8 The Office of Academic Achievement, which is our  
9 bridge for the new students who attend the college  
10 in terms of the advising, in terms of the  
11 retention, monitoring their progress, making sure  
12 that they fill out their financial aid forms, and  
13 they have all the elements ready to be successful.  
14 When they start at Hostos, they call it Discovery  
15 Program, which for those who are familiar with  
16 SEEK [phonetic], a sort of a community college  
17 version of, of the SEEK program, the Student  
18 Leadership Academy, and I know that we have some  
19 Hostos students in the house, either here or in  
20 the other floor, and probably many of them are  
21 part of the Student Leadership Academy. They can  
22 be student ambassadors to the orientation  
23 services, volunteers, a number of programs that  
24 highlight the link to the community, in which they  
25

1  
2 have to keep academic success, they give back to  
3 the community, and it's a phenomenal retention  
4 tool for all of us. In addition to the programs  
5 that are listed in my testimony to support  
6 academic improvements, we're also proud of our  
7 collaboration with the New York City Department of  
8 Education on the following pipeline programs,  
9 Senior Dean Mogalescu mentioned them: College  
10 Now, CUNY Prep, CUNY Start, ASAP and the Hostos  
11 Lincoln Early College High School. I do want to  
12 take a second, the reference was made to the  
13 Hostos-Lincoln Academy, we made history last year  
14 at the commencement ceremony, when we had 35  
15 students be the first cohort of students who  
16 graduated from baccalaureate [phonetic] early  
17 college program that we have. And I've been  
18 college president now for three years, one of the  
19 highlights of my professional career has been to  
20 be at that ceremony and see those 35 students, who  
21 in a very devilish twist of bureaucracy got there,  
22 got to participate in a college graduation  
23 ceremony before their high school ceremony,  
24 because we end the semester before, so they were  
25 partying and having a hoot at our commencement

1 ceremony a couple of weeks before they actually  
2 formally graduated from high school. But it's a  
3 great acknowledgement of what can be done, you  
4 know, with students from our community. Although  
5 the focus of this hearing has been the important  
6 partnership between the New York Department of  
7 Education and CUNY, I also wish to highlight that  
8 one of Hostos's trademarks is our collaboration  
9 with community based organizations to also promote  
10 college readiness. In this regard, I quickly want  
11 to mention our partnership with Leading Bronx CBOs  
12 to create The Bronx Opportunity Network, which has  
13 developed a comprehensive borough based approach  
14 to help disconnected youth succeed in getting a  
15 high school education. We also, for the past two  
16 summer, in collaboration with the college  
17 initiative, have had a summer readiness workshop  
18 for previously incarcerated individuals, so they  
19 can be ready to go to school in the fall. And I  
20 just want to--and by saying that, you know, we, we  
21 know that there's a lot of roadblocks and  
22 challenges our students face. We are very, very  
23 committed to do better by them, to help them  
24 succeed, to achieve their full potential, and, and  
25

1  
2 we are completely committed to the collaborations  
3 with the New York City Department of Education.  
4 We believe that that's the way in which we're  
5 going to change the lifestyle of many of those  
6 students, and I would be happy to take any  
7 questions from the members of the City Council.

8 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you,  
9 President Rodriguez. And now, we're going to hear  
10 from Gina Ortiz, student at John Jay College of  
11 Criminal Justice, she's a senior, and she  
12 graduated from Hostos Community College, right?

13 FELIX MATOS RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

14 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Sure.

15 [background comment] No?

16 GINA ORTIZ: I am an alum of the  
17 College Now program over at Hostos Community  
18 College.

19 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Oh, okay.

20 GINA ORTIZ: Bronx Civic Scholars  
21 Institute, also a former employee with the College  
22 Now and SEAL [phonetic] program, computer research  
23 skills, instructor with the SEAL program. Like to  
24 introduce myself again: Gina Ortiz. I am  
25 currently a senior at John Jay College where I am

1  
2 completing a Bachelor's of Science and Criminal  
3 Justice, after having earned an Associate's Degree  
4 in Police Studies, with a 3.45 GPA, I am a proud  
5 graduate of Riverdale Kingsbridge Academy, in The  
6 Bronx. During my junior year of high school, I  
7 met with my guidance counselor, because I was  
8 looking for a summer program that would give me a  
9 sense of what college work and life would really  
10 be like. In connection with my interests in  
11 government and law, we recommended that I apply to  
12 the Bronx Civic Scholars Institute, a College Now  
13 summer program at Hostos Community College. As  
14 part of the summer program, I took a college  
15 credited course in American Government. It was  
16 one of the first times that I had ever had to read  
17 a college level textbook, take part in various  
18 debates, and apply the material we learned to real  
19 life situations. My professor did a great job in  
20 helping us understand how to approach college work  
21 and the skills I began developing in that  
22 government class provided me with the foundations  
23 to be successful in my senior year, as well as my  
24 classes in John Jay College of Criminal Justice.  
25 The summer I spent at Hostos wasn't only about

1  
2 strengthening my academic skills. As part of the  
3 program, we had the opportunity to meet with  
4 elected officials, including Council Chairperson  
5 Robert Jackson, and discussed different policy  
6 issues. We also participated in an internship. I  
7 engaged with the Northwest Bronx Community and  
8 Clergy Coalition, where my classmates and I worked  
9 on the SEATS campaign--Schools Exploding At The  
10 Seams--to fight against school overcrowding. As  
11 part of this internship, we had to make speeches,  
12 including some on the steps of City Hall, write  
13 letters, and grapple with how to utilize evidence  
14 to formulate an effective argument. My experience  
15 with College Now provided me with the academic  
16 skills and the confidence I would need to be  
17 successful in any educational and professional  
18 context. The summer after my first year at John  
19 Jay, I worked for College Now as the Internship  
20 Coordinator for the Hostos summer program, as well  
21 as an instructor for a computer research class for  
22 English language learners who were participating  
23 in another College Now program, as well.  
24 Throughout the summer, I saw the ways my students  
25 developed their academic voice and approached

1  
2 their classwork with a new sense of confidence. A  
3 lot like myself, when I had experienced it also.  
4 Being on a college campus every day allowed me and  
5 my students to understand that college was for us,  
6 and that we could and would be successful, no  
7 matter what. Throughout my college years, I've  
8 had many opportunities to showcase and build on  
9 what I learned in College Now. Two years ago, I  
10 was selected as a sole student representative on  
11 the enrollment planning committee for CUNY's new  
12 community college, where I provided a critical  
13 student perspective. In addition to being a  
14 fulltime student, I am also an auxiliary police  
15 officer, and am currently working fulltime  
16 providing support and advocacy for a caseload of  
17 approximately 35 clients who have been infected  
18 with HIV and long term illnesses. As I prepare to  
19 enter my last semester at John Jay, I look back  
20 and realize how different my college experience  
21 would have been without College Now. Instead of  
22 being intimidated by going from a class of 160 to  
23 a class of more than 1,500 students, I arrived at  
24 John Jay with a clear sense of college  
25 expectations, a better understanding of how to

1  
2 manage my time, and an awareness of the different  
3 support services I could use on the college  
4 campus. Being able to take a college credit  
5 course gave me the skills that I would need to be  
6 a successful student, and in the not too distant  
7 future, an outstanding professional. Thank you,  
8 College Now and thank you, New York City Council,  
9 for all that you are, all that you do, and  
10 allowing me to speak today. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Well, Gina,  
12 let me just thank you [applause] and obviously you  
13 are a prime example of the type of progress that,  
14 I guess that all of us would like to say. And I'm  
15 just so happy that you're--a part of the  
16 presentation was a student from our schools--

17 GINA ORTIZ: Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --was here to  
19 give testimony. And obviously, you're working so  
20 hard, working fulltime and going to school and,  
21 and also an auxiliary police officer, you're,  
22 you're just a superwoman in a lot of respects.  
23 [laughter] But our colleagues have been biting at  
24 the bit in order to ask questions. We have about  
25 six colleagues. My normal is to let our

1  
2 colleagues ask questions, and I will follow up.  
3 So, Ydanis and I will be waiting for our  
4 colleagues to finish. So Council Member Charles  
5 Barron, followed by Council Member Jumaane  
6 Williams, and Council Member Mark Weprin, Levin,  
7 Greenfield, Gale Brewer, Danny Dromm. And  
8 Margaret Chin. Sergeant-of-Arms, would you set  
9 the clock for five minutes, please? Members, when  
10 you hear the ding-ding-ding-ding, you know, it's a  
11 good time to wrap up, okay? [laughter] Okay, so,  
12 Council Member Charles Barron of Brooklyn, you  
13 have the floor.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you  
15 very much. We should get ten minutes behind that,  
16 because this has been an overload of information,  
17 this is what Department of Education does, they  
18 overload you with statistics, you ain't holdin'  
19 all of that. So by the time you leave here, you  
20 won't know what's going on. [laughter] Let me  
21 tell you the real deal. The bottom line, and my  
22 criticism to my colleagues here, this is the  
23 second hearing I came where the, CUNY was  
24 presenting and not a second African-American is  
25 presenting, not one. [clapping] Not one. And

1  
2 we're not minorities, whites are the minorities.  
3 The majority in New York City is black, Latinos  
4 and Asians. For us to have this discussion with  
5 the new majority, and then we don't have a single  
6 African-American from CUNY or from the Department  
7 of Education presenting, is ridiculous. Secondly,  
8 this is not historic to have some discussion from  
9 CUNY and the Department of Education, even if it's  
10 too committees coming together. In 2008, there  
11 was a memorandum of understanding where the both  
12 departments came together to say, "We will track  
13 the students coming--" isn't that correct? "--from  
14 the Department of Ed, coming into CUNY, we will  
15 track them." This is not history, this is  
16 something that's been going on. You know what the  
17 bottom line is? They don't want to talk about  
18 racism, [clapping] they don't want to talk about  
19 the fact that when CUNY was--

20 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --scuze me,  
21 sir.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: --a Free  
23 Academy--

24 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: You're not--  
25 one second, Charles. Please, the applause and

1  
2 boos, you can take them outside. Okay? I'm going  
3 to ask all of you. So if you want to applause or  
4 boo or hiss, go outside.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: When it was  
6 the Free Academy, it was the White Academy. It  
7 was white immigrants that came. When the  
8 complexion of CUNY changed, so did policies. So  
9 did the tuition. These CUNY students now are  
10 going to have a tuition increase of \$300 per year  
11 for the next five years, so by the time 2016  
12 comes, they won't be able to pay tuition because  
13 nothing, TAP or nothing else will cover it. The  
14 other thing what they do with statistics, if the  
15 Department of Education had, since Bloomberg came,  
16 and we need to immediately end Mayoral control, he  
17 is clueless on how to educate our children. If  
18 you had over \$150 billion, that's what the  
19 Department of Education have had for ten years,  
20 some say \$175 billion to educate 1.1 million  
21 educable children, and you're going to come to  
22 this meeting with some pizza talk, and some  
23 decimals and fraction talk, and sound all cute  
24 here, when you're only, only 13 percent of our  
25 black students are prepared, 13 percent. You do

1  
2 the math, you want to do some math, how about \$150  
3 billion and only 13 percent. You would get fired  
4 in any corporation if that was your productivity.  
5 So when they come here today, don't come to  
6 improve, they come to justify failure. And when we  
7 leave here, with all of this promising language,  
8 we're going back to collocated charter schools in  
9 buildings where only one, was built for one  
10 administration, now you have four, overcrowded  
11 classrooms. We're going back to this battle over  
12 teacher evaluation. So, then we're going to go  
13 over battles over, you know, just revamping ed--  
14 shutting down schools. What a good solution,  
15 that's really smart. A school is failing? Shut  
16 it down. You don't have to come up with no  
17 creativity, any fool could shut down the school.  
18 It takes real genius to educate our children. So,  
19 I'm just pissed. I don't have no other nice way  
20 of saying it, because our children are going to go  
21 to jail, or they're going to be in deep trouble if  
22 we still keep drinking this kind of Kool-Aid that  
23 comes up here at these hearings. The bottom line,  
24 people, we got to get out there and end Mayoral  
25 control of our schools. The Mayor's out of

1 control. And this is a school system that if they  
2 really wanted to do something, this little program  
3 for black and Latino youth that he came up with?  
4 What did he get, an epiphany, after ten years that  
5 there's something wrong with black and Latino  
6 youth? On his way out, to maintain his legacy?  
7 \$20 some odd, \$30 million dollars for that. You  
8 have \$23 billion now, if you wanted to deal with  
9 black and Latino youth he could've done it through  
10 the years that he was here. We got to put  
11 pressure, pressure, on this Department of  
12 Education and CUNY, arresting students because  
13 they're demonstrating to keep their tuition down.  
14 And then, they don't have the students involved.  
15 We need more power in this system, over the Board  
16 of Trustees who ended in 1999, they ended  
17 remediation in the four year colleges. They have  
18 remediation at Harvard. So what the hell is CUNY  
19 [time bell] that they can't have remediation in  
20 their four year colleges. So, I'm saying to you,  
21 and as I end, that I, I'm not asking them no  
22 question, 'cause I'm afraid they'll take my time  
23 and have a long empty rhetoric answer. So I just  
24 wanted to make my statement here today, that we  
25

1  
2 got to fight this system, we got to fight CUNY, we  
3 got to fight the Department of Education, for them  
4 to use those billions of dollars to invest in  
5 black and Latino youngsters in particular, Asian  
6 youngsters, people of color in particular, and  
7 struggling working class families, so that our  
8 children can get a real education with the  
9 billions of dollars we have. End Mayoral control,  
10 get rid of Bloomberg and the Mayor--education, and  
11 get rid of Chancellor Goldstein, too, 'cause he  
12 has failed us.

13 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: [off mic]

14 Thank you, Council Member Barron.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [off mic]

16 You can clap and let them put you out, if you  
17 want. [laughter]

18 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you,  
19 member, Council Member Barron. Council Member  
20 Williams of Brooklyn.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Hello.

22 Thank you to the Chairs. I'm a public school  
23 baby. Brooklyn public school, PS346, Abe Stark,  
24 IS383 Philippa Schuyler, Brooklyn Tech, Brooklyn  
25 College my bachelor's, and Brooklyn College my

1  
2 master's. So I'm a believer in the public school  
3 system, 'cause so far it's worked out okay, we'll  
4 see how everything else goes. I do have some  
5 issue, what's happening today, though, 'cause I  
6 don't think everybody is getting the education  
7 they deserve. So, I did want to mention just  
8 briefly, the CUNY should still be free. They  
9 mentioned the Free Academy, how great it was. I  
10 do agree with my colleague. Once the complexion  
11 changed, open enrollment changed, and that's an  
12 atrocity, I believe. One quick question, also, I  
13 didn't hear much about career ready. What is the  
14 metric for career ready? [background comments]  
15 And I'm going to have to rush a little bit, 'cause  
16 I know we have five minutes.

17 JOSH THOMASES: Yeah.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: And I  
19 want to make sure I get through everything.

20 JOSH THOMASES: So, each, each  
21 pathway has a different metric, depending on  
22 whether you're in a construction trades pathway or  
23 you're in a technology pathway, there are  
24 certificates for the different pathways. Most of  
25 them require some post-secondary certificate.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay. I  
3 hope some of my colleagues follow up and really  
4 hone in on that.

5 JOSH THOMASES: We'll have to talk  
6 about it.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: So, I  
8 just want to cut to the chase. Do you believe  
9 Mayoral control is working?

10 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Yes. I  
11 think that when you look at the outcomes for kids,  
12 when we started this, 40 percent of African-  
13 American students were graduating, now 60 percent  
14 are graduating. That's not enough, but that is a  
15 dramatic change, and it's something that we should  
16 be proud of. It used to be that we had, between  
17 our black and Hispanic students, only 9,000 going  
18 into CUNY, that's almost doubled, it's over 16,000  
19 now. Those are thousands and thousands and  
20 thousands of children's lives that have been  
21 changed, and the reason it's changed is because  
22 the Department of Education has changed from a  
23 system that was really neglected in many parts of  
24 the City, to one where there is an expectation  
25 that every kid learn, and that every kid have

1  
2 access, and every kid have an opportunity. And  
3 it's not something that you can snap your fingers  
4 and just change quickly. It takes time. And  
5 those billions and billions of dollars are being  
6 used to change what's happening with our kids.  
7 And it is working, and it's going to take more  
8 time.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: So, some  
10 of the graduation rates are always, they are  
11 questionable, particularly if they're not college  
12 or career ready. And as far as those are  
13 concerned, you know, I think it's like moving from  
14 a D to a D+, and for black and Latino kids it's  
15 like from moving from to a F to a F+.

16 SHAEEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Yeah, I  
17 think it's a fair--

18 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Also  
19 there, there may--

20 SHAEEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: --it's a  
21 fair point. But let me just be clear on what we  
22 mean between graduation rate and college and  
23 career ready. It's the difference between a 65  
24 and a 75 on the Regent's Exam, and that difference  
25 is keyed in to--

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Well, I'm  
3 looking at 13 percent for black students and 15  
4 percent for Hispanic students, and just 50-  
5 something percent for white students. So, the  
6 movement, while it's, glad it's moving the right  
7 direction, it's dismal. So, I believe Mayoral  
8 control isn't really working, I believe if we had  
9 municipal control, there'd be more people allowed  
10 to be part of the conversation. And I believe if  
11 the Administration, particularly the Mayor, who  
12 just doesn't like to listen to other people, or  
13 talk to other people, would open his office to  
14 some of the advocates who are here today, and have  
15 some other ideas, we might be increasing that a  
16 lot better. I'm very happy that CUNY is--and the  
17 DOE--are moving toward a better direction. I  
18 think we have a lot more to go. This Common Core-  
19 -sure--the Common Core program seemed very good.  
20 Is that working? How long has that been going  
21 forward? Is that critical to the change?

22 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: So, couple  
23 things, first on your last question around the  
24 Common Core. We've been working with our schools  
25 for about 18 months. We are seeing deeper, higher

1  
2 quality work, more intensive writing, more applied  
3 mathematics. It's a huge amount of work for our  
4 teachers, they are doing a great job with it.  
5 Within a contractual day, and, you know, I worked  
6 a teacher, I would echo Dean Mogalescu, nobody  
7 works harder. We, we see this as a three and four  
8 year trajectory. And are seeing it grip. The one  
9 thing that I would just say on the prior point:  
10 there isn't a city that's moved the perfor--  
11 graduation rate more aggressively, faster than we  
12 have. I can't agree with you more, we've moved  
13 from 30 percent graduation rates for black and  
14 Latino boys, to 52 and 53 percent. Nobody's going  
15 to say "You can be done at 52/53." But nobody's  
16 moved it, there was an MDRC study I'd referenced  
17 in an earlier testimony, that, that celebrated the  
18 work that was done in New York City, as the most  
19 aggressive work in the nation based on a study of  
20 over 100,000 young people and the impact.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: And of  
22 those 52 percent, which is dismal, 13 percent are  
23 career or college ready.

24 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: And that's  
25 the work ahead, and it's the work of this country.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: But we  
3 can't, when we, when we mentioned this statistic,  
4 sometimes we forget about those. But also--

5 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: We don't,  
6 Councilman.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: --when I  
8 talk about charter schools, my understanding is  
9 charter schools should've been, or were supposed  
10 to be experimental, which I think is fantastic, to  
11 try to find new ways to educate our students.  
12 What is the process that you have of getting the  
13 information from the charter schools and bringing  
14 it back to the pub--the rest of the public school  
15 system so everyone can benefit?

16 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: So, first  
17 of all, one of the things that we've done is we've  
18 tried to include some of the charters in our  
19 networks, where they are interested in partnering.  
20 We've also looked at some of the models. So, for  
21 example, the way in which charter schools use data  
22 as part of their instructional planning is  
23 something that we've learned a lot from. One of  
24 the things that they invest a lot in, is having  
25 teachers meet in teams and work through and look

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closely at the students' work and customize--

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: What, charter teachers or all teachers?

SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Well, I was giving you examples of things that I thought were innovative in some of the charter schools, that I think are models that we've sought to look at across the system.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay.

SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Just on the, on the, the data point around college ready--

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Just, I only have 15 seconds, so I'm, so I just--

SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Okay.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: --want to get these two out.

SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Okay, go ahead.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: One, did you know about the OSC issues that Council Member Fidler spoke about before he spoke about 'em?

SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: I didn't know the data point that he shared of [time bell] the number of slots shifting--

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Which is  
3 horrific to me that the agencies are not speaking  
4 to each other, because the Mayor makes one policy  
5 for one agency that affects the other, and then we  
6 try to pretend like we're not shuffling around  
7 with money, with shell games and a whole bunch of  
8 stuff that frustrates me. But last--

9 JOSH THOMASES: We have been in  
10 conversation with Commissioner Mulgrave around the  
11 huge challenge in the face of the budget cuts.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Oh, and  
13 last, so my last comment is, I firmly believe that  
14 the Mayor has had ten years, a decade of Mayoral  
15 control. We haven't moved the ball fast enough.  
16 He should open it up to municipal control, to get  
17 some more ideas in there. Shutting down schools,  
18 charter schools, all these processes, should be  
19 discussed with other people, you can't shove these  
20 things down people's throat and expect them not to  
21 regurgitate it, even if some of them are good  
22 ideas. So we should try to get more conversation.  
23 We should stop shutting down all these schools and  
24 open colocations, 'cause the data is showing that  
25 even some of those, they're not working as well.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you,  
3 Council Member. Council Member Mark--keep it  
4 there--Council Member Mark Weprin, followed by  
5 Council Member Levin.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Thank you,  
7 Mr. Chair. Let me just, let me start on AP exams.  
8 I don't know, Deputy Chancellor if it's you, or--  
9 I'm very happy more kids are taking the AP exams.  
10 I'm curious, do more schools, are more schools  
11 offering AP exams?

12 JOSH THOMASES: Yeah, almost,  
13 almost every high school in the City at this  
14 point. The, the brand new schools have just  
15 opened with maybe ninth grade or not, but we have  
16 it in over 460 of our high schools.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Really?  
18 Almost all the high schools now have it. That's  
19 good. 'Cause I know that was always a big  
20 complaint, and some of our local high schools that  
21 students were upset that they didn't offer AP  
22 courses, you're saying now that most, most of the  
23 schools now offer them?

24 JOSH THOMASES: Right. Yes.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: That's

1 great. I did notice that I do see that more  
2 students are taking them. I will point out that  
3 the title's a little misleading, you write "More  
4 students are taking and passing the exam," indeed  
5 more kids are passing, but I actually did a little  
6 math without involving pizza, and the number of  
7 people passing before was 54.1 percent, and the  
8 number of people passing now is 54.1 percent.  
9 What can we do to help increase the number of  
10 student passing, percentage wise, and not just the  
11 number taking it?  
12

13 JOSH THOMASES: Yeah. It's the  
14 work around the Common Core. The, the title is  
15 about the absolute number--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Mm-hmm.

17 JOSH THOMASES: --who are passing  
18 the exam. The percentage reflects the challenge  
19 we're seeing around CUNY remediation.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Right.

21 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: And just,  
22 just--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Yeah.

24 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: --can I  
25 make a point. This is not a unique problem to New

1  
2 York City. ACT did a study nationally and looked  
3 at how many kids are college ready. Only 25  
4 percent of kids nationally, across the whole  
5 country, in every group, met their standard. So,  
6 the fact that we're seeing similar data in New  
7 York City is because everyone is looking at a more  
8 rigorous standard that they had not looked at  
9 before. And so when you raise the bar and make it  
10 harder to meet the standard, you have many kids  
11 who don't. And the challenge is you start to do  
12 that, with the goal of getting more kids to meet  
13 it. That's the only way you get there.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Well, see  
15 now, well, let me first just point out also by the  
16 way on the issue of CUNY, I think CUNY's doing a  
17 great job, I think the Chancellor's doing a great  
18 job. My area, I represent Queensborough  
19 Community, which has just been phenomenal lately.  
20 The amount of students that are going there, that  
21 want to go there has grown. And Queens College,  
22 which is not quite in my district, also is doing  
23 great. And so I just wanted to give a shout out  
24 to CUNY, make sure that nobody leaves with the  
25 impression we don't think they're doing a good

1  
2 job. I do want to just qualify a couple of  
3 things, though, 'cause, 'cause Deputy Chancellor  
4 you did mention the test prep issue and I just,  
5 you know, the problem with, you know, you say you  
6 raised the bar. A lot of people I speak to think  
7 that the bar has been lowered. And what's been  
8 happening is that because we're just trying to get  
9 these kids to a certain level, that certain  
10 overachieving students, or high achieving  
11 students, have like a glass ceiling that they hit  
12 when it comes to prepping for exams. And the test  
13 prep, you say that those new questions that you  
14 have to show your work, don't allow you to test  
15 prep. That may be true to some extent. The  
16 problem is the multiple choice ones are being  
17 test-prepped. And what I mean by test-prepped is  
18 not teach--I don't even like using "teaching to  
19 the test," once again, because it's not really  
20 even teaching to the test, it's teaching how to  
21 trick the test. And on a question like the pizza  
22 question, they'll say, "If the question is to  
23 compare, one is claiming one thing and one is  
24 claiming the other, it will rarely be the first  
25 person who's the right answer." I mean, that is,

1  
2 my son in third grade got a, you know, a packet  
3 home from Stanley Kaplan, that said when the, when  
4 in a multiple choice question on ELA says, "All or  
5 never," it's the wrong answer. So you can  
6 eliminate that choice. That's not learning.

7 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Right, I  
8 agree.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: And, and  
10 just one last point, and I'll let you talk.

11 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Can I just  
12 respond to that, though?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Sure, okay.

14 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: The, the  
15 issue is that the only way you get away from that  
16 is by changing what is taught and what is  
17 assessed, and how you assess it. As long as you  
18 got bubble tests, and that's what everyone is held  
19 accountable for by the state--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Okay.

