

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
JOINTLY WITH THE  
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

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October 16, 2020  
Start: 10:18 a.m.  
Recess: 5:08 p.m.

HELD AT: Remote Hearing

B E F O R E: Mark Treyger  
CHAIRPERSON

Mark Levine  
CHAIRPERSON

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Alicka Ampry-Samuel  
Inez Barron  
Ben Kallos  
Ydanis Rodriguez  
Rafael Salamanca Jr.  
Barry Grodenchik  
Daniel Dromm  
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Brad Lander  
Justin Brannan

Farah N. Louis  
Deborah Rose  
Joseph C. Borelli  
Andrew Cohen  
Mathieu Eugene  
Robert Holden  
Keith Powers

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

Richard Carranza, Chancellor  
Department of Education

Dr. Jay Varma, Senior Advisor for Public  
Health  
Mayor's Office

Dr. Daniel Stephens, Deputy Commissioner of  
Family and Child Health  
DOHMH

Chelsea Cipriano, Executive Director  
Intergovernmental Affairs,  
DOHMH

Dr. Ted Long, Executive Director  
New York City Test and Trace Corps  
Senior Vice President of Ambulatory Care  
New York City Health and Hospitals

Maidel de la Cruz, Director Government and  
Community Affairs  
New York City Health and Hospitals

Susan Haskell, Deputy Commissioner of Youth  
Services  
DYCD

Donald Conyers, First Deputy Chancellor

LaShawn Robinson, Deputy Chancellor

Josh Wallack, Deputy Chancellor

Lauren Siciliano, Chief Administrative  
Officer  
Department of Education

Lindsay Oates, Chief Financial Officer  
Department of Education

Kevin Moran, Chief School Operations Officer

Dr. Linda Chen, Chief Academic Officer

Carrie Bateman, Chief Operating Officer  
Division of School Planning and Development

John Shae, Chief Executive Officer  
Department of Education

Kenyati Reed, Executive Director  
Office of Safety and Youth Development

Christopher Caruso, Executive Director for  
Community Schools

Chris Groll, Chief Executive Officer  
Division of School Climate and Wellness

Eadie Sharp, Chief Strategy Officer

John Hammer, Deputy Chief Executive Officer  
and Director Special Education Office

Michael Mulgrew, President  
UFT

Tajh Sutton, New York City Resident

Randy Levine, Policy Director  
Advocates for the Children of New York

Andrew Ortiz, Manager of Educational Policy  
New York Immigration Coalition

Hallie Yee, Policy Coordinator  
Coalition for Asian-American Children and  
Families

Lisa Caswell, Senior Policy Analyst  
Daycare Council of New York

Leonie Haimson, Executive Director  
Class Size Matters

Paul Scialla, Founder International Well  
Building Institute  
Founder and CEO, Delos

Quadira Coles, Policy Manager  
GGE

Toni Smith Thompson, Senior Organizer in  
Education Policy Center  
New York Civil Liberties Union

Krystal Vazquez, on behalf of Lenny Goldberg  
Opportunity Charter Schools

Dr. Thomas Howard, Executive Director  
Bronx Charter for Better Learning

Daryl Hornick Becker, Policy Associate  
Assistance Committee for Children of New York

Gregory Brender  
United Neighborhood Houses

Valone Brown Jr., Director  
Learn to Work

Paulette Healy, Council member  
Citywide Council on Special Education

Phil Wong, President  
Community Education Council 24

Mary Chen, Director  
Chinese American Planning Council



2  
3 JOHANNA CASTRO: Sergeant Leonardo, we  
4 are live.

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Great. Sergeants, can  
6 you please begin your recording?

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Recording is up.

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Recording is rolling.

9 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Recording to the cloud  
10 is ready to go.

11 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you. Sergeant  
12 Kotowski, we are ready for your opening.

13 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning and welcome  
14 to today's remote New York City Council hearing of  
15 the Committee on Education jointly with the Committee  
16 on Health. At this time, would Council staff please  
17 turn on their video? Please place electronic devices  
18 on vibrate or silent. If you wish to submit  
19 testimony, you may do so at

20 [testimony@council.NYC.gov](mailto:testimony@council.NYC.gov). That is

21 [testimony@council.NYC.gov](mailto:testimony@council.NYC.gov). thank you. We are ready  
22 to begin.

23 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Okay.

24 [gavel]

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Good morning and  
3 welcome to today's virtual hearing. I am Council  
4 member Mark Treyger, Chair of the Education  
5 Committee. I'd like to thank my colleague, Mark  
6 Levine, Chair of the Health Committee, for holding  
7 this critically important joint hearing. I also want  
8 to acknowledge and thank the presence of our Speaker  
9 Corey Johnson for his support in being here today, as  
10 well as Public Advocate Jumaane Williams. Today's  
11 oversight topic is reopening New York City public  
12 schools, health and safety. There are also two bills  
13 that the Education Committee will hear. Introduction  
14 number 2058 by the Public Advocate which would  
15 require the DOE to report student attendance during  
16 periods of remote learning and a bill that I  
17 sponsored, Introduction number 2104 which would  
18 require the DOE to report on certain metrics  
19 regarding remote learning. While scheduling this  
20 hearing has had some hiccups, I welcome the  
21 Chancellor and his senior leadership team here today  
22 to what is happening around the reopening of New York  
23 City schools and to answer questions and bring  
24 transparency and oversight on critical issues  
25 surrounding health and safety of our students, our



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2 educators, and all of our staff. I understand how  
3 busy the Chancellor and his team have been  
4 particularly since March. The hours and hard work  
5 folks have put it would test anyone's metal. I  
6 appreciate the Herculean task the department has and  
7 continues to have as this pandemic continues to  
8 impact our city. That being said, we do not have  
9 city Council oversight hearings as a frivolous or  
10 political exercise. Despite everything going on  
11 around us, I want to make it crystal clear to City  
12 Hall that legislative oversight is a sacrosanct  
13 responsibility of this body and it is not optional.  
14 Oversight hearings provide this committee and the  
15 Council as a whole, the opportunity to inspect,  
16 examine, review, and act as a check on the executive  
17 branch and its agencies. That is why we are here on  
18 a Friday morning. COVID-19 has presented challenges  
19 to this city unlike any other we have faced in  
20 decades. COVID-19 affects every single resident in  
21 this city and affects the educational outcomes of all  
22 of the city students whether they be in public,  
23 private, or religious institutions. In the best of  
24 times, the DOE's ability to deliver educational  
25 services to 1.1 million students, all with diverse

2 needs, is challenging enough. In the midst of a  
3 pandemic, that mission becomes even more formidable.  
4 Between now and December, the Committee on Education  
5 will focus its oversight responsibilities on various  
6 aspects of education in New York City as it currently  
7 stands affected by the pandemic, including its impact  
8 on students with disabilities next Friday. I expect  
9 this administration and the DOE to be present,  
10 provide information on the current state of affairs,  
11 challenges faced, and steps to be taken to meet those  
12 challenges had on. I expected this administration  
13 and the DOE to be ready and able to answer fully  
14 questions raised by this committee and when  
15 information is sought outside of an oversight  
16 hearing, that the department respond in a timely  
17 manner to all committee requests for information.  
18 This includes request for information on the  
19 administrations. It should not take this committee  
20 months to receive briefings are confirmation of what  
21 the administration is considering when we are  
22 constantly receiving reports from CBL providers who  
23 are being told that their funding, including  
24 community schools and the vital Learning to Work  
25 program is being gutted and that there are

2 operational concerns with the learning labs and  
3 bridges programs hindering working families ability  
4 to access critical childcare. All the while, we are  
5 learning about the plan to acquire a school bus  
6 company at great, but unspecified cost through the  
7 media. This is not a functional way to govern. I do  
8 want to acknowledge that there are many individuals  
9 who have worked collaboratively and quickly to brief  
10 this Committee and answer its questions outside of  
11 the context of an oversight hearing and I thank them  
12 for their partnership, although, we still need a lot  
13 more information than we have right now. Ultimately,  
14 we all have the same goal. That the city's 1.1  
15 million students can attend school in a safe,  
16 supportive, and academically rewarding environment.  
17 We can achieve this goal when we work  
18 collaboratively, rather than in opposition. I will  
19 briefly talk about Introduction number 2104. This  
20 bill would require DOE to report on metrics regarding  
21 remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. These  
22 metrics would include language access and support  
23 provided, learning engagement rates, information on  
24 the level of remote learning students in juvenile  
25 facilities that receive IEP compliance rates, and a

2 host of other metrics. Much of what is covered by  
3 this bill was included in a follow-up letter to the  
4 DOE following our first remote hearing back in May.  
5 We never received the data that we asked for, despite  
6 extending the deadline. We, therefore, had to resort  
7 to using Council subpoena power to compel the  
8 Department to immediately get us as much of the  
9 information, but we are still moving forward with the  
10 legislation to fully capture all the data that we  
11 have requested. It is outrageous that the de Blasio  
12 administration and instead meet the efforts of this  
13 body and its request for information that would shine  
14 a light on the city's efforts in delivering remote  
15 education to 1.1 million students. The New York  
16 State Education Department sums up perfectly why this  
17 committee, through its oversight function, is seeking  
18 this data. Quote, data collection for continuous  
19 improvement and reflection means data is used to  
20 understand what is happening, to identify challenges  
21 or roadblocks, and to figure out what is working.  
22 Districts must assess immediate needs, but recognize  
23 the need to continue to reassess regularly as  
24 circumstances are likely to change frequently in this  
25 tumultuous time. Continuing to collect data to

2 ensure accurate understandings of need is necessary  
3 to continue providing the most effective and  
4 efficient response, end quote. I look forward to  
5 advancing this legislation and identifying gaps in  
6 services and working with the Department and our  
7 community of advocates and CPR was to plug those gaps  
8 and ensure those students are receiving the free and  
9 appropriate education they are entitled to under law,  
10 whether they are learning remotely, in person, in a  
11 juvenile facility, or with disabilities. We can and  
12 we must do everything possible to meet student needs  
13 and provide a quality education to all. Finally,  
14 with respect to doing everything possible to meet  
15 student needs, I want to add-- and I want to really  
16 emphasize this. I want to add that school leaders  
17 and school staff, from teachers to maintenance to  
18 school food workers, they are the ones who  
19 operationalize every single change in guidance. They  
20 are the ones who are ultimately responsible to  
21 implement every change that City Hall announces on TV  
22 and social media. They are the ones who hear  
23 directly from the parents and how our parents and  
24 students supposed to feel when conflicting guidance  
25 is passed down by the state and city? Absolute

2 confusion, frustration, and anger. I want to  
3 recognize all of our school leaders and all of our  
4 school staff for their extraordinary front-line work  
5 they do every day. And I want to recognize and  
6 acknowledge the daily struggle that parents and  
7 students face trying to navigate the ever constant  
8 changes to our school system. I want to thank  
9 everyone who is testifying today and I want to thank  
10 the Council staff for all the work that they have  
11 been putting in for this hearing. Malcolm Buterhorn,  
12 Jan Atwell, Colima Johnson, Chelsea Badermore, Masis  
13 Sarkisian, Melissa Nunez, Rose Martinez. I want to  
14 thank my chief of staff who is working extremely  
15 hard, Anna Scafe and my policy director Vanessa Ogle.  
16 And I want to recognize colleagues who are present.  
17 We have Council member Kallos, Council member Lander,  
18 Council member Levin, Council member Rose, Council  
19 member Grodenchik, Council member Ampry-Samuel,  
20 Council member Brannan, Council member Louis, Council  
21 member Ulrich, Council member Holden, Council member  
22 Powers, Council member Eugene, Council member Cohen,  
23 and Council member Borelli. And I will now turn it  
24 over to my co-chair and my great colleague who is

2 doing extraordinary work, Chair Mark Levine of the  
3 Health Committee.

4                   CHAIRPERSON LEVINE:     Thank you so much,  
5 Mr. Chair, and good morning, everybody. I'm Mark  
6 Levine, the city Council member and Chair of the  
7 Councils Committee on Health and I am thrilled to be  
8 partnering today with Chair Mark Treyger and to have  
9 our Speaker Cora Johnson with us, as well, who we  
10 will be hearing from momentarily. As we begin this  
11 hearing of two critical committees, education and  
12 health, examining the safety of our school reopening  
13 process and demanding accountability on behalf of  
14 students and staff. As a DOE parent and as someone  
15 who started his career as a teacher in district 7, I  
16 fully understand the stakes with the imperative that  
17 we only keep schools open amidst this pandemic if we  
18 can sufficiently safeguard the health of students,  
19 families, teachers, and staff. This hearing takes on  
20 an added urgency at a moment when we are confronting  
21 a rising wave of coronavirus nationally and here in  
22 New York City, a trend that may well further  
23 accelerate as the weather gets colder and gatherings  
24 are pushed indoors. We need to examine the health  
25 data, not just in the so-called hotspots of Brooklyn

2 and Queens, but in neighborhoods around the five  
3 boroughs where the daily case numbers are indeed,  
4 unfortunately, now increasing again. Are we  
5 succeeding in implementing promised protocols for  
6 testing students and staff in our school buildings?  
7 What are the results telling us so far about the  
8 prevalence of the virus in our schools? What is the  
9 system, for the critical work of contract tracing and  
10 school communities? What is this telling us about  
11 transmission in school buildings? And what has this  
12 meant for the opening and closing of individual  
13 schools? What protocols are in place to maintain  
14 safety if a student or staff member starts to exhibit  
15 COVID symptoms during the school day? Do we, indeed,  
16 have adequate staffing at every school amidst this  
17 public health crisis? What is the criteria for  
18 closing clusters of schools in additional individual  
19 neighborhoods as cases spike locally for a disease  
20 which is increasingly understood to be airborne?  
21 What do we know about the state of ventilation in our  
22 classrooms and other spaces? Including the key  
23 metric of air exchange rates per hour. What about  
24 learning bridge sites? Are we applying the same  
25 testing, tracing, ventilation, and closing protocols



2 there? Parents and families have endured months of  
3 anxiety, confusion, and uncertainty throughout this  
4 process and they deserve answers to these critical  
5 questions. Teachers, principals, and school staff  
6 have worked with unprecedented intensity throughout  
7 this crisis amidst the most difficult and even  
8 chaotic circumstances. I am full of admiration and  
9 gratitude for your hard work, your dedication, and  
10 your sacrifice and you, too, deserve answers to these  
11 critical questions. New Yorkers need clarity. We  
12 need information based on the science. The city  
13 Council called for and demanded this hearing today to  
14 get those answers and I want to thank the city  
15 Council staff who have worked incredibly hard to  
16 prepare us for today's hearing, including on the  
17 Health Committee counsels Harbani Ahuja and Sara  
18 Liss, policy analyst Emily Balken, finance analyst  
19 Lauren Hunt, and on our data team, Rachel  
20 Alexandroff, Rose Martinez, Melissa Nunez, Mesa  
21 Sarkisian, and Julia Freedenberg. I want to quickly  
22 acknowledge other members of the Health Committee who  
23 are with us. Forgive me if you've already  
24 acknowledged them, Chair Treyger, but we have Council  
25 member Powers, Council member Barron, I believe

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2 Council member Cohen. And forgive me if I've missed  
3 others. We will circle back and announce them. Now  
4 I believe I am passing it off to our Council Speaker  
5 Cora Johnson for opening remarks.

6 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you to Chairs  
7 Treyger and Levine for holding this hearing today and  
8 for everything both of you have done for parents,  
9 teachers, students, and school employees in our city  
10 with all your advocacy, with all your persistence.  
11 Countless New Yorkers would be in the dark right now  
12 about so many of the critical issues facing our  
13 lives. When Chair Treyger came to me a few weeks ago  
14 to say that we still didn't know about spring  
15 attendance under remote learning, I was, frankly,  
16 astonished. This is some of the most basic  
17 information that we could ask for and we don't take  
18 issue a subpoena lightly. It needs to be a last  
19 resort for essential information, but that is the  
20 kind of position that we have been put in. I think I  
21 speak for a lot of New Yorkers and I know I speak for  
22 Chairs Treyger and Levine when I say that that chaos  
23 and dysfunction that has surrounded our education  
24 system in the past year has been hard to watch and,  
25 frankly, heartbreaking. And it is not on one person.

2 This is not about-- I actually like Chancellor  
3 Carranza very much, so it's not about blaming this on  
4 one person. It's about what the city is facing right  
5 now and how difficult it has been. But I want to be  
6 clear that the stress and the frustration that we are  
7 feeling is nothing compared to the stress,  
8 frustration, and anxiety that parents, students,  
9 teachers, and school staff have been dealing with  
10 almost every day since this pandemic hit. They are  
11 trying to make decisions about their education, their  
12 future, their health with little to no information  
13 and with the rules of the game sometimes changing day  
14 to day. I know everyone at the Department of  
15 Education has been operating under incredible  
16 pressure and what is probably the most uncertain  
17 climate of our lifetime. And I want to thank them  
18 for their hard work. But I also want to say that the  
19 city has deserved better. Literally, millions of New  
20 Yorkers have been impacted by these decisions and  
21 it's not just the students and parents and school  
22 employees, but every business that employs a parent  
23 in New York City. Getting this right is a linchpin  
24 of our recovery. Jobs are at stake. Lives are at  
25 stake. And that the future of our children is at

2 stake. I know that it has been incredibly difficult,  
3 as I said, but excuses aren't really helpful or  
4 acceptable. We cannot afford to let the disparities  
5 we have seen from this virus grow. We can't lose the  
6 progress we have made in keeping our positive cases  
7 and deaths down. I really believe that it can all  
8 come down to how we handle this challenge.

9 Chancellor Carranza, I know scheduling this hearing  
10 has been difficult for you, but, frankly, the as you  
11 heard from Chair Treyger, this should have happened  
12 sooner. We are really glad you are with us today  
13 because we look forward to hearing from you directly.  
14 We can't do our job properly without it and everyone  
15 impacted by our school system deserves to get answers  
16 to some of the questions that we have today. We need  
17 to know what is working. We need to know what is not  
18 working, but why this reopening process was so  
19 fraught and how the DOE plans to make sure that the  
20 1.1 million students in New York City get the  
21 education they deserve whether we are able to keep  
22 schools open all year or not. We still want children  
23 to get that education. So, I want to thank you for  
24 being here today and now I'm going to turn it back  
25 over to Chair Treyger.

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2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you. Thank  
3 you, Mr. Speaker and thank you for your support. It  
4 means a lot to get this information and to really put  
5 the Council oversight power to use. Now, I will turn  
6 it over to another big supporter and another great  
7 ally in our fight for our kids. Our Public Advocate  
8 Jumaane Williams.

9 PUBLIC ADVOCATE WILLIAMS: Can you hear  
10 me? No? Can anyone hear me?

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You are unmuted,  
12 but we can't hear you.

13 PUBLIC ADVOCATE WILLIAMS: Can anybody  
14 hear me?

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: There we go. Now  
16 we can.

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Better.

18 PUBLIC ADVOCATE WILLIAMS: You can hear  
19 me now?

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

21 PUBLIC ADVOCATE WILLIAMS: Okay. Thank  
22 you. Thank you so much. As was mentioned, my name  
23 is Jumaane Williams. I'm the Public Advocate for the  
24 city of New York. I want to thank Chairs Treyger and  
25 Levine for not only holding this important hearing,

2 but for the stalwart leadership you both shown  
3 throughout this pandemic and I want to thank the  
4 Speaker for his leadership and I think the Council  
5 for allowing me to speak on this important topic. At  
6 first, I do want to say and echo that I understand  
7 the challenges of trying to educate 1.1 million  
8 students, the largest school system in the entire  
9 country, and I would very much appreciate that the  
10 Chancellor himself and his staff have always availed  
11 themselves to me and to answer questions, which I  
12 appreciate. And I want to make sure that I said  
13 about the outset. I do have to say that looking at  
14 the decisions that we could have made, I always try  
15 to look at the tools at the moment and that decision  
16 cannot [inaudible 00:20:35]. We have done abysmal  
17 when it comes to reopening these schools. There just  
18 is no way around it. We could have done things so  
19 much different and we made the choices we had, the  
20 choices that we did with the resources we had. We  
21 couldn't have done it worse. I also want to be clear  
22 that, when I take a birds eye view and I look at the  
23 Department of Education, the NYPD, the Human  
24 Resources Administration, I cannot put it all on the  
25 heads of those agencies. I do want to tweet what the

2 speaker said a little bit. I do put the blame on one  
3 person. Mayor Bill de Blasio. The incompetency in  
4 decision-making is bar none from what I've seen for  
5 certain decisions, especially around reopening. No  
6 one except for the Mayor and maybe a few others  
7 believe that it made sense to try to reopen in person  
8 for the largest school system in the country.  
9 Nothing that has happened was not anticipated and we  
10 went like a steam train to keep going and the people  
11 affected are the people who are most affected  
12 throughout this pandemic and even before. There was  
13 a word I'm going to use that I heard a lot when I was  
14 a young kid which is hardheaded. It appears that the  
15 administration and the Mayor has just been hardheaded  
16 from people who are on the ground and are saying what  
17 needs to be done. Last month, the Media delayed the  
18 start of an in-person instruction on two different  
19 occasions. Eventually, schools of grade K through  
20 five and K through eight reopened at the end of  
21 September and high schools and middle schools with  
22 grade six through eight opened on October 1st. while  
23 this continuous display of a lack of coordination and  
24 organization on the part of the administration is  
25 disappointing, it's not surprising. What is

2 surprising is that Mayors decision to delay the  
3 reopening for the second time in his reason for doing  
4 so. Many schools did not have enough staff members  
5 to supervise the number of students who were about to  
6 enter the buildings for in person learning. It is  
7 inconceivable that the Mayor could have arrived at  
8 this decision in September when his own education  
9 sector advisory Council, a group made up of members  
10 he himself appointed, warned him of the teacher  
11 shortage four months prior. The Administration knew  
12 that this was going to happen, so they have no  
13 excuse, not, for being this unprepared and ill-  
14 equipped. I am not the only person who has no  
15 confidence in this administration's ability to reopen  
16 schools in a safe and sound manner. A couple of days  
17 before schools reopened, the union representing our  
18 cities principal called on the state to seize control  
19 of the school system from the Mayor. While I do not  
20 think we have reached a point where we need to cede  
21 control of our schools to the state Department of  
22 Education, I understand the frustrations of these  
23 principles and I sympathize with them and do wish the  
24 leadership of the UFT has made similarly strong  
25 comments. They have not been provided with enough



2 resources, guidance, and staff to ensure a safe  
3 environment for in person learning. One example is  
4 the fact that the administration and added 4500  
5 educators a week before reopening when the principles  
6 union said they needed twice that amount to function.  
7 It is clear that we cannot rely on the administration  
8 to provide adequate direction and support for our  
9 school staff. As of now, remote learning remains our  
10 best option for school-based instruction while we  
11 continue to open up in a phased approach. And while  
12 last spring showed us the many shortcomings of the  
13 DOE and how it handled remote learning. My bill,  
14 Intro number 2058, would attempt to address one of  
15 those issues. Student engagement. Student  
16 engagement remains a problem because the DOE has  
17 still not provided every single student with a remote  
18 learning device. Providing devices to every student  
19 would not only benefit our efforts to close the  
20 digital divide in our city, but it would bring our  
21 student engagement rate closer to where it was pre-  
22 COVID. Monitoring student engagement is an essential  
23 way to determine the effectiveness of remote learning  
24 which is why I introduced this piece of legislation.  
25 This legislation will require the DOE to report

2 student attendance for the previous week when remote  
3 learning utilized or when a combination of remote and  
4 in person learning is utilized. The data will be  
5 disaggregated by school, school district, grade,  
6 race, individualized education plan status,  
7 multilingual language learner's status, and the  
8 English language learner status. The report is to be  
9 submitted to the Mayor, Speaker of the Council,  
10 myself as the Public Advocate, the school diversity  
11 advisory group, all community education councils, and  
12 posted on the DOE website. And we also need to  
13 address the fact that everyone doesn't have the  
14 Internet services needed. Tracking student  
15 attendance rates allows us to hold the DOE  
16 accountable for ensuring our students have the  
17 ability to access all of their classes remotely. I  
18 was looking at Chair Treyger's New York one when we  
19 finally got some good data that he was asking for a  
20 while and what we figured is what we saw. The vast  
21 majority of people who are affected are black and  
22 brown. Schools that have over 50 percent black and  
23 brown students are eight times-- eight times--  
24 doing worse. This is unacceptable. Can we imagine  
25 all of the energy and the money that we wasted doing

2 something that everybody told this Mayor we cannot  
3 and should not do? Put it into getting the best  
4 remote system we could've and then phased in. it is  
5 inconceivable that this is the decision that the  
6 mayor made. I also want to take a moment to  
7 highlight the importance of Chair Treyger's bill.  
8 Intro number 1650 which would require the DOE to  
9 report data to the Counsel concerning teacher  
10 retention and [inaudible 00:26:05]. At a time when  
11 our school system is experiencing a teacher shortage,  
12 this legislation is essential. Perhaps, what is most  
13 important about this bill is its tax [inaudible  
14 00:26:14] provision which comprises a group to  
15 analyze the DOE's data and provide recommendations to  
16 address the issue. I hope that the DOE will actually  
17 utilize the recommendations issued by this taskforce.  
18 Something that they clearly did not do with our  
19 Mayor's advisory group, to take substantial steps to  
20 retain the educators and provide them with the tools  
21 needed to navigate the tumultuous period. While I'm  
22 glad to see New York working towards recovery after  
23 having been the epicenter of COVID-19, we must not  
24 use our city's low infection rate as a telltale sign  
25 that we can safely reopen schools. The money and

2 energy that the administration is investing in this  
3 hybrid approach will be better spent towards  
4 improving remote learning with a phased in method  
5 coming at a later date when our schools have more  
6 staff, a standard universal guidance, and additional  
7 resources. Reopening our school buildings before our  
8 educators were adequately prepared has been a  
9 disservice to our students, to the parents, to the  
10 entire city. Once again, I urge the administration  
11 to focus on remote learning and delay in person  
12 learning until our schools are ready. And once  
13 again, I just want to thank the Chancellor and the  
14 staff of the DOE who I know have the best of  
15 intentions who I know are doing the best given the  
16 circumstances that we have. But as the Public  
17 Advocate, as a person with a child in the public  
18 school system, I know we made terrible decision  
19 unnecessarily. There has to be an account for that  
20 and we have to do better going forward. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you, Mr.  
22 Public Advocate, for your support and being very  
23 vocal from day one on this issue. I appreciate your  
24 partnership. And with that, Malcolm, we'll swear in  
25 the Chancellor and the panel.

2 COMMITTEE COUNCIL: Yes. So, thank  
3 you, Chair Treyger. Again, everyone, I am Malcolm  
4 Buterhorn, counsel to the Education Committee of the  
5 New York City Council. I am also joined today by my  
6 colleague, Sara Liss, counsel to the Health  
7 Committee. Before we begin testimony from the  
8 administration, I want to remind everyone that you  
9 will be on mute until you are called on to testify.  
10 After you are called on, you will be unmuted. I will  
11 be calling on public witness as to testify in panels,  
12 so please listen for your name to be called. I will  
13 be announcing in advance to the next panel will be.  
14 I would like to remind everyone that, unlike our  
15 typical Council hearings, while you will be placed on  
16 a panel, I will be calling individuals to testify one  
17 at a time. Council members who have questions for a  
18 particular panelist or for the administration should  
19 use the raise hand function in zoom. You will be  
20 called on in the order with which you raised your  
21 hand after full testimony has been completed. We  
22 will be limiting Council member questions to five  
23 minutes. This includes both questions and answers.  
24 Please note that, for purposes of this virtual  
25 hearing, we will not be allowing a second round of

2 questioning. For panelists, once your name is  
3 called, member of our staff will unmute you and the  
4 Sergeant-at-arms will give you the go ahead to begin  
5 after setting the timer. Please listen for that cue.  
6 All public testimony will be limited to two minutes.  
7 At the end of two minutes, please wrap up your  
8 comments so we can move on to the next panelist.  
9 Please listen carefully and wait for the Sergeant to  
10 announce that you may begin before delivering your  
11 testimony as there is a slight delay. I will now  
12 call on the following members of the administration  
13 to testify. Understanding that the Chancellor will  
14 be the only one giving verbal testimony, there is a  
15 full backup contingent of DOE cabinet members, DOHMH,  
16 DYCD, and Test and Trace. So, I am going to announce  
17 everyone that I have on this list, then I will read  
18 the oath and call on each of you individually to  
19 respond. So, the following person will be sworn in.  
20 Chancellor Richard Carranza. Dr. Jay Varma, senior  
21 advisor for public health, Mayor's Office. Dr.  
22 Daniel Stephens, deputy commissioner of family and  
23 child health, DOHMH. Chelsea Cipriano, executive  
24 director intergovernmental affairs, DOHMH. Dr. Ted  
25 Long, executive director, New York City Test and

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2 Trace Corps. And senior vice president of ambulatory  
3 care, New York City Health and Hospitals. Maidel de  
4 la Cruz, director government and community affairs,  
5 New York City Health and Hospitals. Susan Haskell,  
6 deputy commissioner of youth services, DYCD. First  
7 deputy chancellor, Donald Conyers. Deputy  
8 chancellor, LaShawn Robinson. Deputy chancellor,  
9 Josh Wallack. Lauren Siciliano, DOE chief  
10 administrative officer. Lindsay Oates, DOE chief  
11 financial officer. Kevin Moran, chief school  
12 operations officer. Dr. Linda Chen, chief academic  
13 officer. Carrie Bateman, chief operating officer,  
14 Division of School Planning and Development. John  
15 Shay, DOE chief executive officer. Kenyati Reed, DOE  
16 executive director, officer of safety and youth  
17 development. Christopher Caruso, executive director  
18 for community schools. Chris Groll, chief executive  
19 officer, Division of School Climate and Wellness.  
20 Eadie Sharp, DOE chief strategy officer. And John  
21 Hammer, deputy chief executive officer and director  
22 special education office. If I just called your  
23 name, if you could please activate your video now.  
24 Again, I will read the oath and then call on each  
25 panelist to individually respond. If you could all

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2 raise your right hand. Do you affirm to tell the  
3 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth  
4 before these committees and respond honestly to  
5 Council member questions? Chancellor?

6 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA? I do.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Dr. Varma?

8 DR. JAY VARMA: I do.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Dr. Daniel  
10 Stephens?

11 DR. DANIEL STEPHENS: I do.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chelsea Cipriano?

13 DR. DANIEL STEPHENS: She's off camera.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: All right. I can  
15 circle back. Dr. Long?

16 DR. TED LONG: I do.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Dr. Maidel de la  
18 Cruz. We can circle back if she does answer  
19 questions later. Deputy Commissioner Haskell?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I do.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: First deputy  
22 chancellor Conyers?

23 FIRST DEPUTY CHANCELLOR CONYERS: I do.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Deputy Chancellor  
25 Robinson?



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2 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROBINSON: Yes. I do.

3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Deputy  
4 Chancellor Wallack?

5 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WALLACK: I do.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Lauren Siciliano?

7 LAUREN SICILIANO: I do.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Lindsay Oates?

9 LINDSAY OATES: I do.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Kevin Moran? I saw  
11 him before. I can circle back. Dr. Chen?

12 DR. LINDA CHEN: I do.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Carrie Bateman?

14 CARRIE BATEMAN: I do.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: John Shay?

16 JOHN SHAY: I do.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Kenyati Reed?

18 Christopher Caruso? Chris Groll? Eadie Sharp? John  
19 Hammer?

20 JOHN HAMMER: I do.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And for  
22 those that didn't speak before, if you do answer  
23 questions for the first time, later, we will just do  
24 the oath for you. Finally, for question time, due to  
25 the large number of administration officials present,

2 any panelist that will be answering questions after  
3 the Chancellor's testimony, if you could please state  
4 your name for the record before you speak, it will  
5 make it much more clear in the official transcript  
6 for who was speaking. Thank you. And, Chancellor,  
7 you may begin when ready.

8 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Great. Thank you.  
9 So good morning and I'd like to thank Chairs Treyger  
10 and Levine, all of the members of the Education and  
11 Health Committee that are here today, as well as our  
12 Public Advocate Jumaane Williams and our Speaker Cory  
13 Johnson. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss  
14 the Department of Education's reopening plans as they  
15 relate to health and safety. As chancellor of the  
16 New York City Public Schools, I am joined by senior  
17 advisor for public health, Dr. Jay Varma, Department  
18 of Health Deputy Commissioner Dr. Daniel Stephens,  
19 and Dr. Ted Long from the Test and Trace Corps, as  
20 well as Deputy Commissioner Susan Haskell from the  
21 Department of youth services and community  
22 development, as well as all of my colleagues from the  
23 Department of Education. Before I begin, I first  
24 would like to thank the Counsel for your continued  
25 leadership through this pandemic and all that you

2 have done on behalf of New York City during this  
3 time. The unprecedented nature of this pandemic has  
4 challenged our system in countless ways and, in  
5 collaboration with our public health experts, our  
6 educators and families, we have made the most out of  
7 a nearly impossible situation to get our students and  
8 educators safely back into the classroom. Reopening  
9 our school buildings during an ongoing pandemic has  
10 been one of the most complex challenges in any  
11 jurisdiction has confronted in modern history. So  
12 many aspects of this experience have been  
13 unprecedented, but the fundamentals remain the same.  
14 Our students want and need to learn in person with a  
15 caring teacher as often as possible and ensuring  
16 their health and safety is central to everything we  
17 have done to make that happen. Since September 21, I  
18 have had the privilege of visiting many of our  
19 schools in all five boroughs as they welcome back our  
20 students. Seeing the faces of our students light up  
21 when they are reunited with their peers and teachers  
22 and principals was a joyous experience and reinforced  
23 how essential it is to nurture the closest possible  
24 connections between students and their school  
25 communities. I want to emphasize how crucial

2 physically attending school is, especially for our  
3 most vulnerable children. For many, the school  
4 community is the stickiest, most reliable aspect of  
5 their lives with people and resources that they can  
6 count on. I cannot thank you enough our teachers and  
7 our principals, our school staff, our borough staff,  
8 and our food service workers. Our custodial  
9 engineers, nurses whose dedication to our students is  
10 apparent in the heroic work that they have done  
11 during this crisis. Everyone else that supports our  
12 schools also deserves credit, the enormous credit,  
13 including our school safety agents and our bus  
14 drivers and our school support staff. Throughout the  
15 reopening process, we have taken swift and decisive  
16 action to protect the health and safety of our  
17 students and staff. For example, we have granted  
18 reasonable accommodations to work remotely for over  
19 34,000 staff members based on their documented  
20 medical conditions and we have allowed maximum  
21 flexibility for our parents to choose either full-  
22 time remote learning for their children at any time.  
23 Just over 50 percent of our students have elected  
24 that option. With that important context, I'd like  
25 to provide you an overview of the comprehensive

2 health and safety protocols that we've implemented.

3 Health and safety are our first priorities always.

4 The protocols that we have put in place and the

5 decisive actions we have taken show that we are

6 listening to the health experts and working hard to

7 keep our students and staff safe. We are taking a

8 multilayered approach to safety that integrates

9 actions that are all essential. That includes safe

10 levels of ventilation, social distancing, use the

11 face coverings, proper hand hygiene, randomized

12 testing, and informing families about monitoring

13 their children's health. All of these taken together

14 are key strategies we're employing in our schools to

15 decrease the risk of transmission and were part of

16 our back to school pledge to our students, families,

17 and educators. Let me just say a little bit more

18 about these important strategies. In terms of

19 ventilation, it is simple. No room will be used by

20 staff or students if it doesn't meet our ventilation

21 standards. We have surveyed every building and have

22 conducted extensive repairs in spaces that need

23 modifications. If for any reason, the fix was not

24 feasible, that room simply hasn't and won't be used.

25 The Department of Education followed federal

2 standards for disease control guidance for school  
3 operations on your ventilation to reduce the spread  
4 of COVID-19. Every classroom was inspected by School  
5 Construction Authority led teams of professional  
6 engineers. Repairs and remediation efforts were  
7 based directly on those assessments including fixing  
8 Windows and fan motors and cleaning air ducts. We  
9 have taken ventilation concerns very seriously.  
10 Prior to educators returning, we notified 10  
11 buildings that their staff needed to work from home  
12 wall repairs were concluded. Now, only one of those  
13 buildings remain off-line. Out of the 64,550  
14 classrooms across our system, 99 percent are in use.  
15 We also identified and prepared alternative spaces  
16 for those schools that needed them. In addition, DOE  
17 has purchased CO2 testing devices and 30,000 high-  
18 efficiency particulate air or HEPA purifiers for the  
19 first day of school and will continue to order more  
20 is needed. These purifiers are certified to remove  
21 virus size particles from the air and are being used  
22 in nurses' offices, isolation rooms, and other spaces  
23 may require additional filtration. The air testing  
24 devices will also help staff measure CO2 levels which  
25 are an indicator of adequate ventilation. Next,

2 personal protective equipment or PPE and cleaning  
3 supplies have also been any area of focus. We have  
4 ordered and distributed millions of nonmedical masks  
5 and other PPE, including hundreds of thousands of  
6 cases of hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, and  
7 more. Over 500 pieces of PPE and cleaning supplies  
8 have been delivered to school so that may have a 30  
9 day supply of those items on hand at all times. We  
10 also launched a hotline the principles can call if  
11 they have any issues with PPE supplies and all of  
12 this is paid for out of our central budget so schools  
13 don't have to worry about covering those costs out of  
14 their school budgets. Relatedly, custodial engineers  
15 are key contributors and our student communities  
16 remain healthy and safe. They ensure that the  
17 bathrooms are sufficiently stocked with soap and  
18 paper towels at all times and not all hand washing  
19 sinks are in a state of good repair. Our custodial  
20 engineers confirm weekly that all buildings under  
21 their care have at least a 30 day supply of hand  
22 soap, paper towels, PPE, hand sanitizer, disposable  
23 gloves, and antiviral disinfectant in their  
24 inventory. To minimize the potential transmission of  
25 COVID-19, custodial engineers have implemented the

2 following protocols in all of our buildings: there  
3 is nightly disinfecting of all exposed surfaces in  
4 all occupied spaces using electrostatic backpack  
5 sprayers within an EPA approved disinfectant. All  
6 nonporous frequently contacted surfaces such as  
7 desks, tabletop, drinking fountain, faucet handles,  
8 door hardware, push plates, light switches, and  
9 handrails are wiped down and disinfected throughout  
10 the day utilizing an antiviral disinfectant.

