

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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October 27, 2021
Start: 10:08 a.m.
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HELD AT: Remote Hearing (Virtual Room 4)

B E F O R E: Mark Treyger
CHAIRPERSON

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Ben Kallos
Ydanis Rodriguez
Eric Dinowitz
Kevin Riley
Oswald Feliz
Rafael Salamanca Jr.
Barry Grodenchik
James F. Gennaro
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Brad Lander
Alicka Ampry-Samuel
Inez Barron
Justin Brannan
Farah N. Louis
Deborah Rose
Joseph C. Borelli

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

Dr. Linda Chen, Chief Academic Officer
New York City Department of Education

LaShawn Robinson, Deputy Chancellor for
School Climate and Wellness
New York City Department of Education

Adrian Austin, Deputy Chancellor of
Community Empowerment, Partnerships, and
Communications
New York City Department of Education

Lawrence Pendergast, Deputy Chief Academic
Officer for Teaching and Learning
New York City Department of Education

Christina Fodie, Deputy Chief Academic
Officer of Special Education
New York City Department of Education

Marizta Sanchez Medina, Deputy Chief
Academic Officer of Multilingual Learners
New York City Department of Education

Thomas Taratko, Chief Executive of Space
Management
New York City Department of Education

Rebecca Rollins, Chief Executive of the
Office of District Planning
New York City Department of Education

Andrea Bender, Chief of Staff
New York City's School Construction
Authority

Maria Begg Roberson
New York City Department of Education

Andrew Fletcher, Senior Executive Director
of Early Literacy
New York City Department of Education

Kenyatte Reed, Executive Director of
Office of Safety and Youth Development
New York City Department of Education

Sarah Jonas, Executive Director of Office
of Community Schools
New York City Department of Education

Flavia Puelo Perdomo, Chief Executive
Division of School Climate and Wellness

Regent Kathleen Cashin
New York State Board of Regents

Sarita Subramanian, Assistant Director of
Education
New York City Independent Budget Office

Michael Mulgrew, President
UFT

Tanisha Grant, CEO
Parents Supporting Parents New York

Paulette Healy, First Vice President
Citywide Coalition for Educating Families
Together

Melissa K., New York City Resident

Maggie Moroff
Arise Coalition

Randi Levine, Policy Director
Advocacy for Children New York

Ellen McHugh, Cochair
Citywide Council on Special Education

Marissa Manzanares
District 14 Community Education Council

Diane Ravitch, Author

Elsie McCabe Thompson, President
Mission Society of New York City

Lanie Haimson, New York City Resident

Jennifer Goddard
New York City Coalition for Educating
Families Together

Rasheedah Brown Harris, Parent Leader
Parent Action Committee

Kehm Irby, New York City Resident

Carlos Unknown, New York City Resident

Barbara Scott, New York City Resident

Curtis Young, Director
Artistic Noises

Davida LoSavio, New York City Resident

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: We're live.

3 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you. Just
4 confirming the livestream. Good morning. And at
5 this time, will sergeants please start the
6 recordings?

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Computer recording
8 rolling.

9 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you.

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Cloud recording rolling.

11 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you.

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Backup is rolling.

13 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you. Good morning
14 and welcome to today's remote New York City Council
15 hearing on the Committee on Education. At this time,
16 would all Council members and Council staff please
17 turn on their video? To minimize disruption, please
18 place all electronic devices on vibrate or silent
19 mode. If you wish to submit testimony, you may do so
20 at testimony@Council.NYC.gov. Once again, that is
21 testimony@Council.NYC.gov. Thank you. Chair
22 Treyger, we are ready to begin.

23 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Good morning and
24 welcome to today's virtual Education Committee
25 hearing on the Department of Education's academic

2 recovery plan and Introduction number 2374, all local
3 law to amend the administrative code in the City of
4 New York in relation to classroom capacity. I am
5 Mark Treyger, Chair of the Education Committee.

6 Earlier this year on January 20th, this committee
7 held a hearing on COVID 19 impact on student

8 learning. We heard and learned about the myriad of
9 challenges posed by COVID 19 and the introduction of

10 remote learning into the school system and the
11 adverse impact on student learning and academic

12 achievement that continues to this day and will

13 continue for years to come. We learned of the COVID

14 19 slide in which students showed patterns of

15 academic setbacks throughout an extended closure of

16 typical summers and so called summer slide with

17 steeper declines in mathematics than reading. For

18 example, the Northwest Evaluation Association, or

19 NWEA, projected that student started the 2021 school

20 year with roughly 70 percent of the learning gains in

21 reading relative to a typical school year, but just

22 50 percent of the typical learning gains in math.

23 The inequitable rollout of remote learning-- Again,

24 I repeat-- the inequitable rollout of remote

25 learning led to attendance loss and a number of kids

2 disconnecting at no fault of their own, especially
3 among vulnerable student populations, created
4 technical issues for parents and left some teachers
5 underprepared for remote instruction. New York City
6 public schools are now back to full-time in person
7 instruction for all students, but simply because many
8 have returned to the classroom does not mean that all
9 is well. The pandemic widened our pre-existing
10 opportunity, hitting historically disadvantaged
11 student artists. A McKinsey and Company research
12 report on the lingering effects of what they called
13 unfinished learning found that at the end of the
14 2020/2021 school year using math proficiency as a
15 measurement, students and majority black schools and
16 did the year with six months of unfinished learning,
17 students in low income schools with seven. Ice
18 coolers that become more likely to drop out of school
19 and high school seniors, especially those from low
20 income families, are less likely to go on to
21 postsecondary education. This does not even account
22 for multilingual learners, students in temporary
23 housing, and students with disabilities. I also want
24 to say that there really has been also know real
25 accounting of the number of students, particularly

2 high schools who have taken on greater
3 responsibilities because of the pandemic. Whether
4 mom or dad our parents lost their jobs or are facing
5 hard time, so many high school kids I have heard have
6 begun entering the workforce to help mom and dad
7 afford to pay rent. There has never been a full
8 accounting of that. That also needs to be factored
9 in. The numbers and statistics are sobering. While
10 some of our public school students has made gains on
11 academic learning impacts for which they have
12 suffered, far too many have not and the gap continues
13 to widen. On Thursday, July 8th, 2021, Mayor
14 DeBlasio announced a new initiative be New York City
15 Academic Recovery Plan, backed by \$635 million. This
16 new recovery plan is focused on six areas: early
17 literacy, developing students as digital citizens,
18 preparing students for college and careers, investing
19 in special education services, building a universal
20 curriculum across all city schools, and expanded
21 social and emotional learning support. While I
22 applaud these efforts as many seem to be addressed at
23 tackling long-standing equity issues, they don't
24 target all aspects of academic recovery and that is
25 troubling. One notable absence is a focus on math.

2 Study after study has shown that declines in student
3 achievement in math are larger than those in reading.
4 As a gateway subject, a subject that typically
5 provides foundational skill and knowledge for success
6 in STEM fields and other subjects, math should also
7 be a priority for the DOE. While I appreciate the
8 academic recovery plan, I simply believe it is not
9 comprehensive enough to address some of the larger
10 issues at hand. The solutions needed must be bigger,
11 bolder, smarter, and leveraging everything we are
12 able to. Throughout this pandemic, have acknowledge
13 the Herculean efforts made by this department and its
14 response to an unprecedented crisis. We have worked
15 together and I have also held the department
16 accountable through oversight function. I have and
17 will continue to applaud the efforts of the academic
18 teams and how they have listened to this body and
19 accepted some of the recommendations or policy areas
20 we have come up with. But I fear that this plan is
21 inadequate. I also fear that we are, in the city of
22 New York, not really taking into account how
23 significant some of the staffing challenges we have
24 in our school system. You need staff to implement
25 this work and, to this day, I continue to hear of

2 staffing issues plaguing our schools, particularly
3 support staff, paraprofessionals. We have children
4 with IEP's that are now weeks without a mandated
5 paraprofessional. I keep hearing about the thousands
6 of subs available, but subs have the right not to
7 come in and they have the right to choose where they
8 want to work and I continue to hear that, in many
9 cases, services are not being provided. And that is
10 impacting this academic recovery program because you
11 need to pay people, you need to hire people for
12 afterschool program and Saturday program and I
13 continued to hear that they are having great
14 difficulty getting staff to work which really will
15 undermine the whole purpose and premise of this
16 academic recovery vision. During the hearing, I need
17 to hear more details from the department. I need to
18 hear more about the academic recovery and the methods
19 that are being used to assess individual student
20 academic impacts, as well as interventions like
21 tutoring. I want to hear concrete actions being
22 taken to address unfinished learning and the staffing
23 issues plaguing our public school system. Finally,
24 today, we will hear Intro 2374 which is a bill which
25 would require each classroom in a school in a school

2 district in the city of New York which includes
3 districts one to 32, District 75, and district 79
4 schools to provide 35 square feet of net floor area
5 per child by September 2024 with no less than one
6 third of schools complying with such targets by
7 September 2022 and no less than two thirds of schools
8 complying with such targets by September 2023.

9 Efforts to reduce class size in New York City public
10 schools have not, and very far to date, despite all
11 the passionate hard work of parents and advocates and
12 teachers and students, including all of you here
13 today. Once again, the benefits of class-size
14 reduction are clear: better school performance and
15 better life outcomes. We hope to hear from DOE today
16 what, if anything, they are currently doing to reduce
17 class sizes for our needier students and what plans,
18 if any, they have going forward, especially, in light
19 of this legislation. And I'll also just note for the
20 record that the last time that we, as a city, looked
21 at the building code for occupancy for schools was in
22 the 1930s when tuberculosis was the big public health
23 issue during that time. The world has changed
24 greatly since the 1930s and, you know, we are now
25 healing with a significant pandemic and we need to

2 update our building code and update our city codes to
3 meet the reality of our time. I want to thank
4 everyone who is testifying today and I want to thank
5 the City Council staff and my staff for all the work
6 they put into today's hearing: Malcolm Butehorn, Jen
7 Atwell, Colima Johnson, Chelsea Baternore, Masis
8 Sarkisian [sp?], and Frank Perez and my chief of
9 staff, Anna Scaff, my policy direction, Vanessa Ogle,
10 and director of communication, Maria Henderson. I
11 will now turn things over to moderator Malcolm
12 Butehorn.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair.
14 Good morning, everyone. My name is Malcolm Butehorn,
15 counsel to the Education Committee. Before we begin
16 testimony, I'd like to remind everyone that you will
17 be on mute until you are called on to testify. After
18 you were called on, you will be unmuted by a member
19 of our staff and Zoom will prompt you to accept the
20 unmute. I will be calling on public witnesses to
21 testify in panels after the conclusion of the
22 administration's testimony and Council member
23 questions, so please listen for your name to be
24 called. Council members who have questions should
25 use the raise hand function in zoom. You will be

2 called on in the quarter with which you raised your
3 hand after the full panel has completed testimony.

4 We will be limiting Council member questions to five
5 minutes. Please note that, for the purposes of this
6 virtual hearing, we will not be allowing a second
7 round of questioning. For public panelists after you
8 are muted, please listen for the sergeant-at-arms to
9 give you the go ahead to begin your testimony. All
10 public testimony will be limited to two minutes.

11 Please do not read your testimony verbatim. All
12 written testimony will be read by Committee members
13 and committees staff, so please be sure to email it
14 to testimony@Council.NYC.gov. Testimony will be
15 accepted for 72 hours following the close of this
16 hearing. I will now call on the following members of
17 the administration to testify: Dr. Linda Chen, Chief
18 Academic Officer, LaShawn Robinson, Deputy Chancellor
19 for school climate and wellness, Adrian Austin,
20 Deputy Chancellor of community empowerment,
21 partnerships, and communications, Lawrence
22 Pendergast, Deputy Chief Academic Officer for
23 teaching and learning, Christina Fodie, Deputy Chief
24 Academic Officer of special education, Marizta
25 Sanchez Medina, Deputy Chief Academic Officer of

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15

2 multilingual learners, Thomas Taratko, Chief
3 Executive of space management, Rebecca Rollins, Chief
4 Executive of the Office of District Planning, Andrea
5 Bender, Chief of Staff at New York City's School
6 Construction Authority, Maria Begg Roberson, Andrew
7 Fletcher, Senior Executive Director of early
8 literacy, Kenyatte Reed, Executive Director of Office
9 of Safety and Youth Development, Sarah Jonas,
10 Executive Director of Office of Community Schools,
11 and Flavia Puelo Perdomo, Chief Executive, Division
12 of School Climate and Wellness. I will first read
13 the oath and, after, I will call on each of you from
14 the administration to individually respond. Do you
15 affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and
16 nothing but the truth before this committee and to
17 respond honestly to Council member questions? Dr.
18 Chen?

19 DR. LINDA CHEN: Yes. I do.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: DC Robinson?

21 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROBINSON: Yes. I do.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: DC Austin?

23 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR AUSTIN: Yes. I do.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Lawrence

25 Pendergast? Lawrence, you're unmuted. We can come

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2 back to you if you need answer any questions for the
3 record. Christina Fodie? We can come back to her
4 she's answering any questions. Maritza Sanchez
5 Medina?

6 MARITZA SANCHEZ MEDINA: Yes. I do.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thomas Taratko?

8 THOMAS TARATKO: Yes. I do.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Andrea Bender?

10 ANDREA BENDER: Yes. I do.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Maria Begg

12 Roberson?

13 MARIA BEGG ROBERSON: Yes. I do.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Andrew

15 Fletcher? We will come back to him. Kenyatte Reed?

16 Sarah Jonas?

17 SARAH JONAS: Yes. I do.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Flavia

19 Puelo Perdomo?

20 FLAVIA PUELO PERDOMO: Yes. I do.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And I'm

22 going to, quickly before we start, come back to folks

23 that we've missed. Maybe they're at the computer.

24 If we could unmute Lawrence Pendergast? Lawrence, if

25 you are speaking to the computer, we can't hear you

2 and you are unmuted. Just FYI. Okay. While he is
3 figuring that out, if we go back to Christina Fodie.
4 Okay. She's not there. If we could go to Andrew
5 Fletcher.

6 CHRISTINA FODIE: Oh. I think it just
7 worked. Yes. I do.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Perfect. There we
9 go. It's good to get these issues out now. If we
10 can go back to Andrew Fletcher, please, and unmute
11 him?

12 ANDREW FLETCHER: Yes. I do.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And
14 Kenyatte Reed, you are unmuted. Are you there?

15 KENYATTE REED: Yes. I do.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay. Thank you.
17 Dr. Chen, whenever you're ready to begin.

18 DR. LINDA CHEN: DOE. I want to express
19 my deep gratitude to our teachers, staff, and school
20 leaders who have shown up each day to serve our
21 students and who are getting to know our students
22 better and better each day to draw out their
23 brilliance and cultivate their growth. I also want
24 to really thank our families for partnering with us
25 closely in this endeavor. Good morning, Chair

2 Treyger, and all the members of the Education
3 Committee here today. Thank you for the opportunity
4 to testify on behalf of all my colleagues regarding
5 the Department of Education academic recovery plan.
6 I am Dr. Linda Chen, Chief Academic Officer at the
7 DOE and I am joined today by Deputy Chancellor
8 LaShawn Robinson, Deputy Chancellor Adrian Austin,
9 Andrea Bender, Chief of Staff for the School
10 Construction Authority, Lawrence Pendergast, Deputy
11 Chief Academic Officer for Teaching and Learning,
12 Christina Fodie, Deputy Chief Academic Officer for
13 special education, Maritza Sanchez Medina, Deputy
14 Chief Academic Officer for multilingual learners, and
15 other senior leaders from the DOE. Over the past
16 month, we have all had the privilege of witnessing
17 students, families, and our invaluable staff joyfully
18 reconnecting with each other. Our students have been
19 through so much throughout this pandemic and need the
20 support of their school communities now more than
21 ever. The evidence continues to be clear that
22 teaching and learning face-to-face in the classroom
23 is the absolute best way for our students to grow
24 academically, socially, and emotionally. We are
25 thrilled to have them back in person. We are not

2 simply returning to the way things were before the
3 pandemic. We are making historic investments to
4 jumpstart academic achievement for every student
5 across our system and I want to say huge thank you to
6 this Council for all of your advocacy that has helped
7 to make a lot of this possible. Our students lost so
8 much during the traumatic past year and a half. It
9 is absolutely critical that we support them
10 academically, socially, and emotionally by knowing
11 where each student is in Nietzsche of these areas and
12 leveraging that information to cultivate welcoming
13 and affirming learning environments where we hold
14 high expectations and provide rigorous instruction
15 for every student, particularly those most impacted
16 by the pandemic. The work began over the summer with
17 Summer Rising, our bridge to the school year. We
18 witnessed firsthand at sites across the city what it
19 meant for parents, students, and educators to have an
20 academically, enriching, and fun experience over the
21 summer. Our students got back into gear in their
22 learning process so they could hit the ground running
23 when they returned this September. Now that all
24 students are back in person, the strategic framework
25 where academic recovery plan guides school

2 communities, and support for students for this school
3 year. And beyond. That plan emphasizes critical
4 areas of focus, including investing in social
5 emotional supports for every student, early learning
6 for all, digital literacy, college and career
7 readiness, special education services, support for
8 multilingual and immigrant learners, and a rigorous
9 and inclusive university curriculum. We know that
10 children in every community are carrying trauma
11 caused by the COVID 19 pandemic, so successful
12 academic recovery that enables students to learn to
13 their potential can only have been when they are
14 emotional and mental health needs are addressed. Our
15 schools need to be places of healing, so we are
16 making major investments in social emotional supports
17 for students. As every seasoned educator understands
18 from experience, teachers and schools need to know
19 their students well. To facilitate that process
20 across the system, we have started implementing our
21 social emotional screening tool which will reach all
22 students by the. Our goal is to pinpoint areas of
23 strength in key social emotional learning
24 competencies and to help identify students in need so
25 they can be quickly matched with appropriate

2 services. Our K-8 schools have begun screening
3 students this week in high school will begin next
4 week. All 3K and pre-k students will be screened by
5 December. In addition to guaranteeing that every
6 school has the resources to support students who may
7 be in crisis, we announce that we would hire over 500
8 social workers and mental health support staff. To
9 date, the vast majority of the social workers have
10 been hired, 93 percent, and we are working with each
11 school community to eliminate any barriers in hiring
12 for any outstanding positions. Finally, and thanks
13 in part to support from this Council, we are adding
14 over 130 community schools to provide expanded social
15 emotional academic and extracurricular services to
16 students in the highest need communities. Relatedly,
17 all schools have selected low stakes academic
18 screening tools in reading and math that are
19 currently identifying where students are
20 academically. This is the first of three periods
21 when screeners will be administered this year so that
22 our teachers can use the data to inform core
23 instruction and identify where supports and
24 interventions are needed. Screening tools are also
25 part of our continued commitment to early literacy in

2 our early literacy for all efforts. This component
3 of the academic recovery plan has the singular goal
4 of enabling all students to read at grade level by
5 the end of second grade. In addition to the
6 screeners, we are increasing the number of universal
7 literacy reading coaches to approximately 500 in
8 order to provide all K-2 classrooms with support from
9 a literacy coach. In addition, we are training our
10 K-2 educators to provide focused literacy support for
11 students in need. On September 3, we released an
12 academic recovery school allocation of \$350 million.
13 With this funding, schools will receive funding for
14 professional learning, strengthening core
15 instruction, enrichment, and planning for targeted
16 interventions. Schools will also use 20 percent of
17 this funding to support arts programming. The
18 pandemic reinforced the recognition that our students
19 need to be digital citizens to thrive. After we were
20 forced to close our buildings in March 2020, we
21 undertook an unprecedented investment in technology
22 with over 800,000 devices purchased by the DOE and
23 schools. The academic recovery plan builds on this
24 technological advancement by guaranteeing that all K
25 to 12 public school students have access to a digital

2 device, ensuring all students become fully fluent
3 digital citizens. We are distributing more than
4 175,000 crisis as needed, expanding access to
5 computer science for all to 400,000 students by 2024,
6 and training over 5000 educators in advanced computer
7 science. Technological skills. Visual literacy are
8 simply vital for all our students and their futures.
9 Preparing our students for the future also means
10 setting them up to be college and career ready and
11 the academic recovery plan helps ensure that every
12 student is best prepared for the next step in life.
13 So, we are planning for free afterschool personalized
14 college counseling for every junior and senior to
15 help students and families navigate the application
16 process. We have also added 41 remote AP advanced
17 language elective courses and we will be adding more
18 in the coming semester. These courses are taught
19 synchronously by tenured DOE educators and made
20 available to any school that cannot otherwise offer
21 these classes. In addition, we are restoring College
22 Now to serve 22,000 students from all high schools
23 while investing in student success centers 434 high
24 schools to ensure post-graduation plans for all
25 students. Finally, we will build on the capabilities

2 of the New York City school account to ensure that
3 every family can track their child's progress through
4 postsecondary planning milestones. We know that this
5 pandemic hit our most vulnerable students the
6 hardest which is why our recovery planning includes
7 significant investments to special education,
8 including direct services, family communication, and
9 preparing teachers to provide targeted post pandemic
10 supports. From the youngest learners to those
11 preparing for graduation, students with
12 individualized education programs will receive
13 unprecedented assistance. They will also participate
14 with other students in both academic and social
15 emotional learning screeners so teachers can better
16 understand their needs. In addition, all students
17 with IEP's will be offered additional instruction and
18 related services along with the IEP he recommended
19 program and services they received during the school
20 day. We are also providing eligible students age 21
21 and older with continued instruction towards
22 receiving their diploma or other exit credentials or
23 to receive consultation to facilitate postsecondary
24 plans for college and career readiness. Because
25 families are critical to this work, we are expanding

2 family workshops and information sessions available
3 through our Beyond Access series which was launched
4 during the pandemic and supports families of students
5 with disabilities. This year's sessions began on
6 October 5 and will be held every Tuesday evening from
7 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. For our youngest learners with
8 disabilities, we are adding 800 seats for students
9 with disabilities and preschool by next fall, 2022
10 and we are expanding committees on preschool, special
11 education, to expedite evaluations and IEP meetings
12 so that students can get services they urgently need.
13 Each focus area of the recovery plan also includes
14 dedicated investments from multilingual learners and
15 immigrant students to address their distinctive needs
16 in making academic progress and learning languages.
17 Particularly in the context of returning to the full
18 time in person learning, these efforts include
19 conducting wellness checks and providing social
20 emotional learning support to identify the needs of
21 multilingual learners. We are training English as a
22 new language, bilingual, and content area teachers to
23 track student progress and provide targeted support
24 specifically for multilingual learners. And we have
25 provided schools with dedicated funding to purchase

2 texts in home languages and build home language
3 libraries. In addition, we are expanding the
4 immigrant ambassador programs across 30 high schools
5 that match immigrant DOE students with college
6 students to foster mentorship and early college
7 awareness. We have also designed the post secondary
8 readiness for ELL's program or prep to build the
9 capacity of school-based teams to offer students
10 ongoing workshops that afford them an opportunity to
11 explore, prepare, and apply to a postsecondary
12 pathway of their choosing. Our dream squad program
13 organizes school-based teams of educators committing
14 to creating, implementing, and sustaining a safe and
15 welcoming environment for multilingual learners,
16 immigrant youth, and undocumented students. We are
17 currently in the process of selecting schools for all
18 three immigrant ambassador, prep, and dream squad
19 programs. We know that families are essential
20 partners in an successful recorder plan for our
21 students, so we launched a five borough family
22 engagement tour. School communities share their
23 experiences over the school year, DOE leadership
24 answered the questions, and we gathered all this
25 feedback to strengthen our plans. We also continued

2 to build in our innovative parent University that has
3 hosted over 600 courses for over 125,000 users. We
4 are currently developing a series called DOE 101
5 which would provide short videos to help families
6 navigate the DOE and we are expanding our home
7 language offerings, thanks in part, to funding from
8 this Council. Finally, recognizing the diversity of
9 our students and school communities, New York City
10 will develop a rigorous and inclusive and affirming
11 curriculum by fall 2023 that we are calling the
12 Universal Mosaic Curriculum. Currently, there is no
13 single off-the-shelf curriculum academically rigorous
14 and inclusive enough for New York City's 1600 schools
15 and 1 million students. This curriculum will be
16 built on literacy for all, accelerate student
17 learning, and free teachers from time-consuming
18 curriculum development. This work is beginning
19 sooner with engagement sessions taking place with
20 communities, families, and educators and, thanks to a
21 historic and significant investment by this Council,
22 we are also looking forward to the development of a
23 black studies curriculum with partners from across
24 the city. We are kickstarting these efforts by
25 providing an unprecedented infusion of books into

2 every classroom for the school year that reflect the
3 variety of histories, languages, and experiences that
4 make up the city. Schools receive introduction
5 materials and digital libraries and will receive the
6 rest of the collection week. This comprehensive,
7 culturally responsive curriculum is a groundbreaking
8 investment that will be a resource for our students
9 and teachers and an anonymous source of strength for
10 our system as a whole. Next, I will provide some
11 remarks on the proposed legislation. Intro 2374
12 would require that each classroom in New York City
13 public school provide 35 square feet of net floor
14 area per child by September 2024. Let me start by
15 saying the DOE and this administration have made a
16 clear and strong investment to ensuring the health
17 and safety of our students. Our CDC aligned,
18 multilayered approach throughout the pandemic has
19 made us a natural leader in keeping our students
20 safe. Simply put, Intro 2374 is impractical and the
21 administration strongly opposes this measure. The
22 proposed legislation would create a seat deficit at
23 every grade level and require a building of hundreds
24 of thousands of new seats across the city and be
25 incredibly disruptive to the school system as a

2 whole. Under this administration, the School
3 Construction Authority has created 51,540 new seats
4 in fulfillment of the mayors commitment to reduce
5 overcrowding and increase diversity.., This capital
6 plan is the first to fully fund all the identified
7 seat needs, a \$7.8 billion investment in this plan
8 alone. We are currently in the process on 20,676 of
9 the 57,000 seats funded in this program-- funded in
10 this plan with another 5500 seats in the pipeline.
11 We are nearly halfway there as we approach the
12 halfway mark of our plan. We anticipate it estimated
13 93 buildings that will help us alleviate overcrowding
14 and respond to ongoing pockets of growth in
15 neighborhoods with existing or projected
16 overcrowding. As has been noted, this legislation is
17 anticipated to create an estimated additional seat
18 need upwards of 200,000 without a not for future
19 growth. A typical new elementary school is
20 approximately 500 seats and typically takes about
21 five years or longer to site, design, and construct.
22 It can take even longer if the site is complicated or
23 the school is not a simple design. With our current
24 capital commitment, the largest in SCA's history, it
25 will take us a minimum of 15 years to build about

2 75,000 seats if sites are available. That meets,
3 without factoring for any additional growth in
4 student population, it would take several decades for
5 SCA to construct enough seats to meet this need.
6 Overall, it is not possible that SCA could build
7 sufficient inventory in any reasonable timeframe to
8 address the seat need created by this legislation.
9 We do not believe this legislation is warranted or
10 practical. Let me conclude by returning to the
11 academic recovery plan which is a vision and that
12 demonstrates the DOE's commitment to lifting up New
13 York City school communities beginning this school
14 year and ensuring that they have those resources to
15 recover stronger than ever for years to come from the
16 impacts of the pandemic. This fall we welcomed our
17 students back to schools that are prepared to support
18 them academically and socially and emotionally after
19 all they've been through. That is what the universal
20 academic recovery plan is all about. Thank you so
21 much for your time and we are now available to answer
22 any questions that you may have.