21 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: --you're  
22 not going to get a change. And so that's why  
23 we've been fighting to improve the quality of the  
24 assessments, and actually that's something we'd  
25 love for you guys to see as a goal, as well,

1  
2 because it's only then that you're going to  
3 actually see a different practice.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Well, I  
5 actually agree 100 percent we should improve the  
6 quality of assessments. I also think we should  
7 have a broader based assessment, not just based on  
8 standardized tests, but using, using things that  
9 probably professors at colleges get assessed by,  
10 by in-person interviews and watching people teach,  
11 and getting their surveys. But on that issue, DOE  
12 could go a long way by making a statement that you  
13 will not allow the schools to send home Stanley  
14 Kaplan packets that merely teach tricks to the  
15 test, and will not allow them to use that as part  
16 of the curriculum. That's what drives my, my  
17 parents crazy, is they feel like they're not, the  
18 kids are not learning as much because they're so  
19 obsessed with getting just enough to get everyone,  
20 as many people to get fours or threes on those  
21 tests in these schools as possible, and not  
22 necessarily to learn. And forget about creativity  
23 and inspiration and all that, 'cause that goes out  
24 the window, because so much of the emphasis is on  
25 those tests. And DOE hasn't really come forward

1  
2 with statements of going after cheating, going  
3 after, you know, test prep to put in a program to  
4 go after cheating. And also to make a statement,  
5 just come out with a statement, it would make me  
6 so happy, it'd make me less of a pain in the butt  
7 on that, if someone just said, "We're not allowed  
8 to do test prep like that anymore." I'm not  
9 saying not learn subject matter, I'm all for that,  
10 but those tricks on the test [time bell] it seems  
11 to me to be a waste of time.

12 SHANEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: A fair  
13 concern. One thing I can say that we have done  
14 along those lines is we evaluate all of our  
15 schools through the quality review, which is a  
16 visit from a superintendent to the school over  
17 several days to look at what's going on in the  
18 classrooms. The first thing you see on that  
19 rubric is, is there real rigorous curriculum,  
20 engagement by kids, in higher order thinking.  
21 Those, those kinds of standards that are embedded  
22 in the quality review, if what you're doing is  
23 test prep as your curriculum, you're never going  
24 to pass the quality review.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Well, we

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can argue that again later.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you, Council Member. I failed to mention that we've been joined by our colleague from Lower Manhattan, Margaret Chin, who'd directly in front of us. Okay, and now we're going to turn to Council Member Steve Levin of Brooklyn, followed by Council Member David Greenfield of Brooklyn.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much, Deputy Chancellor, everyone who's here to, to testify. I have a few questions. Very first question: according to a Daily News article this past October, on October 24th, with regard to new high schools opened up by the Bloomberg Administration, they have an average, I believe, of 70 percent graduation rate, in new high schools opened up by the Bloomberg Administration. This is an article on October 24th. That's higher than the citywide average for graduation rate. However, only 12 percent were, of student graduating from those high schools were deemed college ready. So, can you explain why there's a discrepancy--

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SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Yeah.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: --where that's so much lower, that's so much lower than, than the citywide average, and yet the graduation rate is so much higher than the citywide average.

SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Because the schools that they replaced were graduating 30-40 percent of their kids, and so they've taken schools that were dropout factories and prevented kids who would've otherwise been on the street, from dropping out, they're keeping them in school, they're graduating. Now, that population of students has lower income in eighth grade test scores in the new schools, there is a higher percentage than the citywide average of students with disabilities, higher percentage of English language learners, and so the kids that they're working with are coming in with many more needs. They were kids who previously would've been dropping out in huge numbers, and they're now graduating. And so they're getting them to this level, and they have yet to get them to this level. And that is the goal Josh talked about, taking 40 of those schools and working with them

1 on this college readiness goal. But remember, all  
2 the schools that are in the comparison group that  
3 you're citing--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Yeah.

5 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: --includes  
6 all the specialized schools, all of the  
7 academically screened schools, all of the schools  
8 that have it up where they screen half of their  
9 kids. So most of the other schools in the City  
10 that we're comparing those schools against, have  
11 academic screens, whereas these schools do not.  
12 They're limited unscreened, and they're taking a  
13 much higher new population, so--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: But they  
15 have a graduation rate that's higher than the  
16 citywide average. So that's, that's, there's  
17 some--there's a discrepancy there that I don't--

18 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: No, it's  
19 not--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: --quite, I  
21 don't buy, but it's--

22 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: --but it's  
23 not a discrepancy, though. What's happening is,  
24 they are very successful up to a certain point in  
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terms of the level of performance.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: But then their success drops off a cliff.

SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Well, getting to the 65 is a powerful accomplishment. Getting to that 75 or 80 is the next step, and they haven't got there yet.

JOSH THOMASES: Councilman, let me say it another way.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I, I only have a little bit of time.

JOSH THOMASES: If, if you were to look a decade ago, there were less than a handful of schools in the city that graduated the majority of their black and Latino high poverty students. We are now talking about we've got scores of them.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay. I have a few more questions. Back to the issue of DYCD and Council Member Fidler's point and Council Member Williams' point. It actually is a source of, I was talking to Council Member Fidler before about this. Before Chancellor Walcott took over as Chancellor, he was Deputy Mayor, and oversaw DO--the Department of Education oversaw DYCD. He

1  
2 became Chancellor, I believe he's no longer Deputy  
3 Mayor. Who oversees, on the Mayoral level, who  
4 oversees the Department of Youth and Community  
5 Development, because it used to be under the same  
6 Deputy Mayor. I'm wondering whether there's,  
7 there's a communication problem here. Obviously,  
8 there's--if we're losing, if we're down to a  
9 quarter of the number of afterschool slots that we  
10 were four years ago, is that, is there a issue of  
11 commun--I mean, clearly that's, there's a problem  
12 here.

13 JOSH THOMASES: We're meeting  
14 regularly with Commissioner Mulgrave around what  
15 are obviously very severe cuts--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: But who's  
17 the Deputy Mayor that oversees DYCD?

18 JOSH THOMASES: I can't, I don't  
19 know the answer to that question.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Who's the  
21 Deputy Mayor that oversees the Department of  
22 Education now?

23 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: There's  
24 not a Deputy Mayor that--

25 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay, all

1 right.

2  
3 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: The, the  
4 Chancellor's over there on a regular basis.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay, but  
6 he's not a Deputy Mayor anymore, right?

7 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: He reports  
8 to the Mayor.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay. Last  
10 June, when the Board of Regents came out with  
11 these numbers, and the 21 percent and the--I was  
12 actually at a event with the Chancellor and the  
13 Mayor at, at the Van Arsdale High School in  
14 Williamsburg, announcing graduation rates,  
15 increasing graduation rates, that exact day. When  
16 reporters questions both the Chancellor and the  
17 Mayor, and I can't quote verbatim, they both  
18 questioned the methodology that the state was  
19 using. In your testimony, I don't really see much  
20 of that. Is that still the position of the  
21 Administration, that the methodology that they  
22 were using was wrong, that these numbers are  
23 somehow faulty? Because they both went, they were  
24 both very aggressive about that issue.

25 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: The

1 methodology we use is slightly more complex  
2 because we have access to more data. And so there  
3 are two things we do differently, in order to  
4 align with where most of our kids end up going to  
5 college, which is CUNY.

6  
7 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Uh-huh.

8 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: We look at  
9 have kids completed the high school math sequence  
10 all three years [time bell] which is one of CUNY's  
11 requirements. And we also look at their SAT  
12 scores. And those two things are not part of the  
13 State's methodology, 'cause they don't have as  
14 granular data. But if you look at the two  
15 systems, they come out with similar outcomes.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay, but  
17 they were saying that, I mean, they were basically  
18 say--trying to undercut the validity of--I mean, I  
19 would characterize it that way, and that was my--

20 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Yeah, I  
21 don't think, I think that the concerns that were  
22 raised at the time had to do with adding a  
23 measurement that isn't fully aligned with the  
24 actual requirements for college readiness, where  
25 most kids end up going are just CUNY and SUNY.

1  
2 And making sure that we take into account both the  
3 Regents Exams as well as the rigor of the  
4 coursework. Because I think both are important.

5 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you,  
6 Council Member.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you  
8 very much, Mr. Chair, thank you very much, Deputy  
9 Chancellor.

10 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.  
11 Council Member David Greenfield of Brooklyn,  
12 followed by Council Member Gale Brewer of  
13 Manhattan.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: So many  
15 questions, so little time. Thank you, Mr.  
16 Chairman. You know, listen, I just want to start  
17 in saying I do acknowledge that there's been a lot  
18 of progress in a lot of different areas, and I  
19 don't think that, to be fair, we're questioning  
20 that there's been progress. I think we may be  
21 questioning the pace of the progress, and the  
22 significance in terms of the amount of funds that  
23 have been invested by the City of New York, into  
24 the Department of Education, in terms of the  
25 return on those dollars. For example, like when

1 we look at stats, you know, stats are always  
2 interesting and fascinating. If you look at page  
3 3, 85.1 percent change in the number of Asian  
4 students, who are enrolling in CUNY. Very, very  
5 impressive number, but it doesn't take into  
6 account, for example, that in that same ten year  
7 period, according to the census, we've seen  
8 roughly a one-third growth in the population of  
9 the Asian community, as well. So, I'm just, I  
10 mean, you know, there's, there are, I mean, the  
11 slides are great, but I'm wondering about a  
12 couple, a couple of specific things. When it  
13 comes to economic level, right, I mean one of the  
14 biggest issues that we have is that folks born  
15 into poverty have a very difficult time getting  
16 out of poverty. Do you track college readiness  
17 based on that statistic, and is there a specific  
18 focus based on economic level?

19  
20 SHANEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: I could  
21 get you that, I don't have it here.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Okay,  
23 that, that--

24 JOSH THOMASES: But I would say,  
25 Councilman, that the focus, because the research

1  
2 is so clear on language development, correlated to  
3 poverty, essentially have the words at the point  
4 of entry into our education system, it is a, it is  
5 a focus in our work in elementary schools.

6 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Scuze me, can  
7 you, can you take off that flash, please? Go  
8 ahead, please.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Okay.  
10 You know, one of the numbers, of course, I think  
11 that, that we've heard, is that we've gone from a  
12 level of one in ten students being college ready  
13 to one in four over the last ten years. Is that  
14 kind of fair?

15 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Yeah.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Right.  
17 So, obviously, significant progress. So just, I  
18 mean, just to put this in context, 'cause I mean,  
19 75 percent of our kids are not there. How long is  
20 it going to take us to get to 50 percent?

21 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: I think  
22 that, just to be clear about the 25 percent, also,  
23 I think this is an important point, that is using  
24 a standard that CUNY just instituted starting this  
25 January, so the kids who were in high school last

1  
2 year, when we took that measurement, or the year  
3 before, didn't know that that precise standard  
4 would be in place, and weren't necessarily working  
5 towards. And one of the things that we've seen  
6 with the State raising the passing score standard  
7 for the graduation rate, from 55 to 65, is that  
8 kids strive to meet those goals. And so, now that  
9 this new goal is in place, I, I expect that we  
10 will see kids striving to meet it. And I also  
11 want to note that four year cohort is what we're  
12 talking about with 25 percent. If you look at  
13 actual graduates, it's 37 percent. And that's  
14 still not great, but it is significantly higher,  
15 and I would expect that we would see this double  
16 over the next three or four years. That, that  
17 would be a tremendous progress.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: So,  
19 doubling within in the next three or four years.  
20 All right, I'm going to be here in three or four  
21 years, I'm going to hold you to that.

22 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Hopefully,  
23 I will be, too. [laughter]

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Let's,  
25 let's talk about--the odds are better, honestly,

1  
2 that I'm going to be here than you, but [laughter]  
3 you never know.

4 JOSH THOMASES: We'll do what we  
5 can.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Let's,  
7 let's talk about the Common, the Common Core  
8 curriculum. I saw, you spent a lot of these  
9 glossy pages dedicated to this Common Core  
10 curriculum. So, so what are we saying? You know,  
11 the last ten years, the last \$200 billion that we  
12 spent, were effectively a waste of money and  
13 suddenly we sort of got lightning in a bottle over  
14 here? I mean, like what happened? Suddenly we're  
15 sort of making this significant, significant  
16 change.

17 JOSH THOMASES: So, essentially at  
18 the beginning of the Administration, we arrived  
19 into a school system where there was no core  
20 curriculum, where there was no guidance for  
21 schools and over the course of the first term of  
22 the Mayor, implemented a core curriculum to make  
23 sure that there was a sufficient and strong  
24 baseline. We did a bunch of work to make sure  
25 that those were aligned with New York State

1 standards. Those, that core curriculum remains in  
2 place. What we are talking about now and the work  
3 that we are doing with the folks who designed the  
4 Common Core standards, is to bridge that  
5 curriculum to the new Common Core standards. And  
6 with generous support from the GE Foundation, are  
7 investing in building the set of supports that  
8 will help teachers figure out what to teach, what  
9 not to teach, and how to do it better. So, in  
10 math, there's specific guidance about what they  
11 should spend less time on. So we can say, "Our  
12 core curriculum is everyday math, here's what you  
13 should focus on, here are the chapters, here are  
14 the more complicated tasks, if you ask--

15  
16 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: No, I  
17 think, I think that's great, but I don't think you  
18 understood my question.

19 JOSH THOMASES: - -

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: I  
21 appreciate that, but you know, we spent over the  
22 last ten years a quarter of a trillion dollars.  
23 That's "T" with a trillion. So, in terms of, in  
24 terms of--

25 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: You have

2 to walk before you can run.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: --so  
4 I'm just trying to understand--

5 SHAEEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: And I  
6 think--

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: That's  
8 fine--

9 SHAEEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Yeah.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: I just  
11 want to understand it. I'm not, I'm not, I'm just  
12 trying, you know, 'cause it's always the end of an  
13 Administration, you start rolling out a new  
14 curriculum [time bell] the obvious question is  
15 sort of, "What happened?" I just have one quick  
16 final follow up question, Mr. Chairman.

17 SHAEEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: But can I  
18 just take, say your question--

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Yea,  
20 please--

21 SHAEEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: --I'd like  
22 to answer that.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: --  
24 please.

25 SHAEEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: The, the

1  
2 reason why the shift is happening now isn't about  
3 the Mayor's Administration, this is a national  
4 shift that's happening. And it's as a result of  
5 folks looking across the country at this problem.  
6 As I said, this is not a New York City problem.  
7 And building a set of resources that is powerful  
8 and useful to us. And it's a teachable moment for  
9 our teachers and our kids. This is a great thing  
10 that we can take advantage of and use to deepen  
11 and enrich what we're doing. And a lot of folks  
12 at these hearings in the past have pushed on the  
13 question of just this type of work. And so I  
14 think it's an opportunity to take what we've done  
15 that's working. It's very important to have basic  
16 skills in literacy and math, but it's also  
17 important to have these higher order skills. And  
18 we can do both.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: You  
20 know, I appreciate that. I guess the question is,  
21 you know, it seems like we're following the pack  
22 rather than leading the pack, right, this is a--

23 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: We're  
24 actually the first city in the country--

25 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: --sort

1 of a national--

2 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: --to  
3 implement it. We have people from--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: To  
5 implement a national standard, though.

6 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Yeah, but,  
7 but we have--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: I mean,  
9 it's not, it's not New York City's curriculum, or-  
10 -  
11 -

12 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: We didn't  
13 create it ourselves--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Okay.

15 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: --that's  
16 true. We're creating the first sets of curriculum  
17 and assessments around it. We have folks coming  
18 from all over the country to look at what's  
19 happening, 'cause we started like 18 months before  
20 most of the rest of the country on this.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: My  
22 final question just relates to a piece that I saw  
23 in the Times, that I honestly thought was a little  
24 bit shocking. It says that six large, well  
25 respected high schools--Stuyvesant, Bronx Science,

1  
2 Brooklyn Tech, Francis Lewis, Midwood, LaGuardia--  
3 account for one quarter of the City's college  
4 ready graduates, though the schools together make  
5 up just seven percent of the freshman class. I  
6 mean, so basically do we sort of have like two  
7 tiers of schools in the City? Schools where, you  
8 know, the kids, these are the schools that we're  
9 going to, the kids who are going to graduate  
10 college, and these are sort of the kids who sort  
11 of aren't going to succeed? How does that, how  
12 does that work, I mean, that's kind of a shocking  
13 stat.

14 SHAELE POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Well, by  
15 state law, we have academically screened high schools  
16 that skim off some of the strongest students into  
17 the specialized high schools. And so, we could  
18 debate that, it's something that's existed for a  
19 long time in this City. And by definition, if you  
20 go into one of those schools, when you start  
21 you're going to come out college ready because  
22 your scores are so high that you're outperforming  
23 everyone else in the City. That said, what we are  
24 focused on is figuring out how do we make every  
25 other high school that is not academically

1  
2 screened, successful in meeting the needs of the  
3 kids. And that's, that's been the work. And it  
4 was that those schools were disorganized,  
5 dangerous and kids were dropping out because there  
6 was nothing happening. Now kids are engaged,  
7 there's life in those schools, kids are  
8 graduating. And we are now pushing on the rigor.

9 JOSH THOMASES: The Puente Academy,  
10 El Puente Academy for Peace--

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: My, my,  
12 my final, my final comment, just my final comment  
13 just on the matter, which I think is important, is  
14 that I think what our message is that, you know,  
15 certainly, as you discussed it before when you  
16 were responding to Steve Levin, well, you know  
17 these kids were, they weren't in school, they were  
18 hanging out, we brought 'em back. You know,  
19 babysitting, checking the box, having the kids  
20 graduate, from our perspective is not enough.  
21 It's good, it's good, it's progress, I'm not  
22 criticizing the progress, I'm just saying that we  
23 expect that for the amount of money and resources  
24 and effort that we put into educating children in  
25 New York City, that we would see even better

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results.

JOSH THOMASES: El Puente--

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: It's not to say the results aren't good, I think we can do a lot better.

JOSH THOMASES: Councilman, if I may--

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.

JOSH THOMASES: --I'd just say, El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice, which is the school, one of the schools on which we based the reform, organized itself with a college ready orientation, and we work daily and nightly to make sure that the predominately Latino kids of the south side of Williamsburg graduated college ready. It was hard work, we didn't get all of them there, but that's the kind of work we're doing and we've got a great group of teachers and great leaders who are moving in that direction.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you. Council Member Gale Brewer, followed by Council Member Danny Dromm.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay,

1 couple issues, picking up on Council Member Weprin  
2 with the AP question, I know you mentioned there  
3 were 460 some schools that have AP, but do they  
4 have the full course possibility? Because my  
5 students, I have I think twelve high schools, one  
6 of the issues is that you don't have the funding  
7 sometimes to have all the AP classes. Is that a--

9 JOSH THOMASES: So, so I would say  
10 three, two things. One is, is we're, we're  
11 working as hard as we can to ramp it up. There  
12 are school--390 of those schools have College Now,  
13 and one of the things that has been implemented  
14 across New York State, and we're doing New York  
15 City as well, is online AP courses, which they'd  
16 begun to pilot elsewhere in the state, where in  
17 rural communities they don't have access to say a  
18 physics, an AP physics course, to improve access.  
19 It's a--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, I  
21 don't know if that's a good thing or a bad thing,  
22 but I want to know can we get data as to which  
23 schools have full complement and which schools  
24 have partial?

25 JOSH THOMASES: Yeah. It's public

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data, it's on our website--

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay.,

JOSH THOMASES: --we can give you that name.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: And how about schools that are closing? Obviously those students sometimes do not get the AP courses that they need. Can you answer that question? A lot of my parents ask that question.

SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: One of the things we've been doing for schools that are phasing out is partnering them with the other schools on their campus, or in nearby campuses, to provide the opportunity for kids where the school itself doesn't have enough resources.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, I'm just letting you know that's a problem still, even though you may have a solution, Shael, it's not a perfect one.

SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Yeah.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I'm glad you mentioned Goddard Riverside, I'll just say thank you for that. Doesn't come better. Tom Pendleton's been talking about CTEs for 100 years,

1  
2 that I've known him, and he is now, suppo--you  
3 know, doing it. So, how are you, I know you  
4 mentioned CTE, but how are you actually going to  
5 implement it? Because we still have shops that  
6 are, you know, the CTE is still a challenge. How  
7 are you actually going to make it happen?

8 JOSH THOMASES: So, Tom Pendleton  
9 works for me, and I--

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I know--

11 JOSH THOMASES: --love him probably  
12 almost as much as you do.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Yeah, but  
14 I've known him longer.

15 JOSH THOMASES: That's true.  
16 [laughter] I won't argue with that point, anyway.  
17 So, we've got a program approval process that is  
18 actually looking at data around impact on students  
19 and following, making sure that students aren't  
20 just getting one nursing class and calling it a  
21 nursing program. But they're getting a whole  
22 scope and sequence, through this certification.  
23 And we're moving to transition every CTE program  
24 to that. If you look on the slide on the  
25 industries, you'll notice that increasingly the

1 kinds of industries for the new CTE programs that  
2 we need to open in our existing schools and in the  
3 new CTE schools the Mayor committed to, do not  
4 require the kind of physical plant that the  
5 automotive and aviation schools required of 50  
6 years ago.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: But what's  
9 the timing on actually implementing all of your  
10 ideas for the CTEs?

11 JOSH THOMASES: The Mayor committed  
12 to open twelve new CTE schools--

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: By  
14 September?

15 JOSH THOMASES: Before the end of  
16 the term. We are on track to review the programs  
17 of 350 programs over the next 18 months.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, I'm  
19 just saying that Tom has been talking--

20 SHAEEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: And  
21 there's six opening this September.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. Tom  
23 has been talking about this for 20 years. The  
24 next issue is language. I was with your favorite  
25 principal last night, Ann Cook--I'm being

1  
2 facetious. And with all the Bloomingdale  
3 wonderful folks. And one of the issues is parents  
4 who do not speak English, sometimes go back to  
5 Head Start or places where they're comfortable,  
6 because there's no language translation to make  
7 all of these parent/teacher school applications  
8 possible. How are you dealing with language?

9 SHAELE POLAKOW-SURANSKY: So we have  
10 a translation unit that we use very heavily and we  
11 try to create resources in the nine major  
12 languages, when we publish them. And I think it's  
13 something that we can always do better on.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, I'm  
15 just letting you know it's still a huge problem.  
16 It has to not just be language, it has to be  
17 comfort, it has to be warm and fuzzy, and it has  
18 to be somebody you can relate to, throw it out  
19 least it at that .

20 SHAELE POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Yeah, oh--

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Bank Street  
22 College of Education, the best. They have  
23 Liberty, which has been training men of color to  
24 college 100 percent success rate, nobody's ever  
25 called them yet about YMI. Are you going to talk

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to them about YMI? Gussy hasn't been talked to--

SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: We're talked to John Schneider, but--

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Not a lot.

SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: I will follow up with him.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you. He complained. And then I want to say to CUNY, Hunter Science is the best, so why can't we just have more Hunter Sciences?

SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: That would be an interesting thing to - -

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing] And pick Susan Christman [phonetic], like her, you need principals like Susan Christman.

SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Go ahead.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Then you have no problems in the whole Board of Ed or CUNY. [laughter]

JOHN MOGALESCU: I was, I was feeling lonely here, after all these questions, but Hunter Science is an early college high school.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: That's  
3 right, 60, 60 percent of the graduating class is  
4 going to Hunter, that's pretty phenomenal.

5 JOHN MOGALESCU: We are big fans of  
6 the program. And in fact, we have just announced  
7 in cooperation with the Department of Ed that  
8 we're going to be starting three new early college  
9 high schools.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Why not  
11 more?

12 JOHN MOGALESCU: Well, there, there  
13 are issues of cost and there are other issues  
14 related to--

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: DOE has  
16 lots of money. [laughter]

17 JOHN MOGALESCU: At some point in  
18 the future, we would probably be delighted to  
19 open--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I can't, I  
21 mean, it's not complicated, right? Why can't we  
22 do--really, why can't we--middle college, I was  
23 around, me and Jay, for middle college, LaGuardia,  
24 100 years ago, also. And that was the beginning  
25 of the CUNY/--I was there opening day. So, my

1  
2 question is [time bell] more colleges CUNY and  
3 Department of Ed. Why not more?

4 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: We are  
5 working as aggressively as we can. The, the--it's  
6 a ratio number, 17--17 to about 500. So, that's  
7 the, that's a numbers problem.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, I'm  
9 just saying that is really the answer to your  
10 problems.

11 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: We, we--  
12 the, the marriage of the--

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: And put  
14 Gussy, give more credit to Gussy and Ann Cook and  
15 you'll do even better.

16 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: The, so  
17 I'm a graduate of Bank Street and know Gussy well,  
18 so happy to--

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Mm-hmm.  
20 Are you, do you ask her for--

21 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: The, the  
22 thing that I would, I would say is, is the  
23 partnerships that both John and I mentioned and  
24 the work that we're doing together is meant to  
25 solve some of the challenge of not being able to

1  
2 do early colleges, by doing College Now at home  
3 and college in the other programs.

4 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.  
5 Thank you, Council Member. Council Member Danny  
6 Dromm, Council--followed by Council Member Chin,  
7 and then the Co-Chairs, Ydanis Rodriguez and  
8 myself.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Thank you,  
10 thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thank you for  
11 your introduction before where you mentioned that  
12 I was a New York City public school teacher for 25  
13 years. And much of the information that we're  
14 talking about today is stuff that I either had to  
15 implement or am somewhat familiar with, although I  
16 think since I've been out of the classroom for  
17 about two years now, some of the little things may  
18 have changed. So I'm just curious to get some  
19 answers. But before I start on that, I just want  
20 to say that I don't think that any of the tests,  
21 the progress that you're alluding to, would be  
22 possible if we were to believe what the Mayor said  
23 recently, that if he had his way, he would cut  
24 half the teachers and double class size. And I'm  
25 wondering if you have an opinion on that, would

1  
2 this, would this, this curriculum, would these  
3 tasks be possible if we cut half the teachers and  
4 doubled the class size?

