

1 BEFORE THE NEW YORK STATE SENATE  
2 STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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3 PUBLIC HEARING:

4 TO EXAMINE THE MERITS OF EXTENDING  
5 MAYORAL CONTROL OF SCHOOLS IN NEW YORK CITY

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7 Senate Hearing Room  
8 250 Broadway - 19th Floor  
9 New York, New York 10017

10 May 19, 2016  
11 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

12 PRESIDING:

13 Senator Carl L. Marcellino  
14 Chair

15 PRESENT:

16 Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr.

17 Senator Thomas D. Croci

18 Senator Simcha Felder

19 Senator Martin J. Golden

20 Senator Liz Krueger

21 Senator Jose R. Peralta

22 Senator Bill Perkins

23 Senator Toby Ann Stavisky

24  
25

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1           SENATOR MARCELLINO: My name is the  
2           Senator Carl Marcellino. I am the Chairman of the  
3           Education Committee.

4           We are here for a hearing on mayoral control.  
5           This is the second of two hearings.

6           We held one up in Albany. Several groups  
7           testified, including the Mayor and the Chancellor.  
8           We were very pleased that they were there, and  
9           questions were asked, and many were answered, but  
10          many were given the answer, that "We don't have the  
11          answer at this point, and we will get back to you."

12          For the most part, that has not happened.

13          We have not heard back from the Mayor's  
14          Office on most of the questions that were asked and  
15          left unanswered at the last hearing.

16          That's a disappointment.

17          I'm sure, and I hope, that those answers will  
18          be forthcoming.

19          We have about a dozen questions or so, and  
20          there's about ten that are still outstanding.

21          We'll provide a list to the Chancellor so  
22          that she can take it back with her, to know that,  
23          these questions, we still would like to hear some  
24          answers to.

25          Some questions -- answers to questions that

1 appeared in some Senators' offices late yesterday  
2 afternoon, which was interesting.

3 But we are missing the Mayor, and he's the  
4 chief player, and he's the person in charge, and we  
5 would like him to have been here.

6 We understand he's busy.

7 Everybody is.

8 Everybody at this table is busy.

9 We all have things we would -- we could be  
10 doing now in our districts, but we are here because  
11 this is an important issue.

12 We're talking about the leadership of the  
13 largest school system in the state of New York,  
14 dealing with approximately 1.1 million children.

15 And that's what this is all about,  
16 "children," and that's what I want to stress here.

17 We're asking these questions to find out if  
18 the children of the city of New York are being  
19 well-served by their educational system; and that's  
20 important to us.

21 I taught in the city of New York for  
22 20 years, a former schoolteacher at Grover Cleveland  
23 High School, long may it wave.

24 And it is -- it was then, and it is now,  
25 still a functioning, vibrant school.

1           And I recently visited, with  
2           Chancellor Fariña, and we took a little tour of the  
3           building. Reminiscent.

4           I was still looking for some of my colleagues  
5           that I saw there way back when. But, some of them  
6           have retired, some of them are still teaching, some  
7           of them moved on to other places.

8           But the educational system, and the process  
9           in dealing with the children, is ongoing, and  
10          mayoral control is an integral part of that.

11          It's still a relatively new experiment in  
12          education. It's not done everywhere.

13          In some cities they're looking at it. And,  
14          in fact, in many -- in some cases, are reluctant to  
15          take it on, because they're looking at New York and  
16          they're seeing what they consider to be a mixed bag  
17          of goods.

18          So we're looking for answers today.

19          My colleagues are here with me, and I'm  
20          pleased to be joined with:

21          Joe Addabbo -- to my left, Senator Addabbo,  
22          Senator Simcha Felder;

23          Senator Marty Golden and Senator Tom Croci.

24          Others will come and go as they can.

25          Hearings are being held, meetings are being held,

1 throughout the day.

2 People will come in later. People will  
3 leave.

4 Hopefully, we will get the list.

5 We have several speakers on the list  
6 available to us to come, who have volunteered to  
7 speak.

8 And our first speaker of the day will be  
9 Carmen Fariña.

10 Chancellor Fariña, please, take the  
11 microphone.

12 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Sitting next to me  
13 is Ursulina Ramirez, chief of staff, and, chief  
14 operating officer, new title.

15 Good morning, State Education Committee  
16 Chairperson Marcellino, Ranking Minority  
17 Leader Latimer; New York City Education Subcommittee  
18 Chairman Felder; members of the Senate Education  
19 Committee; and all the Senators attending today.

20 SENATOR MARCELLINO: With one correction,  
21 Chancellor.

22 Senator Latimer could not be here, so  
23 Senator Addabbo is sitting in, in his stead.

24 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Okay, great.  
25 Thank you.

1 I'm grateful for the opportunity to testify  
2 on the importance of extending mayoral control of  
3 New York City schools.

4 I also appreciate how many of you have worked  
5 closely with us to bring resources to your specific  
6 districts, and I look forward to continuing work  
7 together on the issues that are important to all of  
8 us.

9 Mayoral control has given the people of  
10 New York City a clear person to hold accountable for  
11 the performance of their schools, and mayors have  
12 responded by giving our school system more attention  
13 and resources than ever.

14 Mayoral control has created a stable,  
15 practical, efficient system, where we don't have to  
16 worry that funding and resources that are there one  
17 year will be gone the next.

18 This allows us to conceive of and execute  
19 long-term initiatives for supporting our students  
20 and schools.

21 It has allowed me to select the best and  
22 brightest superintendents to lead our community  
23 education districts.

24 Superintendents must now have ten years of  
25 pedagogical experience, including at least three as

1 a principal, and must have a record of success in  
2 advancing student learning and facilitating  
3 community involvement and input in schools.

4 Also, it helps us with hiring and recruitment  
5 of people.

6 Across this country, I'm getting resumes all  
7 the time, and they want to know that they're  
8 applying to a system that has certain goals and  
9 certain belief systems.

10 And it's important that that be something  
11 that they apply to, and then feel comfortable that  
12 they will be supported in.

13 If you notice from my prepared speech, I've  
14 cut out a lot of it so we can get to the questions  
15 and answers.

16 But perhaps the most --

17 What?

18 SENATOR MARCELLINO: Bless you.

19 [Laughter.]

20 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: I know there's a  
21 certain attention span that people have, including  
22 me, so I want to make sure that we get to the things  
23 that you're most concerned about.

24 Perhaps the most important consideration,  
25 though, is whether or not mayoral control has had

1 measurable impacts on student achievement.

2 Anyone in search of proof need to look no  
3 further than the fact that, under mayoral control --  
4 and this goes back to the Bloomberg years as well --  
5 more students than ever are graduating and fewer are  
6 dropping out.

7 Last year, the year's (indiscernible) year  
8 graduation topped 70 percent, and this also includes  
9 many of our English-language learners, as well as  
10 special-ed students.

11 And 70 percent is good, but it's certainly  
12 not better, and I -- we want to make sure that we  
13 continue working on that to at least 80 percent or  
14 over.

15 Mayor de Blasio came into office  
16 January 2014, with a commitment to provide  
17 New Yorkers with free, full-day, high-quality pre-K  
18 for all.

19 The beginning of our first school year, we  
20 expanded pre-K to more than 53,000.

21 There are more than 68,500 children right now  
22 in our pre-K.

23 And I want to be clear that, to me, it's not  
24 about the number. It's about the quality.

25 When I visit schools, I look to see: What is

1       happening in these pre-K's that may not have  
2       happened before?

3               And, first and foremost, there's a lot of  
4       talk going on in our English-language-learner  
5       schools that's particularly important.

6               There is at least a minimum of one  
7       parent-engagement day per month.

8               There are trained supervisors to work with  
9       these teachers so these teachers can develop their  
10      craft.

11              And the question I've been asking over and  
12      over again is: How is kindergarten better this year  
13      because your students were in pre-K last year?

14              And resoundingly from teachers I'm hearing:  
15      The kindergarten students have more stamina.  
16      They're able to focus. They come in with more  
17      language skills.

18              That's the beauty of pre-K.

19              I'm also proud of what we have accomplished  
20      for our English-language learners.

21              We created a standalone division for ELLs,  
22      and have been actively expanding innovative  
23      programs.

24              Last year we created 40 dual-language  
25      programs. And this year we're opening 36 new

1 dual-language and bilingual programs.

2 As the daughter of Spanish immigrants, and a  
3 former English-language learner myself, I know  
4 firsthand that strong education makes all the  
5 difference.

6 Currently, there are more than  
7 180 dual-language programs in 150 schools throughout  
8 New York City, and they are in many languages:  
9 French, Haitian-Creole, Polish.

10 Got a request from one the Senators to do  
11 Albanian in one of our districts. And if we can  
12 find the students and the teachers, why not?

13 Being a multi-lingual person is part of the  
14 New York City experience.

15 This is why mayoral control is so important.

16 It allows us to create and rapidly expand  
17 citywide solutions to the unique issues our students  
18 face.

19 In serving English-language learners and all  
20 students, we improve dramatically how the DOE  
21 communicates and engages with parents. Partners --  
22 parents are partners in everything you do.

23 This year alone, I have done over 100 town  
24 hall meetings.

25 We have created meetings with CEC presidents

1 on Saturdays, rather than during the week, so we can  
2 pay more attention to major issues.