23 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you, Dr.
24 Chen. I just want to mention that we have been
25 joined by Council member Louis, Council member

2 Dinowitz, Council member Riley, Council member Rose,
3 Council member Borelli, Council member Brannan,
4 Council member Feliz, Council member Grodenchik,
5 Council member Kallos, Council member Ampry-Samuel,
6 Council member Lander, Council member Gennaro,
7 Council member Barron, and Council member Dromm. And
8 if there is anyone else, I guess, Malcolm well let us
9 know. Dr. Chen, I want to first get to the academic
10 recovery piece here, but I couldn't help but hear
11 some of the feedback that you had about the proposed
12 intro. You had mentioned, just so I'm clear, the DOE
13 estimates that it would create a seat need of an
14 additional 200,000 seats. Is that correct?

15 DR. LINDA CHEN: Chair, I would like to
16 ask our Deputy Chief Academic Officer Larry
17 Pendergast to provide additional details on that
18 legislation.

19 DEPUTY CHIEF PENDERGAST: Yes. Look,
20 we've taken a look at the legislation very closely.
21 We appreciate its intent, however, right now we do
22 think it creates a huge seat need across the city in
23 every district, in every borough without exception
24 and it will impact every single school building we
25 have. So, we do have colleagues at the School

2 Construction Authority on, the Office of District
3 Planning in Space Planning who are here to speak more
4 to it, but the legislation is proposed really does
5 present challenges in a very short period of time.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Okay. So, what I
7 just find interesting news that you're able to come
8 to this hearing and give me an estimate of 200,000
9 new seats that would be needed, but I'm still not
10 given the current enrollment number for the New York
11 City public school system. Can anyone give me an
12 update today on how many kids are enrolled in a New
13 York City public school system?

14 DEPUTY CHIEF PENDERGAST: Chair, we can
15 give you that number very soon as promised at the
16 last hearing. We committed to sharing that data at
17 the end of October and we are going on that
18 commitment. So, very shortly with schools of time to
19 verify their registers and, as you know, like that is
20 a responsibility that does fall on teachers and
21 principals we don't want to ask them to do it over
22 and over again.

23 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Well, Mr.
24 Pendergast, you are speaking to a teacher.

25 DEPUTY CHIEF PENDERGAST: Yes.

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Your speaking to
3 someone who scans and gave the attendance sheets each
4 day. They were scanned into ATS and the DOE knows
5 how many kids are in the schools each day. They're
6 just choosing not to share that information publicly
7 for--

8 DEPUTY CHIEF PENDERGAST: Well, sir--

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes?

10 DEPUTY CHIEF PENDERGAST: Sorry. I
11 don't mean to interrupt you. You also know that
12 sometimes you get the sheets back and they say, hey,
13 Pendergast, you marked so-and-so present. Every
14 other teachers marked him absent that day. Are you
15 sure about this? So, is a verification process that
16 goes on and it is the same time every year. So---

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Mr. Pendergast, I
18 would probably-- It's hard for me to accept that,
19 but I share this because I find it fascinating how
20 the DOE and SCA and folks can give me an estimate of
21 additional seat need today, but still cannot provide
22 us an update on the total enrollment. I am going to
23 get back to the bill because I have a lot more on
24 that, but I want to get to the academic recovery
25 piece. We fought very hard in this budgeting, with

2 help from the federal government and from Albany and,
3 of course, the city Council always prioritizes fair
4 student funding and this was, I thought, very big
5 accomplishment to get to every school to 100 percent
6 FSF. I'm just curious to know if DOE had data today
7 on how many new teachers have been hired so far in
8 this school year as a result of the added money to
9 Fair Student Funding?

10 DR. LINDA CHEN: So, Chair and members of
11 the Council, thank you for all of the support you've
12 been advocating for years, quite frankly, around this
13 foundational aid-- a dozen able additional staff to
14 be hired at the school level. I'm going to ask
15 Lawrence Pendergast to provide some details regarding
16 staffing.

17 DEPUTY CHIEF PENDERGAST: Good morning,
18 again. I don't have the exact number of new teachers
19 that were hired with the funding, but we can come
20 back to you with estimates of those numbers.

21 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I would appreciate
22 that data because, along those lines, I'm curious to
23 know how many new social workers have been hired with
24 the money that we've also prioritized for hundreds of
25 new social workers. Does anyone have data on that?

2 DEPUTY CHIEF PENDERGAST: We also have
3 the social worker data and we do have social workers
4 in every school and when we bring you the updated
5 hiring data for the teachers, we will get you the
6 social worker data, as well.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, if we could
8 unmute DC Robinson, I just saw her wave, I think.

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes. Absolutely.

10 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROBINSON: Hi. Good
11 morning. It's a pleasure to be here with everyone.
12 We are really grateful to Council for the advocacy
13 over the years to increase the number of social
14 workers, school counselors, and other professionals
15 in schools to support with mental health and
16 wellness, especially unless moment. The DOE, we are
17 allocated a number of social workers this year and we
18 work collaboratively, you know, across New York City
19 with every single school of social work, advocates,
20 school staff, and others to ensure that we would be
21 able to have mental health professionals available in
22 school or in the community to be able to meet the
23 needs of this moment as we all know that our young
24 people in our educators, we have all been impacted in
25 tremendous ways over the last year and a half and

2 counting-- a little bit more this point. And having
3 that resource on hand in schools has really been
4 critical. We do have that information available. We
5 have about 93 percent of our social workers are
6 staffed and hired in the remaining schools are still
7 in process to get to 100 percent, but we started the
8 school year strong and really ramped up to ensure
9 that mental health support or readily available. If
10 someone can unmute Flavia Puelo from my team, she has
11 the data available for social workers and can share
12 the numbers of current social workers and guidance
13 counselors, psychologists, the new social workers,
14 and others that we have supporting the work. Almost
15 6000 professionals at this point. Flavia?

16 FLAVIA PUELO PERDOMO: Good morning,
17 Chair. Thank you, Deputy Chancellor Robinson. Just
18 to add to what Deputy Chancellor Robinson mentioned,
19 we have, in fact, hired 93 percent of the 500 social
20 workers that were allocated. In addition to that, we
21 know that the combined number of social workers and
22 school counselors in our city is about 4500. We
23 currently have approximately 1000 psychologists. We
24 also know that we've got 30 new family supports. So,
25 in total. We have around 6000 employees that are

2 dedicated to support the mental health and wellness
3 of our students in addition to all of the different
4 partnerships that Deputy Chancellor mentioned which
5 included also our school based mental health clinics
6 and also our--

7 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Flavia, I'm sorry.
8 You came in and out. What number did you have for
9 the number of total social workers working in our
10 school system now?

11 FLAVIA PUELO PERDOMO: The number that I
12 gave you was a combined number, so it was 4500
13 combined social workers and school counselors. As we
14 know, that report we conduct yearly and it is
15 publicly available, so we are going to be releasing
16 that report again during the spring of next year that
17 we have. But currently, we know that we have 4500
18 and we also know that, at of the 500 additional that
19 we receive funding, we actually are very proud of
20 that because it is September already and we had 93
21 percent of those staff members that were selected by
22 their principals and the remaining principals are
23 working on closing out the hiring and selection, so
24 we thank you, Council, as always, for that support.

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And so, Flavia,
3 just to be clear, there are still some schools that
4 are still without a full time social worker at this
5 moment or can you please clarify?

6 FLAVIA PUELO PERDOMO: What I want to add
7 as we clarify that that we know that the way that we
8 look at mental health and wellness support in a
9 school is a combination, right? So schools may rely
10 on their social workers. Schools may rely on their
11 school counselors. Some schools have mental health
12 clinics and, just for context, mental health clinics
13 on site may have a variety of mental health support
14 provided which includes social workers, it includes
15 psychologists, it may include psychiatrists or other
16 providers, so when we are looking at the supports, we
17 look at the plethora, so we may have a school that,
18 say, may have a school based social worker that is
19 covered by a clinic or that's covered by some of the
20 other supports that I mentioned, but we're happy to
21 continue, you know, working with that and provide any
22 additional data that you may require in this area.

23 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROBINSON: Chair, I'd
24 just like to add that all of our community schools
25 have a mental health component that's included as

2 part of the community schools support and we also
3 recently partnered with Health and Hospitals for
4 Pathways to Care program to strengthen community
5 supports, as well. So, looking holistically at the
6 supports we have available across our school system
7 and in communities to meet the needs at this moment
8 and, you know, we wouldn't be able to do that without
9 the support of this Council, in particular, that you
10 have all made historic investments in the mental
11 health and well-being of our students and we greatly
12 appreciate everything that you have done, including
13 the recent investment in the mental health continuum
14 that we are partnering with others on to get that
15 work implemented, as well.

16 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And, Deputy
17 Chancellor, I do want to recognize your leadership
18 and work on that and I know we are having a lot of
19 conversations about safety these days, but those who
20 work in the system and those who know our children
21 and should love working with kids know that safety is
22 a very big term because, when you have kids coming
23 into school hungry with insecure housing, that is
24 also a safety issue and when you have inadequate
25 supports to support them, that is also a major safety

2 issue. And so, we absolutely value, respect, and
3 appreciate the critical role that school safety
4 agents play. And I want to remind the public that
5 the majority of this Council actually supports
6 keeping school safety agents and knowing the role
7 they play in helping shape school safety climate.
8 They Do that work alone. As we pointed out before
9 repeatedly in the past, that we had more safety
10 agents than social workers, counselors combined in
11 the school system and we continue to really need to
12 go out more to meet the social emotional needs of our
13 kids particularly in the moment that we are in. So,
14 I just want to get that out for the record and I
15 thank you, Deputy Chancellor, for your work on that.
16 Mr. Pendergast, to the list of data requests that
17 I've given you with regards to teachers and social
18 workers, any information about paraprofessionals?
19 Because this is an area that I continuously hear from
20 schools to this very day that there are many, many
21 issues in terms of staffing with paras. can you speak
22 to the number of new paras that have been hired in
23 this school year?

24 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: So, first of all,
25 return to the previous question, Chair, the team says

2 that a little over 5000 teachers were hired this year
3 and over 85 percent of the new Fair Student funding
4 was spent on teacher salaries. When it comes to
5 paras-- let me circle write back to you with the
6 para number--

7 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Mr. Pendergast,
8 just to be clear, you said 5000 teachers. Are you
9 including substitute teachers or these are full-time
10 positions in schools?

11 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: I believe those are
12 full-time positions in school, sir.

13 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Okay. And when you
14 mentioned that the bulk of the FSF money was spent on
15 teacher salary, that also means that-- is that new
16 teacher salary?

17 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: Yes.

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Okay.

19 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: The bulk of the FSF
20 was spent on teacher salary.

21 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right.

22 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: That was the
23 original request.

24 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right. Because
25 that also speaks to the fact that each year teacher

2 contracts go up and the cost of retaining teachers
3 goes up and so Fair Student Funding goes to cover the
4 cost of retaining veteran teachers and schools, so
5 that is helpful to know. And you will get back to us
6 on the number paraprofessionals, is that right?

7 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: Yes, sir. We will
8 circle right back.

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Okay. Can anyone
10 speak to me about how many currently at this moment
11 in this day, how many DOE central staffers are
12 currently redeployed in schools?

13 DR. LINDA CHEN: So, Chair, I can begin
14 this. We really appreciate everyone who has been all
15 hands on deck. The majority of our staff in the
16 central and borough citywide offices are back at
17 their jobs. I believe-- let me just get the number
18 here. I just want to make sure we give you--
19 everyday it's been different based on the needs. I
20 will ask Lawrence Pendergast since is looking up the
21 number for paras to just provide also the-- 250.
22 The number currently, I believe, is 250 that are so
23 redeployed, sir.

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: It which positions
3 are you finding the most hard to fill that you're
4 forced to redeploy central staff to schools?

5 DR. LINDA CHEN: We have been--
6 paraprofessionals is one position as well as special
7 education teachers.

8 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And that is an area
9 of great concern for us because the academic recovery
10 program, particularly the afterschool and Saturday
11 program is really supposed to center the student
12 population that, as we all know, many students were
13 not able to get there. It of required services
14 during the last school year and this was the big push
15 to create a very big, bold vision and program to meet
16 their needs. And, Dr. Chen, I have to tell you and
17 listening that not a day goes by that I don't hear
18 from a school community not just my district and
19 across the five boroughs-- and I'm sure my
20 colleagues hear similar stories where there are
21 significant staffing issues in terms of particularly
22 serving this vulnerable student population. Can you
23 speak to where the academic program is at in terms of
24 staffing and what is the plan? Is there a
25 contingency plan in terms of addressing the shortage

2 of staff to meet the needs of the kids? Because I'll
3 tell you, Dr. Chen, the purpose of this program was
4 not to create a cookie-cutter program just to say
5 every school has something. This is supposed to be
6 tailored and customized to meet the individual
7 learning needs of all of our kids is mandated by
8 their IEP. So, can you speak to this is that and
9 what is the plan to address staffing issues?

10 DR. LINDA CHEN: Chair, thank you for
11 emphasizing the importance of a tailored plan and not
12 a cookie cutter-- and you're absolutely right about
13 that. That is why the funding we distribute schools
14 is based on a recovery plan and that is happening
15 right now with our special education students. I ask
16 that Deputy Chief Academic Officer Christina Fodie
17 provide more details about what is happening with
18 that process around special education recovery
19 services.

20 CHRISTINA FODIE: Good morning, Chair,
21 and good morning, members of the Council. It's
22 always nice to be with you. And, Chair, I am
23 consistently overwhelmed with the passion with which
24 you speak on behalf of our students with
25 disabilities. I am grateful for that always, so,

2 thank you. I want to just quickly, if I can come
3 touch upon the paraprofessional question and then we
4 will definitely dive right into recovery services,
5 but professionals play, as you know, really well an
6 incredibly important and vital role in our system and
7 we are certainly working diligently to provide every
8 child with an IEP access to their paraprofessionals.
9 I can say that there are 8500 substitute
10 paraprofessionals available in the pool right now and
11 over 3000 news substitute paras have been added this
12 school year alone. Our DOE team in our operations
13 team has been able to expedite all processing of
14 these subs while still requiring a rigorous
15 background check. As an additional incentive,
16 substitute paraprofessionals and teachers can earn
17 additional pay over the daily rate for days worked
18 before Thanksgiving in hopes of getting as many
19 qualified folks into the system as possible. I also
20 just want to say that, in terms of the recovery
21 services, to give you a quick update as to where we
22 are-- in terms of occupational therapy, physical
23 therapy, speech therapy, you're talking about the
24 customization of this program. You are absolutely
25 right. This is intended to provide additional

2 related services and instructional services to our
3 students with disabilities. On the related service
4 front, I'm really delighted to say that we are in the
5 process of hiring over 400 OT, PT, and speech hires
6 to help staff are essential day-to-day needs, but
7 also it up like a very vital role in the delivery of
8 recovery services in the upcoming school year. As we
9 speak, individual recovery plans are being developed
10 by our teachers and our schools. Funding was already
11 allocated for the planning of the delivery of
12 recovery services and implementation funds will be
13 arriving the schools shortly. We been having weekly
14 office hours with hundreds of principles to help
15 support them in the delivery and design of their
16 recovery services and has been a real effort on our
17 part to be as responsive and nimble as possible to
18 the concerns coming out of the field. Despite the
19 many challenges our schools have faced over the past
20 19 months and continue to face, this remains an
21 enormous priority for our system, for Chancellor, for
22 each of us on this call today and our method here is
23 that we want to reach as many students as quickly as
24 possible, Chair.

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, and I
3 appreciate your service, Ms. Fodie. I just, when the
4 DOE keeps loosing number of substitutes available, I
5 just want to just, again, remind folks that
6 substitutes don't have to come in and they can choose
7 to, even if they do, and one day, they can choose to
8 not come in the next day or they could request a
9 transfer and that is what I am hearing is happening
10 in our schools, literally, every day. Do you have
11 data on how many paras are currently placed on unpaid
12 leave as a result of not complying with the vaccine
13 mandate?

14 DR. LINDA CHEN: I'm going actually pivot
15 over to Larry Pendergast and, if we don't have that
16 exact number, Chair, we will make sure we provide
17 that to you.

18 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: Right. We will get
19 that right away.

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: All right. Because
21 I think it is just important and I think folks in DOE
22 already know this, but I just want the public to
23 understand that when we keep. These numbers of
24 substitutes, doesn't mean that they are coming in
25 because we continue to hear there are some schools

2 who are still short as many as 10 paraprofessionals
3 which is a really serious issue, particularly for
4 children with IEP's who are required to have these
5 critical services. I did not hear, Ms. Fodie, and
6 forgive me if I missed this. What is the plan, the
7 contingency plan, if we cannot adequately staff up?
8 You mention the extra money available. I am hearing
9 that there is no big, you know, rush of people
10 looking to work after school or Saturday's, so what
11 is the plan to staff up these critical programs if
12 there's no rush and staff? Sorry. Go ahead.

13 CHRISTINA FODIE: No. No. No. I didn't
14 mean to interrupt you. Yes, Chair. This, as I
15 mentioned, is an absolute priority for us. We have
16 developed contingency plans around flexibilities for
17 schools and plan to release additional information on
18 that topic shortly, Chair. We are not ready to do
19 that today, but I can assure you that we are in the
20 process of-- and have been-- of looking at
21 alternatives and ways to support schools as I think--
22 and help schools think flexibly about how to deliver
23 these services, recognizing that they are absolutely
24 essential to our students this year.

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And, Ms. Fodie, is
3 there a reason why that cannot be shared today?

4 DR. LINDA CHEN: Chair, we are still just
5 finalizing and getting a lot of feedback from various
6 principles. As you know, there are a number of
7 factors that they are managing and, as Chief Academic
8 Officer Fodie mentioned earlier, we've had a lot of
9 office hours and we are now in the process of
10 finalizing those flexibilities so that we can ensure
11 consistency for everybody, including our families, to
12 know what those are.

13 CHRISTINA FODIE: And I apologize, Dr.
14 Chen. My mute button is-- I'm really having a hard
15 time with it, Chair. I apologize. I didn't mean to
16 not respond to you. But, as Dr. Chen said, we are in
17 the process of-- obviously, whatever flexibilities
18 we put in place need to-- there are a number of
19 stakeholders, Chair, that have to be on board with
20 this in order to make this work properly. And so, it
21 is really, at this point, we need to-- we are in the
22 process of getting to all those stakeholders and
23 including our legal obligations, Chair, as well as
24 our labor partners that everyone else to make sure
25 that we are all on board with any modifications to

2 the plan and want to do that in a responsible and
3 uncommunicative and in a fashion that is based on
4 partnership. So, I apologize for not being able to
5 offer more on that today, but am happy to provide
6 additional updates to you, Chair, and the Council on
7 this important topic.

8 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: And regarding the
9 para non-vax question, 94 percent of our
10 paraprofessionals are vaccinated. That is over
11 21,000 paraprofessionals that have been vaccinated
12 and it is approximately 1500 have not been
13 vaccinated.

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Okay. I am just,
15 you know, concerned that we are really not hearing a
16 contingency plan and, again, we are dealing with a
17 population that is already has been greatly impacted
18 and it just seems that folks are just trying to kind
19 of scramble. Because I know that, as it is, schools
20 are having a hard time staffing up in the moment that
21 we are in and now a lot of money has been put in to
22 make up for a lot of loss of services and impaction
23 from the last school year and there is a real serious
24 concern that I have about we have this new money, but
25 it is just there is a real concern about how it's

2 going to be spent and how it is going to actually
3 meet the needs of the kids who really need the most
4 help. And let me ask you, Dr. Chen-- and anyone can
5 speak to this. I know that in our teaching
6 preparatory institutions, we have a pipeline. We
7 have students who are going through the graduate
8 school system who might have already taken some of
9 the exams and coursework to be a teacher. They
10 should be, you know, eligible and ready to be a
11 paraprofessional. If you pass the LAST, for example,
12 and have a certain number of credits and a bachelors
13 degree, you can be a paraprofessional. Have we been
14 in touch with CUNY and our teaching preparatory
15 institutions about tapping into that pipeline to help
16 fill some of the staffing challenges and gaps and to
17 maybe work with NYCEP [sp?] On the potential for
18 emergency waivers to help address the needs in our
19 schools?

20 DR. LINDA CHEN: Chair, yes. We have our
21 human resources department and teacher recruitment
22 units have been in contact with higher Ed
23 institutions to do just that. I have to really speak
24 on their behalf. They've done so much to look at
25 every possibility, including incentives, and so on to

2 ensure that we have that pipeline. In fact, schools
3 have been hiring some folks, as well as permanent
4 employees within that scope.

5 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Is there a plan
6 this year-- and forgive me if I missed this. I just
7 want to get clarity. Is there a plan this year to
8 implement and conduct the traditional learning survey
9 that DOE asks schools to conduct each school year
10 definitely prior to the pandemic? Is that still
11 happening this year?

12 DR. LINDA CHEN: Yes, Chair. That will
13 continue to move forward.

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And, Dr. Chen, when
15 does the survey come out?

16 DR. LINDA CHEN: The survey-- I need to
17 just double check the timelines on that, but,
18 generally, we would collect the information in the
19 spring and it is released the following year,
20 together with the school quality snapshot and reports
21 so that all of the information is shared together.
22 And I can get back to you on timelines on that.

23 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And, Dr. Chen, has
24 this survey been tweaked and adjusted to kind of meet
25 the reality of today because this survey was designed

2 prior to the pandemic and a lot of our kids and staff
3 are facing a whole new host of challenges and issues?
4 Has that been tweaked and also how can we, you know,
5 better use these types of surveys to kind of get real
6 time feedback from our school communities to kind of
7 better meet them where they are at? Because just
8 anecdotally, I speak to schools, literally, every day
9 and I kind of hear about the issues and challenges
10 which they are facing that will be more impactful, I
11 think, or helpful to have a macro look at the school
12 system as a whole about where things are at. Has
13 there been a conversation about adjusting the survey
14 the kind of meet the moment that we are in rather
15 than the traditional survey prior to the pandemic?

16 DR. LINDA CHEN: Yes, Chair. You are
17 absolutely right about that. We do tweak some of the
18 questions because, I said, be relevant to the times,
19 not just business as usual. I want to also
20 emphasize, too, in addition to-- and perhaps my
21 colleague, Adrian Austin, can speak more to this--
22 but in addition to the surveys, we've also expanded
23 community and family engagement and this has been
24 happening more than ever through the use of
25 technology and so we also have other input and

2 feedback and interaction that is coming and, as well.
3 Deputy Chancellor Austin, would you like to say more
4 about those on going efforts that you. And your team
5 have been involved in?

6 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR AUSTIN: Certainly.
7 Thank you, Dr. Chen, and thank you, City Council for
8 the question. Before we even receive the funding for
9 the ARP funding and the foundation eight funding, we
10 started to have these conversations with families.
11 And so this actually was led by Larry Pendergast who
12 is here with us on the call and Dr. Ruby. But they
13 started having conversations with over 70 focus
14 groups across our system with teachers and principals
15 and parents and advocates to start to do the planning
16 that we knew was necessary to build out a solid plan
17 for what the fall would look like because we knew we
18 were coming to a year like no other and asking
19 everyone to step up. All of our 150,000, you know,
20 manpower workforce to step up to serve in a different
21 way. And so, that is something that happened early
22 in the spring and actually there was a really robust
23 report of recommendations that was produced as a
24 result of that. And so, that is what started our
25 engagement. We followed that with the citywide sort

2 of, you know, every borough Chancellor tour to do
3 listening sessions with family across the city.
4 Thousands of families participated in that. We got a
5 lot of information through like mentor meters that we
6 did in those events. We actually provided sort of a
7 broad sketch of plans for. Next to respond to we
8 allowed parents to sort of asbestos questions or to
9 offer us ideas over what is important and we did a
10 little bit of analysis and actually looked at that,
11 as well. So, that is some of the engagement we did
12 in preparation for the planning needed to take place
13 for this fall and then we are continuing to do that.
14 And I know you'll know this, but there's a lot of
15 engagement happening right now. There is a brilliant
16 New York City engagement happening led by Senior
17 Deputy Chancellor Rosales around what gifted and
18 talented education will look like in the future.
19 There some engagement that is going to be happening
20 in Brooklyn North that I am very excited about that
21 is going to look at how we revitalize our leadership
22 teams. We've heard a lot of feedback about our SLT's
23 and our DLT's. So, how to really revitalize and
24 support our school governance structures from the
25 local level? And then, there is, you know, the other

2 piece of engagement-- and you all know this. I
3 oversee several offices, one of which is FACE, but
4 supporting the new CEC leaders that were elected in
5 the spring. 72 percent of them are brand-new and so
6 there's a lot to work that is being done to both
7 include and prepare all of those leaders for their
8 positions and also include them engagement. And I
9 think, for the first time in a long time, anyway,
10 these CEC's are cosponsoring a leading some of the
11 Brilliant NYC engagement locally. So, that is just
12 sort of a rough summary of some of the work that's
13 been happening.

14 DR. LINDA CHEN: Can I also add, Chair,
15 we want to also express our gratitude to you in the
16 Council for the funding that you provided to ensure
17 that there is outreach and engagement with our
18 multilingual families and language access, as well.

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah. And I surely
20 think we need to do even greater investments in
21 communities that need more help, but, Dr. Chen, just
22 very quickly, just to follow up on something. When
23 will the academic recovery program begin as far as
24 after school and Saturdays? When is that slated to
25 start?

2 DR. LINDA CHEN: Sure. Our schools have
3 been planning for this and I will say that some have
4 already started. I spoke with a principal yesterday
5 who already started extended day and Saturday work.
6 But we--

7 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: How many have
8 started?