11 Special attention is paid to horizontal surfaces in  
12 buildings, near areas, classrooms, and bathrooms and  
13 custodial engineers are required to complete and  
14 maintain daily bathroom inspection and daily building  
15 disinfection laws. We will continue to ensure that  
16 custodial engineers have the resources that they need  
17 to ensure our cleaning and disinfecting standards are  
18 being met. Now, nurses. Another critical  
19 contributor to our safety efforts as our nursing  
20 force. The city Council has been a great advocate  
21 for ensuring that our school buildings have access to  
22 nurses and now we have made sure that, with every  
23 school building, has the school nurse. In  
24 partnership with New York City Health and Hospitals,  
25 which have provided critical support on this issue,



2 the office of school health now has almost 400  
3 additional nurses that cover all K-12 schools which,  
4 at the start of the school year, did not have a  
5 nurse, as well as a supply to cover for any absences  
6 on any given day. Additionally, there are 100 nurses  
7 who provide geographic coverage for early childhood  
8 programs. A health hotline is staffed by nurses of  
9 early childhood program providers it also serves as  
10 providers to them, as well. In terms of health  
11 monitoring, we know that that is essential and even  
12 before entering school buildings each morning,  
13 students and staff know how to take their temperature  
14 and complete their health screening checklist  
15 following the states recommendation. Beyond this, we  
16 have been and will continue to educate and enforce  
17 the key for actions in preventing the spread of  
18 COVID-19. In those keys for our physical distancing,  
19 wearing face coverings, hand hygiene, and, very  
20 important, staying home sick. If a student is at  
21 school and does not feel well, they will be escorted  
22 to the school's isolation room. They will be tended  
23 to by a school nurse or a caring adult who has been  
24 designated for that role until their guardian is able  
25 to pick them up from school. Every school has access

2 to professionals and highly trained building response  
3 teams that is ready to respond in the event that  
4 there is a health concern in the school. BRT's are  
5 trained staff within a school building selected by  
6 and in cooperation with principal or principals who  
7 are tasked with emergency information and action  
8 management responsibilities. Now, testing. We know  
9 that widely available access to the testing and a  
10 strong contact tracing and core team system are  
11 essential to being able to manage the pandemic and  
12 sustained low levels of community transmission. City  
13 rotten testing sites are offering free COVID testing  
14 for all New Yorkers citywide, but are prioritizing  
15 expedited results for school staff and students with  
16 results coming within 48 hours if they go to one of  
17 the 22 sites across the city. We have also been  
18 working with the Department of Health and Mental  
19 Hygiene and that Test and Trace Corps, known as T2,  
20 and establishing monthly random testing at every  
21 school. The goal is to discover COVID-19 positive  
22 cases and that is exactly what we are doing.  
23 Beginning October 9, test and trace rolled out  
24 mandatory random testing at all schools to continue  
25 to keep transmission in our classrooms low and our

2 communities safe. Complement to that testing work is  
3 our interagency situation room which launched on  
4 September 14th. This is a one-stop shop. Rapid  
5 response team staff by personnel from the Department  
6 of Education, the Department of Health, T2, and it is  
7 open six days a week for principals to communicate  
8 questions, concerns, and potential cases. Where  
9 necessary, classrooms or school buildings are  
10 temporarily closed to maintain the safety of school  
11 communities and prevent the spread of the virus.  
12 Citywide school buildings will close if the  
13 percentage of positive COVID-19 tests in New York  
14 City is three percent or more using a seven day  
15 rolling average. This is the most aggressive  
16 threshold in the nation. Additionally, based on the  
17 surveillance data from the Department of Health, we  
18 know that certain areas of the city are experiencing  
19 a sharp increase in cases and test percent  
20 positivity. We have temporarily closed schools in  
21 the COVID-19 red and orange zones, designated by the  
22 governor, and will continue to work with the state on  
23 best approaches in these neighborhoods to keep New  
24 Yorkers safe. On a daily basis, the Department of  
25 Health and T2 are deploying hundreds of staff in a

2 multitude of operational efforts to increase access  
3 to testing, to conduct outreach, and engage with  
4 affected communities to mitigate the transmission of  
5 COVID-19. In addition to all these efforts and to  
6 protect the physical well-being of our school  
7 communities, we are even more attentive than ever to  
8 supporting the social and emotional needs of our  
9 students in response to the trauma that they have  
10 experienced due to this pandemic. Schools have been  
11 equipped to integrate trauma informed practices into  
12 instruction and to build off of last year's major  
13 expansion of mental health supports and social  
14 emotional learning through the bridge to school  
15 initiative. The bridge to school initiative  
16 integrates social emotional learning into the  
17 curriculum and will provide trauma informed training  
18 for more teachers, as well as resources for teachers  
19 and principals to manage blended learning. Available  
20 sessions include training to recognize the signs of  
21 trauma and its impact on young people and effective  
22 trauma care practices that align to existing social  
23 emotional and mental health support systems used in  
24 the Department of Education. Another part of our  
25 work includes the partnership with the Child Mind

2 Institute to offer additional supports for school-  
3 based staff this fall, including webinars and  
4 workshops, videos, and print materials to support  
5 social emotional learning in the classroom and a  
6 helpline for educators to receive additional guidance  
7 and support. Again, I want to thank the Council and,  
8 particularly, Chair Treyger care for his constant and  
9 consistent advocacy and action on the importance of  
10 attending to the social emotional needs of our  
11 students. That focus has made us more prepared and  
12 better equipped to respond during this crisis.  
13 Throughout the spring and summer, the DOE has trained  
14 approximately 13,000 people in a trauma 101 series  
15 focused on grief and loss, bereavement, and self-care  
16 in a crisis. This included crisis team members who  
17 responded to schools that experienced a loss and  
18 provided mental health supports to school leaders and  
19 school support staff. Since launching the Bridge to  
20 School Initiative, we trained over 1600 school  
21 leaders and over 45,000 school-based staff with  
22 numbers growing daily. We are very excited about  
23 this work and look forward to continued partnership  
24 in service of our students and our school  
25 communities. We are also navigating the

2 unprecedented and constantly changing realities of  
3 this pandemic. There is a lot of information coming  
4 quickly in real time that we worked diligently to  
5 process and communicate with clarity as best we can.  
6 Effective two-way communication is especially  
7 important during a time of crisis and engagement with  
8 principals and educators has been an important part  
9 during this time of crisis and executing a safe  
10 reopening. I have sent frequent emails directly to  
11 principals in order to ensure they are hearing the  
12 most important updates related to COVID-19. Blended  
13 learning and health and safety and, in response to  
14 principal feedback, we now send them our Principles  
15 Digest highlights at 7 AM on Mondays, Wednesdays, and  
16 Fridays to keep them fully informed about more  
17 detailed information that they need to know. In  
18 addition to written correspondence, we have regularly  
19 convened citywide principal meetings to share updated  
20 policy information and provide them with an  
21 opportunity to ask questions. And, with respect to  
22 communication, it is important to communicate just as  
23 vigorously with our families and we have proactively  
24 engaged with them throughout the summer and reopening  
25 process providing them regular updates and

2 opportunities to ask questions and connect with  
3 community partners. Schools know their community's  
4 best and many have communication tools at their  
5 disposal to convey information to families. That  
6 includes Robo calls, texts, emails, websites, and  
7 more. Additionally, all of the letters sent home to  
8 families by way of principles have been translated  
9 into nine languages. In addition to the letters, we  
10 share news and updates to DOE's website, the morning  
11 bell blog, and social media. The DOE leadership also  
12 hosts or attends a virtual town halls for families to  
13 answer questions on a regular basis and we been  
14 holding briefings and briefing calls with elected  
15 officials, advocates, and student leaders throughout  
16 this entire time. One particular user of these  
17 opportunities is Chair Treyger and his staff who we  
18 have had many almost weekly briefings with and has  
19 had access to all of my cabinet on a regular basis.  
20 Our family and community empowerment team is  
21 supporting parent leaders through weekly check ins  
22 with education and president councils, weekly email  
23 updates about important resources, and news for  
24 families and constant ongoing, on-call, targeted  
25 support. Face hosts, virtual meetings, and town halls

2 to inform families about health, safety, and academic  
3 updates and, in addition, our fees team support  
4 family facing district and school staff weekly watch  
5 party Wednesday events and training sessions. They  
6 also provide direct support for the 1400 parent  
7 coordinators through a website with information and  
8 training resources on remote learning, wellness, and  
9 other topics that are important to our communities.  
10 Finally, the Department of Education is actively  
11 engaging with students to understand their real  
12 experiences with remote and blended learning and with  
13 school reopening. We respond to their questions and  
14 concerns while focusing on such topics that young  
15 people prioritize such as grading policy, device  
16 distribution, diversity and admissions, and COVID-  
17 related health concerns. I would like to take just a  
18 moment to also talk about the proposed legislation.  
19 In trial number 2058 requires DOE to report on remote  
20 learning attendance. We support the goal of this  
21 bill to ensure that families, elected officials,  
22 advocates, and other stakeholders have access to  
23 meaningful data on student attendance during remote  
24 and blended learning. In trial number 2104 requires  
25 DOE to report data on instruction and services



2 provided during remote learning including students  
3 with disabilities and multilingual learners. We look  
4 forward to further discussions with the Council on  
5 both of these important pieces of legislation. In  
6 conclusion, this public health emergency has tested  
7 all New Yorkers in many, many ways the DOE does to  
8 rise to the challenge of this moment has been a  
9 testament to the determination and incredible staff,  
10 students, and families. We are taking to lessons we  
11 learned every day to adapt and improve and so for we  
12 have seen that our protocols are largely working. I  
13 want to assure you that we are going to remain  
14 flexible, transparent, and continue to work with our  
15 own health experts, our principles, our teachers, our  
16 parents and students who are partners with us in all  
17 of this. So, on behalf of my colleagues, I want to  
18 thank you for your time and we will be happy to  
19 answer the questions that you may have.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And we're just  
21 going to quickly swear in-- because I know we had  
22 muting issues before. Deputy Chancellor Austin and  
23 Kevin Moran. So, if you both could activate your  
24 video, please. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the  
25 whole truth, and nothing but the truth before these

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2 committees and respond honestly to Council member  
3 questions? Deputy Chancellor?

4 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR AUSTIN: I do.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And Mr. Moran?

6 KEVIN MORAN: I do.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And, Chancellor, we  
8 just ask that, when Council member Treyger begins his  
9 questions, if you are going to point to someone on  
10 your team to answer questions, if you could just call  
11 out their names so our master muter would know who to  
12 unmute for you. Thank you.

13 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: I like that term.  
14 Master unmutter.

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Okay. Thank you,  
16 Mr. Chancellor, for your testimony. I also wish,  
17 before we start asking questions, just recognize we  
18 have also been joined by Council members Miller and  
19 Council member Dromm. I want to begin by getting  
20 clarity, I think, for school communities and for the  
21 public. And if additional folks have to weigh in on  
22 this, I welcome that. Does the city of New York have  
23 a mandatory testing plan for New York City schools  
24 and, if so, why is there language and notice to  
25 school families that consent to testing is not

2 mandatory? I think that has created a lot of  
3 confusion in school communities and for families and  
4 I would appreciate if someone can just clarify what  
5 exactly is the testing plan for schools? Thank you.

6 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: So, Chairman

7 Treyger, there is mandatory testing for any human  
8 being that is in a school building during the school  
9 year. We know that test and trace is very important,  
10 but we also know that, in order to have a handle on  
11 what is happening in our school communities, it is  
12 important to have testing. And just as a heads up, I  
13 am going to ask Dr. Jay Varma if he wants to chime in  
14 after I give some top lines. Let me be very clear.  
15 John Locke wrote about our social compact about  
16 living together in a society. This is where we test  
17 our social compact because it is about the health and  
18 safety during the pandemic of everyone. But we also  
19 are educators and we are in schools, so we are asking  
20 for consent. We are requesting that parents sign  
21 consent forms and we are giving ourselves time to  
22 educate our parent communities, educate our student  
23 communities, educate our school communities around  
24 why we are doing that. But let's be very clear. A  
25 student who does not have consent or any adult that

2 does not submit to testing, randomized testing, there  
3 is an option for those students and that is fully  
4 remote learning. But if we are going to be together  
5 in the school building, randomized testing what will  
6 be mandated. It is mandated. Dr. Varma?

7 DR. JAY VARMA: Nothing else from me.

8 Yeah.

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, I just want to  
10 note that the-- and I appreciate the answer. The  
11 notice that was sent to families says something a  
12 little bit different. The DOE has communicated to  
13 parents and guardians that, while consent to testing  
14 is not, quote, not mandatory, children who do not  
15 consent to testing, quote, may-- not will-- may be  
16 switched to remote learning if a sufficient sample  
17 size is not reached. So, the question is how will  
18 this threshold be determined? Who will determine  
19 when nonconsenting students are transferred to remote  
20 learning and is there a possibility that the same  
21 cohort of students will be repeatedly tested if a  
22 school has a low rate of return of consent forms?

23 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: So, I will ask Dr.  
24 long to talk about the testing in the cohorting. So,  
25 again, Chair Treyger, let me be clear. We will

2 clarify the language and I believe there is  
3 clarifying language that is going out to clarify what  
4 the expectations are. We prefer to start with an  
5 education approach rather than the hammer, but let's  
6 be very clear. And I appreciate the opportunity to  
7 be clear during this hearing. Testing is mandatory  
8 for in-person learning. There is a ramp up and, of  
9 course, we want parents to be engaged, so that is why  
10 we are asking for the consent, but there will be  
11 mandatory randomized testing. Dr. Long, could you  
12 talk in a little more detail about how that  
13 randomization is happening and what that looks like,  
14 please.

15 DR. TED LONG: Yes. Thank you,  
16 Chancellor. So, the way that randomization works is  
17 we develop a roster of anybody who would be in the  
18 building. It is randomized and then a list is put  
19 together with names. We then go down that list,  
20 which is a randomized list and that's who was  
21 selected for testing when we go in to do testing but  
22 that point in time in the school. That is it simply.  
23 I'd be happy to go into it with more detail if that  
24 would be helpful.

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, Dr. long, I'm  
3 not sure if the question was answered. In the fact  
4 that is there a possibility that the same cohort of  
5 students will be repeatedly tested if a school has a  
6 low rate of return of consent forms and is repeatedly  
7 testing the same cohort of students, some of whom may  
8 have had antibodies, a statistically valid way of  
9 measuring point in time prevalence?

10 DR. TED LONG: Two parts to your  
11 question. Mr. Chancellor, do you mind if I jump in?

12 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: No. Please.

13 DR. TED LONG: Okay. The purpose of  
14 doing a randomized list is to avoid testing the same  
15 group over and over. That's the reason why we do it.  
16 So, if you have 100 different students and your  
17 randomized list and you have to test 20 percent of  
18 them, you are going to have, very likely, different  
19 20 percent because they are randomly selected every  
20 single time. That's the purpose of randomization.  
21 To avoid the exact problem, you're clarifying. So, I  
22 agree with your question. The second part of your  
23 question was for antibodies. What do we do if we are  
24 retesting people that may have antibodies? To be  
25 clear-- and I wish this was better news-- we cannot

2 say with certainty that antibodies confirm immunity.  
3 We truly hope that they confirm at least a degree of  
4 immunity, but that is something that we-- that is  
5 why we are doing only PCR testing in terms of our  
6 school testing program here. We are not using the  
7 antibodies because we would not want to draw a  
8 conclusion about the immunity that the science does  
9 not yet support.

10 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, and I want to  
11 be clear. I'm not asking for a hammer. I'm just  
12 asking for basic transparency. Folks want to know  
13 what the plan is. The folks on television use the  
14 language mandatory and a paper went out and an email  
15 went out to the families that's is not mandatory.  
16 So, I think every opportunity we have to clarify and  
17 make this as clear as possible is really important  
18 and I think that, if additional language is coming  
19 from City Hall and DOE and health officials to make  
20 this more clear, I think that that is appreciated  
21 because-- I'm just sharing stuff that's on the  
22 ground-- there is a lot of confusion about what the  
23 plan actually is. Let me ask how many affirmative  
24 consent forms have been returned citywide and how  
25 many denials of consent have been returned?

2 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: I am going to ask  
3 one of my colleagues who will have the most recent  
4 information. Who would have that answer, folks? Who  
5 has the most recent information? Doctor?

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Can we unmute Dr.  
7 Varma?

8 DR. JAY VARMA: I don't have it  
9 specifically handy, but we are trying to gather this.  
10 The dilemma with it, you have to keep in mind, is  
11 that people can consent up until the last moment.  
12 That includes adults who can consent, obviously, any  
13 time, as well as students who can bring in consent  
14 forms up until the last minute. So, it's actually a  
15 rolling process over time in one of the reasons why--  
16 I just want to clarify two important concepts that  
17 are coming up. One of the challenges that we have  
18 with using the word mandatory and one of that reasons  
19 that language was written originally the way it is is  
20 because people interpret mandatory to be forced. You  
21 know, students, adults have autonomy over their  
22 bodies. They have the right to consent to a  
23 procedure being done. Now, of course, if they don't  
24 consent to it, there can be consequences for failure  
25 to consent, but I will just explain that that is one



2 of the reasons that that language was bandied about  
3 quite a number of times. It was to remove that  
4 connotation that mandatory equals forced. And then,  
5 second, to get to your question about consent, this  
6 is a rolling process during the month of October. We  
7 are the only school district that I know of anywhere  
8 in the world of anywhere of this magnitude. There  
9 are certainly some very small schools that have tried  
10 programs like this. So, it is going to take us a  
11 little while to figure out and assimilate the numbers  
12 and to determine whether or not we actually got the  
13 sample size that we need to draw statistic--

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But, Dr. Varma, how  
15 many consent forms did you receive as of yesterday?

16 DR. JAY VARMA: Yeah. I don't have the  
17 number of consent forms, but I can give you the  
18 number of people that were tested. Well, tested--

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Well, Dr. Varma, I  
20 have to say this is a hearing on the safety of  
21 reopening schools in the city and how does not having  
22 that number instill confidence in the public and  
23 within this Council that we are getting this right?  
24 Just because you are trying it doesn't make it right.

2 We need information to evaluate this and to keep, of  
3 course, folks informed.

4 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Mr. Chair--

5 DR. JAY VARMA: And, Council member, we  
6 tested 7257 people in the past, what, three days and  
7 had 15 of those were positive for 0.2 percent  
8 positivity rate.

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And how many of the  
10 7000--

11 DR. JAY VARMA: That is a very large  
12 sample size relative to the proportion of students  
13 that are actually attending in person learning  
14 turning that.

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And, Dr. Varma, of  
16 the 7000, how many attend school in the yellow zones?

17 DR. JAY VARMA: That I don't actually  
18 have because what we are going to be doing is we're  
19 going to start specific programs in the yellow zones  
20 to do testing on a weekly basis as mandated by the  
21 governor, so we will have to get you that number  
22 specifically.

23 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Dr. Varma, so,  
24 again, the yellow zones, I know, were drawn by the  
25 governor, not the Mayor. So, I get that. But there

2 is a lot of tension and anxiety within the yellow  
3 zones because there is some overlap with the ZIP Code  
4 plan which the Mayor rolled out. And I appreciate  
5 that you are sharing some testing data, but we don't  
6 even know what the numbers are in the yellow zones  
7 and we do need the number of consent forms coming in  
8 because it absolutely gives us a sense of where  
9 things are at. You know, here I am telling you there  
10 is confusion on the ground in the middle of a  
11 pandemic, in a crisis, and we don't have this basic  
12 information. So, when can you get the committee they  
13 information of the number of students and staff  
14 tested in the yellow zones and the number of consent  
15 forms that have been returned.

16 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Mr. Chairman?

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah?

18 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: So, I just got an  
19 update as of the end of the day yesterday there were  
20 72,000 consent forms returned by students. So, we  
21 have 72,000. As Dr. Varma has said several times,  
22 this is a rolling process. There is a lot of consent  
23 forms coming in on a daily basis, but as of the end  
24 of the day yesterday, 72,000 consent forms.

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, thank you, Mr.  
3 Chancellor. And of the 72,000 consent forms as of  
4 yesterday, how many were in the affirmative and how  
5 many were negative?

6 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Consent forms mean  
7 that they are in the affirmative. So, those are  
8 72,000 people that signed a consent form saying you  
9 have permission.

10 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right. But  
11 families have an option to provide up form that says  
12 that they don't give consent. Is that right?

13 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Yes.

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right. So, these  
15 were 72,000 affirmative consent forms? Thank you,  
16 him Mr. Chancellor, for that information.

17 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: We will get you the  
18 refusal number, but I understand it is very minimal.  
19 But we will get that number for you.

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right. And just to  
21 further follow up on that, how many schools have a 20  
22 percent or lower rate of consent among their students  
23 who have opted into in person learning?

24 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Say that one more  
25 time, Mr. Treyger?

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Sure. How many  
3 schools have a 20 percent or lower rate of consent  
4 among their students who have opted into in person  
5 learning?

6 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Well, we will get  
7 you that information. But, again, schools are  
8 building their positive consent numbers, so that is  
9 changing daily, almost hourly. So, when we will get  
10 you the most recent information today.

11 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I would appreciate  
12 that, Mr. Chancellor, because any additional  
13 information provides clarity and can give folks a  
14 sense of knowledge of what actually is happening. I  
15 want to do now-- also, I wanted to clarify with the  
16 health officials just for a moment. And this is  
17 important for families to understand, as well. I  
18 have been contacted by a number of families and  
19 parents asking a question about why they are not  
20 allowed to have a pediatrician provide a test for  
21 their child, especially in children, or testing could  
22 be a very traumatizing experience. And I know that,  
23 Dr. Long, we were on a briefing call, but I do think  
24 it is important for the public to understand what is  
25 the reasoning, the rationale, why notes from

2 pediatricians or results from pediatricians are not  
3 accepted by the DOE?

4 DR. JAY VARMA: Yeah. I can start. So,  
5 any parent has the right and we actually actively  
6 encourage all New Yorkers to get tested regularly.  
7 And that includes parents taking their young children  
8 in. So, in fact, they can take their child to the  
9 pediatrician anytime they want to to get tested.  
10 Further the purposes of the random sample survey that  
11 we are doing, to make this statistically valid and  
12 have a good epidemiological representation, it's  
13 designed as what we call a quaint prevalent survey  
14 which is that all of the tests done in the specific  
15 population and, in the situation, the unit of  
16 reference is the school community of attending in  
17 person learning. All of those tests need to be done  
18 on the same day using the exact same collection  
19 method and using the exact same testing method. So,  
20 if we want to be able to draw valid conclusions about  
21 this, that is the important approach to go. But,  
22 again, I would just challenge the notion that you  
23 can't take your child to pediatrician. You  
24 absolutely can't do that. Those test results are  
25 reported. If there is a positive result, it is

2 immediately received by Test and Trace, the health  
3 department, and then reported and managed by the  
4 situation room.

5 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right, Dr. Varma.

6 I was just making the point that parents were asking  
7 the question-- I was at the CDC virtual meeting  
8 recently where this came up. Parents asking why  
9 can't the results be used in place of the randomized  
10 sample? And there was an explanation of-- which I  
11 heard from Dr. Long-- but I think it's just  
12 important to share this information with the public  
13 also parents can do this, but as far as the  
14 randomized testing, testing has to happen inside the  
15 school. Is that correct?

16 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Correct. Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And can you also  
18 explain why parents or what communication to parent  
19 of young children, if they want to be there to  
20 support them-- is there mobile testing by the  
21 school? Is there something where parents could  
22 provide support to kids if this is a very  
23 traumatizing experience for them?

24 DR. JAY VARMA: Yeah. I think we are  
25 very sensitive to the fact that, obviously,

2 particularly for younger children, this is going to  
3 be a new and potentially, you know, worrisome  
4 experience. At the same time, we have to balance the  
5 infection control precautions and one of the most  
6 important infection control precautions that we could  
7 institute, one of the best ways that we can prevent  
8 COVID is by limiting the number of people that are  
9 physically present in a building at any given time.  
10 And that's why we don't, unfortunately, allow  
11 caretakers, guardians of children to be present  
12 physically in the building. And the providers that  
13 we have, we absolutely recognize that the parents are  
14 concerned about this, but we have to assure people  
15 that we are only hiring teams that we have a  
16 tremendous amount of trust with because we have  
17 actually worked with them many times before.

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And, Dr. Varma,  
19 this question is to you, again. As a senior advisor  
20 to the mayor on public health and someone who is  
21 watching this very closely, does it concern you that  
22 we only have up to this point, 15 percent of consent  
23 forms and citywide in situations where we are also  
24 seeing spikes in cases across the city? Does it  
25 concern you and can you please elaborate?



2 DR. JAY VARMA: Yeah. I would say the  
3 reason--- I would say, first of all, we obviously  
4 aspire to make sure the random testing-- random  
5 sample survey program is done with as much rigor as  
6 possible and to use the highest level of  
7 participation. It is absolutely not just an  
8 aspiration but our intent. But I would explain that,  
9 actually, testing, even though I am a firm zealot  
10 when it comes to testing for the community control of  
11 COVID-19 and, in fact, was the architect of our  
12 original testing and tracing design for this, I do  
13 not [inaudible 01:13:48] emphasize that testing was  
14 not even one of the first, second, or even third  
15 lines of defense to protecting our children, our  
16 students, and our staff from COVID-19. As the  
17 Chancellor has clearly laid out, and as you can see  
18 from the examples in other parts, you know, here in  
19 the United States aware people relied on testing,  
20 testing alone will not save you. What you need it is  
21 the universal masking, the physical distance, the  
22 reduction in class sizes for the aggressive use of  
23 hand hygiene and, of course, the presence of adequate  
24 ventilation. So, I am not concerned that, you know,  
25 that during this current rollout, that we don't have

2 a very high level of consents, because I view our  
3 testing program is providing us a snapshot into the  
4 effectiveness of our prevention measures, but not  
5 really the full picture.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, Dr. Varma, I  
7 will say that I am not a public health expert. I am  
8 a teacher by trade and I know what I know and I don't  
9 know what I don't know and I appreciate your service,  
10 but I will share with you is that Dr. Fauci, who I  
11 think, you know, it is Brooklyn's old, America's  
12 doctor right now was asked a question about schools  
13 in testing and he made it very clear on national  
14 television that, in communities where we are seeing  
15 increased transmission or increased cases, it's very  
16 important to get the surveillance and the test done  
17 right, in addition to the mask wearing and  
18 compliance. He stressed the importance of having a  
19 testing plan. So, I'm just sharing with you that it  
20 is concerning, at least to me, and, again, I am not a  
21 doctor. You are and I appreciate your service. It  
22 is concerning to me that only 15 percent of students  
23 who have opted for in person learning have returned  
24 their consent forms as of this date at a time when we  
25 are seeing increased positivity rates across the

2 city. And if you want to just respond one more time  
3 and then we'll move on.

4 DR. JAY VARMA: Yeah. Absolutely.

5 Thank you. I mean, I think it's important to keep in  
6 mind that, you know, whether it's Dr. Fauci or other  
7 national leaders are talking about it, they are  
8 trying to express feedback on what the United States,  
9 as a whole, should be doing. They are not talking  
10 about New York City where let me-- it is very  
11 important for people to recognize here we perform  
12 more tests per capita on people of all ages in any  
13 other jurisdiction in the United States of this size  
14 and most places in the world. Because of all of the  
15 efforts that have been done by the city and our  
16 partners, we performed over 50,000 tests in a single  
17 day last week and those numbers continue to rise.  
18 So, the context in which Dr. Fauci and other people  
19 are making those comments is not just specific to  
20 schools. It's also specific to the fact that many  
21 places around the country perform only a fraction of  
22 tests available in the community when we have here in  
23 New York City.

24 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right. And look.

25 I understand that, you know-- we had a hearing the

2 DOE did not attend recently where public health  
3 experts, doctors, came to testify and they shared in  
4 my colleagues and others were present. They shared  
5 very serious concerns about the mayor's hybrid model.  
6 They shared concerns about increased exposure to kids  
7 on different days. So, if Monday they are in school  
8 and then on Tuesday they are with-- if their parents  
9 could afford childcare, there in a child care  
10 setting, they are increasing exposure to folks. Is  
11 there a body of research that you could point to that  
12 gives folks, parents, a sense of confidence and  
13 safety in this model? Because, obviously, there is  
14 work out. There is public health experts actually  
15 cautioning about our approach right now.

16 DR. JAY VARMA: Yeah. I would say that,  
17 first of all, we all, in the scientific community,  
18 have to be humble. We have all been surprised  
19 throughout this experience about how the virus  
20 behaves both at a molecular level, as well as at the  
21 population level. So, I want to preface everything I  
22 say based on that. In terms of the body of research,  
23 the body of research is not the rigor that we would  
24 normally love to have because we don't have the time  
25 for that. So, the body of research that does exist

2 is empiric, real-world evidence from all over the  
3 world with both similar, as well as very different  
4 economic social demographic structures. And that  
5 includes Asia. That includes large swaths of Europe.  
6 And I can tell you, based on my own personal research  
7 into all these places because I have worked globally  
8 for the past 20 years and have contacts all over the  
9 world. There are no places that are requiring  
10 mandatory testing at this scale. And, in fact, have  
11 been able to keep their schools open with even fewer  
12 of the systems that we have in place. Many places  
13 don't actually use a hybrid model, for example, in  
14 Germany. Our don't use universal masking. Don't  
15 have the same, you know, rigorous monitoring  
16 techniques that we have and have been able to open up  
17 school successfully. So, I think it is absolutely  
18 true that there are many in the public health  
19 community that feel that certain-- one group of  
20 activities should be done. There are others that  
21 feel another group of activities should be done, but  
22 the real world empiric lived experience to date is  
23 that the approach is that we are taking are the right  
24 approaches to make school safe.

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, Dr. Varma, I'll  
3 make one last point and then I will move on to  
4 technology. I just want to say that, you know, I am  
5 trying to provide clarity for myself and also, most  
6 importantly, for school families and the public and,  
7 of course, my colleagues. The governor of New York  
8 and his folks go on television and say that we need  
9 to put yellow, orange, red zones and, in addition to  
10 overlapping the mayor ZIP Codes or whatever you want  
11 to call this, we don't have enough data right now and  
12 information. Earlier, you cannot tell me how many  
13 folks we have tested in the yellow zones where there  
14 is an acknowledgment by state health officials that  
15 we are seeing increases and spikes in cases. So, I  
16 think it is too early to judge, I think, even from  
17 anyone's part, that this is all safe, this is all  
18 great I know that we need the data. We need to make  
19 informed decisions and I am just telling you that, as  
20 of this moment, there is still confusion about what  
21 the testing plan is, even though I appreciate folks  
22 providing additional information today at the  
23 hearing. We need a lot more information and it has  
24 to reach our multiethnic, diverse communities  
25 because, right now, there remains a disconnect. I

2 want to move on to the Chancellor with regard to  
3 technology.

4 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Chairman--

5 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Mr. Chancellor--  
6 Yes? Please.

7 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: I'm sorry. Just in  
8 order to provide some more clarity, the number of  
9 permission forms that we've gotten is closer to 20  
10 percent of our students who are in blended learning  
11 mode and that does not include any statistics on  
12 staff because staff are also part of the testing  
13 regime. So, when this random testing happens in the  
14 randomization takes place, it includes not only  
15 students, but also adults in the building. I  
16 explained it in terms of it is every human being in  
17 the building is part of the randomized set. So, we  
18 will break that data down for you with a little more  
19 specificity. I can also tell you that, as of October  
20 14, in terms of testing that has happened for schools  
21 in the yellow zones, there been 3229 tests conducted.  
22 There have been 3100 tests received and there been  
23 only for positive results of that testing up through  
24 the 14th. So, those are schools specifically in the

2 yellow zone and the testing that is happening in  
3 those schools.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you, Mr.  
5 Chancellor. And would you, by any chance, know how  
6 many consent forms from the yellow zones that we have  
7 received?

8 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: No. We are working  
9 to disaggregate that data for you.

10 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I appreciate it.  
11 And, Mr. Chancellor, is there a separate and  
12 different-- I'm hearing, and that's why wanted  
13 clarity, I am hearing reports that there are separate  
14 and different testing strategies for district 75?  
15 Can you clarify?

16 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Well, students and  
17 staff in district 75 will also be tested, but what we  
18 understand is that our district 75 students are  
19 probably some of our most vulnerable students in our  
20 school system. I know you know this very, very well.  
21 So, there are additional precautions and, I would  
22 say, sensitivities that we have to keep in mind when  
23 we do this randomized testing with district 75  
24 students. It's a scary experience. It could be a  
25 very scary experience for those students. So, we are



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2 working with our educators in district 75 to craft  
3 the protocols for testing the students in district 75  
4 schools so that it is not the scary experience. We  
5 are paying attention to their social emotional  
6 learning needs and it's not a negative experience for  
7 them.

8 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, Mr. Chancellor,  
9 I know that you know that and I appreciate your  
10 understanding of that. My question is to the health  
11 team. Why wasn't this all prepared before the  
12 reopening of schools for kids in district 75 and  
13 staff who work there? Mr. Chancellor, you are not a  
14 health experts. You are an educator and you know  
15 your stuff and I appreciate your service, but the  
16 question is to City Hall into the health team, why  
17 wasn't that all prepared before school reopened?  
18 Before kids and staff returned to school in district  
19 75?

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Can we unmute Dr.  
21 Long?

22 DR. JAY VARMA: This is Jay. I think  
23 you and muted me, but I can--

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You are both on  
25 muted. So, go ahead.

2 DR. JAY VARMA: Okay. I mean, I can  
3 just start really briefly and then maybe Ted can talk  
4 about the options that are available. In terms of  
5 the policy decision at the outset, the policy was  
6 exactly what the Chancellor had said which is that,  
7 at the beginning, we are-- that as I just described  
8 to you about why, you know, we don't allow, you know,  
9 parents to come into the room, come into the building  
10 to support their children during testing, we also did  
11 not feel that, for children in district 75, many of  
12 whom have, you know, behavioral challenges, that it  
13 was appropriate to actually do testing in the way  
14 that we think it must be done safely to prevent COVID  
15 transmission which is to be done physically present  
16 in the school. So, our original plan and policy  
17 decision at the outset was, basically, provide  
18 education and awareness about where parents could  
19 take their children to be tested. Since that time,  
20 we've heard the feedback that the families and the  
21 parents and the staff want more information and more  
22 streamlined system. So, maybe, Ted, you can discuss  
23 what some of the options are for that.

24 DR. TED LONG: Yeah. I just want to  
25 say, Chair Treyger, this is really important to me as

2 a practicing physician. I see patients every week.

3 I see patients Friday afternoons. When I'm done

4 here, I'm going to see my patients. Parents must be

5 given the opportunity in T 75 schools to be with

6 their children at the time of the tests. They need

7 to be there to support their kids and that either can

8 be done at the school or it could be done at one of

9 our facilities that we currently have. We have some

10 of the best pediatricians in the whole world in New

11 York City Health and Hospitals. We have many

12 locations and what we want to do is we want to be

13 able to test all students in T 75 schools who want to

14 be tested or whose parents want to test them, but in

15 no way that allows their parents to be with them.

16 And, in particular, they can come to one of our sites

17 now with there. And have a world expert do the tests

18 themselves. And that is very available now. I care

19 very much about this and if it is not clear, let us

20 know how we can make it more clear because I couldn't

21 agree with your importance of the point anymore.

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Dr. Long, I

23 appreciate you and I appreciate your access and

24 availability to my office. You have been updating us

25 and I appreciate you. The question just to clarify.

2 You mentioned that we are extending this  
3 accommodation to parents of children who go to  
4 district 75. There are children with IEP's who are  
5 not in district 75 settings. Is that same courtesy  
6 being given to them?

7 DR. TED LONG: You mean, in the terms  
8 of can they come to be tested by one of our  
9 pediatricians at one of our sites with their parents?  
10 Absolutely.

11 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Having parents  
12 present. Yes.

13 DR. TED LONG: To be clear, we have  
14 designated some-- You can sort of think of it as  
15 some of our sites as centers of excellence for  
16 performing tests in challenging situations or with  
17 younger kids like my son is very young. So, those  
18 sites exist in our system today and we will share  
19 with you the exact list of them so the parents will  
20 know exactly where they can take their kids for a  
21 world-class experience.

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And, Dr. Long, is  
23 it accurate that the city had to update its  
24 notification protocols with schools after recently we  
25 learned that a school safety personnel was tested

2 positive, and we wish them a speedy recovery, but the  
3 information did not reach in a timely fashion, the  
4 school community. Is that accurate? Because I am  
5 hearing reports from folks on the ground that there  
6 has been an update to NYPD DOE notification with  
7 regards to when there is a positive case?

8 DR. TED LONG: Yeah. I appreciate the  
9 question. In terms of the situation room and its  
10 communications, I'm going to do for questions around  
11 situation rooms to Dr. Stephens who is joined us  
12 here. Dr. Stevens, are you on the line?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER STEPHENS: I am I  
14 met muted? Okay. Thank you. So, thank you for that  
15 and I appreciate the questions. I am Daniel  
16 Stephens, for the record. I am a pediatrician and  
17 deputy commissioner for family and child health. And  
18 I am actually sitting upstairs in the situation room  
19 right now. So, part of our function in this multi  
20 agency endeavor that is the situation room is making  
21 sure that we get information from the school  
22 community when there is a concern, that we look up  
23 and we make sure that we have the accurate  
24 verification of that and then circle back and close  
25 the loop and communicate clearly with school

2 communities and school leaders. And so, the  
3 situation room opened September 14 and, since then,  
4 we have been updating our protocols to make sure that  
5 letters and calls and direct communication to school  
6 communities happened in the shortest time possible,  
7 but also making sure that the information is the most  
8 accurate and verified.

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But, Dr. Stephens,  
10 can you just note for the record was there an update  
11 in recent days between notification protocols between  
12 NYPD and DOE since safety agents report to NYPD, not  
13 to DOE?

14 DR. DANIEL STEPHENS: So, actually, I  
15 cannot speak to the actual protocols to notification  
16 between those agencies, but I can make sure that we  
17 get back to you with that information.

18 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Chairman Treyger?

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes, Mr.  
20 Chancellor?

21 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: I can verify that  
22 that is, in fact, true. So, we have been in contact  
23 with NYPD. So, now, their reporting system is synced  
24 up with our reporting system which is synced up with  
25 the situation room. So, it is all connected.

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And I want to note  
3 for the record that that, no way, was an issue within  
4 DOE or the situation room. It is the other agency  
5 that, quite frankly, there was a disconnect from  
6 their part and I do appreciate the recognition. And  
7 I did visit the situation room and, Commissioner  
8 Melanie La Rocca is a rock star and she is working  
9 very hard there and the folks there are working very  
10 hard. So, I appreciate that. I want to move to the  
11 topic-- because I'm running out of time for my  
12 colleagues, as well, to the issue of technology. Mr.  
13 Chancellor, as of this moment, how many requests is  
14 the DOE in receipt of as of this moment for a device  
15 and for Internet?

16 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: So, that is an  
17 hourly changing statistic, so I'm going to ask Lauren  
18 Siciliano to give us. She is right on top of that.  
19 So, Lauren Siciliano? Chief administration Officer.

20 LAUREN SICILIANO: Good morning, everyone.  
21 Thank you, Chancellor and thank you, Chair Treyger,  
22 for the opportunity to talk about what we're doing on  
23 devices. As you know, it is absolutely critical and  
24 we take very seriously the commitment to ensure that  
25 students have the devices that they need. And that

2 is why, since the spring, we have distributed roughly  
3 350,000 LTE enabled iPads to students who need them  
4 to support remote instruction. It was really  
5 important for us to ensure that those devices were  
6 LTE enabled so that students who didn't have Internet  
7 access at home could still access the Internet  
8 through those data plans. And, as we have done that  
9 distribution, we have started with our highest needs  
10 students first, starting with our students and  
11 shelter. Since the school year has started, schools  
12 have been working with their students and families to  
13 confirm they are device need. They have been  
14 distributing device inventory that they have and then  
15 letting us know what Remains. What devices they  
16 still need. Those evaluations are ongoing and, in  
17 the first-- the last few weeks, we've distributed  
18 about 20,000 iPads to students that needed them and,  
19 as I believe you are aware, we have ordered an  
20 additional hundred thousand iPads, LTE enabled iPads,  
21 to ensure that we can meet any outstanding demand, as  
22 well as have enough supply on hand for repairs and  
23 replacements.

24 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I mean, that's  
25 information that I pretty much had. The question was



2 how many requests are you in receipt of as of this  
3 moment for devices and Internet as of today?

4 LAUREN SICILIANO: Sure. Absolutely. So,  
5 as the Chancellor said, this is an [inaudible  
6 01:31:47] process, so we get requests from schools  
7 and then we follow up with the schools to confirm do  
8 they have any devices on hand that they can  
9 distribute? Are there devices on route, etc. So, as  
10 of this moment, we have about 77,000 requests, but,  
11 again, we then go in verify the need with the school,  
12 so it is a constantly changing number.

13 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, the logical  
14 question would be why didn't City Hall-- and I'm  
15 going to pull out the mayors--because I-- as the  
16 Public Advocate mentioned, we are under a mayoral  
17 control system and he goes on television each morning  
18 and he said for weeks that every kid who needed  
19 technology had technology when, in fact, that is not  
20 the case and the record has to be corrected. And I  
21 think folks are asking the logical--- and I'm asking  
22 the logical-- the question why didn't the  
23 administration take stock of this need months ago and  
24 why did they only order these additional iPads now  
25 when we have been hearing for months about many kids

2 in need of technology and, quite frankly, we just got  
3 the information from the DOE that showed significant  
4 disparities where-- particularly around racial lines  
5 and where many kids, obviously, did not walk on. A  
6 low engagement rate. Low attendance rate. We don't  
7 even know how many kids have ever logged on once  
8 since March and I understand that there is different  
9 modes of instruction, but the fact that we still--  
10 you just shared with me that 77,000 requests for  
11 technology, these are almost 100,000 kids or more  
12 that I don't know what instruction they are getting  
13 right now. You know? Regardless of whatever model  
14 people support. Hybrid, not hybrid. Remote learning  
15 is a part of the program and the fact that thousands  
16 of our kids, particularly from under resourced  
17 communities, still don't have a device is  
18 unacceptable and shameful and I want to lay fall  
19 squarely with the mayor and his office for being in  
20 denial about the severity of this issue. This is not  
21 new and Mr. Chancellor knows this as an educator for  
22 many years, as well. The issue of Internet  
23 bandwidth, Internet access, technology is not a new  
24 issue. This was the mayor's plan and, you know, to  
25 meet he failed to meet the needs of our kids. The

2 fact that we have thousands of kids, particularly in  
3 under resourced communities still without a device.  
4 How soon will we get these devices and also have you  
5 heard feedback from educators and families that they  
6 prefer chrome books in some cases because of the  
7 ability to type and better functionality as opposed  
8 to the iPads and do they come with Internet-- the  
9 Internet enabled us some of these iPads are? I would  
10 appreciate an update on that.

11 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Chair Treyger--

12 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes.