3 And, also, our parent-engagement office has  
4 been increased with personnel so we can have more  
5 translations.

6 And this year we have even created a  
7 grandparents advisory group, because we're finding  
8 in certain parts of the city that grandparents are  
9 actually raising the students, and it's really  
10 important that we help them hone their skills.

11 We're thinking outside the box with  
12 student-led conferences.

13 We've increased our parent attendance at  
14 schools by 38 percent this year, and student-led  
15 conferences allow students to articulate their  
16 academic progress to their families, and they sit at  
17 the parent-teacher conference with their parents,  
18 often as translators; but more often than that,  
19 actually being able to explain in their own words  
20 what they need more help in.

21 Recently, I was in a fourth-grade class,  
22 where the teacher was explaining to the parent that  
23 there are certain days of the week the child doesn't  
24 do the homework as well as they should. And the  
25 child actually said to the mother: See, I told you,

1 you overprogram me on Wednesdays.

2 And having a child hear what he or she needs  
3 to do better, to me, is more important than just a  
4 lot of things being said that don't have impact.

5 We cannot be successful without meaningful,  
6 sustained parent engagement at a variety of levels.

7 We have added 40 minutes with parent  
8 engagement every single week. First four months of  
9 this year, attendance increased 38 percent.

10 And thanks to our multilingual Raise Your  
11 Hand Campaign, more parents have run for their seats  
12 in their local education councils.

13 In 2013, just 729 parents applied.

14 Last year we saw nearly 1,300 parents apply,  
15 an increase of 75 percent.

16 We are investing \$23 million more in arts  
17 education each year.

18 We now have the highest number of art  
19 teachers in a decade, and 22,000 more students  
20 across 113 middle and high schools of receiving arts  
21 instruction.

22 I want to say about the arts, it's always  
23 been very close to me and something I'm passionate  
24 about.

25 And this year we also started something

1 called "Teen Thursdays," where all the museums in  
2 the city of New York actually host teenagers.

3 And any of you who have lived with a teenager  
4 know that hosting teenagers after school in groups  
5 of 30 to 60 is not the easiest thing in the world.

6 And many of our cultural institutions  
7 had embraced this, to the degree that the  
8 Metropolitan Museum has hosted 4,000 teenagers on  
9 Fridays, through their museums, mostly studying  
10 American history.

11 We have hired 250 new guidance counselors to  
12 support students.

13 And we recently created new third-grade  
14 gifted-and-talented classes opening next year in  
15 only -- in the districts in the city that didn't  
16 have them: 7, 12, 16, and 23.

17 And in this development, all districts will  
18 have at least one program.

19 These initiatives, and many others like them,  
20 came across because of parent and community input,  
21 but mayoral control is what made it possible to  
22 implement them so quickly.

23 The investment in the arts was made with City  
24 money. The expansion of guidance services was made  
25 by the City's commitment.

1           Without mayoral control, and the support of  
2           this Mayor, these initiatives would not have  
3           happened.

4           Mayoral control also allows us to plan more  
5           fully and with more confidence for the future.

6           Without mayoral control, it would be nearly  
7           impossible for a mayor to lay out a long-term,  
8           detailed vision for our schools, such as, Equity and  
9           Excellence.

10          Equity and Excellence is a program that  
11          I believe totally in.

12          This Saturday we're having a conference at  
13          which almost 1,000 school leaders and CEC members  
14          will be attending, to see it laid out, in workshops,  
15          principal to principal.

16          Universal literacy program places reading  
17          coaches and teachers with experience, who will be  
18          trained over the summer, in many -- ultimately, in  
19          every elementary school right now in four districts  
20          in the city.

21          Algebra For All, AP For All, Computer Science  
22          For All, seeks to provide students with skills and  
23          courses that they need to be successful in today's  
24          colleges, but also in the job market of the future.

25          College access for all middle schools will

1 provide students earlier exposure to college; or  
2 college access for all high schools, to ensure our  
3 students have access to the resources they need to  
4 pursue a path to college.

5 Yesterday I attended a college fair in City  
6 Councilmember Comrie's district. And I did a survey  
7 about how many students there will be the first in  
8 their families to go to college.

9 And an overwhelming number, almost  
10 60 percent, will be the first.

11 So there are lots of challenges, not only to  
12 get into college, but to stay in college, and to  
13 make families understand the importance of that.

14 All students, regardless of what type of  
15 school they attend, deserve to benefit from the  
16 combined knowledge of our supremely talented and  
17 gifted teachers.

18 The District-Charter Program will pair  
19 district and charter school together, to foster  
20 strong relationships and the sharing of best  
21 practices.

22 I went to visit a program yesterday that has  
23 a strong relation, in Brooklyn, with a middle school  
24 and a charter school in the same building, where  
25 they're doing reading buddies with each other.

1           We have done strong partnerships also with  
2 un-Common-schools network which, now does training  
3 for some of our teachers and principals on teacher  
4 feedback.

5           We believe that support like this is key to  
6 helping our most disadvantaged students thrive.

7           This is the philosophy we've used in our  
8 approach towards supporting and improving struggling  
9 schools.

10          The Renewal Schools Program, another cohesive  
11 citywide program, is only possible because of  
12 mayoral control. It focuses on supporting schools  
13 and students while providing clear academic  
14 benchmarks.

15          It's really important to understand that the  
16 commissioner, MaryEllen Elia, has actually been  
17 visiting our 27 persistently-struggling schools, and  
18 has been impressed by the amount of resources we've  
19 put in these schools, the amount of training we're  
20 giving these teachers, and, also, by the amount of  
21 leadership that we've had to change in some of these  
22 schools, to make sure the schools are successful.

23          In these particular schools we have training.

24          We've extended learning time by an hour each  
25 day.

1           We've given them very targeted resources.

2           And, also, we ensure that we are visiting  
3 them on a regular basis to ensure that the work  
4 that's happening is of high level.

5           We have seen real progress.

6           70 percent of renewal schools have increased  
7 their graduation rates, up from 50 percent a year  
8 ago.

9           We have been able to achieve this, in large  
10 part, by working with our partners to ensure that  
11 the schools have access to our best principals.

12          We are receiving whatever support they need.

13          The program is also showing success in terms  
14 of parent engagement.

15          And something that we are particularly proud  
16 of, that they are visiting each other and actually  
17 seeing wonderful processes in all the schools.

18          Together we have made remarkable progress,  
19 and we have so much work ahead.

20          To continue building on the critical progress  
21 we've made, and to confidently plan on a scale  
22 that's necessary, I ask you to consider at least a  
23 three-year extension of mayoral control.

24          As someone who has proudly dedicated my  
25 entire life to education, I know this is necessary

1 for students to thrive.

2 As a veteran of four different New York City  
3 public-school systems, I know what works, and what  
4 didn't work.

5 I was part of the original centralization  
6 model, where you got a number; and based on your  
7 number, you got assigned to a school or a  
8 principalship regardless of whether you were the  
9 right person for that school.

10 I was a superintendent under  
11 decentralization, and knew that, sometimes, even  
12 appointing a principal to a school took two years  
13 because of the politics involved.

14 I was a regional superintendent, which I also  
15 understand had some really strong value to it, but,  
16 ultimately, maybe not the consistency, because if  
17 you were in a school in The Bronx, there was a big  
18 difference what was expected of you, from the school  
19 perhaps in Brooklyn.

20 On behalf of all our students, parents,  
21 families, educators, our city, and it's future,  
22 I thank you for the opportunity to testify before  
23 you today, and ask you to allow us to continue to do  
24 what works.

25

1           SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you.

2           We've been joined by Senator Toby Stavisky,  
3 coming to join us.

4           And, let me start off with a multi-part  
5 question. I'm going to ask it at once, and perhaps  
6 you could address it.

7           Recently in one of the newspapers -- local  
8 newspapers, "The New York Post," there was an  
9 article which quoted Police Commissioner Bratton,  
10 telling the parents of students, to "Pat your kids  
11 down before they leave the house because they're  
12 picking up weapons in the schools."

13           There's been a twenty -- according to the  
14 article, approximately, a 26 percent increase in the  
15 amount of weapons found in the schools. And he felt  
16 that the parents should be checking the kids before  
17 they leave the house.

18           I don't remember, in 20-plus years of  
19 teaching, anybody ever saying anything like that  
20 before, telling the parent to pat their kids down  
21 and check them for weapons as they leave their  
22 houses.

23           I think that's a bit much.

24           But if it's true that there has been an  
25 increase in the amount of weapons seized, I'd like

1 to know why, and what are we doing about it to stop  
2 it?

3 Schools -- I've heard you've been quoted  
4 recently, as they're closing a particular school,  
5 and you want to close a few more are coming.

6 If we're working so well, how many new -- how  
7 many schools are going to be closed? Where are they  
8 located? Why are they being closed?

9 These are questions I think that have to be  
10 answered, and we'd like some of those answers now,  
11 if you can give them.

12 And if not, we'd like to see answers come to  
13 us as quickly as possible.

14 We gave you a list of the questions that were  
15 not answered in the prior hearing. Those are the  
16 ones we consider was most important.

17 There were several others that we just didn't  
18 think were that significant to warrant a rehash.

19 But, the list was -- has been provided. We  
20 hope that some of those answers can come to us at  
21 a -- in a timely way.