9 DR. LINDA CHEN: I don't know how many
10 have started, but I know that, you know, I spoke just
11 randomly yesterday to a principal that had started.
12 We have asked schools to aim for the middle of
13 November to be able to make sure that they are able
14 to organize the types of supports and the personnel
15 for the supports to do that, but, again, every school
16 is determining what is the right amount of time in
17 those sessions for each of their communities.

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Are you concerned
19 that there is still-- and just so I'm clear, state
20 assessments are still happening this coming school
21 year and the school year. Is that correct?

22 DR. LINDA CHEN: Correct. That is what
23 we been informed.

24 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And are you
25 concerned that, if schools are able to set something

2 up in terms of afterschool or Saturday and do to some
3 of the staffing issues and staff that we have already
4 talked about, that this will just be kind of tailored
5 towards more test prep to get kids prepared for these
6 assessments rather than to really make up for the
7 impacts of the previous inexistent school year?

8 DR. LINDA CHEN: Our focus in the
9 academic recovery plan-- and I appreciate the
10 question. It's an important one, especially in the
11 midst of all that we are going through here and our
12 recovery plan is both social emotional learning, as
13 well as academic learning and that is something that
14 is incredibly important and essential to us as a
15 system and, in terms of the academic piece, I really
16 appreciate your comments earlier at the opening
17 around unfinished learning because, basically, we
18 have interrupted learning for our students and some
19 more than others and, as you noted, it has
20 exacerbated existing disparities and so our focus is
21 on leveraging social emotional learning to advance
22 academics for students aligned to the standards.
23 Now, are the test focusing on standards? Yes. But
24 our focus is on making sure that every student can be
25 independent and be able to perform so that they can

2 be take advantage of every academic opportunity.
3 Now, with that being said, we want to make sure we
4 know where they are performing currently and what are
5 their strengths? How can we build upon them to catch
6 up on that unfinished learning? Part of that work is
7 making sure that we focus on what we call priorities
8 standards. I always appreciate a conversation with
9 you because you understand these things well, right?
10 Well, if a student is to be prepared for this year's
11 work, we need to focus on this year's standards and
12 accelerate all the things that are needed in terms of
13 those core priorities standards and those are
14 resources that we provided for schools because there
15 are so many things to focus on what we want them to
16 be clear to focus on how do we get every student to
17 accelerate in their learning to address this
18 unfinished learning and that is our priority and to
19 do it with the utmost care around various
20 circumstances that they are managing in their homes
21 across the city.

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, I appreciate
23 the answer, Dr. Chen. I just, again, want to say
24 that to me this is also a major equity issue because
25 there are students and their families from the start

2 of the pandemic to now that certainly is some kids
3 and families have added resources and I certainly
4 wish them the best where a lot of these transitions
5 of been almost seamless where they can provide added
6 supports whether they been in private learning pods
7 during the last school year, whether they are hiring
8 private tutors, you know, at a very expensive cost
9 and they have the support structure or support system
10 with means and there are many kids who rely and
11 families who rely on us, the government and the
12 public school system to be the great equalizer is to
13 be that base level of equity to provide that support.
14 And I feel that we are falling behind here and I just
15 come in conversations with parents in my district
16 and, again, other parts of the city, staffing issues
17 even in terms of afterschool support. Kids sometimes
18 are assigned work where they need help from mom or
19 dad. But if mom or dad are working or some children
20 are caretakers for their younger siblings, you know,
21 there's an issue in terms of the lack of support
22 structure. And that, to me, is a part of this and
23 that is why I also go back earlier to the issue of
24 attendance. In my previous hearing, there were
25 parents who lost loved ones due to the pandemic and

2 they are keeping their kids home-their kids under the
3 age of 11 or under 12 are fearful for their life and
4 some are waiting for the home instruction to take
5 shape. So, that's on my mind here, as well. You
6 know, we have to meet the needs of all the kids, but
7 certainly those kids who need greater support. I
8 have follow-up questions on my bill and other items,
9 but, in the interest of time, and going to turn it
10 now to my colleagues for questions and I will circle
11 back. I believe I saw Council member Dinowitz with
12 his hand up and--

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Actually, Chair,
14 Council member Barron's hands was up first followed
15 by Council member Dinowitz and--

16 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Okay. So, the
17 principals are going first here. Council member
18 Barron.

19 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you, Mr.
21 Chair. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the
22 panelists that are here. In first, as I generally
23 do, I want to have this disclosure on the record that
24 Deputy Commissioner LaShawn Robinson and I have
25 common ancestors in Frederick and Levinia Robinson

2 who were my great great grandparents and her great
3 great great grandparents. So, I want that on the
4 record. I'm very concerned about this topic, of
5 course. We all are. Part of the tragedy of what
6 happened in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina-- not
7 Hurricane Katrina, but the aftermath, was the
8 negligence and disregard of this country in
9 responding to the needs of the people who were
10 devastated by the breaking of the dam and all that.
11 Just the inappropriateness or the lack of preparation
12 to provide emergency services. And a part of the
13 study that was referenced in the briefing notes said
14 that for four months lost and academics would require
15 two years of normal learning to bring those students
16 back to the level where they should be. That is a
17 fantastic task before us and my first question is all
18 of the teachers, particularly in grades 7-12, are
19 these teachers who are certified in the subject area
20 that they are teaching?

21 DR. LINDA CHEN: Council member, thank
22 you and we so appreciate your experience as a
23 seasoned educator and asking us these important
24 questions.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

2 DR. LINDA CHEN: And my first comment
3 on-- So, the answer to the certified teachers is we
4 worked with every school to make sure we understand
5 how important it is, especially for secondary, to
6 have certified content teachers for students should
7 be able to earn credit and really gain that expertise
8 from teachers. I will pivot to the Larry Pendergast
9 at a certain point here to, more--

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And if it could be
11 very brief because I want to try to honor the time.

12 DR. LINDA CHEN: Yes.

13 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: Yes, ma'am.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

15 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: The vast majority
16 are certified in the subject area they are teaching,
17 not all.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Can we get a
19 percentage by each of the subject areas, particularly
20 math and science?

21 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: Yes. It's going to
22 take some digging just because that is that the
23 school and classes level.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Well, if we can't
25 get the number of students enrolled, I--

2 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: Yes. You can.

3 Yes. You can.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Well, you know,
5 have to comment on the same issue that the Chair
6 raised. It's an insult, I believe and I wonder why
7 you're not willing to share with us the data that you
8 have about the number of students who come to school?
9 We are not even talking about a room. Who came to
10 the school yesterday? How many children came to
11 school yesterday? And the fact that you want to
12 avoid that is really questioning the trust that we
13 have with the data that we can get from you. And I
14 have to say that because it's unacceptable. But, to
15 move on to my other questions, there is always been a
16 great lag between the college readiness members and
17 the students that come into CUNY that need
18 remediation are 70 percent. Now, you may know that I
19 am the Chair of Higher Education. I shudder to think
20 what it is going to be if there was 70 percent
21 previously of students who came into CUNY who needed
22 remediation and moving forward it's going to be a
23 real task. And I think and I set up before. We need
24 to better link and a better trail between-- a better
25 connection or bridge between the city DOE in CUNY

2 where most of the students who graduate from our
3 schools go to. So, just what to say that we need to
4 be mindful of that and I did hear you talk about-- I
5 think I heard you talk about curriculum that you are
6 calling the universal mosaic and how are we going to
7 make sure that all students, but particularly
8 students who have traditionally been underserved and
9 underrepresented and not included in the curriculum--
10 and I'm talking about black and brown children-- how
11 are we going to make sure that we have a
12 comprehensive, cohesive approach that talks about
13 historically the contributions that they have made
14 two world civilizations and, particularly, to the
15 development of this country?

16 DR. LINDA CHEN: So, in terms of the CUNY
17 question, we are, you know, working very closely with
18 them to make sure to address the precise issue that
19 you have identified to ensure that students are
20 getting all the supports that they need so that they
21 don't need to require so much remediation at the CUNY
22 level. Also, a mosaic curriculum, just very quickly,
23 we are going to be starting engagement citywide
24 shortly and then specifically at the district level
25 should do exactly what you have raised which is make

2 sure that every part of the city has a voice and what
3 is represented and who is represented in historically
4 accurate and complete representation in this mosaic
5 curriculum. That is exactly the purpose of it. So,
6 thank you.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And, Mr. Chair, if
8 I can ask one further question? Thank you. As we
9 talk about the digital divide that continues to exist
10 for black and brown family is and the problems with
11 having access and having connectivity, that is going
12 to be an ongoing issue to make sure that we resolve
13 the and also particularly for children living in
14 temporary shelters. My question is how are we going
15 to use this point in this horrible situation to our
16 advantage and make sure that teachers still fall back
17 to, you know, chalk and talk, that they really
18 understand the opportunity through this open
19 curriculum of being able to access the Internet for
20 current information. We're no longer bound to
21 textbooks which, of course, we all know had great
22 limitations. So, we are no longer pounded textbooks.
23 So, what kind of in-depth professional development is
24 going to take place that will make sure that teachers
25 maintain and advance using the technology that is the

2 palm of their hands and their fingertips and so
3 readily available?

4 DR. LINDA CHEN: Yes. That is so true
5 and that is exactly what we're doing. We are
6 continuing to provide professional learning for
7 teachers. We actually also have continued to update
8 all of our technology curriculum tools, as well, that
9 all teachers can access and, of course, we are
10 continuing to make investments so that students have
11 Wi-Fi enabled devices to address the issue that you
12 are bringing which is this lack of connectivity, as
13 well. All of those things, I think, you know, the
14 pandemic has been and continues to be difficult, but
15 one piece of leverage is that technology and rely on
16 that even with families and communications schools,
17 as well as day-to-day learning. We are still
18 leveraging the technology even though we are in
19 person. Thank you.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you. Thank
21 you, Mr. Chair.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Council
23 member Barron. And, next we will turn to Council
24 member Dinowitz.

25 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Thank you,
3 Chair Treyger and Council member Barron. It's a
4 little weird following up a principal, but I will do
5 my best. So, I have a couple questions. First, you
6 know, I've because I'm a millennial, but I also have
7 the one with commercials because I am a millennial,
8 but I see a lot of commercials and I see the ads for
9 vaccines. I had seen ads for school in September. I
10 don't see advertisements now. I bring up
11 advertisements because, you know, it is, I think, a
12 great way to keep. Send families updated and
13 informed. So, just a couple questions about that.
14 Why these campaigns, these ad campaigns stopped? And
15 were you advertising in multiple languages? And,
16 for example, you say your expanding IEP services for
17 3K and pre-k. Anyone dealing with services for
18 students with disabilities knows that there has to be
19 significant input and engagement with families.
20 There are times with families who are often left
21 behind and often don't know or don't know how to
22 access things. So, are you still engaged in at
23 campaigns and things like that in different mediums?

24 DR. LINDA CHEN: Council member Dinowitz,
25 thank you for also acknowledging the need to provide

2 language access, as well as information more broadly.
3 I'm going asked that we unmute Deputy Chancellor
4 Austin to address the specific question of
5 advertisements.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You were unmuted,
7 Deputy Chancellor Austin, but you remuted. So we
8 will unmute you again. Thank you.

9 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR AUSTIN: Thank you.
10 Sorry. Can you repeat the question?

11 DR. LINDA CHEN: It was regarding why we
12 stopped advertisements for services in the DOE?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: The whole
14 question again?

15 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR AUSTIN: So sorry.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: No. No.
17 That in the beginning of the school year, there were
18 at campaigns welcoming. Send families back into
19 schools. I don't see those at campaigns anymore. I
20 think these ad campaigns are vital, especially multi
21 language campaigns and at the media, robust
22 campaigns. And I'll just say to inform and engage
23 families, particularly the most vulnerable families
24 who, you know, children with IEP's who need to know
25 their rights and needs to know the services that you

2 are spending millions and millions of dollars on
3 exist, but also for recruitment of paraprofessionals,
4 teachers, and school staff which-- and we know it is
5 understaffed and we know they are teaching out of
6 license this. So, what is going on with these ad
7 campaigns?

8 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR AUSTIN: Thank you so
9 much and I'm so sorry to make you repeat your
10 question, but it's really good one. So, we spent a
11 lot of time and we invested quite a bit of funding
12 into making sure we did a robust back-to-school
13 campaign and so, I know, we got a significant amount
14 of funding for that and we literally used almost
15 every channel that was available to us we used. We
16 used our Chancellor on radio spots. I know several
17 people did radio spots. We were on buses. We were
18 everywhere because we had a considerable amount of
19 funding to support that particular campaign. And so,
20 what you're asking is like, okay. Well, what is
21 next? We are really excited that we received funding
22 from you all come from City Council to support
23 language access and so we are planning on doing
24 before citywide campaign specifically with the
25 language access focus and the first campaign that we

2 are thinking about is around special education.
3 There is a number things. One is a compensatory
4 services and, obviously, at the incredible investment
5 that we are doing in special education services and
6 the other, which I'm excited about them which I know
7 the translation in interpretation unit is excited
8 about is for the first time DOE is offering
9 translation of IEP to any family that wants it. And
10 so, we want to make sure that we are advertising and
11 promoting that, as well and with the funding that we
12 received from you all, we are also going to be
13 investing a lot of workshops. We are partnering with
14 community-based organizations that will do workshops
15 for families around special education rights and the
16 process and we want to sort of in bed all of the good
17 sort of work that we are going to be doing in this
18 area in the campaign. And so, we are building it out
19 now. We meet every week with a group of community
20 advocates to start to think through and support us in
21 planning for how we are going to be spending that
22 money and certainly there helping those also with a
23 marketing piece because the first campaign will be a
24 very large campaign centered around special education
25 and specifically incorporating in including a

2 language access component to make sure that our
3 families who speak other languages other than English
4 are included and specifically targeted in that ad
5 campaign.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Thank you.
8 Thank you for trying to speak quickly. If I could
9 just ask, I think, to more questions, Chair Treyger?

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Go ahead.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Okay. Thank
12 you. Thank you. So, look forward to seeing those
13 advertisements. I would encourage you to-- I'm glad
14 you are planning. That is a good word to hear, but,
15 you know, every day we wait, you know, makes it
16 harder and harder for families and children to get
17 reengaged. So, it's clear that there is a big gap in
18 math achievement. The Chair mentioned it earlier
19 that it doesn't seem to be addressed in the academic
20 recovery plan, but this is only a part because of the
21 pandemic. Children lacked in map way before the
22 pandemic. So, I had high school students who didn't
23 know their times tables. They struggled with
24 fractions or even the concept of negative numbers.
25 But if we wanted to hold remedial math skills class,

2 it was met with resistance whether it was a staffing
3 issue or we could encode it properly and the students
4 wouldn't get credit for it. So, are you looking--
5 you know, this is, by the way, the same issue is what
6 I taught reading. I tried to teach reading, but the
7 principles were resistant because it wouldn't count
8 as a high school class. The kids wouldn't get
9 credit. The school wouldn't look good for having
10 kids out of those classes. So, are you working to
11 address these nitty-gritty barriers? These details
12 so that when we talk about academic recovery, we can
13 actually give students what they need instead of
14 giving them more time to do some of the work that
15 they're struggling to do to begin with?

16 DR. LINDA CHEN: Council member Dinowitz,
17 thank you so much for being so precise around this
18 given your experience. And, number one, math is part
19 of the academic recovery supports, so in terms of the
20 academic recovery stand that went out to schools that
21 can be used for professional development, enrichment,
22 core instruction, intervention, all those specific
23 things. We have also given the menus and things that
24 they can also choose from that also addressed
25 mathematics in including the screening tools to make

2 sure that we know where every student is so that we
3 can prepare them for this year's mathematics skills
4 according to the standards for that grade level or
5 that course. And also to your point around the
6 reading and, especially as a high school teacher, you
7 are right. Sometimes it's all about credit
8 accumulation, but we need to really be able to know
9 who are those ninth and 10th graders, right, that
10 have really spent a good portion, if not all, in the
11 pandemic in their high school career, where are they
12 in their reading and that is also what the screeners
13 will help us to.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: So, I am
15 sorry.

16 DR. LINDA CHEN: Yes.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Impart me.
18 Because it's not really getting to the core of my
19 question. I don't doubt that you want to assist
20 students and find out where they are. That is kind
21 of like education 101 and I think it is great that we
22 are doing this. I am saying that once we find out--
23 and this is real life. I've high school students, I
24 had them reading at an elementary school grade level.
25 Our schools empowered to take those handful of kids

2 and provide them with remedial education? I'm not
3 talking about putting them in high school regions
4 saying AP for all and putting them in an AP class and
5 saying, well, if we put them into an AP class, it
6 will accelerate instruction. It's fantastic for
7 them. What I'm talking about is saying can we
8 teaching give students a Wilson reading program? Can
9 we give them remedial math instruction and will the
10 students receive credit for and will the school be
11 punished for providing exactly what the assessment
12 say the students need? That's my question. Not
13 whether or not you are assessing students.

14 DR. LINDA CHEN: So, the assessments to
15 help us determine the needs and be precise and be
16 able to provide the and that is actually precisely
17 what the school allocation memo covers, right? It
18 covers the ability to provide students precisely what
19 they need, especially the ones you're talking about
20 in either ninth or 10th grade and we've also provided
21 training for those Wilson Orton Gilligan-based
22 interventions as well as the provision for purchasing
23 the materials that are needed that can also occur
24 outside of the school times. So, all of those things
25 are provided-- and I'm glad he raised it because

2 those are specifically what the academic recovery is
3 about.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Good. I'm
5 glad to hear that the funding is there for Wilson. I
6 want to make sure that a student will receive credit
7 and the school, you know, it's not just incentivized
8 from providing a child what they need. And this is--
9 I'm asking this because I saw it in 14 years of
10 teaching. Schools were distant incentivized of doing
11 the right thing and, just to touch on what Chair
12 Treyger said about the test. Is it all going to be
13 test prep? And I'm glad to hear you say no, but if
14 you are still judging schools based on their exam
15 scores, then they are going to target instruction
16 towards test prep and, in many cases, the students
17 won't get what they need both academically and in
18 terms of mental health support. And so, that is why
19 I am trying to get to this which is that the Wilson
20 materials you say you are providing for high school
21 students which, again, I'm very appreciative because
22 so many of our children need those decoding skills.
23 Are they going to get credit for that and our schools
24 actually encouraged in incentivized to give that to
25 students or our schools just incentivized to put them

2 in the most rigorous possible class even if they're
3 not ready for it which I saw throughout my career?

4 DR. LINDA CHEN: And I think that
5 represents a lot of previous practice, but I will
6 tell you that in this moment of academic recovery
7 under the leadership of Chancellor Porter, that is
8 not going to be discouraged. Meeting the needs of
9 students as we see fit is encouraged, including
10 providing the interventions at a high school student
11 may needed reading. Now, I do want to address the
12 question and important and one which doesn't have a
13 clear answer-- I'm just going to say, right? As a
14 high school teacher, you know that there are certain
15 policies aligned with the state around credit
16 accumulation and it is difficult to determine what
17 kind of interventions-- like a reading Wilson, if
18 you will, intervention-- aligns to course
19 accumulation and the required course, right? And I
20 don't want to go around that question. I will say
21 that that is a difficult and complicated one given
22 the requirements for graduation credits, but what I
23 will say is, regardless of where that stands, this is
24 the reason why the assessments that we are requiring
25 identify the skills that are needed for students and,

2 therefore, we are tracking those in making sure that
3 that additional support for the students that you're
4 talking about will be provided because this is the
5 first time we, as a system, actually know who really
6 needs those things.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: So, I am glad
8 to hear that shift that Chancellor Porter is making.
9 I will say that I know it is difficult regarding the
10 state standards, but the situation for our children
11 and our families is also difficult and although it is
12 a difficult question, it's one that needs to be
13 addressed and one that I hope to work with you on. I
14 will just say one last thing is just also about the
15 Mosaic curriculum. I don't know what it looks like,
16 but I certainly hope that includes everything and
17 everyone, including, you know, Holocaust education
18 and Jewish education, especially as we are seeing a
19 rise in anti-Semitic a crimes, especially the stories
20 that I don't how to share with you right now in my
21 experience teaching, but I do sincerely hope that
22 that is also integral to the Mosaic curriculum.

23 DR. LINDA CHEN: It is integrated and I
24 would also encourage and will make sure COUNCIL
25 members get that information advanced. We are going

2 to be doing citywide engagement around that and that
3 is important for our families and all families across
4 the city from every corner of the city to tell us
5 what they want to have represented, but, for sure,
6 what you are expressing, those are all parts of the
7 purpose for the Mosaic curriculum. Thank you and we
8 will work with you on that credit piece, too,
9 Councilman Dinowitz. Thank you.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Thank you very
11 much. Thank you for your time.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And, next,
13 can we unmute Council member Grodenchik?

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Thank you.
16 Thank you. I just want to point for the record that
17 I am not an educator, unlike Chair Treyger and
18 Council members Barron and Dinowitz, but I did the
19 next best thing. I married an educator and I am a
20 proud product of the New York City Public School
21 System. I want to start off by thanking-- I see Ms.
22 Bender is here today and we have done a lot of work
23 starting with the former president of the SCA,
24 Lorraine Grillo and Ms. Bender's predecessor,
25 buildings Commissioner Melanie LaRocca, to build--

2 some of them are already open. Almost 900 of them
3 are already open-- new school seats in my district
4 and I do know the Olympian effort that it takes to
5 get this done and I want to thank her on behalf of
6 the other two people I mentioned for their hard work
7 on behalf of the students of Eastern Queens. I also
8 want to echo Council member Barron's comments along
9 with Chair Treyger about either the unwillingness or
10 the inability to tell us how many students there are
11 in the New York City Public School System. We know
12 that the number is down, but either way it is not
13 good that we don't have that information. I know
14 that Chair Treyger asked for it at the last hearing.
15 He asked the First Deputy Chancellor at that time and
16 we need to have this. This is about as basic
17 information as we can get out of the school system
18 and not having it several weeks later is, to put it
19 mildly, disappointing. I do want to take a riff on
20 something that Council member Barron said and that
21 has to do with connectivity. And when I took office,
22 as I do all the time-- and I'm making my list
23 towards schools now before I leave office at the end
24 of the year. One of the things that truly bothered
25 me was the age of the technology in schools. I

2 remember visiting one school where the computer
3 teacher showed me Macs that were nine years old which
4 are, you know, at that point, computers age out so
5 quickly, nine years is truly ancient. And I wanted
6 to hear from somebody-- I don't really have a person
7 in mind. Many of the laptops that I my colleagues
8 have purchased for schools rightly went home with
9 children during the pandemic and I am concerned--
10 and they are aging. You know, laptops age, too. All
11 technology ages and I would like to know what the
12 plan is to ensure that the technology in schools is
13 continuously upgraded. We live in a world of
14 connectivity. We are hopeful that our schools that
15 we will not have to close them again for this
16 pandemic, but we can never be certain of that and I
17 do want to know what the plan is going forward and
18 how it will be funded to make sure that all of our
19 students are connected in school and out of school.

20 DR. LINDA CHEN: Thank you, Council
21 member, for your important question and I think what
22 we've been doing, certainly, is leveraging resources
23 that we have right now not just out of necessity for
24 technology, but really being able to upgrade and
25 ensure that deeded equipment is also updated wall we

2 have the funding to support this. I want to make
3 sure that we can get back to-- we don't have folks
4 from DOIT on to share specific plans of upgrades, but
5 I do know that schools are always keeping
6 inventories. Our DIIT team does support and look at
7 those to help them prioritize funding. I do see
8 Larry Pendergast with his hand up. It looks like you
9 would like to add a few more details in here, as
10 well.

11 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: Hello, Linda.
12 Thank you, Council member Grodenchik. We just do
13 want to say that we absolutely agree and, as part of
14 the academic recovery plan, we have a significant
15 commitment to upgrading our devices across the city.
16 This year alone, over \$122 million has been dedicated
17 to upgrading and improving the number devices that we
18 have and making sure they are all LTE enabled and
19 make sure that were trying to overcome the
20 connectivity issues that you raise and that we saw an
21 Eastern Queen was recently as five years ago.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: All right. I
23 thank you. My time is running low and I want to
24 thank the Chair for indulging me.

25 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: And I hope

3 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: And I hope

4 that we can give an answer to the number of students

5 in the school system. I know we can count. I'm

6 married to a math professor, so, if you need help, I

7 am available. Chair Treyger, thank you for indulging

8 me today. Thank you, Ms. Chen-- Dr. Chen and Mr.

9 Pendergast.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Council

11 member Grodenchik. Next, we are going to turn to

12 Council member Riley.

13 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Good morning,

15 everyone. Good morning to Chair Treyger. Thank you

16 so much for your leadership, of course. Just real

17 quick I have to echo my colleagues when we are

18 talking about the school lists because I now just

19 like my colleagues. I'm getting calls from parents

20 who have students who are enrolled in school yet and

21 it's kind of challenging helping them out to get them

22 enrolled in a school and it is in late October so, if

23 we can get that list entitled of the projected date,

24 but I know we keep asking every hearing for this list

25 and we can't get it. So, I just wanted to, you know,

2 echo my colleagues. Secondly, to kind of piggyback
3 on Council member Grodenchik, in the beginning of the
4 year at asked if it was possible if Council members
5 could get a list of schools that had been underfunded
6 within our districts who have outdated technology
7 within the school so that we can get them in the
8 budget for the upcoming years to come. Is that
9 something possible to do? And, lastly, I don't know
10 if this is a proper setting, but it's a concern. The
11 violence that is going on within our schools and I
12 watched a troubling video on YouTube that shows there
13 is a lot of gang activities within the school and I
14 just want to know what is DOE doing to kind of
15 address that being met, you know, kids join gangs for
16 different reasons. To be a part of a group, to
17 protect themselves. This is different reasons why
18 kids are joining gangs and if we have this new
19 technology that we're talking about right now like
20 social media which is kind of being aggravated with
21 these incidents let's happening within our schools,
22 what is DOE doing to kind of address this? Do we
23 need to fund more programming within our schools? I
24 know there's great programs like NBK out there that
25 I've been a part of or Aim High that we just

2 implemented in a school in my district, Bronx Health
3 and Science. What needs to be done on our part or
4 collaboratively together that we can insist that our
5 kids are coming to school and feeling safe that they
6 can get the education that they deserve? Thank you.