13 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: all start, but if  
14 Lauren would like to chime in, as well. Let me just  
15 clarify, if you don't mind, a little bit about that  
16 77,000 number. As Lauren Siciliano mentioned, these  
17 are requests that are coming from schools and the  
18 assumption is-- and it's the best assumption-- the  
19 assumption is that schools are bringing forth  
20 requests because their students need the devices.  
21 However, the reason that we go back and then engage  
22 with the schools to understand better what the number  
23 is that they are requesting is that, in some cases,  
24 schools may be requesting devices to fulfill their  
25 supply in their school. So, they may have had five

2 computer carts, three of them they have signed out so  
3 they're asking for those computer carts to be  
4 replenished. So, the reason I mention that is that,  
5 in that case, as you can tell, it's not the case that  
6 students don't have a device because the school has  
7 asked for a device. It's not necessarily the case  
8 that the student doesn't have a device. There's a  
9 need for devices. So that's what Lauren was talking  
10 about in terms of we engage with the school to better  
11 understand which is a device that's needed in the  
12 hands of a student, which is a device that is being  
13 requested to replenish supply, and it's not uniform  
14 across the entire DOE. That being said, we also are  
15 working and you've been a big voice in helping us  
16 with this. In helping to secure internet access from  
17 our internet providers in New York City who do very  
18 well providing internet services to people who pay  
19 full price to them. So we have been lobbying and  
20 asking them to provide it either at no cost or at  
21 very discounted rates which, when we pivoted in  
22 March, we were able to pay for and, in some cases, we  
23 got for free for our students that were-- our poor  
24 students and our students in temporary housing, etc.  
25 I'll give you just one more example. We recently

2 heard from a number of advocates who brought to our  
3 attention that there were a number of students in  
4 temporary housing that were unable to-- actually,  
5 what we were told is that they didn't have Internet  
6 access. So, we very quickly, working with our city  
7 agency partners, actually sent our teams from DIIT  
8 into those public housing buildings and, literally,  
9 checked the LTA signal. I'm not going to use names  
10 here, but there are different companies that have Wi-  
11 Fi or Internet connectivity and, literally, what we  
12 found is that, in those buildings, the card that  
13 enables connectivity that belonged to one company had  
14 poor service but a card that provides Internet  
15 connectivity from another company. So, we engaged  
16 then in the process of switching out those cards to  
17 the one that had better service. That is just an  
18 example of all of the very complex issues that kind  
19 of feed into this number of who has connectivity and  
20 he doesn't have connectivity. I would only add to  
21 that that we had a number of students that were  
22 assigned devices and then graduated this summer, so  
23 we are in the process of working with those families  
24 and students to return those devices to us, as well.  
25 And that is also going to replenish our supply.

2 There is an urban myth out there that we don't allow  
3 schools to order chrome books. That is absolutely  
4 not true, but we happen to be the largest school  
5 system in America, but we are not the only school  
6 system that is ordering devices from all of the  
7 manufacturers. So, there is a definite supply chain  
8 issue nationally, almost globally, with the supply of  
9 devices. What we have been able to do, again,  
10 working with our agency partners, is to really engage  
11 with our manufacturers and we have gone to the top of  
12 the list and many of those cases around chrome books,  
13 around iPads. We have been prioritized in terms of  
14 the supply chain aspects and I think our chief  
15 administrative officer Siciliano can tell you what  
16 the states are. The most current dates of when we  
17 are going to start getting those batches of devices  
18 we've ordered. Lauren?

19 LAUREN SICILIANO: Sure. Absolutely. So,  
20 everything I wholeheartedly agree with everything, of  
21 course, that the Chancellor just said. Those are all  
22 really important pieces of the work that we are doing  
23 to support students and ensure that they have  
24 connectivity. I would add, as well, that, dear  
25 question about chrome books versus iPads. So, both

2 in the spring and then with this most recent round of  
3 ordering are the devices that we act purchasing  
4 centrally, we looked across manufacturers who could  
5 get us a device-- the supply of devices that we  
6 needed in the timeframe that we needed. Obviously,  
7 with our scale and with the national and global  
8 supply chain issues that the Chancellor mentioned,  
9 that was not an easy task and Apple was able to do  
10 that and they were able to do that for LTE enabled  
11 devices which, as you mentioned, are just so  
12 essential to make sure that our students can connect.  
13 What we have done, based on feedback from students  
14 and families, from educators, and for many of you, we  
15 bordered many keyboards for the iPad so that,  
16 particularly for older students, they can use the  
17 keyboards with the iPad which makes it, you know,  
18 much more similar in terms of functionality and use  
19 to the chrome book. We are also, as the Chancellor  
20 mentioned, working with all of our manufacturers to  
21 prioritize supply for DOE. So, to take the chrome  
22 book example, we just spoke with our chrome book  
23 provider and they have prioritize supply for DOE.  
24 They don't have the scale that Apple is giving us,  
25 but this way, when schools order individual sets of

2 chrome books, it is about a four week turnaround they  
3 are estimating between the purchase and the delivery  
4 versus the mother dates that I know of been thrown  
5 out there.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right. I just want  
7 to clarify a couple things I heard, as well. And I  
8 appreciate the additional information. There is a  
9 number reasons why many kids did not have a device,  
10 as well. First of all, as we know, in the spring--  
11 not faulting the DOE, but it took months for, I  
12 think, FedEx or the shipments to arrive for the  
13 technology and what happened as a result of that, as  
14 mentioned, a number of schools could not wait for the  
15 shipment and whatever technology they had in their  
16 school, they gave out to their kids. Now, what  
17 happens is that if you were an eighth grader and you  
18 are graduating, the school asked you to return the  
19 laptop and now you are an incoming freshman to high  
20 school and you don't have a device. And so, I've  
21 heard from many high schools telling me that freshman  
22 don't have devices. Also, I've heard from many of  
23 our immigrant families where-- and this is not a new  
24 issue. This is been going on for a number of years.  
25 Many immigrant families were fearful, afraid,



2 understandably so, to fill out any government forms  
3 to return to the government out of fear of what that  
4 would do to their immigration status. So, they never  
5 got a device because they were fearful for filling  
6 out the forms and they asked whether there was a way  
7 for the schools to get the device and then the  
8 schools would give it to them. So, these are couple  
9 of the reasons why. And also, this is a high needs  
10 school district and I want to just be very clear on  
11 the record. This is not just the city. New York  
12 State has a responsibility here. The federal  
13 government has a responsibility here. This isn't not  
14 just a New York City issue, but I think it is  
15 important just to get the facts out there about how  
16 severe this challenge is. And it would've been much  
17 more helpful for the mayor of New York to have been  
18 upfront and vocal about this months ago rather than  
19 tell the public that we are okay. And I'm not  
20 faulting the Chancellor or any people on this call  
21 right now. I hold the mayor accountable because that  
22 is precious time that we lost in advocacy to ensure  
23 that every kid got technology and Internet. Mr.  
24 Chancellor, I'm going to ask one more question and  
25 then moved to my colleague. Chair Levine has been

2 very patient. Forgive me. What percentage of  
3 schools are providing in person instruction by having  
4 students log into zoom from the classroom? I know  
5 that the mayor made a public pledge of providing in  
6 person instruction to all of our kids who opted for  
7 in person learning. As you know and I appreciate  
8 your service. I was also a former history teacher.  
9 I know what in person service is. Having an adult  
10 supervise kids log on to zoom is not in person  
11 instruction. That is a virtual study hall. So, what  
12 is the percentage of schools that are providing in  
13 person instruction or in person services, so to  
14 speak, by having students log in to zoom from the  
15 classroom as a result of the staffing shortage in our  
16 school system?

17 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Okay. Can you hear  
18 me now?

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes.

20 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: So, Chair Treyger,  
21 again, your education background is just so  
22 refreshing because you understand the complexities of  
23 all of these issues and to have Chair Levine also be  
24 a former teacher is just an added bonus. So, thank  
25 you and I appreciate you lifting those out. Again,

2 we are doing something that, because of the hard work  
3 of my fellow New Yorkers, we put ourselves in a  
4 position because of the low transmission of community  
5 spread, that it provides and makes it possible for us  
6 to have in person learning even a modicum of the  
7 week. But, in order to do that and the nation's  
8 largest, most complex school system, as you know, has  
9 been incredibly challenging, especially with the  
10 staffing issues and that staffing percentage and  
11 number of students that have chosen in person versus  
12 fully remote continues to change. So, with that, I  
13 am going to be the very first one to say that is not  
14 ideal for a student to come to a school and then have  
15 a remote experience or a blended or a virtual  
16 experience in school. But, as you so ably mentioned,  
17 it is beneficial because they had the socialization.  
18 They had the support of their teachers. They had  
19 guidance counselors. They have social workers. They  
20 get food. They see other children. Their parents  
21 are able to go to work. So, as we continue to build  
22 and get better and make the model better as we go  
23 forward, we are going to see less and less of those  
24 situations where the students are doing that. It is  
25 a very small number. I'm going ask our first deputy

2 Chancellor Donald Conyers. He may have a much more  
3 exact percentage because they are monitoring that.

4 So, Donald?

5 FIRST DEPUTY CHANCELLOR CONYERS: Good  
6 morning, Chair Treyger, and all of the other members  
7 of the panel. And, Chancellor, I do have some  
8 information about the percentage of students  
9 receiving instruction, but I don't have it with me at  
10 the moment and I do apologize because I am not  
11 situated where I thought I would be this morning and  
12 I apologize. I do not have that information with me  
13 right now.

14 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: So, we will get  
15 that to you today.

16 FIRST DEPUTY CHANCELLOR CONYERS: Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Mr. Chancellor,  
18 yeah. It's very important because I wanted just get  
19 to the heart of this that-- and I'm just going to  
20 mention again that I speak to a number of school  
21 staff and I'm sure you do, as well and I have heard  
22 enough to determine that trust is very much broken in  
23 the school system and that mayor goes on television  
24 and says that he is promising in person instruction  
25 to the kids to sign up and, in fact, in many cases,

2 it's not. So, I would appreciate that information.  
3 And also just to paint a picture to the public. The  
4 mayor said that everyone that signs up for in person  
5 learning would get in person services, in person  
6 instruction. The fact is many kids are not. The  
7 mayor said every kid would have technology who needs  
8 it. The fact is, as we have heard today, many kids  
9 still do not. So, I know that we are facing  
10 challenges, but being honest should not be a  
11 challenge for the mayor and for his office. And I  
12 think that is really important to drive home. I  
13 know, Mr. Chancellor, that you work for the mayor.  
14 We are under a mayoral control system, but it doesn't  
15 help when there is this disconnect from what is going  
16 on television versus what is happening on the ground.  
17 I am going to pause here and turn it over to my very  
18 patient colleague, Chair Mark Levine, for questions.  
19 Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Thank you, Chair  
21 Treyger, for your excellent work in this hearing and  
22 in general during this difficult crisis and good  
23 afternoon, Chancellor Carranza, Deputy Commissioner  
24 Stephens, Dr. Varma, and the team. I'm pleased to  
25 have the chance to converse with you for a moment.

2 The city has set a standard of three percent  
3 positivity for systemwide conversion to distance-  
4 learning, but it appears now there is a standard for  
5 a move locally and in some cases where individual  
6 neighborhoods have hit three percent. And let me  
7 just pause to apologize for the background noise  
8 here. This is working from home in a small Manhattan  
9 apartment, so bear with me. The public has good  
10 information daily on the positivity rates citywide.  
11 We can track the seven day average every single day  
12 with public information, but the public doesn't have  
13 that kind of information on a localized basis. The  
14 closest we have is positivity by ZIP Codes. Looking  
15 back over the past month with the one week delay,  
16 which is not the same as the rolling seven day  
17 average, but even using what limited public  
18 information we have, we can infer that there are  
19 already communities outside of the identified  
20 hotspots in Brooklyn and Queens where the positivity  
21 rate is above three percent. Most notably the South  
22 Shore Staten Island, for example, where, as far as I  
23 can tell, the positivity rate is actually higher than  
24 some neighborhoods like Kew Gardens which are  
25 considered hotspots. So, could you please clarify

2 what the criteria for localized shutdowns is and  
3 whether you can make such local information available  
4 on a real-time basis to the public?

5 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Thank you, Chair.  
6 I'm going as Dr. Varma if he could clarify it for  
7 you.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Can we please  
9 unmute Dr. Varma? There we go.

10 DR. JAY VARMA: Okay. Great. Thank  
11 you. Yeah. So, let me go through make sure I get  
12 all those questions, Council member. So, first of  
13 all, just to address the most important one that--  
14 I'm sorry. The big one that you raised about  
15 availability of data. Yes. The health department,  
16 Commissioner [inaudible 01:50:35] and I and the team  
17 have actually been discussing over the past two weeks  
18 and they are actually working on a website update  
19 right now so that there will be more up to date data  
20 available at the zip code level publicly. So that  
21 hopefully will get addressed very imminently,  
22 basically. Now, let's get to the larger question  
23 about when it is appropriate to close schools and  
24 when it is not. So, I want to first explain why we  
25 chose a three percent threshold in chose to make it a

2 citywide positivity number as opposed to a  
3 neighborhood level I and then, the second thing I  
4 want to get to the and names to get to the question  
5 about when local restrictions are actually important  
6 at the ZIP Code level. So, the reason we initially  
7 said a three percent target for citywide is because  
8 that would be one metric that we used to think that  
9 we are losing sort of the ability to control the  
10 epidemic citywide based on the primary measures that  
11 we use right now and those can be, basically,  
12 clarified as individual social distancing measures  
13 like wearing a mask, maintaining physical distance,  
14 staying home if you are symptomatic. That's one set.  
15 The second set of measures it is our test and trace  
16 program which is a huge and important contributor to  
17 reducing transmission and the third tool that we  
18 have, our community distancing measures like limiting  
19 gatherings. So, we were concerned that if I were  
20 citywide test positivity rose above three percent,  
21 that it would indicate that we are losing the ability  
22 for those measures, as we have been right now, to be  
23 able to control the epidemic and that we would need  
24 further restrictions, one of which might include the  
25 closure of school citywide. Now, the question then



2 becomes-- and I know it has been raised many times  
3 before-- is why don't we apply that at the ZIP Code  
4 level or at the neighborhood level or however you  
5 want to define neighborhoods. And here's a couple of  
6 reasons why not to do that. The first is that, you  
7 know, test positivity is an important indicator, but  
8 it also, you know, can be problematic if the total  
9 sample of your people that you are testing isn't  
10 necessarily represented of that population. So, it  
11 is an important indicator and we use it carefully,  
12 but, at the same time, it doesn't necessarily  
13 indicate that the small community level at any one  
14 time that that is the only thing that you should  
15 hinge on. It is very important and I don't want to  
16 deemphasize that. The second is that our schools, as  
17 you know, don't represent-- are not like a rural  
18 school district where the vast majority of students  
19 and staff and faculty all come from that community in  
20 and of itself. So, we have to be cautious about when  
21 we use school closures given the fact that, you know,  
22 the schools in those communities which may be  
23 experiencing high test positivity may not actually  
24 draw the majority of the people at risk from that  
25 community itself. So, we have to be very cautious

2 about when we make that decision because there are  
3 real harms, as we know, from restricting in person  
4 learning. So, now I want to get to the question of  
5 why is it that we actually did close schools, for  
6 example, in the red and orange sounds have they have  
7 been defined by the governor and then, of course, in  
8 the ZIP Code proposal that we had before. We made  
9 that decision very reluctantly and we did it because  
10 we had to-- we decided, based on a number of  
11 indicators, the most important one being the  
12 consistently high test positivity combined with the  
13 clustering of cases in a very concentrated geographic  
14 area and-- so that was what the trigger was. Then  
15 we responded-- and Dr. Long can go into more  
16 detail-- with a very intensive operation to ramp up  
17 our testing and tracing activities and very  
18 aggressive activities to improve our individual  
19 social distancing measures. Observing people with  
20 facemask use, going in and inspecting places to make  
21 sure that they are following all those measures. And  
22 it was only after those measures-- the  
23 intensification of individual distancing measures,  
24 the intensification of test and trace failed, that we  
25 then made the very reluctant decision that we had to

2 institute stricter community social distancing  
3 measures in those communities. So that is,  
4 effectively, it returned to pause. And the reason we  
5 had to include schools in that at the time was  
6 because we had to do anything we count to limit the  
7 amount of interaction there is between individuals or  
8 between different households in those communities and  
9 the challenge with schools is that they either  
10 represent, again, in some situations, people from the  
11 community meeting together or, more concerningly,  
12 people from outside those communities coming into  
13 those communities and it was based on a very  
14 difficult assessment that, in fact, it had to be  
15 included in the group of activities that we were  
16 closing in an attempt to minimize the amount of  
17 interaction between humans and households. I'll stop  
18 there and, hopefully, I've answered your question.  
19 I'd be happy to answer more.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: I appreciate that,  
21 but then how are we to understand your criteria for  
22 shutting the schools in places where rates are  
23 currently rising there outside the hot zones? I  
24 mean, I mentioned the South Shore and Staten Island  
25 and, as far as we can tell, rates are rising in

2 several neighborhoods in the Bronx. It sounds like  
3 you are not using the three percent criteria in those  
4 cases. That is more subjective and, if that's the  
5 case, how should parents in those communities,  
6 families and those communities, staff in those  
7 schools, understand what's ahead in their  
8 neighborhoods.

9 DR. JAY VARMA: Let me clarify again.

10 So, the three percent is a trigger that we need to  
11 take more actions. So, the test positivity is an  
12 incredibly useful indicator because it allows us to  
13 make good comparisons across neighborhoods, but it is  
14 not necessarily the trigger that you have to shut  
15 everything down in those communities. What you see  
16 and what we have been tracking is that, when that  
17 test positivity rises above a certain level and stays  
18 above that level for a period of time-- seven days,  
19 14 days-- that that is our trigger to us that we  
20 need to take more intensive activities. So, I will  
21 give you an example and then Dr. Long can maybe  
22 provide some more great examples. We saw this  
23 happened in the Tremont section in the Bronx in July.  
24 We responded, as I mentioned, by ramping up our  
25 community mobilization to promote the individual

2 social distancing measures and dramatically ramping  
3 up our testing and tracing activities. That had a  
4 very profound effect on reducing test positivity and  
5 allowing us to avoid closing schools and closing  
6 businesses. We then saw the same exact phenomenon  
7 in Sunset Park. We use that test positivity as our  
8 triggered act [inaudible 01:56:58] the community  
9 mobilization and the testing trace activities, we  
10 brought test positivity down. We followed that exact  
11 same model in Borough Park and other parts of  
12 southern Brooklyn, but did not see the impact that we  
13 wanted, so that's what led us to it. So, I want to  
14 draw a distinction between test positivity being  
15 [inaudible 1:57:17] close schools versus using test  
16 positivity as an indication that you have to take  
17 action and that it is only when those actions fail to  
18 take effect that you need to go to the next level of  
19 distancing measures. In this is a discussion that  
20 you see happening globally and locally throughout the  
21 country and the world which is, when do you ramp up  
22 and institute community social distancing measures?  
23 And the informed consensus is that is what you do  
24 when the individual and test and trace measures are  
25 not effective.

2 DR. TED LONG: I'm happy to add on--

3 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Please. Please.

4 DR. TED LONG: oral turned back to you.

5 If you'd like me to add on, I'd be happy to,

6 otherwise, I will turn it back to you.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Okay. I was going  
8 to move on for time.

9 DR. TED LONG: That's fine.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: The health  
11 department this week issued a health alert advising  
12 New Yorkers to get tested monthly if they work  
13 outside of the home and, specifically, the alert  
14 listed teachers and others who work in school  
15 buildings. It did not, as far as I could tell,  
16 explicitly list students, so I would love, if you  
17 could clarify, whether you believe that standard  
18 should be applied to students, as well, who are  
19 attending in person classes. And, the extent to  
20 which you are assessing whether that standard is  
21 being met by the students and staff-- again, we're  
22 talking about testing they would pursue outside of  
23 the randomized testing you are offering. And what,  
24 if anything, you are going to do to help achieve that  
25 the school communities meet that milestone.

2 DR. JAY VARMA: Yeah. Let me start  
3 briefly and then I am going to pass it over to Ted to  
4 talk about this sort of community activities and  
5 services. So, just broadly speaking, you know, there  
6 is always going to be a Between public health  
7 guidance and actual behavior and uptake by  
8 individuals. So, we chose a one month interval as  
9 the-- you know, as the criteria and put out a broad,  
10 you know, comment about, you know, categories of  
11 people, you know, that fall into it and, essentially,  
12 work outside the home, but, particularly, in certain  
13 settings because we want to motivate people to  
14 actually take advantage of testing that is available.  
15 It's a critical way that we can both monitor the  
16 epidemic, as well as control infection. So, we would  
17 very much encourage, you know, families to seek out  
18 testing for their kids, as well. Of course, again,  
19 for minors, there are a couple of important issues.  
20 First of all, we know that rates of both symptomatic  
21 infections, as well as severe infection are markedly  
22 lower in younger children, although those frequencies  
23 start to normalize a little bit more as you get to  
24 older populations. You know, adolescents and older  
25 teenagers. As well as their risk of transmitting

2 infection and causing rates. So, we don't feel quite  
3 as strongly that, you know, about the need for that  
4 guidance to be followed by younger children, but,  
5 rather, we would encourage parents if they want to do  
6 it, to pursue it and make it available and to discuss  
7 that with their pediatricians. Ted, do you want to  
8 talk about some of the availabilities of services and  
9 access?

10 DR. TED LONG: Yes. I do. And I  
11 think, Chair Levine, you are bringing up a really  
12 important point that I want to just say very clearly,  
13 for the record, to draw the distinction out here.  
14 The random sample survey of students and staff that  
15 we are doing at schools is not intended to be a  
16 replacement for getting yourself or your family  
17 members tested on whatever frequency makes sense  
18 after talking to your healthcare provider. We are  
19 going to get a certain percentage of everybody at the  
20 school as part of our random sample survey. If you  
21 are not part of our percentage, of course, you should  
22 also go and get tested if you wish to or if your  
23 family wishes to. This June 1, we became the first,  
24 I believe, big city in the country to have a  
25 universal testing recommendation or policy at the



2 city level. We want to test everybody and we put out  
3 the guidance to help to make it more clear for  
4 everybody listening in here. You should be able to  
5 look at it and know what your frequency for your  
6 testing, what our recommendation would be. We are  
7 more than 300 locations across New York City. We, at  
8 our sites, offer tests, of course, free of charge.  
9 We want to remove all barriers and, again, I just  
10 want to make the point that we are doing the random  
11 sample in the schools to assess at that point in time  
12 the level or the prevalence in the school. It is not  
13 intended to supersede parents, teachers, staff, or  
14 students or kids coming out in getting tested at  
15 whatever frequency in a way that makes sense for them  
16 outside of the school.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Right. But you  
18 issued a health alert this week, the Health  
19 Department did. This is a very formal health action  
20 that you take in very proscribed circumstances. It  
21 has a real weight and goes out to thousands of  
22 providers. It is an official document and it hasn't  
23 been done that often throughout this pandemic. So,  
24 that is now the official policy of the city and, if  
25 that is the case, then it leads to the question of

2 what DOE is doing to inform its staff and students of  
3 this recommendation to facilitate access to testing  
4 resources or to track whether we are achieving that  
5 goal. And that might be a question for someone at  
6 DOE whether you have engaged on this, whether you are  
7 aware of this new health guidance and whether you are  
8 incorporating it into your communication with staff  
9 and students.

10 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Yes. Thank you,  
11 Chairman so, we are incorporating the guidance, as  
12 part of our regular communication with our principles  
13 in our school buildings. So, what we will do is we  
14 will follow up with you and send you what we are  
15 sending them.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Okay. It is clear  
17 that many, maybe most, of the tests that are done on  
18 students and staff will not be part of the randomized  
19 trial for the reasons that Dr. Long has mentioned.  
20 And so, that raises the question about our systems  
21 for alerting schools when someone in their community  
22 tests positive because they go for a routine medical  
23 exam, because they have symptoms which lead them to  
24 get checked or simply because they wanted to know  
25 their status. Explain to us how it is that the

2 school community will be alerted if someone is part  
3 of the school tests positive outside the building.

4 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Yeah. I think that  
5 is probably a question for Dr. Varma or Dr. Long.

6 DR. JAY VARMA: You. Let me get started  
7 and then I can pass it over to Ted and Danny to add  
8 in. So, the way the notification occurs is-- so,  
9 first of all, just for everybody's backgrounds, so  
10 that they understand, the different ways in which a  
11 test result can get reported to the situation room,  
12 which is the unit that takes action, there is a  
13 couple of different data streams. The first would be  
14 through the standard reporting mechanism which is  
15 that any time a laboratory performs a test on a New  
16 York City resident, it is required by law that that  
17 get reported through an electronic system that is  
18 maintained by the state. Through that state system,  
19 it immediately comes to the city health department  
20 and it gets routed immediately to the test and trace  
21 corps which Linda's interviews and that would be one  
22 pathway in which they would find out that, you know,  
23 as part of the interview, that it is the child going  
24 to a public school or a staff member. The second way  
25 in which test results get reported is, of course,

2 directly from the person themselves. Either the  
3 students [inaudible 2:04:530], the staff for the  
4 teacher, notifying either the principal or somebody  
5 within this health community in the Test and Trace  
6 Corps or the health department directly. Again,  
7 those reports then have to get verified because,  
8 again, they are in individual report and that is all  
9 managed through the situation room. And then the  
10 situation room will then take actions about first on  
11 the decision about whether a classroom needs to be  
12 closed and, second of all, whether a building needs  
13 to be closed and sending out letters of exposure to  
14 those who are potentially exposed and letters about  
15 lawn exposure to those who weren't. So, maybe, let  
16 me pass it over to Ted or Danny, then, to get into  
17 the specifics about how those letters go out and who  
18 communicates them.

19 DR. TED LONG: Yeah. I'll give you one  
20 fact and then I'm going to pass this to Dr. Stephens  
21 who is, of course, in the situation room. So, who  
22 better to comment on how the situation room works  
23 than him live? There's been 283 classrooms closed  
24 and that just the way that we get data and the ways  
25 that Jay was saying and how we were able to take

2 quick, decisive, and clear action with communication  
3 for each of those and it has only resulted, from  
4 those, a small fraction of buildings actually needing  
5 to be closed. Which, again, speaks to the  
6 effectiveness and rapidity that the situation room is  
7 currently operating under. Danny, I will turn to you  
8 for some more details.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER STEPHENS: Sure.

10 The only thing that I would add is, to Chair  
11 Treyger's point earlier, it is accurate information  
12 and making sure that information gets into the hands  
13 of the school community. So, at its communicating,  
14 it is letters sent out to principals. It is calls to  
15 principals and school leaders. But getting those  
16 tools in their hands to then spread that throughout  
17 the school community to parents, to staff, to  
18 families, and to all stakeholders. And so, it is  
19 that information flow, but, specifically to your  
20 question, the output of the situation room is  
21 intended to be disseminated broadly throughout the  
22 school community and invested stakeholders.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: That raises the  
24 question of when a child or a staff member tests  
25 positive, you have to initiate contact tracing. How

2 far back are you looking to check for contacts? I  
3 imagine it is particularly a challenge if someone is  
4 asymptomatic, which kids usually are, thankfully,  
5 because you don't have the onset of symptoms as a  
6 marker to determine when someone could be contagious.  
7 So, people are only getting tested once a month,  
8 you're not going to catch all new cases the moment  
9 they emerge. How are you determining how far back to  
10 look for purposes of contact tracing?

11 DR. JAY VARMA: Ted, do you want to--

12 DR. TED LONG: Actually, Danny, why  
13 don't you start with just-- and this is just the  
14 flow of things to Chair Levine's point-- with how  
15 the situation room looks at classroom closures every  
16 time we have a positive case and then a layer on top  
17 of that-- the contact tracing which we do in  
18 addition to what Danny is about to tell you about.

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER STEPHENS: Sure.

20 So, to Dr. Varma's point earlier with a variety of  
21 ways that information can be reported to the  
22 situation, whether that be a positive report, whether  
23 that be through lab data, whether that be through a  
24 principal, whether that be through documentation. To  
25 your point, Chair Levine, we follow closely the CDC

2 guidance to determine the infectious., Meaning,  
3 right, if someone presents with symptoms trying to go  
4 back and determine the period in which that  
5 individual may be infectious or contagious to others,  
6 as well as there is a similar process to determine  
7 the infectious. For someone who is tested who is  
8 asymptomatic who that-- or presymptomatic or someone  
9 who does not have symptoms. Taking that period, we  
10 then determined where we need to start to ask  
11 questions or look for close contacts. And that is  
12 part of the, to Councilman's Treyger's point earlier,  
13 is the beauty of having Test and Trace and DOH and  
14 DOE all in the same place under the great leadership  
15 of Commissioner La Rocca, is for all of us and for  
16 different agencies to work together to ask those  
17 questions quickly and determined those timeframes  
18 quickly and quickly initiate the test and tracing  
19 process.

20 DR. TED LONG: Yeah. And brass tacks  
21 to your point, Chair Levine, 48 hours is our gold  
22 standard. Now, what happens is just to walk you  
23 through-- because I think this is an important  
24 point-- if there is a positive case, it starts in  
25 the situation room, as Danny said, the classroom or

2 pod will be identified and then everybody in that  
3 classroom or pod will be going out on quarantine for  
4 14 days no matter what, no questions. That's the  
5 golden rule that never changes. Then, on top of  
6 that, we do our contact tracing to identify  
7 additional close contacts because the positive  
8 student or teacher may have potentially exposed  
9 people outside of the school. That's why our current  
10 contact tracing needs to exist on top of the  
11 situation room. But the situation room's action is  
12 instantaneous. There's no need to wait. The pod is  
13 going to quarantine for 14 days no matter what. Then  
14 we do contact tracing on top of that and then, if  
15 there is another case in the school or if that is the  
16 second case, that is where considerations of  
17 potentially closing the building for 24 hours comes  
18 into play.

19 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Chairman Levine?

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Please, Mr.  
21 Chancellor.

22 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Yes. I just want  
23 to add to what my colleagues have said. So, earlier  
24 in our testimony, Chair Treyger raised a concern of a  
25 school safety agent. I just want to lift up as an



2 example of how the situation n room supports schools.  
3 So, it was the principal that called us and said, I'm  
4 hearing that the agent that tested positive, made  
5 that report. We were able to do the detective work  
6 in the situation room to verify that which then also  
7 identified the miscommunication or the breakdown in  
8 communication between NYPD and DOE and we were very  
9 quickly able to get to the bottom of that case. The  
10 beauty of having a one stop shop where everybody  
11 associated is there, it is a tremendous assistance to  
12 not only do the detective work, but getting  
13 information to the school, the school community,  
14 including letters and emails and all of the  
15 communication. Just wanted to lift that as an  
16 example.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Thank you. And I  
18 just want to acknowledge a few Council members who  
19 have joined us who I don't believe we mentioned  
20 earlier which is Council members Van Bramer, Levin,  
21 and Cornegy. I do want to ask about ventilation  
22 because this is a disease that we really now do  
23 understand is airborne. Some of the standard  
24 measures for ventilation in a classroom or any room  
25 are levels of CO2 or the air circulation rate, the

2 number of times in our in which airflow cycles in and  
3 out of a given room. Aware that information is made  
4 public, classroom by classroom basis. I don't think  
5 parents have the ability to see any kind of measures  
6 for the child's classroom. Could you update us on  
7 the extent to which you are taking such measures and  
8 whether and how a parent and staff, for that matter,  
9 can you check these readings for their room?

10 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Sure. So, I will  
11 start and then I am going to ask Kevin Moran and also  
12 John Shea to add some more detail about this. So,  
13 again, when I spoke in my testimony, there are tens  
14 of thousands of rooms that have been looked at and  
15 walked through the work that happened to make sure  
16 that there is ventilation. It's a massive  
17 undertaking, so what we've done is we have started to  
18 put that together so that we can publicly show what  
19 the statuses of those particular rooms and the room  
20 flow. Now that we have people in the rooms, we're  
21 able to actually use a CO2 monitors to be able to do  
22 air quality work and look at the air quality in every  
23 school has a CO2 device and that's about where my  
24 expertise ends. So, I will ask Kevin or John to give  
25 us some more detail.

2 KEVIN MORAN: Sure. Thank you, Council  
3 member Levine. Ventilation is always a part of a  
4 multi-pronged approach to reduce any transmission of  
5 COVID-19 and other airborne viruses. The idea at the  
6 onset is to reduce any aerosol in the classroom  
7 environment or a school environment. And so, we  
8 align that with the CDC's guidance. We actually  
9 encourage windows to be opened, all of our exhaust  
10 systems to be assessed and functioning. All of our  
11 corrected error intakes to be assessed for their  
12 functioning and the same with these units and  
13 handlers in the classroom. So, we're looking at the  
14 systems in our building as designed to be operable  
15 and functioning knowing that they were designed for  
16 100 percent occupancy of students and knowing that we  
17 are roughly around 30 percent of student occupancy  
18 and potentially lower in some instances. So, what  
19 the Chancellor said, we are providing or have  
20 provided facilities with a CO2 reader so they can  
21 assess airflow within classes. If the classroom has  
22 [inaudible 02:14:24] we will provide air purifiers.  
23 For schools with HVAC systems or much larger systems,  
24 we are providing the MER-13 filter which is also a  
25 CDC recommendation to make sure it is removing

2 particulate matters in the air. We are also opening  
3 windows before classrooms and in the evenings to  
4 release any [inaudible 02:14:44] bio burden from  
5 classrooms. So, our assessments by the School  
6 Construction Authority [inaudible 02:14:49] were  
7 taken at the end of the summer to assess all the  
8 progresses to date, post it online for each family to  
9 see room by room the operability. That will be  
10 updated every Friday and, if there are any concerns  
11 locally, parents can talk with their principal and  
12 school custodians for the latest information at the  
13 school level. But this is part of a multi-pronged  
14 approach to ensure that, again, we do not have  
15 infectious particulates in the schools and that  
16 happens by pre-screening. I'm a former public school  
17 teacher and a parent now and with my two kids, we did  
18 the [inaudible 02:15:22] this morning, so it starts  
19 with parents not sending any kids to school with any  
20 symptoms. Ultimately, our testing approach to ensure  
21 that we are testing students to make sure they are  
22 not infectious or, you know, asymptomatic and  
23 potentially spreading unknown. The mandatory mask  
24 wearing is, obviously, mandatory and we're going to  
25 control any aerosols from an infected student, if

2 present. The hand hygiene and all the other  
3 recommendations the CDC has offered, we are following  
4 and our schools are introducing 100 percent fresh air  
5 to make sure that we're doing everything we can to  
6 make sure that our students and staff members are  
7 safe. We are working with our principles, and with  
8 our teachers and custodians. So, if there are  
9 localized questions, those answers reside on our  
10 website if anybody wants to know the status of a  
11 room, but we will not use a classroom if there is not  
12 ventilation present in there. So, we will make sure  
13 that the repairs are made. We have 2800 classrooms  
14 identified at the end of the summer. We are down to  
15 the last 200 that need repairs. I would also add we  
16 have order 30,00 HEPA indoor air purifiers. We've  
17 already received 15,000 of those of which they are  
18 all placed in nurses' offices and isolation rooms.  
19 So, if you have any questions--

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Thank you. I'm  
21 just going ask one final question because we do have  
22 colleagues that are patiently waiting. It's about  
23 community schools and I don't know whether the  
24 director Chris Caruso is still with us, but community  
25 schools are just essential in the services they

2 provide are not luxury items. They really are  
3 critical to the health and well-being of students and  
4 families and even to educational achievement. And  
5 they have sustained real cuts this school year. I'm  
6 concerned about relationships with community-based  
7 partners being severed. That really is one of the  
8 key ingredients of a successful community schools.  
9 Could you please talk to us about the plan to  
10 maintain community schools, to maintain CBO  
11 relationships during this pandemic?

12 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Thank you, Chair  
13 and then I will ask Mr. Caruso to join. I saw him  
14 on. So, I am a big, big supporter of community  
15 schools. I did that when I was superintendent in San  
16 Francisco and Houston also. I started a community  
17 schools and, New York City, New York City has been at  
18 the forefront of the community school's movement for  
19 decades. Obviously, with an austere budget, there  
20 were challenges with the budget, but I also wanted to  
21 publicly thank Chairman Treyger who is pledged to  
22 help us find the funding and restore the funding.  
23 So, thank you, Chairman Treyger. I know he is a big  
24 supporter of community schools, as well. We have  
25 also really looked and found some additional funding

2 to restore as much as we can and I want to echo what  
3 Chairman Treyger said about the responsibility of the  
4 state of New York and the federal government. We  
5 cannot continue to support learning in America in our  
6 public schools if the federal government does not  
7 step up and recognize that we have a pandemic. In  
8 this is one of those examples of how are our  
9 community-based partners have really been part of the  
10 fabric of keeping social emotional learning in  
11 wraparound services and health services and mental  
12 health services in place for our most vulnerable  
13 students in New York City. So, we're going to stop  
14 at nothing to try to make sure that our community  
15 schools we can restore to pre-COVID funding levels,  
16 but, at this point, it is very challenging and why I  
17 am very grateful for the support of the City Council  
18 in helping us to do that. Chris, are you on the  
19 call?

20 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: I am, Chancellor.  
21 Thank you for the opportunity to speak for a moment.  
22 Chairman Levine, thank you for your steadfast support  
23 of community schools and our students and, Chairman  
24 Treyger, same to you. I know you've been a huge  
25 advocate for this work. Since that time the pandemic

2 struck, our community schools have really stepped up  
3 and partnerships between nonprofit organizations to  
4 forge relationships with families and schools have  
5 really helped many of our most vulnerable students  
6 adapt, get connected to food security, technology,  
7 and the basic supports that students need to thrive.  
8 We also have a lot of evidence in the success of  
9 community schools and so, you know, battling through  
10 these tough financial times, it has been really  
11 difficult and I am so appreciative of the patients  
12 and work that our nonprofit organizations have done  
13 across the city and supporting principles and  
14 families and teachers and students during this time.  
15 As the Chancellor said, we have been working really  
16 hard to find resources. We made a commitment to all  
17 of our nonprofit organizations and community schools  
18 that any expenses they have incurred during this time  
19 of uncertainty would, of course, be reimbursed and we  
20 are working really hard to get some more clarity on  
21 the budget situation as soon as possible. And thank  
22 you, again, for all your support in this work.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Thank you, Chris.

24 We have to get this money restored for the good of  
25 the kids, first and foremost. For the communities,



2 for the CVS. And I will certainly be joining with  
3 Chair Treyger with Council colleagues to fight for  
4 that. I'm going to wrap it up now. Thank you to the  
5 administration for this discussion and I think I'm  
6 going to cue Malcolm, our committee counsel, to work  
7 through the cue of our colleagues. Thanks, again.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yep. I'm going to  
9 switch to Council member questions now, but Chair  
10 Treyger had one quick follow up question for First  
11 Deputy Chancellor Conyers. If we could go ahead and  
12 unmute the First Deputy Chancellor? Chair Treyger,  
13 he's unmuted. You can ask your question.

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you very much  
15 and I do want to just note for the record I was  
16 strong supporter of both community schools and of the  
17 learning to work critical programs that serve as  
18 these children who actually need to support more than  
19 ever and it is unconscionable that we are going to  
20 fight like hell to restore every dime to both  
21 community schools and learning to work. And I think  
22 my colleague for raising this. This is a top  
23 priority for us. I just wanted to quickly follow up  
24 before we turned our colleagues with the question  
25 that I posed to the First Deputy Chancellor to make

2 sure that we have the entire question wrapped up so  
3 we get all the data that we need. I asked about what  
4 percentage of schools are providing in person  
5 services by having students log into zoom from the  
6 classroom. I just want to make sure that we also get  
7 the number of what is the actual staff shortage  
8 number because this is a direct result and impact of  
9 the hybrid model that requires more staff at a time  
10 when we have fewer staff working in school buildings.  
11 So, what is the number that we are short by to  
12 provide in-person instruction to every single child  
13 who signed up for in person services? In the final  
14 note, Deputy Chancellor, since we are experiencing  
15 the severe staff shortages, one of the first things  
16 that comes to my mind in addition the promises made  
17 to kids is a legal mandate that we have two kids.  
18 The percentage of students that are not receiving  
19 their full IEP mandates as a result of that staffing  
20 shortage, as well. Do you have that information with  
21 you available or do you have to get back to us?

22 FIRST DEPUTY CHANCELLOR CONYERS: We will  
23 have to get that back to you, sir. And I think you  
24 for the clarification on these three aspects and we  
25 will get back to you shortly on that.

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: It's very  
3 important. Thank you, Deputy Chancellor. I will  
4 turn it over to Malcolm to begin the queue.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. The  
6 first few Council members that we have lined up will  
7 be Council member Kallos followed by Council member  
8 Lander, followed by Council member Holden. And there  
9 are others that will be following, but we will first  
10 start with Council member Kallos.