22 But I would like the answer to the questions  
23 about the school closures; and the potential for  
24 violence and weapons in the schools, because that,  
25 to me, is extremely significant, protection of the

1 both the students and the staff -- the teaching  
2 staff, in the buildings.

3 I don't know that a firing of a principal is  
4 going to resolve that problem.

5 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Well, first and  
6 foremost, let me take on the school closures.

7 I was certainly here under the prior  
8 administration when schools were closed, and, in  
9 many cases, not with a lot of community input.

10 We're looking at school closures a little  
11 differently.

12 And I'm looking at it from the point of view  
13 is: What's too small to succeed?

14 When I came on board, we had almost  
15 100 schools that had less than 150 students in them.

16 As you know, you cannot give resources to  
17 students in schools that don't have a guidance  
18 counselor after-school program.

19 And those numbers don't generate the  
20 resources.

21 I will tell you that as a -- you know, having  
22 done this all my life, that I know, anything less  
23 than 300, or a little bit more, middle schools don't  
24 allow you to have the certified teachers, the  
25 after-school programs.

1           So, we see looked at school closures from two  
2 points of view:

3           Does it make sense, in this particular  
4 neighborhood, that there are other equally good or  
5 much better schools that these students could be  
6 moved to?

7           Which is exactly what we did, to ensure that  
8 the students are in a place where they have the  
9 resources they need.

10          So school closures this year, we did three  
11 school closures, with one, I believe, happening now.  
12 And next year, probably not many more than that.

13          But before we close a school: We have  
14 community meetings. We visit the schools, we talk  
15 to the principals. And in every single case, we  
16 also worked with the affiliated unions in terms of,  
17 if these are principals who we have another opening  
18 for, we move them.

19          But you can't -- we had schools with 67 kids.  
20 We had a school with 24 kids.

21          SENATOR MARCELLINO: But why would that be,  
22 if there's schools within the immediate area, if  
23 these are elementary schools, and most of the  
24 parents or the kids who live in the outlying  
25 community would be going to that school?

1 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Not necessarily.

2 SENATOR MARCELLINO: They have choice and  
3 they're walking with their feet?

4 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Well, partially,  
5 but that wasn't the major thing.

6 We had a high school with 40 kids, because  
7 they were allowed to stay open and no one was  
8 applying there. There was an enrollment issue.

9 In middle schools, we had a lot of schools  
10 that were set up around specialty themes, but you  
11 had four or five middle schools in the same  
12 building, and one school didn't have the resources.

13 So, we're not only closing, we're also  
14 merging and consolidating.

15 This year we had 25 schools that we merged  
16 and consolidated into 12 schools.

17 Again, lots of neighborhood community input.

18 But the idea was, to increase the resources  
19 for the students, and give the students more choice  
20 in the curriculum areas.

21 And, again, we visit communities, we give  
22 them choices.

23 And one particular middle school that had the  
24 67 students, we gave parents a choice of other  
25 schools in the neighborhood that they could apply

1 to, to make sure there's no disruption.

2 In the past, what happens is, instead of  
3 closures, you do what we call "phase-outs."

4 And "phase-outs" meant that you gave them  
5 four years' notice that a school was going to close,  
6 and you let the students, over time, leave the  
7 building.

8 And that actually was much more problematic  
9 because, when teachers got wind of a phase-out, the  
10 good teachers, in many cases, ran to open market, to  
11 go somewhere else. And, also, a lot of parents lost  
12 faith in the school because they knew, over time, it  
13 was not going to be there.

14 So I do think closing, and giving parents  
15 options, is the right way to go for schools that are  
16 too small to succeed.

17 And I think also, with mergers and  
18 consolidations, it's how to do two schools together.

19 I'll give you an example of middle schools in  
20 The Bronx.

21 There are four schools in the building.

22 Two of them are doing quite well. One not  
23 so well. And the reality is, it had, maybe,  
24 150 students.

25 There was plenty of capability to stay in the

1 same building and work with one of the other  
2 principals, and ensure that those students now,  
3 which they didn't before, have full after-school  
4 programs, become part of the community school  
5 program which is in that building.

6 So, to me, it's all about the kids: What  
7 works better for the students?

8 And the mergers and consolidations work.

9 As far as Commissioner Bratton's statement,  
10 I was with Commissioner Bratton actually, yesterday?

11 You don't remember.

12 We had a team-up day, where we went to  
13 schools around the city, to talk about, you know,  
14 NYPD and principals and teachers working better  
15 together.

16 I think the one thing he and I agree, that  
17 parents have to take some responsibilities.

18 I don't think I would use the expression  
19 "tap-down" (sic), but, you know, a lot of the  
20 weapons that are coming to schools, particularly in  
21 high school, are coming from homes.

22 And if parents have weapons in their homes,  
23 keeping them under lock and key, to me, seems like a  
24 parent responsibility. And I think that's  
25 important.

1           As far as safety is concerned in the  
2 schools -- and I visit a lot of schools -- I don't  
3 feel our schools are not safe.

4           You always will have a few kids who do  
5 something they shouldn't do.

6           But in terms of the weapons that are in our  
7 schools, they are generally confiscated quickly.  
8 And, again, parents get called in, and then the  
9 students have to take responsibility for what  
10 they've done.

11           SENATOR MARCELLINO: What happens to a kid  
12 who has a weapon?

13           CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Well, it depends  
14 on the issue and the type of weapon.

15           They're suspended, and there's a whole  
16 process that has to be done.

17           And then, of course, the parents are always  
18 called, and some kind of a repercussion takes place.

19           It depends on the school's particular issue,  
20 and what the child did with the weapon. Or, in some  
21 cases, didn't do anything; was just caught through  
22 the scanning process.

23           SENATOR MARCELLINO: I notice we've been  
24 joined by Senator Peralta, and Senator Perkins also.

25           Thank you for coming.

1 All right I will pass the baton on to a --  
2 Senator Addabbo.

3 SENATOR ADDABBO: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

4 First, let me thank you and your staff for  
5 organizing this hearing today.

6 And I do appreciate when you say that the  
7 focus is about the children and the system.

8 And I totally agree, it should always be  
9 about the children and the system or the structure.

10 So, Chancellor, thank you very much for being  
11 here today as well.

12 And if we can focus on the system or the  
13 structure, because, back in 2002, when I was in the  
14 city council, and Mayor Bloomberg at the time had  
15 this idea about mayoral control, I actually thought  
16 it was problematic about the name being called  
17 "mayoral control," because, if you think about it,  
18 when we do our streets, it's not mayoral control of  
19 our streets or roadways. It's Department of  
20 Transportation.

21 And so the mayor's control over our schools  
22 should be considered the Department of Education,  
23 not mayoral control.

24 Actually, it should be local government of  
25 schools, or local control.

1           So that being said, let's take the  
2           consideration, a hypothetical, that if the State  
3           Legislature did not do anything, if it was to lapse  
4           come June, and we no longer have the Department of  
5           Ed or mayoral control, government control of our  
6           schools, talk us through what you think would be the  
7           ramifications for our children if we were to go back  
8           to the old Board of Ed or some other structure.

9           CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: I would say it's  
10          probably going to be a nightmare, but I'll try to  
11          temper that a little bit.

12          I think the -- who makes ultimate decisions,  
13          you need someone to be accountable. And you need  
14          someone -- and to some degree, you know, it's  
15          happening already.

16          Who do you point a finger at?

17          People don't call when you're doing a good  
18          job and say, Thank you very much.

19          But I do think it's important to say, okay,  
20          this is the person that I'm holding accountable.  
21          These are the things they've said publicly they're  
22          going to stand for, and tick off the boxes as they  
23          do it.

24          We said we were going to do pre-K.

25          We said we were going to do middle school

1 after-school.

2 We said we were going to do a higher rate of  
3 high school graduates.

4 Those are all things we put on our agenda to  
5 get done, and that's what I believe we have  
6 accomplished.

7 I think, for me personally, in terms of being  
8 a chancellor, it means -- and I don't even know what  
9 the legality would be if we go back to a board -- it  
10 means you have to convince X number of people to  
11 vote, and have a unanimous vote, or a majority vote,  
12 on the issues you want to do; which, to some degree  
13 is going to necessarily slow us up on some of the  
14 things we want to do.

15 I remember as a school-board member --  
16 I mean, a superintendent, and, actually,  
17 Mayor de Blasio was on my school board, that I had  
18 to meet with every member of the school board,  
19 one-on-one, to convince them about some of the  
20 things that we wanted to do. And it took, maybe,  
21 three or four months, and then, ultimately, nobody  
22 would agree with anybody, so we didn't get some of  
23 these things done.

24 So, to me, I do think it's going to slow the  
25 process.

1 I do think that the satisfaction of  
2 principals and teachers, overall, in the city is  
3 high. This is the highest it's ever been. We've  
4 done our own internal surveys.

5 And having people who are satisfied with  
6 their profession and working hard at what they do,  
7 I think is crucial.

8 I think the other thing we've done  
9 differently now than we did before, is that we have  
10 a lot more support, where local officials and  
11 parents have access to superintendents.

12 You know, one of the things that's different  
13 now than it was in 2002, the hierarchy is very  
14 clear.

15 It's the mayor.

16 Then it's me.

17 Then it's my superintendents.

18 And we now have 44 superintendents who have a  
19 geographical neighborhood, so many of you already  
20 know who your superintendents are. You know who you  
21 can call if there's an issue.