7 DR. LINDA CHEN: Council member Riley,
8 thank you so much for your support and advocacy. I'm
9 going to start with one of the first issues that you
10 raised around technology. We will work with our DIIT
11 team to see what kind of list we can get to you
12 because I know we keep inventories. We appreciate
13 you thinking ahead on how to advocate and support
14 local communities around upgrading technology. I do
15 want to pivot over to Deputy Chancellor Robinson
16 through her and her team may have been doing amazing
17 work thinking about it day and night and I can
18 testify truly to that around the safety and well-
19 being of our students socially, emotionally,
20 physically and I'm just going to pivot over to her to
21 respond more specifically.

22 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROBINSON: Yeah. Thank
23 you so much for raising that concern and I also
24 appreciate that you raised a concern from the lens of
25 complete safety. Obviously, the safety of our

2 children at school communities, that is a top
3 priority and every parent sends their child to
4 school, I did. When my son was attending New York
5 City public schools that I entrusted the physical
6 safety of my son to the school community. But I also
7 entrusted his social emotional safety to the school
8 community, as well. And, you know, wanted the school
9 to have a lens, especially as we navigated through
10 this pandemic on trauma and the impact on children
11 and children who had experienced a great degree of
12 loss, separation, social isolation. You know, that
13 was the case for my side and children across our
14 school system. We've made significant gains over the
15 course of this administration in partnership with
16 Counsel. We've been able to support teachers and
17 school leaders and trauma informed care and training.
18 We've been able to work closely with educators to
19 deal with issues of adult, social emotional learning.
20 We've ramped up restorative justice in school
21 communities to ensure that, for middle schools and
22 high schools, restorative justice programming would
23 be in place and that work is critically important.
24 That were having conversations about responsible
25 decision-making as a connection to safety. Social

2 emotional growth and development as it connects to
3 safety. So, I'm joined by my colleague, Kenyatte
4 Reed who can talk about more efforts that align with
5 the restorative justice programming and alternate at
6 this time.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Well, real quick,
8 Deputy Chancellor, I do respect the efforts that DOE
9 is doing, but what else can be done with adding more
10 community effort? Chair, for could just continue
11 real quick.

12 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROBINSON: Please.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: What can be done
14 with community effort that could kind of help with
15 this impact that our students are going through?
16 Because, after they leave the school, they have to,
17 you know, walk all. They have to actually worry
18 about getting home sometimes. What can be done with
19 community engagement? Because were having these town
20 hall meetings now with the principal and the
21 community, but I think that the community really
22 wants the leadership from DOE at some of these
23 meetings where they kind of could come to a consensus
24 of what could we do to ensure that our communities
25 are safe? So I just wanted to-- I do respect the

2 work that is being done, but I do feel like, with all
3 due respect, we need to do more to ensure that our
4 students are safe and that parents feel that they
5 could send their students to school and to make sure
6 that our students are listed in school also. Thank
7 you.

8 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROBINSON: I absolutely
9 agree with that. We know that we need to do more and
10 come from the community perspective, restorative
11 practices are includes the entire community. It
12 extends beyond staff members and school roles and
13 takes parents to be a part of that process, as well.
14 It takes young people to be a part of the process, as
15 well. We are also expanding the community schools
16 model which is directly the connection between the
17 school and the broader community. So, really
18 expanding that program. We have 100 more community
19 schools coming on board in addition to the community
20 schools that we added this year. You now, the Chair
21 has indicated that every school should be a community
22 school.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: I agree.

24 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROBINSON: the community
25 school model is being scaled across the nation. The

2 New York City community school model as an effective
3 model that is going to be scattered across this
4 nation. We received word about that last week. So,
5 we know that we have strategies that work. Will
6 continue to invest in these strategies. Strategies
7 that include the community as well as you are
8 indicating, but certainly the community school model
9 and restorative practices, those are all practices
10 and a model that is rooted any greeting community.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Thank you, Deputy
12 Chancellor. Thank you, Chair.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: DC Robinson, did
14 you still want us to unmute Kenyatte Reed or no? Did
15 you want to add anything?

16 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROBINSON: Sure.

17 KENYATTE REED: Thank you, DC problem
18 seven thank you to all of you, city Council members.
19 I really appreciate the question that Council member
20 Riley is really bringing up and it's really
21 collaboration with the community. Deputy Chancellor
22 Robinson and her entire team and myself included, we
23 value that partnership and Council member Riley is
24 bringing up a great point that the only way to help
25 our children is when all the adults come together.

2 This is not going to work with just the quote unquote
3 educators doing their part or just the community
4 members. We have to do this together, so we welcome
5 this opportunity. You mentioned things like NBK.
6 Things like PSAL, arts programs. Things like our
7 partnerships with Cure Violence providers and
8 violence interruptions that we work with tirelessly.
9 Council member, what you're saying is that we agree
10 with you completely. We have to wrap it up. Like
11 we've been doing it but now is the time it has to be
12 ratcheted up. So, I'm just taking this opportunity
13 to say that I look forward to working with you in the
14 other community members doing this work because we
15 have to-- like imaging, children's lives on the
16 line. Thank you so much.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Thank you. Along
18 those programs, I think we need to add more trade
19 programs also in our schools to just give our
20 students more opportunities after they leave from
21 high school. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you very
23 much, Council member Riley and I appreciate your
24 attention to this issue and I also, at this from
25 experience and also want to say that some of the

2 instances that we have seen and are very concerning
3 instances that we have seen also tend to happen
4 around dismissal time and that is one of the many
5 issues and reasons why we work so hard. Deputy
6 Chancellor, you remember on trying to strengthen the
7 MOU between DOE and NYPD about the clear division of
8 responsibilities and roles about who is responsible
9 because this is an item that I saw firsthand that
10 historically there was some finger-pointing and some
11 very gray areas about responsibility, but the most
12 effective thing that I saw during my experience was
13 when DOE and school safety, NYPD, work together on
14 creating safe passageways and safe corridors for kids
15 to get from school to home safely when they actually
16 work together and when there is a planner protocol
17 procedure in place for folks to work together. Also,
18 quite frankly, in a city with an enormous budget,
19 there is no excuse why there is no universal
20 afterschool programming customized to meet the needs
21 of all of our kids whether it is in homework help or
22 art or sports. You name it. There should be
23 critical programming in addition to social emotional
24 supports for children and so there is just no excuse
25 for that and I'm a big believer in a big supporter in

2 a community schools model and not just, you know, K
3 to 12. Even beyond. After school for adult
4 education because empowering parents actually helps
5 their children, as well, in their schools. Safety is
6 a very big, subjective broad term and we need to have
7 a more holistic conversation in early thank everyone
8 for raising it. I also want to mention that we have
9 been joined by Council members Salamanca and Council
10 member Miller and, Malcolm, is there anyone else with
11 a question on the queue?

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No. And also
13 Council member Rosenthal. Should alternate back to
14 you for your follow-up questions.

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you, Malcolm.
16 I have a question, Dr. Chen, with regards to
17 Consortium schools. I have heard from consortium
18 schools that the DOE is implementing sort of a
19 blanket assessment that consortium schools are being
20 required to implement even though their schools are
21 not-- they are exempt from taking the Regents
22 examinations or the assessment there being required
23 to implement news tied to the Regents. Are you aware
24 of this and can you speak to this issue?

2 DR. LINDA CHEN: Sure. So, Chair, first
3 and foremost, we appreciate the consortium schools in
4 the work that they do with our schools and we have
5 been talking all throughout this hearing on the
6 screening tools that we are relying on across the
7 system so that we, at this point, especially in this
8 recovery, we need to know where our students are and
9 what their strengths are about the areas of growth.
10 We need to really be able to pinpoint and really
11 efficiently get to supporting with the staff that we
12 have, as we have discussed. You know, time is every
13 moment and every minute is important. So, yes.
14 Consortium schools, as all DOE schools, have been
15 required to select a screening tool and they have
16 gone through the same process as all schools where
17 there is also a superintendent exception process that
18 was part of the selection process and any school that
19 wanted to appeal on that behalf, we share the
20 criteria with them which was, essentially, a valid
21 and reliable measure and one in which the data could
22 be collected centrally and consortium schools, as
23 with all other schools, went through that process and
24 were asked to provide that information. Now, what
25 they do with their [inaudible 1:56:17] and so on, all

2 that rich work, nothing prohibits them from doing
3 that, but we do need to have systems and wellness
4 checks, if you will, on academics to ensure we were
5 call the conversation we had with Councilman
6 Dinowitz. Like in order to know what students need
7 that specific reading support, the screeners do
8 provide that kind of indication so that we can really
9 catch every student.

10 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But, Dr. Chen,
11 there's irony here because consortium schools, to
12 their credit, have been able to show us in the public
13 that there are actually more effective ways of
14 assessing engaging in learning and teaching practices
15 without the use of the standardized exams such as the
16 Regents exam I feel like we almost have it backwards
17 here. That rather than telling them to use a
18 screener that is tied to a Regents, why don't we pick
19 up a phone and asked him what are they doing to get
20 formative data and formative information without, you
21 know,-- there called low stakes assessments to kind
22 of gauge where kids are at and to kind of use that
23 feedback to kind of modify and improve our
24 instructional agenda and practice. Are you following
25 my thinking here?

2 DR. LINDA CHEN: I am and I appreciate
3 you emphasizing that these are low stakes
4 assessments. These are not Regents that we are
5 giving students. This is simply another piece of
6 information that can inform Consortium schools and
7 other schools doing some similar work in tandem with
8 the other pieces of information they are checking.
9 So I will say there are other schools that have
10 similar practices-- maybe an automobile specific
11 consortium-- and, you know, some of our schools have
12 those other particular assessments that they continue
13 to use. Other schools abuse some of the very ones
14 that are being identified as the universal screeners
15 now. And I know there are some changes here and what
16 I've learned from other schools is that, you know,
17 yes, it's hard to be required to do something and I'm
18 going to say that as a former empowerment principal.
19 I understand that. However, we are in a moment where
20 we really have to responsibly be able to know where
21 every student is and this additional information
22 helps consortium schools and all schools have those
23 multiple sources of information and I do agree with
24 you that we need to and will continue to learn
25 alongside consortium schools on the longer process

2 of-- and I know the state is considering this right
3 now, right? What are different alternative forms of
4 assessment that could be use that are much more
5 authentic? And I think that Consortium schools have
6 a lot to contribute to that conversation moving
7 forward, as well.

8 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah. I mean, we
9 hear the term alternative form of assessment. To me,
10 it's more about like research-based assessments and
11 stuff that actually works. And I don't think the
12 DOE, historically-- not just this administration.
13 Historically, has ever really put in the time,
14 energy, resources to truly work with schools to
15 create our own kind of assessment tools that are not
16 reliant on the use standardized exams or something
17 that is driven by some consultant who never taught a
18 day in their life at the school. That could be a
19 very enriching opportunity and activity for schools
20 to undertake and that is if we have trust and faith
21 in our schools to work together to actually do this
22 because I observed a PBAT. Not to go off on a
23 tangent here, but I observed. As someone who used to
24 teach a Regents class and Proctor Regents exams, the
25 PBAT was far more comprehensive than any Regents exam

2 I have ever seen. And so, I think we have a lot to
3 learn from consortium and not the other way around.
4 But I want to get back to certain things here.
5 Bussing. And then I have some questions on the bill
6 which I have to get to. We have heard many stories
7 of students with IEP's who still have not been
8 assigned above route. Do you data and how many IEP
9 students have an assigned bus route and how many are
10 still waiting for an assigned bus route?

11 DR. LINDA CHEN: Chair, thank you for
12 focusing on an important aspect that often intersects
13 a school opening which is bussing and making sure
14 that we can get our students with disabilities to and
15 from in school safely and on time. At this time, I
16 think we will need to get more specific information
17 back to you. Kevin and his team are not on this
18 call, but I don't know if Larry wants to add anything
19 else at the moment to this. But it is an important
20 question and it is information we want to make sure
21 we get to you.

22 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: I don't have too
23 much more to add here. I don't believe that-- I am
24 pretty confident that they can speak to the bussing
25 and that the students are being provided for, by

2 Kevin and his team can come back with more specific
3 details.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I just want to
5 state, you know, we're talking and were supposed to
6 have this hearing about academic recovery. I am
7 hearing some outright war stories for children who
8 are legally required to have bus services. It's a
9 combination of things. Kids who have still not been
10 assigned a bus route. Due to the paraprofessional
11 shortage and staffing issues. There are some
12 students that actually need that para to be with them
13 and because they're not with them, they cannot get
14 the services. Some companies who are continuously
15 neglecting their responsible-- the responsibilities
16 as they are being paid by the-- drivers not showing
17 up, missed stops, continued things which completely,
18 you know, takes away that child's education, but even
19 if they come late to school, completely ruins the
20 rest of their day. And so, just wanted to make sure
21 that we all are holding these bus companies
22 accountable and I will be more than happy to follow-
23 up additionally with Kevin, who, I will say is been
24 pretty responsive to my office and to be and I want
25 that noted for the record. But I actually-- my

2 issue that I'm having right now is with these bus
3 companies that continuously, I think, are
4 continuously failing to meet the needs of our
5 children and also the ability for OPT to come in a
6 timely fashion, get these routes assigned or adjusted
7 accordingly. I want to move on to the bill. Dr.
8 Chen, I mentioned earlier in my testimony that the
9 last time we actually looked at the administrative
10 code in terms of school building occupancy was
11 actually before World War II. Are you aware of that?

12 DR. LINDA CHEN: Sir, I can't say that I
13 am, but I appreciate you educating us all on these
14 aspects.

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: That's the last
16 time that this code has actually been-- let's just
17 say looked at with a close lens and changes made to
18 the city's school building occupancy code. And the
19 issue of that time, according to our research and
20 understanding was tuberculosis. Would you agree that
21 the world has greatly changed since the 1930s and
22 tuberculosis is not the biggest public health risk
23 facing our kids and families today? Is that correct?

24 DR. LINDA CHEN: Yes. And I do also want
25 to invite my colleagues on the line who have much

2 more knowledge about the topic than I do will have
3 them chime in, as well.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right. And you
5 mentioned earlier that the proposed bill would
6 require or create an additional seat need of over
7 200,000 students. Is that correct?

8 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: Yes, sir. And I'm
9 sorry, sir, if you could indulge me.

10 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Please.

11 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: I was just in touch
12 with Kevin in he says all students registered by the
13 first school have bussing. Been working through the
14 staffing issues and giving vendors flexibility by
15 doubling up on routes and [inaudible 02:05:25]. But
16 he wants you to know he will follow-up with your
17 office.

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Lawrence, I will
19 tell you that were still hearing some pretty horrific
20 stories, but we will follow-up and I think my
21 colleagues will-- as a matter of fact, I'd like to
22 dig deeper on this. Council member Rosenthal, C. Is
23 a NICU have a case, so would like to turn it over to
24 Council member Rosenthal and then I will finish my
25 questions afterwards.

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Great. Thank
4 you so much. I want to thank you, Chair Treyger, for
5 this hearing and thank everyone in the DOT for all
6 your hard work. You know, you are doing God's work
7 every day, so thank you for that. I apologize for
8 jumping on late, but I did just hear you talking
9 about the bussing. I have got a number of cases in
10 my district parents with special ed kids who are not
11 getting any help from the DOE. I've been told-- and
12 this may be misinformation, but I've been told that
13 they have been told they have to find it themselves
14 and once they find the bussing, they let the city
15 know. I can't really follow all the logic and I
16 haven't dug into this too deeply, but let's be clear.
17 Bussing is not solved. Making a sweeping statement
18 that everyone has the bussing needs met is just
19 patently not true. I'm sure the vast majority do and
20 I would rather you word it that way that the vast
21 majority do, but it's not accurate that--

22 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: Council member,
23 what we were saying, but the office was saying, was
24 that the students who were registered for first day
25 of school--

2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Oh, yes.

3 These parents were all registered--

4 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: were routed. So,
5 we will definitely follow-up.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: and, I mean,
7 what's so terrifying-- I mean, of course, I
8 appreciate you following up with me. I will tell you
9 the cases I have, but, again, we are here as Council
10 members representing, you know, big districts. If I
11 am having a problem, it's happening in every
12 district. So, I will just leave it there, but I
13 really do ask that you follow up with the. There are
14 several parents who are really suffering with this,
15 obviously. They can't get their kids to school and,
16 obviously, the other quick suggestion is just reach
17 out to two organizations. If you really want the
18 full list, reach out to Advocates for Children and
19 they will tell you all the families that do not have
20 bussing and a million other things, of course and
21 then Sarah from the organization PIST, she can give
22 you the list of families that have not had their
23 bussing needs met. Thank you. Thank you, Chair, for
24 recognizing me. I appreciate that.

25 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Sure.

2 DR. LINDA CHEN: Thank you for bringing
3 that up, as well as Chair Treyger and we really do--
4 on the half of the DOE, we do appreciate you speaking
5 with the depth of understanding and empathy of what
6 is happening with our family is and just even one
7 family who is experiencing that is not okay and I
8 just want to be clear about that. And we are going
9 to continue to work harder on this issue because, you
10 know, and the cases that you know of, that may not be
11 all of them and so we know that this is something
12 that we need to get better and better at. I know, as
13 the Chair has mentioned, Kevin is working day and
14 night with his team to address these issues. We are
15 not going to stop until every student has what they
16 need in terms of their transportation. But thank you
17 so much for bringing that up.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yeah. Well
19 address you can reach out to. It is Sara Contelnoto
20 [sp?]. I'm sure you know of her, but it is
21 PISTNYC@Gmail.com. She has really got her finger on
22 the pulse, as does Advocates for Children. So, I'm
23 sure you know them.

24 DR. LINDA CHEN: Absolutely. We are
25 connected to them. Yes. Thank you so much.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you.
3 Thank you, Chair.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you, Council
5 member. I also see that we have been joined by
6 Council member Lander who has his hand raised, so be
7 happy to turn to him, as well.

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you very
10 much, Chair Treyger, and thank you very much to the
11 administration for being here. I'm going to go back
12 and follow up on some of the Chairs questions about
13 the assessment. And I guess my first one is this:
14 has the map growth assessment been validated as a way
15 of measuring learning loss?

16 DR. LINDA CHEN: Yes. It has been
17 validated in terms of measuring student growth or
18 whatever nomenclature you want to use, but what
19 students have learned. It does measure growth.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Okay. Well, that
21 is not a measure. I don't love the phrase learning
22 loss, but if that is what we are trying to do, I
23 mean, obviously, it doesn't know what they had
24 before. So, obviously if you do any assessment and
25 you do it at one point in time and then you do it at

2 another point in time, of course it can tell you
3 growth between the two things, but that's not the
4 same as on validation of its measure as an ability to
5 help us address, you know, quote, unquote, learning
6 loss, is it?

7 DR. LINDA CHEN: It identifies what
8 students know and need to know in terms of the grade
9 level that they are in and it is a computer adaptive
10 assessment, so it will constantly give questions
11 really calibrated be precise about what a student
12 does know and what the needs are.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Okay. But I'm just
14 being clear. Like many, many assessments do that,
15 correct?

16 DR. LINDA CHEN: Yes. We tried to make
17 sure that we picked ones that can be done efficiently
18 and also reliably. Yes.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Okay. But I'm just
20 going to flag-- like that speaks and no way to kind
21 of broad issues of pandemic learning loss. It's just
22 a tool for assessing where students are that that
23 enables them to be assessed at some future point in
24 time, as well.

2 DR. LINDA CHEN: It identifies what a
3 student needs and I suppose you could translate into
4 loss. I agree with you that that is not the term
5 that we prefer, either. I think the Chairs term
6 around, you know, unfinished learning is more
7 precise.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: But, I mean, look.
9 I guess my question is there are many ways of
10 assessing where students are and how schools and
11 teachers can support them in their next, you know,
12 periods of growth. So, I just really don't
13 understand why we wouldn't allow schools to choose
14 assessment approaches that align with their broader
15 pedagogical philosophies. I guess it's my
16 understanding and I know the Chair mentioned the
17 Consortium schools, but it is my understanding that
18 high schools well beyond the Consortium schools also
19 requested the opportunity to use assessment
20 approaches that align with their pedagogical
21 philosophies other than MAPI and that none of them
22 are allowed to do so. Is that correct?

23 DR. LINDA CHEN: So, it is true that
24 every school was given the opportunity to select from
25 a small number. Again, we focus on the efficiency in

2 the reliability of the tools. We also deliberately
3 looked at which schools were already using. So, we
4 didn't pick-- the small menu did not consist of
5 something that no school was using. There were a
6 number of schools that already were using those--

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Those schools that
8 have approaches and propose to use tools other than
9 MAP, they were all denied the opportunity to use an
10 assessment approach. The Consortium schools were
11 denied and I know a number of other individual
12 schools were denied their request to use an
13 assessment tool that they believe best aligned with
14 the pedagogical approach at their school.

15 DR. LINDA CHEN: Every school has an
16 assessment plan and they are not denied the ability
17 to use those tools that they want to, however, they--

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Come on. I don't
19 want to fight about this. I mean, yes. You guys
20 denied many high schools who requested to use
21 alternative assessments-- that was the Consortium
22 schools, but not only the Consortium schools,
23 correct?

24 DR. LINDA CHEN: For the purposes of this
25 universal screener, correct.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: They were all
3 required-- and I mean, obviously, they can use the
4 screener and other assessments, but like these are
5 schools in particular that are looking to multiply
6 assessment approaches. They are looking to align
7 assessments with the pedagogical approaches that
8 their schools take and the idea that one universal
9 computerized system that could be used from tweed is
10 required for efficiency over what principals and
11 school communities believe is best for their
12 students, you know, that makes no sense to me. Like
13 the whole reason that we have principals who are--
14 Yeah. So, you know, I appreciate your acknowledging
15 that all the high schools that asked to do it were
16 rejected, how many with that?

17 DR. LINDA CHEN: Every school is required
18 to--

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: No. No. How many
20 were rejected? How many high schools requested to
21 use an alternative screening tool instead of Map
22 growth and were rejected from doing that?

23 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

24 DR. LINDA CHEN: I don't have the numbers
25 of the schools on hand, but we can provide that.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: We follow-up to
3 give the committee that number?

4 DR. LINDA CHEN: Sure.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Okay. And, Chair,
6 I know you care about this, as well. My time has
7 expired, but I will just say that it is also my
8 understanding that individual parents who didn't want
9 MAP growth used, that principals were denied any
10 opportunity. That like parents if they didn't
11 believe in the screener, essentially, had to keep
12 their kids home that day kind of at their own--
13 anyway, it is important that we provide good tools to
14 all schools, but I think requiring MAP growth that
15 had no particular or specific validation for a tool
16 what this point in time and denying all schools that
17 wanted to use an alternative approach and parents who
18 wanted to view it differently from any opportunity to
19 do so is just not consistent with supporting schools
20 to do their best at helping their students succeed
21 and thrive and, instead, prioritizes the kind of
22 centralized approach and the value of which really,
23 honestly, escapes me here. So, I appreciate you
24 letting us know the number of schools at the
25 different levels who asked to do it and were denied

2 and I just, you know, we will continue to ask you
3 like you help build a system through the Consortium
4 schools, through schools that take alternative
5 assessment approaches through an understanding that
6 diminishing universal and standardized assessment
7 approaches is not always what is best for building
8 strong support of pedagogical school communities.
9 This is a mistake, so I will leave it there and I
10 thank you for the time.

11 DR. LINDA CHEN: Just to be more
12 accurate, MAP was not the only option. Also schools,
13 including some high schools, engaged in other
14 assessments like Star Renaissance. So, it was not
15 the only option on the table.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Were there any
17 options at all that high schools proposed that you
18 had not previously designated that you allowed any
19 schools to use?

20 DR. LINDA CHEN: I can double check that,
21 but, again, the criteria were reliable and valid--

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: No. Answer my-- I
23 understand, but you rejected every-- I mean, unless
24 you want to tell me where, I mean, it is my
25 understanding that principals who care enormously

2 about this set of questions and proposed alternative
3 tools that you rejected every one of them.

4 DR. LINDA CHEN: I have to double check
5 to see if that is the truth, but I do know that there
6 were other alternatives that they did select and come
7 to your point, we will provide that information for
8 you.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Okay. Thank you.
10 Thank you, Chair.

11 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you,
12 Councilman Lander. And I agree with the Councilman
13 that there are, you know, schools that have taken it
14 upon themselves to, you know, build capacity and kind
15 of come up with-- I actually think-- more
16 effectively research-based ways of engaging where
17 kids are at. And, also, for the record, Dr. Chen, I
18 think I mentioned this before. When I was a high
19 school teacher, I didn't need a fancy, expensive exam
20 or assessment to figure out where kids are at. The
21 first week of school I would, you know, assigned sort
22 of an essay kind of assignment and, you know, low
23 stakes and not hurting them in any way academically,
24 but just to kind of get baseline data for me as a
25 teacher to know where my kids are at and then I would

2 come up with sort of these individualized approaches
3 to kind of better meet the needs of my students. The
4 issue for me, Dr. Chen, was where do I find
5 resources, time, space in terms of helping kids catch
6 up to the reading at their grade level and writing at
7 their grade level? That was the challenge for me. I
8 think we spent so much money and energy on coming up
9 with different ways of assessing kids and kind of,
10 you know, we kind of already know a sense of where
11 they're at as to how we should better support them to
12 move them from point a to point B. That is where I
13 think we need to work on and I think one of the areas
14 that the DOE, in my view, has really fallen short is
15 learning more from the consortium route because I
16 think they are doing some really innovative good,
17 good work that I think should be applied beyond. But
18 I want to get back to my line of questioning. So,
19 just to go back, we heard the proposed bill would
20 create a seat need of over 200,000 new seats. Just
21 accounted clarify for the record, New York City is in
22 receipt of billions of dollars of federal and state
23 aid. Is that correct?

24 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: That is correct.

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Why aren't we
3 pursuing this issue of class-size reduction in line
4 with this critical federal and state aid that does
5 not come about every year? This is not something
6 that is routine, but this is a very unique
7 opportunity that does not come around very often to
8 better meet the needs of children? So, can anyone
9 speak to why are we not applying some of that federal
10 and state aid towards class-size reduction and is
11 class-size reduction something that the DOE actually
12 believes in? Let's hear folks thoughts on that.

13 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: We do, absolutely,
14 believe that class-size does matter and what-- we've
15 also brought some experts with us, Chair Treyger, to
16 speak to this. But we have a long-standing
17 commitment to reducing class-size. The current
18 capital plan provides \$19 billion in funding over the
19 course of five years to create approximately 88 new
20 school buildings and more than 57,000 seats. The
21 state budget includes the first of a three year
22 phase-in of the long promised campaign of fiscal
23 equity funding. It means, for the first time, the
24 DOE can afford to raise Fair Student Funding for all
25 schools to 100 percent and that means a \$600 million

2 investment in our students and, as we said before,
3 the vast majority of that money goes to staffing. We
4 also have our \$18 million that, in partnership with
5 Council, thank you-- \$18 million investment to work
6 specifically, directly in class-size and early
7 literacy, hiring 140 new teachers and 72 high need
8 elementary schools. That money went out in the
9 summer. The majority of those teachers are in place
10 and working now. So, like the investments are there
11 and we believe in them deeply and the commitment we
12 are going to make, we are going to continue to make
13 for our neighborhoods in our communities to make sure
14 they have the schools they need.