11 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you. You get  
13 unlimited time. I've got five minutes. So, I've got  
14 six questions. You know the drill. Pencils out.  
15 Chancellor Carranza, I know you know how much I care  
16 about childcare. As we have fought to reopen with  
17 students learning remotely with two, three, or every  
18 day of the week, it became clear that we would need  
19 somewhere they could do so with adult supervision.  
20 That's why I proposed remote learning centers in the  
21 letter on July 10th and was pleased with your  
22 announcement of adopting the model through learning  
23 bridges. I was, however, concerned when only 100,000  
24 seats were announced and asked for more in a letter  
25 with Council member Lander on July 23rd. We just

2 learned that I have one site in my district with 60  
3 seats to serve nine elementary schools had more than  
4 4000 students. Will you open a site on Roosevelt  
5 Island with an MWBE provider that we have identified?  
6 Will you open more sites in my district and  
7 throughout the borough of Manhattan which only got  
8 128 sites for 336 schools? Question two. While many  
9 schools with the hybrid model have a minimum of two  
10 days with three days on alternating weeks, I actually  
11 have schools alternating between one and two days a  
12 week with class sizes as low as six students. Can we  
13 guarantee a minimum of two and three days a week for  
14 every school in the city? Question three. You know  
15 how I feel about the purchase of 300,000 iPads that  
16 did not offer keyboards or even broadband hunting and  
17 pecking out 100 word essays on a screen. Borough  
18 president Brewer and I have allocated millions to  
19 purchase laptops, speaking for myself, for every  
20 school in my district. But now schools are being  
21 blocked on the ground that kids can't take the  
22 laptops home when they need them most. I even  
23 secured 1499 a month broadband and now free broadband  
24 for these families. Will you release or millions for  
25 schools to buy these laptops that connects families

2 with this free broadband? Question four. On June  
3 29, I joined [inaudible 02:25:44] banks to propose 84  
4 million dollars in savings by phasing out our racist  
5 textbooks that too often perpetuate notions of white  
6 supremacy through a narrow focus on the achievements  
7 of white men in Europe. Expanding the narrative  
8 through open textbooks can help teach the rich  
9 diversity of shared contributions across culture from  
10 Arabic numerals and Catherine Johnson in math to  
11 [inaudible 02:26:07] and George Washington Carver in  
12 science. Key figures and developments have been  
13 neglected in every subject, not only history. Will  
14 you join me in rooting out injustice in the class?  
15 Racial injustice in the classroom and adopt open  
16 education resources or open text books and move  
17 towards and more culturally responsive, adaptive, and  
18 digital learning that will help all of our students  
19 succeed no matter their zip code or their gender or  
20 the color of their skin? Question five. In August  
21 7th, I joined black, Latino, and Asian-- for Black,  
22 Latino, and Asian co-chair Robert Cornegy in asking  
23 if we could desegregate online education for the  
24 several hundred thousand-- I think 400,00 students  
25 who chose to remote entirely online with a citywide

2 online class free of being restrained by physicality  
3 and the racist red lining that we've been dealing  
4 with even to this day. We could finally desegregate  
5 the program, offer GNT to anyone who offered it  
6 citywide. The New York Post even endorsed this idea.  
7 Sixth and final question. Last year, you missed the  
8 deadline to implement GPS tracking for school buses  
9 for parents, but promised to have it rolled out by  
10 this school year. Now, more important than ever for  
11 parents to know where the children are, when will you  
12 roll out this program? Along the same lines, I've  
13 been in communication with the parent of a student  
14 with autism whose bus driver tested positive for  
15 coronavirus on October 6th, but was not notified  
16 until a full seven days later, putting the child,  
17 family, other students, and staff and even the school  
18 at rest what went wrong and how long should it take?

19 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Okay. Thank you.

20 I'll start with the last one first. GPS tracking.  
21 Pandemic. Pandemic. That's what happened. So, we  
22 are on track to-- We are back on track to roll out  
23 the via tracking that will give parents the  
24 functionality, but let me just remind everyone there  
25 is a pandemic. We shut down the school system. We

2 shifted to remote learning. That is what happened.

3 So, I just want to be very clear. We are also very

4 committed to making sure that parents have the

5 information they need to know where the children are

6 and make sure that they are safe. Kevin, did you

7 want to add a little more detail to when-- Kevin

8 Moran, what is the new timeline for our via

9 implementation? Kevin Moran, if you could meet him,

10 please?

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Can we please

12 unmute Kevin Moran?

13 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: There we go.

15 KEVIN MORAN: Yeah. So, honestly, in

16 March, the COVID shutdown impacted directly our

17 supply chains for the units that we will be

18 installing on buses. So, we needed 10,000 units

19 coming out of China. That [inaudible 02:29:07]

20 directly impacted. Also, project plans due to the

21 shutdown was significantly delayed. And so, when you

22 look at providing GPS, there is a fair amount of

23 training that has to go involved in actually using

24 the system. And so, with the bus companies down

25 through the summer, we had no opportunity to, one,

2 install the devices, do any quality control of the  
3 devices, to do any systems integration over that time  
4 period. So, yes. We are delayed, but are committed  
5 to getting that back on track. More to come on that,  
6 but we have been talking directly to the CEO of via  
7 and we are very excited to get everything lined back  
8 up where we can actually do the testing of the units  
9 on the buses and then, ultimately, having to interact  
10 with our school systems. So, yes. Definitely more  
11 to come on that, Councilman. We will get back to you  
12 on a more definitive timeline.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: When a bus driver  
14 or other DOE staff tests positive for coronavirus, is  
15 it supposed to take seven days to tell a child and  
16 their family about?

17 KEVIN MORAN: I don't know the case you're  
18 speaking about. I don't know if the test results are  
19 shared. If they are shared, we immediately take the  
20 driver off the run and make those notifications with  
21 the school. If it's necessary, we'll shut down the  
22 run. If the determination on the Test and Trace is  
23 that it's okay to redeploy the route absent the  
24 driver and attendant, we'll do that. Each case is  
25 different. I don't know the case you are speaking



2 about, but if you shared it with me, I could give you  
3 [inaudible 02:30:31] when you get it to me.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: We will get it to  
5 you. The rest of the questions, Chancellor?

6 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Yeah. So,  
7 culturally relevant curriculum, absolutely. We, as  
8 the Department of Education have taken a strong stand  
9 on culturally relevant and sustaining curriculum.  
10 That should not be any different as we are in a  
11 virtual environment, as well. We are continuing to  
12 work to make all of the materials and all of the  
13 curriculum that our students engage with culturally  
14 relevant and sustaining. That is not going away at  
15 all during this time period. In terms of minimum two  
16 or three days for blended learning, we are in the  
17 process right now of recalibrating what is happening  
18 with our in person learning. Now, if you remember,  
19 when we did our survey back in April in terms of  
20 asking families are you choosing remote learning, the  
21 default was that, if they didn't indicate a  
22 preference for remote learning, it was assumed that  
23 that they were choosing to be in a blended learning  
24 environment. Now, that students have actually come  
25 back, we know that more families have chosen a remote

2 learning environment which, again, has made it so  
3 that class sizes are even smaller than what we can  
4 medically, safely, have in our schools and schools  
5 are starting the process now of reconfiguring their  
6 classes and reallocating their teachers so that they  
7 have teachers that can have two or three more  
8 students and then the staffing shortage isn't as  
9 great as it was when we were first planning with all  
10 these students that were going to be in a remote  
11 oriented person learning environment. What we have  
12 also seen is that schools are also able to then tweak  
13 their models so that they can offer more days of in  
14 person learning due to the smaller number of students  
15 that have chosen in person learning. The caveat that  
16 I would add here, though, is that there will be  
17 another opportunity that will come for parents and  
18 students to opt back in to in-person learning. So,  
19 what we don't want is a see-saw effect. So, a  
20 student right now has two days of in person learning.  
21 Because of the numbers, the school may be able to  
22 reprogram and they may be able to get four or five  
23 days of in person learning and then, with this next  
24 window coming within the next four or five weeks,  
25 then if more, significantly more families choose in

2 person learning, the school will have to re-program  
3 again and that family that has now five days of in  
4 person learning may have one or two days of in person  
5 learning again. We don't want to do that to  
6 families, so we are trying to be, and working with  
7 our schools, very, very deliberate and communicative  
8 with families around what those tweaks are going to  
9 look like. I will say, Council member Kallos, that  
10 our goal is always to the greatest extent possible,  
11 to have the most in person learning days for students  
12 that have chosen that modality. In terms of the  
13 money for laptops, I know our chief financial officer  
14 is on the line. Lindsay Oates. If you could please  
15 unmute Lindsay Oates, she can talk to you about the  
16 issue on money for laptops.

17 LINDSAY OATES: Thank you, sir.

18 Figure for the question, Council member Kallos. So,  
19 I believe what you are referring to is what we call  
20 Reso A funding. That funding was released several  
21 weeks ago and we have been communicating with schools  
22 and supporting them in purchasing those devices. So,  
23 I am happy to report that, after being stuck for a  
24 little bit, it is out there and schools are

2 absolutely ordering devices and other school-based  
3 equipment that they need to support instruction.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Great.

5 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: And then the  
6 question on learning bridges, I'm going to ask Josh  
7 Wallack and Susan Haskell to address that issue for  
8 us, please.

9 JOSH WALLACK: I can say simply that  
10 Susan and I would be very happy to work with you,  
11 Council member to look at the site that you pointed  
12 out on Roosevelt Island and, if providers are  
13 interested, they can apply on passport. But happy to  
14 touch base with your office and learn about the  
15 specific suggestions. We do want to stand up as many  
16 seats in all parts of New York City as possible. We  
17 are also emphasizing standing up seats first in  
18 neighborhoods that were particularly hard-hit by the  
19 pandemic. So, we are trying to balance this, but we  
20 would like to work with you and look at the sites  
21 that you have in mind.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you.

23 Chancellor, the last question was about desegregating  
24 the online education.

2 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Yes. So, let's  
3 talk more about what that means in this virtual  
4 environment. And I will reference the letter, as  
5 well. But just I'd like to get a little more  
6 information as to what exactly we are talking about.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: It would be  
8 offering students a chance to disengage with their  
9 current local public school provider of their choice  
10 and then join a citywide class. The classes could be  
11 oriented around enrichment, a dual language program,  
12 give them talented-- because it could be scalable,  
13 it could literally just offer the kids whatever they  
14 wanted very similar to some of the STAG  
15 recommendations on what you've been pushing for and  
16 so just creating a space where the kids can opt in,  
17 the kids could be integrated across the entire city  
18 and across classroom and it even be sorted based on  
19 their preferred learning style. Some kids liking it  
20 to be live in eight hours a day versus other kids who  
21 just want the homework assignments and what have you.

22 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Got it. Thank you,  
23 Council member. Obviously, a lot to talk about  
24 including some potential labor issues. So, that is  
25 the kind of detail that I think our team should

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2 engage in a conversation about. But happy to do  
3 that.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you. And  
5 thank you to the Chairs indulgence with all the  
6 questions.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And  
8 next we will go to Council member Lander.  
9 Remembering, everyone, there is five minutes for  
10 Council member questions.

11 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Okay. Thank you  
13 very much and to the Chairs for this important  
14 hearing. Chair Treyger and Chair Levine and,  
15 Chancellor and your team, it is good to see you.  
16 Time allowing, I'm hoping to ask questions for a  
17 little more details on learning bridges, on outdoor  
18 learning, and on admissions for next year, but I want  
19 to start with a pretty specific question. DOE has  
20 imposed a new policy for extended use permits that's  
21 having a devastating impact on afterschool programs  
22 and many schools. Huge new fees that are making it  
23 impossible for schools to operate their own  
24 afterschool programs and you have exempted DYCD and  
25 DOE funded programs, but you have made it impossible

2 for programs operated by the schools, many of which  
3 have internal scholarship opportunities for low  
4 income families and are absolutely essential for  
5 working families, have been forced to close. DOE  
6 suggests this is because of the additional cleaning  
7 costs when afterschool providers use the space, but,  
8 then, in your own communication, you have made clear  
9 that no extra cleaning is happening between the end  
10 of the school day and the start of afterschool.  
11 Security and cleaning is already scheduled around  
12 after school, so there is no schedule change. There  
13 is just no reason to hike the fees other than revenue  
14 generation and you are making childcare costs  
15 prohibitive at a time when we've got to be doing  
16 everything we can to provide childcare to working  
17 parents. So, I want to ask if you will agree right  
18 now to reverse this policy so our afterschool  
19 programs can operate for working families?

20 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Thank you, Council  
21 member. I'm going to ask our chief financial officer  
22 to talk. Lindsay Oates to talk about the need for  
23 the fee adjustments.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: I don't want to  
25 hear about the need for fee adjustments, so, Lindsay,

2 if you will say yes, you are going to reverse the  
3 policy, that would be great. But I would wish you  
4 don't use any of my time to tell me that you are  
5 actually using it for cleaning that is not actually  
6 extra cleaning taken place.

7 LINDSAY OATES: Council member Lander, I  
8 would be happy to discuss this with you off-line so  
9 we don't use the time now to the discuss this if that  
10 is your preference. I can't commit that we are going  
11 to reverse these fees, but I do want to correct, for  
12 the record that DYCD and other city agencies that  
13 provide afterschool programs are not exempt from  
14 this. We are working with out-- there is an  
15 increase cost that they are paying to support these  
16 increase cleaning costs.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Do you have any  
18 clue how many afterschool programs have been forced  
19 to close by the new fees?

20 LINDSAY OATES: I do not. I think that  
21 there are lots of decisions made by schools about  
22 afterschool programs right now, not the least of  
23 which is fees.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Okay. Lindsay,  
25 I would like to follow up with you off-line, but this



2 is a devastating policy. It makes no sense. It  
3 doesn't cost the city money. These are afterschool  
4 programs providing working families desperately  
5 needed childcare and is taking action that forces  
6 them to close is counter production. Anyway, so I  
7 will follow up with you off-line, but I really hope  
8 you will reconsider this. It's just a bad decision  
9 for New York's families right now. All right. So,  
10 the questions I would love to put out there that are  
11 more general-- it was great to your little bit about  
12 learning bridges which I know it is wonderful to have  
13 stood up. I would love to hear a little bit more the  
14 details. Maybe I miss them, but I didn't hear before  
15 how many slots are there, where are they? How many  
16 requests from families? How many offers and how many  
17 offers accepted? And how many of those are teachers  
18 and school staff and essential workers? On outdoor  
19 learning, I've seen some amazing pictures from  
20 principals and teachers and school staff, so I would  
21 just want to get the data. How many schools? How  
22 many closed streets? How many parks? And then my  
23 last question is about admissions. As you know,  
24 Chancellor and Deputy Chancellor Wallack, we have  
25 been pushing, especially seeing how well the district

2 15 model is going, that we cannot use last fall's  
3 fourth grade grades and test scores. There are just  
4 meaningless. When are the admissions decisions for  
5 next year going to get made and communicated to  
6 families and where are we, especially, on middle  
7 school admissions where we have a model we could just  
8 use for one year citywide in this pandemic to try  
9 something that will actually help us move forward on  
10 desegregation, but also just makes sense given the  
11 realities of the pandemic?

12 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Okay. So, on  
13 learning bridges, I'm going to ask again, Josh and  
14 Susan if you would mind. Josh Wallack and Susan  
15 Haskell? If you could unmute them, please?

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You're unmuted--

17 SUSAN HASKELL: Okay. Thank you for  
18 your question. This is Susan Haskell, Deputy  
19 Commissioner of youth services at the Department of  
20 Youth and Community Development. We have been  
21 ripping up this initiative to help support families  
22 and DOE students enrolled in blended learning. I  
23 know, as of my last data point, we had more than  
24 45,000 families who had gone to the DOE website who  
25 were eligible to participate in learning bridges. We

2 are excited about that and we want to continue to  
3 encourage families to go to the DOE website who are  
4 interested in this childcare program and express  
5 their application there. We have more--

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

7 SUSAN HASKELL: We have more than 300  
8 programs operational right now matched with a roughly  
9 500 schools and we look forward to sharing more data.  
10 I'm sure some of that has been updated as recently as  
11 today. We look forward to continuing to share more  
12 data points about the participation in learning  
13 bridges.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Can you just tell  
15 us when we could expect to see some numbers about  
16 number of slots and offers and, you know, the kinds  
17 of things that we would rather not subpoena. If you  
18 could just tell us when you are going to give us the  
19 information.

20 SUSAN HASKELL: Yeah. No problem. We  
21 have exceeded our initial goal of 30,000 seats to be  
22 available when school opened. We are in our second  
23 full week of programming and we are, at the same  
24 time, you know, connecting our providers with  
25 attendance systems for the K to eight programs, DYCD

2 programs. This is sort of a new administrative  
3 experience for them to be reporting daily attendance  
4 each morning. And so, I think, additionally, we had  
5 maybe 75 percent of programs and that first week of  
6 programs who still needed to, you know, get used to  
7 that system. We have brought that down to under 25  
8 percent and we hope to have everybody fluid with that  
9 system by the end of this week. And so, again, we  
10 should be able to give you more updates week to week  
11 as time goes by.

12 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you very  
13 much. Thank you, Council member Lander. And,  
14 Malcolm, who is next on the queue?

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Chair, I'm sorry.  
16 You can skip my outdoor learning question, but can  
17 you make sure that the admission decisions question  
18 gets answered? That really feels like it's important  
19 for us to hear in this time.

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Go ahead. I'm  
21 sorry.

22 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Yeah. We are  
23 working through the final details of the admissions  
24 process. So, we will have more to say very, very  
25 soon about that.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you. Mr.  
3 Chair?

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And next we will  
5 hear from Council member Levin followed by Council  
6 member Cohen and Council member Salamanca.

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you very  
9 much, Chair. I have my son here with me, so bear  
10 with me for a moment, please. I'd like to first ask  
11 about-- I have questions around students and  
12 shelter. So, Chancellor, you responded to Chair  
13 Treyger's question mentioning that there were sim  
14 cards that were changed out from T-Mobile to Verizon.  
15 My understanding is that that it happened at one  
16 shelter after months of advocates and shelters  
17 raising the issue. There may be a second shelter  
18 today. Can we get a commitment from you that we  
19 can-- that every shelter should have access to  
20 Verizon some cards because of issues around his body  
21 T-Mobile service?

22 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Absolutely. So, it  
23 is actually 10 shelters that are on our list and, if  
24 we use 10 shelters, the teams have been going in and  
25 actually checking. Not just in the lobby, not just

2 in gathering areas, but going throughout the building  
3 to get an assessment of whether or not there is  
4 spotty connectivity. In the cases where there is,  
5 then you've identified the provider. So, in the  
6 cases where there are spotty connections, they  
7 physically change out those Sim cards, rather than  
8 doing a cloud-based switchover because we want to  
9 make sure that the connectivity is strong. So, there  
10 are 10 shelters that are on our list. They will all  
11 be done by next week. So, you're going to see a  
12 regular cadence of that happening. But, in addition  
13 to that call will I mean, some cards is one thing,  
14 but in working with our sister agencies in the city,  
15 we are also working on a broader plan to actually  
16 address Wi-Fi connectivity and no shelter so that we  
17 can ensure that there is no need for some card, but  
18 that there is actually conductivity in terms of Wi-  
19 Fi. So, that is part of a broader strategy there,  
20 but our first goal is to make sure that the students  
21 there have the connectivity that they need right now  
22 to be able to participate.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: But, Chancellor,  
24 there's more than 10 shelters with students in the  
25 city, so I just want to make sure that every

2 shelter-- every student in shelter that's having  
3 issues with connectivity, can have access to a  
4 Verizon some card. Is that right?

5 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Let me clarify.  
6 Thank you, Council member. So, we are starting with  
7 10 shelters that have been identified by advocates  
8 and others as the most problematic.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay.

10 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: That, by no means,  
11 implies that we are stopping there. We are  
12 [inaudible 02:46:51]

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay. Okay. Do we  
14 know how many students and shelter have not engaged  
15 in school this year, whether in person or remotely?  
16 Are we keeping track of that?

17 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: I know we are. I'm  
18 going to ask our First Deputy Chancellor LaShawn  
19 Robinson if she has the details. LaShawn Robinson.  
20 If you can unmute her, please.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You are unmuted  
22 now.

23 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROBINSON: Thank you so  
24 much. Chancellor, we have Chris Caruso on who  
25 oversees both students and shelter along with

2 attendance. And I believe he has that information  
3 available.

4 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: Thank you.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Mr. Caruso, you are  
6 unmuted.

7 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: Thank you very  
8 much. Thank you, Deputy Commissioner Robinson.

9 Council member, I don't have the numbers at hand for  
10 this current year, but I do know for last school year  
11 when we switched to remote, there were 119 students  
12 who were living in shelter who did not engaged with  
13 schools during the remote learning. I'm sure we can  
14 pull-- I might have it in my stack of papers here.  
15 I can look and I'm sure we can pull that number for  
16 this year year to date quickly.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay. And I also  
18 have another question around who is in charge of  
19 students and shelter making sure that all of these  
20 issues are addressed on a day-to-day basis but there  
21 is a point person that providers, shelter providers  
22 and/or advocates like Advocates for Children can go  
23 to? Is there a point person? Would that be you,  
24 Chris, or who would be the point person?



2 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: Would you like for  
3 me to answer that, Chancellor?

4 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Yes. Yes. Go  
5 ahead.

6 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: Okay. Thank you.

7 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Deputy Chancellor  
8 Robinson, as well, to chime in. LaShawn Robinson.

9 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: Great. I'm happy  
10 to start and then Deputy Chancellor Robinson--

11 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

12 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: So, supporting our  
13 students in temporary housing is a multiagency  
14 effort, right? We know that children and families--  
15 not just those living in shelter, but most of our  
16 children and families interact with multiple public  
17 systems. We just heard the example of DYCD and  
18 afterschool programs, as well. So, at the end of the  
19 day, principles are responsible for supporting the  
20 students who are enrolled in their schools. The  
21 Department of Education does everything we can to  
22 support principals who have high numbers of students  
23 who are living in shelter and so, we have an office  
24 of student contemporary housing within the division  
25 of school climate and wellness. We have staff on the

2 ground in schools. The bridging the gap social  
3 workers which the Council has been such a vocal  
4 advocate to make sure that the mental health needs of  
5 our students in temporary housing are addressed are  
6 key among them. We also have 117 staff that actually  
7 work in shelters and work arm in arm with the shelter  
8 directors. So, when we deploy the technology last  
9 spring it in this fall, we were able to shift the  
10 technology directly to the shelters because we had  
11 staff on the ground to help the shelter operators  
12 distribute that to the families. So, I hope that  
13 provides some clarity in terms of the relationship  
14 between DHS and DOE and how--

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: And if I could  
16 just--

17 CHRISTOPHER CARUSO: there are  
18 supported.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Chair, if I could  
20 just respond there really quickly. What would be  
21 really helpful for me as the Chair of General Welfare  
22 and, I think, for advocates and providers, if we  
23 could has, in addition to all of that, a high level  
24 point person so that, when there are specific issues  
25 that arise we can go-- we have somebody at Tweed,

2 whether it is you or Deputy Chancellor Robinson or I  
3 don't know who that we can say we have an issue here.  
4 We have a Sim card that needs to be replaced here.  
5 You know, really specific issues that need to get  
6 addressed immediately, that there is a point person  
7 that we can all go to that everybody knows it is  
8 there and that would be very, very helpful for, I  
9 think, everybody within the homelessness advocacy and  
10 provider community.

11 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROBINSON: Absolutely.

12 You can feel free to reach out to me directly.  
13 Deputy Chancellor LaShawn Robinson and Chris Caruso  
14 with the office of community schools as the senior  
15 executive director. That body of work certainly  
16 falls within the division and is housed within the  
17 office of community schools. So, please, feel free  
18 to reach out directly.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay. I will do  
20 that. Thank you very much.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Council  
22 member Holden, you dropped off, but you are back on,  
23 so you were originally before Council member Levin,  
24 so we will go to Council member Holden who is back on

2 zoom. If we can unmute Council member Holden. There  
3 we go. You're all set.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: I didn't drop off.  
5 I was on the whole. I don't know unless there was a  
6 technical problem. This is for Deputy Commissioner  
7 Haskell and, you know, I do want to hear more about  
8 learning bridges. The stats, especially. And, if  
9 your office can get the Council members a breakdown  
10 by school district of the slots for the learning  
11 bridges, I would appreciate it. You don't have to  
12 answer that now, but my other question is-- and it  
13 is for anybody. Our children with IEP's or receiving  
14 the services or SETSS, Special Education Teacher  
15 Support Services, getting their services they  
16 desperately need if they are only in school two days  
17 a week or sometimes even one day a week? I got many  
18 parents frustrated at online SETSS is not working for  
19 their children along with occupational therapy,  
20 speech, obviously, and language therapy.

21 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: So, Council member,  
22 we have John Hammer from our special education  
23 department. If he can be on muted, he can address  
24 that question.

2 JOHN HAMMER: Hi, Council member Holden.

3 It's John Hammer here from the special education  
4 office. Thank you, Chancellor, and thank you for the  
5 question. So, special education office has worked to  
6 develop two documents to support families in  
7 understanding how both program services and related  
8 services will be delivered in blended and remote  
9 learning. The first is the programs adaptations  
10 document which really is designed to facilitate a  
11 conversation between the child's teacher. The SETSS  
12 provider, the ICT teach, the special class teacher  
13 that is servicing that student, to talk about how the  
14 services we provided in blended learning environment  
15 and to really get feedback and input from the family  
16 and how to best provide these services during this  
17 time. And in some cases, SETSS services can  
18 absolutely be provided effectively remotely and we  
19 would like to work with the family in order to  
20 schedule all those. In some cases, that may not be  
21 the case and so that process is the vehicle for us to  
22 be working with families in order to iron that out.  
23 Similarly, our related service providers are  
24 conducting outreach. Our speech occupational  
25 therapists, and physical therapists, to complete a

2 document called the related services adaptation  
3 document, or the RAD. And during that process, our  
4 related service providers are speaking with families  
5 around the provision of in person services until the  
6 therapy services to really work with families in  
7 order to build a service delivery model that is going  
8 to work best for their students during this time.  
9 And so, we encourage any family who has been working  
10 with their related service provider or special  
11 education teacher to complete these PADs and RADs to  
12 continue to do so and reach out to the school's  
13 principal if there aren't any roadblocks.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Okay. While I have  
15 you on, if parents need their children evaluated for  
16 services, how long will that take? Because, in a  
17 regular school year, this process could take months  
18 and, you know, obviously, we are in a pandemic and, I  
19 imagine, it is even longer. So, could parents be  
20 allowed to get their children evaluated from an  
21 outside source and will it be accepted by a DOE?

22 JOHN HAMMER: Absolutely. It should be  
23 done within 60 days, right? In our school  
24 psychologists are absolutely working with families  
25 and providing evaluations through a comprehensive,

2 data-driven assessment process which we rolled out in  
3 the spring. Families have concerns around the  
4 evaluation process, they should speak to the child's  
5 principal or email us at  
6 special[education@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:education@schools.nyc.gov).

7 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: on the air quality  
8 and so forth. And this could go to anybody, again,  
9 in DOE. Have you reached out to various companies  
10 who provide high-tech technologies like UV light, air  
11 filtration, ionization technology, and have the RFPs  
12 gone out?

13 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: So, Kevin Moran  
14 will give you lots of detail. John Shea, as well.  
15 So, Kevin Moran and John Shea. The short answer to  
16 that, Council member, is yes, but they can talk a  
17 little bit more detail about who and what.

18 KEVIN MORAN: Yeah. We've engaged with  
19 several companies on products that we believe enhance  
20 air quality. And so, the indoor air purifies, you'll  
21 hear more about it potentially later in the  
22 [inaudible 02:56:53] unit. We also have what is the  
23 most important [inaudible 02:56:58] filters. We've  
24 partnered up with an international HVAC expert to  
25 make sure that we can complete that order and keep

2 that supply chain moving. So, we've very excited  
3 about that. We have our own contractor, as well,  
4 that we used readily. Having taken a good hard look  
5 at anything beyond that with the UV lighting  
6 scenario, we've talked about it. We've talked to  
7 other agencies that have used it. Currently, we are  
8 not moving in that direction. We are looking at the  
9 MER-13 filtration system and the HEPA rated indoor  
10 air purifier as the next step. We are not closing  
11 the door on that technology. Just know that we are  
12 committed to the MER-13 filtration and indoor air  
13 purifier right now. I don't know, John, if you have  
14 anything to add on to any of the other conversations  
15 around ionization.

16 JOHN SHEA: I will just add-- And thank  
17 you, Council member Holden, for the questions. We've  
18 been doing a lot of work since the pandemic started  
19 with the Council of Great City Schools which is the  
20 national organization that supports the major urban  
21 school districts across the country to see what they  
22 are doing, as well and we keep in close touch on what  
23 kind of technologies and we share information about  
24 that. So, to reinforce what Kevin said, you have the  
25 as the technology is not something that we think is



2 appropriate for us at this time. The air purifier  
3 certainly are and we are constantly reevaluating that  
4 stuff. Not doing it in a vacuum, but in a very  
5 public and very broad spectrum.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Because certain  
7 ionization's that have been proven throughout the  
8 world and so, you know, as the Chair of technology,  
9 we have heard-- you know, I sat on a number of zoom  
10 meetings with a number of companies and I would be  
11 happy to offer some insight into that if you guys  
12 need it. But, there's many, many solutions and,  
13 obviously, you know, companies are coming out of the  
14 woodwork to try to solve some of these air filtration  
15 systems problems, but ionization looks promising and  
16 there is some data to back it up. So, yeah.  
17 Anything you guys need on that. So, have any schools  
18 been outfitted with, you know-- we heard that some  
19 schools had air filtration systems, portable ones, in  
20 the classrooms. Has that been done?

21 JOHN SHEA: Yes, sir. That's what Mr.  
22 Murray and referred to. We had 10,000 that have  
23 already been delivered and deployed to schools that  
24 we have another 20,000 that will be coming to support  
25 classrooms and instructional spaces and other areas

2 where we think we need mitigating measures in  
3 addition to the other things that we are doing.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Were these done in  
5 older schools with poor ventilation? Were they given  
6 priority?

7 JOHN SHAE: It's a prioritization, not  
8 just the age of the schools, but the type of  
9 ventilation system that it has. Whether it is  
10 working or not. There's a number of prioritization  
11 criteria that we use. Age is one of them.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Okay. Thank you.  
13 Thank you, Chairs.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, we will hear  
15 from Council member Cohen followed by Council member  
16 Salamanca followed by Council member Cornegy.  
17 Council member Cohen?

18 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Thank you, Chairs.  
20 Chancellor, it's good to see you and your team. What  
21 I really want to know is-- and I think what people  
22 want to know is are you going to be able to provide  
23 in person learning after Thanksgiving? And I know  
24 you don't have a crystal ball, but, you know, there  
25 has to be modeling going on or you have to be doing

2 something to be prepared. What is it showing and how  
3 can parents prepare for, as we move as a city, or  
4 indoors, as the weather gets colder? You know, the  
5 numbers-- we had these yellow zones, but, I mean,  
6 they could either be just sort of the tip of the  
7 iceberg so to speak of the second wave here.  
8 Internally, what is the DOE looking at and how are we  
9 prepared for what you are looking at?

10 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: So, Council member,  
11 we are absolutely looking at how do we continue to  
12 build up our in person learning and there's a number  
13 of factors. So, not to get too far into the weeks,  
14 but, I think, first and foremost, concomitantly with  
15 the plan for ramping up the plan for in person  
16 learning, we also have to be very sober about a  
17 remote learning option, so we are building both of  
18 those systems and bettering both of those systems  
19 concomitantly. Now, we saw why that is important  
20 because, with the red zone, orange zone, yellow zone,  
21 and the ZIP Code, when the medical conditions were  
22 right, we have to be able to switch quickly to a  
23 remote option and have students not miss a beat in  
24 order to do that. We also know that, with our  
25 protocols around positive cases in the schools, if

2 there is a classroom or if the school has to shut  
3 down for 24 hours, that also makes it necessary to be  
4 able to pivot very quickly.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Chancellor, I don't  
6 want to interrupt, but because my time is short, but  
7 when you say, you know, switch quickly, like I'm not  
8 sure that that helps New Yorkers. People need to be  
9 able to plan. If you think that there is a high  
10 likelihood, for instance, after Thanksgiving, that  
11 you are not going to be able to in classroom  
12 learning, I think it would help people-- and Chair  
13 Treyger talked about transparency. Like if we were  
14 honest about, we think that there is a low percentage  
15 of probability that we are going to be able to  
16 provide in classroom learning, that would allow  
17 people to prepare and it wouldn't feel-- it makes  
18 you look like you are being very reactive and you are  
19 behind the eight ball when, in truth, you know, you  
20 probably have modeling data right in front of you  
21 that says, you know, it does look good or it doesn't  
22 look good. And I think if you could tell New Yorkers  
23 that, I think it would be very helpful for parents  
24 and students.

2 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: So, I'm going as  
3 Dr. Barr but to also talk about this because we don't  
4 have a crystal ball. I think you said it very  
5 clearly and right on point. I believe that, if New  
6 Yorkers continued to follow the advice, the medical  
7 advice and continued to do the right thing, we will  
8 continue to be at a space where we will be able to  
9 offer in person learning. I believe that. But I  
10 also believe that we will not, in any way, shape, or  
11 form, sacrifice health and safety of our students and  
12 I think we have demonstrated that to our fellow New  
13 Yorkers that, when the circumstances warrant, we  
14 switch. But I do believe that we will be able to  
15 have in person learning and I will just add this one  
16 another caveat is I meet regularly with the 72  
17 largest school system leaders in America. There is  
18 no one, of the largest urban school systems in  
19 America, that has as rigorous or as a comprehensive  
20 plan, including the testing and tracing, that we have  
21 a New York City. And sometimes it's a little hard  
22 for us to grapple with that because we are in New  
23 York, but as other people are contemplating in person  
24 learning, they are blowing up our phones, they are  
25 blowing up our email wanting everything that we are

2 doing because they say, we don't have what you guys  
3 have created. Now, what makes it difficult for us is  
4 we are large and we're complex and there is ever  
5 changing variables. But I do believe will be able to  
6 have been person learning as long as New York is  
7 continuing to follow medical advice. Dr. Varma?

8 DR. JAY VARMA: Yes. Thank you,  
9 Chancellor, for the opportunity. Yeah. I mean, I  
10 guess I'll just say a couple of general comments  
11 which is the first is, again, to reiterate we always  
12 have to remain humble. You know, New York is not  
13 separated. It is intensely connected both to the  
14 rest of the United States, as well as the rest of the  
15 world. Even if we do an A+ job on everything for the  
16 city of New York, we are always at risk because of  
17 our connections. So, everything I say is always  
18 based on what I think today, but also cognizant of  
19 being cautious about the future. I think the second  
20 point I would make is really just to emphasize,  
21 again, that we use multiple layers of interventions  
22 to keep our schools safe and, as the Chancellor has  
23 noted, there are-- I can't even find other places  
24 around the world that are doing as many interventions  
25 as we are doing. The only places that would be

2 vastly superior to us are those that have, basically,  
3 eliminated coronavirus from their country. So, that  
4 includes mainland China, New Zealand, Vietnam.

5 Places like that. In the absence of that--

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time is up.

7 DR. JAY VARMA: all the interventions  
8 that we are making are really the most critical that  
9 we possibly can and I have quite a lot of confidence  
10 that, if we can maintain good adherence to those  
11 measures-- and that is key. Good adherence to those  
12 measures, that we could continue in person learning  
13 throughout the year.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Again, I appreciate  
15 the time, but I'm not sure, obviously, the dilemma.  
16 Thank you.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Council  
18 member. Next, we will hear from Council member  
19 Salamanca followed by Council member Cornegy, Council  
20 member Miller, and Council member Borelli. Council  
21 member Salamanca?

22 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Thank you.  
24 Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good afternoon, Mr.

25 Chancellor. I have some questions and concerns about

2 remote learning and accessibility to technology.

3 This week, I visited my alma mater, CS 150, my  
4 elementary school where my sister and I graduated.

5 Just to visit to see how social distancing is going.

6 The building was immaculately cleaned. I was

7 extremely happy with the procedures. Where they had

8 me take my temperature, fill out the forms, you know,

9 procedures were followed. But what was disturbing to

10 me, Chancellor, was that there are 360 students in

11 that school that are doing remote learning and 120 of

12 those students do not have technology at home. They

13 don't have an iPad. They don't have a Chromebook.

14 So, when I asked the principal, well, how are these

15 students learning at home? She explained that

16 parents have to come in and get a package for the

17 week and, therefore, that means that parents are

18 being asked to be educators at home and so I would

19 like you to please explain to me why is it that the

20 school which is in an underserved community, black

21 and brown community, why wouldn't the Department of

22 Education focus more on ensuring that communities

23 such as mine and my colleagues that are struggling,

24 that the students that are doing remote learning

25 should have technology?



2 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Yeah. So, Council  
3 member, I couldn't agree with you more and we  
4 actually have prioritized-- I'm a little surprised  
5 to hear that. We are making a note of that because,  
6 as we surveyed our schools and it is exactly that  
7 situation that we've asked schools to identify for  
8 us. Who are those students that need devices and,  
9 with the devices that we've had, we've been  
10 delivering devices to schools for exactly that  
11 particular reason. So, I know that my colleagues are  
12 making a note. We're going to follow up with that  
13 school in particular. But from the beginning, we've  
14 prioritized the allocation of devices, internet  
15 connectivity to students who are living in poverty,  
16 students who are living in shelters, students in  
17 foster care, our students with disabilities,  
18 specifically, because we know they are the most  
19 vulnerable students in our system and we also know  
20 that they, historically, have been underserved so  
21 they probably are the ones that need that kind of  
22 technology, as well. So, again, that is exactly what  
23 we've been trying to do.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: So,  
25 Chancellor-- because my time-- I want to get to

2 more questions and, if possible. So, when I spoke to  
3 someone from your office from your team, the first  
4 question they asked were, well, did the parents fill  
5 out the form to request a computer? And, you know,  
6 some of the challenges that I have in my communities  
7 is that I have undocumented families or head of  
8 households who are undocumented. Their kids were  
9 born here in the states, so their citizens. The  
10 parents are scared to fill out these forms. What are  
11 we doing for undocumented parents who are scared to  
12 fill out these forms to request technology at home?

13 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Again, while it may  
14 seem like a bureaucratic move, that's why we ask  
15 schools to identify students for us. Because, while  
16 parents-- And I get it. Parents may be very,  
17 especially immigrant parents, very skittish about  
18 getting information to anything that is government  
19 related. They do trust their schools. They do trust  
20 their principles. They do trust their teachers. And  
21 we have found that that has been a strategy where  
22 we've been able to identify students who haven't come  
23 forward before. So, that is something they need to  
24 do. They need to let their school know so that their  
25 school can let us know.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: All right.

3 And then, finally, I also have a good population of  
4 special needs students. Autism or other special  
5 needs. What is the Department of Education doing for  
6 these students that are doing remote learning and  
7 have special needs?

8 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Yes. I am going to  
9 ask my colleague, John Hannah Mark, to talk about  
10 that specifically because that is his work all day  
11 long. John Hammer.

12 JOHN HAMMER: Good afternoon and thank you  
13 for that question. Department of Education, first  
14 and foremost, has been working to support and prepare  
15 our DOE and contract service providers that are  
16 speech, OT, PT providers to provide high-quality  
17 tele-therapy services to students who are working  
18 fully remotely. In those services, initiated in the  
19 spring where we transitioned over 7000 DOE providers  
20 to the provision of teletherapy services--

21 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Are they doing  
22 home visits? Are they doing home visits?

23 JOHN HAMMER: We are not. We are not  
24 currently doing home visits. We are providing--

25 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Okay.

2 JOHN HAMMER: therapy to student who are  
3 working remotely.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: So, you're  
5 providing this therapy to the students. Now, who is  
6 there educating them? The parent?

7 JOHN HAMMER: They are receiving  
8 educational services through their schools, their  
9 special education teachers who are providing remote  
10 instruction.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Okay. And how  
12 is this being monitored?

13 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time is up.

14 JOHN HAMMER: Monitored through the  
15 principals who are working with teachers to ensure  
16 that students are accessing instruction and are  
17 working alongside families to ensure that that  
18 instruction is meeting the needs of the child to the  
19 greatest extent possible. I'm sorry, Council  
20 member—

21 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Yeah. They  
22 muted me. I know my time is up. I look forward to  
23 having more in depth conversation with your team  
24 about the challenges that I'm having in my district  
25 with technology not being accessible to my

2 constituents and, just to wrap up, I strongly feel  
3 that the conversation that you should be having with  
4 the Mayor, I think every student in the city of New  
5 York in the public school system should have  
6 technology. Whether they are doing remote learning  
7 or whether they are not doing remote learning.  
8 Should a second wave hit, immediately we are going to  
9 shut down and we are going to continue to have these  
10 conversations about not having technology. Thank  
11 you, Mr. Chair.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Council  
13 member Salamanca. And I will just say the next week,  
14 the education committee joint with the Committee on  
15 Mental Health will be doing another hearing on the  
16 impact of students with disabilities. So, for all  
17 Council members, I would encourage you to join us at  
18 the same time next week and we will be talking about  
19 the impact of students with disabilities. Next, we  
20 will hear from Council member Cornegy.