22 Those superintendents have all these  
23 principals accountable for them, and all of them are  
24 educators, which was not necessarily true in the  
25 past.

1           So I think we have a system that holds  
2           accountability, that has stability, and, that's  
3           evaluated.

4           I evaluate all my superintendents on several  
5           things.

6           One: How much they've engaged parents in  
7           their decision-making.

8           How much they've evaluated principals to make  
9           sure principals are doing the right job.

10          I'm just finishing by one-on-one interview  
11          with every single superintendent that works for me,  
12          and I've asked them: What's working? What's not  
13          working? What would you like to see changed a  
14          little bit? And then, also, what are you proudest  
15          of?

16          Those are the questions every one of them has  
17          to answer.

18          And, if they're not mentioning parent  
19          engagement in some form or another, then I worry.

20          And if they're not talking about professional  
21          development, which really did not exist a lot in the  
22          past, I don't feel we're moving in the right  
23          direction.

24          SENATOR ADDABBO: Just in this hypothetical  
25          other structure, should mayoral control expire, is

1       it your understanding that this new structure comes  
2       about this September of 2016? Does it come about  
3       mid-year, starting January 2017?

4               What is your understanding about, possibly, a  
5       new structure for our children?

6               CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Well, the mayoral  
7       control ends at the end of this June, so I'm  
8       assuming, unless there's another away around it,  
9       that July 1st.

10              And keep in mind, that even under Bloomberg,  
11       you had a month in that -- at one time, where there  
12       was a time -- well, it turned out being temporary,  
13       but nobody knew it at the time, and you had people,  
14       I guess, from the borough president's office  
15       representing, but no decisions were generally made  
16       at that time, because it was like a standstill kind  
17       of clock.

18              And that's -- you know, I have a sense of  
19       urgency around this job.

20              I did not come to do this job, at this stage  
21       in my life, where I want to take things slowly,  
22       unless it's something, obviously, that requires some  
23       legal looking into.

24              I want to make sure that every child in  
25       New York City is getting the education that is going

1 to make them the citizens of tomorrow.

2 So, to have anything that stops us from doing  
3 the work, I would find very detrimental.

4 SENATOR ADDABBO: It has been mentioned that  
5 the mayor is not here today.

6 We have about 12 --

7 SENATOR MARCELLINO: If he is here, could he  
8 raise his hand?

9 [Laughter.]

10 SENATOR ADDABBO: He might have come in.

11 We have about 12 session days left up in  
12 Albany. Of course, we can call special session, and  
13 all that stuff.

14 But let's say we're working with the  
15 12 calendar session days.

16 What is your strategy over those next 12 days  
17 or so, with the Mayor, coming back to Albany,  
18 answering questions, having meetings?

19 What is the strategy for the Mayor to  
20 convince the State Senate that mayoral control  
21 should be extended?

22 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: To do my job as  
23 best as I can, day after day.

24 I have been to Albany many times this year.  
25 I have met many of you, one-on-one.

1 I have, now, meetings for the next month,  
2 one-on-one, with a lot of our city council members.

3 My job is to stay focused on the kids, and  
4 what they need to do in their classrooms.

5 I have a saying, "The answer is always in the  
6 classroom."

7 But I do think that, by listening to  
8 constituents -- and, again, elected officials being  
9 constituents -- I think it's really important to  
10 say, Well, what's working for you; what's not?

11 So my job is to do what I know is -- I know  
12 best to do, which is educating kids.

13 SENATOR ADDABBO: I do, we do, appreciate  
14 your dedication to our children; and, again, I want  
15 to say thank you.

16 I guess part of that question was: Does the  
17 Mayor plan on coming back to Albany for these  
18 meetings, for these negotiations, for these, again,  
19 private meetings, with leadership?

20 But does he plan on coming back to Albany.

21 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Well, again, the  
22 Mayor was there for over four hours, as I was,  
23 sitting next to him.

24 After those four hours, we then met with the  
25 Assembly, which over 100 people were in that

1 particular room.

2 Then we met with individual interest groups  
3 that asked to meet with us.

4 So we were there an entire day. And I, from  
5 6:00 in the morning till almost 5:00 that afternoon.

6 Any Senator, or even city council member,  
7 who's asked for private meetings with me has  
8 received them.

9 And, I've met with caucuses.

10 We went out for the Black and Latino caucuses  
11 as well.

12 So, I do think we've made ourselves extremely  
13 accessible.

14 And I -- in terms of his particular schedule,  
15 I do not want to answer for him.

16 But like I said, for me, my job is to work in  
17 the city, with the schools, and the leaders of the  
18 schools, as much as I can.

19 SENATOR ADDABBO: And the last question --  
20 I may have others, but I do want my colleagues to  
21 have an opportunity to speak to you -- with the  
22 expiration of practically anything, we have the  
23 opportunity to improve.

24 That gives us this opportunity to have this  
25 kind of conversation, and, hopefully, improve the

1 structure for our children, educationally.

2 Now, Tuesday -- late Tuesday evening, the  
3 Assembly voted for a straight extender.

4 In your opinion, in talking about the  
5 opportunity to improve, do you think there's this  
6 opportunity, instead of just a straight extender, to  
7 I make these improvements, for parents', you know,  
8 input, relevancy of the CECs or PEP or  
9 administrators and teachers?

10 We have this opportunity to improve our  
11 current structure, all for the sake of our children.

12 Do you see, not only this opportunity for  
13 improvement, but maybe what improvements might you  
14 even suggest?

15 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Well, I think  
16 we've put in a lot of the improvements, only from  
17 the last time I was here, to now.

18 And in terms of parent engagement, which  
19 I guess is one of the things you're asking, when  
20 I first came on board, I remember the CECs being,  
21 to some degree -- they just met; and some came, and  
22 some didn't come.

23 So moving the CEC presidents to Saturday  
24 meetings, and also giving them specific  
25 responsibilities. One of the things I've asked them

1 to think about this year is enrollment improvements  
2 that we needed to do, because we have structures in  
3 place. It's how they're used that matter.

4 I think, also, with the CECs, we asked them  
5 to start looking at diversity issues, which I know  
6 is something that's very close to both the Mayor and  
7 I, and -- but without any mandates.

8 So, for example, you have a CEC president,  
9 District 13, David Goldsmith, who has done an  
10 unbelievable job of getting the people in his  
11 community to talk about what should this look like,  
12 and how does it look like in our community? Because  
13 there's a community-based decision-making.

14 And for any of you who have been following  
15 the press, I sat on the PEP under prior  
16 administrations, and you knew what the foregone  
17 conclusion was going to be on any vote, because it  
18 was, very much, everybody did what they were told.

19 And I'm not saying it's bad or good. I'm  
20 just saying, that's what happened.

21 We go to our PEP meetings, after having spent  
22 hours of discussion, after having the PEP members  
23 going and visiting the schools that are on the  
24 agenda, and we change our mind occasionally, based  
25 on parent input.

1           So I do think the system is there.

2           I just don't think all the structures may  
3 have been utilized to the degree they should have  
4 been.

5           I inherited a parents' department that was  
6 really more a proforma.

7           And the one of the things we asked  
8 Yolanda Torres, who's the head of the  
9 parent-engagement office, is to go out in the  
10 community and ask different communities: What do  
11 they want more of?

12           And based on what they've told us, they want  
13 more English classes, they want GED classes, they  
14 want cooking classes, they want -- it's going to  
15 depend on what they tell us they want, rather than  
16 us telling them what they need. And I think that's  
17 a major shift.

18           So the structures were there. They might not  
19 have been utilized as much as they could have been.

20           We put out publications now on a monthly  
21 basis, for new teachers, for parents, for  
22 principals.

23           A lot of our communication strategies is  
24 letting people know in as many ways as possible.

25           And, actually, with our P-Notes, which is

1 actually going out today, we've put them out to  
2 everybody.

3 CEC presidents, city council members; anyone  
4 who wants a copy of what's at least on my mind, gets  
5 it every single month.

6 So, I do think our communication and our work  
7 with parents has been really strong, and we'll  
8 continue to get even stronger.

9 And we always listen to recommendations from  
10 elected officials.

11 SENATOR ADDABBO: Again, Chancellor, I thank  
12 you so much.

13 And I just encourage you, as you have these  
14 conversations up in Albany regarding the extension,  
15 to give us that kind of input on what we can  
16 possibly do to improve the current structure to,  
17 again, increase the roles of, again, certain  
18 interests in education.

19 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: I would say the  
20 one thing is, that I am going to come back,  
21 certainly to the State Legislature, on several  
22 issues, which are legal issues, that we could use  
23 more help with.

24 And I've discussed this with the  
25 State Commissioner.

1           We need help in terms of our CTE programs.

2           We want to increase our CTE programs, and a  
3 lot of the reasons we can't --

4           (The lights go out.)

5           CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Okay.

6           SENATOR MARCELLINO: Can we stay away from  
7 the light switches in the back, please.

8           It's a little annoying.

9           CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: -- and a lot of  
10 the legislation, and I think that's the role you  
11 guys play that's very important, requires changes.

12           We can't get teachers for our pharmacy  
13 program, we can't get teachers for our health  
14 programs, because there are certain things in state  
15 stature (sic) that keep this from happening in an  
16 easy way.