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Mr. Pendergast, do
16 you believe that class-size and the overcrowding of
17 schools, as well, do you believe that that has
18 inhibited or greatly impacted the school system's
19 ability to fully and safely reopen and to maintain
20 this opening? Is this an issue that continues to
21 plague the school system?

22 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: We have reopened
23 safely. The schools have done tremendous work in
24 reopening safely. I think the data bears that out
25 and, as we continue to, obviously, with that new

2 distancing, right, they present challenges to
3 schools. We want to acknowledge that. So, I guess,
4 that's how I would answer your question. I'm not
5 going to say-- it's not easy or if there are fewer
6 there when it comes to reopening, but the most
7 important thing is that our students are with their
8 teachers and we have done that.

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right. But if you
10 can explain that at the previous hearing we, you
11 know, showed how the DOE changed and updated its
12 definition of how they measure, you know, 3 feet
13 distancing between students and are you aware that
14 the way now that they are measuring the 3 feet
15 different saying is from the center of a desk or the
16 center of the students knows to the other center of a
17 desk. Is that correct?

18 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: I'm aware that
19 schools are using roughly the center of the desk, in
20 many cases, as far as the measuring.

21 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Well, they're not.
22 There being encouraged to do that because it is a
23 significant challenge to safely distance for students
24 and, as I pointed out before in that last hearing, I,
25 as a teacher, one of the effective teaching tools is

2 the ability to walk around in proximity to students.
3 It would be a challenge to do that with tasks that
4 close together. Would you agree that that impact is
5 pedagogy in a class?

6 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: I would. Well, I
7 think it is important that teachers move around
8 classrooms, I do. And they can get to every student
9 in the room and they can check on work and have
10 conversations and listen to students. With the
11 current distancing with the students where they are,
12 we are opening kids are learning and kids are very,
13 very safe. So, I do think that pedagogy has been
14 tremendous and the teachers have done great work.
15 That's what I would--

16 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Mr. Pendergast, the
17 Mayor routinely touts the implementation and rollout
18 of UPK, the early childhood program, is one of his
19 administration's greatest accomplishments. Is that
20 correct?

21 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: I believe so, sir.

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And can you remind
23 us how many children were enrolled in the UPK
24 program?

2 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: I'm going ask about
3 my colleagues if we have a specific number right now?
4 I don't want to be correct here.

5 DR. LINDA CHEN: Is Maria Begg Roberson-
6 - can we unmute her to provide additional details on
7 pre-K?

8 MARIA BEGG ROBERSON: Sorry. I was
9 trying to unmute. I do not have that specific number
10 right now. My apologies. But I can get into you.

11 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes. I would
12 appreciate that. I recall the Mayor talking about
13 how, when he rolled out UPK, over 70,000 students are
14 children were signed up and it was a big
15 accomplishment. Does that number is on right to
16 folks at DOE? Over 70,000 kids signed up after the
17 first year of his first term?

18 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: Sir, that was some
19 time ago I don't want to shoot from the hip.
20 Roughly, I think. Roughly correct.

21 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Roughly correct. I
22 want to credit the DOE and credit the administration
23 for doing something extraordinary, for implementing a
24 robust early childhood program with over 70,000
25 children signed up and seated in about a year. You

2 got that right. And about a year, our local
3 government was able to set up an early childhood
4 program which really is a model and I know that we
5 have had to work to expand it into build it and to
6 further invest in it to provide pay parity and whole
7 other supports for CBO's. Remember, 60 percent of
8 the kids are with CBO's and we appreciate them. They
9 are wonderful partners. But the bottom line is,
10 within a year, over 70,000 kids seated in a UPK early
11 childhood program. Would the DOE acknowledge that
12 that is an extraordinary accomplishment?

13 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: Sure, sir. Yes.

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: why are we not
15 applying the same big thinking, bold ideas, energy
16 towards the issue of class-size reduction? If you
17 are saying 200,000 new seats are needed, we show that
18 we were able to come up with a plan in under a year
19 to see an additional 70,000 children in the program,
20 we have, as he mentioned, on the record, we are in
21 receipt of significant federal and state money. Why
22 are we not applying that same bold, ambitious energy
23 towards the implementation of class-size reduction?
24 I believe New York City in the year 2021 is capable
25 of addressing an additional 200,000 seat need and

2 getting it done. I'm not saying it will get done
3 overnight, but as you shown before, you can get it
4 done. Where there is a will, there is a way. Can
5 anyone speak to that, please?

6 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: Yes. And I'm going
7 to go to our experts at the School Construction
8 Authority, but I do want to say just as a reminder
9 that the pre-k rollout did just rely on new capacity.
10 We also used in existing buildings where we had space
11 and this legislation would, in fact, require new
12 buildings. So, I would like to bring in Andrea
13 Bender from the Chief of Staff at the school
14 Construction Authority to speak to just what some of
15 it entails to create some new schools here.

16 ANDREA BENDER: Absolutely. So, thank
17 you, Chair Treyger, for the question. I don't know
18 if anyone from Early Childhood is on the line who
19 can't speak to the rollout of UPK as it relates to
20 the way that DOE leveraged, and the network of
21 existing childcare providers, to provide pre-k seats.
22 Over a period of years, SCA constructed about 8700 of
23 those UPK seats. There is not a network, to my
24 knowledge, of existing community based providers that
25 provide mandated grades that we could leverage in the

2 same way. On the construction and, what I would say
3 is that, as Dr. Chen mentioned in the testimony, it
4 does take us about five years from the moment that we
5 find an appropriate an available site through
6 feasibility, through design, construction and until
7 we That ribbon, it's typically about five years for a
8 500 seat school, assuming that the site is relatively
9 simple one, it's not part of a mixed-use development,
10 that it is not very tight, and other constructability
11 challenges. And so, we estimated that, to meet this
12 need of upwards of 200,000 seats, it would take us
13 some decades to do that. We ballpark that we could
14 build about 75,000 seats in 15 years. Just from a
15 map perspective, it would probably take us decades to
16 build out these 200,000 seats that we anticipate this
17 bill requiring.

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, Andrea, you
19 heard me say this before and I'll say it again
20 publicly on the record. I really appreciate the
21 ability to get things done much faster than most, if
22 not all other city agencies. The SCA can build
23 literally build a new school in three to five years
24 while it takes the Parks Department 10 years to build
25 a bathroom and a park. You heard that right. It

2 takes New York City 10 years to build a toilet and
3 apart, but the SCA can build a new school within
4 three to five years. And that is a credit to the SCA
5 into their team. Now, Andrea, just to kind of
6 follow-up on that further, you are saying it takes,
7 on average, five years. Are there sometimes cases
8 were schools or extensions are built in under five
9 years?

10 ANDREA BENDER: I would say that if we
11 are building something that is in addition where we
12 have more control over the site or we have more
13 information about the site, that sometimes it can
14 take less than five years, but sometimes even in
15 addition can be very complicated because we've got a
16 factor for the interaction of certain systems with
17 the existing building. So, I would say that five
18 years is really, truly about right for the evolution
19 of a new school project from suit to nuts.

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right. And,
21 Andrea, we work together, your office in my office--
22 to your credit-- on finding spaces even in my
23 district to build new middle schools and extensions.
24 Is that correct?

2 ANDREA BENDER: Absolutely. We very
3 much appreciate that partnership.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And I appreciate
5 SCA's partnership, as well. And just imagine if we
6 applied that energy and focus across every single
7 district, across every single neighborhood and ZIP
8 Code in New York City, I think we would find a lot of
9 promise in reaching a goal. I want to be very clear.
10 The legislation that I have before is now, this is
11 our initial starting point, but we need a starting
12 point because I this far not seen a concerted effort
13 on the part of the administration at really
14 meaningfully reducing class-size. It's been sort of
15 about just catching up to population growth and
16 growth of neighborhoods and trying to adjust to
17 piecemeal rezonings in parts of the city and we have
18 gone through this in the Council has looked at this
19 before and the reports we have issued in terms of
20 school citing reports. But were talking about not
21 just catching up to rezonings were catching up to the
22 growth of populations and, obviously, the census has
23 shown us that we are growing city. But actually in
24 making the investments to meaningfully reduce class-
25 size: something that, actually, New York State

2 requires us and challenges us to do to the contracts
3 of excellence. We are willing to work with the
4 administration on a meaningful timeframe that is
5 feasible and practical, but we are not going to
6 discard this legislation because we need to move the
7 needle on this. This is both from a public health
8 lens, quite frankly because, as I mentioned before,
9 the last time we looked at this issue was in the
10 1930s. As you've noted, the world has changed. I
11 believe in, as we have heard here today already,
12 class-size and building occupancy has inhibited or
13 impacted DOE's ability to fully reopen. I am
14 curious, Dr. Chen, if anyone has any data. Do you
15 have data on how many grievances have been filed
16 against the DOE and against the school administration
17 for issues of class-size and overcrowding? Does
18 anyone have any data on that?

19 DR. LINDA CHEN: I do not have that data.
20 I don't know that the rest of the team does, but we
21 can certainly reach out to our labor department to
22 provide those for you, Chair.

23 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes.

24 DR. LINDA CHEN: Specific liaison
25 grievances on class-size, correct?

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Correct. Correct.

3 And we know that-- and there's a reason why the DOE
4 has to dispatch teams which I am aware of to schools
5 to kind of think about outdoor space and outdoor use
6 because there is just inside the school buildings.

7 If I am hearing that the issue is seat need, 200,000
8 seats, this administration to its credit showed that
9 it can stand a program in a year. If it is issue of
10 construction, SCA builds things faster than other
11 agencies. I'm willing to work on a reasonable
12 timeframe to implement that. If the issue is money,
13 we are in receipt of billions of dollars from federal
14 and state aid. There is no time like now to make
15 this adequate investment. I want to work with the
16 administration on making sure that we craft this
17 language and bill to actually meet the moment because
18 I don't think we are. Council member Dinowitz, I
19 know you have a follow-up question. I will just give
20 a couple minutes on the clock for you to follow up
21 on.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Just one moment,
23 Chair. Maria Begg Roberson from DOE had more to add.

24 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Oh, yes.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And had her hand
3 up.

4 MARIA BEGG ROBERSON: Thank you, Chair.
5 I just wanted to answer your question on how many
6 children are enrolled in 3K and pre-k. So, currently
7 there are about 60,000 children enrolled in pre-k and
8 36,000 students enrolled in 3K.

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you. Thank
10 you for letting us know how many children are
11 enrolled in the early childhood portion. I wish the
12 DOE could give us the rest of the picture, but that
13 is very, very helpful. And, again, to DOE's credit,
14 they build a program and about a year. Great job,
15 DOE. Eric Dinowitz. I'm sorry. Your hands.

16 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Yeah. Thank
18 you, Chair Treyger. And thank you to DOE. It's nice
19 to have a number. You know, we are expecting our
20 kids to do math. It's nice that we can count. My
21 question is just a bout our students in shelter. You
22 know, kids are living in the shelter and living with
23 homelessness and they are some of our most vulnerable
24 students. Attendance in our schools has
25 significantly dropped for students living with

2 homelessness compared to those in permanent housing,
3 if you seen any recent articles. And as part of the
4 recovery efforts, I didn't see it in the plan, but I
5 would like for you to speak about what specific
6 efforts are being made to provide professionals in
7 our shelter system to address the needs of some of
8 the highest needs of children and what coordination
9 you're doing with DHS to provide interventions and
10 these services.

11 DR. LINDA CHEN: Council member Dinowitz,
12 thank you for that important question. I am going to
13 insert the resource part of it and, to just make sure
14 you are aware, and then just pitted over to my
15 colleagues on the specifics. So, the academic
16 recovery allocation, I just want to make sure Council
17 members are very aware that we made it based on need
18 and that comes directly from a lot of feedback you
19 gave us over the past year which includes hardest hit
20 areas as well as students in temporary housing and
21 specific ways also for students in shelter in
22 addition to other students, students with
23 disabilities and multilingual learners of various
24 needs. So I just wanted to make sure that you knew
25 that the resources are geared to follow the greatest

2 needs and then I'll pivot over to my colleague,
3 LaShawn Robinson, Deputy Chancellor Robinson, on the
4 very specifics that her and her team have been doing
5 in response to our students in temporary housing.

6 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROBINSON: Thank you, Dr.
7 Chen. Actually, Sarah Jonas is going to take that.

8 SARAH JONAS: Hi. Thank you so much,
9 Deputy Chancellor Robinson, Chair, and Council
10 members. So, you know, absolutely. Really
11 appreciate lifting again the focus in the critical
12 needs of students in temporary housing. We know that
13 these students face uniquely difficult challenges and
14 they are kept in mind for us, you know, and
15 allocations and efforts and resources. Some
16 specifics: we have dedicated 324 school and shelter-
17 based employees to support students in temporary
18 housing. That include 100 Bridging the Gap social
19 workers, 107 STH community coordinators, and 117 STH
20 family assistance. We are also as far as training--
21 I know that was brought up. How are we building
22 capacity?

23 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: So, if-- I'm
24 sorry because I only have--

25 SARAH JONAS: Sure.

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: two minutes.

4 Unless I am reading this wrong, it says school age
5 children shelters FY 21, June 2021, there were
6 12,000. There was a little more than that the
7 previous month, but it is hovering around 12 to
8 14,000. Even if it were just a class, 300 employees
9 is like 40 kids per employee and were talking about
10 some of the highest needs kids and then you break it
11 down and it's 100 social workers for those roughly
12 12,000 kids. It's one social worker for 120 of our
13 highest need children and it just doesn't sound
14 like-- right? I mean, more than zero is good, I
15 guess, but if Dr. Chen is saying this is based on
16 need, just it's very obvious that people living in
17 and children living in temporary housing whose
18 attendance dropped significantly-- and it was
19 already low to begin with compared to children in
20 permanent housing. I mean, a lot more than a one to
21 120 ratio of social workers. And I didn't hear
22 anything about academic intervention, but we're
23 talking about academic intervention today and I hear
24 about zero teachers working in our shelter and
25 working directly with our children. So, I want to

2 respect the time that Chair Treyger gave me, but I--
3 thank you for having numbers. I'm glad you have
4 numbers. I am deeply disappointed that they are very
5 low numbers and I would love to see those numbers
6 increase tremendously to actually meet the needs of
7 our homeless children and children living without
8 housing. Thank you.

9 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROBINSON: Thank you.
10 Chair, would it be okay if Sarah Jonas had an
11 opportunity to continue and-- would that be okay,
12 Chair?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Thank you. I
14 just wanted to respect time. That's all. But thank
15 you.

16 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROBINSON: Thank you. I
17 just like to honor her response I just like to say,
18 before she continues, thanks to this Council, we have
19 been unable to increase the number of staff members
20 supporting students in shelter. So, that increased
21 on the watch of this Council and this
22 administration-- the increase and opportunity to
23 have social workers, the increase in our STH
24 coordinators. Schools also have infrastructure in
25 place to support students in temporary housing and

2 students in shelter. We partner closely across the
3 city with our other agency partners to engage in this
4 work. I would agree 100 percent with you that there
5 is so much more to be done in this area in
6 particular, but just the efforts of the community
7 schools and even thinking about how we're going to
8 allocate the community schools, I think, will be
9 important to hear and then other efforts, as well.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Okay. I don't
11 doubt that effort is there. I don't doubt the hard
12 work of our professionals. I'm just saying if-- I
13 mean, just on a very basic level, if the children
14 aren't going to school in the first place, then it's
15 very hard for them to get the services if they are
16 not in the school building. But I know that Ms.
17 Jonas wanted to continue with something.

18 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROBINSON: Yes. Please.

19 SARAH JONAS: Thank you very much,
20 Councilman. Yeah. So, just to continue a little bit
21 on December the supports and, again, understand and
22 agree that this is about, you know, capacity across
23 our system and how we are building capacity at the
24 school level and in terms of dedicated staff, you
25 know, to support the efforts at the school level, as

2 well, for our students in temporary housing. So, to
3 share a few more specifics, we have really focused--
4 I think you had brought up training capacity
5 building. We have really focused on a training for
6 all school and shelter-based staff around how to help
7 students reconnect, particularly, if students have
8 been disconnected, how to understand and implement
9 trauma informed practices which we know are critical
10 for all students and, most especially, our students
11 with experienced trauma, including students
12 experiencing homelessness and training around how to
13 help families navigate access to free public benefits
14 to address issues such as housing, hunger,
15 healthcare, and finding employment. We have also
16 been working closely with schools to help them
17 powerfully leverage the title I, STH title I funding,
18 to include specific and targeted supports that would
19 most benefit students in temporary housing. So, for
20 example, things like purchasing school supplies,
21 providing additional enrichment programs, or hiring
22 additional STH dedicated staff which I know is
23 something that you named a moment ago. I would also
24 like to just share that, in working with Volunteers
25 of America and in partnership with the Department of

2 Homeless Services, our STH team provided nearly
3 20,000 backpacks filled with school supplies to our
4 students in shelter the week before the first day of
5 school and we are working, the Office of Community
6 Schools in partnership with Ramapo for Children and
7 we are committing, you know, additional supports
8 around youth voice and leadership and how to ensure
9 that students in temporary housing are being
10 recognized and supported in their own right as youth
11 leaders and lifting their voice to strengthen how
12 they are, you know, leaders in their own schools and
13 how they are helping to advise us in terms of the
14 supports that we are providing to student experience
15 homelessness and their families. So, just wanted to
16 lift up some of those critical supports, as well,
17 which we know are so important for our students'
18 social, emotional, academic, and overall health and
19 wellbeing. So, thank you for, you know, for that
20 time, as well.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Thank you.

22 And not to discount any of that work or that effort
23 or how important it is, but, you know, unless we are
24 addressing the needs of where they are specifically
25 in the shelters with robust staffing, including the

2 training, including the physical supplies, we are
3 just creating another generation of people struggling
4 with poverty and homelessness. We have to address
5 this now intensely now. So, thank you. Thank you.

6 SARAH JONAS: Absolutely. And, if I may, I
7 will just add one less critical piece that is also to
8 your point. Continuing to innovate directly with
9 shelters, including a pilot that we have underway to
10 share, you know, data tools with our shelter partners
11 that narrowed the tools that we are using in our
12 schools so that, together, shelter partners can work
13 with schools around tracking and identifying and
14 providing targeted supports to our students in
15 temporary housing. So, I think that's a great point
16 and I thank you for lifting up that need to be
17 supporting at this school and shelter level,
18 including the coordination between the two to ensure
19 that we are aligned in our powerful supports of our
20 students in temporary housing and their families.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Thank you.
22 Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We will turn to
24 Council member Barron. There you. You are unmute it
25 now, Council member.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you very
3 much. Thank you for the opportunity to come back
4 again. And, particularly, as we are talking now
5 about school space, I have to give high commendation,
6 praise, thanks to the Mayor, to a former Chancellor
7 Carranza, and the School Construction Authority for
8 the beautiful new building that was erected in my
9 district. The site formerly had 12 TCU's which
10 house-- and the part of an old, I guess, health
11 department building. A two story health department
12 building that housed 500 children. So, needless to
13 say, it was very cramped. I want to thank those
14 parties that I mentioned. They met and fulfill the
15 promise that they were demolished. Remove the TCU's,
16 demolish the old building during the time that the
17 students would be moved, they would keep that entire
18 student population intact in one location and to
19 those who have any kind of connection education, if
20 you're trying to have a school in two locations, that
21 can be disastrous. They committed to fulfill the
22 promise to keep the student population and the staff
23 in one location and they fulfilled their promise to
24 open, have a ribbon-cutting, for this fall and it was
25 a beautiful occasion. So I want to acknowledge that,

2 thank them for that, and say that we have a beautiful
3 occasion. So I want to acknowledge that, thank them
4 for that, and say that we have a beautiful five-story
5 state-of-the-art building for 500 children. It's got
6 a beautiful kitchen where it has to walk-in freezers
7 and all the amenities that go with that. They have a
8 cafeteria with pod seating, as well as booth seating
9 so that students are engaged in conversations. They
10 have the gymnasium which has beautiful new
11 equipment and not the regular bleachers. We have
12 individual Christian seats in our gymnasium. We
13 have a dance studio with a floating floor in the
14 mirrors. The cafeteria. Well, I talked about that.
15 We have a library, two science labs. Two science
16 labs fully equipped with a separate preparation room.
17 We have the library. We have the arts studio with a
18 separate storage room for the equipment, and with
19 numerous firing kilns so that you don't have to wait
20 for your project to get fired and you get to take it
21 home, and we have a swimming pool. So, it's a
22 beautiful building. It's a model for what we need to
23 consider moving forward as we talk about how we need
24 to fulfill the need to give students and teachers
25 adequate space in beautiful buildings that are air-

2 conditioned meet all of the standards so that they
3 can enjoy the environment in which their learning.
4 So, oh. And we have a music Studios with five
5 adjoining practice rooms to the music studio. So,
6 it's a comprehensive program.

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you. Our
9 students are entitled to that. Our staff. And we
10 need to make sure that, moving forward, as we talk
11 about class size, classroom size, and appropriate
12 space, this is the kind of model that we look forward
13 to. Thank you very much. And then you, again,
14 everyone who worked on that project.

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I want to thank
16 you, Council member Barron, for championing this from
17 day one to getting it done. And just very quickly,
18 if I may, from the start of construction to the
19 completion of the opening, how long did it take them
20 to build this new school? You are on mute, Council
21 member Barron. You're on mute.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Unmute me. Okay.
23 Thank you. In spite of COVID, the deaths, the
24 delays, and all of that, it opened on time. IT was

2 three years from start to finish with the
3 construction.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Three.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Three years start
6 to finish. They made a promise to me. They knew how
7 important it was to me into the community and they
8 met all of those times in spite of the delays and all
9 that. Yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Three years to
11 build a new school. Andrea Bender and SCA, that's
12 extraordinary. DOE, that's extraordinary. You get
13 it done. You get it done. It can't? Yes. Yes. We
14 can. Andrea Bender, I see you have your hand up.
15 Kudos on doing a great job.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Great work.

17 ANDREA BENDER: I just want to say thank
18 you so much, Council member Barron, for your kind
19 words. We also are so proud of East New York Family
20 Academy. I know the ribbon-cutting was a really
21 lovely special occasion. We were so proud to be able
22 to do that with you and the Chancellor and our team
23 that worked on that cool. I would note that, while
24 construction took three years, it does take time for
25 design and it does take time for feasibility and

2 evaluation due diligence of the site, including
3 environmental and all of that other stuff that goes
4 into the preparation of the school before shovels
5 ever hit the ground. So, and in that case, also, I
6 would note that we also had a site that was
7 identified for us and provided to us in the rezoning.
8 Council member, as you noted earlier, the
9 availability of real estate that is appropriate and
10 in the right location across the city is one of the
11 major challenges that we find across the city and, at
12 East New York Family Academy, we did not have that
13 challenge and so that allowed us to deliver this
14 project in a timeframe that was wonderful for all of
15 the kids who were enjoying that beautiful facility.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Yes. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: It's great. And
18 that's wonderful. The collaboration between the
19 local Council member, SCA, the administration. But
20 you see what happens when we collaborate and actually
21 communicate them work together. Great things happen
22 and heroes spaces found, just like Council member
23 Barron helped find a space. I helped find a space
24 here in my district. That is how it happens. But
25 the point is in three or four years a new school is

2 built and that's-- and I mean that. That's
3 incredible for us to accomplish because other
4 agencies just can't do that and that's why I'm saying
5 that I think that we can actually get something very
6 big done. Thank you, Council member Barron,
7 congratulations on that major victory in your
8 community and for the city, as well. I saw that Mr.
9 Taratko and his hand up and appreciate your service
10 and for being here and please.

11 THOMAS TARATKO: Yes. The building was a
12 great partnership and I remember meeting with
13 Andrea's predecessor, Melody, and the Council members
14 office and getting all the swings space at Maxwell
15 High School done and everything. It was great. But
16 I would like to just not talk about the 200 possible
17 see need and new construction, have we considered the
18 effect this would have on our existing buildings and
19 with all the amenities that the Council member that
20 was just mentioned in the new building, are those
21 kids going to be able to sit in booth seating and
22 enjoy the back-and-forth now with 35 square feet
23 required per student? What do we do with our science
24 labs that are built in fixed furniture? Are
25 auditoriums or gymnatorium? I just want to make

2 sure, Chair, that we are thinking through-- see, I'm
3 the guy that has to implement this. So, whatever
4 comes out, I'm going to be in the schools trying to
5 make it work for all of our principles. On paper, if
6 we're just going by numbers that beautiful 500 seat
7 school that we just designed and built now seats 300
8 people. So, what do we do with the 200 kids that
9 don't get access to that beautiful building now? Do
10 we like them the school day? I mean, I just want to
11 thank the whole thing through before something gets
12 signed over there and then we Make good on it. So,
13 that is just my over arcing concern.

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And, Thomas, I
15 appreciate that concern and what I will note is that,
16 if I heard correctly, this was partly due to a
17 rezoning that was taking place in that community and
18 that was my earlier point. It should not just be a
19 rezoning that triggers this type of planning and this
20 type of thinking because, as we saw with the census
21 data, our population is growing. It is documented.
22 In the census didn't capture every New Yorker,
23 either. I mean, there is a reason why we are losing
24 a congressional seat over that because we didn't
25 capture everyone. It shouldn't take a piecemeal

2 rezoning to figure out how do we build schools out.
3 And that is my issue. What I'm saying is that, when
4 you have the will and you put the ambition and you
5 put the plan and vision ahead of you, New York City
6 has a history of getting big things done when
7 everyone works together. First, if the
8 administration sees this as a goal. I'm hearing from
9 Mr. Pendergast that class size does matter. Mr.
10 Pendergast, is that correct? Is that your position
11 of that is the position of the DOE?

12 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: it is any
13 pedagogue's position, I would say, , right? It does.