21 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time will begin.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Good morning.  
23 Thank you, Chairs. Thank you, Chancellor Carranza.  
24 It's always good to see you. I will not be talking  
25 about gifted and talented today, but my colleagues

2 have painted a pretty good picture about the  
3 logistics and the problems, especially Council member  
4 Salamanca just now. What I would like to say is  
5 that, in my district, we've given his many students  
6 as we possibly can journals. We think that that is a  
7 positive role to play in their emotional health and  
8 well-being of our scholars. But am worried. So,  
9 while we talk about the logistics and the reading,  
10 writing, and arithmetic and access to technology, I'm  
11 not hearing much conversation about the social  
12 emotional portion of this or the arts or athletics.  
13 So, is the father of six, right? You know, it's well  
14 documented. I know how important academics are, but  
15 I also know how important the socialization component  
16 to this is and we are asking students, scholars--  
17 some very young scholars-- to participate in an  
18 environment absent of interaction and absent of any  
19 social emotional engagement and we are almost asking  
20 them to act like adults. And even us as adults are  
21 having difficulty with this remote, as professionals.  
22 I'm wondering what, in the long term, right? Because  
23 immediately we have to pivot it and focus on the  
24 logistics and making sure that they get the education  
25 necessary, but long term, the social emotional

2 portion of this, what are we doing or what's  
3 available? How are we pivoting and shifting as the  
4 Department of Education to meet those social  
5 emotional, arts, and athletic needs? I'm a student  
6 who benefited from athletics, right? No just for my  
7 body, but for my mind. We know that the arts,  
8 combined with good, solid academics or athletics  
9 combine with good, solid academics make a well-  
10 rounded student and help us to compete globally. But  
11 I haven't heard much about those things and I know  
12 it's difficult, Chancellor. You know, that's not  
13 wasted on me. It's typical to have games and/or  
14 concerts and recitals and all those kind of things.  
15 But the social emotional, not to have a conversation  
16 about it, gives me some pause.

17 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: So, thank you. I  
18 will start, Council member Cornegy, and then I'm  
19 going to ask Deputy Chancellor LaShawn Robinson to  
20 give some detail, as well. So, I couldn't agree with  
21 you more. You know, Council member Treyger spoke in  
22 his opening remarks today about what we found with  
23 students on remote learning in March at in April and  
24 the disproportionate impact that it had specifically  
25 in communities of color. I think that is probably

2 one of the more articulate arguments for why we have  
3 to have in person learning because we know that the  
4 children have been disproportionately impacted  
5 continue to be disproportionately impacted. So, we  
6 agree with you 100 percent and I appreciate the  
7 opportunity to talk about how we are ramping up and  
8 moving through what we already had begun around  
9 social emotional learning, trauma informed  
10 curriculum, and strategies and practices. We have  
11 not separated the academic imperative for our  
12 students from the social emotional learning, trauma  
13 informed strategies for our students. They had no  
14 one in the same. So, in terms of the curriculum and  
15 the strategies of the resources that we are providing  
16 to our teachers in our schools, I couldn't be prouder  
17 of the work that LaShawn and her team and our chief  
18 academic officer and her team have done to really  
19 embed them. And then, I would just share one more  
20 thing and then I will ask our Deputy Chancellor.  
21 Yesterday, had the opportunity to visit a school in  
22 Hinton Park in Queens that was doing outdoor learning  
23 and what they are doing is they're doing exactly what  
24 you were talking about. The teacher was masterful at  
25 having students move, but also had them talk about



2 what they were doing and how they were feeling and  
3 how they were processing and why is it now that we  
4 are together? How is that different from what it was  
5 like when you couldn't go out and isn't this great?  
6 So, schools are doing some incredible things around  
7 this issue, as well. So, Deputy Chancellor Robinson,  
8 can you give a little more detail?

9 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROBINSON: Absolutely.  
10 Thank you so much for that question. It's very  
11 important that we continue to prioritize mental  
12 health every time we speak about health and safety.  
13 We are continuing to implement robust social  
14 emotional and mental health support network available  
15 pre-COVID. In fact, under this Chancellor, we formed  
16 the division for school climate and wellness to  
17 ensure that there would be an emphasis on supports  
18 for the whole child. And we've been able to build  
19 upon the work that we have started, such as Sanford  
20 harmony, social emotional learning--

21 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time is up.

22 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROBINSON: Bruller social  
23 emotional learner, health education in elementary  
24 schools and schools across the city, and then  
25 restorative practices and middle schools and high

2 schools. We have invested in these programs pre-  
3 COVID and we continue to do so during this time. We  
4 have expanded our [inaudible of 3:18:02] efforts  
5 significantly and, once we began to be impacted by  
6 COVID, we ensure that we had a comprehensive crisis  
7 recovery effort to add to the additional support and  
8 response to COVID. And not only in response to  
9 COVID, but, frankly, in response to the added racial  
10 trauma that our communities have been impacted by  
11 this school year. In the spring, we trained over  
12 13,000 staff members on trauma 101 and another 2000  
13 in addition social emotional learning sessions. Over  
14 the summer, we worked diligently during this budget  
15 crisis to secure additional private funding and,  
16 through that private funding, we were able to partner  
17 with the Child Mind Institute, the University of  
18 Chicago. We built out trauma informed curriculum and  
19 resources. To date, we have over 45,000 school-based  
20 staff members who have participated in extensive  
21 training in trauma informed care along with 1600  
22 school leaders who have prioritized this work. We  
23 know that this work is not only critical for our  
24 young people, but it is also critical for the adults  
25 who we charge to care for our young people day-to-

2 day. So, we have extended these supports also for  
3 our adults, as well, emphasizing adult social  
4 emotional learning. We launched the bridge to school  
5 plan which has been the resource that we have  
6 utilized across the DOE. That includes a plethora of  
7 activities to be used in the classroom, critical  
8 resources for families and school communities, and  
9 also we spent time at the very beginning of this  
10 school really thinking about the bridge between what  
11 young people have been facing and impacted by,  
12 adults, too, and the academics. That is why it is  
13 called bridge to school. So, there is an intentional  
14 focus on mental health and wellness supports during  
15 this time. We also recognize that it is important  
16 for young people to be able to socialize with each  
17 other. I have a son in our public school system.  
18 We, as a family, elected for in person and we  
19 continue to think through ways to engage in athletics  
20 programming. I'm glad you raised that. At the  
21 beginning of the year, we were not provided approval  
22 from the state to begin athletics programming, but we  
23 continue to think through ways to connect our  
24 students with their coaches and look at other  
25 opportunities for that support to happen. We are

2 monitoring the situation closely and, as soon as we  
3 can engage in athletics programming, we look forward  
4 to doing so.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: So, thank you.

6 I will save the rest of my PSAL questions and the  
7 interface between PSAL and DOE during this pandemic.  
8 I'm telling you will at a time. That is going to be  
9 the focus on my questionings next week and also the  
10 arts. But, I'm not hearing the coordination, maybe  
11 because I'm not deeply involved in it, the  
12 coordination between the PSAL, which is, for those  
13 listening, the public school athletic league, which  
14 I'm a proud alumni of and our academics. So, I am  
15 going to say that until next week. Thank you for  
16 your answers.

17 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROBINSON: Happy to  
18 discuss. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And if I might  
20 before we turn it over, Malcolm, I appreciate the  
21 question from my colleague, Council member Cornegy,  
22 and that is one of the reason why, Council member  
23 Cornegy, you and I and other fought so hard in the  
24 budget to save the Single Shepherd program which  
25 would've meant losing over 100 guidance counselor,

2 social workers for kids in central Brooklyn and parts  
3 of the South Bronx. How vital those relationships  
4 are more than ever right now? That is why we fought  
5 like hell to restore fair student funding. To save  
6 those positions. We have a lot more work to do and  
7 we have to restore the cuts to community schools and  
8 learning to work which are vital relationships for  
9 these kids. Thank you for the question. Next,  
10 Malcolm, please. Thank you.

11 COMMITTEE COUNCIL: Next, we will hear  
12 from Council member Miller followed by Council  
13 members Borelli, Barron, Rose, and, finally, Powers.  
14 Council member Miller?

15 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time will begin.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: And good morning.  
17 Thank you, co-Chairs, Chancellor. It's great to see  
18 you and your team there. I think this hearing is  
19 long overdue. We're hearing just a plethora of idea  
20 and my concern is when we get to, you know, public  
21 testimony, whether the voice of these parents and  
22 these, in particular, communities of color, are they  
23 being heard. So, I really want to kind of touch on  
24 that. But also, some of the things that have already  
25 been said. I am looking for the continuity and the

2 coordination between agencies between all of the  
3 stakeholders involved. I know that these things  
4 don't happen in a vacuum. That some of these things  
5 and policies are by virtue of collective bargaining  
6 and other things, but we are sitting here now with  
7 teachers shortages and here in the district we have  
8 classrooms being taught by Perry's and noncertified  
9 folks. And certainly, these are communities that are  
10 already impacted. These are children that are behind  
11 in their learning. Asking them to transition, first,  
12 to remote and then, when they are in school,  
13 certainly parents out to work and are we giving them  
14 the resources that are necessary? What does that  
15 continuity look like in terms of doing that? The  
16 reduction of teachers in the school building has  
17 become problematic so that classes are being taught  
18 by noncertified folks. I am actually in receipt of a  
19 letter from a local PTA that has a high school that  
20 works in collaboration with SUNY in which the  
21 children get college credits. Because they don't  
22 have that certified teacher instructing, they will  
23 not receive those credits. So, how do we mitigate  
24 these things? How do we ensure that we have the  
25 proper people providing instructions, whether it is

2 remote learning or in-house learning? How do we  
3 ensure that the parents have the tools and resources  
4 to be able to deal with common core and other things?  
5 Because parents being home really serves little  
6 purpose when they don't have the capacity to assist  
7 their children, which is what we have seen under  
8 normal circumstances and what we see now only  
9 exasperates that. So, the how do we address the need  
10 for the additional teachers? What are we doing and  
11 are we using this as an opportunity to diversify the  
12 DOE in terms of educational instructors and  
13 furthering the cultural competency that we need to  
14 see? And then, finally, get, coordination between  
15 Reso A technology, computers, that I know that  
16 Council members such as myself have provided to local  
17 schools. The more than 2000 laptops that were just  
18 provided by the Black Latino Asian Caucus and so  
19 forth. How is that happening and how do we  
20 prevent-- make sure they're going to those that are  
21 most needed, that folks-- how many laptops, tablets  
22 are provided to each family, each child? What does  
23 that look like? What is the oversight to make sure  
24 that we have enough resources and that those  
25 resources are going where they needed to be? And

2 then, finally, I want to speak to what Council member  
3 Lander was talking about. The CBO's that run after  
4 school programs that have another letter. We have  
5 one in district that ran a program last year that had  
6 seven classrooms and paid 1500 dollars. They now  
7 have three classrooms that are asked to pay 500  
8 dollars. I'm sorry, 5000 dollars. And they have a  
9 fourth of the capacity in terms of students. And so,  
10 the math doesn't work out. How do we expect to  
11 provide services for our most vulnerable resources  
12 and our children if we are doing things like, you  
13 know, overcharging? How do we get to a place that we  
14 can have afterschool programs that we do value which  
15 I reject the notion that we cannot provide in-house  
16 learning for our students? How do we make sure that  
17 we provide the best in-house experience based on  
18 teachers, resources, afterschool, and so many other  
19 things that were mentioned? So, I am at 543. We're  
20 done. So, I will hang up and listen answers for  
21 those questions and I look forward to working with  
22 each and every one of you to make sure that we make  
23 these things a reality and that we have--

24 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time is up.



2 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Council member, so  
3 thank you. We will take through the questions that  
4 you asked, starting with the last question. You  
5 asked about afterschool programs. Our chief  
6 financial officer, Lindsay Oates, has already  
7 committed to Council member Lander, but will add you  
8 to that, to have a briefing where we can sit and  
9 actually go through the justification, the reasoning,  
10 the rationale for the change in fees. And it is a  
11 good conversation have. But we also want to  
12 understand what impact is happening out there, as  
13 well. So, she will add you to that list so we can  
14 have that conversation. Also, earlier, the question  
15 around Reso A and funding for technology was brought  
16 up in our chief financial officer also verified that  
17 that funding has gone out to schools. So, schools  
18 have already started ordering devices and technology  
19 utilizing that funding. If you happen to know of any  
20 instance where that is not happening, we would really  
21 appreciate you getting that information to us so that  
22 we can follow up with the schools, as well. In terms  
23 of cultural competency and diversity of staff, that  
24 continues to be one of our goals in everything that  
25 we do and I'm going to talk a little bit about that

2 and the staffing issue in general. I think what's  
3 important to keep in mind is that, as we've worked  
4 very closely with CSA and UFT around the continuity  
5 of learning. We have built into the schedule every  
6 morning, a 30 minute period where the in person  
7 teacher, the blended learning teacher, and the remote  
8 teacher have 30 minutes so that they can collaborate,  
9 they can coordinate, and they can plan together so  
10 that there's a continuation of continuity of what  
11 students are learning. Now, is that perfect in  
12 every single school? Absolutely not. Are we working  
13 to try to get it better and better and better?  
14 Absolutely. And, so we meet weekly and my colleagues  
15 meet daily with all of our labor unions working  
16 through these issues as they arise because, again,  
17 there's always going to be issues that arise in this  
18 particular way of learning. Well, that being said,  
19 it's very, apparent and obvious that, if you are  
20 going to limit the number of students in classes,  
21 that you are going to need more teachers. So, as  
22 that number has continued to shift, schools are in  
23 the process now of shifting what their teachers are  
24 doing in terms of serving students in person. So,  
25 for example, if the school was expecting a certain

2 number of students to come back within person  
3 learning and now, a couple of weeks and do the school  
4 year it is become apparent that, instead of nine  
5 students in the classroom, there is only for students  
6 in the classroom, that creates the opportunity, then,  
7 to consolidate some of those classrooms, still  
8 keeping the numbers medically advised, and the social  
9 distancing advised, but that it frees up a staff  
10 member, teacher to do their teaching in either  
11 another group of students or in another way of  
12 supporting the blended learning. That is happening  
13 as we speak. That also being said, we are working  
14 with CUNY and we have made and we have actually  
15 gotten people that have taken us up on this for their  
16 adjunct faculty members because, as you know, they  
17 have had some difficulty with their enrollment, as  
18 well. The Chancellor of CUNY and I have worked very  
19 closely, so we've gotten adjunct faculty member from  
20 CUNY-- and this is particularly powerful to the  
21 problem that you mentioned around specifically  
22 certified or experienced instructors because these  
23 are subject matter experts. These are the  
24 physicists. They are the mathematicians. These are  
25 the English professors. At our secondary school, we

2 are working to onboard them and come in and be able  
3 to take some of those positions without negatively  
4 affecting what they're doing in the CUNY system. In  
5 addition, we've brought on, literally, thousands of  
6 new people in substitute positions into the system  
7 and I know that one of the concerns that I've heard  
8 from a number of elected officials is, well, but  
9 subs. How can subs do the work of a licensed  
10 teacher? We know that being a licensed teacher is  
11 very, very important. I'm not minimizing that at  
12 all. But what I will say is that, in March, when we  
13 transitioned to remote learning very, very abruptly,  
14 and we stood up our rec centers for the first--  
15 medical providers and our first responders, I can  
16 tell you that, overwhelmingly, the individuals that  
17 took those jobs were substitute teacher and when I  
18 visited those schools and I visited those classrooms,  
19 they were doing a phenomenal job of engaging our  
20 students, of having high quality instruction, of  
21 devouring every piece of curriculum and guidance that  
22 we gave them to provide that kind of a positive  
23 experience for our students. So, we are doing the  
24 same approach with how we are on boarding our subs in  
25 terms of giving them what they need to bring them up

2 to speed. The last thing that I will say that's  
3 really impacting what we are doing in terms of our  
4 certified teachers is that we've had tens of  
5 thousands of our certified teachers that have  
6 requested and been granted medical accommodations.  
7 So, they are providing the instruction in a remote  
8 learning situation. They are certified teachers.  
9 So, again, as those numbers continue to change and  
10 morph, we are continuing to work to build out the  
11 support systems for our teachers and ensure that the  
12 continuity of learning for our students is as strong  
13 as it can be and continues to get better as we go  
14 into the rest of the school year.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: I can really  
16 appreciate that, Chancellor. And if you could just  
17 allow me a second to be brief, but I want to make  
18 sure that we are putting children first and that we  
19 are using this opportunity to diversify the workforce  
20 and the DOE a with these substitutes and others that  
21 are coming on that normally have not had the  
22 opportunity to integrate within the DOE system. But,  
23 finally, is there a way for us to see what buildings  
24 actually have the substitutes, the certified  
25 teachers, the ATRs, and peri's and others who are

2 actually providing the learning and instruction  
3 within the classrooms and can we see, by districts  
4 and school buildings, who is providing those  
5 services?

6 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: So, Council member,  
7 as I mentioned, as things are shifting around the  
8 instruction, what is a classroom that may have a  
9 substitute teacher today may be different tomorrow  
10 because now we consolidated them into another  
11 classroom and now you have a certified teacher. So,  
12 what we don't want to do is confuse anyone about the  
13 shifting data. So, we will provide that. I'm  
14 publicly committing to that. We will provide that.  
15 I just need a little bit more time to let the system  
16 settle and I do want to also thank you and the NAACP  
17 for your work in securing devices for our students,  
18 as well. So, want to publicly thank you for that, as  
19 well.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you,  
21 Chancellor. Thank you, Mr. Chair, as well.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next,  
23 we will hear from Council member Borelli.

24 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time will begin.  
25

1 COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION JOINTLY WITH COMMITTEE ON  
HEALTH

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Thank you. I  
3 would like to ask about the bus contract that was  
4 announced. The first question, are the buses all  
5 owned by Reliant that we are purchasing?

6 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Thank you, Council  
7 member. I am going as Kevin Moran who is the point  
8 person on that particular issue, if you could unmute  
9 him, please, so he can answer that question.

10 KEVIN MORAN: Yes. They recently announced  
11 tentative agreement with Reliant would be to purchase  
12 their assets or their intellectual property and  
13 simply have the [inaudible 03:36:36] and that could  
14 be anything from the payroll systems to onboarding  
15 staff and training. So, yeah. The idea is we will  
16 take their assets, whether they're in [inaudible  
17 03:36:46] or not, that's what we're looking to do.  
18 But details on a tentative agreement will be shared  
19 at a later date.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Are the  
21 taxpayers responsible, though, for the company's  
22 shortfall? Their pension fund over the past few  
23 years?

24 KEVIN MORAN: So, the not-for-profit has  
25 been established that we put forth. It will be

2 coming up on an upcoming panel [inaudible 03:37:10]

3 to talk about the not-for-profits. They were the

4 participating employer into the pension program and

5 we do not anticipate a pension withdrawal at this

6 time. The not-for-profit is offering up employment

7 opportunities to all current employees and that's the

8 intention.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Right. But at

10 the end of the day, the employer that's, at the end

11 of the day, there when someone goes to collect,

12 they'll be holding the bag, no?

13 KEVIN MORAN: The not-for-profit is the

14 employer. You're correct.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: And the

16 taxpayers are not financially backing the nonprofit?

17 KEVIN MORAN: So, we'll be bringing that

18 contract for the not-for-profits to the panel for

19 educational policy. Yes.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Okay. And

21 then, their intellectual property, beyond the stuff

22 that is given to them by OPT and the data we collect

23 with registration, I mean, what could their

24 intellectual property be?



2 KEVIN MORAN: So, it could be as simple as  
3 shoveling their yard. It could be as simple as how  
4 to stack the buses and line them up in the morning,  
5 how to get them out in the morning. In a COVID  
6 environment, how do you get you [inaudible 03:38:10].  
7 It could be anything that they [inaudible 03:38:12]  
8 specifically how to staff up, how to recruit staff,  
9 how to retain staff, how to incentivize staff, how to  
10 make sure you don't get violations, you run on time,  
11 you know, courteous, responsible service. All of  
12 those things you would expect from a business, you  
13 know, each company has a way of doing things and we  
14 hold them accountable for that, but it's what we want  
15 to do when the not-for-profit establishes that  
16 [inaudible 03:38:35] so there aren't service issues.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: So, how much  
18 did the city value the company at? I mean, you know,  
19 is there a price settled on yet?

20 KEVIN MORAN: No. It's a tentative  
21 agreement and we're still negotiating and we're  
22 moving forward.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: But is there a  
24 tentative price in the tentative agreement?

2 KEVIN MORAN: The details on pricing will  
3 absolutely come at a greater date. It's premature to  
4 talk about cost right now.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Okay. Let's  
6 talk about valuation, then. So, the company was  
7 receiving a 42 million dollars subsidy. There are  
8 reports in the press that they have received  
9 additional subsidies on top of that. We know they  
10 have been underfunding their pension by about hundred  
11 to 150 million dollars over the past few years.  
12 There buses aren't entirely owned by the company.  
13 Many are least. Their intellectual property, you  
14 know, it sounds like it's something, but the majority  
15 of their intellectual property is probably the  
16 routing in the data that OPT gives them and their  
17 most valuable contract, if not their only contract,  
18 was with the DOE and that expired in 2020. So, how  
19 are we evaluating the company-- in other words, why  
20 are we even buying this company when it obvious  
21 better solution would have been to use our own  
22 capital program where we can issue debt at a much  
23 cheaper rate to buy buses and highroad drivers?

24 KEVIN MORAN: So, you said a lot. The  
25 contract expired in 2019 and, in terms of contact,

2 the administration has long looked at making a long-  
3 term investment in our school busing industry. As we  
4 move through March and April with the school closure,  
5 we looked at that very carefully. Their contracts  
6 were not settled in the long term from the 2014  
7 contractor, the 2013 contractors, as well as the  
8 legacy contractor. They go back to 1979. They had  
9 paper agreements already in place for long-term  
10 contracts, so our discussion started with the 2014.  
11 Reliant was in that contract [inaudible 03:40:29].  
12 They were not given additional subsidies. I don't  
13 know which one you are talking about, but, yes ,  
14 [inaudible 03:40:34] had ended. They were not  
15 getting it in this term. They are operating on an  
16 emergency contract currently, but there were no  
17 additional subsidies given to that company. I have  
18 no indication that they were failing to make the  
19 pension contributions. I don't know where that came  
20 from, but the idea is, that when we purchased the  
21 company, we are purchasing all their assets as if we  
22 are going to run it and, ultimately, the long term,  
23 make that investment, understand the busing industry  
24 in a different way, and make decisions accordingly.  
25 The not-for-profit will be charged with running that

2 and we are looking to learn more about the industry.

3 This represents, essentially, 2000 employees,  
4 essentially, 1000 buses. It would give us roughly  
5 about 10 percent of the industry for the not-for-  
6 profit to manage and understand more of.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Okay. So, I  
8 guess I'm running out of time, so I want to have some  
9 other questions on a different topic. Kevin, thank  
10 you. But the mayor and the governor indicated that  
11 schools aren't necessarily the cause of a lot of  
12 community spread, so is that true? Is that what the  
13 DOE is thinking? Is there any evidence of school  
14 spread among schools that started opening? And, if  
15 not, then what is the target date to return to full-  
16 time in person for all school children?

17 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: So, Dr. Varma,  
18 would you please take that question?

19 DR. JAY VARMA: Yeah. Absolutely.  
20 Thank you very much for the question. I would say  
21 that, yes, at this time, we have not seen any large  
22 outbreaks associated with our public school system,  
23 so I think it is fair to conclude-- I'm sorry. That  
24 is one point. And then, the second point is, based  
25 on the data that we have both from testing that was

2 done before school started, you know, where we  
3 actively encourage teachers to get tested and we have  
4 results from, I think, 30,000 teachers that were  
5 tested, as well as from the testing that we have done  
6 in the past week, all of those point to the direction  
7 that the public school system is not contributing to  
8 community transmission in any meaningful way. But,  
9 first, as I mentioned before and would reiterate  
10 again, this is an ongoing, you know, epidemic and  
11 things could change. So, at this point, I don't  
12 think we should commit ourselves to any date in which  
13 we would be able to, you know, bring all students  
14 back full-time. I think that would really have to be  
15 a phased approach. And, obviously, it depends-- you  
16 know, I think it goes without saying that it depends  
17 also on building trust. You know, we have to build  
18 the evidence base that shows that, in fact,  
19 everything that we are seeing is, in fact, true and  
20 can't be maintained true. And then earn the trust of  
21 parents and every member of the community that, in  
22 fact, in school learning is safe. I would make just  
23 one last point. That the experience coming from  
24 other countries is, in fact, that you can have, you  
25 know, smaller distances, potentially, between people.

2 You can have more frequent and more intensive in  
3 person learning, but, of course, every community is  
4 different and I think our approach of being very  
5 cautious at the beginning in terms of the number of  
6 people in classrooms, the requirements on masks and  
7 using physical distance was the right approach and it  
8 is just going to be an ongoing process to see when we  
9 can verify that that works and potentially relax some  
10 restrictions to open up in person learning.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Thank you. I  
12 just want to ask the committee counsel to put me on  
13 the list for second round of questions and I just  
14 want to address something that a colleague had  
15 mentioned about the South Shore Staten Island being a  
16 hotspot. 10307 has only 13 cases of COVID, but it  
17 does have a high positivity rate. I will point out  
18 that that is far less, almost a third, the number  
19 cases in many other areas around Manhattan and our  
20 largest school in 10307 is IS 34 R. They have an 80  
21 percent in person rate and their attendance-- I just  
22 checked today-- is over 90 percent. So, I mean,  
23 this is the neighborhood where parents trust the  
24 faculty. Parents want to be in school, you know,  
25 parents are putting their kids. They're actually

2 doing it. So, I really don't want to hear any  
3 discussion of shutting down schools in Tottenville  
4 and 10307 because we hear we trust our faculty, we  
5 trust our teacher and they're doing a great job and  
6 should be a model and not something at risk of  
7 closing. So, thank you and please put me on the  
8 list.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, we will hear  
10 from Council member Barron.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Can you hear me?

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes. Go ahead,  
13 Council member.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you. First,  
15 I want to thank the Chairs. Chairs Levine and Chair  
16 Treyger for having this hearing. I think it's  
17 extremely important. And I came on rather late  
18 because I was holding a hearing of the Higher  
19 Education Committee along with the Wellness Mental  
20 Health Committee and we ended late. So, I don't want  
21 to repeat questions that I'm sure my colleagues have  
22 already raised. What I will do is what I normally do  
23 which is reviewed the testimonies so that I can see  
24 what issues they raised and hopefully what kind of  
25 responses we will get from the Department of

2 Education. I want to thank the Chancellor and his  
3 staff for being here today and I want to talk about,  
4 you know, the phrase what did you know and when did  
5 you know it. So, I want to challenge us. What did  
6 we know and when did we know it? So, we knew, as a  
7 nation, that medically, historically, we were due for  
8 a pandemic. The country did not take appropriate  
9 measures to be ready for this pandemic. We, as a  
10 city, knew that there was a gross disparity, easily  
11 identified by ZIP Codes and other criteria that shows  
12 there was a huge discrimination for communities of  
13 color when compared to other communities. For low  
14 income communities as compared to high income  
15 communities. So, we are in much of what we are  
16 facing now because we did not make appropriate  
17 preparations to deal with it. We have historically  
18 had teachers that were teaching large classrooms,  
19 not, in fact, doing the ratio that is recommended to  
20 have an effective educational process. And what I'm  
21 saying is that we now have the responsibility to  
22 correct all of those factors that are now causing our  
23 children to have this adopted, hybrid method of being  
24 instructed and it is time for us to make sure that,  
25 when we get to budget time, that we put in the money



2 so that we don't have to go and beg for devices for  
3 our children. We don't have to go and try to  
4 scramble devices. At that we understand that it is  
5 our responsibility and bring pressure on the mayor  
6 and the governor to have the funds that we need so  
7 that every child, not just those children in the high  
8 income ZIP Codes that already have the ability to  
9 have the devices and don't have to now scramble to  
10 get it. And I was discouraged to hear that there  
11 were principals who had significant numbers of  
12 children who did not have devices. I hope that the  
13 Chancellor is encouraging principals to pick up the  
14 phone and let them know, when I visited the school  
15 and I ask what is going on? If I get a complaint or  
16 a notice that it is inadequate, I pick up the phone  
17 and I call the Chancellor staff and say, listen, and  
18 I get that. And so, I do hope that we encourage  
19 principals to be able to be able to get what they  
20 need as they move forward. It is time for us to  
21 correct those injustices. I know that there is a  
22 long laundry list of what needs to be done and, in  
23 terms of remote learning, distance learning, and in  
24 class learning, the Chancellor knows-- and I said it  
25 publicly in the past-- I would've thought that

2 remote learning would be the most effective based on  
3 considerations of health, exposure for children, as  
4 well as students. However, we have parents who can't  
5 function in that kind of setting because they have  
6 got to go to work. They've got to have an  
7 opportunity to have an income. We have other parents  
8 whose children have to have some kind of tangible,  
9 physical support in a classroom environment by their  
10 IEP or by their learning style. And so, we've got to  
11 have this model. If we can't rush to get this model  
12 in for in class learning, that would be great, but I  
13 don't know that we can say that we have a date to do  
14 that based on the fact that we have got to find out  
15 what the data shows us in terms of the occurrence of  
16 what might be a resurgence that is coming forward.  
17 But, Chancellor, we are in the midst of the storm now  
18 and there is much that has to be done and juggled  
19 probably every day. My question to you is, as we  
20 move forward and come to the recovery, what are we  
21 going to do to make sure that we have the ability to  
22 try to recoup what it is that students have lost?  
23 What are we going to do to make sure that the program  
24 that you came in on, your grand vision on how to make  
25 sure that we correct all of those injustices that

2 have historically been imposed on black and brown  
3 children that have not allowed them to have access  
4 to--

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time is up.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you. That  
7 have not had access to the full opportunity of other  
8 children and other communities? Are we going to make  
9 sure that the vision picks up? We know that you got  
10 a lot of pushback and a lot of resistance and we want  
11 to encourage you to make sure that you move forward  
12 with that. What are we going to do? And, just  
13 quickly, just to extend my time a little bit.

14 Council member Kallos talked about a plan that he is  
15 considering in terms of reducing discrimination and I  
16 presented to you recently that I would like to know  
17 how we can structure an opportunity for all of the  
18 children throughout New York City who didn't get into  
19 Stuyvesant or Brooklyn Tech or Bronx high school of  
20 science, have an opportunity for them to audit  
21 without any kind of interaction with teachers,  
22 without any kind of responsibility for the teachers  
23 to do any kind of assessment or evaluation of their  
24 work, allow them to audit the instruction in the  
25 classrooms that's going to be presented in those high

2 performing specialized high schools. So, I have  
3 other questions and perhaps I will get to them, but I  
4 want to thank you for the work that you've done. I  
5 want to say that none of us knew we would be here and  
6 we look forward to making sure that the games that  
7 you have made thus far are able to be supported as we  
8 move forward and, again, remind my colleagues, when  
9 it is budget time, all of these things that we want  
10 to have done, it's on us to make sure that they are  
11 the budget. So, thank you. I look forward to your  
12 answers.

13 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Thank you, Council  
14 member Barron. So, we are not, in any way, shape, or  
15 form losing sight of what we need to do and that is  
16 educate every single child in the New York City  
17 Department of Education. 82 percent of our children  
18 are black, Latino, or Asian and a full 72 percent of  
19 our students meet the poverty definition. So, it is  
20 by no way, no means, no way of looking at our school  
21 system could we ever say that this was an affluent  
22 school system with affluent children that is a  
23 suburban school system. That is the reality of who  
24 we educate in our public schools in New York City.  
25 Yet, by every objective measure, when you look at who

2 have been the communities, who have been the children  
3 that have been disproportionately underserved, don't  
4 take my word. Look at the data. It's unequivocal  
5 and it's uncontestable that it has been those very  
6 children. Black, brown, Asian, poor that have been  
7 disproportionately underserved for decades in the New  
8 York City Department of Education and in New York  
9 City. So, I make no apologies for calling that out  
10 and fighting for those children and all children.  
11 And that being said, while we have had to deal with  
12 this pandemic, I would say we are dealing with three  
13 pandemics. We are dealing with a viral pandemic  
14 called COVID-19, which is the medical pandemic. But  
15 associated with COVID-19 is the economic pandemic  
16 that has laid waste to our budgets, our funding  
17 stream, our work opportunities, and it is highlighted  
18 and exacerbated the disproportionate impact of all of  
19 those communities that I just talked about. It is  
20 unequivocal and it is unquestionable the  
21 disproportionate impact that COVID-19 has had in  
22 those very communities that have historically been  
23 underserved and have historically been under  
24 resourced. It's unequivocal. You can't argue the  
25 fact. In the third pandemic is the racial injustice,

2 the social, racial injustice, the structural racism  
3 that exists in systems and structures not only across  
4 New York City, but in, unfortunately, across our  
5 nation and where there have been some folks who have  
6 taken issue that I have also spoken about that. I am  
7 proud to have spoken about that, as a man of color.  
8 As a person who has lived my life in this skin and  
9 has had experiences that others cannot tell me, you  
10 shouldn't talk about. So, what I say, in order to  
11 address those three pandemics that we are  
12 concomitantly challenged with, we cannot go back  
13 after COVID-19, after we have a vaccine, after we  
14 have suppressed this virus. We cannot go back to the  
15 normal that was pre-COVID-19. So, what that means is  
16 many of the things that the Council has been asking  
17 us about and really advocating for. Wraparound  
18 services--

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: That's right.

20 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: [inaudible  
21 03:54:55] service, social emotional learning, nurses  
22 in every building, social workers, culturally  
23 responsive and sustaining curricula so students see  
24 themselves in what they read and they write and they  
25 learn about. The devices so that we, once and for

2 all, bridge the technological divide so that every  
3 child has a device, but more importantly, every child  
4 has a connectivity for that device.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Uh-hm.

6 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: The ability to use  
7 the technology that we have and the wherewithal that  
8 we have developed to use technology to personalize  
9 instruction for students in a much more personalized  
10 way than we have ever been able to do. We can't stop  
11 that post-COVID-19. We have to build upon that. The  
12 new ways of coming together and bringing people from  
13 all across the city and having these conversations,  
14 we have to continue to build upon that. The old idea  
15 of having a snow day where you shut down the city,  
16 there is no snow day. It is just a pivot to remote  
17 learning. And think about how we can continue to  
18 keep that learning alive for our students and for our  
19 educators. The ability to collaborate in a very  
20 different way. All of those things are what the new  
21 normal must be when we exit this pandemic. But I  
22 will continue to say in continue to thank the  
23 Council. We need your support to continue to  
24 advocate with the state and the federal government to  
25 make sure that they step up to the plate because this

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2 doesn't happen for free and this doesn't happen with  
3 a viral, economic, and racial social justice  
4 pandemic. You don't take them on by cutting. You  
5 take them on by taking it on and filling the gaps  
6 where you need to fill the gaps. I hope I answered  
7 your question, but that's where our--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you. Thank  
9 you. And to your staff, be encouraged. I know it's  
10 quite challenging, but continue to do the work on  
11 behalf of our students and staff. Thank you so much.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Council  
13 member Barron. Next, we will hear from Council  
14 member Rose.

15 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you,  
17 Chancellor. Can you hear me?

18 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Yes, ma'am.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you,  
20 Chancellor. My concern is about the learning bridges  
21 programs and the learning labs. I'm really concerned  
22 that the quality of pedagogy is going to be lost. I  
23 don't want these programs to just be babysitting  
24 services, but I want them to be a continuum of  
25 instructional services and support. And, Chancellor,



2 you had stated earlier in your testimony that there  
3 were like 425 schools that did not have access to  
4 nurses. Can you tell me what the need for early  
5 childhood education and learning bridges nurses are  
6 and is testing being conducted at learning bridges  
7 programs and learning labs and-- I'm trying to get  
8 all my questions in. And with learning labs sites,  
9 they are paired with specific schools. How are these  
10 sites identified because there are some very high  
11 needs schools in my district and, as you know, these  
12 learning bridge programs are supposed to serve the  
13 essential workers and in my district, there are some  
14 very high needs schools, but there is a lack of  
15 learning bridges, learning labs slots. So, they are  
16 not accommodating the need of the essential workers  
17 in my concern about the learning labs is it's not  
18 only educational, but geographic. I have a school  
19 that's in my district, but the parents of the  
20 essential workers-- the children of the essential  
21 workers have been assigned to a location or a site in  
22 Council member Borelli's district which is a 20  
23 minute drive by car, but in our trip by bus. You  
24 know, how are these determinations made it and we  
25 need to look at making them, you know, more

2 accessible to the families. And then, my last  
3 comment is just that I echo Council member  
4 Salamanca's conversation about the abuse of access to  
5 equipment and services. And so, I just think in the  
6 access to digital equipment and instructional support  
7 and pedagogy. That is the paramount educational  
8 neglect and, you know, that is really a punishable  
9 offense and I think that it's really a shame that the  
10 communities that have been , you know, impacted by  
11 the lack of access and a lack of, you know,  
12 educational structure, that, you know, they are, once  
13 again, the communities that are-- you know, have the  
14 highest negative impact. So, I think you. If you  
15 could just address those questions. I know it was a  
16 lot, but thank you.

17 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Thank you, Council  
18 member. So, again, I will reiterate I couldn't agree  
19 with you more in terms of access to the equipment  
20 that students need to be able to participate in the  
21 educational process. Again, we are taking a period  
22 of approaches to identify where those gaps are. We  
23 have heard very, very powerful testimony from Council  
24 members about immigrant families and their reluctance  
25 to engage with any kind of survey order to fill out a

2 form. Or some don't even have the ability to access  
3 online forms. But that is why we have asked schools  
4 to help us identify students that need those devices.  
5 So, I'm going to encourage you, as well. Any  
6 specifics that you have, please--

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: I do.

8 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: and we will get  
9 right on that, as well. But we agree with you and I  
10 agree with you. For all the questions that you asked  
11 in terms of learning bridges and nurses for learning  
12 bridges and ECS's--

13 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

14 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: and how they're  
15 selected, I'm going ask Deputy Commissioner Susan  
16 Haskell and Deputy Chancellor Josh Wallack to tag  
17 team in answering those questions because they really  
18 have been the architects and working hard on that  
19 initiative for the city.

20 SUSAN HASKELL: Thank you, Chancellor.  
21 I'll get started and I will invite my colleague to  
22 jump in with anything that I am missing. Chair Rose,  
23 it's good to talk to you about this again. I  
24 appreciate the opportunity to connect with you about  
25 learning bridges last week. To start, we have tele-

2 nursing available for all learning bridges sites at  
3 this time available from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. we are  
4 looking to expand those hours. So, in the learning  
5 bridges program could utilize that to get some  
6 advisement. Maybe they have a symptomatic youth.  
7 Maybe they're not quite sure whether they should send  
8 somebody home or is this something we report into  
9 DYCD to get it through the situation room. So that  
10 resource is available now. We have given information  
11 about testing to all our providers and their staff  
12 including letter that will help them get expedited  
13 test results if they are staff coming into a learning  
14 bridges program just to make sure that the staff are  
15 as healthy as possible when we get started. We spoke  
16 a little bit about school matches. I think I mention  
17 broadly-- I don't have today's update, but we have  
18 about 500 schools matched. I know there are about 26  
19 learning bridges programs in Staten Island right now  
20 at this moment. When we spoke, you mentioned this  
21 case-- and I would like to follow up with your  
22 office. It didn't sound right to me about that  
23 travel distance and I think there's something not  
24 right about that, so I definitely want to follow up  
25 with that specific case and see if we can find a

2 solution to that one. How are schools being  
3 matched? I mean, I think it's important to say that,  
4 as my colleague, Josh, said earlier, we're focusing  
5 on students with the most need first. So, we've--  
6 and my colleague, Christ Caruso, is also here and had  
7 been helping up match to schools that have high need.  
8 We're looking at demand. In other words, where those  
9 applications are coming from into the DOE portal.  
10 We're taking into consideration geography,  
11 communities that have been hard hit by COVID and  
12 proximity to the learning lab itself, an issue you've  
13 just raised for one of your constituents. So, all of  
14 those things are being taken into consideration and I  
15 think, you know, on thing that's critical-- that's  
16 been critical about this school match to this point  
17 is that this is a new way of doing service for young  
18 people and each school has its own schedule. So, in  
19 order to get the service to the students who need it  
20 most on the most number of days, we really wanted to  
21 have programs aligning with the Scheel schedule. In  
22 other words, if I'm matched with this group of  
23 schools, I connect with the principal. I offer my  
24 service to balance the days when you are doing school  
25 in person. And so, our providers now are working

2 through those schedules with students. And before I  
3 pass it off to my college, I'll just say that DYCD is  
4 overseeing the contracts for k to eight and we're not  
5 building up schools. Our programs are not schools,  
6 but they are staffed with caring adults and  
7 opportunities for young people to have positive peer  
8 connections, do recreational activities when they're  
9 not engaged in their remote learning and we feel  
10 confident we can give young people support that goes  
11 beyond what they might be getting at home on those  
12 remote learning days and I-- somebody mention  
13 anecdotes. I've actually seen some photo and  
14 activities. Everything from yoga and origami and the  
15 cla-- you know, different student engaged in their  
16 classroom remote learning. So, from our perspective,  
17 that's the social emotional supportive environment  
18 we're trying to create for students in the k to  
19 eight. Josh?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: And, Commissioner,  
21 I'm really concerned about-- I understand the social  
22 emotional part, but these young people are in these  
23 learning labs all day in place of being at home maybe  
24 with a parent that would be assisting them with the  
25 instructional-- you know, their studies and whatever

2 they're learning remotely. I'm concerned that these  
3 young people at these learning labs are not going to  
4 have that level of support. They need the  
5 educational support, you know, during the day. So,  
6 and then the location of the-- you know, the schools  
7 that have been identified, you know, like early on in  
8 this process are not necessarily the schools that  
9 have the highest need. I have schools that have one  
10 or two in reading and math and that is the-- you  
11 know, the majority of the students in the school.  
12 And the absence of being in school, you know, and  
13 their parents being essential workers, I need for the  
14 learning labs to be more than just, you know, focused  
15 on the social emotional. But there needs to be  
16 someone that is focused on the educational.