5           SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: I think  
6 that everyone wants as many teachers as we can  
7 get, but it's complicated in a fiscal environment  
8 where you're butt-heading [phonetic] up against  
9 space and budget constraints. And there are  
10 places where we've seen that it's, a great teacher  
11 can actually work with a larger number of kids,  
12 it's not by definition the class size that makes  
13 the ultimate difference. And there's a big debate  
14 in the education community about if we did one  
15 thing, should we just change the class size. And-  
16 -

17           COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: But that's  
18 the one thing you haven't, that haven't tried.

19           SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: But, but  
20 just let me, let me finish.

21           COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: And, and for  
22 the 25 years I was in the system, Shael, it's,  
23 it's been the one thing that you've never tried.  
24 And I'm wondering why that's not the emphasis  
25 here. I think that there's a false emphasis on

1 the test scores to begin with. Much of our  
2 conversation here today has just been on this, on  
3 test scores. Why are we basically only talking  
4 test scores, and using test scores as the way to  
5 evaluate the system, as the way to evaluate  
6 students and as the way to evaluate teachers. I  
7 am a City College graduate. I received my  
8 master's degree in education from City College.  
9 And when I went to City College, when I was taught  
10 how to teach, the first thing that they taught me  
11 in City college was not to look at the record  
12 cards, because the record cards would prejudice  
13 against the progress that students might be able  
14 to make in your class. That was what I was  
15 taught, and that was what I experienced as the way  
16 to be a successful teacher in the classroom,  
17 because I didn't have lowered expectations for  
18 kids based on some test score or what some other  
19 teacher might've said before. I try to take each  
20 kid at the, on the individual level at which they  
21 came to me.  
22

23 SHANEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: I think,  
24 can I just respond? I, I think we agree that if  
25 you just look test scores, you're going to have a

1  
2 very skewed picture, and you need to look at a  
3 balance. So, test scores can tell you something,  
4 but you also need to look at kids' writing, you  
5 need to observe them, you need to work with them  
6 over time, and I think what good teachers and good  
7 principles do is they try and take all of those  
8 different things into account. And when we talk  
9 about how we evaluate teachers and how we evaluate  
10 schools, we also take all of those things into  
11 account.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: But that's  
13 not what, that's not was, is happening, in the  
14 Department of Education.

15 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: That's not  
16 true. That's just not true.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Everything  
18 is based on the test scores--

19 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: That's not  
20 true.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: If you want  
22 to go to an evaluation system--

23 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: That's not  
24 true.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: --of

1 teachers--

2  
3 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: That is  
4 not true.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: --that's  
6 going to be based on test scores--

7 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: That's not  
8 true.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: And all the  
10 tests of - -

11 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: You're,  
12 you're simplifying it--you're simplifying it.  
13 The--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: No, I'm not.

15 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: The  
16 proposal--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: You're  
18 simplifying it by using the test scores.

19 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: The  
20 proposal around the teacher evaluation system is  
21 that part of it would be on test scores, part of  
22 it would be on the principal's observation of the  
23 teacher's work in the classroom. And ideally we'd  
24 like to look at other things like what are the  
25 students saying? What are parents saying? Those

1  
2 are, those are multiple measures. So, the debate  
3 historically has been, "Should you look at test  
4 scores at all?" And what we've said is it needs  
5 to be part of the picture and actually that's an  
6 area--

7 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Well, let's  
8 look at this testing you have here.

9 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: --where  
10 we're in agreement.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: This stuff  
12 with pizza. My understanding is that if a child  
13 puts anything on paper, right, if they draw a  
14 diagram, whatever, they at least get a one for  
15 that, for doing that. And I've been in schools  
16 where I have seen teachers tell the children,  
17 "Just put something there, because if you at least  
18 put something there, you'll get a one and, and you  
19 won't get a zero. Only way you get a zero on the  
20 test is if you put nothing at all."

21 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Well, this  
22 test actually--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Am I  
24 correct?

25 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: No, not in

1 this case. There are, the State, the State test--

2 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Oh, I  
3 disagree with that.  
4

5 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: --that  
6 currently exists, which is not this, does give  
7 partial credit for students showing their work.  
8 But what we're proposing here is a different  
9 thing. And the state is realigning its test.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: I think the  
11 problem is that, and I, Josh, I'm sorry, Thomases'  
12 statement about the State designed new tests,  
13 therefore we looked at the standards, speaks to  
14 exactly what the problem is. This, the state  
15 changes the assessment, so we change our  
16 instruction. Are we, is the instruction driving--

17 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: The  
18 assessment hasn't changed yet.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: --test  
20 scores is, is the assessment driving the  
21 instruction?

22 JOSH THOMASES: So, so let's be  
23 clear. The assessment hasn't changed yet. The  
24 New York State [time bell] along with dozens of  
25 other states, the vast majority, 48 out of the 50

1 states, I think, have adopted a new set of  
2 standards that require the kind of complicated  
3 work that is what I think you're referring to,  
4 when you're saying "Go beyond tests," that require  
5 that students exemplify the kind of resiliency and  
6 grit and ability to think differently, that will  
7 only happ--that will happen if we get our students  
8 college and career ready.  
9

10 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Now, just--

11 JOSH THOMASES: The State is  
12 designing a set of assessments for 2014/15 that we  
13 are preparing years in advance for, that are going  
14 to require more complicated kind of student work.  
15 That is the kind of work that preparing for a City  
16 Council hearing, whether on whichever side of the  
17 table we're on, our students need to experience.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Well, it's  
19 so hard to, to make my point in such a little bit  
20 of period of time, and there's so much ed-speak  
21 that goes on, and I agree with what Council Member  
22 Barron said, basically, that it's very difficult  
23 to cut through that. But I notice here, also, and  
24 I make this my last question. School leaders, you  
25 say that school leaders are, how did you word it?

1  
2 Getting to the classroom more often. Now one of  
3 the biggest complaints that I've heard from  
4 principals, is that they can't get into the  
5 classroom, they're bogged down with paperwork,  
6 which the central DOE is forcing the principles to  
7 do. And principles would love to be able to get  
8 into the classrooms, to evaluate teachers. How  
9 are you assessing the teach--principal's abilities  
10 to be able to get into the classroom, work with  
11 the teachers, and do they do model lessons? And  
12 finally, because I won't be able to ask this, will  
13 the Chancellor provide model lessons for teachers  
14 to follow and to be able to implement many of  
15 these things? The Chancellor himself, does he  
16 know how to do these things?

17 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: So the  
18 Chancellor was a teacher, as you know, and - -

19 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: For two  
20 years.

21 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: --in his  
22 career.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: A  
24 kindergarten, 25 years, 30 years ago.

25 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Well,

1 there's nothing wrong with kindergarten.

2  
3 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: But he's  
4 not--

5 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Danny.  
6 [laughter]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Excuse me.

8 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Council  
9 Member, let's allow, let's allow them--

10 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Let me,  
11 let me try and answer--

12 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --to answer  
13 the question.

14 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: --the  
15 points.

16 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And then we  
17 have, we have to move on to, to questions from  
18 Council Member Chin and - -

19 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Okay, I'll  
20 be quick. I think that we have provided model  
21 lessons. There are, there are samples that you  
22 can look at and I'd love to hear your feedback on  
23 it. We--

24 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Physically  
25 modeling them.

2 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: They,  
3 yeah--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Going into a  
5 classroom and showing how it can be done.

6 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Well,  
7 there--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Will the  
9 Chancellor do that?

10 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay, Council  
11 Member--

12 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: You can  
13 ask him if you want.

14 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Excuse me.  
15 Why, why don't we allow him to answer whatever  
16 questions, and then we have to move on, Council  
17 Member Dromm, I'm sorry.

18 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: I think  
19 that the goal of getting principals into  
20 classrooms is one that we share. And we, the  
21 first message that the Chancellor sent to  
22 principals on his first week on the job, was  
23 setting a goal about reducing the amount of  
24 paperwork because it was something that he heard  
25 loud and clear as he was working as a Deputy

1  
2 Mayor. And we have done some really significant  
3 changes this year. So we used to have something  
4 that principals hated, the comprehensive education  
5 plan that was often 60 or 75 pages. It's now five  
6 to ten pages. And that was a big shift in a big  
7 piece of paperwork that, and that we're looking at  
8 a lot of different things like that. And we're  
9 asking principals to set a goal for themselves  
10 this year, of getting into classrooms much more.  
11 And you're seeing it happen. If you talk to  
12 teachers and you talk to principals, this is  
13 something that is changing this year in our  
14 schools and it's something that we're working very  
15 hard to enable.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [off mic]

17 People are shaking their heads, just so you know.

18 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.

19 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Well, you  
20 know, it's true. Talk to principals and teachers.

21 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Well, time  
22 will tell. We're going to turn to our colleague  
23 Council Member Margaret Chin, and then we'll have  
24 Q&--Questions from the Co-Chairs.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you,

1 Chair. I am also a proud graduate of City  
2 College, and I am glad to see our President here.  
3 [background comment] Yeah, City College is in the  
4 house! [laughter]  
5

6 MALE VOICE: Well chosen.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: [laughs]

8 Proud alumni. I want to focus on the questions on  
9 how the student finds out information about all  
10 the college programs that you've talked about in,  
11 in your testimony. And this relate to in terms of  
12 guidance counselor and college counselor. I mean,  
13 I mean, that's what we used to, and I used to work  
14 at Seward Park High School, way back in the '80s,  
15 and you know, there were counselors there. And so  
16 if you could focus on that, I mean, are theses,  
17 does every school have guidance counselor and  
18 special college counselors available? And also  
19 what about some of the, the smallest school, that  
20 are collocated together, do they have that  
21 resource?

22 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: So,  
23 schools have mobilized that resource in different  
24 ways. In some cases they're done by guidance  
25 counselors, in some cases there's a college

1  
2 counselor, in some cases there are groups of  
3 teachers who are responsible for--in some cases  
4 they partnered with CBO organizations to provide  
5 that support, given obviously the very difficult  
6 budget times that we're on. Part of the work that  
7 John and I have been engaged in, and that's a  
8 heart of a Graduate NYC, is partnerships both with  
9 City University, the DOE and the broad swath of  
10 CBO partners that work with students on that  
11 bridge, to make sure that the quality of  
12 information that the adults have at their  
13 disposal, make sure that two things happen: one,  
14 that students get good, timely information, the  
15 right information on everything from entrance  
16 requirements to what are the right courses you  
17 need to have in high school to whether you should  
18 go to York or LaGuardia, City or Hostos. And that  
19 therefore, because they've got that information,  
20 the adults have more time to, of their precious  
21 time, to spend on working with families,  
22 particularly families who, where the students are  
23 the first generation, where children are the first  
24 generation to go to college, the work to get those  
25 families ready for that transition, on FASA

1 [phonetic] and on everything else, is enormous.

2 And so--

3 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yeah, the  
4 financial applications.

5 JOSH THOMASES: That, that, the  
6 work we're doing, ev--is to make sure that that  
7 quality information is there, and the support is  
8 to give, is there to move, to move the energies of  
9 the schools towards the coaching. So, when I said  
10 in my testimony that--and reiterated what the, the  
11 Mayor said, so that every school will have the  
12 training from Goddard, so that they're not making  
13 a set of mistakes that they, that, that we know  
14 are fixable. The, is a--at the heart of our  
15 strategy.

16 JOHN MOGALESCU: Council Member, if  
17 I might add on that, it is, your question goes to  
18 the heart of some of the whole aspect of college  
19 success. You know, for too long, and it's been,  
20 you know, a joint failure to provide as good  
21 information as possible, to the students who--and  
22 I will speak only about, about CUNY, and so bad  
23 decisions have been made over and over again. We  
24 really think for the first time we are addressing  
25

1  
2 this in a very, very serious and joint way  
3 together. At CUNY, we believe that this is our  
4 responsibility as well as the responsibility of  
5 the Department of Ed. We expect that we will be  
6 starting a public awareness campaign by the end of  
7 this calendar year, if not before, with regard to  
8 educating both students and parents in what it  
9 means to be college ready. And, and we think of  
10 that as, as a part of the responsibility of our  
11 admissions folks, and working together with, with  
12 CUNY. I couldn't agree with Josh more and the  
13 seriousness of your question about that, as well.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: I think that  
15 when you touch upon, you know, all the nonprofit  
16 that's helping, which is great, like in my  
17 district, they're doing that. But one thing I  
18 think you need to bring back to the Mayor, in  
19 terms of budget, is a lot of these programs are  
20 getting cut. I mean, they're doing SAT prep and  
21 they're doing tutorial program, and they're  
22 helping kids graduate. When I got to some of  
23 these ceremony, it's amazing the kids in our  
24 neighborhood, that are graduating. But those  
25 program are getting cuts, and they're, and they

1 don't have the resources to support our children.  
2 So, you need to really look at that. And the  
3 resource that goes into the school, the after  
4 school programs are so critical in terms of the  
5 support, and when you talk about parental  
6 involvement, I mean, just to give you an example,  
7 parents need to know about these college programs  
8 and these CTC school, but they need to know about  
9 it early, not even just in high school. I mean,  
10 back in elementary school, they got to start  
11 thinking about it, and really supporting their  
12 children. Because some of the immigrant parents  
13 that we work with, they scrub and save to send  
14 their kids to these tutoring program. So that  
15 their kids have a good chance of getting into a  
16 better high school, and in college. But you know,  
17 they're like spending their hard earned money  
18 [time bell] that they work very hard on, to do  
19 that, and we need to support them by providing  
20 some of these programs in our schools. So, I  
21 think that you really, I hope that you would just  
22 bring back and work with DYCD. You cannot cut  
23 back on these afterschool programs.

25 JOSH THOMASES: So we are obviously

1 in the difficult budget times that we are, but  
2 couldn't agree more with the spirit of the  
3 challenge. What we've discussed, John and I, and  
4 certainly in our conversations with our  
5 Chancellors, is essentially there's two choices.  
6 One is just to say the budget crisis is so severe  
7 we don't have time, we don't have the ability to  
8 do it. There are school districts that have said  
9 that around the Common Core, for example. And the  
10 other choice is to say that we don't have a choice  
11 but to. And that the act of mobilizing resources  
12 within schools, of working effectively with DYCD,  
13 and working across communities, for the sake of  
14 our children, is the only way to go. For us it  
15 was a non-choice.  
16

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yeah, and  
18 just--

19 JOSH THOMASES: --to mobilize that  
20 effort.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: --I just  
22 wanted to add that, I mean, just that we, we need  
23 to celebrate the student that are, you know,  
24 making a, that are being successful, and getting  
25 into college, and we really have to make sure that

1  
2 we help them with the financial aid. I mean,  
3 CUNY, I support, it should be free, it was free  
4 when I got, when I was there. But even now, a lot  
5 of student gets financial aid, and that is  
6 critical, and that's one resource that we really  
7 should focus on, helping every family access all  
8 the financial aid that they can get.

9 JOSH THOMASES: Absolutely.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.

12 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: That's a  
13 central goal, and I just want to add one point  
14 about that for our immigrant kids. The New York  
15 State Dream Act is something that we believe is  
16 critical, because so many kids who came here and  
17 are undocumented, don't have access to financial  
18 aid, and that's something we all need to fight  
19 for.

20 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.  
21 Thank you, Council Member.

22 JOHN MOGALESCU: Mr. Chairman?  
23 President of City would like to say a word if--

24 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Sure, sure.

25 LISA COICO: Okay. Yeah, thank

1  
2 you. I just wanted to add, in terms of financial  
3 aid, we looked at our freshman, incoming freshman  
4 class this year, and it really is critical. 60  
5 percent of our incoming freshman at City College  
6 did not pay any tuition, because of financial aid  
7 and other help that we've given them. In  
8 addition, we used all of our temporary services  
9 dollars, which was over \$8 million that we got  
10 toward college assistance, rather, so that we  
11 could help the students stay on campus and do work  
12 and have jobs and money. And then in addition, we  
13 gave over \$5 million in philanthropically  
14 developed scholarship funds. And we keep working  
15 toward that, to keep increasing that goal.

16 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.

17 Council Member Williams has a quick question, and  
18 then we're going to turn to both Co-Chairs.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank  
20 you. I just really want to say, 'cause I  
21 appreciate it, just four points I wanted to say  
22 real quickly. One, I always note that whatever  
23 industry we're in, unfortunately the darker the  
24 shade, things always change. So when CUNY open  
25 admissions changed, I remember seeing it with the

1 social workers, and I see it now happening with  
2 the nurses, so there always seems to be a trend,  
3 and I hope we can go back to reversing that trend  
4 and not continuing it. Also, I remember when I  
5 was in tech, talking about the dual system, seeing  
6 my education I was getting, opposed to my peers,  
7 was much different. Even in the quality of books  
8 that I was receiving at Brooklyn Tech, versus  
9 other high schools, I hope some of that has  
10 changed. My third point is, I think some people  
11 would have better chance at celebrating some of,  
12 some of the minor accomplishments if it wasn't for  
13 the arrogance of this Administration. In doing  
14 its things by itself, only with itself. Perhaps  
15 if you opened up some more, we can get more  
16 successes and everyone can celebrate in there.  
17 But it's very hard to do that when you're working  
18 with someone as arrogant as this Mayor. And I  
19 know Mr. Suransky, you come very highly in the  
20 education field, Mr. Walcott is not as decorated.  
21 But we really need to change that whole ideology  
22 there, so that we can really get some changes and  
23 everyone can celebrate. And lastly, I hope  
24 there's a more coordinated effort to deal with the  
25

1  
2 problems of black and Latino, particularly young  
3 men, and poverty in general. All ages, he should  
4 be discussing this issue.

5 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.

7 Thank you, Council Member. Now, questions by the  
8 Co-Chairs, Ydanis Rodriguez and myself.

9 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

10 Look, I, I'm, I think that this issue that I, when  
11 we look on college readiness, I think that I look  
12 at the, at the, at the immediate plan, and the  
13 long term plan. The immediate plan is what is it  
14 that we can do to deal with the high school  
15 student that we have right now? The 9 to 12. How  
16 much more can we do? And that's a question, it  
17 should involve of us. How much more can we do  
18 with a cohort of the 9th grade that we have, right  
19 now sitting in our DOE system? And then of  
20 course, also we have to deal with the immediate  
21 reality: the student that is graduating right now  
22 in June. When I was a social studies teacher,  
23 chairing the committee on social studies, too, and  
24 Danny Dromm also was there, as you know, by this  
25 time, I'm pretty sure that you know, what

1 percentage of a student who is graduating in June  
2 need remedial courses?  
3

4 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY:

5 Absolutely.

6 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And, and  
7 that's, if you have that percentage, I would like  
8 to hear that estimation--

9 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: We don't  
10 have that number, but it's certainly true that  
11 schools have that. We have a graduation tracker  
12 that--

13 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And we can  
14 say that at this moment--

15 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Every  
16 school has--

17 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: --that a  
18 large percentage of the students who we're  
19 graduating now in June, will need remedial  
20 courses.

21 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: That's  
22 correct.

23 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: That's  
24 correct. So, so I think, and again, I ... that  
25 group of student, they cannot wait for supermar--

1  
2 for superman to come. We need to deal, we need to  
3 be there. We need to deal with our reality.

4 JOHN MOGALESCU: Councilman--I'm  
5 sorry.

6 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: And, and  
7 that's where in CUNY then has the big  
8 responsibility, because most of them they go into  
9 CUNY. And then at the CUNY level, as far as I  
10 know and, and I don't know if President Lisa can  
11 answer the question, what percentage of student do  
12 you have at City College that they need remedial  
13 courses right now?

14 LISA COICO: If we're talking about  
15 SEEK students? We have--

16 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: No,  
17 remedial courses.

18 LISA COICO: Oh. We don't really,  
19 I guess--John, do you want to talk about  
20 percentage?

21 JOHN MOGALESCU: Well, what I  
22 would, what I would say--

23 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: President  
24 Lisa, if, when you respond, you're going to have  
25 to speak into the mic, please.

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LISA COICO: Oh, okay.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: You can use that mic right there.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: But let me tell you what I know. Let me tell you what I know.

JOHN MOGALESCU: I--Please.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: As far as I know, a student going to senior colleges, they don't take remedial courses. And let me know what percentage, because I saw some number here, saying about with students taking remedial courses--

JOHN MOGALESCU: Right.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: --City College as far as I know, student there, they don't take remedial courses.

JOHN MOGALESCU: Well--

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Yeah, as a teacher that I was, I - - , what I know and not, I'm not against it, I think that we need to work on a comprehensive plan. I know that right now, if my student were, had an average of 90, or 85, because that's connected also to the region, how they would do in the region, mostly likely they

1  
2 would have a chance to be picked by one of those  
3 six CUNY college that they would like to go. If  
4 the average is 65 or 70, isn't that true that that  
5 group automatically will be going through a  
6 community college.

7 JOHN MOGALESCU: Let me just say a  
8 couple things to, to a number of things that you,  
9 you've said.

10 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Can you be  
11 short, because you know, I--

12 JOHN MOGALESCU: I'm going to be  
13 very short. At our senior colleges, while we  
14 don't offer former remedial classes, because of  
15 the SEEK program, and because of ESL and rules  
16 related to that, there are small percentages of  
17 students at our senior colleges who get extra  
18 services, that some might call remedial. You  
19 know, it's extra tutoring, it's special help.  
20 They're not formal classes. So, in fact, there  
21 are some senior colleges at City and elsewhere,  
22 who get those special services, as per legislation  
23 of SEEK and College Discover.

24 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.  
25 Thank you.

1  
2 JOHN MOGALESCU: Now, just one  
3 other thing. As far as your earlier point, I  
4 think we do have a responsibility with regard to,  
5 to working with high schools, and I just wanted to  
6 mention two things. One, we are in discussion  
7 with DOE for an early intervention program, which  
8 would do everything that you just said in your  
9 initial comments, about a identifying people early  
10 on and giving them some kind of extra help before  
11 they start college. Our hope is to start a small  
12 pilot of those students who will start CUNY in the  
13 fall, this, this summer. And second, the at home  
14 and college program that we mentioned in our  
15 testimony, now in 62 high schools, and hopefully  
16 will be expanding, does that as well. We go into  
17 high schools and try and work with students that  
18 we've identified as likely to need remediation,  
19 and hopefully help them so that when they go to  
20 CUNY they either need less remediation or none at  
21 all.

22 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Great, so  
23 while we wait for record, what we are saying is  
24 that when a student go to a senior college, you  
25 can say they can receive extra hope, science lab,

1 English lab, especially one-on-one advisory. But  
2 those student, they are not taking remedial  
3 courses at senior colleges.  
4

5 JOHN MOGALESCU: That's correct.

6 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: That's  
7 correct, right? So, remedial college classes take  
8 place at community college, right?

9 JOHN MOGALESCU: Or, what we call  
10 our comprehensive colleges, which we have three  
11 colleges: New York City College of Technology,  
12 Medgar and College of Staten Island, that offer  
13 both two year degree programs and four year degree  
14 programs. The students who are in the two year  
15 degree programs are able to take remedial at those  
16 three comprehensive colleges.

17 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Are those  
18 two, when they are starting the two year program.

19 JOHN MOGALESCU: That's correct.

20 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And also we  
21 can say, can we agree that close to 80 percent of  
22 the student graduated from DOE needs some level or  
23 remedial courses?

24 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: No.

25 JOHN MOGALESCU: No, no.

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SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: No.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: What percentage?

SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: It's less than 50 percent.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Less than 50 percent. Is that the num--is that the, is that a CUNY data?

JOHN MOGALESCU: That, that is the data. And let me explain a little bit, and elaborate on what Shael said. At our--

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Before you elaborate--

JOHN MOGALESCU: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: So, Shael, you responded that, not less than 50 percent of students that enter CUNY or the senior colleges do not require remediation?

SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: What he asked is DOE graduates.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Say that again.

SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: He asked about DOE graduates.

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CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Let me--  
sorry.

SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: And, and  
so, if you go to slide four, on our presentation,  
this shows DOE students entering CUNY. And the  
percentage that required remediation by CUNY's  
criteria was 51.4. Now, 58 percent of our  
students go to CUNY. The other students,  
approximately 42 percent, go to SUNY, to private  
colleges, to other places. Because CUNY has one  
of the best community college systems in the  
world, and is right here in New York City, most of  
our kids who require a two year program are most  
likely to go into one of the CUNY programs. The  
kids who don't go to--

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: That's the,  
that's the, you mean to community colleges?

SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay, go  
ahead.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And let me,  
and--

SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: And so,

1  
2 those 40 percent that are going outside of CUNY  
3 are going to programs at SUNY, they're going to  
4 other private colleges in New York State, other  
5 private colleges elsewhere in the country. So,  
6 if--

7 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: But, but to  
8 answer his question, you're saying that, I guess  
9 he asked the question, is more than 50 percent of  
10 our students requiring remediation when they go,  
11 is that, you're talk--I thought it was CUNY--

12 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: 51.4 last  
13 year required remediation that go to CUNY.

14 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And that's  
15 for the--

16 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: That's, so  
17 that's about 60 percent of our kids go to CUNY,  
18 and of those, about half need remediation.

19 JOHN MOGALESCU: By the way, the  
20 confusion about, the confusion about this--

21 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: All right,  
22 let me, let me, because I've been holding this  
23 hearing before. In record, we know, that remedial  
24 courses is not offered at senior college, and I'm  
25 fine with that. I don't have issue with that.

1  
2 Senior college provides support to the SEEK  
3 student one-on-one advisory, extra support, but a  
4 student who are at City College, at John Jay, as I  
5 was in the '80s when I took remedial courses,  
6 remedial courses would not be offered to me right  
7 now, I would be going through LaGuardia, Hostos  
8 and those colleges.

9 JOHN MOGALESCU: That's correct.

10 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: That's what  
11 we have. There's no seen--that's number there  
12 about remedial courses at senior colleges, it's  
13 not true. There's not--

14 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: It is  
15 true.