17           So, definitely, that's a role that all of you  
18 can play.

19           One of the things I'm concerned about there  
20 are -- some of our major shortage areas are, for our  
21 dual-language expansion, is teachers who teach  
22 another language.

23           And I have a lot of teachers who want to  
24 teach in New York City, but they don't have  
25 reciprocal licensing.

1           So if you're teaching in Texas, which is  
2       where I'm getting a lot of requests from, there's a  
3       surplus of dual-language teachers, but they can't  
4       teach in New York City because of their licenses.

5           So there's a lot of things that we can sit  
6       down together and say, as partners: What could we  
7       do better to make some of the things that are, you  
8       know, actually stumbling blocks to our work?

9           SENATOR ADDABBO: Thank you.

10          Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11          SENATOR MARCELLINO: Just so everybody knows,  
12       and put in it perspective, the State contribution to  
13       the educational system in the city of New York is  
14       \$9 billion. We're not talking about small change  
15       here.

16          So when we discuss what's going on, we have  
17       an oversight responsibility, which we will adhere to  
18       and we will put forth.

19          So, I am pleased that our members -- the list  
20       that I have established right now is:

21       Senator Croci, Senator Golden, Senator Peralta,  
22       Senator Stavisky, and Senator Perkins.

23          That's it.

24          And Senator Felder, obviously, we'll fit in.

25          I'm going to go left to right. Whichever

1 order, we'll get --

2 SENATOR PERKINS: (Indiscernible.)

3 SENATOR MARCELLINO: -- we'll get to  
4 everybody.

5 SENATOR STAVISKY: (Indiscernible.) You're  
6 in the middle, right.

7 SENATOR MARCELLINO: Everybody will get a  
8 fair shot and a fair chance to ask questions, and we  
9 have other panels to go. So if we can keep our  
10 questions concise, and if can keep our answers as  
11 tight as we can, then we have a chance of getting  
12 out of here before midnight.

13 Senator Croci.

14 SENATOR CROCI: Well, thank you,  
15 Mr. Chairman.

16 And thank you, Senator Golden, for allowing  
17 me to jump ahead, as I'm going to have to leave  
18 early.

19 But, Chancellor, I appreciate your appearance  
20 here today.

21 I want to dovetail off of something that you  
22 raised, and then something the Chairman raised  
23 initially.

24 First, as a former chief executive of a  
25 small -- the third largest town in the state of

1 New York, when there was an initiative important to  
2 the residents of my town, and in my role as chief  
3 executive, if the Legislators in Albany wanted to  
4 discuss policy with me, I got in the car and I drove  
5 to Albany.

6 If they wanted me to come back, I got in the  
7 car and drove back to Albany.

8 I checked ego at the door, particularly when  
9 it came to the welfare of the children and the  
10 families of our community.

11 So I would just say that, in this case, we  
12 are talking about, as you have raised, and,  
13 certainly, your focus is on the families and the  
14 children that we're talking about, it's worth the  
15 chief executive coming out and appearing.

16 It's an indication to the Legislature about  
17 the importance of the issue to the chief executive.

18 And something that the Chairman raised was  
19 the security.

20 Of the 32 persistently dangerous schools in  
21 the state of New York, as rated by State Ed, 27 them  
22 are in New York City.

23 And, so, when I hear about young kids  
24 being -- being -- arming themselves with weapons on  
25 their way to school, it's because, it's not just

1 they're afraid of something in the school. It's  
2 from their house/from their home to the school,  
3 there is an issue; and inside the school, there is  
4 an issue.

5 It's not a spontaneous action that a kid  
6 decides to arm themselves.

7 So I'm concerned about some of the security  
8 questions that have been raised, and I was wondering  
9 what the school system intends to do, or the City  
10 intends to do, to ensure that, from that young  
11 person's home to the school, on the streets, that  
12 they feel safe; and then once they're inside that  
13 school, they feel safe.

14 Because the parents' expectation is, when  
15 they give their children to the school system and  
16 they enter that doorway, that they are safe and in  
17 an environment conducive to education.

18 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: I want to be very  
19 clear that, at this moment, the State and the City  
20 do not use the same template to give us safety  
21 statistics.

22 And, actually, the Commissioner and I have  
23 been talking about how do we equalize that, so when  
24 we use numbers, we're both using the same set of  
25 numbers?

1           Crime has gone down in New York City schools  
2 almost 29 percent.

3           And I will tell you again, I visit schools  
4 all the time. And I particularly have visited most  
5 of the persistently dangerous schools personally.

6           And one of the schools on that list is  
7 actually one of our gifted-and-talented schools.

8           So I want to be clear that, sometimes, it's  
9 the incident itself that -- because incidents have  
10 point systems. And what the point system will bring  
11 up is, sometimes, for one student and one incident,  
12 it increases the number.

13           So we have to be very honest about what --  
14 how we evaluate these schools, and how do -- what  
15 constitutes a crime?

16           Having said that, even one incident is one  
17 incident too many.

18           One of the things we've instituted also, with  
19 the NYPD, because a lot of these incidents,  
20 unfortunately, happen on the way to school/on the  
21 way home, we started increasing what we call "safe  
22 corridors."

23           There are many schools in our city that we  
24 know are in particularly unsafe neighborhoods.

25           So we now have a system where, at dismissal

1 time, there are extra safety officers and police  
2 department personnel, to actually have students,  
3 when they walk what they call the "safe corridor,"  
4 watched.

5 If we have incidents -- and I'm thinking of  
6 one in particular that we just saw about two weeks  
7 ago, where there were some gangs in two rival -- in  
8 two schools. And gang activity is one of the issues  
9 that raises the safety concerns in neighborhoods.

10 We now have a special unit that we work with,  
11 with NYPD, just to put in those neighborhoods.

12 We have increased school safety agents in  
13 some schools, but, more importantly, I think, we're  
14 starting retraining school safety officers.

15 How do you de-escalate issues?

16 How do you anticipate an issue even before it  
17 happens? Which is possible.

18 So I do think our schools are safe.

19 I certainly go into schools all by myself.

20 People also always shocked. I walk in the  
21 building, all by myself. Where's my entourage?

22 I don't take an entourage.

23 I really feel that our public schools are as  
24 safe as they can be, but always -- there's always  
25 room for improvement.

1 SENATOR CROCI: Thank you.

2 SENATOR MARCELLINO: Senator Golden.

3 SENATOR GOLDEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

4 Thank you, Chancellor, for being here today,  
5 and thank you for the good work that you do in the  
6 school system.

7 It's a difficult school system, but some of  
8 the questions I asked the last time are going to be  
9 very similar to the questions I'm going to ask  
10 today, so there will be few surprises here.

11 I still believe you have to be an MIT  
12 graduate to traverse your computer system and your  
13 technology system in trying to look up schools.

14 What money goes into the schools?

15 How that money is divided?

16 How much money a student gets in each one of  
17 these schools?

18 How much money goes into the construction  
19 projects?

20 What are the overruns on the construction  
21 projects?

22 And why is there more of a focus on these  
23 overruns -- overriding these projects?

24 And one I'm going to go specifically is going  
25 to be PS 201 in Brooklyn.

1 I noted that Mr. (indiscernible) and  
2 Mr. Gonzalez are doing their best.

3 I mean, it's two and a half years, and we're  
4 going into a third year, for reconstruction. You  
5 could have built the school by the time we finish  
6 renovating this school.

7 There was a revolution going on in my  
8 community over this.

9 And I have to find out, you know -- how do  
10 I find out when this is going to end?

11 What does this actually cost us?

12 And how would I find that in the computer?

13 And how can you help me on that?

14 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Well, that is a  
15 challenge.

16 And, certainly, if you want to ask me, what  
17 is one of the challenges that I haven't really  
18 solved yet? that is definitely one of them.

19 Our website leaves a lot to be desired,  
20 certainly, for this century, and it's something  
21 we're working on.

22 I would say, also, we are very transparent,  
23 but getting the information is not as easy as the  
24 transparency once you dig it up.

25 One of things that I think that I can

1 honestly say is that, this year, we're working with  
2 my financial officer, and the Mayor, no school will  
3 be budgeted at less than 87 percent of fair-student  
4 funding. That's across the board throughout the  
5 city.

6 Our lowest right now is at 82 percent.

7 No school will be less than 87.

8 And our hope is that, within a year, all  
9 schools will be at least at 90 percent.

10 So that's one of the things in terms of  
11 getting services.

12 The other thing is, in terms of -- and you're  
13 certainly one of the most overcrowded districts --  
14 where do we find space?

15 And thanks to many of the elected officials  
16 and parents and everybody, real-estate agents, we  
17 are really looking for space that we can either  
18 lease or build.

19 And one of the thing we're looking at in your  
20 particular district, is how do you convince parents  
21 to cross the other side of Third Avenue, which is a  
22 problem?

23 We know where we have the space, but parents  
24 don't necessarily want to go to those spaces.

25 And the other big issue that we have, and

1 this is true in your district, and it's true,  
2 certainly, in areas of Queens and some parts of  
3 The Bronx, where we have TCUs.

4 We have several schools that we wanted to  
5 move. But in order for us --

6 SENATOR MARCELLINO: What's a "TCU"?

7 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: The temporary care  
8 units. The --

9 URSULINA RAMIREZ: The trailers.

10 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: -- it's the  
11 trailers.