17 SUSAN HASSELL: Agreed. And they are  
18 staffed with people who can help with everything from  
19 how do I work my technology today to how can I  
20 communicate with the school to learn more about how  
21 do support. And we would like to hear from you if  
22 you would like to talk about specific school  
23 recommendations.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Okay. Thank you.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next,  
3 we will hear from Council member Powers.

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Thank you. Thanks  
6 everybody. Very long hearing, but very informative  
7 and educational. No pun intended. Before get my  
8 real question in my questions that I had sort of  
9 planned to ask, wanted to just follow up with Council  
10 member Borelli's question related to the bus contract  
11 just because it is something that I think is relevant  
12 right now. And I wanted to ask-- Anybody is free to  
13 respond, but just to give us a sense of-- wanted to  
14 know whether that it gone through an RFP to select  
15 the food to purchase and, if not, can you give us  
16 information why that purchase wouldn't have had to go  
17 through an RFP?

18 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Thank you, Council  
19 member. I'm going to ask for Kevin Moran to be  
20 unmuted, please.

21 KEVIN MORAN: Yes. So, for this purchase,  
22 right now what happens is we constitute a board for a  
23 not-for-profit similar to how we arranged the  
24 custodial through the [inaudible 04:09:26] system and  
25 that the in the not-for-profit actually manages the



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2 work. There is no RFP for that. The matter is that  
3 Reliant currently is on emergency contract extension  
4 provided service. This is a tentative agreement. I  
5 mentioned that at the start when Council member  
6 Borelli talked about it. We announced the tentative  
7 agreement and I promise you more to come at a later  
8 date.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: And how do you know  
10 that you're getting the best value for that contract  
11 if you are not going out into the field to be--

12 KEVIN MORAN: Yeah. Yeah. We engaged with  
13 the national expert, a consultant in this regard and  
14 they are working in partnership with us as a group  
15 [inaudible 04:10:06]. It's public, obviously, now.  
16 And Transpar helps evaluate. They do this work  
17 nationally and they will help evaluate the deal and  
18 how it works.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Okay. I think  
20 Council member Borelli is coming back for second  
21 round. I will let him go back to some of those  
22 questions, but I want to just go back to remote  
23 learning. So, number of students-- and this is  
24 probably going to be the Chancellor or someone else.  
25 I just want to-- you know, there's new numbers, I

2 believe, students that have chosen fully remote  
3 learning which has increased dramatically from what I  
4 have is 26 percent before schools reopened to 52  
5 percent now, according to the latest survey results  
6 as of Friday, the ninth. So, week from today. Can  
7 you just tell us what you're thinking is and why  
8 those numbers have increased and do you attribute  
9 those increases in students choosing in fully remote  
10 over in school blended learning, primarily to be  
11 concerned about student health and fear of  
12 contracting COVID or do you attribute it to other  
13 reasons?

14 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Yeah. This is  
15 strictly just opinion here. We don't have any hard  
16 polling data or anything like that. What I can tell  
17 you is that there's just been a lot of talk just in  
18 general, not only in media, and the news channels.  
19 There is just-- you know, there is increase in case  
20 counts across the country. We've had our own zones  
21 in New York City where we have implemented some  
22 strategies and we have had to shut down some schools.  
23 I just think people are traumatized and people are  
24 nervous and parents are traumatized and parents are  
25 nervous. So, I think that once-- and I could tell

2 you that have been to schools in every borough and,  
3 without exception, once you are in a school and you  
4 see how clean the schools are, you see that there are  
5 structures and protocols and your temperatures check  
6 did you have to show your questionnaire in your  
7 answers and there is social distancing. The kids are  
8 wearing their masks. Once parents experience that in  
9 students experience that, the level of angst comes  
10 way down.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: But then, I guess,  
12 my question is why is those numbers going in the  
13 other direction if that's the case? If you were  
14 doing blended learning and felt like it was safe,  
15 everything-- all the protocols were in place that  
16 would keep you safe, wouldn't you expect that number  
17 to go in the other direction?

18 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Sure. But as I  
19 said in my comments, Council member, we are in a  
20 media-rich environment where people are being  
21 bombarded with all of these messages about case  
22 counts going up all over the country and people are  
23 nervous about that. So I think that-- you know, I  
24 don't have a crystal ball, but if we continue to do  
25 what we have done to control the community spread and

2 this starts to be controlled across the country and  
3 people have-- I will tell you, for the weeks that we  
4 have had in person learning now, we've had  
5 remarkably, remarkably safe learning environments.  
6 Maybe Dr. Varma can talk a little bit more about  
7 that. So, when you look at the data, it doesn't  
8 support the narrative that's out there about the  
9 exploding cases, in particular, in our schools. But  
10 there is still this environment that people are  
11 subjected to and I don't blame parents for being  
12 nervous.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Gotcha'. I'm just  
14 going to go to the next question. You know, I think  
15 there's more than that. You know, I understand that,  
16 maybe, there is a narrative problem here versus the  
17 reality of being in the schools.

18 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: It does seem like  
20 there's more to it. I'm just going to ask another  
21 question with the approval of the Chairs. I've been  
22 here for four hours. But I just wanted to ask a  
23 couple data points because on the same thing about  
24 safety and feeling safe, perception versus reality,  
25 but also what are folks feeling like right now, can

2 you just tell us just some data numbers on the number  
3 of teachers that have retired or resigned or applied  
4 for medical accommodations and received medical  
5 accommodations for this school year?

6 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Yeah. So, all  
7 started then I will ask Lauren Siciliano, our chief  
8 administrative officer to give you the details  
9 because she will have them. So, we take the official  
10 snapshot of retirements and separations on October  
11 31. So, we can't give you for this year, but I can  
12 anecdotally tell you that, what we're seeing in terms  
13 of the retirements and separation is not any more  
14 than what we have seen last year. In fact, it is  
15 lower than what we've seen last year. So, we expect  
16 that to hold true after we take our official snapshot  
17 on October 31. Lauren, if you are on muted, can you  
18 talk about accommodations? How many been granted?  
19 How many people apply? And was there another part of  
20 that--

21 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Applied and  
22 received.

23 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Applied and  
24 received. Lauren?

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2 LAUREN SICILIANO: Yes. Absolutely.  
3 Happy to. So, to date, approximately 38,000 staff  
4 applied for reasonable accommodations to work  
5 remotely due to higher risk of COVID and, of those,  
6 34,000 have been granted.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Can you give me the  
8 first number again? It was--

9 LAUREN SICILIANO: 38,000.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: 38. Okay.

11 LAUREN SICILIANO: And 34,000 for the  
12 number granted.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Okay. And I'm just  
14 going to ask one more question. Thank you, Lauren.  
15 This is back, I think, to the Chancellor. Do you  
16 expect to see that number-- I know I'm using your  
17 words-- crystal ball. But on the crystal ball, do  
18 you see or predict that the number in your next  
19 survey to be a higher proportion going back remote  
20 even if your thesis is true here which is that the  
21 narrative has sort of gotten out of control and it is  
22 hard to define? What is your expectation as you move  
23 forward in the school year about whether remote will  
24 become growing options for folks?

25

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2 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: I think that-- and  
3 we talk a lot about this. I think that as our  
4 community starts to see that this is a safe learning  
5 environment, as students start to communicate with  
6 their friends about what their experiences are in  
7 school, as the community spread and the peaks and  
8 valleys-- the peaks that we had to New York City are  
9 brought under control again, I think that we are  
10 going to see an increased desire for in person  
11 learning. That would be what my prediction is, if I  
12 had a crystal ball. That being said, we have no way  
13 of knowing.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Right. When do you  
15 know? Like how often are you getting numbers or like  
16 getting a learning survey that says here is how--  
17 with the numbers, the latest numbers, are? Like when  
18 will we know what the trend-- how often do you see  
19 the numbers that give you a sense of the trend?

20 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: So, we follow those  
21 numbers every single day we definitely look at them  
22 weekly. There will be a window that we've talked  
23 about all along with this design in which parents  
24 that have chosen a full remote experience will have  
25 the opportunity to opt in, specifically opt back in,

2 to an in person learning. That is probably going to  
3 happen within the next four weeks where that window  
4 we will be talking about it. And we will be doing  
5 lots of outreach to parents and. Communities to make  
6 sure that they understand that this is your  
7 opportunity to opt into the in person learning  
8 because we have to plan for it, we have to program  
9 for it. I think that will give us a very true  
10 picture of how many parents and students have chosen  
11 in person versus remote.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Okay. Thank you  
13 for the questions and answers and thank you, to both  
14 Chairs for putting up with a lot of our questions.  
15 So, thanks so much.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Council  
17 member Powers. For a very strict two minutes, we  
18 will go to Council member Levin and then Council  
19 member Borelli and then back to Chair Treyger.

20 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

21 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Excuse, Mr.  
22 Chairman, I've been here for four and a half hours  
23 and I need to go to the restroom and I thought there  
24 wasn't going to be a second round. I've been holding  
25 it. I just can't hold it anymore.



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2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Mr. Chancellor, I'd  
3 be happy to have a very quick break. Apparently  
4 there was a very pressing item that they felt was not  
5 answered in their first round of questions, but I  
6 would be happy to take a few minutes quick break just  
7 for--

8 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: I understand, Mr.  
9 Chairman. I appreciate it. Those were the ground  
10 rules. I have a number situations that I am trying  
11 to work through right now. We are in the midst of  
12 trying to reopen schools and I have spent four and  
13 half hours, with all respect, answering questions  
14 here to the best of our ability. I have a school  
15 system to keep open. I have a [inaudible 04:18:47].  
16 I asked that we stick to the ground rules and, in the  
17 immediate, I need to go to the restroom, so I'm going  
18 to do that, but I'm going to ask that we stick to the  
19 ground rules.

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Mr. Chancellor,  
21 feel free to go to the restroom, but I don't think  
22 the administration is in any position to lecture the  
23 Council about ground rules after a number of  
24 postponements and cancellations. But we will take a  
25

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2 five minute recess and we will restart with you ever  
3 will testify from the administration. Thank you.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Good afternoon,  
5 everyone that is still on. This is Malcolm,  
6 committee counsel to the Education Committee. Just  
7 bear with us one moment, please and we will beginning  
8 in the next few moments. So, just standby a moment,  
9 please.

10 Okay. Now that the break has concluded,  
11 is anyone from the Department of Education, Testing  
12 Trace Corps, DYCD, or DOHMH still on the zoom call?  
13 I see Dr. Varma has activated video. Anyone from the  
14 Department of Education? Dr. Daniel Stephen is on.  
15 John Shea. Susan Haskell. Is the Chancellor, the  
16 First Deputy Chancellor, or any of the other Deputy  
17 Chancellors still there? Okay. So, Chair Treyger,  
18 if you want, we can just quickly go back to those  
19 follow-ups and the representatives that are present  
20 hopefully will be able to answer it and then we can  
21 turn it back to you and then begin our public panel  
22 portion, if that works for you.

23 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Malcolm, I just  
24 want to confirm with you before we turn it over to my

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2 colleagues. Is it in fact the case that no one from  
3 the DOE is now on this zoom?

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: It is looking like  
5 we do not have-- Well, John Shea is on. Video  
6 activated. I'm sorry. Just looking through  
7 everyone. That is all I see at this time and he is  
8 joined by, again, Dr. Daniel, Dr. Varma, Dr. Long.  
9 That's all I see right now. Oh. The Chancellor just  
10 activated his video.

11 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Okay. If that's  
12 the case, we can go right to the Council members.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay. So, in quick  
14 order, short, strict two minutes. Council member  
15 Levine, Council member Borelli, and Council member  
16 Holden. Council member Levine, if we could unmute  
17 him, please. Levin. Sorry. Council member Levin.  
18 My apologies.

19 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay. Thank you  
21 very much, Chair. Thank you, Chancellor. Okay.  
22 I'll ask two quick questions. What is that, in the  
23 testing, the randomized testing that DOE did recently  
24 in the past week, it showed a positivity rate of one  
25 out of 1700, so, .06 percent. Obviously, our

2 positivity rate as a city is 1.5 percent right now in  
3 a seven day moving average. That's a huge  
4 discrepancy and I know that, you know, there's--  
5 we're not really sure what the data is showing in  
6 terms of children testing positive, but are we  
7 certain that that is how low that is? Because that  
8 seems awfully, awfully low.

9 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Thank you, Council  
10 member. So, Dr. Varma and Dr. Long?

11 DR. JAY VARMA: Sure. May go ahead and  
12 answer. So, just to clarify the numbers, the ones  
13 that we have as of this morning-- and, again, the  
14 changing because people are getting tested today--  
15 were based for the monthly random sample survey that  
16 we started on Friday of last week and then continued  
17 through yesterday, there have been-- there were  
18 10,676 that were tested. As of this morning, 7257  
19 had complete results back and, of those, 15 were  
20 positive which was 0.2 percent. So,  $15 \div 7257$  of the  
21 results that are available.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay.

23 DR. JAY VARMA: So, just to clarify the  
24 numbers. So, this is a little complicated. I'll try  
25 to keep it brief, but we have to remember that, when

2 you look at test positivity, the indicator that we  
3 follow normally, we, as epidemiologists to public  
4 health professionals know that that is not a-- you  
5 can't directly apply that to the total population of  
6 the community because, obviously, that includes  
7 people who sought testing and, by definition, you're  
8 going to get into that group of people who are at  
9 higher risk. So, as an indicator--

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

11 DR. JAY VARMA: We use that as an  
12 indicator to mark trends over time, but we wouldn't  
13 consider that what we call the prevalence. Its  
14 prevalence would be, you know, if you took 1000  
15 people randomly off the street, what percentage of  
16 them would be positive? We know that it is going to  
17 be much lower than that. So, the question you're  
18 asking is how do you know whether the prevalence of  
19 infection in the school community, which is what  
20 we're measuring-- what we call point prevalence---  
21 how that compares to the community prevalence. And  
22 the only way you can do that is through modeling  
23 estimates and that is because this is a very  
24 challenging disease in terms of who gets tested,  
25 along people are infectious for, etc. So we up teams

2 at NYU and Columbia were continuously, at least every  
3 week, updating estimates where they produce an  
4 estimate of what they think the number of infections  
5 in the city are and, based on the estimates from this  
6 past week-- and there's a range there because  
7 there's a lot of imperfections and assumptions that  
8 goes into it-- we would expect that the point  
9 prevalence-- so if you took a random sample of New  
10 York resolve the street, that it would be anywhere  
11 from, say, around 0.1 percent to 0.7 percent. So--

12 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right.

13 DR. JAY VARMA: less than one percent  
14 overall. So, the point estimate that we are getting  
15 from the school community is consistent with that and  
16 what it indicates to us is that school does not  
17 appear to be a risk factor to getting infected which  
18 is what we would've presumed, but it's consistent  
19 with that.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: But it doesn't--  
21 Not in a special risk factor, but it--

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Council member  
23 Levin, just we do have to move on, but if you want to  
24 get that point in for Dr. Varma, please.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay. I just  
3 wanted to say that it's-- it doesn't seem to be in a  
4 special risk factor, but what we're seeing in Europe  
5 right now, for example, is very concerning. Czech  
6 Republic is close down their schools and I don't know  
7 what is going to be happening in France or in  
8 Portugal or in Italy, but we are seeing that they are  
9 taking other measures of, you know, other types of  
10 closures. Restaurants and things like that. And,  
11 you know, I remain concerned that, if we are going to  
12 be in the situation like what they are in Europe  
13 right now, we should be starting to think about how  
14 we are going to react to communitywide transmission  
15 the like of what they are having in Europe right now.

16 DR. JAY VARMA: Yeah. I'll answer just  
17 very briefly and the answer is they are not doing  
18 anything like what we are doing. The model we have  
19 chosen is to model ourselves off the East Asian  
20 megacities. Singapore, Hong Kong, Korea and jump and  
21 react. Places in Europe, cities in Europe, Paris,  
22 Milan, you know, Madrid, London, they would love to  
23 have a three percent test positivity rate. We, in  
24 fact, look at it as a mark of danger and need to act.  
25 So, we have chosen a totally different approach. So,

2 yes. Europe is a concerning case study for what not  
3 to do.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay. Thank you.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Council  
6 member Levin. We will now go to Council member  
7 Borelli.

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Can we please  
10 unmute Council member Borelli?

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Thank you.

12 Sorry. I was trying to be cognizant of the  
13 Chancellor's time. I'm reading the state's public  
14 health law, section 2164 which sets up the ability  
15 for school districts to require medical procedures,  
16 usually vaccinations, for entry into public schools  
17 and in the following section, it sets up medical  
18 exemptions for them. But I'm not seeing where the  
19 city gets the authority to actually enforce the  
20 mandate of testing in schools. So, I'm just  
21 wondering where does the statutory authority come  
22 from to require COVID testing and, if the child  
23 doesn't have consent and he or she is mandated to do  
24 remote, does remote education meet the state  
25 constitutional requirement of sound, basic education?



2 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: So, Council member,  
3 I'm not an attorney and I don't know if any of our  
4 attorneys are on here, but we are in a pandemic. The  
5 governor has issued executive emergency orders. The  
6 city health commissioner has issued orders, as well.  
7 So, we do have not only a duty, but we have an  
8 obligation to maintain a safe environment for  
9 students and staff in our buildings. So, we would be  
10 happy to get a detailed legal answer for you on that.  
11 On that specific question in terms of the law.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Thank you.  
13 And do you agree that a remote learning, normal  
14 circumstances, would not meet the constitutional  
15 requirement of a sound, basic education?

16 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: I don't agree. I  
17 think, because of the pandemic, we are all are really  
18 choosing from a portfolio of imperfect solutions and  
19 remote learning is one of those imperfect solutions.  
20 But in order to keep students and staff safe and  
21 understanding that we can't have school in person  
22 learning the way it used to be pre-COVID-19 with the  
23 number students in the number of staff, that we have  
24 to make these medically advise decisions to keep

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2 people safe. And we are working very hard and it is  
3 all of our--

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Okay. Thank  
6 you.

7 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: to build on that  
8 remote learning experience so that students are  
9 getting access to the state standard curriculum.  
10 They are getting access to wraparound services and  
11 they are getting there legally mandated services, as  
12 well.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Do we know of  
14 any children who were tested without consent yet?

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: All right, Council  
16 member. This is the last thing. We need to move on.

17 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Thank you.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And then I was just  
19 instructed before I turned to Council member Holden,  
20 Council member Cornegy or Miller-- raise your hand  
21 now or forever hold your peace for two minutes second  
22 lightning round. Council member Holden. If we could  
23 please unmute Council member Holden.

24 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

25

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: And Chancellor,  
3 when will the grading policy be released?

4 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: That's imminent.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: All right. So, we  
6 should have it within the end of the month or--

7 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Absolutely before  
8 the end of the month.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Okay. And when are  
10 the students being tested for gifted and talented?

11 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Again, we are in  
12 the final stages of vetting that policy internally,  
13 as well, so that will come before the end of the  
14 month, as well.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: And just-- I might  
16 know the answer to this, but I would like to just  
17 share it. Why can't there be a camera in the  
18 classroom?

19 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Could you elaborate  
20 more on that?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: For instance, to  
22 tape-- to videotape or live a teacher in the  
23 classroom.

24 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Well, we know  
25 pedagogically that that is not best practice. You

2 know, camera stationary classroom while the teacher  
3 walks back-and-forth in and out of view of the  
4 camera, just pedagogically isn't a good, sound  
5 instructional practice. So, we do have teachers that  
6 are doing remote learning where they are on camera  
7 and projecting to a number of different students  
8 across the city. That is actually in agreement that  
9 we have with UFT on a program that we are doing, that  
10 the notion of a camera stationary in a classroom just  
11 isn't the best practice, so we haven't encouraged  
12 about it all.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Okay. And just one  
14 final question. Are all full-time teachers currently  
15 teaching full-time? If they are working, are some  
16 teachers not teaching the full workload?

17 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: No. All full-time  
18 teachers are teaching, whether it is in person or  
19 supporting a blended learning environment for  
20 teaching fully remote.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: But they are  
22 teaching full time?

23 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Yes.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Okay. Thank you.

25 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: All right.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council member  
3 Treyger, our one final hand that was up, our good  
4 friend, Council member Miller.

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And this is the  
7 final hand. And I--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Council member  
9 Treyger, no problems. I will forgo my questions for  
10 now and allow you to continue the hearing. So, thank  
11 you so much, Malcolm, and Mr. Chair.

12 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: Mr. Chairman, I  
13 would say to all of the Council members, if there  
14 were additional questions that we couldn't fit in, we  
15 would be happy to respond to them if you send them to  
16 our legal-- our legislative liaison. We would be  
17 happy to respond in writing to those questions.

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes, Mr.  
19 Chancellor, because I wanted just to get one more  
20 point and, as well. I heard before someone mentioned  
21 from your team about the number 38,000 staff that  
22 have applied for medical accommodations. Is that  
23 just teachers? Is there a breakdown of teachers,  
24 counselors, social workers? Is that everyone?

2 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: We can get you a  
3 breakdown, but that includes everyone and all of  
4 those categories that you just mentioned. We would  
5 be happy to get you a breakdown of the different  
6 categories.

7 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right. Because,  
8 Mr. Chancellor, the reason why I raise that is  
9 because, when you mentioned before that students want  
10 to go back to it in person experience, there are  
11 cases where the guidance counselors of opted for  
12 medical accommodations working remotely. Their cases  
13 were, as you have acknowledged, although we didn't  
14 have the number of staff shortage, where kids are not  
15 getting in-person instruction. They are getting,  
16 basically, someone just supervising them as they're  
17 getting study hall. That is a part of the issue here  
18 is that it's a hybrid model that requires more staff  
19 at a time when many staff are applying for medical  
20 accommodations and, understandably so. A final point  
21 to Kevin Moran and then we will move on. Kevin or  
22 John Shea, many of the classrooms are reliant on  
23 Windows been opened for ventilation. What happens in  
24 the cold weather? What is the plan for the cold when

2 windows will be shut to deal with the cold climate?

3 Thank you.

4 KEVIN MORAN: Yeah. We do have a cold-  
5 weather plan. As you may know, we filed up our  
6 boilers yesterday and then, starting our heating  
7 season. We anticipate-- I know you know, as a  
8 classroom teacher, you probably kept your classroom  
9 windows open as I did at the to exhaust. That is a  
10 great form of promoting air ventilation when the  
11 boilers are up and if we could overcompensate, if you  
12 will, for the low temperatures outside. If there's  
13 an issue where Windows cannot be opened, we will  
14 provide indoor air purifiers. We have an additional  
15 20,000 on order. We are looking forward to the  
16 opportunity to kind of understand this in real time  
17 [inaudible 04:55:53] ambient air temperatures  
18 outside. So, we do have a plan. It really focuses  
19 on the MER-13 filters for the HVAC and the covers at  
20 least 700 of our buildings. So, have our buildings  
21 are supported in that way. And then, moving towards,  
22 if you can't open just the top, just using an indoor  
23 air purifier for the classroom setting and we will  
24 provide that.

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But, Kevin, correct  
3 me if I'm wrong. There's a difference between, let's  
4 say, air purification and air ventilation. A number  
5 classrooms are relying on windows open for  
6 ventilation. What happens when it is freezing cold  
7 and they have to close the windows and the school--

8 KEVIN MORAN: Yeah. Those rooms also have  
9 fresh air intakes and actual exhaust stores. So, if  
10 there rooms in particular that we hear of, we will  
11 get to it. We are down to less than 200 rooms  
12 without a functioning exhaust system that would take  
13 any kind of, you know, impurities out of the air and  
14 exhausted outside. Once the class is occupied we  
15 will also continue to monitor for CO2. But I can get  
16 you something in writing, if helpful, but what our  
17 plan is in more integrated detail.

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Okay. All right.  
19 Thank you. And, with that, just this note for Mr.  
20 Chancellor and to others on the call. There is a lot  
21 of information that we did request that we need in  
22 terms of the number of staff shortages. And also,  
23 I'm not sure if we had a number with regards to  
24 attendance for the blended learning. Mr. Chancellor,  
25 a question I was asked in the letter that we sent



2 back in May, spring, and to summer, do we have with  
3 you the number kids that we have made no contact with  
4 whatsoever? Remote calls? Anything? Do you a  
5 number with you there?

6 CHANCELLOR CARRANZA: We will get that  
7 information along with the information you requested.  
8 We will get that.

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Okay. Thank you,  
10 Mr. Chancellor. And, with that, we will move on to  
11 the next panel.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: That concludes  
13 testimony from the administration. We will now turn  
14 to begin public testimony. I would like to remind  
15 Council members who have questions for a particular  
16 panelist to use the raise hand zoom function in zoom.  
17 You will be called on when that panel has completed  
18 its testimony and you will be called on in the order  
19 in which you raise your hand. I do want to remind  
20 everyone that we are-- the Sergeant-at-arms will be  
21 keeping a timer for two minutes for people's verbal  
22 testimony. Written testimony may be submitted for  
23 the record may be as long as you wish. So, for panel  
24 number one, we will be calling Michael Mulgrew,  
25 president of the UFT.

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

3 MICHAEL MULGREW: Good afternoon,  
4 everyone. I want to thank you all for having this  
5 hearing. Something that is very important and  
6 unprecedented, actually, across the country, which is  
7 a large school system that is open during a pandemic.  
8 We had to fight to close our schools in March and  
9 then, from April on, we started fighting or started  
10 actually putting together a plan in case we were able  
11 to open our schools. We knew everything was  
12 contingent upon the spread of the virus or,  
13 basically, what we now know as positivity rates. And  
14 if the city was able to get those down, that there  
15 would be a possibility that our school system would  
16 open. We knew it would be irresponsible to wait  
17 until we got to that point to then start to plan. We  
18 became quite frustrated in April, May, June when the  
19 city would not engage with us with a real plan  
20 because we knew this would be a difficult, if not one  
21 of the most immense challenges the school system ever  
22 faced. During July and August, the city did engage  
23 with us. The Department of Ed engaged with us and we  
24 started to break down all of the different facets  
25 that we felt needed to be addressed. The safety

2 procedures were first. What is the proper procedures  
3 inside of a building for getting students in and out?  
4 What PPE building us to have? What ventilation  
5 standards had to be sent and then had to check each  
6 and every classroom throughout the entire city. All  
7 of those things were done. And then it became about  
8 a safety plan which, I'm sure you all saw play out  
9 publicly where we were at odds with this  
10 administration. We had medical, independent medical  
11 experts, saying that we needed to have a medical  
12 monitoring program, mandated testing program.  
13 Thankfully, that kerfuffle landed us with having a  
14 very aggressive plan and one we are very proud of.  
15 So, now, it's about monitoring all of these things as  
16 we open. We still face major challenges in terms of  
17 staffing. We face major challenges in terms of  
18 childcare issues. Not just our members, but many  
19 people across the city are dealing with. And we are  
20 dealing with challenges in certain elements--

21 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

22 MICHAEL MULGREW: certain elements of the  
23 Department of Education who seem to keep sending out  
24 guidance that contradicts our agreement or  
25 contradicts their own guidance. So, we knew forward

2 watching everything at all times. Safety is first,  
3 as we have always said and we look forward to  
4 answering any of the questions that the Council has.  
5 But thank you for your support in all of the  
6 different, what we would say, not conflicts, just  
7 differences of opinion about how things should be  
8 done in our school system.

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, I want to just  
10 publicly acknowledge and recognize-- I think it's no  
11 secret how the teachers union, the UFT, and all the  
12 support staff, this is very personal to me and I just  
13 want the public to know that's watching, it is very  
14 courageous for a municipal union at this hour and in  
15 a financial crisis and pandemic and everything else  
16 going on, to be speaking up not just for their  
17 membership-- and this is really important for folks  
18 to understand. They're not just speaking up for the  
19 UFT. If anything, if you look at all of the  
20 advocacy, it is always centering the needs of kids  
21 and their families and prioritizing their safety and  
22 wellness and, as a teacher, that's what I was taught  
23 and I just want to just publicly acknowledge and  
24 thank every member of the UFT. Every member of our  
25 school staff that really-- our front-line workers

2 every single day, in every sense of the word.

3 President Mulgrew--

4 MICHAEL MULGREW: Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: You mentioned that  
6 the city administration engaged with you in July  
7 August as far as planning for the school year. Is  
8 that correct?

9 MICHAEL MULGREW: Well, the Department of  
10 Ed itself at engaged with us in June, but it was  
11 clear that they weren't given full throated authority  
12 at that moment. We really started to have full  
13 engagement right after the 4th of July holiday, which  
14 is why we had to fight to push back the opening of  
15 school not once, but twice because you normally start  
16 planning for the school year in April and that is  
17 without a virus and a pandemic on top of you.

18 Planning for opening a school in the middle of a  
19 pandemic is-- takes a lot more detail on a lot more  
20 preparation and that's why it was so frustrating that  
21 they waited until after the July 4th weekend where  
22 the administration at City Hall itself really started  
23 to engage.

24 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, President  
25 Mulgrew, I think you for that honesty and

2 transparency because, as a former teacher, I know  
3 that my school community would be planning for the  
4 next school year which starts in September by usually  
5 February/March. They would already start making  
6 plans about hiring decisions and positions they have  
7 to fill and waiting for enrollment numbers to come  
8 in. the fact that they waited, really, until  
9 July/August speaks volumes about why we're in the  
10 state that we're in and why there were a number of  
11 delays. President Mulgrew, have you been given any  
12 information about how severe and what-- as numbers--  
13 as far as staff shortages folks are experiencing in  
14 the school system? The Chancellor did not have that  
15 data here today with him. Have you heard anything on  
16 that?

17 MICHAEL MULGREW: We haven't gotten a  
18 final number of how many that have been hired.  
19 Basically, you are talking about full-time  
20 substitutes. You understand that. You know, if we  
21 can find a math, science, or special education  
22 teacher or any sort of bilingual teacher, those would  
23 also be hired permanently. But, from what I  
24 understand. We have not been given a final number.  
25 We know we have a record number of complaints,

2 operational complaints, which is a contractual  
3 provision we have. And the majority of them are  
4 based, specifically, off of staffing. The Department  
5 of Ed had issues. At one point, they had asked  
6 principles in an online forum to check if you were  
7 ready to open. And, of course, most principles which  
8 check I am ready to open because, the school had to  
9 open, they're going to say they are ready. Then when  
10 we pushed back the opening of schools, there was a  
11 lot of misinformation going around because  
12 superintendents were telling principles, well, you  
13 checked you were ready to open, therefore, you don't  
14 need staff. And that was not the question they  
15 asked. You know, you and I or anyone who's ever  
16 worked in a school, we figure out what has to be done  
17 when the school opens, but there was a real amount of  
18 confusion going on on that side of the Department of  
19 Education. The side that deals with hiring and the  
20 side that deals with the day-to-day instructional  
21 running of the DOE. And that's been probably what's  
22 caused us the most challenges said, really,  
23 situations that should've been avoided.

24 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you,  
25 President Mulgrew. The Chancellor and the city

2 administration finally shared some bits of data with  
3 us. I don't know if you heard. They shared with us  
4 that under 20 percent -- somewhere between 15 to 20  
5 percent of the surveys have been returned from those  
6 students who opted into blended, in person learning.  
7 Again, only 15 to 20 percent of hundreds of thousands  
8 of students for in person learning. Were you aware  
9 of that and does that concern you?

10 MICHAEL MULGREW: No. That can't be true  
11 because the mayor himself reported earlier that 74  
12 percent had opted in when he didn't have opt in. He  
13 only had opt out forms. He then counted any parent  
14 who didn't fill out a form as the 74 percent who were  
15 voting to keep-- to go to school in person. So, at  
16 that moment, the city already had 26 percent of the  
17 parents had already opted out, so that number can't  
18 be true.

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, I--

20 MICHAEL MULGREW: That's the mayor's press  
21 conference. Not me. And remember--

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah.

23 MICHAEL MULGREW: the other piece here is  
24 that just because a student doesn't fill out an opt  
25 out form, doesn't mean they haven't opted out. As we



2 now know that schools are open, that number is much  
3 higher.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, President  
5 Mulgrew, we are also kind of perplexed by what we are  
6 hearing today, but they shared with us on the record  
7 that they have received, and I quote, 72,000 consent  
8 forms to date, but we have close to 500,000 students  
9 who are still, as of this moment, still in the in  
10 person blended learning. That is under 20 percent  
11 of--

12 MICHAEL MULGREW: Listen. Go back to the  
13 mayor's press conference in June. The parents are  
14 siding with me, I think were his exact words. 74  
15 percent want to go back to school. So--

16 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right. And--

17 MICHAEL MULGREW: That means, at that  
18 moment, they had 26 percent saying they weren't going  
19 to go back.

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And, President  
21 Mulgrew, were you aware did you catch the exchange  
22 where there was confusion in the city's own language.  
23 They announced today-- the Chancellor said today we  
24 have a mandatory testing program, but the notice they  
25 sent to families states clearly that, while testing

2 is not mandatory, you know, then they said that your  
3 child may be shifted to a remote, not definitely  
4 will. There is a lot of confusion on the ground  
5 about what the testing-- are you aware of this  
6 confusion?

7           MICHAEL MULGREW: Very much so because I  
8 know that it's a mandated testing program. In fact,  
9 when we announce the program, the Mayor said it is a  
10 mandated testing program. That guidance they sent  
11 out-- and during my initial testimony, you heard me  
12 say that the biggest problem that we are facing right  
13 now was this constant contradicting guidance that the  
14 Department of Ed is sending out. And if you look at  
15 that notice that they sent out to the parents, it  
16 says-- the first line says, testing is not mandated.  
17 If you follow it all the way down about 12 paragraphs  
18 later, it kind of-- if you follow it, it says, oh,  
19 it is mandated. But our parents are not lawyers and  
20 they deserve to have very clear information sent to  
21 them. And it's getting really tiresome to have these  
22 lawyers and bureaucrats at the Department of Ed  
23 making and sending out all of this contradictory  
24 information. It's bad enough that they do it to the  
25 schools and the principles themselves. But what you

2 are doing it with parents, you are doing a major  
3 disservice. They are supposed to come out with a  
4 clarifying message that says it is mandated. It's in  
5 our state plan. In District 75 is not exempt, even  
6 though the Department of Ed, we have seen slides from  
7 deputy chancellors who have slide presentation saying  
8 District 75 is exempt. It's just not true. So, I  
9 know you asked them-- I did not-- I was not on for  
10 the entire exchange and I didn't hear that piece,  
11 but, yeah. It's really quite aggravating because it  
12 is hard enough what we're doing right now. This is  
13 an unprecedented challenge. You know, have you  
14 checked on any of the other large school systems in  
15 the United States and how they are doing with this?  
16 You wouldn't know because we're the only ones who are  
17 open. The last thing we need is the administration  
18 that is supposed to be supporting as in helping make  
19 it easier-- the last thing we need is for them  
20 actually making it more confusing.

21 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I couldn't agree  
22 with you more. We are in a pandemic. We are seeing  
23 cases increase across the city, not just in a few ZIP  
24 Codes, but across the city. In the last thing we  
25 need is confusion about what the testing plan

2 actually is for schools. I also wanted to make you  
3 aware, President Mulgrew, that they shared with us a  
4 number for the first time that, as of yesterday, they  
5 have received 77,000 requests for technology devices  
6 for children who still, to this day, do not have a  
7 device in Internet to conduct remote learning. And,  
8 again, regardless of what you opted for, remote  
9 learning is a part of the education program for the  
10 school year ahead and I asked why wasn't this plan to  
11 head months ago? You mentioned that they engaged you  
12 only in July. This was planning that they should  
13 have done months ago. Were you aware of this moment  
14 and, if you could speak about the impact of the lost  
15 instruction and the ability not to connect with kids.  
16 They will never get this time back.

17 MICHAEL MULGREW: Yeah. Now, we knew  
18 there was a problem. We didn't have a quantifiable  
19 number we had asked about at. And I want to be--  
20 you know, at the same time, I want to just constantly  
21 make sure that people know what is actually working  
22 and what is not working. Right? When it comes to  
23 PPE, when it comes to the ventilation stuff, when it  
24 comes to the cleaning stuff, that's working. That  
25 side of the Department of Education has done an

2 amazing job. I've never seen so many materials move  
3 so quickly. We had, basically, war rooms set up for  
4 schools that would constantly-- and anything we  
5 asked friend that side of the Department of Ed was  
6 working quite well. The ventilation piece, you heard  
7 them talking today. They are constantly on top of  
8 that. I want to publicly thank Rob Spier and Tishman  
9 Speier. They lent us some of their top ventilation  
10 engineers in the entire world and us. So now that we  
11 have a better understanding of how to make our  
12 building safe. And, hopefully, those are the people  
13 that, if we have 77,000 children without devices, we  
14 give that task to the people who have been doing this  
15 work because I do believe if we put it into the other  
16 side of the Department of Ed, the instructional HR  
17 side, that those children will be waiting even  
18 longer.

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: also, President  
20 Mulgrew, I just want to put on your radar question  
21 that I asked them that they didn't have an answer  
22 for, but I just want to make sure because I know you  
23 care deeply about this issue. Because our schools  
24 are experiencing severe staff shortages, I asked them  
25 about the percentage of students who are not

2 receiving all of their IEP mandates. This has a  
3 direct impact. We know about, you know, the issues  
4 of ICT classes and others. Have you received any  
5 information from staff or from folks that you speak  
6 with about how severe this issue is as far as not  
7 meeting IEP mandates and IEP obligations?

8           MICHAEL MULGREW: It's tough to quantify  
9 because you go from district to district and they are  
10 interpreting the regulations differently and what can  
11 and can't be done. So, I've instructed our staff to  
12 come up right now in, starting on Monday because we  
13 thought we had the majority of this stuff worked out  
14 in August and September. But, without any clear  
15 leadership in terms of how these things are supposed  
16 to actually get implemented and when we go back to--  
17 we can't have the wild wild West show in the middle  
18 of a pandemic that everyone can do whatever they  
19 think is right because that is when people get hurt  
20 and children don't get the services that they need.  
21 So, we know it's a problem and I think we need to  
22 just give very clear directions at all times what a  
23 school should be doing. What is the proper ICT  
24 model? Does the child have to have access to both  
25 the special education and general education teacher

2 or a subject specific teacher? The answer is, yes  
3 because that is the federal definition of an ICT  
4 model. So, those types of things should not be open  
5 for interpretation. I mean, these things are pretty  
6 clear on how they are supposed to work. But, again,  
7 throughout the Department of Education, we have  
8 different interpretations. Some of them are  
9 blatantly breaking a child's rights. And those  
10 things are being sent because we are getting  
11 complaints. I don't have the exact number. But were  
12 getting many complaints. I know we are getting more  
13 complaints that we would normally have at this time  
14 of the year and those things are then, if they are  
15 not getting rectified, they are going to go to the  
16 state.

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: and, President  
18 Mulgrew, I don't know if you caught the exchange with  
19 me and Kevin Moran were asked about those classrooms.  
20 And I worked in an old school building, as well.

21 MICHAEL MULGREW: Yeah.

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: There are  
23 classrooms that boldly pass the ventilation test only  
24 because they have windows--

25 MICHAEL MULGREW: Correct.

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: and that they could  
3 open. As we move into the colder weather where it's  
4 too cold to keep the windows open, does it concern  
5 you what ventilation old buildings will have when  
6 they have to close the windows?