16 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: There's  
17 not, there's not remedial classes teaching at - -  
18 at CUNY. Just one second. [crosstalk] Let, let-  
19 -

20 JOSH THOMASES: Can we just respond  
21 to that? Can we just have City University - -

22 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ:  
23 [interposing] Well, I, I need to put in the record  
24 what we've already got as the answer from CUNY.  
25 And, and--

1  
2 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: No, he  
3 didn't answer your question, so let him answer.

4 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Yes, he  
5 did. Let, let me--

6 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: He didn't,  
7 he didn't answer what you just said, it's not true  
8 what you just said.

9 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Let me, let  
10 me continue.

11 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Yeah, but  
12 what you said is not true, we need to address it.

13 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: No, let me go  
14 back. No, I asked, I ask the question. Now, on  
15 the DOE, when we go to community colleges,  
16 community college, CUNY has said here before, that  
17 more than 75 percent going, graduating from DOE,  
18 and going to CUNY, needs some level of remedial  
19 classes.

20 JOHN MOGALESCU: Let me--

21 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And he,  
22 that's what you have said in previous hearings  
23 that we have for.

24 JOHN MOGALESCU: I, I think what I  
25 said, and let me try and--and this is something

1  
2 that I think is misinterpreted a whole lot, you  
3 know, with regard to trying to explain this. The  
4 figure of 75 percent of the students coming from  
5 DOE who need remediation, are the students who  
6 were coming into our community colleges; but as I  
7 indicated earlier, we have a significant number of  
8 students who go to our senior colleges from DOE,  
9 not needing remediation. So, if you lump all of  
10 the students together, that come from the DOE to  
11 CUNY, the overall figure is approximately 50  
12 percent who need remediation [time bell] because  
13 there are so many students who go to City College  
14 in Baruch and Hunter and Queens who don't, and  
15 still come from the Department of Ed. We get 70  
16 percent of our students at those senior colleges  
17 approximately from the Department. I just wanted  
18 to be, be clear on that.

19 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Great.

20 And, and I think that we should be fair for  
21 record, too. And I think that for being fair,  
22 what we are saying is that overall, for all the  
23 student graduating to DOE, going to CUNY, only 50  
24 percent need remediation because we also looking  
25 at the number of student going to senior colleges.

2 JOHN MOGALESCU: That's correct.

3 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: However,  
4 for record, we are also saying that at senior  
5 colleges, a student does not take remedial  
6 courses. And it is when they go to community  
7 colleges that they need remedial courses. So when  
8 we separate, when we look at the student  
9 population graduating from the DOE, going to  
10 community college, then at community college

11 JOHN MOGALESCU: Right.

12 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: --they're  
13 need of remedial courses is above 75 percent.

14 JOHN MOGALESCU: That's correct.

15 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.  
16 So, I move to my next question: El Puente. A lot  
17 of respect. What percent of student graduated  
18 from El Puente?

19 JOSH THOMASES: Average graduation  
20 rate hovers around 80 percent.

21 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Wow, let's  
22 replicate that model.

23 JOSH THOMASES: That's what I spent  
24 the last seven years trying to do.

25 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Let's

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replica the model.

JOSH THOMASES: I'm with you.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: I know El Puente, and El Puente is needing with the thing [phonetic] every year. And the student get active in their community.

JOSH THOMASES: Correct.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And the student get motivated to know that there's a reason why they should to go school, why they should be prepared to serve - - to serve their family, and to serve the community.

JOSH THOMASES: Correct.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: So, if we had that model, this is not - - , this is not Stuyvesant, this is not one of those college-- because if you give me Stuyvesant, if you give me Hunter Elementary, when I get level, top level four, 98 average student, anyone who is principal there will produce the same number that is produced in those school right now, because that's like you going to the ivy league college. If you've been going through Manhattan, to any Columbia Grammar, only those type of school, - - ,

1 - - school from the kindergarten, and you go to  
2 the Ivy League college, you know what? You're  
3 ready. You're ready to compete. You will find a  
4 teacher who is a facilitator. That's not our  
5 reality at the, in the New York City public  
6 school. When I got to the graduation every year  
7 in my district, and I hear the stu--the teacher  
8 asking the student, "Can you celebrate with the  
9 parent?" those graduating to first grade. From  
10 kindergarten to first grade. And the whole  
11 expectation, can you tell you parent that you know  
12 how to count 100. Can you tell your parent that  
13 you know how to write your name? Can you tell,  
14 you celebrate that you know how to ... that you  
15 know the alphabet? That's not enough. It is  
16 unfair to expect that a first grade teacher, a  
17 second grade teacher, who is getting that student  
18 in level 1 and level 2 from the beginning, will be  
19 able to produce at the same as I would be getting  
20 a student who already have a strong base, since  
21 they were in kindergarten. And as I say, I'm not  
22 waiting for 20 years from now. That's what I hope  
23 that we, I hope that this generation, as a, it  
24 require a movement to fight against segregation  
25

1  
2 and the system. It was the black, the Latino, the  
3 whites who came together and say, "We need to  
4 change this. You know, right now, our education  
5 in the City is segregated. It's segregated  
6 between those that can afford the top education  
7 and those that they when they, when they start  
8 elementary school, they did not bring the base.  
9 And they started junior high school at level 2,  
10 and they will be behind and they will be moving to  
11 high school. And then you get this principal in  
12 the school without - - college advisory, without,  
13 got the no resources. For them to produce in  
14 those four year, what a student were supposed to  
15 have, before they, they got into the, they got  
16 into the building. So, what I hope is that first  
17 of all, we have model is working. I think that  
18 also we need together to get our private  
19 institutions here, to get more involved and  
20 interested in collaborating more, because it's not  
21 enough only to leave it to the DOE the  
22 responsibility of closing this gap. Because at  
23 the end of the day, what we are talking about is  
24 the safety of the City. Is the safety of a  
25 society, if we will have the men and women ready

1  
2 to compete with the other nation, this is not  
3 about me being black or Latino saying, "Can you  
4 give me that opportunity?" We are not begging.  
5 What we are saying is, black and Latino make the  
6 majority of this City, and we share very proud  
7 brother and sister, white, Asian and people from  
8 other nationality. And we should look at when a  
9 change that, because we are only one city. And  
10 what we have is not working. And I'm so proud of  
11 El Puente. I know El Pu--I know a little bit  
12 about El Puente, I've been following El Puente, I  
13 have friend that were working at Puente. So, if  
14 they're graduating 80 percent, and I know that  
15 most of them, college ready, let's look at that.

16 JOSH THOMASES: So, so if I can, I  
17 can't agree more, obviously. I worked at El  
18 Puente for over 15 years. That's exactly what we  
19 did. And so the schools I just quickly pulled to  
20 the district you represent, from Marble Hill  
21 School for International Studies, to Wheels  
22 Academy in Washington Heights, are the kinds of  
23 schools we built--

24 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: And  
25 Luperon, Luperon is an amazing model.

2 JOSH THOMASES: And Luperon.

3 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: I know, I  
4 visited your school, too, when you were, when you  
5 used to be the Principal.

6 JOSH THOMASES: And so, what we--

7 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: So I know  
8 about the level of collaboration. But that's,  
9 that's what I, I think that we need to do more.

10 JOSH THOMASES: That's right. And  
11 we now have--

12 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And I know  
13 that having you in the--and I know blaming you,  
14 the new leadership of the DOE, because I think  
15 that everyone that has been there has made a  
16 contribution. Now, it is on your shoulder to say  
17 how I like to be seen, when I leave the DOE.

18 JOSH THOMASES: That's correct.

19 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And I think  
20 that that level of collaboration that you can help  
21 us to implement, you want to Bank Street, great,  
22 let's see how--and they've been doing good. But  
23 let's see how much more. Teacher's College, Bank  
24 Street, the Education Department of City College,  
25 Hunter, all over. How can we be sure, and that

1  
2 can be my question, can we work in a plan where  
3 each high school should be connected with a higher  
4 institution, so that they have a partnership and  
5 they can mentor this teacher? Because don't give  
6 me that, "We working this A and B." I know what  
7 we working. When I say can we have us a plan to  
8 provide all the close [phonetic] 500 high school a  
9 partnership with a higher institution?

10 JOHN MOGALESCU: You know, I would  
11 just, a couple of thoughts. One, and I'm, we are  
12 already have partnerships, we have every single  
13 CUNY college involved with local high schools.  
14 And in fact, the, we have over 400 high schools  
15 that we are working actively with right now, with  
16 a hope that we would be in every single--so I can  
17 give you that commitment that there is an interest  
18 and a desire to do just what you said.

19 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Is the DOE  
20 making to a commitment to bring the resources that  
21 CUNY needs to complete that, the goal?

22 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: You know,  
23 John and I meet on a monthly basis with our key  
24 leadership teams to figure out how to bridge the  
25 gap around resources, and figure out how to meet

1  
2 that commitment.

3 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Right.

4 Last couple of questions, I'm sorry, Robert.

5 JOHN MOGALESCU: Can I just add one  
6 quick thing, is that okay, or not? Okay, which is  
7 I want to just go back to what you said in your  
8 opening remarks about commitment to make change.  
9 And I just want to kind of reassure you that we  
10 feel the exact same way. And as I said, I'm in  
11 this system 40 years, and I am as impatient as you  
12 are, to make the kinds of changes that you are  
13 talking about.

14 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Right,  
15 three short question. One, how much did the DOE  
16 invest in college prep or college readiness?

17 JOSH THOMASES: We can get you the  
18 numbers in detail. The, the mobilized effort of  
19 our, my, our career and technical education unit,  
20 that is our, I have an office of post-secondary  
21 readiness that is doing career technical  
22 education, multiple pathways to graduation and the  
23 college counseling work, in partnership with Elena  
24 Konsin's [phonetic] office. I have a team of  
25 people that are responsible for the implementation

1 of the Common Core, and that professional  
2 development. I have a team of people that are  
3 responsible for the development of the, the  
4 instructional supports, and the quality review.  
5 And I have a team of people who are responsible  
6 for our Office of School Programs and partnerships  
7 which is doing, and I wish I had recorded your  
8 speech around enlisting the, the broader community  
9 into this work. And so, we can get you those  
10 numbers afterwards.

12 SHANEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: It's  
13 approximately \$80 million.

14 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: \$80  
15 million.

16 SHANEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: And, and I  
17 would just say that those parts of our  
18 organization that Josh listed, a lot of people  
19 have been going around saying that we got rid of  
20 teaching and learning, we don't have any support  
21 around this. We have a division that's very  
22 focused on the academics, it's called the Division  
23 of Academics, Performance and Support. The name  
24 might've changed, but the work has actually  
25 improved and strengthened. And that's the word

1 we've been describing today.

2 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: The, the--

3 JOSH THOMASES: And I, and I sit on  
4 the Chancellor's cabinet playing that role. [time  
5 bell]

6 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Does, does  
7 the DOE has a comprehensive college readiness plan  
8 as today?

9 JOSH THOMASES: Correct, yes,  
10 that's what I've walked you through today.

11 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: What's  
12 that?

13 JOSH THOMASES: Yes, that's what  
14 I've walked you through, through my testimony.

15 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Do you have  
16 like it online? Do you have--as you know, and I,  
17 and my question is more related, as you know, as  
18 you have said, the college readiness issue and  
19 concern is a national one. And as you know, they  
20 have many debate and conversation. Even there was  
21 one in this City where a country from Europe and  
22 United States sat also sharing experience about  
23 how much more can we do on college readiness?  
24 When does the college readiness program begin at  
25

1 the DOE?

2  
3 JOSH THOMASES: I think the core of  
4 the proposal you could see in the Chancellor's  
5 raising the bar, release of I think in June--

6 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Actually,  
7 that's not enough. That, that's--

8 JOSH THOMASES: And I'm happy to  
9 walk you through the details. We have a Graduate  
10 NYC website that delineates some of the work. We  
11 have a Common Core library that delineates others.

12 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: At what, at  
13 what grade does the DOE comprehensive college  
14 readiness plan begin?

15 JOSH THOMASES: Pre-K.

16 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Do you have  
17 anything online?

18 JOSH THOMASES: Yes, so the--

19 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Let's say I  
20 would like to - - and, and I--

21 JOSH THOMASES: So if you go--

22 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: --and right  
23 now, at this moment, my, as you know, there's  
24 debate in many city, and there's like a, people  
25 sitting, print and say, "This is our college

1  
2 readiness plans that we have," that is not only  
3 about a standard. It's not only about vocabulary,  
4 it's about how many college advice do we provide.  
5 How, what are we doing to be ready, when do we  
6 start? And you know the conversation we, do we  
7 start college readiness? It's not only to provide  
8 more math and science and reading and writing at  
9 the pre-K or K, or kindergarten. It's more about  
10 when do we start gathering with the student,  
11 addressing for them to plan for college. When do  
12 we starting having that conversation with that  
13 news to the public [phonetic]?

14 JOSH THOMASES: So, to be perfectly  
15 candid, if you ask me, "Is there a plan that you  
16 can go read online?"

17 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

18 JOSH THOMASES: No. Are there, is  
19 the work in progress and moving? Yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Can we, do  
21 we have any--can we say that at this hearing that  
22 in months we can have a, a written document with a  
23 comprehensive college readiness for New York City  
24 public school?

25 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: I think

1  
2 that the document that is in our testimony on this  
3 PowerPoint, is a good summary of the different  
4 things that we're doing. But we'd be happy to  
5 work with you to create something. One of the  
6 things that the staff mentioned when we were  
7 preparing for this hearing is that as they were  
8 preparing, the information is in lots of different  
9 places, and so if it would be more accessible for  
10 the public and for parents, we'd be happy to work  
11 with you to get feedback on how to organize what  
12 we're doing in a way that is easy to understand  
13 and accessible. I think that's a good suggestion.  
14 And I think in terms of how early, I think you're  
15 absolutely right. There was a good article on the  
16 schoolbook website of the Times about a school  
17 that starts in elementary school with setting a  
18 tone around this type of work, and I think that  
19 many of our elementary schools are starting to  
20 have those conversations. We're in the process of  
21 building a tool for parents that we hope to be  
22 piloting next year, that will be a specific  
23 college readiness tracker, that tracks some of  
24 these specific things for each kid. And that tool  
25 is something that is designed to give not just

1  
2 information about what your kid's done so far, but  
3 also to give, "Okay, by 9th grade you should've  
4 taken algebra. By 10th grade, you should've gone  
5 on at least three college trips. By 11th grade  
6 you should've taken the PSAT. And you should've  
7 started to do the financial aid planning." And so  
8 there are a lot of steps along the way that  
9 families and kids don't know about and we need to  
10 create easy to use tools for them to help with  
11 this.

12 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And, and I  
13 just wanted to end my part saying that our b--I  
14 mean, I'm emotional on this topic because I know,  
15 as I said, that we are losing a generation of  
16 young people. Now, they could be the engineer,  
17 the doctor, the architect or they could be the  
18 leader of the future. And I don't think that with  
19 a percentage that we are preparing right now, we  
20 will have enough, as I said, to compete with other  
21 nation. And, and I think that, and I share with  
22 the Chairman of the Education Committee, so I say  
23 I looking for the best school to my daughter  
24 kindergarten school. And when, when I was asking  
25 one of the school that I went, "What is the type

1  
2 of school that you want?" I said, "I want to get  
3 a school that pre--that provides all the tools  
4 that my daughter need for her to take control of  
5 her education."

6 JOSH THOMASES: Absolutely.

7 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And I think  
8 that we should end on getting each student in our  
9 system to take control of education. We know that  
10 it's not an easy one, we know that there's a lot  
11 of--and most of the students, they bring a lot of  
12 also problem for their community and the family,  
13 but I, I hope that we can be working together.  
14 And I hope, I invite you as the leaders of DOE and  
15 the Chancellor and other to help us coming out  
16 with a booklet, something writing, more clear,  
17 that any student, that any parent can see, "This  
18 is our college readiness plan," so that we can  
19 refer to that as elected officials, as New  
20 Yorkers, as students, okay.

21 JOSH THOMASES: So, so we do, we  
22 will be putting out, and it was done in  
23 partnership with parents, a college readiness  
24 plan. If the answer is "What are the steps to  
25 college?" we have worked with a group of parents

1  
2 to put out a particular plan, the more detailed  
3 one that Shael and you discussed, obviously, is  
4 work we could continue. And as I do the same  
5 thing, as I tour elementary schools in Brooklyn  
6 for my kindergartner, I hope we can share notes on  
7 that, as well.

8 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.

9 Well, let me, let me just ask a couple of quick  
10 questions. We have a lot of panels that are  
11 waiting. And so does the Department of Education,  
12 what does the DOE mean when it uses the term,  
13 "career readiness"?

14 JOSH THOMASES: So, it's a good  
15 question. I'm going to try and give a quick  
16 answer.

17 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Please.

18 JOSH THOMASES: We don't have a  
19 simple answer to it, because it depends on what  
20 industry. So, career readiness in the  
21 construction trades looks re--looks different than  
22 career readiness in software engineering, looks  
23 different than career readiness in aviation. The  
24 core of the definition is a, that the career and  
25 technical education pathway should end in a

1  
2 certification that, that means that the student is  
3 ready to enter either a post-secondary pathway of  
4 what we've called a middle skill job. That is not  
5 a dead end job in the industry.

6 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And what is a  
7 middle skill job? Give me a couple of examples.

8 JOSH THOMASES: A middle school job  
9 is a job that's an entry level job, that will have  
10 steps that allow the student to fully--

11 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Like what?

12 JOSH THOMASES: --enter in the  
13 middle class.

14 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Give me a  
15 couple of examples.

16 JOSH THOMASES: A radio, a  
17 radiologist, somebody working in a tech room in  
18 radiology. A, into a nurse's assistant, where  
19 you're starting to learn how to be a nurse and  
20 then you can ultimately become a nurse. Right?  
21 'Cause there are a set of steps along the way.

22 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: So, do you  
23 have any special college readiness or regular  
24 special college readiness programs or curriculum  
25 from, for ELL students, English Language Learners,

1  
2 or for special education students? And do the  
3 Common Core standards address these groups?

4 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: So if you  
5 look at the website, you see that for each of the  
6 curriculum units that we published, we published  
7 it with an addendum for English Language Learners,  
8 and an addendum for special ed students. And the  
9 reason for that is that we wanted to send a very  
10 clear signal from the beginning, that this is for  
11 everyone.

12 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay.

13 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: And that  
14 everyone has to achieve at this level. And in  
15 order to get our students who are English Language  
16 Learners, or our students with disabilities, to  
17 achieve at that level, we need to scaffold, which  
18 means we need to break it up into pieces that are  
19 manageable and make sure that they're able to  
20 access the content and that might mean for a  
21 student who, for example, is, has a disability  
22 where they're dysgraphic and they have trouble  
23 with writing that we get them an Alpha Smart,  
24 which is a small little laptop where they can type  
25 their stuff. It might mean for an English

1  
2 Language Learner that we actually work with the  
3 kid in their native language and in English over  
4 time so that they become more and more independent  
5 as they engage with the stuff that they need to do  
6 in English.

7 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: So is this  
8 part of the national core of curriculum standards?  
9 Or is it the national standards that you've then  
10 added that as far as to make them New York  
11 standards?

12 SHael POLAKOW-SURANSKY: We added  
13 that for, for New York City, as it's not, it's not  
14 precisely a standard, it's the curriculum--

15 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay.

16 SHael POLAKOW-SURANSKY: --that we  
17 teach in order to get kids to learn the standard.  
18 So everyone has the same standard, but we actually  
19 teach it in a way that's accessible for everyone.

20 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Sure.

21 [crosstalk]

22 JOSH THOMASES: We'd also say we've  
23 partnered with folks like the New York City  
24 Immigration Coalition on college information for  
25 immigrant communities.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Is that, is  
3 that approved by the State Education Department?  
4 Or that's just our own addendum to the--

5 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: We've been  
6 working closely with them, and it's, it's  
7 something that they're very interested in. And I  
8 think it's not just us, everyone is trying to  
9 answer the question: How do you make these more  
10 rigorous standards accessible for all our kids?

11 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Well, why  
12 don't you, why do you make it an addendum? Why  
13 don't you just include it as part and not an  
14 addendum?

15 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Well, the  
16 reason--

17 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Since you're  
18 talking about this is curriculum.

19 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: You're  
20 right, like I think that when we talk about it  
21 with principals, we say "Design your curriculum  
22 using universal design for learning," which is a  
23 term that's used to mean that you need to make it  
24 accessible for every student.

25 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Right.

1  
2                   SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: It comes  
3 from architecture, when you make a building  
4 accessible for individuals who are handicapped,  
5 you need to build a ramp sometimes in order to  
6 make sure everyone can get in. And the same is  
7 true with curriculum, you need to build access  
8 points for every kind of student in, into the  
9 curriculum. The reason I was referring to it as  
10 an addendum--

11                   CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay.

12                   SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: --is  
13 because it is something that does require extra  
14 work on the part of teachers to adapt some of the  
15 things that they might do with a student who's not  
16 coming with a disability.

17                   CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay, so give  
18 me what percentage of the students in New York  
19 City are ELL, English Language Learners, and  
20 children with special needs?

21                   SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: I think  
22 it's approximately 15-16 percent kids with  
23 disabilities, and approximately 18 percent kids  
24 who are English Language Learners. I mean, as you  
25 know, the school I ran was a school for immigrant

1  
2 kids, and this is something that is very close to  
3 my heart. I believe strongly that those students  
4 can master both the, the language and the  
5 standards, given the right supports.

6 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: So, are you,  
7 are you working in conjunction with the State  
8 Education Department from a statewide perspective  
9 or is it just New York City doing that with  
10 respect to their own program?

11 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: No, we're  
12 working really closely with them, and we have a  
13 really strong partnership. And I think we've  
14 learned a lot from them, and likewise, them from  
15 us.

16 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay.

17 JOSH THOMASES: And so for example  
18 we, we're partnering with them on the development  
19 of support materials, we're working with them and  
20 with the writers of the Common Core on the  
21 implementation, both our site and Common Core  
22 Library and, and the New York State side,  
23 EngageNewYork.org, have links to each other, we're  
24 not duplicating work 'cause nobody's got enough  
25 resources to build all of the supports.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And what  
3 about the Young Men Initiative, announced by the  
4 Mayor? Have you developed as of yet programs  
5 within the YMI that are aimed specifically at  
6 preparing these young men for college?

7 JOSH THOMASES: So--

8 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Or you  
9 haven't? Yes or no?

10 JOSH THOMASES: We, we will be  
11 launching in a, in a matter of a couple weeks the,  
12 the signature part of the initiative, the Expanded  
13 Success Initiative, which is, as I said earlier,  
14 focused on our high schools that with high poverty  
15 black and Latino boys, where they have high  
16 concentrations of them, have gotten the most  
17 success at getting them to the high school  
18 diploma, have figured out how to keep them in  
19 school, how to keep them out of trouble, how to  
20 build the culture that gets them that diploma  
21 rate. And now work with those. And they're,  
22 they're some of our best principals, some of our  
23 beset schools, and they're all over the City, but  
24 they're focused in obvious places: Central  
25 Brooklyn, the South Bronx, and the like. To work

1  
2 with those, to develop models that get us to the  
3 next bridge, which is to college and career  
4 readiness for those young men.

5 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And as far  
6 as, is all of that within the amount of money that  
7 was laid out by Mayor Bloomberg, or is that  
8 additional moneys?

9 JOSH THOMASES: No, that's correct,  
10 it's, that comes out of a grant from the Open  
11 Society Institute. There's other work that we're  
12 in process that's part of Young Men's Initiative,  
13 related to reducing recidivism for suspensions,  
14 related to the special education reform, the  
15 accountability inside of the progress report for  
16 high pover--for young men, young black and Latino  
17 men in the lowest third of performance. There's a  
18 specific accountability measure. So there's a set  
19 of pieces, the, the funded, the key funded on from  
20 Open Society is the first one I mentioned.

21 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: How much is  
22 that?

23 JOSH THOMASES: Approximately \$24  
24 million.

25 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay, and

1  
2 that's part of that, I think the Mayor announced  
3 was \$127 million or something like that.

4 JOSH THOMASES: I don't have the--I  
5 don't have that number off the top of my head.

6 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Shael, you  
7 know that is. But that's all, that's--

8 JOSH THOMASES: I know that, that--

9 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --additional  
10 money or within that?

11 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: It's part  
12 of it.

13 JOSH THOMASES: It's part of that.

14 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Part of it,  
15 okay.

16 JOSH THOMASES: Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Now, you  
18 talked about the graduation rates and what have  
19 you and so forth, so I guess the question is that  
20 Department of Education claims that the graduation  
21 rates have increased. And unfortunately, college  
22 readiness, in my opinion, has not. You may say it  
23 has. In your view, how has credit recovery  
24 impacted the high, higher graduation rates that  
25 you're talking about, and higher percentages of

1 college readiness? Because you know, coll--the,  
2 the whole issue of credit recovery, in my opinion,  
3 you know, I know we can debate on this subject, is  
4 a scam. Basically allowing some students to do  
5 some nonsense work in order to get credit. I'm  
6 not saying all of it's like that, but the majority  
7 of it. And in fact when we held the hearing on  
8 this particular matter some time ago, you, meaning  
9 DOE, could not even tell me how many college  
10 readiness programs there exists in New York City.  
11 [background comment] Credit recovery, I'm sorry,  
12 credit recovery, exists--what are the programs?  
13 What are the requirements? And every school, for  
14 every program, you could not tell me that. I  
15 don't even believe you can tell me that today. If  
16 I asked you to give me a list of every credit  
17 recovery program. Because I do believe it's being  
18 used in order to assist, it's being used to assist  
19 in increasing the numbers. So, my question to you  
20 is, more specifically, do you feel that college,  
21 the credit recovery has been used to increase the  
22 number of graduation rates that you site and the  
23 number of students that are college ready?

25 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: So, on,

1  
2 let me answer all the questions. First, you said  
3 that you didn't believe that college readiness had  
4 increased, but by our measure and the state, it  
5 has almost doubled. It went from 16 to 25 on our  
6 measure.