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Okay. So, that is
15 great. And also, Thomas, I'll just go back earlier
16 that the last time we looked at this issue from a
17 building code standpoint, it was pre-World War II
18 which, I hope we agree, the world has greatly changed
19 since World War II. Tuberculosis is not the issue
20 today of our time, unfortunately. So, we have money.
21 I am hearing that class size does matter. You know,
22 the history showing that you can get big things done.
23 I am very open to the conversations and discussions
24 about how do we get this on a reasonable timeframe,
25 but we need to move the needle on this because I just

2 don't hear any type of sense of urgency. And, also,
3 I'll be very blunt and just be more direct. I am not
4 a public health expert, but from every public health
5 expert that you listen to it read from, they tell you
6 that this is not the last pandemic that we will be
7 dealing with. Does that sound accurate to what you
8 are reading, as well? Anyone from DOE want to
9 respond to that?

10 THOMAS TARATKO: Well, again, not a
11 health expert, either. So, you know, I breeding many
12 different articles and everything, but we functioned
13 a long time with certain standards. If they need to
14 be adjusted, that's fine. I just want everyone on
15 this hearing to understand that this is going to have
16 bigger applications than just 200,000 seats and SCA
17 going out there and killing it all over the city,
18 which I know they will do, but it's going to affect
19 every successful school that is functioning now.
20 It's going to affect the number of cluster rooms, the
21 number of specialty rooms. There class sizes across
22 the board. The way we operate is right now we are
23 operating differently than we have my first 42 years
24 in the department.

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thomas. Thomas, if
3 I may. If I may. Are there schools today that don't
4 have a library?

5 THOMAS TARATKO: Right now, the buildings
6 are using those specialty spaces as classrooms some
7 periods of the day. Not in our typical, say,
8 [inaudible 02:59:46] or pre-March 16th, 2019 ways.
9 They are using the buildings differently now. That
10 is how they are able to handle social distancing.

11 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I'm sorry about
12 that. So, but Thomas, just to clarify for the
13 record. We have schools that are without-- today.
14 Today. Present-day. Without a full dedicated
15 library. Is that correct?

16 THOMAS TARATKO: Constructed library,
17 it's quite possible we have some buildings out there.
18 Yeah.

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Okay. And if I
20 heard correctly before, Council member Barron
21 mentioned that, in this new school, there building a
22 gymnasium which means they are combining a gym and
23 auditorium together. Is that correct?

24 THOMAS TARATKO: Yes.

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right. And then
3 there are some schools that have gems and auditoriums
4 built separately. Is that correct?

5 THOMAS TARATKO: Correct.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And that's--
7 forgive me. And that is also attached to issues of
8 space?

9 THOMAS TARATKO: Depending on, you know,
10 what was available on that lot or when that building
11 was built. Buildings are built differently with some
12 space restraints. Yes.

13 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, we are making
14 decisions because of space constraints. Is that
15 correct, Thomas?

16 THOMAS TARATKO: That's correct.

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: and we usually
18 should be building a system that centers the needs of
19 children and not centers space constraints. Would
20 you agree with that?

21 THOMAS TARATKO: I don't know that that
22 is a possibility New York City, but, yes. I mean, of
23 course. Kids first.

24 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right. In kitchen
25 be first, but I don't think they aren't I think that

2 there is a way. Again, we found ways to accomplish
3 big things and if the administration actually wants
4 to make this a call and actually get this done, we
5 proven that, when we are all working together and we
6 are on the same page, big things can happen. I just
7 believe that it is a question of not if but when the
8 next pandemic hits. I think we've already heard from
9 a number of folks how class size does matter in terms
10 of public health. Basic pedagogy. Also an issue of
11 equity for children. And so, yes. I appreciate the
12 fact that you care deeply, as we do, about all the
13 critical spaces that our kids rightly deserve. But
14 as you pointed out, we are making decisions now,
15 today, minus this bill. If we take away the bill,
16 minus this bill today we are making decisions based
17 on space constraints and not based on the needs of
18 kids. We need to turn that around and that's what I
19 think this bill really does. Thank you, Thomas, for
20 your service and also for your office's
21 responsiveness, as well, and many issues that we've
22 flagged. Thank you. Thank you so much. And I
23 think, with that, I think, Malcolm, is there any
24 other member that has any additional questions?

25 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No. There is not.

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: With that, we will
3 now turn to public testimony. Thank you very much.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and I
5 would like to remind all public participants that we
6 are limiting testimony to two minutes. Please wait
7 for the sergeant-at-arms to give you the cue to begin
8 and we ask that when time is called, if persons could
9 wrap up their thoughts so we can move on to the next
10 panel. But, before we begin public testimony, Chair,
11 we do have a public official panel. So we first will
12 be hearing from Regent Kathleen Cashin from the New
13 York State Board of Regents and Sarita Subramanian,
14 Assistant Director of Education at the New York City
15 Independent Budget Office. We will first hear from
16 Regent Cashin.

17 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

18 KATHLEEN CASHIN: Thank you. Good
19 afternoon, Chairman Treyger, distinguished members of
20 the New York City Education Committee for holding
21 these important hearings today. When I was
22 superintendent of District 23 in Ocean
23 Hill/Brownsville, fourth-graders had to take a
24 multifaceted state test for the first time which
25 included reading, writing, and listening. The first

2 thing I did as superintendent was to reduce class
3 size in the fourth grade. In those days, the
4 community superintendents have their own budgets and
5 therefore I could invest the necessary funds to
6 provide reasonable class sizes so that we could
7 better prepare students to take this important new
8 state test. We lowered class size and all the fourth
9 grade classes to 16 to 20 students per class. We
10 also help prepare the teachers by providing them with
11 books in different genres and had them ask their
12 students to respond in writing to prompts each
13 morning following reading and listening exercises.
14 The results were really astounding. The children in
15 one of the poorest districts in the nation had the
16 greatest growth of any district in the city in
17 reading, writing, and listening. The key initiative
18 that caused this substantial growth, I believe, was
19 lowering the class size. I also noticed that a more
20 manageable--

21 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

22 KATHLEEN CASHIN: class size promoted
23 collaborative planning among the teachers. This is
24 essential because collaboration improves instruction
25 and it promoted collegiality among staff. I

2 discovered that class size not only improves the
3 ability of students to learn, but also improves the
4 ability of teachers to plan and teach in a more
5 effective manner. For the first time, they were
6 able to manage their classes better. And that
7 smaller class size while them to develop a
8 relationship of trust with their students that, in
9 turn, led to improvements in student discipline and
10 behavior. Market improvement. Teachers had more
11 energy and confidence in their ability to do their
12 jobs which encourage them to more enthusiastically
13 collaborate with each other. This fostered a high
14 degree of professionalism. My experiences district
15 superintendent and then, following that, as regional
16 superintendent, it reinforced my conviction and the
17 importance of class size and my understanding of the
18 following principle: if you reduce class size and
19 provide the right curriculum and structure, the rest
20 will follow. Thank you for this opportunity to
21 testify. I be happy to answer any questions.

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I want to thank you
23 Regent Cashin real leadership, your dedication, and
24 for always centering it about the children in our
25 kids and even, you know, were talking about class

2 size bill, but you've actually been in this work and
3 done this work and I appreciate your testimony. And
4 can you speak to me about what type of support did
5 you receive from the department or lack of support or
6 support in general when you were working on this when
7 you were superintendent?

8 KATHLEEN CASHIN: Well, you know, my team
9 and I, we just realize that discipline is better,
10 that teachers are more confident when they have the
11 ability to teach your children. They are more
12 prepared. Everything was better. So, I was like--
13 I mean, had control of the budget. My team and I had
14 control of it and when we were regions, we didn't.
15 It was, you know, an organization giving us money,
16 but we had control of it and we poured the money into
17 reduction and class-size. For the fourth grade,
18 first, because it was the first year of the test. I
19 remember Chancellor Leavy was the Chancellor at that
20 time. I remember him announcing it at a
21 superintendents meeting. They asked me why we grew
22 so much, comparatively speaking. The growth was
23 astounding. Reduction in class-size promotes better
24 behavior on the part of the children. They get more
25 attention. Teachers are able to give them

2 boundaries, teach them boundaries. Our suspension
3 rates also went way down. Not that we didn't have
4 consequences. There were consequences if a child
5 should disrupt the class, etc. But our first and
6 second and third option was not to suspend. It was
7 to give a consequence, but to control and encourage
8 them to control their tempers, encourage them to have
9 behaviors that will bring about a positive
10 consequence. So, you have discipline improving
11 because of reduction in class-size, your pedagogy
12 improving because of reduction in class-size, the
13 test scores improved because of reduction of class-
14 size, teachers were happier. I mean, this is another
15 crisis we are facing, if I may. We can't get
16 teachers. Last week, I spoke with a lot of Dean's.
17 I'm on the cochair of the Higher Ed committee. We
18 spoke with a lot of Dean's in the Dean's are saying
19 how concerned they are about is getting teachers.
20 Not only about is getting teachers, but keeping
21 teachers. So, coupled with the positive aspects of
22 what our children receive because they get the
23 attention, because the teacher can be kinder. They
24 have the time to be kind because they learn more. At
25 the time to help the children learn. But coupled

2 with all that, is that teachers wanted to stay
3 because there happier. So, the two things that are
4 crisis: first the child, but secondly the teacher.
5 If we can't get teachers, we are in a lot of trouble
6 and last week when I spoke to all these Deans, they
7 were giving me suggestions on how to keep teachers.
8 Pay substitute teachers. For example, a student
9 teachers to sub. Now, you may say, well, we can't
10 get subs. So, if we can have student teachers who
11 can be paid to do student teaching, which we are
12 exploring on the Board of Regents, by the way, that
13 would be a tremendous help to our schools. We don't
14 want to break up the class. I mean, the principal, I
15 never wanted to break up the class. Never. I'd
16 rather pull somebody out of the program then to break
17 up the class because the kids are so disrupted and
18 they are forlorn a lot of ways, although they don't
19 have the teacher. But if you gave the teachers a
20 real shot at teaching the kid, a real shot at having
21 them learn self control, learn kindness with
22 boundaries-- that was the mantra. Kindness but
23 boundaries. And there were consequences if the
24 boundaries were broken, but it wasn't throw them out
25 and go home. I mean, where does the kid go? What

2 does the kid do? So, class-size is a benefit for our
3 children and deserve it, but class-size reduction is
4 a benefit for our teachers and they deserve it.
5 Everything improves. Now, I will say this, if I may,
6 just to go on little bit more. The supervisors have
7 to be around the building and they have to know
8 what's going on. They absolutely have to know what's
9 going on and they have to make sure that, with the
10 reduction of class-size, is better teaching. Say,
11 because you do something that is really good,
12 reduction in class-size, you have to make sure it is
13 implemented properly and that is where the
14 supervisors come in making certain that the children
15 benefit from that reduction and making sure that the
16 teachers benefit. I did notice-- now, one school
17 was unbelievable, but many of the schools. You know
18 how, Mark, you were a-- Chairman Treyger, excuse me.
19 I know you are a teacher I know that it is far better
20 if teachers can collaborate social studies with
21 science, math, etc. all collaborating and reinforcing
22 concepts. It's ideal. But that is promoted by
23 reduction in class size. So, it benefits the
24 teacher-- and we are in crisis with our teachers
25 and, most importantly, it benefits the children under

2 our care suspensions were down in district 23,
3 academics were up. And they had consequences. The
4 children always had consequences, but it wasn't to
5 suspend and put them out of the building. Our focus
6 was to benefit the child in the teacher. So, they go
7 hand in hand.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Did you
9 have more questions, Chair?

10 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Just one last
11 question really quickly. Regent, I really appreciate
12 this. We heard testimony from DOE and SCA that space
13 is a challenge. I don't disagree that space is a
14 challenge, but we approve it in history that we can
15 overcome that with resources and the willing capacity
16 to change that. How did you deal with any space
17 issues during your time as superintendent?

18 KATHLEEN CASHIN: Well, I was lucky and
19 honored to be in Brownsville. People were wonderful,
20 but we were not overcrowded. We were not. So we
21 were readily able to do this. But I also want to say
22 about space issues, I really don't know if the number
23 is reduced by 200,000 students or three, but over
24 this pandemic, the New York City school system has
25 lost two or 300,000 students. I think we used to

2 have one point million. I don't know what it is now.
3 You would now. Maybe hundred or 900,000. I'm not
4 sure. But we have definitely lost a very large
5 number. So, what I did, as I said, we work
6 overcrowded in the district. I was lucky and honored
7 to be there. The best of my life. But you can find
8 space. I mean, you can use space differently in the
9 building if you really look to reduce the class-size,
10 but we didn't have to do that, Chairman. Honestly,
11 we were lucky not we didn't have that overcrowding
12 situation and we made the most of it. Teachers were
13 happy. Students delivered pedagogically. Students
14 were happy. You should have seen the parent meetings
15 that I had. Indications of whether the students are
16 happier is how many parent-child up in a meeting. I
17 used to say to the parents, if you have-- and they
18 packed my meetings and I always provided the parents
19 so they didn't have to worry about making dinner,
20 with dinner. And I said to them, though, if a child
21 or younger child should be disruptive a little,
22 please take them out for a while and give them a
23 breather. In the day. Everything was better. First
24 of all, it was the best time of my life. I'm saying
25 it again. We did so much good in the underpinning of

2 everything was reducing class-size and then
3 pedagogic-- we were driven pedagogically. We had
4 disciplined, but not the kind to probe the kid out.
5 Consequences and we taught them how to do self-
6 control behaviors, etc. We also taught them and
7 tried to teach them kindness. That is a big
8 disciplinary technique. You know, if you are kind to
9 child, they start to listen to you and they start to
10 respect you and everything gets better. Kindness
11 with boundaries, I would say, was our approach to
12 discipline, coupled with reduction in class-size,
13 coupled with the ability to collaborate because they
14 were so welcome to the meetings. It all turned out
15 to be the rebirth of Brownsville for a goodly period
16 of time and it was the best time of my professional
17 career. Even the regions. I had 23, 19, and 27. 19
18 was East New York, 27 was the Rockaways. Even as
19 well as we did and we employed the same strategies of
20 kindness and boundaries, the best time that I could
21 really keep my pulse on the schools because we had
22 fewer schools than the hundred and 14 that I had as a
23 regional superintendent, although the strategies with
24 the region work today are, too, as best we could.

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And Regent Cashin,
3 you mentioned in the enrollment numbers that you are
4 estimating. The education department still is not
5 telling us--

6 KATHLEEN CASHIN: Oh, Chairman, I was just
7 reading in-- Well, not just. But I was reading in
8 the papers that the numbers are way down. People are
9 saying they are going to Charters, they're going to
10 Catholic schools, they're going to private schools.
11 I thought I read a couple weeks ago that the numbers
12 are two or 300 down, but, you know, I don't have
13 any-- you know, because I am a Regent, I don't have
14 any privilege data that I am sharing. I read it in
15 the papers that wasn't just 100,000. It was like two
16 or 300.

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But just clarify
18 for the record for us, because I'm pretty sure I know
19 the answer, but I just want to get this on the
20 record. There is nothing in state law or state
21 education rags that prohibits the DOE from telling
22 the public today how many kids are enrolled in the
23 public school system. Is that correct?

24 KATHLEEN CASHIN: I believe--

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank we lost
3 connection, Regent Cashin.

4 KATHLEEN CASHIN: I believe it is public
5 information that you're entitled to help. I don't
6 believe there is any regulation against prohibiting.
7 We always knew how many children. I remember knowing
8 it was 1.1 million when I was a superintendent and I
9 think it may have grown to 1.2, but I remember
10 reading it-- I got it from the paper, Chairman. I
11 did get it from any privileged information.

12 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah. Yeah. They
13 are telling us that October 31 is this magical time.
14 I know, being a teacher, know what that means. I
15 know that we are required to report to the state the
16 number of kids enrolled in a school for budgetary
17 purposes of reasons because, if a student gets more
18 present at least once in the month of October, the
19 school gets money for the student and that is
20 something that is important with NYCED, but that does
21 not prohibit the city from telling us how many kids
22 are enrolled and I really, again, thank you, again,
23 Regent, for that clarification. I really appreciate
24 you being here today. Thank you very much.

25 KATHLEEN CASHIN: Thank you, Chairman.

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Malcolm, who is
3 next?

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Sarita Supra-- And
5 I apologize for messing up your last name, Sarita.
6 Subramanian and from the New York City Independent
7 Budget Office.

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

9 SARITA SUBRAMANIAN: Good afternoon,
10 Chair, and members of the city Council. Thank you
11 for the opportunity to testify. My name is Sarita
12 Subramanian and I am the assistant director for
13 education at the New York City Independent Budget
14 Office. Please refer to my written testimony on
15 details-- I'm sorry. On details on the 362 million
16 in funding dedicated to academic recovery that we see
17 so far in school budgets and central office budgets.
18 Today's testimony will focus on IBO's analysis of the
19 potential impact of the intro on city schools. We
20 estimate that almost half of the city's 1600 schools
21 that would be subject to the local law but not be
22 able to guarantee 35 square feet per student,
23 potentially affecting more than 103,000 students.
24 The city Council's proposal will increase the square
25 footage from the current building code and, following

2 the proposal, IBO divided the square footage of each
3 regular classroom and specialty instruction room by
4 35 square feet in all rooms in the 2019-2020
5 principle annual space survey. We found that 672
6 schools in districts one to 32 and 75 would be out of
7 compliance and, in total, there would be a shortage
8 of space for about 103,000 students. About 80
9 percent of these schools were able to accommodate
10 three quarters or more of their students and, on
11 average, these schools would have to find space for
12 94 students. Looking across the different schools,
13 almost half of high schools would have been out of
14 compliance, needing space for approximately 44,000
15 high school students. There are three important
16 considerations to take into account. First, these
17 estimates assume that the total area of a room can be
18 usable space, but, in reality, these classrooms have
19 a portion of their space dedicated to classroom
20 supplies and furniture such as--

21 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

22 SARITA SUBRAMANIAN: well as a teacher's
23 area. In addition, other spaces are available for
24 conversion to classroom space such as the space used
25 by outside organizations or large assembly spaces.

2 However, the strategy may affect school operations in
3 the availability of educational after school and
4 community programming. Finally, we estimate that the
5 DOE may need to construct or lease approximately 3.6
6 million square feet of space across the schools and,
7 while there are plans for adding new seats, there are
8 over 30,000 new seats since the 1920 school year and
9 through September 2024. That's still well below the
10 103, 000 seat we estimate for the need for schools,
11 posing a significant challenge for many of the city
12 schools. Thank you, again, for the opportunity to
13 testify and I would be happy to answer any questions.

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you very
15 much, Sarita, for your testimony and for your service
16 and for your great work and just for clarification,
17 your office is estimating a seat need or, as a result
18 of this proposed bill, 103,000-- is that correct?

19 SARITA SUBRAMANIAN: That's correct.

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And did you hear
21 the testimony from the administration made that over
22 200,000?

23 SARITA SUBRAMANIAN: Yes.

24 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Do you know why
25 there's a discrepancy?

2 SARITA SUBRAMANIAN: I'm not sure. I
3 can't say because I'm not aware of their specific
4 methodology, but I can tell you that our
5 methodologies simply takes the square footage of
6 every regular classroom and specialty instruction
7 room and divides by 35 square feet, so, you know,
8 just to be very transparent about our methodology,
9 can't really speak to what or how they are coming up
10 with their estimate.

11 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right. And are you
12 also aware-- because we did some research on our end
13 about the last time that the building code was kind
14 of adjusted was back in the 1930s before World War
15 II?

16 SARITA SUBRAMANIAN: I was not aware of
17 that specifically, but I do recall you mentioning
18 that, yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right. And the
20 issue of the time was tuberculosis and we certainly
21 have agreed that the world has changed greatly since
22 then. It also I appreciate you mentioning that--
23 because in the building code itself, it doesn't
24 really reflect the reality that furniture exists
25 because, as we know, there is something called desks.

2 Teacher desks, student desks, and they just imagine
3 as if these things are invisible and people can just
4 be stuffed into a room like sardines. And so, I
5 appreciate your recognition of that because,
6 actually, the-- thank you, really, for that
7 clarification and for your report and we will have
8 some further questions and interests, but in terms of
9 timeframe, in terms of building out additional space
10 and using these federal resources very, very wisely
11 and strategically, so, again, I thank you for your
12 report and I thank you for your testimony today.
13 Thank you so much.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Sarita.
15 Just bear with me one moment, please. Okay. So I
16 just want to remind Council members if you have
17 questions for any panelists, use the raise hand
18 function in zoom. You'll be called on in the order
19 that your raised your hand after the full panel has
20 completed testimony. And I would just like to
21 remind, as we now turn to public testimony for public
22 panelists, after you are unmuted, please listen for
23 the Sergeant-at-arms to give you the go ahead to
24 begin your testimony. All public testimony will be
25 limited to two minutes and all written testimony will

2 be read by community members and committee staff. So
3 please remember to email it to
4 testimony@Council.NYC.gov. Testimony will be
5 accepted for 72 hours following the close of the
6 hearing. The sergeant will prompt you when you're
7 into minutes is up. At that point, we ask for
8 fairness for all that are waiting to testify that you
9 please wrap up your comments so we can move to the
10 next panelist. So, next, we will hear from Michael
11 Mulgrew from the UFT. The panel after that will be
12 Tanisha Grant, Paulette Healy, Amy Sai, and Melissa
13 K. And then the panel after that is Maggie Moroff,
14 Randi Levine, and Ellen McHugh and we have more
15 panels following. But next, we will hear from
16 Michael Mulgrew of the UFT.

17 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

18 MICHAEL MULGREW: Thank you, Chairman
19 Treyger and to the City Council for having this
20 testimony. At this point, after listening to so much
21 of this today, if we cannot finally agree as a city
22 in the middle of a pandemic that we need a plan and
23 we need an enforceable plan in order to lower our
24 class size. I don't know when we're ever going to
25 get to it. This is absolutely absurd, some of the

2 testimony I've heard from the city today. What I did
3 hear is they are half empty, we're half full. I just
4 heard, without doing anything, we can get half the
5 schools in New York City into compliance within three
6 years. Wouldn't that be a wonderful feat that half
7 of the schools without doing a single thing in New
8 York City, except [inaudible 03:28:37] schools this
9 is a priority. We get half of our schools to half
10 the class sizes that the surrounding school districts
11 have and our children deserve that in New York City.
12 I don't know what else to do except to say that we
13 are fully in support of this legislation because
14 right now what we're dealing with in schools is class
15 sizes, under the city's guidance and regulations, as
16 you had a hearing a couple of weeks ago, the
17 Department of Health has risen the class sizes of New
18 York City from 34 to 52. They said we can safely put
19 52 children in a standard classroom right now because
20 they have a new way of measuring that nobody in the
21 universe recognizes and if that is what we are
22 getting from our city, this is why this Council is
23 here and needs time because you cannot trust them to
24 do the right thing at all anymore. The city has not
25 engaged in this legislation. They have chosen,

2 instead, to do everything in their power to kill it
3 and I just want the Mayor to come out publicly and
4 tell people until all the parents of this city and
5 state that he does not believe in lower class sizes
6 and we know why he will not do that because he has
7 future political aspirations. So, for us right now
8 in New York City, keep the focus on getting this done
9 because we know the only way to get the children in
10 the city what they want and what they need and what
11 they should have--

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

13 MICHAEL MULGREW: is pass this legislation
14 and I am fully in support of this. And thank you
15 very much.

16 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I want to thank
17 you, President Mulgrew. In the way that were looking
18 at this is the we're actually just trying to adjust
19 the health code to the current social distancing
20 standards.

21 MICHAEL MULGREW: Correct.

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And that is,
23 basically, it ended not show. No matter how they are
24 trying to adjust the health code which is not been
25 updated when it pertains to schools since the pre-

2 World War II era, to be adjusted to meet the reality
3 of today which we all can agree that we are in a
4 pandemic now, but this is not the last pandemic that
5 we will face and that is just the bottom line. And,
6 President Mulgrew, you know, I am aware again, being
7 a former teacher and a delegated and even, again,
8 prior to the pandemic, that there were just thousands
9 of grievances filed to the Education Department every
10 single school year because of the just violations of
11 class-size issues here. But we can't go back to
12 that. That is not-- the conditions that led us to
13 the pandemic, we cannot replicate and to-- we need
14 to write a whole new book. Not just turn a page and
15 that is why this is about actually updating New York
16 City to the 21st century to the world that we are in
17 here today and I appreciate your partnership and also
18 your members for really shedding light in how severe
19 this issue and challenge is. So, we are not giving
20 up. This is going to get even more intense, but we
21 are up for this fight and thank you very much,
22 President Mulgrew, for your testimony in your
23 leadership.

24 MICHAEL MULGREW: And thank you for your
25 leadership. Thank you very much.

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you.

3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And
4 next we will hear from Tanisha Grant.

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

6 TANISHA GRANT: Hello, Chair Treyger and
7 Council members. Thanking you for giving me the
8 opportunity to speak. First of all, I would just
9 like to say, Malcolm, I'm not just Tanisha Grant. I
10 am Tanisha Grant, CEO of Parents Supporting Parents
11 New York. Please address me as such. I represent
12 the parent community. I want to talk about some of
13 the things that I heard the Department of Education
14 say today and I also want to lift up the fact that I
15 think it's very disrespectful that they leave before
16 public comment where they don't even listen to us and
17 our concerns. Every meeting I am online, they are
18 gone before we have the chance to tell them how we
19 feel about our public schools, about our students,
20 and about our communities. I want to address that
21 800,000 devices that Linda Chen talked about being
22 provided for students. I want to say that is a lie.
23 As you know, Chair Treyger, for the last year, my
24 organization has raised money to give black and brown
25 children their own high quality laptops. We've

2 served over 400 children in all five boroughs and we
3 are continuing every month. This makes our second of
4 October, Chair Treyger. So, if they have 800,000
5 devices, why do I have a list of parents whose
6 children need devices, Chair Treyger? I want to talk
7 about the academic recovery plan. It is a joke. It
8 is crazy to me that the same people that teller
9 children that they have to show up to be prepared to
10 do their schoolwork can't even show up to the Council
11 meeting and be prepared to give us the numbers on the
12 children that have not stepped foot in school due to
13 health concerns. That is very concerning that the
14 leader of the Department of Education cannot give us
15 the information to make informed decisions--

16 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

17 TANISHA GRANT: when it comes to our
18 public schools and our children and our school
19 communities. As a parent, it is heartbreaking to
20 come to these meetings time after time and hear the
21 Department of Education gas land as and flat out lied
22 it was and tell us that everything is rainbows.
23 Chair Treyger, I just went to a funeral on Sunday for
24 my daughter's classmate who committed suicide. Where
25 are these 6000 school social workers and school

2 counselors? My son is also lost a child, classmate,
3 to suicide. No one has even reached out to us, Chair
4 Treyger, to ask how my children are doing. The
5 suicide rate of our children has gone up during this
6 pandemic. I don't even hear anybody speak of it
7 because this is the trauma that our children are
8 facing and they are told that they are supposed to go
9 to school and learn in a pandemic. There is so much
10 more that I could say, but I have a few PSPNY members
11 on here that will speak to themselves, as well. This
12 is unacceptable. This needs to be done today. I
13 yield back. Thank you.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, we will hear
15 from Paulette Healy.