7 MICHAEL MULGREW: Yes. And though winter  
8 plan is something we've been working on. So, take an  
9 older school just generally. One that was having  
10 problems with ventilation. The process that we would  
11 go to that we have gone through is first we went and  
12 fixed all of the-- what's called the fresh air  
13 exchange dampers. You have to go up into the  
14 mechanical rooms on the top of school buildings.  
15 Many of them were not functioning. So, first it's  
16 fixed all of them and what we do is get a balance of  
17 fresh air inside of the system and we are not  
18 recycling air. That makes the school safe at that  
19 moment. But then can you keep all that fresh air  
20 coming in constantly in the winter? No. Because, if  
21 you do that, then the building is going to freeze.  
22 So, you one of two choices. The two choices are  
23 either you replace the existing filter system with a  
24 MER-13 filter system and, in many cases, are dampers  
25 don't actually have-- you can't just put MER-13



2 filters in them. You have to rip out the existing  
3 filter system, fabricate a new holding system, and  
4 then put MER-13 in that way or, what you would do is  
5 you put a heating element, a heating element on the  
6 fresh air as it's coming in. The same is going to be  
7 at the classroom level. So, either you are going to  
8 have to turn the heat up in the building which means,  
9 in the rooms that don't have a window, they are going  
10 to become hot, but the rooms that you have to keep  
11 the windows open, they will be okay. Or you do what  
12 Kevin just said and you start bringing in air  
13 filtration systems that catch COVID and you have an  
14 air filtration system working that way or you have to  
15 figure out a way to get an air exhaust exchange  
16 system. So, but were down to a smaller number of  
17 rooms and we are coming up with these winter plans  
18 now. I am much more confident on this side in terms  
19 of these issues because the people who have been  
20 solving them have actually done a really good job and  
21 we have verified that with independent experts.

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: President Mulgrew.  
23 And just the last thing I'll say to point out to my  
24 colleague, to Chair Levine, we are greatly concerned  
25 about the increase in cases around the city and--

2 MICHAEL MULGREW: Uh-hm.

3 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I think that,  
4 regardless of the model, remote learning is a part of  
5 the program and I think that the DOE and the city  
6 need to do a lot more to invest and make sure that  
7 every child from every ZIP Code gets the technology  
8 and Internet which they deserve--

9 MICHAEL MULGREW: Yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: and to provide the  
11 adequate chaining to your membership, to educators on  
12 how to do it. Because some of our schools, as you  
13 know, don't even have adequate bandwidth where there  
14 are teachers who I speak with who, literally, have to  
15 walk around the hallway--

16 MICHAEL MULGREW: Uh-hm.

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: to catch a signal  
18 in order to connect with their students.

19 MICHAEL MULGREW: Yeah.

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: it is unacceptable.  
21 So, going to keep pushing the point of better support  
22 for the remote learning program because, as the  
23 Chancellor even acknowledged, if this gets worse as  
24 far as the virus cases, the system may need to pivot  
25 further.

2 MICHAEL MULGREW: Yeah.

3 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But, remote  
4 learning is just not adequate right now as far as the  
5 infrastructure in place for kids. Thank you,  
6 President--

7 MICHAEL MULGREW: No. The--

8 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I'm sorry. Go  
9 ahead. Yes.

10 MICHAEL MULGREW: No. The remote  
11 learning-- Look. The educational platforms, each  
12 classroom having its own educational platform, we  
13 have, long way since last March, but the actual  
14 broadband capability is the thing that keeps me up at  
15 night more than anything else.

16 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you,  
17 President Mulgrew. Then I will turn to my Chair Mark  
18 Levine.

19 MICHAEL MULGREW: Thanks, Chair.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Thank you so much,  
21 Chair Trager and President Mulgrew. It's great to  
22 see you. I'm just so grateful--

23 MICHAEL MULGREW: Nice to see you.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: to your members and  
25 what they have done over the last eight months. One

2 of the most difficult periods in public education,  
3 probably in the history of the city and your members  
4 have been tireless and stoic and they put safety  
5 first for themselves and the children and families--

6 MICHAEL MULGREW: Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: that they serve and  
8 for you in their efforts. I wanted to ask you about  
9 learning bridge because this is an important resource  
10 for any family that has an essential worker or, for  
11 another reason, each childcare and teachers are  
12 essential workers and many of your members are  
13 required to be at school buildings starting very  
14 early in the morning and so they need childcare which  
15 is consistent with that schedule and it's not clear  
16 to me that learning bridge is meeting that scheduling  
17 need. What is your view of that?

18 MICHAEL MULGREW: It's not. It's very  
19 simple. It's not meeting their needs because the  
20 learning bridges program open after schools open.  
21 So, how is the teacher supposed to drop their child  
22 off and be at school on time? And the Department of  
23 Education and City Hall knows that this is the real  
24 problem. There's supposedly giving us an answer  
25 either today or Monday, but it's been two weeks. But

2 who designed a program for essential workers that  
3 access to the program starts after they already have  
4 to be at work? Just think about the stupidity of  
5 this. We designed a program for essential workers  
6 that you can't get your child in their until after  
7 you are already at work and then the issue becomes  
8 does the teacher drop their child off at all learning  
9 bridge that is closest to the school where they work  
10 or do they half to drop it off close to the school  
11 where the child goes? And they will say, well, we're  
12 trying to do the safety, were trying to keep a pod,  
13 but we know the integrity of that it is not real at  
14 all anywhere. So, if the program is designed for  
15 essential workers childcare needs, it needs to be  
16 based off of what the essential worker needs, not  
17 whoever got the contract to run the program needs.  
18 So, I am very happy that you brought this up because  
19 it is something that is getting me quite angry.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: With good reason.  
21 It's really inexplicable. I have to imagine that  
22 teachers may be one of the single largest elements of  
23 the workforce that need childcare now. I would have  
24 to imagine that you have thousands of teachers who  
25 have young children in the program is not meeting its

2 stated mission if the hours are not consistent with  
3 the needs of essential workers.

4 MICHAEL MULGREW: No. And I understand  
5 people who travel from outside of the city. And  
6 those are more nuanced situations, but just the basic  
7 fact that so many teachers-- and they said, look,  
8 were working on it. I'm done working on it. There  
9 should be no need to work on this. This program  
10 should meet the needs of the workers it is supposed  
11 to serve. Not meet the needs of the people who got  
12 contracts to run it. And if the city put out  
13 contracts and accepted them with those hours of work,  
14 then somebody should be held accountable for doing  
15 something really stupid.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: And are they now  
17 claiming that the contracts lock the men and that  
18 they can't fix this?

19 MICHAEL MULGREW: That is what-- we are  
20 waiting for a final answer, but that was the  
21 information that first was given to us, my folks that  
22 were working on this.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: That is  
24 unacceptable. We need to do better than that. We

2 need a solution. This is really indefensible and we  
3 are going to fight with you to fix it.

4 MICHAEL MULGREW: I appreciate that.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: I wanted to ask you  
6 about the policy of allowing people to stay home if  
7 they don't feel well. This is actually one of the  
8 top guidelines of the Department of Health in  
9 general, together with wearing a mask and washing  
10 your hands. They say to stay home if you're not  
11 feeling well. It's very important. That, of course,  
12 has to apply to teachers.

13 MICHAEL MULGREW: Uh-hm.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Do you have good  
15 protocols in place that allow a teacher, if they are  
16 not feeling well, the stay home without too many  
17 bureaucratic hoops? With allowances for adequate  
18 sick time? Really, it's not only a matter of the  
19 health of the teacher, but really you want to protect  
20 the whole community by allowing people to stay home  
21 when needed.

22 MICHAEL MULGREW: So, what we have in  
23 place now is that if someone is not feeling well,  
24 they are being-- you know, the guidance is do not  
25 come in. No one will be harmed for taking additional

2 sick time. If you have to stay home because of a  
3 COVID issue, the specific COVID issue, then that is  
4 not charged against your sick pay. But, if you are  
5 just not feeling well-- we did this last year in the  
6 end of February, beginning of March where we wanted  
7 to-- when the Department of Health of New York City  
8 put out the guidance that said stay home if you are  
9 not feeling well. The MLC actually went to the city  
10 and said, you can't now punish people for following  
11 your guidance. In the city agreed to that.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Okay. Good. Keep  
13 us posted because we don't want anyone to be  
14 penalized for doing the right thing.

15 MICHAEL MULGREW: I'm sure we will have a  
16 situation where it happens.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: And the last thing  
18 I just wanted to bring up with you is the question  
19 about individual neighborhoods which are seeing  
20 spikes in cases. I know you have been dealing with  
21 this for months, but, you know, unfortunately, we  
22 don't have good real-time data neighborhood by  
23 neighborhood on things like positivity rates and it's  
24 difficult to analyze, but it's pretty clear that  
25 there are communities outside of the known hotspots



2 where cases are rising. For example, Tottenville on  
3 Staten Island, there's some communities in the Bronx  
4 where probably the positivity rates are at or over  
5 three percent. What is your understanding of the  
6 protocols for determining if we need additional  
7 neighborhood schools shut down because of localized  
8 increase in cases?

9           MICHAEL MULGREW: Well, we were in our  
10 agreement with the city. And, remember, we were the  
11 only school district in the state that had a mandated  
12 testing program. But we also included the ZIP Code  
13 provision that, if a ZIP Code went above a three  
14 percent positivity rate for a period of days, then  
15 the schools inside of that ZIP Code had to  
16 immediately be tested. I was not happening when  
17 school began and we gave them, basically, five days  
18 to start to figure this out and we were preparing to  
19 go to court when the mayor announced that you was  
20 putting those schools into remote setting at that  
21 moment. Now, since then, you all know that the  
22 governor is committed and now is, basically, put  
23 together a mandated testing program for any schools  
24 in red or orange zones throughout the state and that  
25 is now in place. So, it's monitoring of both the

2 city and the state data. It doesn't match in terms  
3 of timelines. This is one of the frustrations we  
4 have. That city data and state that always doesn't  
5 match, but it seems that it is showing the correct  
6 trends, so, you know, we have this in place and they  
7 are constantly looking at this. This is our biggest  
8 challenge. All the rest of the stuff, safety and  
9 everything else, we know that the country is now in  
10 another wave. Can New York City and New York State  
11 do enough to stop the way from hitting us? That's  
12 really the question we have. And it's going to  
13 require this diligence in terms of schools have to  
14 get use to you could be a person instruction. You  
15 might be remote for the next two or three weeks and  
16 then you will go back to in person instruction. It's  
17 not an ideal situation, but that's the world in which  
18 we live. If the city does get overwhelmed, then the  
19 school system is just going to go back to fully  
20 remote and it won't open, probably, for the rest of  
21 the year. What we are trying to do, though, is, you  
22 know, when the medical experts we dealt with  
23 throughout the summer, they understood the importance  
24 of opening up a school system. They said it's really  
25 important. But, at the same time, the

2 epidemiologists who we were working with said, we  
3 will back you up to open your schools, but from our  
4 and what we will have to do, we are petrified of your  
5 schools being open because the schools have shown in  
6 different places, right here in New York State, and  
7 in different countries and in different parts of this  
8 country, schools have at times been the bridge to a  
9 greater spread in the community. So, that diligence  
10 of watching and testing the schools is very important  
11 right now. But the city in the state are looking at  
12 this data constantly. You are going to see those red  
13 and orange zones move. You are just going to see it  
14 move. Hopefully, they shrink and that will be a  
15 clear sign that we are doing our work correctly. But  
16 it comes down to the community habits and you just  
17 have to do the right thing here. And, you know,  
18 right now our positivity rate in the schools is low.  
19 We've started our testing of all the schools, but  
20 it's slow. I'm one of the reasons it is low is  
21 because all of the schools in the red and orange  
22 zones aren't being tested because they're not open.  
23 There only in remote.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Right.

2 MICHAEL MULGREW: So, we are testing  
3 schools in yellow and a noncollege zones because  
4 those are the only schools that are in person right  
5 now. So, that's another reason why our testing is  
6 low. But it's a good thing. When we have low  
7 testing, low positivity, that's a good thing. We  
8 should all smile.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: That is true. But,  
10 look, and a city this big, the city wise numbers,  
11 while helpful, are not telling us the full story.  
12 We've just seen--

13 MICHAEL MULGREW: Correct.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: huge variation from  
15 neighborhood of neighborhood. And we do need local  
16 data. We need it in real time and we're not  
17 currently getting at, so we are pushing very hard for  
18 a ZIP Code by ZIP Code daily update on things like  
19 positivity rates because we have to manage the  
20 hotspots and see when they are getting better, yes,  
21 but also get early warnings when problems are  
22 emerging in other areas.

23 MICHAEL MULGREW: The best number to look  
24 at his hospitalizations right now until they  
25 straighten us out. And they are on the uptick.

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2 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Unfortunately, they  
3 are.

4 MICHAEL MULGREW: Yep.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: They are, indeed.

6 Well, we will be watching. Thank you, President  
7 Mulgrew--

8 MICHAEL MULGREW: Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: for speaking and  
10 for all your work. I think we will ask the committee  
11 counsel now to start the queue of our colleagues for  
12 questions.

13 MICHAEL MULGREW: He's got to unmute  
14 himself.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yeah. The screen  
16 froze for a second there. We will call in Council  
17 member Kallos.

18 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: 90 percent of life  
20 is showing up, so I just want to thank you, President  
21 Mulgrew, for showing up for our students, parents,  
22 and teachers in September when the Chancellor  
23 refused.

24 MICHAEL MULGREW: Thank you.

25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Now, President

3 Mulgrew, you in the CSA president [inaudible  
4 05:30:59] actually pledged that you would not open a  
5 school unless it was safe and would go to court if  
6 you had to at that hearing. And that was the  
7 certainty that parents, students, and staff and I  
8 needed to hear to rest assured and, frankly, these  
9 assurances should have come from the mayor to begin  
10 with. I also want to thank you for your guidance as  
11 we reached out, as I reached out and asked them to  
12 set up remote learning centers and then, when they  
13 would only have 100,000, asking for more and then  
14 blasting them when they said they were only going to  
15 have 30,000. I am still disappointed that we are  
16 still at the 30,000 mark. As the contracts Chair to  
17 the extent that you brought up that these contracts  
18 are deeply flawed, I would be honored to work with  
19 you and the Education Chair to hold a hearing on  
20 these learning bridges contracts. And I will just  
21 ask, I guess, when-- I was hoping learning bridges  
22 would model more off the universal pre-k expansion  
23 that we were able to do--

24 MICHAEL MULGREW: Uh-hm.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: actually, know  
3 where the locations were, that there would be some  
4 sites that were community-based and others that are  
5 school-based, operated by DOE. At this point, I'm in  
6 a situation where I have been given one learning  
7 bridges location and 60 seats for 4000 students and,  
8 I think, nine schools. Is it something where DOE  
9 could-- and we found tons of empty commercial spaces  
10 for DOE, but they won't even look at them. Is that  
11 something where the city should be or could be  
12 stepping in to operate any of these learning bridges?

13 MICHAEL MULGREW: When we made a big push  
14 in July saying we don't know if all the schools are  
15 opening or not, at that point, we weren't sure. We  
16 were working towards it. We did run a campaign with  
17 parents for a period of weeks where we said, no  
18 matter what happens, the city is going to have a  
19 child care crisis. Okay? The Department of Ed does  
20 not operate learning bridges. Okay?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Yep.

22 MICHAEL MULGREW: It's some coordination--  
23 Right. And I really wanted it steered clear from the  
24 Department of Ed because the Department of Ed has  
25 enough on its plate and they are having a hard enough

2 time even dealing with what is on their plate in  
3 terms of the instructional side and communications.  
4 But 30,000 is not enough.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: You took the words  
6 right out of my mouth. So, to the extent that it is  
7 in DYCD, I will reach out to Chair Rose on that and I  
8 know she's been a member of this hearing. I had an  
9 additional question which was what has the  
10 administration done about the virtual content  
11 specialists to support remote learning?

12 MICHAEL MULGREW: We agreed upon a  
13 posting. We agreed upon that position in August and  
14 we still don't have a single one.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Not one?

16 MICHAEL MULGREW: and it's actually one of  
17 the key positions that we agreed to. They actually  
18 came to us and outlined it and we saw that we were  
19 thinking about the same type of thing. We said, yes.  
20 This will absolutely alleviate a lot of the staffing-  
21 - it won't solve the staffing issue, but it would be  
22 helpful. We agreed to that posting and that position  
23 in late August and we still don't have one.

24

25



2 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: What can we do to  
3 bring these people in? Is it for lack of knowledge  
4 that it exists?

5 MICHAEL MULGREW: It's there now, well, we  
6 don't know of what we agreed to is exactly what we  
7 want. Maybe we shouldn't give them-- they teach  
8 four periods a day and then, for one. Today they are  
9 doing this work, plus they receive a stipend. That  
10 is what was in the posting. Now there might be costs  
11 to the staffing problem. We can't give them this  
12 period. We agreed to this a long time ago. What are  
13 you talking about? And I'm like, this one.

14 Actually, will alleviate the need for multiple  
15 teachers. So, I don't know. They can't get out of  
16 their own way. They don't know what they want or, in  
17 terms of the instructional side of the Department of  
18 Education, they can't get out of their own way. They  
19 don't have any clue what they want, what they agreed  
20 to, how to make it work, or how to implement it.

21 That is why it is so important to understand the  
22 schools are making this work. It's the schools  
23 making this work. Just like remote, it was the  
24 schools. The schools are making this work. The sad  
25 part is we have this major, one of the largest--

2 it's probably one of the largest educational  
3 bureaucracies in the country and they don't help at  
4 all they do is actually cause problems. So, they  
5 asked for a position. We agreed. We did a posting  
6 in August. We still don't have a single one. And we  
7 know we have a staffing problem and this position was  
8 specifically to alleviate some of the staffing  
9 issues.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: So, have my word to  
11 get that posting out there and do follow up with DOE  
12 to find out what is going on.

13 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: but thank you,  
15 President Mulgrew.

16 MICHAEL MULGREW: Thank you.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Are there any other  
18 Council members that have questions, please use the  
19 raise hand function in zoom now.

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I just want to and  
21 by saying, Malcolm, thank you to the President  
22 Mulgrew. After this hearing, but I wanted to bring  
23 to your attention from some folks in my school  
24 community that they saw state troopers coming around  
25 our neighborhoods in southern Brooklyn to see if the

2 city is, in fact, closing schools in the red and  
3 orange zones. Are you aware of that?

4 MICHAEL MULGREW: I am not aware of that  
5 specifically. That individual thing, but I am aware  
6 that the state is making sure that, not just New York  
7 City, but any municipality in the state is actually  
8 doing what it is supposed to be doing. It's not just  
9 about the schools. It's also about making sure that  
10 communities who are supposed to have a higher degree  
11 of lockdown are doing what they are supposed to be  
12 doing. And it is up to the individual municipal  
13 government to make sure that they are doing their job  
14 in enforcement. So, yes. I am aware that the state  
15 is looking at all of that, but, in terms of this, it  
16 just seems like they are just trying to make sure  
17 that everyone-- calling everyone accountable. In  
18 this challenge of trying to keep us out of the second  
19 wave is huge. And this is--

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right.

21 MICHAEL MULGREW: You could have a panel  
22 of the top epidemiologists in the United States or  
23 across the globe and all these different approaches  
24 in different parts of the world, if you can't monitor  
25 where the virus is and shut it down quickly, you

2 cannot be successful. Take the politics and  
3 everything else out of all of this. You need to know  
4 if the virus-- the virus is here. It's you. So,  
5 you have to constantly test randomly. What we're  
6 doing in the schools. Just imagine that .19 or .2  
7 that they called it, that we found in our random  
8 testing. Those were students and adults that had no  
9 clue whatsoever that they were COVID positive. They  
10 had no understanding that they were COVID positive.  
11 Thankfully, at this point, in terms of the random  
12 testing, we haven't had the double case and a school.  
13 That means the PPE, the procedures and everything are  
14 working because it's not spreading. But that is the  
15 diligence that it takes and that is the discipline  
16 that we are going to need to stay out of this. So,  
17 when people play politics with the virus and the  
18 procedures, it really gets me quite angry because I  
19 don't want our school system shut down again. I  
20 don't want our city shut down again. And I don't  
21 want to be talking about more and more deaths ever  
22 again.

23 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: No. I appreciate  
24 it, President Mulgrew and I just want to remind the  
25 public, as we let you go, that, as of June-- it

2 could be more, but as of June, close to 80 or so DOE  
3 employees that we knew of passed away because of the  
4 virus and that doesn't include other school-based  
5 staff that work for different--

6 MICHAEL MULGREW: Yeah.

7 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: you know, agencies.  
8 Students who lost loved ones. The number could have  
9 increased. So, you know, that is an important part  
10 here. That this is at a time when the mayor said to  
11 score people back in March, go back to school, when  
12 many people got sick and some died. And trust  
13 remains broken in the city of New York and beyond.  
14 And I just wanted to publicly again, thank you for  
15 being very courageous to testify, to continue to be  
16 very vocal on these issues for not just schools and  
17 school staff, but really for all of our  
18 neighborhoods. I appreciate, President Mulgrew.

19 MICHAEL MULGREW: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: and thank you for  
21 your time today.

22 MICHAEL MULGREW: Thank you. Be well,  
23 everyone, and be safe.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. The  
25 next panel we will call up is Tajh Sutton, Randy

2 Levine, Andrea Ortiz, Hallie Yee, Lisa Caswell, and  
3 Leonie Haimson. And I will remind everyone that we  
4 are putting everyone on a two-minute clock. We will  
5 start with Tajh Sutton.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

7 TAJH SUTTON: Thank you so much. Man,  
8 okay. Some things I wanted to address, particularly  
9 in President Mulgrew's statement is that I think we  
10 have a misconception of what we have planned and what  
11 we would hope for these plans and what is actually  
12 happening on the ground. I hear a lot of  
13 congratulations on our ventilation, but we know for a  
14 fact that the capital plan that was necessary to  
15 update our schools and were able to make them safe  
16 for students, not just in particular ZIP Codes or at  
17 schools with really, really vocal and active PTAs  
18 because the parents there have the wealth and the  
19 time and the support to advocate for these things,  
20 right? But I'm talking about every school in New  
21 York City having what it needs with regards to  
22 ventilation, staffing, and funding. We know that  
23 that is not the case. But to hear our leaders  
24 continue to act as if we are in a position where  
25 schools can and should be open 100 percent is

2 outrageous in the month of October. I want to  
3 highlight that. I want to highlight the fact that  
4 parents, students, and teachers have been organizing  
5 all summer around the issues that we continue to see  
6 because leadership is not listening and, while I  
7 share your frustration with our chancellor, we also  
8 need to be very clear that the ball was dropped by  
9 our mayor, our governor, and UFT President Michael  
10 Mulgrew, as well. Parents are asking for very small,  
11 very simple things like language access and  
12 technology access, like universal broadband, like  
13 actually making our curriculum culturally responsive  
14 rather than using the words and then allowing our  
15 children to show up remotely and be police for not  
16 having their cameras on or being in their pajamas  
17 because they are tired even though they still showed  
18 up. And so, these are the kinds of conversations we  
19 can't even have because we are so worried about  
20 things like whether or not we have enough custodians  
21 to clean our schools and whether or not our staff is  
22 supported in the ways that they need. Right? We are  
23 the PD for our teachers. Who is supporting the  
24 teachers and parents emotionally? Are we even having  
25 that conversation? What is the difference between

2 discussing SEL and actually providing it and I can  
3 tell you right now, at the local level, many schools,  
4 despite their best efforts, are failing. It's not  
5 for lack of trying--

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

7 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: If you want to wrap  
8 up your final point, please.

9 TAJH SUTTON: Thank you, Councilman  
10 Treyger. I appreciate it. I really just wanted to  
11 highlight the fact that so many families are talking--  
12 - the conversation you guys are having here, we've  
13 been having, too. And it is really-- and to all of  
14 that, we are at the center with you. We cannot  
15 create anything as a city if we continue to have  
16 leadership at the top and in this very unique space  
17 and everyone else, including and especially our most  
18 impacted families, somewhere on the sidelines waiting  
19 for guidance. We don't want to wait for guidance.  
20 We want to help develop the guidance because that is  
21 the way that we know that our families who don't  
22 speak English, who don't have Internet access, who  
23 live in homeless shelters, or are, literally, on the  
24 street and trying to log into the school at a Burger  
25 King parking lot, right? What are the ways that we



2 reach them effectively? And we are not-- we  
3 understand the circumstances because we are also  
4 living them and I think sometimes that gets  
5 forgotten. Parent leaders are still just regular  
6 parents, too. A lot of our teachers are also parents  
7 and that is getting lost in this narrative where the  
8 students and the parents and the teachers are being  
9 pitted against one another. But really what we want  
10 is to be included in the integral decision-making  
11 that is going to move our city forward and I will  
12 continue to stress for Councilman Treyger, for the  
13 Public Advocate, and what parent leaders on community  
14 education councils have been saying all summer and  
15 what we have been asking for is a delayed and faced  
16 reopening. We fought really hard and we got two  
17 small delays and that is wonderful, but the reason we  
18 are seeing families opt back out of the blended model  
19 and into the remote model is because of all the  
20 failures that we already outlined. [Inaudible  
21 05:43:29] what happened and ask for your support in  
22 addressing. So, I think it is prudent upon all of us  
23 not to just have a monthly call where we listen the  
24 parents, you know-- air quotes on listen. Right?  
25 We let parents talk. Let me say that correctly. But

2 don't actually listen. We know exactly what we need  
3 and what our families need and we really need to be  
4 engaged in a way that our expertise is valued and  
5 then implemented so that we can all create safe  
6 conditions for our schools. In the last thing I want  
7 to say is that not wanting the schools open because  
8 they're not safe is very different than not wanting  
9 schools open at all. We would love nothing more than  
10 to send our children back to school, but we need to  
11 have an honest conversation about these spikes, about  
12 the infection rates rising in our communities that  
13 were hit the hardest in the first place, and what  
14 exactly we are going to do to keep families,  
15 students, teachers safe. Thank you.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, we will hear  
17 from Randy Levine.

18 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Can we please  
20 unmute Randy? There we go.

21 RANDY LEVINE: Thank you for the  
22 opportunity to speak with you. My name is Randy  
23 Levine and I am the policy director of Advocates for  
24 Children of New York. I want to start by recognizing  
25 the very hard work of the DOE, educators, and the

2 Council during this difficult time. We appreciate  
3 that the Council is hearing two bills today that  
4 would require the DOE to publicly report on remote  
5 learning, such as the percentage of students,  
6 including students with disabilities and English  
7 language learners who are and are not participating.  
8 Like the pandemic itself, remote learning has had a  
9 disproportionate impact on historically marginalized  
10 communities and has magnified pre-existing  
11 inequities. In the past few weeks alone, with the  
12 school year already underway, Advocates for Children  
13 has heard from dozens of families whose children are  
14 missing out on instruction because they do not have  
15 the technology needed. We have heard from families  
16 who requested an iPad months ago, but have not  
17 received one. Families who cannot get their iPads to  
18 work and have been unable to get help from the DOE,  
19 and shelters who do not have Wi-Fi or sufficient  
20 cellular reception to use the iPads. We were patient  
21 as the DOE worked to distribute iPads when schools  
22 closed in March, we were dismayed that so many  
23 students continue to go without the technology they  
24 need in October at a time when nearly all students  
25 are expected to learn remotely from two to five days

2 per week. A student's education should not be  
3 conditioned on their parent's ability to pay for a  
4 laptop and internet service. Talks about some of the  
5 other barriers we are seeing to remote learning,  
6 including the need for assistance for parents who  
7 speak a language other than English. We agreed that  
8 the city should publicly report data to help shed  
9 light on remote learning participation and are  
10 providing suggestions for strengthening the bills,  
11 including adding participation rates for students who  
12 are homeless or students who are in foster care. The  
13 city must also use the data it already has to  
14 redouble its outreach efforts and provide  
15 individualized support for families to get students  
16 engaged in remote learning.

17 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

18 RANDY LEVINE: As the city continues  
19 working on the health and safety measures needed to  
20 protect school communities from COVID-19, school  
21 environments. Since the time schools closed,  
22 students and adults have experienced trauma and  
23 students must receive the mental health support they  
24 need to succeed this school year, instead of facing  
25 school discipline and policing which can result in

2 lost days of instruction and significant trauma,  
3 particularly for black and brown students and  
4 students with disabilities. Our written testimony  
5 outlines a number of recommendations of steps that  
6 the DOE should take to increase mental health support  
7 and social emotional learning during this time.  
8 Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next,  
10 we will hear from Andrea Ortiz.

11 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

12 ANDREA ORTIZ: Good afternoon and thank  
13 you. I am Andrea Ortiz, manager of education policy  
14 at the New York Immigration Coalition. We commend  
15 the Committee on Education and Public Advocate  
16 Williams for introducing Bill 2058 and 2104 and are  
17 here to offer a very strong support for these  
18 essential initiatives and testify on behalf of our  
19 education collaborative about the dire need for  
20 publicly available subgroup data on student  
21 engagement and achievement for English language  
22 learners and students with families with limited  
23 English proficiency. Only with real transparency of  
24 the DOE's engagement and achievement data, throughout  
25 the root pandemic would we be able to target

2 reparations for the damages done to our immigrant  
3 communities. Therefore, we recommend that the city  
4 Council publicly released disaggregated data on  
5 grades and engagement for spring and summer and have  
6 periodic assessments of fall engagement and  
7 achievement data on a quarterly basis. Work with the  
8 DOE to devise academic interventions for immigrant  
9 students and [inaudible 05:48:24] with gaps in  
10 learning due to structural issues and track how they  
11 targeted those interventions. Implement the  
12 education collaborative school communication plan and  
13 add significant capacity and investment in  
14 translation and interpretation services. Education  
15 policy in New York City has historically marginalized  
16 immigrant families. We should be disturbed by the  
17 fact that, even before the pandemic, one in four ELS  
18 students dropped out. The worst dropout rate of any  
19 subgroup in the city. The COVID crisis has  
20 underscored and compounded the profound inequities  
21 already affecting immigrant families. So, quickly  
22 want to highlight ongoing issues that we have seen on  
23 the ground which we would get into greater detail in  
24 our written testimony. Immigrant students are not  
25 receiving critical information or being meaningfully

2 engaged. The COVID crisis has exacerbated long  
3 existing inequities and communication with immigrant  
4 families, including the overreliance on digital  
5 platforms which our communities struggle to access.  
6 The abrupt shift of remote learning has hit our it  
7 would great students the hardest. They have  
8 experienced greater academic slide. They have not  
9 received the supports that they need and many are  
10 still without devices. The gap is only getting  
11 larger--

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

13 ANDREA ORTIZ: addressed. Immigrant  
14 families with limited English proficiency and low  
15 digital literacy have gone-- have been struggling to  
16 support their children with their schoolwork and the  
17 lack of robust instruction for ELS has limited  
18 student's abilities to practice their English  
19 language speaking and reading skills. And the last  
20 thing I will say before I give up, here are members  
21 have reported to us that many immigrants never  
22 received information in their home languages about  
23 summer school languages, the schedule for the fall,  
24 remote orientation days, and/or other school bus  
25 schedules for their fall semester. These are

2 egregious issues that I wanted to lift up. Again,  
3 there is further information in our written  
4 testimony. Thank you very much for the opportunity  
5 to testify.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next we  
7 will hear from Haley Yee.

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

9 HALLIE YEE: Hi. Thank you. My name is  
10 Hallie Yee and I am the policy coordinator at the  
11 Coalition for Asian American Children and Families.  
12 So, for our schools to be safe and prepared to  
13 actually continue reopening to our students,  
14 teachers, administrators, and support staff, we have  
15 to think about more than just that three percent  
16 citywide average transmission rate threshold that the  
17 city is focused on at the moment. On behalf of our  
18 70+ organizational members and partners surveying the  
19 diverse Asian-Pacific American communities across New  
20 York City, we are asking Council today to hold our  
21 public education system accountable to the  
22 community's needs. First, demanding that the city  
23 provide accurate data, collection, and disaggregation  
24 of data on infection rates, hospitalizations, and  
25 deaths in the APA community and in all communities of



2 color. In order to best respond to the pandemic and  
3 reopen safely, we have to be able to track race,  
4 ethnicity, and languages spoken for those who are  
5 tested so we can appropriately take care and trace.  
6 We are not doing that now and the stories are being  
7 raised by the lack of data on race and ethnicity. We  
8 have been told that neighborhood level data is being  
9 taken in the form of ZIP Codes, but that only gives  
10 us the where, not the how or the who to help.

11 Second, we demand that schools in partnership with  
12 the city's health system can ensure that critical  
13 information gets to the students and families in the  
14 language that they need. It was only recently that  
15 the Health and Hospitals was able to translate health  
16 outreach documents into the top 11 language is  
17 required by law. This was too late and still not  
18 enough. There has to be more support ready for the  
19 students and families who are limited English  
20 proficient. DOE has more experience with that  
21 already it needs to have more coordination with DOHMH  
22 and H&H in that regard. In the absence of clear  
23 information, misinformation and rumors prevail.

24 Third, we demand that schools address the mental  
25 health needs of students and families, especially

2 those who have been targeted during this pandemic and  
3 have faced things like loss, isolation,  
4 discrimination, xenophobia, and so much more as they  
5 returned to school.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

7 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: You may wrap up  
8 your final point, please.

9 HALLIE YEE: Sorry. Thank you. Our  
10 community members are understandably frightened of  
11 sending their children back to school and there is  
12 already such a deep mistrust kind of building within  
13 our communities around the government and ensuring  
14 best practices around testing and data and languages  
15 are just key to New York City's recovery. It is  
16 critical in making it safe for our children to  
17 actually go back and learn in person.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And,  
19 next, we will hear from Lisa Caswell.

20 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

21 LISA CASWELL: Chair Treyger and Chair  
22 Levine, thank you for the opportunity to testify  
23 today. My name is Lisa Caswell and I am the senior  
24 policy analyst Daycare Council of New York. We would  
25 like to take this opportunity to thank the city

2 Council for its strong voice in last year's battle  
3 for salary parity. It has been a silver lining  
4 throughout the pandemic, giving daycare Council  
5 members much needed strength as they support  
6 thousands of children and families in crisis. We  
7 would also like to acknowledge the quality of  
8 administrative oversight being provided by the  
9 Department of Education's division of Early  
10 Education. Their guidance reflects high levels of  
11 interdepartmental collaboration, making it possible  
12 for our members to access resources and maintain  
13 critical safety standards in a constantly shifting  
14 environment. In recent weeks, and immediate response  
15 to a child's positive COVID-19 test results and one  
16 of our agencies centers. With safety measures and  
17 protocols firmly in place, our members have increased  
18 confidence in their ability to manage risk. This  
19 does not mean that they are not facing hiring  
20 challenges as they manage employee requests for  
21 medical accommodation. We are also dealing with the  
22 backlog in comprehensive background check clearances  
23 which may take months to resolve at a time when we  
24 need to increase the number of staff to lower class  
25 size. With regards to utilization, some of our

2 members are losing children as parents return to full  
3 time work outside the home because their childcare  
4 program does not have the necessary space or staff to  
5 offer five full days of supervised learning to all of  
6 the families that need it. Other childcare programs  
7 that have agreed to run full day onsite learning  
8 bridges programs are having trouble referring their  
9 own children to these seats because they are being  
10 reserved for children attending UPK and 3PK and  
11 public schools and, based on earlier conversations, I  
12 know this whole initiative is very confusing. These  
13 issued, combined with continuing delays and the  
14 processing of applications is affecting enrollment.  
15 Fortunately, the DOE has assured its contracted  
16 childcare--

17 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

18 LISA CASWELL: that their funding will  
19 remain stable throughout the city's recovery process  
20 despite fluctuations in enrollment. Finally, as  
21 members of the Steering Committee for the Campaign  
22 for Children, we have been advocating for a more  
23 substantial roll on behalf of childcare and youth  
24 services. Our expertise in human services and  
25 education should put us at the center of decision

2 making. Instead, we are often brought together for  
3 our initial input but are not consulted again until  
4 new initiatives are announced. We must be fully  
5 engaged in the entire process, including program  
6 development process, and implementation. This will  
7 be particularly important as we continue to manage  
8 limited funding going forward. Thank you so much for  
9 your time. We greatly appreciate your longstanding  
10 support of the city's early childhood education  
11 system and welcome all opportunities for continuing  
12 collaboration. Thank you.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And,  
14 next, we'll hear from Leonie Haimson.

15 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

16 LEONIE HAIMSON: Thank you so much for  
17 holding these important hearings today. My name is  
18 Leonie Haimson. I am the executive director of  
19 Class-size Matters. We are living in unprecedented  
20 times and the public needs as much transparency as  
21 possible regarding the DOE's implementation of  
22 blended and remote learning. To assess what is  
23 working this year and what is not. If students are  
24 not logging into their online classes, as 23 percent  
25 of summer school students never did, that is strong

2 evidence their plan needs revision. I am here to  
3 support the two reporting bills under consideration  
4 and to suggest a few technical improvements to ensure  
5 that the required reporting is even more specific.  
6 Regarding Intro 2058, attendance data should be  
7 disaggregated in three categories in the way  
8 schooling is now organized for most students. That  
9 is full time remote, online classes for blended  
10 learning students, and in person classes when  
11 students are being taught in school buildings. In  
12 addition, the wording of this bill does not clearly  
13 specify how attendance should be reported or defined  
14 and we know that schools are doing that in very  
15 different ways. It should require also how many  
16 students attended the class each day on average over  
17 the last week, rather than logged in on any one day  
18 of the week. The importance of disaggregated data by  
19 the type of because, otherwise, we don't know which  
20 particular modalities are working and not. Many  
21 parents and teachers have expressed concern that  
22 remote class sizes have been as large as 70 or 100  
23 students are more which has made it impossible to  
24 engage their children. With the recent articles in  
25 The Post, Wall Street Journal, and Gothamist about

2 this issue, classes this large make it impossible  
3 for most students to establish and maintain any real  
4 relationship with their teachers and receive the  
5 feedback they need. There is convincing evidence  
6 that, in fact, online class sizes must be as small as  
7 possible to ensure sufficient interaction,  
8 discussion, and engagement and I gave some quotes  
9 from researchers and practitioners about that issue.  
10 It's also important--

11 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

12 LEONIE HAIMSON: Yes. So, the city  
13 Council has little direct authority over education  
14 policy making. Due to the language of mayoral  
15 control, they have an important roll to require  
16 maximum transparency about the conditions in which  
17 New York City students are forced to learn,  
18 especially during this highly unusual year. Thus,  
19 every effort should be made to ensure that the  
20 reporting bills you pass are clear and specific in  
21 their language to maximize the chance that they can  
22 be enforced and allow for greater public  
23 understanding. Thank you for allowing me to speak  
24 today.

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you very  
3 much, Leonie, and to everyone on the panel who  
4 testified and for your extraordinary work. I just--  
5 one quick question from the New York Immigration  
6 Coalition or others who might want to feel free to  
7 chime in. As I mentioned in my exchange with the  
8 Chancellor-- and I think also, Council member  
9 Salamanca mentioned this, as well. I have heard  
10 feedback from some of our immigrant families that  
11 they are understandably fearful for filling out the  
12 request forms to get a device. And the Chancellor  
13 mentioned that they should contact their school.  
14 What the administration needs to remember is that the  
15 structure that they created required parents,  
16 required families to fill out a form, a survey form  
17 and that might change moving forward when they order  
18 the more iPads next month, but their structure was  
19 the barrier for many kids getting that. Have you  
20 also heard the same concerns--

21 ANDREA ORTIZ: Yes. I--

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Please. Yes, Ms.  
23 Ortiz. Please go ahead.

24 ANDREA ORTIZ: Yes. Absolutely. We've  
25 been hearing that. And ask you may know, the issues



2 with public charge have made this particular issue  
3 one that, you know, we have had to fight very hard to  
4 get families to understand what's going on and,  
5 you're right, that the actual system was created by  
6 the legal team in the DOE who, basically,  
7 circumvented the capacity for advocates. [inaudible  
8 06:00:15] their schools to actually fill it out for  
9 those people, technically, right? Although we do  
10 know that some of that is also-- that is definitely  
11 happening because that's the only way that we can  
12 actually get those families to fill out the form.  
13 And, if I can just say that it also-- Carranza's  
14 answer also completely doesn't recognize the fact  
15 that schools do still have a long way to go to be a  
16 trusted place for immigrant families and that work is  
17 going to be continuing and especially important now  
18 that, you know, many of our immigrants have really  
19 struggled to communicate with the schools. Getting  
20 contact with anyone at the schools whatsoever even  
21 with advocates. Right? And so, we fight with the  
22 advocates to make sure that our advocates and our  
23 CBO's are able to best serve the immigrant students,  
24 but we know that many of our immigrant students are  
25 not connected to a CBO or another advocate and they

2 are probably struggling the most right now as they  
3 don't have anyone to navigate these, basically,  
4 waters that are not able to be navigated very well.