12 And a lot of people don't want the trailers,  
13 but if we're going to get rid of the trailers, we  
14 have to place the kids temporarily someplace while  
15 we build, because a lot of our schools have very  
16 large schoolyards and we can build schools there.

17 I'm going through a situation right now in  
18 Brooklyn, but where do you put the kids meantime?

19 So, there's a lot of things, but in terms of  
20 specific numbers for specific schools, this is still  
21 a work in progress.

22 SENATOR GOLDEN: Those trailers, we  
23 definitely don't want to go back with. Kids were  
24 falling through the floors on these trailers.

25 These trailers were a disaster. They should

1 not be in existence at all. And whatever we can do  
2 to get kids out of trailers, we have to do that.

3 Now, I'm one of the -- this may be an  
4 old-school approach, but the "if you build it, they  
5 will come."

6 So I do believe that you have to build them.

7 I don't care where you build them. You have  
8 to build them, and you have to build them with  
9 STEAM, and you have to build them with STREAM,  
10 programs.

11 You have to be able to give the kids of the  
12 future the opportunity to stay, live, and raise  
13 their families here, and we don't have enough for  
14 that.

15 And I don't see that in any plan, and that's  
16 sort of a real serious problem.

17 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: I totally agree  
18 with you, and that's something we're working on.

19 We have buildings that are over 100 years  
20 old, that just to put wiring in them for air  
21 conditioning is a monumental job because they don't  
22 of the capacity for wiring.

23 So, this is not something I'm going to tell  
24 you we are greatly successful at, but it's certainly  
25 something we're working on.

1 I was in one of your schools this week, and  
2 the principal wants more outlets, so -- because  
3 they're not used to -- when the school was built, it  
4 was not built for the technology of today.

5 So that is part of the work with, you know,  
6 Computer Science For All. We want to make sure that  
7 we put the support services in schools that we need  
8 to get that done.

9 SENATOR GOLDEN: If you could bring one of  
10 our kids in from the schools, they can build a  
11 better tech program so we can easily access that  
12 program, so we can break it down by district, by  
13 school, by account, what money is going into that  
14 school, what programs they have.

15 I think we got some of the best kids in the  
16 entire country going to our schools, so I do  
17 believe --

18 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Oh, I love that  
19 idea.

20 SENATOR GOLDEN: -- there's no reason for  
21 this not to happen. This is the twenty-first  
22 century, we should do that.

23 Moving along: overcrowding.

24 I sat with the administration years ago --  
25 14 years ago, and they told me, What do I got to do

1 to reduce the overcrowding?

2 We did it.

3 I put 8,000 new classrooms sites in  
4 District 20.

5 Guess what?

6 We went to a meeting, most overcrowded school  
7 district? District 20.

8 It's -- it's -- I just can't -- where is  
9 there a plan for emerging communities -- emerging  
10 new immigrant -- emergent communities coming in?

11 And what is our plan as a city to deal with  
12 them, in education, transportation, but not so  
13 much -- your goal is education -- just the education  
14 portion of it?

15 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: I think this is  
16 one of the places, very honestly, that having a  
17 committee of people from the electeds and people  
18 from school construction and us and some educators  
19 and some superintendents at the table, particularly  
20 the three most overcrowded districts, 20, 24, parts  
21 of 10, and having a real discussion, because this is  
22 a very big problem, and no one person is going to  
23 solve it.

24 The other thing is, and because this is  
25 something, I now drive around the city, wherever

1 I see high-risers, to try to figure out, are they  
2 one-bedroom? two-bedroom? three-bedrooms? because,  
3 well, that kind of tells you, there are going to be  
4 children.

5 Because, although Williamsburg group,  
6 dramatically, in Brooklyn, a lot of them are  
7 one-bedrooms, so you can kind of say, well, maybe  
8 there are going to be singles.

9 But the other piece of this is, that the  
10 explosion of newly-arrived immigrants in certain  
11 parts of the city was totally unexpected, and, many  
12 times, they're not reported.

13 So it's like, in your district in particular,  
14 there are apartments that you pass by, or houses,  
15 you assume one- or two-family houses, where, in  
16 reality, maybe six families are living in those.

17 So we have to get smarter of how do we count  
18 these families?

19 And many of these are the families that don't  
20 report who they are to any authority --

21 SENATOR GOLDEN: We have illegal conversions  
22 going on in my community, where you take a one- or  
23 two-family home and you turn it into five or six  
24 families. And that's going on.

25 The City knows this.

1           We all know this.

2           So what we have to be able to do is come  
3 together, as a unit, as a city, with the Building  
4 Department, with the City Education Department, with  
5 Transportation, PD, FD, and, believe it or not, our  
6 hospitals which are impacted as well, to make sure  
7 that we get the best services for the people coming  
8 into our community.

9           I don't want to stop anybody.

10          I want to make sure it's done and planned  
11 correctly, to make sure that we do the right thing,  
12 and that the people that live here deserve the  
13 housing, get the housing, and get the best education  
14 they can possibly get.

15          And we are really -- you're doing an  
16 excellent job educating, but, unfortunately, we're  
17 losing a tremendous number of our kids to  
18 out-of-state.

19          We're losing them to Texas, to California.

20          CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: North Carolina and  
21 Pennsylvania, the two biggest states.

22          SENATOR GOLDEN: Pardon me?

23          CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: North Carolina and  
24 Pennsylvania, two of the biggest states where we're  
25 losing to.

1           SENATOR GOLDEN: So that's -- and the other  
2 issue that -- is the pre-K's.

3           Obviously, we enter them into pre-K and --  
4 which is the smartest thing, great idea; very costly  
5 idea.

6           We got -- you couldn't figure out that  
7 money -- if I asked you to sit down here, we could  
8 sit here for ten hours and we couldn't figure out  
9 where that money came from, and how that money's  
10 being paid back.

11           Now, that's number one.

12           How many kids got to get into the system?  
13 That's another issue.

14           And how many kids are left out of the system?

15           And how many kids are being moved around  
16 through the shelters into different communities,  
17 that are also impacting those communities?

18           What is lo -- co-locations doing to the  
19 overcrowding?

20           And how are we making sure that charter  
21 schools are not hurt by this?

22           Is that a lot of questions in one question?

23           CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: It is, but let me  
24 try to take one at a time, and maybe, you know,  
25 Ursulina Ramirez can answer (indiscernible).

1           First of all, one of the things that I think  
2 would be helpful for everybody to work together, and  
3 we started doing in a small way, is that new  
4 developers always ask for some kind of easement  
5 rights.

6           If you're going to go up higher, what can you  
7 do?

8           I think they should do early childhood  
9 centers in their buildings. Having pre-K's in  
10 buildings that are going up, a win-win for most  
11 developers.

12           And I'm thinking of one we've done  
13 particularly well, I think in DUMBO, where the  
14 developer is actually giving us pre-K sites, so that  
15 means those local public schools don't have it. And  
16 I think they should be giving us space for schools.

17           There are some in Queens that are doing this  
18 already, but maybe this could be part of the overall  
19 plan to do this.

20           I think having -- you have to look at the  
21 expenditure on pre-K, two ways.

22           I see the expenditure on pre-K as an  
23 investment.

24           If you have an extra year of school, and  
25 particularly our students who go -- start school,

1 not speaking English, and they are able to go to  
2 kindergarten with much more skills under their belt,  
3 the system and the city is going to be better off in  
4 the long run.

5 I think in terms of the co-locations, I have  
6 the saying, "There are lessons learned."

7 And one of the things that, actually, we've  
8 been discussing, is how do we get a much more  
9 focused approach to co-locations where everyone is  
10 well-served?

11 Like I said, I went yesterday to a site, a  
12 success academy, Ancephalo (ph.) Middle School --

13 SENATOR GOLDEN: That's my district.

14 There's tens of thousands of kids on lists,  
15 waiting to get into these schools, and they can't  
16 get into them.

17 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: But, again, it's  
18 how -- what are the things that are in common that  
19 the schools could share?

20 Where are these things, like after-school  
21 programs, and things like that, that actually make  
22 sense?

23 But I think the other piece of this is, also,  
24 in co-locations, does it make sense to put three  
25 middle schools in the same building, or three

1 high schools, that they can share resources?

2 AP For All doesn't mean every single school  
3 has to have five AP courses.

4 But if you have five high schools, and I just  
5 said this in The Bronx, and I said to each of the  
6 high schools:

7 You have a history class, you have an English  
8 class, you have a math class.

9 How do you then parallel teaching beyond the  
10 same bell schedule -- which is, somehow or other,  
11 it's a horrific idea for many people -- so that you  
12 can actually go into each other's classrooms and  
13 take classes in other classrooms?

14 After-school programs, if you unify all the  
15 after-school programs, kids have more choices.

16 So, I think we need to talk a lot more, and  
17 I think co-locations is one of the issues. We  
18 really want to have more discussions with  
19 communities on: What makes sense? What doesn't  
20 make sense? What is an underutilized building  
21 versus overutilized building?

22 Because the Blue Book from the past wasn't  
23 working, and we now have a new way of looking at  
24 space. But we need -- that really, probably, could  
25 use a little bit more refinement.

1           URSULINA RAMIREZ: And, Senator, I just  
2 wanted to quickly answer, you made a comment about  
3 new capacity within your district.