7 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay.

8 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: And so I  
9 think even though that is still low, it's, it's an  
10 important increase. I think that it's  
11 inappropriate to suggest that credit recovery is  
12 always a joke. I'm glad that you said that  
13 sometimes it's, it's--

14 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I said it's a  
15 scam, and the majority of it, in my opinion,  
16 because DOE, when I asked you, to--and I'll let  
17 you respond.

18 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: So let me,  
19 I'm going to try and answer your question.

20 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay.

21 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: So, here  
22 are the rules around credit recovery as we have  
23 them right now. There has to be a committee that  
24 includes teachers and administrators in the school  
25 [time bell] that when a student has not fulfilled

1  
2 the requirements of a course, that they look at  
3 what has been missed and they develop an academic  
4 plan for that student to meet the mastery  
5 objectors of that class. And if you look across  
6 all of the credits that are given in high school,  
7 less than two percent of the credits are related  
8 to credit recovery. So, so that's less than two  
9 percent of the credits granted in high school are  
10 related to credit recovery. So, it's a small  
11 percentage of credits that are being granted as a  
12 result of credit recovery.

13 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay.

14 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: And I  
15 think that it may be that there are some students  
16 who do earn credits that are inappropriately  
17 earned, and one of the things I've talked about in  
18 the past is that we initiated an audit of our  
19 schools to really dig into this. And we're  
20 looking closely at are there ways to put  
21 additional requirements around this program, to  
22 make sure that it's never abused, because I think  
23 that we have, through our investigation, seen  
24 instances where there's not appropriate  
25 documentation of the Committee that I described,

1  
2 and that committee is a very important check and  
3 balance, because what it's means to do is it's  
4 meant to ensure that both teachers and  
5 administrators are confident that what's being  
6 assigned is real and is rigorous. And where  
7 that's not happening, there's a real risk that  
8 it's being done inappropriately. That said, it's  
9 still a very small percentage of the credits that  
10 are being given in the system.

11 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay. I  
12 just, I ask you as the Chief Academic Officer, and  
13 I'm going to be asking this question down the  
14 road, I want to know all of the credit recovery  
15 programs that existing the City of New York by  
16 school. And you know one thing? That's easily  
17 doable by just sending a directive, via your  
18 network, to make sure that every principal have  
19 the curriculum for every credit recovery program  
20 that exists in their school, that's not very  
21 difficult. So I'm going to be asking you that  
22 down the road. So I'm just giving you fair  
23 warning

24 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Okay,  
25 okay.

2 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And, and do  
3 you know when the, I think you had mentioned or  
4 someone did, that about an audit of that had--

5 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: Yeah,  
6 it's, it's the Auditor General who's doing the  
7 audit--

8 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay.

9 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: --so I  
10 don't know exactly what the timing is, but it's,  
11 it's something that once it's done, we'll share,  
12 obviously.

13 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay. Well,  
14 I just want to ask the question of CUNY and of  
15 President Rodriguez, you had indicated that X  
16 amount of percentage, and I forgot, I can look it  
17 up in your testimony, students that are coming in  
18 have one remediation course. How many students at  
19 your school have to take at least two or more  
20 credit recovery courses? You know, 'cause one is  
21 one.

22 FELIX MATOS RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

23 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: But two is  
24 two and three is three. Which--

25 FELIX MATOS RODRIGUEZ: The

1  
2 testimony--Oh. I mentioned that 88 percent of all  
3 the students that started last fall, right, had to  
4 take at least one. I don't know how many had to  
5 take two. I can tell you how many had to take  
6 three--

7 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay, just  
8 tell me.

9 FELIX MATOS RODRIGUEZ: Which is 25  
10 percent.

11 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: 25 percent to  
12 take three.

13  
14 FELIX MATOS RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: So, it would  
16 be good to have the numbers for, for not only one,  
17 but two--

18 FELIX MATOS RODRIGUEZ: Oh, that's  
19 easy, yeah. Mm-hmm.

20 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --and to  
21 three.

22 [background comment]

23 FELIX MATOS RODRIGUEZ: But  
24 remember, also, one of the things, and going back  
25 to part of the distinction that Senior University

1 Dean Mogalescu made, remember also that, for  
2 example, I have, of the 7,000 students that  
3 started, at least 16 percent were GED. So, you  
4 have to factor, those are not students coming from  
5 the DOE, so that's a separate--

6  
7 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I, I--I  
8 understand--

9 FELIX MATOS RODRIGUEZ: --set of  
10 issues.

11 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: What  
12 percentage GED?

13 FELIX MATOS RODRIGUEZ: 16 percent.

14 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: 16 percent.

15 FELIX MATOS RODRIGUEZ: 16, yes.

16 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay, I can,  
17 I can appreciate that. [laughs] I can appreciate  
18 it.

19 FELIX MATOS RODRIGUEZ: I will get  
20 you information, happy to do so.

21 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Yeah.

22 JOSH THOMASES: Chairman--

23 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Sure.

24 JOSH THOMASES: --our citywide, the  
25 numbers we have is any remediation, 51 percent;

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two areas, 14 percent.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Two areas meaning two courses--

JOSH THOMASES: Two of math, reading and writing.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Math, reading and writing.

JOSH THOMASES: So there are three areas of remediation.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay.

JOSH THOMASES: You can need remediation in math, you can need remediation in reading, you can need remediation in writing.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And, so--

JOSH THOMASES: So you had ask for two, the number is 14 percent.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Of, of all of the CUNY students?

JOSH THOMASES: CUNY wide.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: CUNY wide. How many students is that, 14 percent, give or take?

JOHN MOGALESCU: You know, if I might, Mr. Chairman, we have all that data, and

1  
2 rather than, you know, we have a pretty good sense  
3 of this, why can't we get it to you very, very  
4 quickly.

5 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Yeah, I  
6 understand you get it to me, but I figured that  
7 you would know then number.

8 SHAEL POLAKOW-SURANSKY: 6,000,  
9 approximately.

10 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Approximately  
11 6,000?

12 JOSH THOMASES: Approximately  
13 6,000.

14 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay, thank  
15 you. That's appropriate. Well, I'm going to stop,  
16 I mean, I have a lot more questions, but we have  
17 Mike Mulgrew, the President of UFT; we've been  
18 running way behind schedule. And about seven  
19 panels. Want to thank both DOE officials and CUNY  
20 officials on behalf of Ydanis and myself. Staff  
21 will follow up with additional questions that they  
22 may have on both either DOE and CUNY. I want to  
23 thank President Lisa from City College of New  
24 York, and President Rodriguez from Hostos  
25 Community College for coming in, along with the

1 student, the senior at John Jay College. And we  
2 appreciate you working. The bottom line is that I  
3 know that all of us, including every member of the  
4 City Council, wants to make sure that every child  
5 graduates from high school, being college ready  
6 and/or career ready. So thank you very much on  
7 behalf of both of us.  
8

9 JOSH THOMASES: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay, and  
11 next we're going to hear from the President of the  
12 United Federation of Teachers, Mike Mulgrew.

13 [pause, background noise]

14 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: It's now 4:28  
15 and we're going to hear from Mike, Mike Mulgrew,  
16 the President of the United Federation of  
17 Teachers. If there are other people in the other  
18 room, there are seats here in the primary--scuze  
19 me? [background comments] All right. So there's  
20 seats in the primary room. Sergeant-of-Arms will  
21 escort you in. So, welcome, President Mulgrew of  
22 the United Federation of Teachers, You may begin  
23 your testimony.

24 MIKE MULGREW: Thank you, and good  
25 afternoon, Chairman Jackson, and Chairman

1  
2 Rodriguez, and thank you so much for convening  
3 this hearing on something that is very, very  
4 disturbing to this City and to the parents and the  
5 children of the school system. I'm, we've  
6 submitted testimony and I know that you're running  
7 behind, so I don't want to go over the numbers  
8 again. The numbers are--well, the numbers that we  
9 know of, I was kind of shocked to hear the lack of  
10 information about numbers on something so many  
11 people are looking at. It's a very sad thing  
12 that's going on here. The fact is that this  
13 Administration has never stopped congratulating  
14 itself for ending social promotion while at the  
15 same time creating a social graduation program.  
16 That is what is going on here. We have numerous  
17 children who are graduating high school and are  
18 not prepared to take college courses. We see many  
19 reasons for this. First and foremost, we believe  
20 that the--

21 [time bell]

22 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Nick, Nick,  
23 one second, Nick. One second, Mike, please. Hey,  
24 Nick.

25 NICK ECONOMO: [off mic] Yes, sir.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Let that  
3 young lady in, please, the one just now.

4 NICK ECONOMO: Yeah, you want her?

5 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Yes, please.  
6 Thank you. Continue, Mike, I'm sorry.

7 MIKE MULGREW: The school report  
8 card or progress report system has driven the  
9 importance for credit accumulation, is now more  
10 important to any of the schools. I was very  
11 disturbed to hear one of the DOE personnel here  
12 talking about credit recovery programs, and that  
13 there are teams at school that ensure rigor. And  
14 make sure that all the programs and everything  
15 that are put in place are being done properly. I  
16 don't know what he's talking about, I don't have a  
17 clue. And I think if he visited a school and  
18 actually tried to find out how this was being  
19 done, he would be greatly disturbed. This has  
20 been something--credit recovery, when I was a  
21 teacher in high school, was done only on very,  
22 very few occasions, the requirements are clear, a  
23 child must do the seat time, in other words the  
24 child must have sat through the class and covered  
25 all of the material. And the reason that the

1 child failed is because they do not have a mastery  
2 of the material. Then, through a separate  
3 program, or project, a child has to be able to  
4 demonstrate a mastery of that material. And that  
5 is the only time that credit recovery is to be  
6 issued. When the progress report for the high  
7 schools started rolling out after its second year,  
8 all of a sudden we started seeing schools all over  
9 the city at the high school level start credit  
10 recovery programs. There were no guidelines given  
11 out by this Department of Education, and if we did  
12 not file the State Education Department complaint,  
13 and start saying, and they, and then make them  
14 send out their interpretation, which we had a  
15 conflict with and had to go to Albany to try to  
16 get clarification on. So, they have always seen  
17 credit recovery as a way for schools to push their  
18 progress report or their grades up, and not the  
19 grades of the student. Which is why we now have  
20 this problem and crisis that we are facing. And  
21 there are very simple things to be done there.  
22 First, the Department of Education's job is not to  
23 sit in the Tweed Courthouse and look at computer  
24 screens and data reports. They are to ensure that  
25

1  
2 these programs are being done properly. And they  
3 refuse to do that. They do quality reviews of  
4 schools, where they actually have people go to the  
5 school, weeks ahead of time, they don't even hide  
6 it now, someone's job is to get the school ready  
7 for somebody to come in and do a quality review  
8 and make sure everything's right. So we now have  
9 a system that has institutionalized dog-and-pony  
10 shows. The schools know it, the DOE knows it, the  
11 networks who are there using know it, they have  
12 people whose job is to go to a school to set up a  
13 dog-and-pony show, so they can say, "We were at  
14 the school and everything is being done right."  
15 And the minute they leave, it's all gone. It is a  
16 sham what is going on in our school system. We  
17 are now calling it a "decade of disaster." We do  
18 have programs, and I am very, very disturbed what  
19 the City University is facing; at the same time,  
20 they have had their highest enrollments ever,  
21 where it's very competitive to get into those  
22 schools. If children continue to need that level  
23 of remediation, they're never going to get it,  
24 they're going to start being pushed out of CUNY  
25 because they are so over enrolled now. And that

1 will be a very big danger of so many children's  
2 lives being flushed away, and it's just wrong. I  
3 do recommend, and I have now officially made it  
4 part of the UFT's legislative agenda in Albany, we  
5 have programs that are working very well. The  
6 College Now program is a huge success. It is a  
7 small program, it is not very expensive. We need  
8 to expand it, because the students who get through  
9 the College Now classes are college--are at a much  
10 higher rate of college readiness. So if you know  
11 that is working, why aren't we expanding it? So  
12 I'm here to ask the City Council, because it is  
13 not my program, it is City University's program,  
14 but I have made it a priority in the legislative  
15 agenda of the UFT in Albany, to get more funding  
16 to expand these programs for our children. And  
17 that's going to require all of us saying the same  
18 thing. It's not a large ticket item, when you  
19 talk about the budgets in Albany, but it would  
20 have a meaningful effect. The CTE programs have  
21 also proven, and here's--proven to have a higher  
22 rate of college readiness, and it's because those  
23 programs require curriculums based on industry's  
24 needs. So, the analytical skills that are now  
25

1  
2 being pushed out of regular academic classes, are  
3 built into the CTE sequences. So we need to  
4 expand and keep the rigor inside of the CTE  
5 sequences; at the same time, I know the Department  
6 of Ed is closing many CTE schools but say they're  
7 expanding. Well, they usually say they're doing  
8 things and this is going to happen afterwards.  
9 I've been very disappointed by so many of their  
10 words. So, we are committed to making sure that  
11 we do something to reverse this trend. The report  
12 card is clearly the biggest problem we have. Just  
13 last week, with the Mayor now threatening to close  
14 58 schools this year, the majority of them high  
15 schools. How do you tell high schools that your  
16 whole awareness, your ability to remain open is  
17 based on credits, student credits recovery, and at  
18 the same time tell them, "Oh, no, we want you to  
19 do it with integrity. We want you to do this  
20 correctly."? The schools now are doing very  
21 simple things, they're not offering art, they're  
22 not offering music, they're offering less AP  
23 classes. These are all things that require higher  
24 level critical thinking skills. They've removed  
25 these from the schools. This is having a

1  
2 cumulative effect on our students, which is why we  
3 have more and more are coming out not ready for  
4 college. So, my recommendations again, work to  
5 expand College Now, more CTE certified sequences,  
6 they must be certified by the State, not just  
7 sequences that we call "theme sequences." They  
8 have to be certified so we know the rigor is  
9 there. Change the progress report and start  
10 making the DOE actually go into schools and do the  
11 hard work of making sure that the programs that  
12 are being run are being run properly, and stop  
13 wasting all of this money and causing so much  
14 frustration in schools by hiring people to set up  
15 and stage dog-and-pony shows, what they call  
16 quality reviews, and then saying, "Everything's  
17 fine," and then never going back to the school.  
18 Their job is to help the schools and make sure the  
19 schools are doing the right thing by the children.  
20 Thank you very much.

21 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Oh, well, let  
22 me thank you for keeping it real, as they say.  
23 But I do have a couple of questions with respect  
24 to that. In your opinion, I've expressed this and  
25 you weren't here, I said to Shael, the Chief

1  
2 Academic Officer, and Josh, the Deputy Chief  
3 Academic Officer, that their presentation and  
4 communicating to us was ideal. But, but talking  
5 the talk is one thing; can they walk the walk.  
6 Now you can, as you know, you could stand up and  
7 give a message, but the question is, are all of  
8 the people that must implement it, are they going  
9 to hear the message and are you going to provide  
10 them with the tools--

11 MIKE MULGREW: Correct.

12 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --in order to  
13 get the job done. My question to you is, from a  
14 budgetary point of view, how do you think that  
15 last year's budget and this year's budget, the  
16 proposed budget, obviously at the State level, the  
17 increase is no more than four percent of last  
18 year's budget, because that's already set in law,  
19 unless it changes.

20 MIKE MULGREW: Four percent  
21 increase.

22 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And the  
23 Governor is threatening that the four percent may  
24 be withheld--

25 MIKE MULGREW: Mm-hmm.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --if unions  
3 and local education agencies around the state do  
4 not reach an agreement on the evaluation system.  
5 We don't even know what the, the bud--the  
6 preliminary budget is going to be with the City of  
7 New York as of yet, but we know that we're in a  
8 billion dollar deficit. How is the budgetary  
9 process going to impact the whole situation on  
10 whether or not our children are college ready?

11 MIKE MULGREW: Okay. First, in  
12 order for the Department of Ed to start taking the  
13 responsibility of supporting and monitoring  
14 schools, you would just need to shift their  
15 operating process, is the nicest way for me to say  
16 it. Their job is not to sit in the Tweed  
17 Courthouse. Their job is to go to schools. In a  
18 real, meaningful way. So that would require no  
19 extra cost, it would just mean that they would  
20 have to lead the Tweed Courthouse. And they would  
21 have to tell people that their job is to monitor  
22 and make sure things are implemented correctly.  
23 In terms of giving directives, say on the credit  
24 recovery issue, sending it out in the principal's  
25 weekly does not make it real. Okay? If you're a

1 principal, you get a principal's weekly newsletter  
2 that goes on for ever and ever and ever with all  
3 these things you're now responsible for, that's  
4 impossible to do. Telling a principal you need to  
5 do this, this, this, while you're telling them at  
6 the same time to do 6,000 other things, is absurd.  
7 And that's what they use as cover to say, "We  
8 informed the school what to do correctly." It's  
9 not that hard to train people. You don't, you  
10 already have money in place. It's just going to  
11 mean a shift. And we already know, and the City  
12 Council was very, you know, focused on this last  
13 year, the amount of money that is spent at the DOE  
14 center, that is not going to the schools, is  
15 immense. And they're never held really  
16 accountable for that type of spending. And the  
17 computer--I mean, just as, the things that they're  
18 doing, in terms of building software and databases  
19 that are never used by the schools, and have no  
20 use for the children, shifted. Stop with those  
21 no-bid contracts. That's what you should be  
22 doing. College Now is not a, it's not a heavy  
23 lift, if you put \$5 million into College Now,  
24 you're probably doubling its budget. Think how

1  
2 many more children we could service. That's  
3 something we can do from Albany, and that money  
4 would be going to CUNY, not to the Department of  
5 Education. So there are ways to do this, right  
6 now, with our current budgets. It's just going to  
7 require a change in thinking at the Department of  
8 Ed, but it's hard to get them to get a change in  
9 thinking when they say everything's wonderful and  
10 everything we're doing is great. How are you?

11 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: DOE said  
12 that they have a, a college readiness program that  
13 is started in kindergarten. What do you know  
14 about the programs? [laughter]

15 MIKE MULGREW: When did they start  
16 it? When did they start it?

17 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Pre-K they  
18 said.

19 MIKE MULGREW: Don't know anything  
20 about it. Did they explain this?

21 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: No. What  
22 do you think should be done to create, or how  
23 important is when you look, and you look as a  
24 leader of the UFT right now, how important is for  
25 each parenting and student to know that there's a

1  
2 college readiness program booklets that they can  
3 see, that they can read, that they can follow up.

4 MIKE MULGREW: I think the parents  
5 would be pretty interested in knowing if there was  
6 such a program. I know that money that you invest  
7 at the, what we call the zero to four age level,  
8 is money that's well spent. That is why we, we  
9 with our daycare providers, we have procured  
10 grants, and we're training daycare providers.  
11 They do this voluntarily, they're all being  
12 trained on early grade, early childhood  
13 development stages. And thankfully, even though  
14 they're supposed to just be daycare providers,  
15 they're turning into teachers. So I agree that  
16 I'm happy to hear that the Department of Ed has  
17 this, but I'm sad because I've never heard of it.  
18 And if I've never heard of it, I have a feeling  
19 that most of the parents have never heard of it.  
20 So, that's nice that they have this program. I'd  
21 like to know how many children are in it, and how  
22 many parents have been contacted about getting  
23 into it. That's the first question I have. And  
24 if they do have it, I'd be more than happy to help  
25 show, tell people that it's there.

2 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Well, let me  
3 thank you for coming in on behalf of--how many  
4 people you represent?

5 MIKE MULGREW: 200,000.

6 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: 200,000. Let  
7 me turn to our colleague, David Greenfield of  
8 Brooklyn, and then we're going to move to the, our  
9 first panel.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Thank  
11 you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you Mr. Mulgrew for  
12 your testimony today. I have a couple of quick  
13 questions, just you know, the, the DOE came here  
14 with some very fancy slides.

15 MIKE MULGREW: Yeah, they do that.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: And--  
17 yeah, and I actually pointed out to them that, you  
18 know, in their fancy slides, for example, one of  
19 the, one of the stats that they had was that, you  
20 know, the, the percentage of Asian students that  
21 have been, that have been college ready over the  
22 last ten years has gone up by some 85 percent. I  
23 noted to them that the percentage of the Asian  
24 population in New York City has gone up by around  
25 35 percent, so you kind of have to sort of

1  
2 accommodate that. Do you have an opinion on  
3 their, on their stats? I mean, do you sort of  
4 have your own data in terms of, you know, whether  
5 their data is accurate? 'Cause you know, there's  
6 always a tendency, obviously, for any agency to  
7 sort of try to spin things in the best light.

8 MIKE MULGREW: No, that would never  
9 happen in public. [laughter] Look, this is what  
10 I--I worked with, I work with a lot of the people  
11 at the City University of New York. I think they  
12 do wonderful service, and I think it really is one  
13 of the things that gives so many children a chance  
14 at a college degree where they wouldn't have it.  
15 And what they've told me over and over again, is  
16 that they now have a crisis. They are facing a  
17 distinct crisis, because of the amount of  
18 remediation they must now be giving to children  
19 who are graduating the New York City public high  
20 schools. So, when you have a, the City University  
21 of New York telling you there is something wrong,  
22 something horribly wrong, trying to spin it as if  
23 there isn't a problem is absurd. There is a  
24 problem.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: What,

1  
2 what they, they cite that they've gone from around  
3 one in ten kids prepared to around one in four.  
4 Of course, we point out that that means 75 percent  
5 of kids are not prepared. I asked them how  
6 quickly--

7 MIKE MULGREW: How did they  
8 baseline the one in ten, which I would like to  
9 know.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: I don't  
11 know, I only get five minutes at these things.  
12 [laughter] Believe me, I have lots of questions.  
13 My question is, when I ask them, I said, "So how  
14 long is it going to take to go from 25 percent to  
15 50 percent?" they, they, without blinking, they  
16 said, "Three to four years." I noted that, I  
17 noted to the Deputy Commissioner that I would most  
18 likely be around in three to four years, and he  
19 most likely not be around, so be tough to sort of  
20 hold him to that. But what's, what's your take on  
21 that. I mean, sort of do you see that trend  
22 moving upward? And if not, you know, what, what  
23 else could we do to sort of remediate the  
24 situation? Aside from what you discussed already  
25 in terms of the College Now and the other

1  
2 programs, which seems sensible.

3 MIKE MULGREW: I think they should  
4 create more what we call Freshman Academies.  
5 Freshman Academies are basically, if you design it  
6 correctly, it's an academy for all incoming 9th  
7 grade students, you do a diagnosis; specifically  
8 you should really look at their literacy  
9 diagnosis. Get what it's at, it's a, the reality  
10 is, the removal of social promotion, and they do  
11 love to trumpet that they remove social promotion.  
12 Well, the problem is we don't leave hardly anyone  
13 back anymore. Because the tests that we're, the  
14 whole school system at the elementary level is  
15 geared towards test prep. So you can teach a  
16 child how to pass a test, but they don't have real  
17 learn--real knowledge acquisition. So, we now,  
18 and this is the irony of ironies, is we used to  
19 hold back a lot more kids when we supposedly had  
20 social promotion. And now they're all going  
21 through, because we do test prep. If you go to an  
22 elementary school, all you will see is they have  
23 units of lessons based on test skills so that you  
24 can pass your test. And that's all they do. So,  
25 when a high school gets a 9th grader, they then

1  
2 are responsible for someone who is already below  
3 grade levels. So, you have to have a remediation  
4 program, how do you make it better? You start a  
5 remediation program in 9th grade. And that's what  
6 a Freshman Academy would do. It would, it has to  
7 be literacy based. What we see is the biggest  
8 problem that we have is their literacy skills are  
9 two to three grade levels behind, so we have to, I  
10 was at a school two days ago because it's a high  
11 school that is now implementing a literacy based  
12 9th grade program, and that's something we know  
13 has to get done. :And that would be a major piece  
14 to do, and something we should be looking at to do  
15 across the high schools in New York City.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: That's  
17 a good suggestion. My final question relates to  
18 in fact, I guess what you refer to as the Mayor's  
19 "decade of disaster" running schools.

20 MIKE MULGREW: I've said that, yes.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: I'm,  
22 I'm just reading off your testimony.

23 MIKE MULGREW: [laughs]

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: I'm  
25 not, I'm obviously not that bold, but I did ask

1 the Department of Education a similar question,  
2 which I'm wondering if you have a perspective on,  
3 'cause I didn't get a straight answer from them.  
4 And that is that, you know, we've doubled the  
5 funding towards education over the last ten years,  
6 we've spent something like a quarter of a trillion  
7 dollars, and now this new glossy slide that we  
8 have focuses on this new thing called "Common Core  
9 Curriculum." Right, which they're trumpeting out  
10 and they're sort of very, very excited about. And  
11 so my question to them was, you know, what the  
12 heck have we been doing the last ten years?  
13 Right, you know, suddenly today we woke up and  
14 sort of discovered this. And so, I think you sort  
15 of have a unique vantage point to sort of maybe  
16 try to answer that for us. You know, what has the  
17 DOE been doing the last ten years that suddenly,  
18 you know, in the last two years of the Bloomberg  
19 Administration--we think, of course, 'cause we  
20 thought we were here four years ago--but, that in  
21 the last years of the Bloomberg Administration,  
22 suddenly there's a brand new Common Core  
23 Curriculum. So, what's been going on over here?