16 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

17 PAULETTE HEALY: Hi. Can you hear me?

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

19 PAULETTE HEALY: Thank you so much for
20 this opportunity to speak. My name is Paulette Healy
21 and I am the First Vice President for the Citywide
22 Council of Special Education. I am also here to
23 represent Parents for Responsive, Equitable, Safe
24 Schools, or PRESS NYC. The rollout of academic
25 recovery programs are supposed to support children

2 with IEP's that may have regressed and experienced
3 academic setbacks as a result of the pandemic. As of
4 right now, hours students with disabilities have lost
5 precious instructional time and services due to the
6 ongoing staffing shortages and the failures by the
7 Office of People Transportation to transport our
8 children to their sites. Academic recovery cannot
9 start without staffing in place. The intention of
10 these programs were not meant for an abundance of
11 assessments order to line the pockets of big testing
12 companies such as Pearson's or Aperture, but that is
13 exactly what we are seeing. Why would assessments be
14 prioritized over the actual implementation of
15 services? Is the DOE intent to tie up families and
16 lengthy litigation over getting compensatory services
17 instead of investing in practices that can go towards
18 staff retention like a living wage and active
19 engagement in order to sustainably address the
20 existing staffing shortage? We have already heard
21 the DOE doubletalk on how much staff has been hired
22 and how many are still needed. The deficits are in
23 paras, social workers, and special education
24 instructors and these staffing shortages directly
25 affect our students with disabilities. There is no

2 recovery without the necessary reports in place.
3 That means staffing, transportation, training,
4 supplies, access to space, equipment, and an
5 investment to develop those in support roles in order
6 for them to have the opportunity to become better
7 educators need to be in place. I also emphasized
8 transportation because our children in D 75 with
9 developmental disabilities are bussed out of their
10 communities 85 percent of the time. Therefore, an
11 order for these students to receive these recovery
12 services, there needs to be transportation in place
13 to bring the children home from the afterschool
14 programs. They cannot just walk home--

15 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

16 PAULETTE HEALY: or get dropped off. I
17 literally have three more sentences. Do you mind if
18 I finish? Okay. I'm going to go ahead.

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes. Please
20 finish.

21 PAULETTE HEALY: Thank you. Thank you,
22 Chair Treyger. They cannot just walk home or get
23 dropped off at their communities school on Saturday
24 and, as of right now, we still have children waiting
25 for their bus routes to get service, so we have no

2 confidence that buses will be in place by the time
3 the recovery services are rolled out. Lastly, on the
4 topic of overcrowding, we can alleviate many of our
5 overcrowding problems by offering a permanent remote
6 learning option. Even though the DOE refuses to die
7 launch attendance numbers, we, as parent leaders
8 doing the grassroot work on the ground knew that
9 thousands of families still refuse to send their
10 children into the unsafe overcrowded environments and
11 are still demanding a remote option. Establishing a
12 permanent remote option will reduce class size, allow
13 better staff retention for staff who need the medical
14 accommodations, and allow inappropriate learning
15 environment for students that thrived during remote
16 learning, including students with disabilities. I
17 know I sound like a broken record, but, in spite of
18 the increase in ACS visits and continued harassment
19 by Borough attendant officers, families are still
20 keeping their children home until a remote option is
21 restored, therefore, it bears repeating. We have
22 6000 positive cases since school started. Our
23 schools are just not safe. Thank you, esteemed
24 Council members and, Chair Treyger, for this
25 opportunity to testify.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And,
3 next, we will hear from Amy Tsai.

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

5 AMY TSAI: Can you hear me?

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

7 AMY TSAI: Good evening. My name is Amy
8 Tsai. I am the vice president of New York City
9 Coalition for Educational Families Together. I am
10 also the CEC member for District 75 Council for the
11 special needs community in all five boroughs. I'm
12 also a parent of five current public school students
13 from elementary to high school. We are talking about
14 more than a half a billion dollars of academic
15 recovery plan that services all of the students--
16 especially the students that I represent-- for
17 district 75. And including students that are
18 inclusion programs. This is the revolving door of
19 what we continue to see what has happened in the
20 Summer Rising programs which the DOE continues to say
21 was a privilege and beneficial time for those
22 students, but, yet, like my previous member here who
23 just spoke about transportation issues and shortage
24 of staff, the same issues are happening dramatically
25 in District 75 community, especially our

2 paraprofessionals. And as we heard today, the DOE
3 has not provided any data in regards to how many are
4 currently in our schools and how many will be
5 interviewed and put back into our schools so that
6 every single child that do receive these services for
7 one to one paraprofessionals or group is received to
8 their needs and goals. In regards to technology, our
9 children also need to be followed up with [inaudible
10 03:40:58]. These are specific needs for those
11 students that have a way to access and have
12 opportunities to thrive in these opportunities of the
13 recovery plan. And, again, you know, Saturday
14 programs and afterschool programs that are funded by
15 regularly are not accessible for students because
16 there is no transportation interface recovery plan
17 does go forward, there's still no access for the
18 students.

19 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

20 AMY TSAI: Parents are put forward their
21 own pockets of money to bring their kids to school,
22 parents who don't even have a bus route or the child
23 is arriving early. This is incredibly-- really
24 concerning to me and my community. We need to make
25 sure that these students are still not behind, as,

2 again, students with disabilities have always been
3 left behind a lot of times in communication and
4 outreach to our families is not the same as our
5 general universal New York City school system.
6 Thank you so much for the opportunity to testify
7 today.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Amy.

9 And the final person on his panel is Melissa K.

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

11 MELISSA K: Thank you for having us. So,
12 I heard a few things, but the most important things
13 are not always what they appear to be. Smaller class
14 size is one of the few factors that will help educate
15 students, but the first thing must be for parents to
16 bring their children into the school [inaudible
17 03:42:38]. I am one of the parents who do not feel
18 safe and comfortable with commuting by two trains to
19 take my child to school. With the rigorous COVID
20 measures and a plethora of other things that we are
21 not aware of. The DOE, on the last Council meeting,
22 told us that they would have the numbers of the
23 students who are not in school by the end of October.
24 We are days away from November. I don't know how
25 much longer, you know, those things should be,

2 especially that we knew that this meeting was going
3 to come about and many people have been asking for
4 these numbers. Another important thing would be the
5 curriculum. Equity and inclusion is very important.
6 Students need fair standards across-the-board
7 [inaudible 03:43:35] to obtain the education that
8 they need. Class sizes, I know for my CEC, Leoni,
9 has been working with Class Size Matters and she
10 spoke at a few of our meetings. And one of the
11 things that I have brought up in my daughter's
12 school, you know, she has always had smaller class
13 size. Currently, she only has 19 kids in her class,
14 but it's not just the class size, so you also have
15 that differentiated learning. You know, in her
16 class, she's in a dual language class, she has
17 students with IEP's who are English language
18 learners, children who are--

19 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

20 MELISSA K: in grade level. So, you
21 know, to kind of sum everything up, there are more
22 than just one thing. You know, even with meeting
23 families with where they are, our children have been
24 met with trauma after trauma and never after one of
25 these trauma has the school contacted to say, hey,

2 how are you? Is there something we can do to help
3 your daughter? Is there something that she needs?
4 Is there something that will help you get over this
5 threshold to bring her to school? The only thing
6 that I am offered is a homeschool application. I
7 have been turned down. My daughter has not received
8 a single assignment since school has started.
9 Meanwhile, I've been taunted, you know, with stress
10 and bothered of worrying if the knock at the door is
11 going to be ACS with a charge of education neglect
12 when I am doing to best at what I am offered. You
13 know? I am not an educator. These are professionals
14 that go to school for years to prepare. You know,
15 you have learn how to redirect a class, how to give
16 their students the assistance and the time that they
17 do need. I am not an educator, but I am my daughters
18 first educator. I am her parent. I am concerned
19 with her overall health and her mental, her physical,
20 and with her being at home where she's with me where,
21 contrary to what has been said of before, this is the
22 safest place for her. It's her home. I am
23 responsible. As her parent, we are responsible for
24 her overall health. We're not receiving any
25 resources, any assistance, any help, and then to

2 continuously, to these meetings. As Tanisha said,
3 you know, when it gets time for the parents to be,
4 you know, the DOE officials are not here. The
5 information that they tell us when they meet with
6 parents and they talk and we have these discussions,
7 I would just love to know where do they find the
8 parents who speak at these meetings who they have for
9 their input on these discussions? Because I've never
10 heard of them and then, when they do have webinars,
11 there isn't an opportunity for parents to speak.
12 It's, you know, all of these questions in advance and
13 they kind of pick of the three questions of the
14 appeal that are not controversial. But, you know,
15 our students are traumatized and, you know, for my
16 safety and for my daughter, I have epilepsy and just
17 recently I suffered another seizure just Friday so,
18 it's another trauma added on for my daughter to
19 witness and had we been commuting to school, you
20 know, this would have occurred in transition upon
21 commuting. You know, I have asked this school could
22 the counselor-- you know, we have counselors at
23 school and we hear these great plans that, you know,
24 we hire social workers and counselors and we have
25 people and we have the staff here. Yes, that is

2 there. The staff is there in the building. My child
3 is not in the building. How do you help these
4 students who are not comfortable? Who are concerned
5 for their safety and for the safety of their parents?
6 What is being done to help these students lowers my
7 child only required to receive an adequate education
8 if she is inside of the school building? Thank you.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Chair,
10 that concludes the testimony for this panel. Did you
11 had questions for any of them?

12 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: It's a very
13 sobering, powerful testimony and just curious to know
14 when is the last time you have heard-- to the
15 parents who just spoke, Melissa, when is the last
16 time you heard from the DOE on how they can support
17 your child? Because we are now approaching Halloween
18 and what you have just described is completely
19 unacceptable to me and to, really, everyone. When
20 news the last time you have heard from the school and
21 heard from DOE meeting the needs of your child?

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: If we could
23 unmute-- Yes. Go ahead.

24 MELISSA K: Almost two weeks ago. And,
25 again, like so many with, you know, a follow up with

2 me with providing me a homeschool application which
3 put everything on me which is what I am doing now.
4 It just kind of removes the support and the resources
5 that the DOE would provide, which would require me to
6 do everything, which I already am doing on my own
7 anyway.

8 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: That old is your
9 child again?

10 MELISSA K: She is nine and she is in the
11 fourth grade.

12 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Melissa, I'd like
13 to get your contact information. There are some
14 folks who DOE, their cameras might be not on screen.
15 We need to follow up on this case. This is not
16 acceptable. This is negligence on their part. So,
17 if we can--

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, we have her
19 contact information. We will send it to your office.

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Please. Thank you
21 very much. Thank you.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Melissa.
23 We will send your contact information to the Chair's
24 office. The next panel that we are going to hear
25 from is Maggie Moroff, Randy Levine, Ellen McHugh,

2 and Marissa Manzanares. The panel after that will be
3 Diane Ravitch, Elsie McKay Thompson, Lanie Hansen,
4 and Jennifer Goddard. In the panel after that will
5 be Kehm Irby, Carlos, Barbara Scott, Curtis Young,
6 and Davida LoSavio. We will first hear from Maggie
7 Moroff.

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

9 MAGGIE MOROFF: Good afternoon, Chair
10 Treyger. I'm really glad to see so many parents here
11 and I hope the DOE is still here to hear them, as
12 well. As you know, I coordinate the Arise Coalition.
13 Since March 2020, Arise members have worked with
14 countless families of students who haven't received
15 all the special ed supports that they required. The
16 pandemic has amplified the divide between students
17 with disabilities and their peers. I want to speak
18 today about some concerns that we have around the
19 rollout of recovery services for those students and
20 no literacies supports planned using federal COVID
21 relief funds. First, on the recovery services should
22 be made available after school and/or on Saturdays,
23 you have voiced so many of our concerns in your own
24 questions to the DOE earlier, so thank you for that.
25 It is clear that those services will provide all

2 students with disabilities with the compensatory
3 services that they need and have a legal right to
4 receive to make up for all they didn't get the past
5 months. Or these past 20 months. But the burden of
6 seeking comps services can't sit with periods.
7 Rather, the DOE should issue guidance to schools on
8 their obligation to determine and provide comps
9 services when recovery services aren't enough and to
10 parents on how to request those services and avoid
11 the already overburdened to process system when
12 needed. Also, while the DOE plans to set up sensory
13 sites in each borough as part of the recovery
14 program, as you heard, the rest is being left to
15 schools to implement. The DOE clearly needs to
16 establish oversight for both recovery and comp
17 service processes to ensure that all students with
18 disabilities, regardless of the schools that they
19 attend have access to adequate additional supports to
20 make up for all that has been missed over the past
21 months. I also want to speak really, really briefly
22 about the DOE intent citywide Mosaic--

23 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

24 MAGGIE MOROFF: curriculum. Two
25 seconds. The plan is to ensure that curriculum is

2 culturally responsive and appropriate and we agree
3 100 percent. At the same time, we want to be sure
4 that it is grounded in the science of reading,
5 delivers core literacy instruction and interventions
6 in a systematic, scaffolded way that shares all
7 students get instruction in the five pillars of
8 reading. Without that, students are going to
9 continue to struggle and the city is never going to
10 meet its goal of all children reading. There is more
11 in my written testimony. Thank you.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Maggie.
13 And next we will hear from Randi Levine.

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

15 RANDI LEVINE: Thank you for the
16 opportunity to speak with you today. My name is
17 Randi Levine and I am policy director of Advocates
18 for Children of New York. Following the president
19 disruption in public education, we appreciate that
20 this city is investing in some important initiatives.
21 With our limited time today, I'm going to briefly
22 outline just some of the areas where we are
23 advocating for change. While we appreciate that the
24 DOE has allocated funding to provide recovery
25 services for students with disabilities after school

2 are on Saturdays, these services will not be
3 sufficient to provide all students with disabilities
4 with the compensatory services they have a legal
5 right to receive to make up for what they missed
6 during the pandemic. Parents should not have to file
7 hearings to get these services. We also have
8 significant implementation concerns with how recovery
9 services are being offered, including that the DOE
10 has not been to providing bus service. We are very
11 pleased that the DOE plans to launch a contact
12 enhancement for preschool special education programs,
13 but the city has not yet committed to providing
14 salary parity for teachers at these programs, putting
15 the success of the program at risk. We appreciate
16 that the DOE plans to rollout the new citywide Mosaic
17 curriculum I want to ensure this curriculum is not
18 only culturally responsive, but also grounded in the
19 science of reading, given the hundreds of calls AFC
20 receives each year from families concerned about
21 their children's reading skills. And we want to
22 ensure that students identified as needing more
23 support following the DOE early literacy screenings
24 can access evidence-based literacy interventions. We
25 appreciate that the DOE has hired hundreds of

2 additional social workers, but are disappointed that
3 the DOE allocated only \$12 million in federal funding
4 of the \$118.5 million needed to expand restorative
5 practices to 500 high schools and only 5 million of
6 the \$15 million needed for the mental health
7 continuum. We are deeply disappointed that the DOE
8 did not allocate funding for a comprehensive plan to
9 support English language learners.

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

11 RANDI LEVINE: many of whom did not
12 receive their mandated English as a new language or
13 bilingual instruction over the last 19 months or for
14 a multilingual communications and outreach plan. And
15 we are disappointed that the DOE did not allocate any
16 funding specifically to meet the needs of students
17 who are homeless. Fortunately, the DOE will be
18 receiving additional funding specifically for this
19 purpose and we are calling for the DOE to hire 150
20 shelter based community coordinators to help connect
21 students to school and other educational supports.
22 Just to wrap up, with respect to Introduction 2374,
23 we strongly support reducing class size and, at the
24 same time, we want to ensure safeguards are in place
25 for students with disabilities, including Moses an,

2 located District 75 schools who historically have
3 been the first students excluded from school
4 buildings when space is tight and who are often
5 already traveling extensive distances to get to
6 school. We want to reduce class size while also
7 ensuring there are sufficient spaces for students
8 with disabilities to get their instruction and
9 services as close to home as possible, per their
10 legal right. Thank you for the opportunity to speak
11 with you and I am happy to answer any questions.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Randi.
13 Next on this panel we will hear from Ellen McHugh.

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

15 ELLEN MCHUGH: Good afternoon. It may
16 be good evening by the time we finish. My name is
17 Ellen McHugh. I am the cochair of the Citywide
18 Council on Special Education and member of the
19 Education Council consortium. I am speaking for
20 myself, based on my experiences over the past 25
21 years. At this point in time, you have heard a great
22 deal of what the objections are to either the
23 recovery plan or the concerns about smaller class
24 sizes. There's no one in this room and probably no
25 one in this city who would say that smaller class

2 sizes is not a benefit. However, if you have a child
3 in a district 75 program, you are looking at being
4 excluded. If, as Tom Taratko pointed out, the school
5 that was built to hold 500 will now only hold 300,
6 where are those children in that local district or in
7 a district 75 program supposed to go? Our cumbersome
8 method of providing special education has created a
9 rift or divide. A chasm or Canyon. I don't know how
10 you want to describe IT. In the special education
11 community. We are looking at children who are
12 excluded not because of any other reason, but because
13 principals say, I don't get money for that child. Or
14 because, as a principal said not too long ago, I am
15 reopening this school and I wanted to be a good
16 school. I don't want those kids here. With the
17 advent of smaller class sizes, it will be exceedingly
18 easy for those who are bigoted-- and they exist in
19 the system-- to refused to provide rooms--

20 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

21 ELLEN MCHUGH: for kids who are
22 District 75 eligible. Additionally, there will be
23 problems with providing rooms for special education
24 services such as speech and language, OT therapy, or
25 counseling for those children who are in local

2 district supported special education programs. It
3 has taken years of tears and sweat, pleading, crying
4 to have our children accepted as part of a community
5 and a school and now, without really well-planned and
6 well thought out directives in this legislation, we
7 are looking at someone bullying their way through
8 enforcing unequal choices, unpleasant choices, mean-
9 spirited choices because children with disabilities
10 will not be able to access their home zoned schools,
11 their home district schools. They will be asked to
12 move elsewhere. Thank you for the time.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And our
14 final panelist and then we will turn to Council
15 member questions, our final panelist is Marissa--
16 and I apologize if I'm missing this up, Manzanares.

17 MARISSA MANZANARES: That's very close.
18 It's Manzanares. Thank you.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Manzanares. Sorry
20 about that.

21 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

22 MARISSA MANZANARES: All right. Thank
23 you, everyone, for having me here. I a district 14
24 community education Council member. I am a public
25 school parent and I am also a mental health

2 practitioner and I work with many kids around New
3 York City who are public school children. So, I am
4 in support of this amendment and I hope that you vote
5 for it because we all know there is ample research
6 that proves that students in smaller class settings
7 can achieve better outcomes in both academic and
8 social emotional life skills. This is imperative
9 that we put mental health of our students and our
10 teachers at the forefront of education funding and
11 policy. Class-size reduction is one of the most
12 easily attainable changes that we can make as we
13 continue to advocate for diverse, inclusive education
14 that also includes narrow diversity in the classroom,
15 to speak to the district 75 families who do feel left
16 out. A more inclusive system that allows to have all
17 services in the district and the school would be so
18 much more helpful and I think we can attain this by
19 having smaller class sizes. Teachers who have packed
20 classrooms can never fully know each student, whether
21 that is academic or cognitive or emotional and one
22 thing that we do know, as psychologists about
23 children is that, if they are seen and heard, they do
24 well. That is all children want to do is do well and
25 we have to create the environment for them to be able

2 to do that. So, I think that this is the least we
3 can do to start changing the New York City Department
4 of Education viewpoints and outlook. That the
5 classrooms need to have more connection, equity,
6 inclusivity, and acceptance of narrow diversity.
7 That needs to start with classroom size and then
8 looking at assessments and then looking at supportive
9 services in the school.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And,
11 Chair, I will turn to you for any questions for
12 Maggie, Randi, Ellen, or Marissa.

13 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: First of all, I
14 want to thank the powerhouse panel. A lot of very
15 important and meaningful testimony and also just want
16 to definitely acknowledge in here Ellen McHugh
17 testimony and we absolutely do not want and cannot
18 accept any child from D 75 or any child to be
19 negatively impacted because the goal here is to
20 actually improve outcomes for all children and I
21 think there is almost universal agreement that
22 smaller class sizes beneficial in so many ways. I
23 will tell you, as a teacher that taught inclusion
24 classes, ITC classes and a large high school, I asked
25 for more common planning time to-- think about it.

2 You're working with the code teacher and I don't
3 think it is insane to ask and we have time to sit
4 down after class or before class to cocreate
5 curriculum together, until modify instruction--

6 [background conversation]

7 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: to modify
8 strategies together. And it was almost impossible to
9 do that because of, you know, just overcrowded
10 schools, a lot of class-size issues, spacing, time
11 constraints, and so forth. I will say that we--
12 that was my motivation for calling for a-- what is
13 called in SBL. A school building option change where
14 we modified schedule on Wednesdays where periods were
15 a little bit shorter, but we tried to give some time
16 some time to the teachers to have some time. But I
17 was told by my administration that, Mark, it is just
18 we don't have the space. It's a complicated
19 programming issue because of the number of kids. So,
20 I would argue that improving outcomes for kids who
21 really, absolutely do need more help and support, it
22 is all tied here together and we already heard from
23 the administration that even minus this bill, they
24 are already making decisions centered on space
25 constraints. Not centered on the needs of kids and

2 what is best for children, but space constraints.
3 That is just unacceptable to me in a city with a
4 budget that is baloney now to \$100 billion in receipt
5 of federal aide, state aid. We need to center this,
6 but make sure we center it in an equitable way that
7 does not hurt any child or any family because you are
8 correct. My father is a retired D 75 teacher. I
9 know this very well how children historically, to
10 this day, in many ways, are excluded and not part of
11 it. But this is actually about centering them
12 actually for the first time and all of our children
13 in a meaningful, equitable way. So, I want to thank
14 everyone for their testimony. And, Randi, thank you
15 and Maggie for really bringing it home in terms of
16 making sure that these recovery programs are not just
17 some cookie-cutter, you know, just something to put
18 onto a piece of paper, but actually tailored to meet
19 the individual learning needs and the requirements of
20 our children. But, as you heard, we are plagued with
21 some serious staffing issues. I am not hearing a
22 contingency plan. I think that Regent Cashin offered
23 some interesting ideas with regards to the payment of
24 student teachers. I talked about also that there are
25 staff and folks within our particular program taken

2 the exams to be a teacher that make them eligible to
3 be a para right now and we need to kind of tap into
4 every possible way to make sure that we are meeting
5 the kids needs in this moment. So, thank you for
6 your testimony. Thank you all very much.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair.
8 And next we are going to-- our next panelist Diane
9 Ravitch, Elsie McHugh Thompson, Lanie Hansen,
10 Jennifer Goddard, and Rasheedah Brown Harris. We
11 will first hear from Diane Ravitch.

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

13 DIANE RAVITCH: Thank you very much to
14 the members of the committee. I am a historian of
15 education. My first book was a history of the New
16 York City public schools. I published it almost 50
17 years ago. As a historian, I studied reform in New
18 York City and in cities across the nation. Reform
19 these days, and for many years, has meant shaking up
20 the system. Centralized, decentralized, re-
21 centralize, reorganize bureaucracy, put the Mayor and
22 control, change decision-making structure, hire
23 consultants, hire data analyst, hire coaches, or
24 outsource the schools to private entrepreneurs. Over
25 reform the more standardized testing, interim

2 assessments, test prep, testing, and more testing.
3 More testing does not produce more learning or better
4 grades. These so-called reforms barely move the
5 needle, if at all. Class-size reduction is a far
6 more powerful reform than any of those I have
7 mentioned. When class sizes are reduced, student
8 grades improve, discipline improves, teacher morale
9 improves, children get the attention they need,
10 specially the children with the greatest needs. And
11 teachers have the time they need to do their jobs.
12 Class-size reduction it is the most powerful reform
13 you could enact and I agree with you, Chairman
14 Treyger, that putting the needs of children first is
15 more important than looking at the facilities. The
16 facilities can be changed, but the children only have
17 one chance to learn. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I just want to say
19 that it is an honor. Huge fan. I read as much as
20 you published and produced and I cannot thank you
21 enough. Your entire career into this moment you
22 always centered children and you hold us in
23 government accountable and speak truth to power from
24 the very beginning, but you are probably-- you are a
25 mentor and probably one of the greatest public school

2 champions of our time and I just wanted to thank you
3 so much for your service, for being here, for your
4 incredible work, and just say that I am a huge, huge
5 fan of yours and thank you for your testimony today.
6 Thank you.

7 DIANE RAVITCH: Well, thank you so much.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And, next, we will
9 hear from Elsie McCabe Thompson.

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

11 ELSIE MCCABE THOMPSON: Thank you. I think
12 this issue is so important that I pulled over on the
13 side of the road to make sure that I could speak to
14 it, too, am a huge fan of Diane Ravitch and Mary
15 Butts. I'm the president of the Mission Society of
16 New York City and we take a long view of education,
17 as does Diane. We are a 209-year-old anti-poverty
18 organization focused on bringing about an end to time
19 generational poverty through education. We have seen
20 and witnessed a number of trends in education. You
21 know, then to city or the need for authenticity. The
22 need to teach to the whole child. Personalized
23 learning, usually delivered through a computer
24 algorithm and the need for high expectations. Yet,
25 probably the most important thing we can do is

2 smaller class sizes because it is impossible to have
3 high expectations if teachers don't authentically no
4 child because they don't know what the child is
5 capable of. We can embrace the whole child if we
6 only know the names of students in the half of the
7 classroom and we can't personalized learning if the
8 child doesn't have the bandwidth, Internet, or device
9 and we certainly can help with the reality of trauma
10 that most of our public school kids. Doreen as a
11 result of the pandemic. I am a mother of two
12 children with IEP's. I am also the mother of a
13 special education UFT teacher. I probably should
14 have had an IEP is in the early 60s they had IEP's,
15 particularly for black and brown kids. But you can,
16 you know, help children with IEP's if you don't know
17 them and--

18 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

19 ELSIE MCCABE THOMPSON: most of the Carter
20 cases, as we all know them, they are the basis for
21 their litigation against the department is why we can
22 only get a quality education if we go to a private
23 school with a small class-size, but, you know, I've
24 advocated for class sizes of 12 students for the
25 teacher. Think of how wonderful it would be if

2 teachers had the luxury, the ability to actually know
3 all of their students names and could get
4 personalized homework or not because you should give
5 homework to student who is living in a shelter. So,
6 you know, I hope, you know, the city sees fit to
7 drastically lower class sizes and I would say the bar
8 should be set at 12 because then you can actually
9 mainstream kids and most kids with IEP's and teach
10 them alongside the general education tapirs with dual
11 certified teachers.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: thank you. Thank
13 you. And, next, we will hear from Lanie Jameson
14 followed by Jennifer Goddard followed by Rashida
15 Brown Harris. Lanie?