4           And last night, just so you know, the Panel  
5 for Educational Policy had voted on the amended  
6 capital plan, with \$800 million in "new seat"  
7 investments, including some in your district.

8           Because we have heard from community members  
9 about the growing -- the growth of different  
10 neighborhoods, whether that's from developments, or  
11 from students living in temporary housing elsewhere.

12           So we have made investments, and specifically  
13 to --

14           SENATOR GOLDEN: I thank you on one issue.  
15 (Indiscernible) on Manhattan Beach, which I think  
16 was very good.

17           I have three locations at that -- I have a  
18 one shelter -- a women's shelter, a men's shelter,  
19 and a family shelter. That would have destroyed my  
20 school over there, School -- PS 22.

21           And, thank God, you did the right thing  
22 there.

23           URSULINA RAMIREZ: And I do want to note that  
24 we are -- and we're trying to do -- we're doing a  
25 better job of actually working more closely with the

1 Department of Homeless Services, to talk about how  
2 we are coordinating and working together.

3 In addition, the Mayor made an investment of  
4 \$10 million to really support kids in temporary  
5 housing, and the collaboration between the  
6 Department of Education and DHS, because we do --

7 SENATOR GOLDEN: Sorry if I'm talking fast  
8 and putting out a lot of questions, because a lot of  
9 members here want to.

10 And I have -- believe it or not, I have a  
11 senior -- several hundred seniors waiting for me at  
12 a town hall back in Bay Ridge, so I have to try to  
13 get as much out as quickly as I can. And I think  
14 it's important for you, the media, for this panel,  
15 so the proper decisions are made as we move forward.

16 So, what I need to know is the -- I wish  
17 I had some of those schools that had 100 kids in  
18 them.

19 I got the -- my middle schools are 2,000  
20 kids. My high schools are 4500 and 5,000 kids.

21 You know, so when you break them down into  
22 three different academies, I think you're almost  
23 forced to break them into three different academies  
24 when you have that many kids in a school.

25 Maybe I'm wrong there.

1           And how many -- go ahead.

2           CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: No, I mean, one of  
3 the schools that I'm particularly proud of in the  
4 city is Fort Hamilton High School.

5           SENATOR GOLDEN: Doing an excellent job  
6 there. The (indiscernible) program they have  
7 there --

8           CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: They have  
9 5,000 students; but, yet, she has an assistant  
10 principal in charge of each academy in that  
11 building.

12           They were one of the first schools I invited  
13 to go see Hamilton, because of the work they do, not  
14 only in the academics, but in the arts.

15           So I think each school has to be evaluated on  
16 it's difference: is it working? isn't working?

17           Large was -- I mean, I -- like I said, it was  
18 too small.

19           I believe in small high schools, but they  
20 have to be the right small schools serving the right  
21 purposes.

22           SENATOR GOLDEN: Well, the -- I got to say  
23 that the -- we need to be able to focus, and I think  
24 there has to be more communications.

25           And the Mayor here has to, I believe, lead

1 here in getting us, not only that we have meetings  
2 within each borough, or with the legislators, as to  
3 a plan, but each community board, on a quarterly, or  
4 at least every six months, we should have a meeting  
5 with those community boards, with the building  
6 department, with the different city assets, to make  
7 sure that we're planning correctly, and that there  
8 are some changes coming up, that everybody in the  
9 city is aware of these changes, and what are we  
10 doing as a single unit, to bring that together,  
11 where we have the overcrowding conditions, we have  
12 illegal conversions.

13 How do we stop the illegal conversions?

14 How do we balance the system?

15 And how do we bring down the overcrowding in  
16 our school districts by finding the properties that  
17 you need, and to find the leased properties that you  
18 need, so you can go forward and give the best  
19 education?

20 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: I mean, I actually  
21 think that bringing a lot of people together by  
22 borough is a great idea.

23 Somebody had mentioned it at the last  
24 meeting, and we already started -- I already asked  
25 my (indiscernible) to start thinking about it.

1           The other things, as based on a different  
2 meeting that I had a few months ago, we had our  
3 first meeting with the community planning boards'  
4 education chair people about three weeks ago. And  
5 it was so productive, that we agreed that we were  
6 going to have these meetings at least four times a  
7 year.

8           SENATOR GOLDEN: Good.

9           CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: And, this way,  
10 they can tell us, because it's -- you know, they're  
11 not congruent to school districts, but meeting with  
12 the community planning boards also gives us -- and,  
13 also, I asked them who they wanted to hear from, and  
14 they all asked: school-construction authority,  
15 someone from enrollment.

16           So the more conversations we have like that,  
17 the better.

18           SENATOR GOLDEN: The -- and the growth of the  
19 schools, obviously, getting the best outcome, the  
20 best product, that we can possibly get, we have  
21 to -- and to get those kids to go across and go to  
22 where these schools are going to be built, is,  
23 obviously, the STEAM, the STREAM, the  
24 gifted-and-talented, the AP courses.

25           But, we're looking down the road.

1 I don't want to lose, you know, a generation  
2 of kids when it comes to STEM and to STEAM and to  
3 gifted-and-talented.

4 My -- my -- some of my communities are very  
5 upset with the gifted-and-talented because there's  
6 not enough programs in our districts.

7 Do we have a -- are you getting more problems  
8 with that in other districts?

9 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Yeah, well, what  
10 we've tried to do is increase the amount of  
11 enrichment programs in every single school.

12 And I was just, again, in one of your  
13 schools, 112, Louise's school.

14 SENATOR GOLDEN: Yep.

15 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: That's where  
16 Commissioner Bratton and I went.

17 And I asked her how she was doing.

18 And she said what she's doing, she's doing a  
19 (indiscernible) enrichment for the students who need  
20 extra support in that area.

21 So I do think that, in terms of -- we're  
22 trying to serve the kids at the top, the bottom, and  
23 the middle all simultaneously.

24 And I think that is something we're really  
25 working on through professional development.

1           But, I'm happy to discuss this further.

2           But I do think what we're thinking of doing  
3           in the Sunset Park area, in particular, is going to  
4           be very helpful.

5           SENATOR GOLDEN:   And I -- because of time,  
6           EIPs.

7           EIPs are down, I understand.   On some of our  
8           kids, somewhere around 40 percent of the programs  
9           they should be getting, they're not getting.

10          I got to -- obviously, we all have large EIP  
11          programs.   And we might -- got to make sure they  
12          have the best possible opportunities for success.

13          And believe it or not, my kid -- a lot of  
14          kids are getting a great, great education, but it's  
15          not everybody.

16          My son is not taking it.   My son is out there  
17          on his own because of the process that you have to  
18          go through; the process going through the State,  
19          having to go to court every year.   And then, of  
20          course, not getting the services that are required.

21          You're supposed to get, is another layer  
22          of -- an insult, actually, to that family that  
23          struggled to get those IEPs and can't get what  
24          they need for their kids.

25          CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA:   Well, I think

1 we've made a lot of strides on this.

2 And I think, you know, Senator Felder can  
3 also testify that we're working very hard on this.

4 But I also want to tell you that we have  
5 increased our number of speech teachers. We've  
6 increased our number of OT teachers. We've  
7 increased the number of clinical psychologists.

8 These are all very important people in the  
9 whole IEP process.

10 So if you don't have the right personnel, you  
11 also don't have the correct services.

12 The other thing I will tell you that we've  
13 tried, and this is where I think pre-K is going to  
14 be particularly helpful, because we were doing what  
15 we call "Turning 5"; analyzing students before they  
16 came into kindergarten.

17 Now we're getting -- catching kids one year  
18 earlier. We have the "Turning 4" programs and the  
19 "Turning 3" programs so that we're able to analyze  
20 what students need prior to.

21 Here, again, something we need to work even  
22 better at is our -- where we log in this  
23 information. Our SESIS needs some improvement.

24 And I think one of the things we've  
25 understood very well this year, is that special ed

1 has to be a top priority.

2 I've always been -- whatever job I've ever  
3 had, one of the things that I made one of my top  
4 three priorities is students with special needs,  
5 because I believe those are the kids who need extra  
6 support.

7 I do think we've done a good job.

8 I think, like everything else, that  
9 particular one, more to be done.

10 But we've put a lot of extra resources this  
11 year. This budget has a lot more money for special  
12 ed and for both -- and for District 75.

13 SENATOR GOLDEN: Well, in closing, I want to  
14 say, thank you.

15 And I want to, again, focus that we do these  
16 quarterly meetings with our community boards, with  
17 our communities, so we know what's going on, and we  
18 do them with a unit -- a city unit that's got  
19 Buildings, everybody, at that table, so we know  
20 where we're going.

21 And, of course, I think we should do it with  
22 our legislators on a borough-wide approach.

23 And the Mayor has got to be at some of these.

24 And I know, in conversation -- I would  
25 imagine you're in conversation with the Mayor on a

1 regular basis.

2 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Absolutely.

3 SENATOR GOLDEN: When do you brief with the  
4 Mayor? Every week? Or --

5 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: At least once a  
6 week.

7 SENATOR GOLDEN: Okay. Thank you very much.

8 SENATOR MARCELLINO: Those weeklies -- those  
9 weekly meetings are scheduled?

10 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Yes, I mean,  
11 depending -- there's always an emergency and we  
12 reschedule it. But the reality is, that we do meet  
13 once a week. And we have teams on both our sides  
14 who meet with each other. So, there's a constant  
15 conversation back-and-forth.