24 MIKE MULGREW: They've been

1 building computer systems that nobody uses, hiring  
2 lawyers and communications people. [laughter]  
3 They have done nothing on curriculum. You know,  
4 we've been saying, "Where's the curriculum?  
5 Where's the curricu--" When, look, there was a  
6 time when the New York City public school system  
7 was considered one of the best in the country.  
8 Okay/ And this is what I can guarantee you at  
9 that point. Every teacher who walked into a  
10 school was handed a curriculum, and scope and  
11 sequence book on when you should be teaching  
12 things at what time. No teachers get handed  
13 curriculum anymore. So, the UFT, working with its  
14 national organization, the AFT, were the people  
15 who helped develop what's called the Common Core  
16 Curriculum. The DOE had nothing to do with it.  
17 So the fact that they're in here saying, "This is  
18 the answer to everything," when they didn't spend  
19 a penny or help develop it, and there's a lot of  
20 work to be done on it. And they won't be here  
21 when it's finished. You know. You can say, the  
22 way you say it, but I'm telling you, they will not  
23 be here when it's finished, because it is only--  
24 and it's not a Common Core Curriculum, and this is

1  
2 the thing they, they keep talking about, it's a  
3 Common Core set of standards. And in education,  
4 standards are used to design curriculums and build  
5 curriculums off of. What the Department of Ed is  
6 already doing is handing out standards and telling  
7 teachers to write curriculums. They're all  
8 teaching, they're all writing curriculums in  
9 different ways, which means we're not going to  
10 have meaningful student performance based on it,  
11 so they're messing it up again.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: So,  
13 this is actually very new information, I just want  
14 to stress this, just understand this point, 'cause  
15 that's not, obviously, the perspective that they  
16 were coming from.

17 MIKE MULGREW: No.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: So just  
19 want to, I want to, I just want to understand it.  
20 So, these are standards, and in fact what you're  
21 saying is, they still don't have a curriculum.

22 MIKE MULGREW: Correct. You take  
23 the Common Core standards--

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Yeah.

25 MIKE MULGREW: --because we didn't

2 want to get into curriculum wars across the United  
3 States.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Yeah.

5 MIKE MULGREW: They get very  
6 touchy, especially in some of the states like  
7 Texas.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Certain  
9 states, yeah, of course, of course. Yes.

10 MIKE MULGREW: So, they're just  
11 standards. Then it is up to each school system to  
12 design curriculum off of it, and then hand the  
13 curriculum to the teachers, so the teachers can  
14 design their lessons to match the needs of their  
15 students. That's how it's supposed to work. What  
16 we have here is, they've already handed out the  
17 standards to the teachers, and are asking them to  
18 write curriculum on their own, without even  
19 training them on it. It's just a mess.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: So, so  
21 why should we expect any different results?

22 MIKE MULGREW: We are going to push  
23 on the programs that we know will make a  
24 difference. The UFT now is starting to train  
25 principals and teachers, with this principals

1 union, we're starting to train them on different  
2 tools, on different, on the Common Core  
3 Curriculums, we're doing this without the  
4 Department of Ed, which is a shame. We're  
5 basically doing the work of the Administration's  
6 school system, the Department of Ed itself,  
7 because we're committed to doing this. In terms  
8 of them, I don't know. I--

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: How--so  
11 last question--

12 MIKE MULGREW: I call it the  
13 "decade of disaster," so I don't have a lot of  
14 hope.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: --I  
16 mean, the decade's done already, that's hopeful,  
17 right, it sounds like there could be, things could  
18 be better in the future. So my final question is,  
19 is there a way to lock them down to actually  
20 creating an actual curriculum? I mean--

21 MIKE MULGREW: It will take a lot  
22 of pressure from the outside. And I would hope  
23 that City Council would join me in that, creating  
24 that pressure.

25 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you,

1 Council Member.

2 MIKE MULGREW: Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you,  
4 Mike. Appreciate it. Our first panel, Dr. Randi  
5 Herman the CSA, she is the Council of Supervisors  
6 and Administrators--thanks, Mike; Kate  
7 Pfordresher, on behalf of the Desola [phonetic],  
8 Professional Staff Congress of CUNY; Zakiyah  
9 Ansari, Alliance for Quality Education; Sierra  
10 Stoverman-Bell [phonetic], the Neighborhood Family  
11 Services Coalition; Warren Gordon, Baruch College  
12 City University of New York Math Council; and  
13 Stanley Octen, Ocken [phonetic], is CUNY, CCUNY  
14 Math Department, CUNY Math Chairs Council. Please  
15 come forward. [pause] So, Dr. Randi Herman;  
16 Kate, are you here?

17 KATE PFORDRESHER: [off mic] I'm  
18 here.

19 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay, you're  
20 second. Zakiyah.

21 FEMALE VOICE: She's here.

22 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Sierra?  
23 Okay, Warren. Okay, and Stanley. Stanley's here?  
24 Okay, go, in that order, Dr. Herman, you may  
25

1  
2 begin. We're going to ask, ask everyone, please  
3 ... One second, one--[pause] We're going to ask  
4 you, if you're submitting written testimony, your  
5 testimony will be part of the record. So if you  
6 can summarize, and no one is going to go more than  
7 three minutes, we have seven different panels that  
8 are waiting. So, I'm going to ask you to be as  
9 brief as possible. Thank you, Dr. Herman.

10 RANDI HERMAN: Good afternoon,  
11 everyone. Just for a moment, I'd like you to  
12 visualize a child that matters to you. We've been  
13 talking a lot about data--

14 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Sergeant--

15 RANDI HERMAN: --and programs. But  
16 it's--

17 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Hit the  
18 clock, please.

19 RANDI HERMAN: --really all about  
20 children. So--

21 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Start the  
22 clock.

23 RANDI HERMAN: --if you could just--  
24 -

25 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Sorry.

1 Sergeant-of-Arms, can you start the clock, please?

2 Go, Dr. Herman, I'm sorry.

3  
4 RANDI HERMAN: So if you just think  
5 about a child while I'm speaking my piece, as it  
6 were. New York City's young men and women aren't  
7 all college and career ready, they never were all  
8 college and career ready. But we can certainly do  
9 a better job than we're doing. Rather than point  
10 fingers and look for a single quick fix, let's  
11 talk about where it begins, so that we know how to  
12 stop it from happening. Our children come from  
13 many countries, speak many languages, and schools  
14 at every level that challenge to meet their  
15 social, emotional, health and educational needs.  
16 I visited a Brooklyn elementary school last week.  
17 The Principal was very distraught, over 30  
18 languages were spoken in her kindergarten. And  
19 she was bereft, wondering how she would ever make  
20 AYP. It was an overwhelming task ahead of her,  
21 and her teachers. They had children from as far  
22 away as Slovenia. They really were at a loss as  
23 to what to do. But they were doing the best they  
24 could, in working with families, teaching families  
25 English, and trying to get the children to learn

1 and master the language, so that by the time they  
2 were accountable for their scores in grade three,  
3 the children would be able to show progress. A  
4 laudable goal. But is that really what we want to  
5 do to children that young? What happened to  
6 playtime? What happened to being able to explore  
7 the world around them in a safe place? We're  
8 taking away all the enrichment, all the reasons  
9 that children want to come to school. We're not  
10 catching their passion, we're not engaging their  
11 imagination, or their creativity. For children to  
12 be able to learn, they have to want to come to  
13 school, they have to be in school. Nobody at the  
14 DOE at the table really talked about attending  
15 rates. How often are the children in school? Do  
16 they leave for long periods of time and come back?  
17 Student with interrupted formal education, as well  
18 as students who have English as a second language.  
19 How do we get these kids when they come to us at  
20 all different points of entry into our system?  
21 How do we get them all college and career ready?  
22 Well, maybe we can't. Maybe what we can do is get  
23 them to a point where they're be able to finish  
24 our high schools, and be able to go to work. And  
25

1 while they're working, they'll be able to go to  
2 college. [time bell] Last sentence? What I'm  
3 suggesting is that every high school be partnered  
4 with a trade union, so that children understand  
5 the purpose of what they're learning, and have an  
6 opportunity to put it to use. It was alluded to a  
7 little bit in conversation, that it was something  
8 that was necessary, they talked about aviation,  
9 they talked about transit tech, Brooklyn Tech a  
10 little bit. But this wouldn't cost us anything.  
11 This is a partnership with the Central Labor  
12 Council.  
13

14 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you,  
15 Dr. Herman. Next, Kate Pfordresher? Okay. And  
16 who are you testifying on behalf?

17 KATE PFORDRESHER: I'm sorry,  
18 Arthurine DeSola, the Secretary of the  
19 Professional Staff Congress--

20 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay.

21 KATE PFORDRESHER: --would have  
22 been here. I'm sorry, this was just a bad day.  
23 So, I'm testifying on behalf of the Professional  
24 Staff Congress, which represents the 22,000  
25 faculty and administrators at the City University

1 of New York. And we're really grateful to have an  
2 opportunity to speak to this joint panel. I'll  
3 try to be really brief. I mean, Arthurine has a  
4 long history of being, of being a counselor at the  
5 Queensborough Community College, so she brings a  
6 particular expertise on this question. The PSC is  
7 very proud of the open access mission of the CUNY  
8 community colleges. And we devote a great deal of  
9 our union's energy and appreciate the attention of  
10 the City Council, to making sure that community  
11 colleges remain open to New York's--as the widest  
12 avenue of opportunity, especially for low income,  
13 minority and immigrant students, and those who are  
14 not yet well prepared for college. The deck is  
15 stacked against these students in so many ways,  
16 it's no wonder that many of them arrive at CUNY  
17 with remedial needs. We recognize and thank, and  
18 in support of this, the joint hearing, raising the  
19 issue of college readiness of DOE. It's, it's  
20 capacity to do a better job for kids all the way  
21 from preschool through high school. We especially  
22 appreciate the point that President Mulgrew just  
23 made, about how desperately stretched the  
24 resources are at CUNY, when these students arrive  
25

1 at CUNY, to provide the services to make up these  
2 deficits. But also that there are many, many,  
3 many thousands of students who deserve this, this  
4 opportunity to go to college and succeed. So,  
5 let's see, I'm just trying to jump ahead. So, you  
6 know, and we sup--we are completely in support of  
7 continuing the pressure on the Department of  
8 Education, to do better. These, you know,  
9 significant efforts obviously need to be made to  
10 improve the college readiness of current and  
11 future high school students, that is absolutely  
12 clear. But there are many who are already in high  
13 school. The point was made about, you know, in  
14 three or four years, we can perhaps have better  
15 results, but that's several generations more of  
16 CUNY, students that will need resources, and the  
17 ability to make up their deficits, and to succeed  
18 in college and get the degree that they require.  
19 It's been said, you know, 79 percent of all  
20 community college freshmen need at least one  
21 remedial course. I appreciate the Council  
22 Member's question about a breakdown of how many  
23 need two remedial courses, how many need remedial  
24 work in more than one area. That kind of detail  
25

1 we don't have and it would be helpful to have.  
2 But we do want to [time bell] Oh, shoot. Can I  
3 just say very quickly, I'm sorry, we recognize  
4 that there's enormous resource drain on CUNY. We  
5 have \$10,400 per FTE student, for each community  
6 college student. That includes tuition, which has  
7 gone up \$300 this last year. It's \$200 less than  
8 last year. CUNY has a very excellent program  
9 called ASAP, that they've, that has done enormous-  
10 -which was the object of a test, it was of a  
11 hearing in December, that has an enormous success  
12 rate in improving the performance of students,  
13 including their needs for remediation. They've  
14 had \$6,500 more than \$10,600 per student in the  
15 program. This is more counselors, more fulltime  
16 faculty, and a whole other set of services that is  
17 just not available to students with remedial needs  
18 in the general population. In the general  
19 population, 50 percent of the remedial courses are  
20 taught by part time adjunct faculty, because  
21 there's just not enough money. That's, there's  
22 more in our testimony. So thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.

25 Zakiyah Ansari?

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[pause]

ZAKIYAH ANSARI: I'm sorry, you didn't have my testimony.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Go ahead, please.

ZAKIYAH ANSARI: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And the next, Sierra is next, please, okay? Sierra is next. Go.

ZAKIYAH ANSARI: My name is Zakiyah Ansari, a parent of eight children, and the Advocacy Director for the Alliance for Quality Education. Are New York public school students adequately prepared for college? That is the question. Is the Mayor's Education legacy a success or failure? The people have spoken and it's not looking really good. Two-thirds of New Yorkers don't think he's doing a good job as Mayor when it comes to education. Why is that? Could it be that after more than a decade, a decade, less than one out of four students are college ready? Even worse, only 13 percent black and Latino students are college ready. The Mayor on more than one occasion has acknowledged that not

1 every child will go to college or wants to go to  
2 college. And while that may be true, they will  
3 need the same college readiness skills to be  
4 successful at work, too. His legacy may very well  
5 have him remembered as Mayor 13 Percent. The  
6 Mayor's vision of supporting struggling schools  
7 has been devastating to our schools and our  
8 communities. The policies have failed to get our  
9 kids to college. Children that look like these,  
10 my babies. Right? That are still in school.  
11 They are, they will be part of the 13 percent,  
12 right? But we want their friends to be part of  
13 the 13 percent. And I want my niece, who's not  
14 two yet, to be part of the 13 percent. I want  
15 that number to be larger, I want her to be part of  
16 the 100 percent. The policies have failed to get  
17 our kids to college. The closing of over 100  
18 schools has moved our kids out of their  
19 communities and disrupted educations for tens of  
20 thousands of schools, and caused others schools to  
21 be overcrowded. This year, nearly half of the  
22 schools proposed for closure were opened under  
23 Mayor Bloomberg. One doesn't even have a  
24 graduating class yet. The proposal to fire over  
25

17 teachers in 33 struggling schools at a cost of \$100 million. Merit pay was tried here in New York City in 2007, and it didn't work then; but now the Mayor wants to spend an estimated \$250 million on bonuses for top performing teachers, instead of putting their money back into our schools, to allow them to reinstate their afterschool programs, art and music, tutoring or even higher, back to social work or a guidance counselor that he may have to let go. Teach to these high stakes tests does our children a disservice. It often leaves them and their teachers stressed and full of anxiety. A high stakes test does not define how intelligent our children are, or how effective their teachers are either. And these tests do nothing to give students the analytical critical thinking skills they need to be successful in college. The small schools that Bloomberg has opened and that he brags about so much actually have prepared, actually prepare fewer of their students for college than the older schools. So clearly, just opening new schools isn't going to get our kids to college. Mayor Bloomberg has ignored education

1 research and education experts to the point of  
2 putting a magazine executive in charge of the  
3 biggest school system in the country. [time bell]  
4 He is willing to experiment with totally untested  
5 people and untested programs at the expense of our  
6 kids. And I'll end with this. Last year, the  
7 Mayor stated about the parents in the struggling  
8 schools, fighting back against his school  
9 closures, that "Unfortunately, there are some  
10 parents who just come from--" wouldn't you like to  
11 know what he was going to finish that with? "They  
12 never had a formal education and they don't  
13 understand the value of education." What we do  
14 know is if there was as much effort put into  
15 research based, proven strategies, like expanding  
16 learning time, college career preparatory  
17 curriculum from elementary school, teacher  
18 collaboration, mentoring and support, social and  
19 emotional supports for our young people who are  
20 facing hardships, like the likes of which many of  
21 us have never seen. True engagement of parents  
22 and communities, as he has into unproven  
23 strategies, well let's just say, we wouldn't be  
24 here today asking if our children are college  
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ready. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.

Next, please, Sierra Stoverman-Bell [phonetic].

SIERRA STONEMAN-BELL: Hi, I'm Sierra Stoneman-Bell, Co-Director of Neighborhood Family Services Coalition. Thank you, Chair Jackson and Chair Rodriguez for the chance to testify today. Neighborhood Family Services Coalition is a group of community based organizations that work together to advocate for public policies that support opportunities and services for young people in New York. Many of our organizations partner with schools and provide critical opportunities for young people to learn, and really prepare for the next steps in the transition to adulthood. I'm going to focus my testimony on one very specific aspect of the City's approach to college readiness, which is the Department of Education's Learning to Work Program, and the current risks result from midyear budget cuts to the program. Again, I think, you know, NFSC appreciates city leaders for really bringing attention to this issue, and setting a higher bar for students and really moving towards

1  
2 better aligning DOE and CUNY efforts. But I  
3 think, you know, we all recognize there's a lot  
4 further we need to go. NFSC's focus is on the  
5 students who are on the margins, those who have  
6 gotten off-track to graduation and need intensive  
7 supports to reengage in school and graduate ready  
8 for their next steps. There are, these are the  
9 138,000 overage and under credited 16 to 21 year  
10 olds in New York City, for whom DOE's multiple  
11 pathways to graduation models were developed  
12 starting in 2005. These include transfer high  
13 schools, young adult borough centers and GED  
14 programs, all centered on a youth development  
15 approach that's really driven by a partnership  
16 between schools and community based organizations.  
17 DOE has contracted with the CBO partners to  
18 operate Learning to Work Program, which are  
19 embedded in these schools and programs, and these  
20 Learning to Work Programs provide structured  
21 internships for students, as well as personalized  
22 academic and social supports. Learning to Work  
23 has been at the heart of the multiple pathways  
24 model, and has made it possible for thousands of  
25 students who were heading towards dropping out, to

1 reengage in school and graduate. And there are  
2 thousands more on their way to that same outcome.  
3 There, they have, the Learning to Work Program has  
4 demonstrated clear success with overage, under  
5 credited students, significantly increasing their  
6 chances of graduating and increasing their  
7 aspirations and expectations for post-secondary  
8 success. So the name focuses on work, but one of  
9 the key components is an internship which students  
10 report really, really show in real terms the  
11 connection between, you know, that experience that  
12 they have and the fact that they need to go to  
13 college to pursue the career that they want. It's  
14 very unfortunate that as part of the Fiscal Year  
15 2011 November Financial Plan, DOE has targeted the  
16 Learning to Work portfolio with a \$3.5 million,  
17 nearly nine percent budget reduction, for the  
18 current program year. And so these budget  
19 reductions are obviously going to have an impact  
20 as they reduce program capacity to engage and  
21 support these students [time bell] and you know,  
22 students in programs are really going to feel the  
23 effects of this. And so, we hope that you will  
24 take this into consideration and really, that we  
25

1  
2 look for the Council to support us to avoid any  
3 further cuts to this program, and programs like  
4 it, that, you know, CBOs and schools need to work  
5 together to support our students. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.

7 Warren Gordon, City New York, City University of  
8 New York Math Council. Followed by Stanley Ocken  
9 of the CUNY Math Chairs Council. Are they two  
10 different councils, or same council?

11 WARREN GORDON: Same. My name is  
12 Warren Gordon. I am Professor of Mathematics and  
13 Chairman of the Department of Mathematics, Baruch  
14 College. I'm here today as the Chairman of the  
15 Mathematics Disciplinary, Discipline Council,  
16 which is composed of all the chairs of all the  
17 mathematics departments within the City University  
18 of New York. That's 19 chairs from every single  
19 unit, every single community and senior college in  
20 New York City. Our concern is, has been and still  
21 is, the poor preparedness in mathematics of  
22 students coming into the City University of New  
23 York at all levels. Our concern was so much that  
24 Chancellor Goldstein arranged to facilitate a  
25 meeting with, between us and former Chancellor

1  
2 Joel Klein in the spring of 2008. We expressed  
3 our concerns to Joel Klein, we made it clear that  
4 the students were ill-prepared to handle college  
5 level mathematics. And many of the instructors in  
6 the high schools were not adequately trained to  
7 properly prepare these students. He challenged us  
8 to come up with a better idea, a better  
9 curriculum, a better system, and the Department,  
10 and the Council put together a very detailed  
11 report to, to Joel Klein, based on the  
12 President's, the President's National Mathematical  
13 Advisory Committee, which was formed by the  
14 President of the United States in 2006, to  
15 increase mathematics preparation in this country.  
16 We submitted a report, we received a thank you in  
17 September of 2008 from Counselor, from Joel Klein.  
18 And that's the last we heard of it with respect to  
19 the Department of Education. The problem lies in  
20 the course content, in K through 12. I am not an  
21 expert in that matter, Professor Ocken, who will  
22 follow me, can talk more to that point. The  
23 problem is when the, when the Department of  
24 Education comes and talks about things like the  
25 Common Core. The problem is, what is in the

1  
2 Common Core? Students can do well in the Common  
3 Core, but they still will not be prepared for  
4 college level mathematics. Students are taking  
5 mathematics Regents in the State of New York and  
6 the Department of Ed said some are getting 65 or  
7 70 on that exam. The problem is that might really  
8 have been a 42 percent. The grades are being  
9 scaled by the State. It is not only the, it's not--  
10 -the fault does not lie within the Department of  
11 Education, it's a systemic problem. If I may read  
12 just one paragraph from the report that I--I gave  
13 you the executive summary of the report. If  
14 you're interested in the detailed report, which  
15 actually makes the recommendations, please let me  
16 know and I can give you the link for it. "If  
17 change is to be effective, it is crucial to deal  
18 with the sources of weak student preparation.  
19 While there are undoubtedly many factors at play,  
20 some beyond the reach of academic intervention, we  
21 believe that systemic flaws in New York City's  
22 assessment and standards are a significant source  
23 [time bell] of the, source of the poor mathematics  
24 preparation we see in the students entering CUNY.  
25 As we will document in the report, the State has

1  
2 mandated a system of mathematical instruction that  
3 is superficial, unfocused and above all, lacking  
4 in critical mathematical content. Large numbers  
5 of high school graduates, including many in CUNY  
6 mathematics courses, are at substantial risk for  
7 failure. In our view, K through 12 students and  
8 teachers alike have been victimized by content  
9 poor mathematics instruction, resulting from New  
10 York State's defective mathematics standards and  
11 assessments. It's our recommendation that the  
12 Board of, Department of Education work with the  
13 Math Council and the State of New York to improve  
14 the curriculum in the State of New York.

15 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.

16 Next, please. Stanley.

17 STANLEY OCKEN: [off mic] Good  
18 afternoon, or perhaps I should say good evening -  
19 -

20 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Yeah,  
21 Stanley, turn on your mic, please. And just  
22 pronounce your last name for me, please.

23 STANLEY OCKEN: I'm Stanley Ocken.

24 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Ocken.

25 STANLEY OCKEN: I'm a Math

1 Professor at CCNY. Every year I make a point of  
2 teaching a pre-calculus or a calculus course.  
3 This is taken mostly by students who have just  
4 made the transition from high school to college.  
5 These students are college ready, by the  
6 definitions that have been, have been used here,  
7 but many of them, and this is true at all CUNY  
8 campuses, are badly prepared to take even a course  
9 at the level of pre-calculus. I believe that  
10 parents of first graders want their children to  
11 have an opportunity twelve years down the line, to  
12 pursue programs such as science, engineering,  
13 medicine, finance, economics, business. These  
14 have in common that they require calculus as a  
15 prerequisite. Many people are surprised to know  
16 that more than 20 percent of students in American  
17 four year colleges try at first semester calculus.  
18 But all of them, or may of them, come with serious  
19 deficiencies. Again, a survey carried out--please  
20 listen. A survey carried out at a four year CUNY  
21 college a few years back, showed that half the  
22 students in pre-calculus, these are college ready  
23 students, were unable to convert three-eighths to  
24 a decimal. 60 percent were unable to divide 0.2  
25

1  
2 by five. They were much worse on basic algebra  
3 skills, I'll spare you the details. Just as  
4 troubling as these statistics, troubling as these  
5 statistics, is that many students are shocked by  
6 the results of their first math exam. They say,  
7 "What's going on? I got good, made grades all  
8 through middle school and high school. Why are  
9 you telling me I'm failing?" Now it is actually  
10 quite clear what's going on. Students succeed in  
11 high school courses because they pass exams that  
12 assess the wrong things. For decades, there's  
13 been a lack of interest in preparing students for  
14 technical aspects of college mathematics, and in  
15 1991, for instance, the preeminent guide to  
16 American mathematics pedagogy stated its agenda  
17 that computation algorithms and the manipulation  
18 of expressions and paper and pencil drill must no  
19 longer dominate K to 12 mathematics. I'm sorry to  
20 disagree, that's been a disaster. I quote from  
21 the CUNY Chair's report. And this is important.  
22 "Our criticism of the New York State Standards and  
23 Assessments is that they introduce many topics  
24 that are confusing to teachers. That are of  
25 peripheral mathematics interest. As a consequence

1  
2 they neglect the core topics that are familiar to  
3 teachers and are critical as preparation for  
4 college mathematics. And so that's the basic  
5 story. You, I'll have to correct my colleague,  
6 the passing grade of 65 on the 9th grade algebra  
7 Regents [time bell] is really 36 percent, but the  
8 main point is that half of that is achieved for,  
9 by guessing. Half of that, 18 percent, is the  
10 passing score. Okay? So, there are remedies  
11 available, if the DOE is willing to reach out to  
12 the CUNY chairs, mathematics departments do want  
13 to be involved. And we hope for a cooperative  
14 relationship with the DOE as a means of addressing  
15 mutual concerns in a constructive way. Thank you  
16 for listening.

17 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Well, thank  
18 you, all of you for coming in, the entire panel.  
19 We're going to move straight to the next panel.  
20 Michelle Yanche from Good Shepherd Services;  
21 Leonie Haimson [phonetic] from Class Size Matters;  
22 Eric Pryor, the Center for Arts Education; Chima  
23 H.--I can't pronounce, A-G--Youth, Urban Youth  
24 Collaborative; Juan Paigon [phonetic] from the  
25 Legacy High School Parents Association, he's the

1  
2 President; and Chang Sun [phonetic] of Public High  
3 School Students, the Coalition for Asian American  
4 Children and Families. FYI, there are about 30  
5 some odd students next door. I've asked them to  
6 come in and take as many seats as possible, so  
7 that students will be able to see this hearing  
8 taking place. So they will be coming in and taking  
9 every seat that's unavailable, that's available,  
10 rather. So, if you have your luggage or your bag  
11 on another chair, please remove them. So,  
12 students come on in, please. Take any available  
13 seat that you see, including these up here.  
14 Thanks, Nick. Give her two. [background  
15 comments] Give them, give them both two, don't  
16 worry about it. Don't give it to me, give it to  
17 her. [background comments] Students! Come on,  
18 move quickly, please, come in here, move all the  
19 way down. Move all the way down. Thank you.  
20 Come on, students. Come on in quickly. Come over  
21 here, some of you, please. Thank you, come over  
22 here. Sit in these chairs over here. There's a  
23 couple of chairs, four or five chairs down there  
24 at the end, where normally Council Members sit.  
25 Come on. Come on, young people, you can move a

1  
2 little faster, I know that. Anyone else? Anyone  
3 else? Come on, now, let 'em come all, all of them  
4 come in. Let all of them come in. All of them.  
5 Everybody, come on. Come down here, young man.  
6 There's four chairs over there, or young ladies,  
7 please sit over there. Come on in, go sit over  
8 there, there's four or five chairs over there, go  
9 over there, please. [background comments] And  
10 there's two over here, three over here, come sit  
11 over here. Young man, take your hat off, young  
12 man, come sit over here. Come on, sit over here.  
13 Thank you. Okay, there's a couple of chairs over  
14 here. Young lady. Please. Come on, can you move  
15 quickly, if you don't mind, please. Thank you,  
16 come on down here. Thank you, come on, young man.  
17 Come on down here. Anyone else. Come on, bring  
18 them all in, even if they have to sit on the  
19 floor, it's okay. Come on. There's an empty  
20 chair in the back row back there, who's sitting  
21 next to you, young man? Okay, there's a chair  
22 over there. Come over here. [background  
23 comments] One more over here. Young lady, over  
24 here. Way down here. Come on. Okay, good.  
25 Anybody else, anybody, let everybody else come in.