16 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Go ahead. We can
18 hear you now.

19 LANIE HAIMSON: Okay. I feel honored to
20 be here and to follow both Diane and Elsie. I want
21 to thank Chair Treyger for holding these hearings and
22 for advocating so strong for the issue that all of us
23 have spoken no matter most for kids which is having a
24 small enough class to really be known well by their
25 teachers and really be able to receive support and

2 the feedback that they need. In 2003, those states
3 highest court said that public school class sizes
4 were too large a New York City for children to
5 receive their right under the state constitution to a
6 sound, basic education and yet class sizes have gone
7 up since then and I have charts in my testimony that
8 you can look at. So, it is really incumbent, I
9 think, ethically on the part of the city to spend a
10 good chunk of this additional state and federal money
11 to start reducing class-size. I also, in my
12 testimony, have charts showing the 20 square feet
13 allowed for kids a New York City public schools is
14 much lower than the requirement in states around the
15 country. And so, this would better align what the
16 space is for other children in schools elsewhere. I
17 also want to emphasize the cost savings, as well as
18 the cost of smaller classes and I think Elsie spoke a
19 little bit about how kids with special needs will be
20 much better served and inclusion classes, there will
21 be lower-cost for both special education referral
22 costs, and for the Carter cases which are growing
23 immensely every year. I think they are no more than
24 \$300 million a year. I also want to point out that
25 there are lots of creative ways to create more space,

2 including moving some of the thousands of kids in the
3 expanded pre-k and 3-K programs into CBO's where they
4 have thousands of seats empty and I have--

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

6 LANIE HAIMSON: the data on that, as
7 well. And those CBO's are sometimes rated higher in
8 terms of their quality of pre-k than the public
9 schools. And so, I think we have this tremendous
10 opportunity in front of us, we have the resources, we
11 have a consensus that this is what is needed among
12 both teachers and parents and experts and it is time
13 to do what we have known for years is really what is
14 needed to improve the quality of education in our
15 schools and the equity that our kids need because one
16 of the clear results of the research is that, while
17 all kids benefit from smaller classes, those who
18 benefit the most are kids with special needs, kids in
19 poverty, and kids of color. And those are the kids
20 who need the help of the most. So, thank you, again,
21 for holding these hearings today and thank you for
22 your strong advocacy on this issue. I think we can
23 do it as the city if we put our mind to it in the
24 real problem is that we haven't come into it yet.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Lanie.

3 And, next, we will hear from Jennifer Goddard.

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

5 JENNIFER GODDARD: Hello. Thank you so
6 much. I am absolutely humbled to be even speaking on
7 this panel. Thank you, Councilman, members, and
8 Chair Treyger. My name is Jennifer Goddard. I do.
9 Of a fifth-grade public school student who has an IEP
10 and is currently in medically necessary instruction
11 under the DOE because he has asthma and an overactive
12 immune system disorder. I am one of the parents that
13 you spoke about earlier, Councilman Treyger, about
14 having to find out of their own pocket supplemental
15 education because the one hour per day that my son
16 receives is a woefully inadequate, to put it mildly.
17 I also want to echo what Mrs. Gray said earlier about
18 the DOE disappearing. Thank you so much to the chief
19 executive of the space management, Mr. Taratko. I
20 appreciate you still being here. You are a minority
21 and I wish that your colleagues would be called to
22 task next time to stay and listen to what parents are
23 saying because then they will hear where these
24 problems are coming from and why that Council members
25 are so tuned into them. I think my services for my

2 son have yet to resume for his IEP and now that he is
3 no longer in a remote learning program because he is
4 physically out of the school building. He is not
5 received anything any suffers from anxiety. So, it
6 is definitely a problem and I want to bring that to
7 your attention. Thank you, also, for lowering the
8 class-size proposition. That is absolutely something
9 that we support at the New York City Coalition for
10 Educating Families Together which I represent and,
11 you know, we also want to reiterate our call that the
12 DOE consider a remote option because-- I know it's a
13 little late in game and almost a month and a half in,
14 but, you know, we have a lot of problems on the table
15 that would be readily solved by offering a remote
16 option. You know, the pandemic is still going on.
17 Children ages five to 17 are absolutely far and away
18 the highest number of COVID cases according to, you
19 know, every single data chart you want to look at.
20 Despite all this, we don't have--

21 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

22 JENNIFER GODDARD: a remote option like we
23 did last year. So, you want to call on you to please
24 consider that. These are problems that we have
25 talked about today between bussing shortages,

2 overcrowded schools, not being able to offer
3 children, you know, related services as part of their
4 mandated services, not even talking about the funding
5 that you now have from the federal government. You
6 know, there is a lot more that we could be doing
7 right now and taking a very important tool like a
8 remote learning option off the table has really
9 crippled the DOE and I think we are seeing the
10 results of it right now. So, thank you so much. I
11 appreciate the time. Thank you.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And,
13 next, we will hear from Rasheedah Brown Harris.

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

15 RASHEEDAH BROWN HARRIS: Can you hear
16 me?

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

18 RASHEEDAH BROWN HARRIS: Okay. Peace
19 and blessings everyone. Yep. Rasheedah Brown Harris
20 here. I am a parent leader with PAC, Parent Action
21 Committee and a proud member of the Healing Center
22 Schools Working Group. I appreciate and respect
23 Council member Riley who spoke earlier and Deputy
24 Chancellor LaShawn Robinson and Kenyatte Reed. We
25 all know what to and, like Kenyatte Reed said, we do

2 need to wrap it up. We need to ramp it up. Like it
3 is not lamented citywide across all of our schools.
4 Chairman Treyger, you know I'm always going to come
5 on here and talk about Healing Center's Schools and
6 restorative practices and how much we need culturally
7 responsive education, more counselors, more
8 enrichment like arts, technology, movement, sports,
9 and project-based learning. But when we talk about
10 healing Center schools and we talk about social
11 emotional learning, this [inaudible 04:20:44] SEL
12 screener that's happening is a slippery slope and I
13 apologize for not being on earlier, so I'm not quite
14 sure-- I look forward to looking over this whole
15 thing. I don't know what was discussed today about
16 that, but when we talk about class-size matters and
17 we talk about capacity and we talk about being safe
18 in schools and we talk about the SEL screener, any
19 time we talk about mental or emotional health, and
20 supplies, but we are assessing it through one
21 standardized assessment. And I heard you guys
22 talking about that assessment earlier. Were talking
23 about academically. This one assessment is based in
24 a white, English-speaking, able-bodied culture and it
25 will likely disproportionality Harlem most of all

2 marginalized students. We know this about
3 standardized tests, right? So now we wanted to
4 standardized SEL screener for our children? Who is
5 proctoring these assessments and our children with
6 disabilities or English is not their primary
7 language, y'all, this is not going to work for our
8 children. The efficacy and the impact of the
9 screener is an issue. Like the teachers and parents
10 don't even understand. Parents don't even know
11 what's happening. I heard that parents are opting
12 out--

13 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

14 RASHEEDAH BROWN HARRIS: [inaudible
15 04:21:54] to be assessed. How much parents are
16 opting out and not letting their children be assessed
17 when the other parents don't even know anything about
18 it? This is an issue, y'all. What are we doing with
19 this data? How is that culturally responsive? How
20 is it differentiated among age groups? And we
21 already spoke to older high school children who have
22 been assessed and they expressed being very
23 uncomfortable. Councilman Treyger, I beg you to look
24 further into this and to assist us with understanding

2 what we're really doing with these SEL screenings.

3 Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: No. I fully agree
5 with you and I go back to something that I have said
6 not just in this hearing but in previous hearings and
7 drop my record here in the City Council that it is
8 not enough for us to say that we want to just get,
9 let's say, one social worker per school. Research
10 shows you actually need about one social worker for
11 every 100-150 students or so and we still have
12 schools where we have thousands of kids sharing one
13 social worker and so we are still, I think, Dr.
14 Harris, you would agree that we are still failing to
15 meet the social emotional needs of kids and kids
16 don't need exams. We don't need tests. We don't
17 need to regurgitate what we already know. We need
18 support structures built in at the school and
19 afterschool to support kids, their parents, and
20 families. And that is a part of the Healing Center
21 Schools, 100 percent. But I really believe that we
22 need to really think bigger and bolder about the
23 community school approach from early childhood to k-
24 12 to adult education because it's really, really
25 critical that we meet the needs of the whole

2 community, the whole child, and so thank you for
3 centering that work, but I fully agree with you and,
4 again, I commend you for your consistent and
5 persistent leadership. Thank you so much.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair.

7 And, next, we will hear from Kehm Irby Carlos,
8 Barbara Scott, Curtis Young, and Davida LoSavio. We
9 will start with Kehm Irby.

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

11 KEHM IRBY: Yes. Good afternoon. I
12 appreciate the opportunity to speak to the panel. I
13 am a former parent of New York City's schools and I
14 had six children in New York City public schools just
15 in every type of school. I had two children with
16 IEP's and one of my children was served very well at
17 PS 133 with the grading inclusion class. One thing I
18 do know is that it is not enough to mandate anything.
19 Everything must come with the proper funding that is
20 mandated. I support lowering class-size. I support
21 the effort of my good friend, Laney Haimson, has put
22 forward, course, but we also understand the New York
23 City's schools have been: located. I don't know
24 where we're going to get the class sizes or where
25 we're going to get the classrooms and, you know, Tom

2 is going to be tasked with the great feat of doing
3 that and you have to remember that part of schools
4 are separate schools. Okay? And that is another
5 dynamic that you have to keep on the table of what
6 you are dealing with with lowering class-size. If
7 you are going to give priority to the New York City
8 public school children, then charter schools are
9 going to have to go somewhere and then there going to
10 have to be another bill because they have some level
11 of leverage at having to be provided space, as well.
12 So, I just want us to think about that. That is not a
13 one prong approach to solving this for our children.
14 Importantly, teachers, highly qualified teachers need
15 to be in the classroom. It's not enough just to
16 lower class size. We also need highly qualified
17 teachers to sustain what you want to have happen in
18 the classroom, so I ask you to think about putting
19 together, you know, educational think tanks around
20 lowering class-size. Choose a school that you want
21 to model--

22 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

23 KEHM IRBY: to do it in and I think that
24 it's just very important that we include all the
25 voices in order to make this happen. We have the

2 money. If you remove police from schools, the money
3 that your funding to have pulleys in schools, you
4 will have some money to lower class size. You will
5 have some money to hire more social emotional support
6 services for our children, especially black and brown
7 children deserve more than a sound, basic education.
8 They deserve more. We cannot do this work alone.
9 There must be a shift to how we educate children and,
10 mind you, New York City is a model for the rest of
11 the nation. I now live in another state and whatever
12 is done in New York, they follow right behind you.
13 So, I know that's a lot of pressure, but whether it
14 is good or whether it's bad, I'm just letting you
15 know that everyone looks that New York City public
16 schools in comparison and whatever New York City is
17 doing, it becomes a national model. So, I just think
18 you would appreciate this opportunity to speak to you
19 today.

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And I thank you for
21 your important testimony and for that very powerful
22 feedback and what I would just add is that I actually
23 believe that, if we-- I agree we need a holistic
24 approach. There is no one-size-fits-all, but if we
25 actually valued and prioritize the reduction of

2 class-size in concert with other things we talked
3 about. You would actually attract and keep great
4 teachers and our school system because the number of
5 teachers who are burning out and are burned out left
6 the school system and you heard it today from the
7 Board of Regions, quite frankly, that we have a
8 crisis in terms of staffing. Because that, when
9 people walk into school and see an overcrowded school
10 or look at a class-size than they'd tried to speak to
11 the administration about how to kind of better meet
12 the needs of their kids, but not to have 40 kids that
13 a class and they feel that no one cares about that
14 and no one values that conversation, that is when we
15 lose people. And so, I think this is really in
16 concert with so many other types of supports that are
17 schools need. And, really, again, I appreciate your
18 really helpful and important testimony today.

19 KHEM IRBY: Yes. One thing I want to add
20 because I'm a school board member in another state,
21 the reason why the teacher part is a crisis this we
22 don't have enough kids, no young adults that are
23 going into the teaching profession. So, the teachers
24 that are coming and the people that are coming into
25 education are all lateral entry people. So, that is

2 a whole other dynamic that we have to solve in mind
3 as well as said we can't solve it just by one prong
4 approach, but our children deserve to be in front of
5 a quality educator, as well, or else lowering class-
6 size will not matter.

7 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Great. Thank you
8 for your testimony. Thank you.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I was talking and
10 was muted. Next, we will hear from Carlos.

11 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

12 CARLOS UNKNOWN: Good afternoon,
13 everyone. Chair, members, and every concerned
14 citizen. First off, I would like to start off with
15 democracy and education and how the DOE withholding
16 education information from us and how that kind of
17 affected the way we make this decision, it's like
18 Tanisha said, informed decisions to keep our children
19 safe. This information, if it directly affects our
20 children, it goes to us. It should not be withheld,
21 not for the agencies think or not for any sake.
22 Especially if it concerns our kids safety and
23 especially at the UC unique times in human history.
24 Secondly, I want to express extreme concern for how
25 most-- how would you say, the demographic that needs

2 support students as an STH. As an STH parent of a
3 child who is STH and doubled up in housing, it was
4 said a number-- 12,000 and the homeless system.
5 It's not just the homeless system. People in the
6 homelessness, plus everybody out there, the DOE is
7 persistently trying to redefine the definition of
8 homelessness so it is more convenient. They get a
9 certain budget for the federal government and the
10 less people are homeless, the less they have to use
11 for them. Now, as a parent who asked the DOE and my
12 child school for help, I was never referred, despite
13 being classified as double up and STH student,
14 referred to an STH counselor. As a matter of fact,
15 during and because of my disability of central
16 nervous system autoimmune disorder, leaves me
17 susceptible to the disease and I take meta-prednisone
18 which lowers my immune system so I can't take the
19 vaccine and I'm homebound. So, I can't take my child
20 to school, so I asked for help with bussing or
21 anything. They said that they cannot do that right
22 now. They cannot help us. They called ACS to help
23 us. Now, what I explained to ACS the same thing.

24 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

25 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Please continue.

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: You can finish.
3 You can finish your testimony.

4 CARLOS UNKNOWN: All right. I explained
5 to ACS the very same thing. That my child's mother
6 who works for me for Freedom Care because my central
7 nervous system disorder doesn't have the treatment
8 yet and I am currently seen by NYPD doctors from
9 Weill Cornell and Columbia and they warned me about
10 the narrow invasiveness of this fire is. Maggie
11 Robbins, my doctor just wrote a paper and it. Paper
12 about it and how it affects your nervous system in
13 your brain through the olfactory and it just got
14 published. And, basically, they want her to
15 homeschool my child and our household to lose its
16 only income. Now, good only 800 dollars from SSD a
17 month. That is what they expect us to live on if she
18 teaches my child because I still have to go to the
19 doctors. I haven't gone to the doctors for months.
20 I've been getting sicker. I've just gone to two
21 trips in the emergency room this week because the
22 meningitis and flareups. Against dangerous and
23 starts causing me brain-damaged. Writing this was
24 difficult for me. So, it's become and causing the
25 brain damage, so very familiar with neuro- disorders

2 and I'm scared, you know, for my child because of the
3 disease narrow invasiveness in the vaccine doesn't
4 stop the infections. They may lessen deaths, but
5 they don't stop spreading in that means it does not
6 induce artificial heart immunity. So, that means
7 that they are depending on us to develop natural
8 heart immunity which I'm not because, according to
9 the CDC, I have, you know, three times the likelihood
10 of dying if I get it. So, even with the vaccine, I
11 don't know what to do. Letting my daughter go to
12 school is like letting her kill me accidentally, let
13 her be traumatized for life, you know, as I'm hearing
14 about those kids who get their parents and their
15 parents die and how do you think they're going to
16 live with themselves for the rest of their lives?
17 Any information is known. You know, my doctor just
18 published it. It's going into the nervous system and
19 there is very little we know about central nervous
20 system disorders, so I risk of children with that?
21 From a learning system is still in place and not
22 being used and can and encompass the whole city, why
23 not let it take up portion off the school system and,
24 you know, it's almost like playing shuffle and then
25 DOE doesn't have to spend as much. They could take

2 the large portion and still take the credit for the
3 student to be there, so they still get their budget,
4 DOE. Sorry. That's it. I just wanted to tell DOE,
5 maybe, to the do that.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: No. I appreciate
7 you, sir, and I am in full support of a remote option
8 for families in and is unconscionable and peer
9 negligence at this point for them to continue to deny
10 it and I also want to say this. That there are some
11 schools who are, let's just say, coming up with
12 creative ways of doing remote options, but that is
13 not across the board. There is no equity in the and
14 so, this needs to be the standard policy across the
15 entire system. So, thank you for your very important
16 testimony. Thank you. Malcolm, you can call the
17 next witness.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next,
19 we are going to call Barbara Scott.

20 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

21 BARBARA SCOTT: Hi. Can you hear me?

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes. We can.

23 BARBARA SCOTT: Hi. Thank you for the
24 opportunity to testify. It is my first time
25 testifying and I am a little nervous, but thank you

2 for the opportunity. First, I just want to say thank
3 you to Tanisha Grant and PSP New York for all their
4 support and I just wanted to say that I think remote
5 options should come back because we really need our
6 students. Some kids are not the same. They don't
7 learn the same. Like my child has an IEP. She is in
8 district 23. The school is not helping me. They are
9 making me apply for home instruction which I was
10 advised to apply for my husband's condition because
11 daughter, thank God, doesn't have any conditions. So
12 we're waiting for a response, but they are still
13 marking my child upset. There is still not putting
14 any classwork in her Google classroom for her to do
15 any type of work. So, I am basically like the
16 teacher for her and they are really not helping in
17 the communication with the school and the parents is
18 getting worse. Like the Mayor is making the parents
19 and the principles in conflict with each other, they
20 don't have no guidance from the DOE. So, we're all
21 confused and I just wanted to say that I want remote
22 learning back and thank you.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next,
24 we're going to turn to Curtis Young.

25 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

2 CURTIS YOUNG: Hello. Thank you,
3 Chairman and members of the committee. I come before
4 you and support Intro build 2374. My will as I take
5 director of Artist Noise and working with young
6 people involved in the juvenile justice system and
7 one of the reasons I continue to champion this issue
8 is due to the intersection I see with large
9 classrooms and the school to prison pipeline. At a
10 time when racial injustice and criminal justice
11 reform is at the forefront of your mind, we must
12 begin to call out where large pockets actually are
13 and injustice to all students, particularly those
14 coming from underserved communities. So, as I said
15 previously, we know that class size reduction
16 improves test for student of color, class size
17 reduction leads to increased college entrances. It
18 also is a cognitive and disciplinary impact that
19 benefits blackmails another students of color. So,
20 we're serious about closing all school to prison
21 pipeline and we absolutely must have class size
22 reductions at the forefront of our policy decisions.
23 Students from already underserved communities arrived
24 to their classrooms with existing challenges,
25 traumas, and a variety of social emotional needs, so

2 we know that class size, as many have said earlier,
3 [inaudible 04:37:49] for improved outcomes for all
4 students, however, when we couple that with adequate
5 staffing, counselors, behavioral specialists, and
6 smaller class sizes, and trained teachers able to
7 deal with all students, we can provide individualized
8 support and support all of our students and needs in
9 these challenging times. So, thank you for your time
10 this morning on this very important topic.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. An hour
12 going to hear from Davida LoSavio.

13 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Davida, if you on--
15 Oh. There you go. You're unmuted.

16 DAVIDA LOSAVIO: Okay. Yeah. Because I
17 wasn't unmute it before. Okay. I am a parent. I am
18 also a parent to the special needs child. She has an
19 IEP. She's a teenager. She is 16 years old, so she
20 is in high school. We are both high-risk per the
21 CDC. This class size issue, I know, has been a
22 problem for years because, for years, she started off
23 in the District 75 and, first of all, DOE has been
24 failing my child from day one because she shouldn't
25 have been in 675. The only thing she accomplished

2 from being in district 75 is not knowing how to do
3 schoolwork and how to get beat up and fight every day
4 because all the boys, because it's mostly boys and
5 their, would fight her in breaking her glasses and
6 ripping her coats, XYZ. So, DOE is actually failed
7 my child from day one in protecting her. The issue
8 we have now with COVID, like it's been mentioned from
9 various speakers-- and the classrooms in the schools
10 are severely overcrowded. They were overcrowded pre-
11 COVID. We are now in the midst of COVID. Prior to
12 what people might want to say in the schools or even
13 more overcrowded. Her school, for example, had a
14 little over 1400 kids pre-COVID and now they have
15 almost 1600 kids. There is no proper way to
16 completely social distance. Let's say or what have
17 you that the DFS technology, air purifiers are not
18 recommended by the CDC. I am attacking. Those DFS
19 purifiers are trash. [Inaudible 04:40:02] it stated
20 that they were better than HEPA. It's owned by the
21 same company itself and [inaudible 04:40:12] is owned
22 by, which is Vincent Lobel. That's not appropriate.
23 EPA has not certified them. Those schools are
24 dangerous. They are, basically, petri dishes
25 breeding COVID-19.

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

3 DAVIDA LOSAVIO: Please, if I could have
4 more time to speak, please. Me and my child are both
5 high risk. Sending my child in could mean death for
6 either one of us and it's not even about vaccinations
7 because we all know that per CDC Dr. Wolinski that
8 the vaccines do not stop transmission due to the
9 Delta variant any longer. So, it's not even about
10 vaccination. It's about that we need a remote
11 option. A centralized, remote option. How my going
12 to send my child to school now when the numbers are
13 so much worse when my child and me haven't even
14 gotten COVID yet because we've been so careful
15 through this entire pandemic so far. The fact that a
16 centralized remote option is not being given is a
17 problem. The fact that my daughter was receiving
18 help from the teachers and everything at first and
19 now it seems like ever since the last week or two,
20 it's like even her para is not allowed to give me any
21 notes anymore or help her with any questions she had.
22 So, basically, they're leaving my child to fail
23 because, oh, she has to be in person even though it's
24 detrimental to her health and neither she can die or
25 she can bring it back to me and I can die. And we

2 are not-- our lives on not expendable. We are no
3 one's human sacrifices and the DOE needs to give a
4 centralized remote option. To be honest with you, as
5 a techie, I'm going to say that DOE should have been
6 have some kind of a hybrid remote option like
7 remote/in-person hybrid scheduled even well before
8 the pandemic due to the fact that we do live in the
9 high tech world. The reason why most of our
10 technology comes from other countries like China and
11 Japan and Japanese and Chinese children are taught
12 technology from a young age. Our children are behind
13 in this is the fall of the DOE. So, the DOE needs to
14 give us a remote option. It is really a mandatory
15 thing and, as for the issues about the social and the
16 mental-- I'm wondering if they-- and I'm saying
17 this from something that we read a doctor that said.
18 Are they maybe not realizing that the social and the
19 mental issues are because the children are going
20 through a pandemic? It has nothing to do with in
21 person because, I'm sorry, but everybody goes on
22 facetime or on Instagram video calling. Everyone
23 using video calling. That is still being social.
24 You're just not next to the person to like pinch them
25 or whatever. But you are still being social. Just

2 like right now we are doing this virtually were still
3 being social. So that all that social stuff, that is
4 garbage. That is just a ploy to do what they want
5 and do what their agenda is and it is not benefiting
6 our kids because my child this past year and having
7 the centralized remote option, she did better this
8 year than she is ever done and all of her 10 years.
9 Now, she's in 11th grade, but before that. In her 10
10 years of schooling and most of that, obviously, being
11 in person learning. This is the first summer this
12 past summer that she did not have to do summer
13 school. So they need to stop this because this is--
14 I remember there being an ad a chair in New York City
15 about no children left behind. They're leaving all
16 these children behind and now I have an ACS case when
17 my daughter's school knew exactly from day one why
18 she wasn't in the classroom because me and her are
19 both very high-risk. Nah. This is a problem and
20 like it's a severe problem and it's an illegal
21 problem, too. And something has to be rectified.
22 Point blank. Period.

23 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you. Thank
24 you for your very-- Yes, Malcolm. Is there---

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No. I just wanted
3 to make sure. People been coming in and out of the
4 zoom. I took a look at the room. I think everyone
5 has testified, but I think if anyone that we have not
6 called on the testify, if you could just use the
7 raise hand function in zoom? And not seeing anybody,
8 that concludes all testimony, Chair, so I'll turn it
9 back to you to close out the hearing.

10 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you, Malcolm.
11 I also want to just make a slight correction in my
12 opening. I mentioned thinking our committees staff.
13 We have wonderful staff. I noted Colima Johnson. I
14 should have-- Susan Olds. She's valued and we want
15 to wish Colima very well. I want to say a big thanks
16 to Aliyah Reynolds. So, my apologies for that.
17 also, I want to just update folks that, you know, I
18 introduced a package of bills of transparency bills
19 that would give us data on attendance enrollment per
20 school and I know City Hall is saying that they'll
21 announce something later this month. We are looking
22 to try to push this, you know, to get this voted on
23 as soon as possible and it will actually give us a
24 per school look, not just an overall citywide number,
25 but we want to look at through zip codes, through

2 school communities to target that type of support.
3 So, stay tuned on that because we're not giving up.
4 We're pushing for greater transparency and we're
5 hoping to get that out as soon as possible. I want
6 to thank everyone and all the parents, educators,
7 stakeholders that testified here today. We have a
8 lot of work to do, but I think the DOE administration
9 needs to also just to some honest self reflection
10 because, as you heard over and over again, that means
11 that kids have never been greater, but we're facing,
12 in my opinion, severe staffing issue. We need staff
13 to help do this work. I also believe that when folks
14 work together and believe in big things, big things
15 do happen. And the city has showed that before
16 historically. So, we're not giving up for the fight
17 to reduce class size, but, in concert with so many
18 other things that we talked about here today. So,
19 with that, again, Malcolm, I think you all. I think
20 the committee staff and everyone testified here
21 today. This hearing is adjourned.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date December 2, 2021