5 But Randy might also be seen in her clients, so maybe  
6 she wants to jump in on this, as well.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Can we unmute Randy  
8 Levine, please?

9 RANDY LEVINE: Sure. I think we  
10 definitely agree and think that there are a number of  
11 families who are not filling out forms for a variety  
12 of reasons, including fear. But definitely also seen  
13 families who still don't know about the device  
14 request form. Definitely hearing from families who  
15 thought that their schools filled it out for them,  
16 but when we escalate the case to the DOE, we are  
17 being told there is no request recorded. And so I  
18 think we need a lot more outreach and a coordinated  
19 effort to see what's happening for children who are  
20 not logging on and for someone to take ownership of  
21 making sure that the request is filled out, that it  
22 is received, that the iPad comes, that the iPad  
23 works, from start to finish. The case is not closed  
24 until the child is logging on and able to participate  
25 in remote construction.

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you, Randy.

3 And I also want to note something else I've heard  
4 and, just to kind of put it into the record that when  
5 the DOE gave families that very kind of rushed remote  
6 readiness survey-- Before they shut the buildings  
7 down they gave families a form to fill out to see if  
8 they had a device at home. What was not clear to  
9 families and, because the DOE did not clarify on  
10 their own forms, is that when they asked the family  
11 do you have a device at home? You know, there could  
12 be, you know, household where mom or dad has a  
13 computer for their work and they have multiple  
14 children and this was supposed to be a commitment to  
15 provide technology for each and every child and not  
16 to share a device with their siblings and with her  
17 parents. And I kept stressing that. So, I would  
18 argue that there are a number of kids who even have a  
19 device now who are sharing it with their siblings  
20 because the DOE did not make it clear that they are  
21 entitled to a device of their own and you cannot, in  
22 this climate of remote learning, every moment counts  
23 and to share devices is just not acceptable. So, is  
24 this something that you could see is happened, as  
25 well?

2 RANDY LEVINE: We have heard of some  
3 families who are sharing one device between multiple  
4 siblings and I will say that was with a DOE iPad. I  
5 think there was a lot of confusion out there in the  
6 spring and that there were some people who were  
7 telling families that they could only request one  
8 device per family. I think with other families, they  
9 may not have realized that they need to fill out the  
10 form for each child, but we're also still seeing  
11 families who haven't received any iPads for their  
12 children and are sharing an iPhone with limited data  
13 among three children trying to log in for remote  
14 instruction and assignments. So, we are relieved  
15 that the city is purchasing additional devices.  
16 That's only one part of the solution. Significant  
17 technical assistance is also needed to make sure that  
18 every family is able to use the device, get it up and  
19 running and log in to their remote instruction. And,  
20 of course, we haven't even been talking today about  
21 instruction because there's this basic access issue  
22 that we have to address first.

23 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Absolutely. And  
24 that's why I mentioned partly an issue of Chromebooks  
25 where the feedback that I have gotten back very

2 strong was that, as far as compatibility and  
3 functionality with the remote platform in order to  
4 type, calm books are the preferred method, but they  
5 are on back order until February or so and they also  
6 need to come with Internet service. So, we're going  
7 to keep at this, but, again, I think you, Randy. I  
8 think the entire panel for your extraordinary work,  
9 for your service, and we will remain in contact  
10 during this time. Thank you so much, again.  
11 Appreciate you.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay. That  
13 concludes this panel. Next, we will hear from Paul  
14 Scialla, Quadira Coles, Toni Smith Thompson, Crystal  
15 Vasquez testifying for Leonard Goldberg and Dr.  
16 Thomas Howard. We will first start with Paul.

17 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

18 PAUL SCIALLA: Thank you, Chair  
19 Treyger, Chair Levine, and members of the committee  
20 for the opportunity to testify. My name is Paul  
21 Scialla and I am the founder and CEO of Delos and  
22 founder of the International Well Building Institute.  
23 We are pleased to already be working with New York  
24 City schools by providing 30,000 portable air  
25 filtration units for distribution across the city.

2 Our testimony today is to highlight the importance of  
3 minimizing airborne viral load in the indoor  
4 environment and the role these units can play to help  
5 support New York City's ability to safely reopen  
6 schools. Delos is a health technology platform. We  
7 lead global research and identify evidence-based  
8 solutions for health and safety. Having worked  
9 closely with Mayo Clinic, Cleveland clinic, and other  
10 medical research institutions for years to understand  
11 the impact of indoor environments on human health.

12 We also operate the world's largest certification  
13 platform for healthy buildings via our International  
14 Well Building Institute with certifications now in 63  
15 countries across approximately 1,000,000,000 ft.<sup>2</sup> of  
16 real estate. Previous testimony has acknowledged  
17 that increased ventilation, as a foundation, is a  
18 good start, but adding enhanced air filtration is a  
19 necessary pathway to lower airborne viral load in  
20 school buildings and can greatly reduce COVID-19  
21 exposure risk when employed in conjunction with  
22 additional best practices. The technology in these  
23 air purification units is capable of trapping and  
24 reducing ultrafine particles that may be carrying  
25 viruses as small as .007 microns at 99.99 percent

2 efficiency, which is smaller than SARS COV-2. These  
3 are portable, wall-mounted, or standalone units that  
4 can be placed into any type of space at very low  
5 cost. Delos strongly recommends that New York City  
6 continue to prioritize improved air quality in  
7 schools by ensuring adequate number of air  
8 purification units for all classrooms and common  
9 areas to complement ventilation strategies. We hope  
10 that, in conjunction with the current COVID-19  
11 mitigation strategies, these solutions will benefit  
12 students, staff, families, and New York City as a  
13 whole.

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: If you want to wrap  
16 up your final point very quickly and then we will  
17 move on.

18 PAUL SCIALLA: Thank you very much. I  
19 just finished, so we do hope that, in conjunction  
20 with these mitigation strategies out there, these  
21 particular solutions will benefit, again, students,  
22 staff, families, and New York City at large. Thank  
23 you all.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And  
25 next we will hear from Quadira.

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

3 QUADIRA COLES: Good afternoon, Chair

4 Treyger and Levin and member of the Committee of  
5 Education and Health. My name is Quadira Coles and I  
6 am the policy manager at GGE. We are offering  
7 testimony today to raise issues of school climate,  
8 inclusive of school discipline and school policing as  
9 a part of the reopening of schools. GGE supports  
10 both bills on the docket. On Intro 1615, we support  
11 the effort to bring specific transparency on the  
12 underrepresentation of loss of black educators and  
13 educators of color. On Intro 2058, we want to raise  
14 a concern we have both hear from both young people  
15 and educators that students are being removed from  
16 the zoom classroom as a classroom management tool and  
17 marked as absent and also the young people are being  
18 required to appear on video during class or risk  
19 being marked absent. We raise these examples to  
20 highlight the new part of the relationship between  
21 attendance and school discipline regardless of  
22 whether this new form of discipline is being tracked.  
23 We also recently found out that schools were sent a  
24 link to an outdated discipline called Resources Info  
25 Hub that does not acknowledge the pandemic or the



2 ways new kinds of learning environments may not be  
3 compatible with last years discipline rules. We've  
4 heard in the past week that principals are requesting  
5 principal suspensions for mass compliance despite  
6 internal guidance from the DOE's office of student  
7 help that attempts to protect young people from  
8 punitive discipline. We want to see that OSH  
9 guidance made public and accessible, at the very  
10 least, to support young people in knowing that  
11 protections are afforded to them. More than this, we  
12 are demanding a suspension moratorium during the  
13 entire duration of the school year, no matter the  
14 instruction style, along with necessary restorative  
15 emotional and mental support. Students attending  
16 school in person should feel safe when asked to  
17 follow CDC social distancing and mask guidelines by  
18 positioning nurses, school counselors, and teachers  
19 as the first contact. We are disturbed to hear that,  
20 because of the short staffing, the DOE trained school  
21 safety agents and assigned them the responsibility of  
22 take temperatures of students entering school  
23 buildings. The city has chosen to normalize a  
24 dangerous trend of--

25 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

2 QUADIRA COLES: public welfare  
3 responsibilities to the police. This year, in due  
4 part to a legacy of underinvestment, students  
5 returning to schools during the pandemic would be  
6 more likely to encounter police than nurses. The  
7 city has chosen to prioritize the interest of the  
8 NYPD and those who are not a part of the school  
9 community over New York public school students.  
10 Students should not have to face disciplinary police  
11 action while trying to adapt to a new way of life in  
12 addition to the many challenges and stressors of  
13 learning during a pandemic. We encourage the city to  
14 become more vigilant when it comes to securing  
15 sustainable education experience for our students  
16 during budget cycles to come. Thank you for the  
17 opportunity to testify.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And  
19 next, we will hear from Toni Smith Thompson.

20 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

21 TONI SMITH THOMPSON: Thank you, Chairs  
22 Treyger and Levine and members of the committee. My  
23 name is Toni Smith Thompson. I'm a senior organizer  
24 in the education policy center at the New York Civil  
25 Liberties Union. I'm also a public school parent to

2 three kids. We continue to be concern about barriers  
3 students are facing in remote learning and we do  
4 agree that data is needed to assess these barriers  
5 and we support Intros 2058 and 2104. Additionally, I  
6 wanted to raise a few concerns that were just raised.  
7 Remote learning does have the potential to expand  
8 access to education in conjunction with in person  
9 instruction, although as was just said,  
10 unfortunately, six months and a remote learning,  
11 there are practices that are disconnecting students  
12 from their learning and further entrenching  
13 inequities. Like was just said, we heard reports of  
14 schools adopting strict virtual learning policies  
15 such as requiring students to have their cameras  
16 turned on or be penalized or sit up straight at a  
17 desk which some students don't even have at home.  
18 These rules create new constraints on learning that  
19 are really unnecessary-- and let me turn off my  
20 video because I think I'm lacking here. And, you  
21 know, not only do camera on roles because anxieties  
22 for students who are worried about appearing on  
23 camera, they also have privacy implications for  
24 students who don't want their home life exposed and  
25 they further marginalized students whose remote

2 learning environment is already difficult, right?

3 And not the same as their school learning

4 environment. So, we do recommend that the DOE adopt

5 a camera optional policy to be responsive to students

6 needs and to protect student privacy. We are also

7 concerned about discipline, including suspensions,

8 but also removals from in person learning and virtual

9 instruction that may not be recorded as suspensions.

10 We echo calls for a suspension moratorium and also we

11 need to pay attention to other practices in the ways

12 that punitive discipline are evolving in this new

13 landscape. And so, as with pre-pandemic disciplinary

14 practices, black and brown students are more likely

15 to be disciplined and really punitive ways. And so,

16 knowing that it is likely that biases will play a

17 role in how students respond to--

18 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

19 TONI SMITH THOMPSON: on how schools

20 respond to student behavior, we need to move away

21 from the premises that education can be taken away as

22 a punishment. Instead, we need to look at how the

23 DOE can use this model to expand access to education.

24 Thank you so much.

25

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And now we  
3 will hear from Krystal Vazquez.

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

5 KRYSTAL VAZQUEZ: Hello, Council members,  
6 and thank you for this opportunity to testify on  
7 school reopening. My name is Krystal Vazquez and I  
8 am testifying on behalf of Opportunity Charter  
9 Schools founder, Lenny Goldberg. Founded in 2004,  
10 OCS is a unique, independent charter school focused  
11 on servicing high needs students with disabilities in  
12 grades six through 12. We work closely with each  
13 student to provide tailored individual and group  
14 instruction and our staff includes trained behavior  
15 specialists, social workers, and learning specialists  
16 to ensure each student has what they need to  
17 successful. I'm glad to have the opportunity to  
18 share an overview of our approach to working with  
19 special education students and how we have brought  
20 this philosophy into our recent work supporting our  
21 students through remote learning since the onset of  
22 the pandemic. We've created extensive support  
23 systems to keep our students engaged and making  
24 progress. Teachers provide five back to back our  
25 long classes through zoom four days of the week and,

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2 on Wednesdays, it is our WIN, Whatever-I-Need Day,  
3 where students receive targeted small group  
4 instruction. We have trained members of our staff to  
5 serve as mentors, dedicated to reaching out to  
6 families to ensure that students are engaged. We  
7 have also created a school culture team to help  
8 monitor attendance and ensure students are missing  
9 instruction. OCS's educational philosophy is built  
10 upon the premise that students with learning  
11 disabilities deserve the satisfaction that comes with  
12 meeting and exceeding rigorous standards for personal  
13 and academic success and we continue to follow this  
14 philosophy through our approach to remote learning in  
15 school reopening which we are continuing to  
16 reevaluate as we look toward safely reopening our  
17 classrooms in the future. Thank you for your time.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And  
19 next we will hear from Dr. Howard Thompson.

20 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Dr. Thomas Howard.  
22 Sorry. I apologize.

23 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Actually, Dr.  
25 Thomas, hold on one second. We are just having a

2 problem unmuting you. Just give us one moment.

3 Okay. Do you see an icon that says accept unmuting?

4 There we go. Okay. Go ahead.

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

6 DR. THOMAS HOWARD: Thank you very  
7 much. Again, good afternoon. Good evening, Council  
8 members and thank you for the opportunity to speak.

9 I am Dr. Thomas Howard but I am the executive  
10 director at the Bronx Charter School for Better  
11 Learning. I am representing parents, staff, and  
12 administrators in two located schools and 1023  
13 student's Pre-K to grade five. At the onset of  
14 COVID-19, we began planning to go to remote on March  
15 the 6th and we decided that, in preparation for the  
16 fall, that we would implement a three phase reopening  
17 plan and, in that reopening plan, we would focus on  
18 health, safety, and high quality education. We  
19 provided quite a bit of training for professional  
20 development for parent-- for teachers and  
21 administrators and also provided trauma-informed  
22 training for parents, teachers, and administrators.  
23 On average, with the parent meetings, we had about  
24 367 parents who would attend these trainings and  
25 meetings, which was a beautiful thing. We opened our

2 school year using it fully remote program that  
3 focused on social emotional learning and preparing  
4 kids for their education all transition, assuming  
5 that they had experienced some trauma prior to the  
6 opening of schools. We also surveyed parents to  
7 understand and ask what their needs were as we  
8 prepared to go to reopen the schools. Currently, we  
9 have about 25 percent of our students who are in  
10 remote learning and about 75 percent of the students  
11 who come to school daily for in person remote. Even  
12 the students who are in remote also can zoom into the  
13 classroom so they get a synchronized learning  
14 experience. We transitioned to hybrid learning the  
15 first week in October and I can report right now that  
16 we have an attendance rate of about 97 percent of all  
17 students. 96 percent for special education students  
18 in enrollment is full. Our goal is to continue our  
19 focus on what we call awakening the learner within.  
20 We have had success with our education--

21 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

22 DR. THOMAS HOWARD: had success with  
23 our educational approach, particularly with educating  
24 black and brown students. In the things that I would  
25 ask that the Council and everyone do is that we



2 promote high quality education for all students in  
3 New York City no matter what type of school you go  
4 to. That every student who is black, brown, and  
5 other should receive the best quality education that  
6 we can get in, as we shift away from health and  
7 safety, that we prioritize high quality education.  
8 To speak with you today.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair,  
10 do you have any questions for this panel?

11 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: No. Just want to  
12 thank them for being here today and sharing very  
13 powerful testimony. Thank you so much.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And we  
15 will now move to our next and final panel. Final  
16 panel is Daryl Hornick Becker, Gregory Brender,  
17 Vallone Brown Jr., and Paulette Healy. We will start  
18 with Daryl.

19 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

20 DARYL HORNICK BECKER: Good afternoon.  
21 My name is Daryl Hornick Becker and I am a policy  
22 associate at Assistance Committee for Children of New  
23 York. Thank you, Chair Treyger, Chair Levine, and  
24 all the members of the Education and Health  
25 Committees for holding today's hearing. For our full

2 set of recommendations, I refer you to my written  
3 testimony. Today, I will highlight just a few areas  
4 where action is sorely needed. First, the city and  
5 DOE must prioritize our most vulnerable students.  
6 Students living in shelters might have a learning  
7 device, but most shelters still lack Wi-Fi and many  
8 have unreliable cell reception. Also, under city  
9 policy, children under 18 cannot be in shelters  
10 without apparent, but the cities learning labs are  
11 only open to students through eighth grade. This  
12 range of barriers requires a coordinated interagency  
13 plan to help these students and a designated point  
14 person to lead this effort. Remote learning is also  
15 likely to exacerbate issues for multilingual  
16 learners. The complex nature of the school year has  
17 deepened the communication barrier for immigrant  
18 families who are also left out of receiving vital  
19 information about scheduling, transportation, or  
20 meals. The DOE must make a concerted effort to reach  
21 these families in a variety of ways. The DOE must  
22 also not cut programs that serve under credited youth  
23 who are most at risk of dropping out. Cuts to  
24 learning to work would eliminate services for these  
25 students such as attendance outreach, counseling, and

2 postgraduate planning. To defund this program now  
3 would remove crucial supports when students need the  
4 most. Second, the city's afterschool programs must  
5 also be part of their restart plan. Afterschool  
6 providers this year have received conflicting  
7 guidance from DYCD and DOE as to how they operate.  
8 Many are being shut out of schools and their funding  
9 may be at risk in the November budget. Youth service  
10 providers successfully ran the RECS last school year  
11 and are currently running the learning labs. They  
12 must be intimately involved in the new school year to  
13 ensure the entire educational system is safe,  
14 effective, and supportive. Finally, the city must  
15 support the behavioral health needs of students.  
16 With the transition to remote learning, many children  
17 are experiencing social isolation, anxiety, and  
18 possibly the loss of a loved one from COVID. The  
19 proposed bridge to school plan is a start, but we  
20 cannot expect schools to implement plans when the  
21 funding sources have been slashed at the city, state,  
22 and federal--

23 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

24 DARYL HORNICK BECKER: level. To  
25 strengthen behavioral supports for students, the city

2 must restore the cuts to community schools and fund  
3 contracts that provide mental health services. Thank  
4 you for this opportunity to testify.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And before he  
6 turned Gregory, I also see that Phil Wong is back on  
7 zoom, so we will add him to this panel at the end.  
8 But next we will hear from Gregory.

9 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

10 GREGORY BRENDER: Good afternoon. Thank  
11 you so much for holding this important hearing and  
12 for the opportunity to testify. My name is Gregory  
13 Brender. I am here on behalf of United Neighborhood  
14 Houses which is a policy and social change  
15 organization of New York Settlement Houses. I want  
16 to focus today on the role that community-based  
17 organizations play in the education system.  
18 Community-based organizations are a key part of the  
19 system and have only become more essential during the  
20 COVID crisis. During the crisis, CBO's deployed  
21 their staff and regional enrichment centers and used  
22 their expertise in early childhood education and  
23 youth development to pilot and implement the first  
24 socially distant programs. They developed with only  
25 a few weeks of prep time, socially distant in person

2 summer camp programs and remote summer camp programs.

3 They maintain children's connections to their peers

4 and carrying adult for remote early childhood

5 education afterschool programs and, most recently,

6 and also with very little prep time, they have been

7 opening learning bridges and learning labs to provide

8 care during the remote days of school. But the city

9 has to do much more to include CBO's who should be a

10 part of all of the discussions or how the education

11 system and how the school reopens. In order to be

12 more inclusive and more supportive of the community-

13 based partners who are so important to schools. UNH

14 makes the following recommendations: we urge the city

15 to improve guidance and communication. Guidance is

16 often missing, late, or conflicting and this has led

17 to issues such as afterschool programs not knowing

18 where they have space, lack of communication about

19 health issues, and difficulty accessing PPE. All run

20 through the next recommendations. Also, to restore

21 funding for the indirect rate initiatives, to restore

22 funding for learning to work which provides support

23 to students in transfer schools, and to ensure that

24 there is parity between the protections afforded to

25 staff in the DOE and the staff and community-based

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2 organizations who are entering hazardous situations  
3 to provide care to children. Thanks again for the  
4 opportunity to testify.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And  
6 next we will hear from Valone Brown Jr.

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

8 VALONE BROWN JR.: Good afternoon. Thank  
9 you for having me to discuss some policy changes this  
10 afternoon. My name is Valone Brown Junior. I am the  
11 director of the Learn to Work program for St. Nick's  
12 Alliance. I have been the director for three years  
13 now. As Gregory just mentioned, I'm hoping that the  
14 Learning to Work program is not eliminated and cuts  
15 aren't sought. I would like to thank Councilman  
16 Kallos who has been an astounding supporter of our  
17 program. I have been on this call from 10 AM, so  
18 that should let everyone know on this call how  
19 passionate I am about LTW and the possible cuts.  
20 This program being cut and gutted and eliminated  
21 would not just affect the employees that are CBO's  
22 that partner with the school. These are individuals  
23 who have given their livelihoods to have given back  
24 to their communities, to the students and the  
25 children of our future. But, most importantly, it

2 will affect the families and the students. The Learn  
3 to Work program, if you do not know, is the program  
4 that is in transfer schools throughout the city.

5 Transfer schools house students who are underage and  
6 over credited. These students are at the most risk.

7 These students are in these schools because they are  
8 looking for their second, third, fourth, fifth

9 chants. We cannot cut programs like LTW that offers  
10 these students the ability to earn wages to help

11 their parents. Especially in a pandemic now. Our  
12 program has been able to fuel at least \$150,000 a

13 year into the northern Brooklyn community. With the  
14 program being gutted, we lose all that money going

15 into the neighborhoods. Going into the families.

16 Once again, not only does the program allow wages for  
17 our interns and for our students, but it exposes

18 students to career readiness through internships,

19 post-secondary readiness, visiting various colleges,

20 vocational training opportunities. So, Chancellor

21 Carranza and the mayor, you have 15 months left.

22 Please take the time to do what is right and do not

23 cut our program. We need this for the individuals--

24 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

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2 VALONE BROWN JR.: their livelihood, to  
3 their jobs, and please think of the students who  
4 really need this program to continue their education  
5 and finally graduate from high school. Thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And,  
7 next, we will hear from Paulette.

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You are unmuted now.

10 PAULETTE HEALY: Can you hear me?

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

12 PAULETTE HEALY: Wonderful. Greetings  
13 esteemed Council members. My name is Paulette Healy.  
14 I am a council member on the Citywide Council on  
15 Special Education and a steering member of Press NYC.  
16 I, along with hundreds of parents who have spoken at  
17 nausea about a responsive, safe, and equitable school  
18 reopening with the emphasis on investing and  
19 addressing the challenges with remote learning  
20 instead of rushing to a horribly underfunded in  
21 person learning approach, ignoring known ventilation  
22 issues, staffing shortages, and access to devices and  
23 Wi-Fi service, so I am not going to repeat myself  
24 again. Instead, I want to address the intentional  
25 misguidance have put into practice in order to



2 continue the systemic silencing of the voices of the  
3 stakeholders, especially our teachers, parents, and  
4 students. In this hearing alone, we have heard  
5 conflicting statements from the Chancellor and his  
6 staff on the COVID reporting process, on whether data  
7 on consent forms for random testing is available,  
8 whether attendance numbers are available, whether  
9 guidance has been updated to school staff, tasked to  
10 rollout information on the ground. Dr. Barba himself  
11 said that the best way to prevent the spread of the  
12 virus is to limit the amount of people in the  
13 buildings. What better argument for going fully  
14 remote than that? Students who have received devices  
15 are reporting they are broken and need to go through  
16 it unnecessarily complicated process to report it.  
17 Teachers are troubleshooting tech issues built into  
18 the DOE iPads themselves that prevent platforms that  
19 they used to teach from launching, instead of  
20 actually spending time teaching. We have a letter  
21 from PS 142 in district 1 sighting, quote, bulging  
22 remote class sizes and ICT classes are out of  
23 compliance, end quote, due to the staffing shortages.  
24 We have teachers threatening to fail students who  
25 miss to Google meet sessions. Is this what trauma

2 center teaching looks like? We have an entire school  
3 community speak out about the harm their families  
4 have endured at the hands of a racist principal at PS  
5 132 in district 14, yet nothing has been done. We  
6 have reports of students being forced to submit to  
7 random testing in schools without parental consent.

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

9 PAULETTE HEALY: We have superintendents  
10 that have done nothing to quell concerns of the  
11 families and absolutely no best practices in place to  
12 make sure information is going out to our families  
13 and languages that they can understand or have access  
14 to if they are still awaiting a device to learn off  
15 of. In the middle of October, we still have families  
16 on waiting lists for the paltry number of childcare  
17 seats offered in learning bridges and 72,000 students  
18 still waiting for devices. I urge the Council  
19 members here to please use their collective power to  
20 institute universal broadband for all in order to  
21 address the digital divide that prevents our children  
22 from a free and appropriate education. I urge city  
23 Council to continue demanding accountability from the  
24 Chancellor and the DOE often given to you because you  
25 are the only body that seems to have the possibility

2 to apply pressure. In this crisis, we need you all  
3 to keep this up and I thank you city Council members  
4 and the public advocate office who have acknowledged  
5 the outraged voices of our parents and teachers,  
6 school staff, food servers, custodians, and have  
7 recognized and supported our endless efforts to keep  
8 our children safe and to demand clear accountability  
9 from our district leaders, our school leaders, and  
10 our DO eat leaders. Thank you so much for the time.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next we  
12 will hear from Phil Wong.

13 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

14 PHIL WONG: Hello. Good afternoon,  
15 Chairman Treyger, Chairman Levine, other members of  
16 the education committee. Thank you for giving me the  
17 opportunity to speak. My name is Phil Wong, the  
18 president of the Community Education Council 24. I  
19 would like to read to you today our resolution number  
20 139 that was passed on October 13th at October's  
21 monthly meeting of CEC members. Whereas the COVID-19  
22 epidemic has taken a multitude of lives of those  
23 living and working within district 24, whereas COVID-  
24 19 epidemic has disproportionately distributed the  
25 health-- disturbed the health, well-being, and

2 education of students in district 24, whereas Mayor  
3 de Blasio has already twice delayed the opening of  
4 schools, creating hurdles with district 24 families  
5 to plan daily work and education schedules, whereas  
6 Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Carranza has been less  
7 than transparent and disclosing that thousands of  
8 unfilled teacher positions needed to meet the demand  
9 of schools as projected in their plans, whereas Mayor  
10 de Blasio and Chancellor Carranza have still not  
11 properly staffed New York City public schools with a  
12 sufficient number of teachers and staff to safely  
13 meet the educational, psychological, and physical  
14 needs of our students. Whereas numerous high-ranking  
15 officials at the Department of Education resigned  
16 within weeks and days of the planned opening.

17 Whereas the Department of Education did not implement  
18 a system wide training and staff in remote learning  
19 through the summer. Whereas the Department of  
20 Education and the city of New York have not properly  
21 coordinated, managed, and communicated the locations  
22 for meal distribution to remote learning students,  
23 blended rowboats students on their days not at  
24 school, and individuals in need of food. Whereas the  
25 Department of Education has not delivered on their

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2 own goal of providing live instruction to all remote  
3 learning students--

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

5 PHIL WONG: Therefore be it resolved that  
6 New York City schools must provide an equitable  
7 distribution of teachers so that every school has the  
8 proper staffing for live event remote instruction be  
9 it further resolved that the Community Education  
10 Council expresses no confidence in Mayor de Blasio  
11 and Chancellor Carranza due to their repeated failure  
12 of policy implementation and communication throughout  
13 the COVID-19 emergency. Thank you.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And, at  
15 this time, I will ask if we have inadvertently missed  
16 anyone that would like to testify. There were a few  
17 people dropping in and out of zoom today. Please use  
18 the raise hand function now and we will call you in  
19 the order that your hand is raised. Hallie Yee and  
20 then, Chair Treyger, Council member Holden does have  
21 a question for this panel.

22 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts-- Sorry.

23 Time starts now.

24 MARY CHEN: Hi. Thank you, Chair Levine,  
25 Chair Treyger, and the members of city Council, for

2 the opportunity to [inaudible 06:33:45] today. My  
3 name is Mary Chen. I'm the director of CPC's child  
4 development services overseeing 12 early childhood  
5 and school-age programs and that is [inaudible  
6 06:33:57] our constituents as agents of social  
7 change. To that end, we are grateful to testify  
8 today about the issues that impact individuals and  
9 the families we serve. We are grateful to the  
10 Council on their leadership on these issues. By  
11 written testimony addresses the following concerns:  
12 quality programing, child depression, community-based  
13 [inaudible 06:34:21] capacity, transparency, and  
14 accountability, and [inaudible 06:34:24].  
15 Especially, in CPC's early childhood and school-age  
16 programs, they are truly critical safety nets with  
17 thousands of working class AAPI and immigrant  
18 families. When schools close, our services are  
19 shifted to remote settings. Staff continue to  
20 provide services nonstop and creatively integrated  
21 their programming on to an online format.  
22 Understanding how critical staying connected with the  
23 families is at this time. However, the programming  
24 that was guided by what teachers did was really by  
25 their own true drive and passion and, without

2 guidance and input from DOE. We are still unable to  
3 increase the early childhood [inaudible 06:35:08]  
4 capacity and technology, equipment and bandwidth  
5 makes it really hard to be effective in supporting  
6 all our families. And one of the things I want to  
7 really stress about was that we've been talking about  
8 social distancing in schools and, in public schools,  
9 they had a minimum of, at least, 50 percent cuts in  
10 classroom size to allow for social distancing, but in  
11 CBO's, this is not the case. There's only been a 15  
12 percent decrease from full programming and, for the  
13 younger classrooms, the classroom size remained--

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

15 MARY CHEN: So, it's really important and  
16 crucial that DOE and DOH recognized that CBO's are  
17 providing crucial care for all of these immigrant and  
18 low income families, but at the same time, we're not  
19 doing it with the same guidances that is needed.  
20 With that said, [inaudible 06:36:02] in the written  
21 testimony and I just wanted to stress that point in  
22 the confusion that DOE has been giving [inaudible  
23 06:36:12] in terms of not being clear with  
24 information that we can disseminate to our families.  
25 But that is really one of the things that is making

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2 it hard for families to really make adequate  
3 decisions with their own children and the well-being  
4 of their families. Thank you.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. If we  
6 could please unmute Council member Holden. He had a  
7 question for this panel.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Hi.

9 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Thank you. I have  
11 a question for Phil Wong. Is he still on? Phil?  
12 Are you still there?

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: He is. We will  
14 unmute him. Just give us one moment.

15 PHIL WONG: Hello? Hello?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Yes. Yes. Hi, Mr.  
17 Wong.

18 PHIL WONG: Hello.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: I have a question  
20 on the CEC 24 voting as a no confidence for not only  
21 the Chancellor and the mayor's handling of the  
22 reopening or lack thereof. What is the number one  
23 complaint that you have in your district?

24 PHIL WONG: The number one complaint is  
25 that the kids are not receiving the education they



2 are entitled to. They believe they have seen  
3 Catholic schools that's open five days and they  
4 believe the public school should do the same or learn  
5 from them to start opening five days. And, as I  
6 hear, there are kids leaving the public school system  
7 and now entering Catholic school. A very, very  
8 concerned about that.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: I heard that, too.  
10 Just in the-- We're also hearing, at least in my  
11 office. I don't know if you are hearing it over at  
12 CEC, that some of the remote learners are finishing  
13 their work within 10 or 15 minutes and have nothing  
14 to do the rest of the day.

15 PHIL WONG: That is correct. The  
16 instruction that is being offered remotely is not  
17 adequate. The kids have nothing to do like before 10  
18 or 11 AM and that is a big problem.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: So, in your  
20 district, not the CEC wants full in person five days  
21 a week in school? You're saying that?

22 PHIL WONG: That is correct. That is  
23 correct.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Okay. Thank you.

25 PHIL WONG: Sure.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Thanks so much.  
3 Thank you, Chair.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Treyger, I will  
5 pass it back to you.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you very  
7 much, Malcolm, and thank you to my colleagues and to  
8 everyone who came to testify today. You know, I want  
9 to summarize by going back to a point I made earlier  
10 in the hearing about trust being broken in the impact  
11 of that trust being broken. The mayor publicly said  
12 that the majority of families indicated to his  
13 administration that they wanted in person, hybrid  
14 blended model when, in fact, the survey results are  
15 showing the opposite, not because that families and  
16 kids don't want, you know, the critical services of  
17 the in-person services, but because, I think, trust  
18 remains broken and shattered as far as the ability to  
19 operationalize all of the safety plans and to have  
20 the staffing and everything in place. The mayor  
21 promised that those children who would opt for in  
22 person learning would receive in person instruction,  
23 but, as I mentioned before, that is not the case for  
24 many children. They have in person study hall,  
25 virtual study hall, without a teacher present. And I

2 am a former teacher, so you cannot pull a fast one on  
3 me. That is not instruction. That is simply someone  
4 supervising kids logging on to zoom if they have  
5 Internet in their class. If they have a device. The  
6 mayor, you know, made a promise that every child who  
7 needed technology and Internet already had it and  
8 today we finally learned that, as of yesterday, over  
9 72,000 requests are still in the system for children  
10 in need of devices and Internet. We learned today  
11 from President Mulgrew, that it was only until July  
12 that the administration began to think of what a  
13 reopening plan might look like for the school year  
14 ahead when, in fact, under normal years, you begin  
15 planning for the next school year back in, maybe,  
16 February. Even sooner. So, there is an expression  
17 that I apply from the school system to hear. When  
18 you fail to plan, you plan to fail. And our  
19 children, our educators, our families, our parents  
20 deserve so much better. The mayor promised that he  
21 had a childcare plan. There is a childcare crisis  
22 right now. There is no question about it. Many  
23 educators themselves are parents. One educator  
24 reached out to meet that the cost of childcare for  
25 her kids exceeds what she brings home in pay.

2 Children of essential workers, folks who are working  
3 in our hospitals and emergency care centers who are  
4 seeing spikes in cases, they have been failed. They  
5 deserve so much better. In any part of our function,  
6 as Leonie Haimson mentioned, the Council is limited  
7 in our authority, but we do have the power of  
8 oversight. We have the power to shine light on  
9 problems and we will continue to do everything within  
10 our power. I want to note, for the record, that the  
11 administration might be annoyed to answer questions  
12 for four hours or so, but, if they would've given us  
13 the information that we asked for back in May-- if  
14 they would've given us the information that we asked  
15 for in a letter that we sent them in the summer, if  
16 they would've showed up to my hearing on September  
17 3rd, we could have addressed many of the questions  
18 that I had to repeat not for the first time, second  
19 time, but third, fourth times at this hearing today.  
20 So, no one is going to lecture this body or this  
21 committee and this Council and the staff about ground  
22 rules when, in fact, they have failed to provide the  
23 transparency and the full information that we need.  
24 We don't even know the cost of this private school  
25 bus company deal at a time when we just heard from

2 providers-- and I know this personally-- how vital  
3 the Learning to Work program it is. It's not just a  
4 program. It is a support system. It is a lifeline.  
5 It is a connection. It literally keeps them in  
6 school. That is what is at stake right now. This is  
7 not a program that, you know-- this is a lifeline.  
8 A support system for kids. The community school  
9 program. So, the city administration has to answer  
10 why they prioritized a private school bus company  
11 bailout over the childcare needs of families, over  
12 providers that are doing lifesaving work and came  
13 changing work for kids on an everyday basis. We are  
14 going to continue to demand answers because we have a  
15 lot more questions that we have after today's hearing  
16 and I hope that we try to clarify some of the  
17 confusion, although, with the stuff that we are  
18 today, I think there is going to call but  
19 unfortunately, being even more confusion. But we  
20 have a lot more work to do to clarify and to provide  
21 full transparency to our school families who deserve  
22 nothing less. And I will close by saying, but again,  
23 every tweet from City Hall, everything they put out  
24 at night or everything is not done without the  
25 implementation of our school communities. They

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2 implement everything. From early childhood, K to 12,  
3 all of them. They implement all of the guidance. We  
4 are in debt to our school communities, to our  
5 families, everyone. And that includes PTA, CEC, all  
6 of our school support systems. The advocates here.  
7 We are in debt to you. We appreciate you and we have  
8 a lot more work to do. And, with that, I will  
9 adjourn-- Oh?

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We're going to turn  
11 it over to Chair Levine.

12 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Oh. Forgive me.  
13 Chair Levine, forgive me. My extraordinary  
14 colleague. The fellow co-Chair of the Mark Caucus.  
15 I want folks to know that I follow Chair Levine, his  
16 twitter, to get all the latest critical health  
17 updates. He has been extraordinary in giving  
18 transparency to the public. He helps me get  
19 information, as well. He's done a fantastic job as  
20 the Chair of the Health Committee. Please, Mark  
21 Levine, if you want to close us out. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: I certainly will.  
23 Thank you, Chair Treyger. There is nobody in New  
24 York City who cares more than you about the welfare  
25 of our students, of our staff, of our school system

2 and I want to thank you for prioritizing health and  
3 safety throughout this entire crisis. You and I  
4 communicate constantly. I really value that  
5 partnership. In our work is not done. This crisis  
6 is not over. This pandemic is not over. And I think  
7 this hearing is been extremely important today both  
8 for the questions that we answered and for the  
9 questions that were not answered. We are not going  
10 to stop until we get the information that the public  
11 deserves, that parents deserve, that we need to  
12 ensure that we are living up to the highest standards  
13 of safety in this pandemic. And that requires clear,  
14 consistent enforcement of the protocols we have  
15 established. To test. To contact trees. To monitor  
16 the people's health. To make critical decisions  
17 about closing classrooms and schools and entire  
18 districts. And that requires information offered to  
19 be transparent, real-time way to the public. And we  
20 do not have some of that information today. This  
21 hearing has highlighted the shortcomings that we must  
22 address. And to all of you who have participated,  
23 the parents, teachers, the experts, thank you for  
24 coming today. For being on the record. For staying  
25 and for fighting on behalf of the young people whose

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2 responsibility we hold in our hands. So, thank you,  
3 everybody, and be safe.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Just one thing,  
5 Chairs.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes, Malcom?

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I just want to make  
8 sure we don't cut off your colleagues. Council  
9 member Holden, your hand is up. I don't know if that  
10 was from before and we forgot to put it down. Can we  
11 unmute Council member Holden for a minute, please?

12 There we go.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: I just want to  
14 thank both Chairs for this hearing. We have learned  
15 a lot, but I still-- you know, I agree with Chair  
16 Levine that we do have a lot of questions that were  
17 unanswered. I know the Chancellor-- I've been a  
18 critic of the Chancellor for a while and I think he  
19 proved me right with the attempted reopening a number  
20 of times of the school year. I don't think they were  
21 prepared. I agree with Chair Treyger. And, by the  
22 way, I want to thank him. If they just took some of  
23 his recommendations on reopening, they would've had a  
24 much better time and I just thank him for just a  
25 great work and, like you just said, Chair Treyger,



2 about Chair Levine looking at his tweets, I often  
3 look at yours and really, really felt that you had  
4 great ideas on reopening and I just think they should  
5 have listened to a few of them. Certainly, the  
6 earlier years. The younger students should have been  
7 given priority. Also, at risk students, special  
8 needs students, students with learning disabilities  
9 should be given priority because many of them can't  
10 work remotely. It's impossible. So, that should  
11 have been a top priority and I don't think it was.  
12 But I just want to thank you, Chair Treyger, again,  
13 for your great work on education and thank you for  
14 this hearing and I loved the exchange with the  
15 Translator. You're not going to tell us how to run a  
16 hearing and you're not going to tell us how to do our  
17 jobs. And I thank you for that. Standing up to him.

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you. Thank  
19 you, Council member Holden. And on that note, I just  
20 want to say that I worked on a proposal with actual  
21 educators and parents and families throughout the  
22 summer. I waited for the state to release their  
23 guidance to see if it was consistent and I felt that  
24 we had to pass it equity test for kids and for  
25 families. There are children, particularly young

2 children, children with special needs, multilingual  
3 learners, and others where one day a week is just not  
4 cutting it. Working parents facing impossible  
5 childcare situations. And we have to make our  
6 largest school system in the country more manageable.  
7 I think we are too big to come back at once, but we  
8 could phase this in and making sure we have the  
9 resources to operationalize safety plans and have a  
10 responsible phased-in approach. And, having said  
11 that, there is no excuse why, to this day, thousands  
12 of children still don't have a device and Internet.  
13 That's just inexcusable to me. And I just want to  
14 give a big shout out and thanks as we close to the  
15 extraordinary counsel staff. They are extraordinary.  
16 They work even harder than all of us and they are  
17 great. My staff and my Chief of Staff and others.  
18 My entire staff in my team, I think all of you for  
19 your great work and your sacrifice on behalf of the  
20 city of New York. And, with that, I will adjourn.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council member

22 Treyger, before you do gavel out, they wanted me to  
23 remind the public that's on and watching that next  
24 week we have another hearing. Reopening New York  
25 City public schools' impact on students with

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2 disabilities. Same bat time. Same bat channel. So,  
3 I'm now done. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes. We'll be  
5 back. We'll be back. There's more. Thank you,  
6 Malcom. Thank you all. This hearing is adjourned.

7 [gavel]

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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 October 30, 2020