1  
2 Anybody else out there? [background comments]  
3 How many? Let 'em come in, please. [background  
4 comments] Come on. Come on, young man, over  
5 here. Let 'em all come in. Even if a couple have  
6 to sit on the floor over here, it's okay. Please.  
7 Come on over here. There's a chair over there,  
8 there's a chair over there. Come on, young man.  
9 Come on, over here. That's everyone? Okay,  
10 everyone's in? Good. Okay, so, now, now these  
11 are students from what school? [background  
12 comments] Different high school students. Okay.  
13 Welcome to our hearing, joint hearing of the  
14 Education Committee and Higher Education  
15 Committee. Ydanis Rodriguez chairs the Higher  
16 Education Committee, and I chair the Education  
17 Committee. You know the subject of this  
18 particular hearing is, "Are New York City public  
19 school students adequately prepared for college?"  
20 That's the subject. So these individuals that you  
21 will hear testimony, and they will identify  
22 themselves, what organizations are they from, and  
23 you will hear what their perspective is. Everyone  
24 is entitled to three minutes to speak. We're  
25 going to start with Yanc--Michelle Yanche from

1  
2 Good Shepherd Services. So, you may begin.

3 [background comments] Turn on your mic, please.

4 MICHELLE YANCHE: Hi, I'm Michele  
5 Yanche, from Good Shepherd Services. I'm not  
6 going to read my testimony, even though I had my  
7 own fancy PowerPoint. I'm happy to forward it to  
8 you if you'd like to see it in larger scale than  
9 what it is on the printed copies. Instead I'm  
10 going to just focus my spoken remarks on the  
11 challenges that the young people that we work with  
12 face and the work that we're going in partnership  
13 with CUNY, and some national organizations around  
14 strategies for helping them be successful. I also  
15 beg your apologies because I have to do childcare  
16 pickup at 6:00. So when I'm done I'm going to zip  
17 out. Your, everyone here, all of your staff know  
18 how to find me if you have follow up questions.  
19 So, quickly, Good Shepherd Services works across,  
20 is a community based organization. We work in  
21 collaboration with both DOE and CUNY, in all of  
22 the collaborations that were referenced in the  
23 earlier testimony, from the Department of Youth  
24 and Community Development programs, to the  
25 Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention, the--

1 Councilman Jackson's on the City Council's Dropout  
2 Initiative, we're a partner there. The Learning  
3 to Work programs, that Sierra Stoneman-Bell  
4 testified about. We work with principals on  
5 turnaround schools. With CUNY we have  
6 partnerships with Kingsborough, New York City  
7 Tech, Bronx Community College; we're part of  
8 College Now through Hostos at Bronx Community High  
9 School, which is one of our transfer schools in  
10 the multiple pathways portfolio. And we are also  
11 part of the Hostos partnership through the Bronx  
12 Opportunity Network that was mentioned by Hostos  
13 President Rodriguez. The students that we focus  
14 on in all of this work are struggling students,  
15 young people who are referred to as overage/under  
16 credited, or who have already dropped out of high  
17 school and come back to reengage in high school.  
18 We support them in both helping them graduate from  
19 high school and transition to college, and we work  
20 to help ensure their success. While raising the  
21 bar, we see a lot of risks and challenges that  
22 young people face, including the sort of erosion  
23 of the resources that help support them. From  
24 cuts to our Learning to Work program and those  
25

1  
2 internships that young people have, that's where  
3 most of the cut is taken. The out of school time,  
4 primary prevention erosion of supports that help  
5 young people prepare to be successful in high  
6 school. All kinds of illumination of resources in  
7 schools from guidance counselors, arts, music,  
8 etc. We know that all of that makes an impact.  
9 What our young people, we're most worried about  
10 our young people, is that we see with this push to  
11 college preparation and moving to college is that  
12 we don't set young people up to transition to  
13 college; have to take remedial courses, get  
14 themselves in debt, and then not be able to  
15 complete. So that we could actually do more harm  
16 than good with this, the big push to college if  
17 we're not careful, because young people walk away  
18 with a lot of debt and no credit. So, I want to  
19 focus you on, and I won't read it all 'cause I'm  
20 running out of time, but a model that worked on  
21 developing with Jobs for the Future [time bell]  
22 which is a national organization, that works on  
23 back on track strategies and helping young people  
24 be successful in college, about how to help young  
25 people get to college, but to stay with them to

1  
2 ensure that they are successful once they are in  
3 college. There's three parts: enriched prep,  
4 helping young people be as prepared as possible  
5 when they graduate, helping bridge them to the  
6 college, and then staying with them for at least  
7 one year, so that they, we don't leave them until  
8 they have traction in college. Thank you. And  
9 all of that material is in my testimony.

10 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.  
11 Next, please. Just identify your name and your  
12 pos--your organization. You may begin your  
13 testimony.

14 LEONIE HAIMSON: Yeah, my name's  
15 Leonie Haimson, I'm the Executive Director of  
16 Class Size Matters. And I've been very interested  
17 in the testimony of the DOE and the other people  
18 who've spoken today. I wanted to point out in my  
19 written testimony, I have about eight ways in  
20 which they're gaming the system now, at DOE  
21 schools, in order to get their credit accumulation  
22 up, to get better grades. And you can't fault  
23 these people because they are being threatened  
24 with their schools closing and their jobs lost, if  
25 they don't get that credit accumulation up. So,

1 the combination of the high stakes accountability  
2 system with no oversight by DOE, and in fact  
3 encouragement by DOE to game the system means that  
4 basically our high school diplomas are becoming  
5 less and less meaningful. I want to talk a little  
6 bit about an analysis I just did of the NAEP  
7 scores which are our only semi-reliable  
8 achievement scale that can be compared across the  
9 country. Class Size Matters did an analysis  
10 showing that when you take all the six subgroups  
11 that are examined in the NAEPs, which are Asians,  
12 blacks, Hispanics, economically disadvantaged, and  
13 non-poor kids, and you compare them and average  
14 their gains since 2003, to their peers in the  
15 other large cities, New York City comes out second  
16 to last in the amount of progress that our kids  
17 have done since 2003, second only to Cleveland,  
18 which is widely considered a basket case. Our  
19 white students, our Hispanic students and our non-  
20 poor students are doing the worst, particularly at  
21 the eighth grade level when we have the least  
22 gains in both English and math for those groups.  
23 And in fact, our non-poor students are the only  
24 group in the entire country where our average  
25

1 scores at eighth grade are lower now than they  
2 were in 2003. And one of the problems I see, of  
3 course, is the increase in class sizes, which have  
4 happened over the last four years, it's  
5 interesting that they talked about they want to  
6 replicate El Puente, which I think everybody  
7 agrees is a great school. I was sitting there on  
8 my computer and I did a quick calculation.

9 Average class sizes at El Puente are 20, while 50  
10 percent of our high school students are suffering  
11 from classes of 30 or more, and class sizes are  
12 going up every year. Class sizes at the early  
13 grades are also critical. They're the best  
14 studies that we have, show that kids who are in  
15 smaller classes in the early grades for four  
16 years, their chances of graduating high school  
17 with a meaningful degree goes up 80 percent; and  
18 for kids who are disadvantaged, their chances of  
19 graduating from high school double. And so what  
20 we've seen over the last four years is it's  
21 unprecedented increase in class size, especially  
22 at the lower grades, where now there are just as  
23 many kindergarten students in classes that exceed  
24 the union contract of 25. That means 26 or over,  
25

1  
2 then in 20 or lower, which the Mayor promised to  
3 do twice: when the first ran for office and then  
4 again in 2005. So, right now, our class sizes in  
5 the early grades are the largest that they have  
6 been in eleven years. These kids are going to  
7 suffer throughout their careers because of it, the  
8 research shows. Their lifetime chances of  
9 graduating from high school and going to college  
10 [time bell] will forever be damaged by the fact  
11 that this Administration has allowed class sizes  
12 to increase. And that's what I call, or I would  
13 agree with Mulgrew calling it the "decade of  
14 disaster."

15 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Well, thank  
16 you. Next, please.

17 ERIC PRYOR: Hello. I want to  
18 thank Chairman Jackson and Chairman Rodriguez. My  
19 name is Eric Pryor, I'm the Executive Director at  
20 the Center for Arts Education. The Center for  
21 Arts Education is a not-for-profit committed to  
22 stimulating and sustaining quality arts education  
23 as an essential part of a, every child's education  
24 in New York City public schools. It's our belief  
25 that arts education is a vital component in

1  
2 developing critical thinking skills and problem  
3 solving skills. Both which are needed and vital  
4 in gaining admission to college, as well as  
5 matriculating through college. We sit here in the  
6 capital, in terms of cultural capital of the  
7 world, and yet art was not discussed one time by  
8 anyone from the DOE. The industry and the arts in  
9 New York City is over \$21 billion in arts and  
10 entertainment. And to not look at that and have  
11 the students within New York City trained and  
12 exposed, is ridiculous. Also, it's important that  
13 arts is a vital access point. School for a lot of  
14 people, if you're just put into a math class or  
15 reading class and you're not successful, it's no  
16 fun, no one wants to go into a situation and just  
17 fail, or not have success. So you have to have  
18 other entry points, other access points. Arts,  
19 sports. For myself, I've been an executive at the  
20 arts, leadership within organizations for the past  
21 15 years. I use more that I learned as a former  
22 student athlete in college and as an artist than  
23 anything else I have, because of the critical  
24 thinking skills and the ability to solve problems.  
25 The problems that we have to solve in America in

1 terms of creating jobs, we need young people to  
2 think creatively. If you're going to teach 'em  
3 math and teach 'em how to be engineers, they need  
4 to be creative engineers, so they can create the  
5 new technology that will employ people within our  
6 country. We're doing a disservice when we don't  
7 put math, when we--excuse me, when we don't put  
8 the arts, when we don't put music and drama. You  
9 know, most--my wife is an attorney, One of our  
10 good friends, who was a drama student, she said  
11 what she learned in drama was essential in terms  
12 of litigating cases within a courtroom. You--  
13 these are things you can't necessarily quantify  
14 with respect when you, when you look at a test  
15 score, but these are things that are used in  
16 everyday life. You know, I talk to people who  
17 have businesses, they have no idea about  
18 understanding color. There's a thing I like to  
19 refer to as visual literacy: people's ability to  
20 understand what they see, how things work. All of  
21 these things are factors that one uses in life,  
22 understanding, be able to read body language, all  
23 of these things are taught within the arts, and  
24 you know, right now, also research shows that part  
25

1  
2 of the brain developments, it's very much attached  
3 to one's involvement in critical thinking and  
4 being involved in the arts. I think it's critical  
5 that it become part of the, of the curriculum  
6 here, and I [time bell] want to thank you for  
7 giving us the opportunity to speak today.

8 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.

9 Next, please.

10 CHIMA AGWU: Good evening. My name  
11 is Chima Agwu, I'm a senior at Belmont Preparatory  
12 High School.

13 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And how do  
14 you spell your last name? A-G--

15 CHIMA AGWU: A-G-W-U.

16 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: W-U. Okay.  
17 Very good.

18 CHIMA AGWU: First I'd like, I'd  
19 like to start by saying that we're here discussing  
20 the issue on college readiness, and I'm very upset  
21 that since this meet--this meeting has begun,  
22 we're just now getting in here to speak. I feel  
23 like we should have been the first, students  
24 should have been the first ones in here to give  
25 their testimonies. So, I'd like to continue by

1  
2 saying that I am here as a high school student  
3 that has not received the support that I have  
4 needed in my college application process. My  
5 school, it has been very difficult, it's been a  
6 very difficult process. I have not even been able  
7 to really sit down with my guidance counselor to  
8 get the help I needed, the help that I needed was  
9 out, came from outside the DOE. It has been  
10 through my organization, Sisters and Brothers  
11 United. They have helped me complete my college  
12 application and go, go through my college essay  
13 and all the requirements that I have needed to do  
14 for my essay. So it's very difficult for me to  
15 sit here to be prepared for college, when I'm not  
16 getting the help I need from the DOE. And it's  
17 very shameful that the help that we're receiving  
18 is from outside organizations. And it's very  
19 shameful that, and it upsets me very much, because  
20 I was fortunate enough to have an organization  
21 that was able to help me through this. A lot of  
22 the students within my school, a lot of the  
23 seniors in my school, have not finished their  
24 application as of yet. And that's very difficult.  
25 And then, it's also a shame that, that--that only

13 percent of black and Latino students actually make it into college. So, really, the question now is, where is the help that the DOE is supposed to be presenting to us? So, it's not the responsibility of outside organizations but rather the DOE's responsibility to give us the support that we need. That's why as a member of UYC, we're here to demand that one, we, that they follow, implement certain policies. One, we need the numbers. The first one is that DOE should launch a system wide assessment of what support schools are currently providing to students and make it public. Two, start early and provide us with the necessary expertise. Every student, every school should have a well-trained college counselor for every 100 students, for every hundred seniors, to start working with the students as early as the 9th grade year, so that the students are prepared, starting from the 9th grade year, knowing what they should be looking forward to when they get to senior, so it makes it easier for them to apply for college, and transition into college when the time comes. And three, they should stick with us through the end.

1  
2 DOE should provide the funding and the support to  
3 high schools and implement summer bridge college  
4 programs at all NYC high schools. My school, it  
5 would be, it would be very helpful in my school if  
6 we had the student success in a way that students  
7 can actually go to get [time bell] the support  
8 that they need for college. And that is why we're  
9 here to ask if you, as the members of the City  
10 Council Education Committee, and the Higher  
11 Education Committee, individually endorse the  
12 Urban Youth Collaborative "Get Us To College  
13 Campaign."

14 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.

15 Okay.

16 CHIMA AGWU: That's it.

17 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Cool.

18 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: But I'd  
19 also like to say first of all, I'm so proud to  
20 see, especially the young people here. And I hope  
21 that today will mark your life forever You need  
22 to graduate from college, and you need to be a  
23 role model for the rest of the students that we  
24 have the street. Especially to the people of  
25 color. Because you heard a lot of people talking

1  
2 many people, we have failed. We the adults. We  
3 have failed our young people. Things, you know,  
4 business should not be as we have it right now.  
5 As you know, like, that number is for real. Only  
6 15 percent of student graduating from New York  
7 City public school are college ready. You heard  
8 the math, the, the Chairman of the Math Department  
9 at CUNY, they just said, when most of the student  
10 graduated from the DOE, they are not ready to do  
11 math at the college level. I broke my own  
12 obstacle, I was born and raised in the Dominican  
13 Republic. So, English was not my language. So, I  
14 had to deal with my accent, especially to those of  
15 you that were born here, that English is not a  
16 obstacle. Don't give up. Graduate, but graduate  
17 with a top grade. And be a critical thinking.  
18 Because as we have said, you know what? I only  
19 have one daughter, four years old. She's right  
20 now ready. She will go to the top school, I  
21 promise you. Because we're doing the best we can  
22 to be sure that she can be ready to do that. So,  
23 as she had that opportunity, every single student  
24 in this City should have this opportunity. :Those  
25 of who are ready to compete, congratulation.

1  
2 Those of you that are struggling with math or  
3 writing, that you have not had the opportunity or  
4 the tools to be critical thinking, or anything  
5 that you do in the classroom, that you heard  
6 people saying that if 35 student doesn't matter,  
7 it's not true, I taught for 15 years. I can  
8 lecture for 35 year. Will I have the time to work  
9 one by one with 35 student, as I could do with ten  
10 or 15? Those people in the upper middle class in  
11 this City, that they are raising the family, they  
12 are already sending the children to the school  
13 with a school size of 30 or 35. One of the things  
14 that they look is how many student are there in  
15 the classroom? What do they have on art and music  
16 and gymnastics. How do they get involved, how do  
17 they participate in the cultural institution of  
18 the City? That's the conversation that happen in  
19 the upper middle class when they plan, their  
20 children education. And they have been leaving  
21 our people, coming from the working class  
22 community, behind. So, what I hope is that, take  
23 it as a challenge, I am so proud to look at you  
24 paying attention, don't fall asleep. Pay  
25 attention to this conversation and I hope that 50

1  
2 year from now, as my Co-Chair and colleagues who  
3 come here, but also sitting in this place. Here,  
4 usually the City Council hosted here. You are the  
5 next City Council, you are the next Sotomayor, you  
6 are the next President Obama. But you have to be  
7 sure that no one will tell you that you cannot do  
8 good. So, go out after today, do the best we can,  
9 but also be a leader in your own community  
10 fighting for you people.

11 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.  
12 Thank you. Next, Juan Paigon, Juan is here? No?  
13 Okay, what about Chang Sun, the Public High School  
14 Students Coalition for Asian American Children and  
15 Families? Okay.

16 CHANG SUN: Hi, my name is Chang  
17 Sun, I'm from high school, I'm a high school  
18 student from Dual Language and Asian Studies. I'm  
19 a, my, I'm a ELL student who came through my, like  
20 one years ago, and I found that the reason why our  
21 ESL student are not college and career readiness  
22 is because there are two reasons. First is the  
23 lack of support from, from both schools and  
24 families. And now there is the language barriers  
25 with ELL students and their family give us their

1  
2 desire to continue their education. I have a  
3 friend who has been in America for six years in  
4 Chinatown. Now she is a senior at the High School  
5 for Dual Language and Asian Studies. Six years of  
6 living - - in Chinatown, her English was still not  
7 proficient. She has a hard time to communicate  
8 with other peoples in English, which mean her,  
9 give up the--which made her give up the right to  
10 speak up. When I ask her about her future, she  
11 said that she was unsure about this, but she does  
12 not want to go to college because it's useless and  
13 she also want, it is also a waste of money. She  
14 wanted to, she wanted to make money; however, she  
15 had nowhere to start her career, except the jobs  
16 in Chinese restaurants. Schools counselors don't  
17 even bother talk to her, because they already gave  
18 up on her because on her, she did really, she  
19 didn't do well on the school Regents, and other  
20 stuff. So, school counselor don't even bother to  
21 talk to her because she even don't want to improve  
22 her, she doesn't need any, they think that she  
23 doesn't need any help. Also her family, too,  
24 don't even expect her to go on college because  
25 they think that is useless, and why don't waste,

1 spend money for college, four years of college.  
2 Just, they just want simply, want her to go on  
3 working at a restaurant and at least earn some  
4 money. October 1st was the time she took her SAT.  
5 Before that day, I called her to remind her about  
6 this. It was ten, it was about 10:00 p.m., and  
7 she was still working at a restaurant. She thank  
8 me and said that she almost forgot about the SAT,  
9 if we don't have this phone call. She will be  
10 graduating this June, and after the graduation  
11 hopefully she will find a good job as a  
12 restaurant, a restaurant worker. Therefore, there  
13 are many stories like the girl's, ELL students,  
14 the ELL's college and career readiness has grown a  
15 big - - in this society, therefore I recommend  
16 that first guidance and college counselors should  
17 follow up the ELL action plan that DOE have come  
18 up with, and guidance counselor and a guidance  
19 counselor to student ratio, so make sure everyone  
20 could have the support and we hope that no more  
21 students could have the, would have to suffer  
22 because of the language barrier. And everyone  
23 could have the equal opportunity to, for a better  
24 education. Thanks.  
25

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CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.  
Thanks for coming in. [time bell] So, the next  
panel is Maura Flavin [phonetic], Citizens  
Committee for Children, are you here?

FEMALE VOICE: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay. Good,  
and Jorel Mall [phonetic], Urban Youth  
Collaborative, Jorel's here? Good. And Susan  
Crosen [phonetic], CPAT D2 PS126, Manhattan, is  
she, are you here? Susan?

FEMALE VOICE: Yep.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay, good.  
And John Arano Escobar [phonetic], Latin Youth for  
Higher Education, John are you here? John? Okay.  
Carlos Martinez, Make the Road New York, Carlos?  
Please, come forward. Pamela Johnson, CEC 11,  
CB12, NAACP, are you here? Pamela? Okay. Good.  
Not good, but I mean. And also Dehania Lauren  
[phonetic], Urban Youth Collaborative, are you  
here? Come forward. Okay, so, with that, Maura.  
Good, just, just identify your name and your  
organization, you may begin your testimony.  
Please try to keep it under three minutes, ladies  
and gents, please? Okay.

1  
2 MAURA FLAVIN: Sure. Good evening,  
3 my name is Maura Flavin, I'm the Policy Associate  
4 for Early Childhood Education, Education and Youth  
5 Services at Citizens Committee for Children. We  
6 are a multi-issue child advocacy organization  
7 dedicated to ensuring that every New York child is  
8 healthy, housed, educated and safe. Thank you to  
9 the members of the Education Committee and the  
10 Higher Education Committee for holding this  
11 important hearing. CCC strongly believes that we  
12 as a City must invest in measures to protect  
13 students from becoming disconnected from school.  
14 We must ensure that students start ready to learn,  
15 keep students from falling behind once they are in  
16 school, and help them stay on track for college  
17 and career success upon graduation. Quality early  
18 education programs, afterschool programs, school  
19 based mental health, and mental health services,  
20 behavioral interventions, such as positive  
21 behavioral interventions and supports, a decrease  
22 in the use of suspensions, are all critical to  
23 ensuring that children and youth are prepared to  
24 learn and must be supported. Early childhood  
25 education has been proven to benefit children's

1  
2 cognitive, emotional and social wellbeing, reduce  
3 special education enrollment and grade retention,  
4 and increase test scores in high school  
5 completion. Quality afterschool programs are also  
6 paramount to ensuring children's academic success,  
7 and that they are college and career ready.

8 Incidentally, CCC feels strongly that now is not  
9 the time for additional cuts to youth services  
10 citywide, as many children and families depend on  
11 these supports for academic and social enrichment.

12 The use of early warning indicators can also be  
13 useful in identifying struggling students and  
14 intervening to keep them on track for college and  
15 career. In research, to develop their early  
16 warning system tool, the National High School  
17 Center identified attendance behavior and course  
18 performance during the first year of high school  
19 as the key predictors in high school completion.

20 In addition to investing in critical prevention,  
21 preventive measures such as early childhood  
22 education, afterschool and early warning systems,  
23 we must continue the important work of getting off  
24 track student on track for college and career  
25 readiness. Though outcome data is somewhat

1 limited on the multiple pathways to graduation  
2 programs, there are encouraging trends emerging.  
3 Learning to Work programs in transfer schools,  
4 YABCs and GED programs, have been more successful  
5 than traditional high schools in graduating  
6 overage and under credited youth. While CCC is  
7 very pleased that DOE's school progress reports  
8 have begun to include data on students' college  
9 and career readiness, CCC urges the City to  
10 continue collecting and sharing outcome data for  
11 alternative programs, and invest in research when,  
12 invest in resources when promising trends such as  
13 those described above emerge. While many students  
14 have benefited from the Department of Education  
15 multiple pathways to graduation portfolios  
16 citywide, the capacity across the City is limited,  
17 and those programs, including learning to work,  
18 among others, are facing additional cuts that will  
19 prevent them from accepting all eligible students.  
20 CCC urges the City to protect investments in  
21 programs for overage and under credited youth, and  
22 can continue to explore options for students who  
23 could not access these programs due to credit or  
24 ages. CCC would be remiss not to mention the  
25

1  
2 impact of suspensions on student college  
3 readiness, when the DOE's approach is to  
4 discipline can cause serious interruptions in  
5 students' education. And lastly, CCC urges New  
6 York City to take a leadership role in ensuring  
7 that families have access to college savings  
8 platforms. All research shows that asset  
9 development in college savings platforms are vital  
10 tools for families to plan for their children's  
11 futures and to make college attainable. Thank  
12 you. [time bell]

13 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.

14 Nest, please, Jorel?

15 JEROME MOORE: Good evening, my  
16 name is Jerome Moore, I am 18 years old and a  
17 leader with the Urban Youth Collaborative and  
18 Future Tomorrow. I'm currently 18 years old and  
19 I'm standing here, or sitting here, a week before  
20 my 19th birthday, to inform you that I'm going to  
21 college. For most people, this would evoke  
22 cheers, smiles, and high-fives. But not for me.  
23 For me, those four words, "I'm going to college,"  
24 represent the hardest six months of my life.  
25 Imagine, you applied and got accepted to college.

1  
2 Got offered tens of thousands of dollars in  
3 scholarships, awards from the NAACP and your  
4 father's union, and you're all ready to go away  
5 for college. But then, one week before you plan  
6 to go, during a phone call just to check who your  
7 roommate was going to be, you were told that the  
8 school didn't have housing for you. You were told  
9 that you can either apply five months later, or  
10 find housing off campus, which I could not do.  
11 So, I chose to apply for the next semester, five  
12 months later. After five months of wrestling with  
13 financial aid offices, online forms, collecting  
14 documents and mailing checks, I'm finally going to  
15 college. The process of going to college is  
16 complicated. We need a lot of help, especially if  
17 you are among the first in your family to go to  
18 college. I went to Franklin K. Lane, a phased out  
19 high school with a model student success center.  
20 I can honestly say that the college counselors and  
21 the center itself helped me a great deal. Without  
22 the help of these college counselors, I wouldn't  
23 be able to navigate the college admissions process  
24 and the miles of red tape involved within it.  
25 Without peer college counselors, trained to help

1 students like me, I probably would have given up a  
2 very long time ago. People that are going through  
3 the process or knew about - - shared that  
4 knowledge with me, and for that I am truly  
5 grateful. I was given something that all students  
6 should be entitled to: Help. We call on the DOE  
7 to fund these student success centers and bridge  
8 [phonetic] college programs. SSC peer counselors  
9 and bridge college mentors can use the experiences  
10 to help out college students. Students currently  
11 going through what I went through, students  
12 currently involved in that same red tape I was  
13 stuck in. If the DOE would provide funding for  
14 college, bridge college programs, then graduates  
15 like me would be able to return to our high  
16 schools and support seniors in the same college  
17 process that we needed help in. So, here I sit,  
18 one week before my 19th birthday, to inform you  
19 that I'm going to college. But what about  
20 students who didn't have SSCs or the guidance I  
21 received? What about students who fell through  
22 the cracks? Are we just to sit here and pretend  
23 that they don't exist? That their stories don't  
24 deserve to be told? At a time when only 13  
25

1  
2 percent of Latino student, black and Latino  
3 students graduate New York City high schools  
4 college ready, the DOE must commit more resources  
5 to get us to college. It is the responsibility of  
6 the DOE to make sure that all New York City high  
7 school students are college ready. Anything less  
8 is a failure on their part. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.

10 Carlos Martinez?

11 [pause]

12 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Before Carlos  
13 begins, we have for the record, testimony before  
14 the City Council, Committees on Education, Higher  
15 Education, submitted by Ken Small, Development  
16 Director, Bronx Works. Carlos, continue.

17 CARLOS MARTINEZ: Good evening,  
18 Carlos Martinez, I'm a member of Make the Road New  
19 York, also of College of Educational Justice.  
20 After a decade of education or lack of education,  
21 it seems that students are still at a  
22 disadvantage. They don't have enough knowledge to  
23 get a higher education, without having to take  
24 remedial studies. Knowledge they were supposed to  
25 have by the time they reach college. In New York

1 City, only 13 percent of black and Latino students  
2 graduate high school, prepared for college.

3 That's why I'm calling Bloomberg Mayor 13 Percent.

4 I have five children, two in their early 30s and  
5 one in his late 20s, and two in their early 30s.

6 My children in their 30s had it rough in high  
7 school. One of my daughters made it through high

8 school with only a third grade level. She was

9 asked by her teacher, "How did you make it here?"

10 - - she took a course in medical assistant and she

11 is still paying for a loan. My oldest son didn't

12 pass the Regents by two or three point, decided to

13 take a GED. He works at a gift shop in Puerto

14 Rico as a manager. One of my sons told me that in

15 every grade level he was taught the same thing.

16 He got his high school diploma at a outreach

17 program. Does not want to go to college and pay

18 for a loan for courses he should have had in high

19 school. My 20 years olds are twins, boy and girl.

20 The boy, he also didn't pass the Regents, and

21 could not get his high school diploma, although he

22 had all his credits. He now works at night in a

23 pharmacy as a stock person. My daughter, she got

24 her high school diploma but does not feel prepared

1  
2 to go to college. She works at a retail store.  
3 They could have been doctors, teachers,  
4 professionals, but the educational motivation  
5 stopped somewhere, before or during high school.  
6 Why? The educational system is not working for  
7 our children. I have grandchildren now. I don't  
8 want to see the same happening to them. I am fed  
9 up. It's time for a change, Mayor 13 Percent.  
10 The educational system was bad when my 30 year old  
11 went to school, and it's still the same under the  
12 Bloomberg Administration. It's not improved.  
13 Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.  
15 Susan Crawson [phonetic], CPAC, District 2, PS126.  
16 I believe Manhattan, is that correct?

17 SUSAN CRAWSON: Mm-hmm. Thank you.  
18 My name is Susan Crawson, I'm the Co-President of  
19 the Parent Association of PS126, MAT, it's a pre-K  
20 through middle school, down in Chinatown. SLT  
21 core member, Secretary of the District 2  
22 President's Council, Second Vice Chair of CPAC, a  
23 former music therapist and a special education  
24 teacher. But my most important job is being the  
25 mom of two amazing middle school boys. Both are

1  
2 ADHD, and one is so challenged by it that he's in  
3 a 12-to-1 self-contained middle school classroom  
4 with some mainstreaming. When I told 'em what I  
5 was doing today, he looked at me and he said,  
6 "Well, I don't know about kids being prepared for  
7 college, but what are they doing to help me get  
8 ready for high school?" And I thought, and this  
9 kid isn't surviving in the New York City school  
10 system, I was like, "Benjamin, that's exactly why  
11 I'm here and I don't have a job right now, to make  
12 sure that you're ready." My husband has a Ph.D.  
13 in history, taught college history for 12 years.  
14 I'm a music therapist. But you know what? No  
15 matter what I do, no matter how many meetings I go  
16 to, I don't know how to help my kid. Everybody  
17 today, they forgot, Benjamin refers to himself as  
18 the "Oh, by the way." He's not black, he's not  
19 Hispanic, he's not Asian, he's white, he has  
20 bright blue eyes, he has red hair, and he won the  
21 district, the Manhattan Championship Baseball  
22 Tournament last year, as a sixth grader. That's  
23 what he does. But you know what? He's not going  
24 to survive in what has been created in this decade  
25 of disaster. And he's twelve-and-a-half, so his

1  
2 decade, he's right in the middle of it. So, I, I-  
3 -every time I come to here, I have a testimony and  
4 then I crumple it up after hearing things. So, I  
5 just wanted to say, "You're not forgotten," and  
6 I'm so excited to see kids here that want to have  
7 a voice. I'm so thrilled, I'm so thrilled that  
8 there were people crawling at the rafters. I  
9 stood for two-and-a-half hours to sit in here and  
10 stay, and I hope to god my kids find their way  
11 home from Chinatown to the West Village. But  
12 anyway, so I wanted to say there are people that  
13 care, and I really hope as a community, that we  
14 keep having these meetings and keep on these  
15 people to make sure that they protect the future  
16 of this City. So, thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.

18 De--Diana Lauren, or Laura? :What's your last  
19 name?

20 DIANA LAUCER: Laucer.

21 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Laucer, L-A-  
22 U-C-E-R?

23 DIANA LAUCER: Mm-hmm.

24 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay.

25 DIANA LAUCER: My name is Diana

1                   Laucer, and I'm 18 years old, I'm here  
2  
3                   representing the Urban Youth Collaborative and  
4                   Sister and Brothers United. First most, I just  
5                   want to say, many of us have been here since 1:00  
6                   p.m., and it took almost five hours to get the  
7                   first youth person to speak. How can you attempt  
8                   to fix an education problem without asking the  
9                   people that are directly affected by your policy  
10                  failures? But I would like to read a testimony on  
11                  behalf of Brittany Alicia [phonetic]. "My name is  
12                  Brittany Alicia, I am a recent graduate of the  
13                  Academy for Environmental Leadership. And I'm now  
14                  attending LaGuardia Community College. For the  
15                  past four years, I have been a peer youth leader  
16                  at the student success center. My primary goal is  
17                  to support young people on their pathway to  
18                  college. For many of the students that I work  
19                  with, college does not seem like something that  
20                  they can achieve. It takes hard work and long  
21                  talks to get a young person to understand that  
22                  college is an option for them, and that they need  
23                  to take advantage of it. At the student success  
24                  center we work with different grade levels in  
25                  different ways. For the freshmen and sophomore

1 classes, we spend time in classrooms running  
2 college awareness workshops to get students  
3 thinking about their interests in potential  
4 college options. For the junior class, we spend  
5 our time registering them for the SATs, drafting  
6 personal statements, and drafting their top  
7 colleges lists. Senior year we help every student  
8 on campus fill out college applications and seek  
9 money through financial aid and scholarships. I'm  
10 convinced that without student success centers my  
11 peers as well as myself would not be attending the  
12 colleges and universities that we now attend.  
13 This year, our program got additional support to  
14 help students who graduate, navigate the red tape  
15 that stands between them and actually attending  
16 the college that accepting them. Throughout the  
17 summer, we will be working with graduating seniors  
18 to help them finalize their financial aid packages  
19 and complete the registration process. For many  
20 of our students, the process of finalizing  
21 registration gets confusing, causing them to never  
22 start at the college that accepted them. We are  
23 hopeful that this additional support program will  
24 help dozens more students enroll and start  
25

1 college. It is important for us to remember that  
2 student success centers are extremely valuable and  
3 cost effective. Any program that allows young  
4 people to support other young people in achieving  
5 their goals is worth our time and money. At the  
6 moment, at a moment where high schools are now  
7 getting evaluated on college matriculation numbers  
8 of their students it is more important to remove  
9 the barriers between graduating seniors and  
10 college enrollment. I urge the Department of  
11 Education and the State to look for ways to  
12 support and expand programs like the student  
13 success centers. Thank you." And on behalf of  
14 the Urban Youth Collaborative, I would ask you  
15 again to please endorse our Get Us to College  
16 Campaign. Chima spoke about this earlier. And if  
17 you are truly dedicated to our education, I know  
18 it won't be a problem for Council Member Rodriguez  
19 and Councilman Jackson to please sign that paper.  
20 In front of all of you I see, in front of all  
21 these people in this room, to endorse our Get Us  
22 to College Campaign. It would be truly  
23 appreciated. [time bell]

24  
25 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.

1  
2 Thank you, everyone, and I want to thank this  
3 panel for coming in and staying the course, the  
4 distance of this particular hearing. All of the  
5 youth and the parent that hopefully their, your  
6 children will find their way home. For the  
7 record, we received testimony from the New York  
8 State Youth Leadership Council, and the name of  
9 Jacqueline Singto [phonetic], so this is for the  
10 record. And our next panel is Reverend Nathan,  
11 Nathaniel Dixon, from St. Stevens VMC, or UMC.  
12 Are you here? Okay. Domingo Estevez, Student  
13 United for a Free CUNY. Are you here? Eric J.  
14 Adams, NYCC, New York City Communities, are you  
15 here? Okay. Michele White, Hostos Community  
16 College, are you here? Okay. Niasha Confetti  
17 [phonetic], Coalition for Asian-American Children,  
18 are you here? Where? Okay, come forward, please.  
19 And Carini Jimenez [phonetic], Urban Youth  
20 Collaborative, are you here? Where? Raise your  
21 hand? Okay, come on down. And I believe Sylvia  
22 or oof, I don't know, Mata [phonetic], from  
23 Queens. 7612, 188th Street. Are you here? No?  
24 Okay. Jasmine Miller, from NYCC, are you here?  
25 Jasmine? No? Yau Yau, high school student, CUNY,

1  
2 City College, Coalition for Asian American  
3 Children and Family. Bye, young people. See you  
4 later.

5 STUDENTS: Bye. [Etc.]

6 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: All right,  
7 thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And Miashya  
10 Scarborough [phonetic], from Urban Youth  
11 Collaborative, are you here? Is there anyone else  
12 that wishes to testify tonight? So these are the  
13 last two, last three panelists that will testify.  
14 Identify your--go up there. Identify yourself and  
15 you may begin your testimony. Go ahead, young  
16 lady, please.

17 NIASHA GRIFFITH: So, my name is  
18 Niasha Griffith [phonetic]. I'm with the  
19 Coalition for Asian American Children and  
20 Families. I'm the Policy Manager for Child  
21 Welfare and Education. CACF is a membership  
22 organization that has almost 40 members, Asian led  
23 and Asian serving organizations that provide  
24 social services and other interventions in  
25 communities across the City. First of all, thank

1                   you to your staff and to the Chairs of the  
2                   Committees for staying through this marathon  
3                   session. I'll be very brief. I won't read my  
4                   testimony, I just want to highlight a few key  
5                   things. Firstly, just some background on the  
6                   community. We are approximately 13 percent and  
7                   growing, of the New York City population, we're  
8                   the fastest growing by percentage in New York  
9                   City, and our growth rate is seven percent  
10                  statewide. A lot of the challenges that you've  
11                  heard other young people speak today are also  
12                  shared by members of our community; in fact, one  
13                  out of two Asian/Pacific American students are  
14                  born into poverty. And 26 percent of Asian  
15                  American citizens in New York live in poverty.  
16                  One in five English language learner students are  
17                  Asian/Pacific American, and as you know, as you've  
18                  heard from testimony before, ELL students have the  
19                  highest dropout rate in New York. I'm just going  
20                  to briefly touch on some challenges and then  
21                  highlight a few recommendations. Some challenges  
22                  that we've seen in our community and these also  
23                  are across the board, 'cause other students have  
24                  also mentioned them, is lack of knowledge of the  
25

1 process. Linguistically isolated households,  
2 meaning that in the family, no one over the age of  
3 14 speaks English well. Lack of family support  
4 and a school climate that is not supportive. And  
5 for example, a school climate that might be  
6 focused more on punitive as opposed to positive  
7 interventions. In terms of recommendation, we  
8 want to really ask the City Council to focus on  
9 oversight and close monitoring of the Department  
10 of Ed for their corrective action plan for English  
11 learners, English language learners. They've been  
12 consistent and persistent long term findings that  
13 the City is failing English language learners and  
14 you've heard prior testimony from Chang Sun about  
15 her friend's experience of being forgotten and  
16 falling through the cracks. So we want to ask the  
17 Council to closely monitor the Department of Ed's  
18 implementation of this plan to make sure that  
19 things like expanding bilingual ESL programs  
20 actually occur, and that they're concrete  
21 improvements to service delivery for that  
22 population. We want to also ask the Council to  
23 give support in terms of ensuring that we have a  
24 learning climate that supports achievement for all  
25

1  
2 students, specifically increasing the ratio of  
3 guidance counselors to students, which you've  
4 heard mentioned is a very important resource for  
5 students. And also, shifting from punitive to  
6 positive interventions. I know that budget times  
7 are hard, but we have 5,000 school safety officers  
8 and 3,000 guidance counselors. Obviously, there  
9 needs to be a discussion on proper allocation of  
10 resources to ensure that students achieve,  
11 especially for the Asian American community.

12 [time bell] Thank you for listening and there's  
13 more detail in my testimony. Feel free to refer  
14 to that .

15 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.

16 Next, please.

17 YAYA FANG: Hi, my name is Yaya  
18 Fang, and I'm turning 19 tomorrow. I am a recent  
19 immigrant and English learner and I attend a New  
20 York City public high school. I came to this  
21 country about five years ago, and I have never  
22 stopped feeling pressures, ever since I step on  
23 this land. I face many challenges and barriers as  
24 an ELL and recent immigrant. It's not easy to  
25 speak another language and to adapt a new culture.

1  
2 One out of four APA high school student do not  
3 graduate on time or at all. We, we are not  
4 college ready because we do not receive enough  
5 support and help from both family and school.  
6 Most of our parents don't even understand the  
7 basics English, and they could not even get the  
8 chance to engage with our guidance counselor,  
9 because there's only one, and she doesn't even,  
10 she only speaks English. And I just finished my  
11 first semester in City College. I feel it's, I  
12 felt tremendous pressure and wanted to give up.  
13 I've often felt lost and confused. I was not  
14 ready for college. High school stu--high school  
15 didn't prepare me for, for college. For many ELL  
16 student, who face - - of language and culture,  
17 just being in a new country is extremely  
18 difficult. No, in addition to being a high school  
19 student, ELLs need more support in high school due  
20 to their, their - - and a lot of support in  
21 education from their family. Now that I'm in  
22 college, many of my classmates als--who are also  
23 recent immigrants said they feel the same way I  
24 feel. For ELLs who come from background with no  
25 knowledge of this country, and family who are also

1  
2 disengaged and overworked. We need more support  
3 in our public high schools to better prepare us  
4 for college experience. I believe guidance  
5 counselor can be trained to fully understand our  
6 experience, and better prepare us for life in, in  
7 and after high school. Thank you for this  
8 opportunity for me to share my experience. And I  
9 really hope that the New York City Education and  
10 Higher Education Committee will create a more  
11 effective and supportive - - for learning for  
12 public high school to, high school students for my  
13 younger brothers and younger sister from all over  
14 the world. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.

16 Next, please.

17 KARINI JIMENEZ: Hi, my name is  
18 Karini Jimenez.

19 MALE VOICE: Speak into the  
20 microphone.

21 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Pull the mic  
22 up.

23 KARINI JIMENEZ: Okay, yeah, hi.  
24 My name is Karini Jimenez. I'm 17 years old, I'm  
25 a senior at the Leadership Institute High School,

1  
2 and also a member of the Sisters and Brothers  
3 United. I'm here today because my school opened a  
4 student success center three years ago, and has  
5 been running this center with limited resources.  
6 This center, now with the school, has successfully  
7 got students into colleges of their dreams, like,  
8 like SUNY Farmingdale and many more. I want, I  
9 want to study psychology, at SUNY Fredonia, and  
10 the student success center has helped me through  
11 the process, starting from researching the  
12 colleges and finding a scholarship that best fit  
13 me. I wait for the college admissions response as  
14 we all wait for the response of a better funding  
15 for college programs across the City. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.

17 Next, please.

18 [pause]

19 MIAYSHA SCARBOROUGH: My name is  
20 Miaysha Scarborough, and I'm a senior the  
21 Leadership Institute High School and a member of  
22 the Urban Youth Collabor--I'm sorry, I don't know  
23 how to say it right. My school has had the  
24 privilege to have the student success center,  
25 which is a program where we the students get one-

1 on-one support during, during and afterschool  
2 hours. The school, the center helps guide us  
3 through the college process, it helps us look for  
4 scholarships that best fits us and apply to  
5 colleges. The student success center is available  
6 for all students, 9th through 12th grade. This is  
7 an important part of the center because it  
8 develops a culture around college from the first  
9 day students enter high school. I along with my  
10 classmate have benefited a lot from the center and  
11 I believe that more schools should have a center  
12 like ours, with more resources so that more than  
13 50 percent of our student body can be college  
14 ready. Thank you.

15  
16 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.

17 And last but not least.

18 [pause]

19 JOSEPH DUARTE: How you doing? My  
20 name is Joseph Duarte, I'm from Samuel Gomp--  
21 [background comment] Oh.

22 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Joseph.

23 JOSEPH DUARTE: My name is Joseph  
24 Duarte, I'm from Samuel Gompers High School  
25 [background comment] I'm from Samuel Gompers High

1 School, I'm a youth leader at Sisters and Brothers  
2 United and Urban Youth Collaborative. I'm here  
3 today because I want to say my part of the story  
4 the way I view it, the story I went through. My  
5 school is being slated to close, which is not  
6 fair. So there's a whole bunch of students that  
7 are not college ready, are going to be pushed out  
8 of high school, and they're still not going to be  
9 ready to go into that workforce. So, it still  
10 doesn't make sense how Mayor Bloomberg can do  
11 this. And it's like, I feel that I need to become  
12 more prepared, there needs to be more counselors  
13 throughout the City, there needs to be new ways  
14 where teachers can learn how to teach students in  
15 interesting ways, so students can become college  
16 ready. And Mayor Bloomberg has not done one  
17 single thing to help students--ESL, or black and  
18 Latino students. And all type of students around  
19 the City. And I just feel that if, you know, I'm  
20 asking you here a part, can you, I mean, a part as  
21 the Urban Youth Collaborative, and to please sign  
22 onto that thing, as I saw you signed on. Please  
23 sign on, Robert Jackson. This is an opportunity  
24 that we need to get this, the, Get Us to College  
25

1 Campaign, something that really impacts me,  
2 because I want to get to college. I hope my kids  
3 get to college, 'cause I'm going to stay here in  
4 the City and I want my kids to grow up with a good  
5 education. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Well,  
8 finally, let me thank you and let me thank  
9 everyone for staying the course. Obviously, this  
10 is an extremely important subject, and whether or  
11 not our school system is preparing our young  
12 people ready for college. And obviously the  
13 numbers speak for themselves. We're not doing a  
14 good job. And if in fact this was a test, 15  
15 percent, 13 percent, 27-28 percent, by every  
16 statistics that I know standard, that's failure.  
17 We need to do a better job and understanding that  
18 it's going to take everyone--students, parents,  
19 administrators, educators, everyone involved,  
20 community based organizations, corporations to  
21 provide additional resources and tutors and what  
22 have you and so forth--and us, as legislators,  
23 trying to refocus and focus and focus on ensuring  
24 that it works. It's going to take a long time.  
25 But obviously the students can't wait. Because

1  
2 one thing when you reach high school, there's no  
3 turning back. And as you know, when you graduate  
4 or if you drop out, the chances are that if you  
5 don't receive a high school education, chances are  
6 if you don't receive a college education, your  
7 future more than likely is not going to be very,  
8 very bright. And we want to make sure that every  
9 student has every opportunity to be whatever they  
10 want to be. That's most important. And that's  
11 what we are fighting for, that's what you're  
12 fighting for, so we thank you, all of the elected  
13 City Council Members that was here, all of the  
14 staff of the Education Committee, the Higher  
15 Education Committee, my colleague Ydanis  
16 Rodriguez. As he indicated, you may have not  
17 known, he came here from the Dominican Republic,  
18 and didn't speak English at the age of what, 15, I  
19 think?

20 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: 18.

21 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: 18. He  
22 worked his way, his family supported him, he drove  
23 a cab, he got a college education, he was a  
24 student leader at City College, and now he's a  
25 Member of the City Council. Not only a Member of

1 the City Council, he's Chairing the Education  
2 Committee. Myself, I grew up with a family of  
3 nine. Only two graduated from college, myself and  
4 my brother. Grew up poor in New York City, and  
5 now one generation removed, my wife and I college  
6 educated, all three of our children are college  
7 educated, and we've said earlier in our testimony,  
8 the difference between a high school education and  
9 a college education over the lifetime of your  
10 career, is at least \$20,000. So, and my three  
11 girls, our three girls, are now 36, 31 and 25, and  
12 they're all college--one's an M.D., one's an  
13 educator with a double master's degree, and one's  
14 a professional dancer. So, education is the key.  
15 Not only to uplift like the majority of people we  
16 were talking about in this particular hearing, not  
17 only blacks, Latinos and Asians, but education is  
18 the key to uplift all people. So with that, let  
19 me turn to my colleague, Council Ydanis Rodriguez,  
20 the Co-Chair of this Committee, to give some  
21 closing remarks.

22  
23 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: First of  
24 all, I'd like to thank you, thank the Chairman  
25 Jackson for working, been working with us on this

1 hearing. As you know, like this is the, this, I  
2 would say today's hearing from the Higher  
3 Education Committee, conclude our series of  
4 hearing that we've been holding now, on college  
5 readiness. Starting with remedial courses, ASAP.  
6 And now I think that we had a good conversation.  
7 Now the question is where are we going from now  
8 on? And I hope that we will continue working  
9 together, especially with CUNY and the DOE, to--  
10 and the other unions, the PSCA [phonetic], UFT and  
11 others, especially the students, so that we can  
12 work together to create a college readiness  
13 booklet, so that we can see that everyone should  
14 know what is our plan to bring a child, since they  
15 are born into, they go into college. And it's not  
16 a college just to make money, it's a college to be  
17 a leader, it's a college to be critical thinking,  
18 it's a college to be a - - a graduate to be a role  
19 model for the future generation. I would like to  
20 thank CUNY for staying here, up to the end of the  
21 hearing, which is very important. They were  
22 listening. So, City University of New York was  
23 one of the institutions that participated in this  
24 hearing. Been, they've been here, they did not

1  
2 leave here. I don't know if there's anyone here,  
3 by the DOE, but I know also that they were here up  
4 to almost the end of the hearing. So, I think  
5 that this is an important conversation. At the  
6 end of the day, we the adults, we'll do the best  
7 we can, but at the end of the day we also want to  
8 continue working together, especially with the  
9 youngsters. It is your voice, it is to be sure  
10 that your school is not closed. It is your voice  
11 so that you teach the other friends in your  
12 community, especially community of color, we lack  
13 our resources. Now it doesn't matter that we  
14 don't have the same opportunities as other people,  
15 we have the same skill. So, let's keep working  
16 together as you can see that from the interest and  
17 perspective of our Chair. We didn't come here to  
18 attack, neither DOE, neither CUNY, no one, because  
19 we want to see results. And we just want to see  
20 every single child who is born in this City, to be  
21 at college readiness, and when they are college  
22 level, for them to decide whatever they would like  
23 to do. But - - go, that's a big responsibility, I  
24 always have say that education for me is the new  
25 civil right movement that we can build. Because

1  
2 there's a lot that we got to do in order to  
3 achieve a goal to send every single child from the  
4 City or to prepare every single child ready for  
5 them to do good when they become a young adult.  
6 So, thank you everyone, especially my Co-Chair  
7 Jackson.

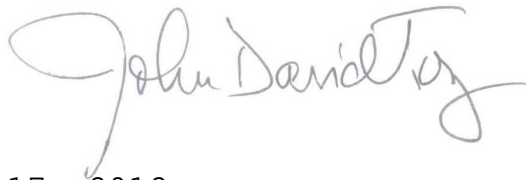
8 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you,  
9 and Sergeant-of-Arms, we want to thank all of the  
10 staff, the Sergeant-of-Arms and the multimedia  
11 people from WNYC TV. And with that, this joint  
12 hearing of the Higher Education Committee and  
13 Education Committee on the issue of "Are Our  
14 Children Ready for College?" is hereby adjourned  
15 at 6:18 p.m.

16 [gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, JOHN DAVID TONG certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

Signature

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John David Tong". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the printed word "Signature".

Date February 17, 2012