16 SENATOR MARCELLINO: Senator Peralta.

17 SENATOR PERALTA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

18 First and foremost, I just want to say that  
19 I am looking forward to our meeting that needed to  
20 be rescheduled yesterday.

21 Thank you for waiting.

22 But, today we are here to talk about mayor  
23 control.

24 And first and foremost, I just want to say  
25 that I think you're doing a terrific job as

1 chancellor.

2 But today we're here to talk about mayor  
3 control.

4 And the issues here that have been brought up  
5 by some of my colleagues is the fact that, this is  
6 such an important issue, such a top priority for the  
7 Mayor; and, yet, he is not here.

8 He has chosen to be at radio shows, and not  
9 be here at this hearing.

10 And I can get your answer, when you said that  
11 you were up in Albany for a whole day, and you were  
12 at meetings and you testified.

13 But as you know, one day of testimony, one  
14 day of meetings, doesn't move things in Albany.

15 In fact, they don't move things anywhere in  
16 city hall.

17 So I think that, if the Mayor, if this is  
18 such a top priority, I agree with my colleagues that  
19 the Mayor should be at these hearings and should be  
20 personally answering these questions.

21 But be that as it may, we will move on, and  
22 I will ask you some of the questions that I would  
23 ask him.

24 So, over the last two years, how many times  
25 have the full PEP (the Panel for Educational Policy)

1 denied a proposal or a contract referred to it for  
2 its approval by the DOE?

3 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: A few.

4 Ursulina has the exact number.

5 URSULINA RAMIREZ: Yep. One second.

6 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: I will tell you  
7 just all -- one of them in particular they asked to  
8 us revise, and to take back, and that was the Amazon  
9 contract. And the Amazon contract was not supported  
10 because it did not have provisions for blind  
11 students.

12 And we went back, and because of our  
13 purchasing power, we were able to get Amazon to redo  
14 the entire contract and provide Braille services  
15 through Amazon, not only for our students, but  
16 nationally.

17 So I think that was a big step forward in  
18 terms of how we look at contracts.

19 And our contract subcommittee on the PEP is  
20 particular vigilance. In fact, they look at every  
21 single print, and bring to our attention the issues  
22 they want to discuss.

23 Ursulina?

24 URSULINA RAMIREZ: We've actually altered  
25 five proposals, based on the panel and the CEC's

1 involvement.

2 One was actual complete vote down by the  
3 panel, and the others were revisions or withdrawals.

4 And, actually, currently, and as of last  
5 night, we're having -- engaging the panel members  
6 and the communities on several different co-location  
7 proposals that we pushed back for a couple of  
8 meetings, to continue to engage communities. And  
9 those are scheduled to be voted on in June.

10 SENATOR PERALTA: Okay. So one, in total,  
11 that has been completely denied, and five that have  
12 been sent back been for revision?

13 URSULINA RAMIREZ: Sorry. One that was voted  
14 down, one was withdrawn, and the other three were  
15 revised.

16 SENATOR PERALTA: Okay. And that one that  
17 was voted down, was that revised?

18 URSULINA RAMIREZ: No.

19 The one that was voted down, we did not put  
20 back forward to the panel.

21 SENATOR PERALTA: Okay. Good.

22 You know, PEP is an issue that we as  
23 legislators are discussing, in terms of what the  
24 make-up will look like, and, is it working -- and  
25 these are some of the questions.

1           Is it working?

2           Is there enough input by the parents?

3           Do they actually have enough say when it  
4 comes to moving issues forward?

5           And one of the concerns that I would like for  
6 you to address is the concerns that I've heard at  
7 meetings: Is the PEP just a rubber stamp for the  
8 administration?

9           And I -- it's a concern, so I want to bring  
10 it up, and I want to get clarification, and your  
11 side and your angle, and what factually happens.

12           That's why I'm bringing up this question.

13           CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: I would say that  
14 this PEP, right now, is a lot more independent than  
15 it would have been three or four years ago.

16           I sat on both.

17           Remember, I was deputy chancellor under the  
18 prior administration, and there were seldom  
19 pre-meetings.

20           This PEP meets prior to every hearing two or  
21 three times, particularly when there's a contract to  
22 be discussed or a co-location.

23           For example, yesterday's discussion on the  
24 co-locations, which is why we put them off for a  
25 while, almost every single PEP member had gone to

1 visit schools that were on the co-location site.

2 So they actually go, they look, they  
3 interface with other people, and they come back with  
4 suggestions based on their school visits.

5 So I think that it's really -- it's a very  
6 active PEP, very carefully selected to represent  
7 different interests.

8 There's one PEP member who is very involved  
9 in special needs and has a special-needs child. And  
10 every time there's a special-needs issue, we ask her  
11 to take a stance on that.

12 We have another PEP member who is very  
13 engaged and involved with English-language learners.

14 So I think the PEP members, to a large  
15 degree, other than the ones that are chosen by the  
16 borough presidents.

17 Remember, there are five representatives, one  
18 from each of the borough presidents, so they  
19 certainly come with a voice based on their  
20 particular borough, and what they have been either  
21 instructed to say or to ask or to think about.

22 So I think it is a very fair representation.

23 I will tell you, they do a lot of talking  
24 among themselves.

25 When they ask for more information, they've

1 asked for -- they've asked for people from my  
2 department.

3 Like, they've asked Milady Baez to speak to  
4 them. They've asked Corinne Rello-Anselmi, they've  
5 asked Lorraine Grillo, to speak.

6 They ask me to make available to them, people  
7 that can give them more information.

8 So I think it is pretty independent.

9 I think, also, obviously, mayors do want to  
10 have their own agendas, to some degree, so I think  
11 putting it on there.

12 But in terms of anyone who has gone to any of  
13 our PEP meetings, and last night was one of them,  
14 and parents get up and they talk and they say what  
15 they want to say.

16 They are listened to.

17 I want to be very clear, they are definitely  
18 listened to.

19 But listening and agreeing are not always the  
20 same thing.

21 And I think that's one of the things.

22 So in terms of -- and parents e-mail me all  
23 the time.

24 One of the reasons I do the town hall  
25 meeting, and I want to be clear on this, and

1 I didn't know this when I started this job:

2 When I went to my first town hall meeting,  
3 and I believe it was in Queens, they gave me these  
4 cards that people -- it was Staten Island,  
5 actually-- and they gave me these cards of questions  
6 people had.

7 So I took the questions, and I started  
8 reading the questions and answering them right on  
9 the spot.

10 And, all of a sudden, there was total silence  
11 in the room. And the CEC president, I guess, told  
12 me, You know, you don't usually answer the questions  
13 here.

14 I said, Well, how do they get answered?

15 Well, someone calls them up, or whatever.

16 I have gone to every town hall meeting in  
17 every district. I have not missed one district,  
18 some districts I've been to twice, and answered  
19 every question, within hours, asked of me.

20 And in that particular one, the ones I didn't  
21 get to, I called that Saturday --

22 I was new on the job. I didn't have as many  
23 things on my head as I have now.

24 -- and called parents at home.

25 And one parent in particular hung up on me.

1           I said, This is the Chancellor. I have your  
2 question, I want to answer you.

3           And she hung up, and I called her back.

4           And she said, Stop playing games.

5           You know, I said, No, this really, really is  
6 the Chancellor. I said, You asked a question.

7           "Oh, my God."

8           So I do believe in that.

9           I was a parent of public-school kids.

10          I expect the respect to be shown to everyone  
11 in the system. And I do my town hall meetings with  
12 my own translation.

13          I will -- you know, there was one meeting  
14 where the translators didn't show up, and I spoke in  
15 Spanish.

16          I think it's really, really important that  
17 we're out there.

18          We're public servants. I take that very,  
19 very seriously.

20          And I think, to some degree, how you evaluate  
21 mayoral control is, also, who does he choose as  
22 chancellor?

23          Mayor de Blasio could have chosen anyone.  
24 I mean, I'm sure he interviewed a lot of other  
25 people.

1           But he chose me, and I think he chose me  
2 because I'm an educator.

3           I am my own person. We don't always agree on  
4 everything. I'm very happy to say, you know,  
5 I think we should do this versus this.

6           And I think that's an important way to  
7 evaluate a mayor and mayoral control: Who's the  
8 chancellor?

9           I represent him, certainly, under Joel Klein.

10          Many times I went out and represented him at  
11 many meetings, particularly parent meetings.

12          So --

13          SENATOR PERALTA: Well, I appreciate that,  
14 and I think that he did make a wise decision when he  
15 chose you as the chancellor, because we could look  
16 back at other decisions, that we don't need to talk  
17 about here.

18          But this was a wise decision when it came to  
19 that.

20          But, again, the reason that some of these  
21 concerns come up is because, I'll give you an  
22 example:

23          Just recently, as you just stated, the  
24 Mayor -- every mayor, not just this particular  
25 mayor -- but every mayor has a certain agenda and

1 wants to move forward. And sometimes they will take  
2 certain measures and recommendations, and they will  
3 accept them. And sometimes they won't accept them,  
4 and they move forward.

5 On a different front, just recently, a  
6 community-board forum in Queens, there was a vote on  
7 bike lanes, where the community boards rejected the  
8 bike lanes.

9 And the day after -- I think maybe it was  
10 even the same day, maybe the day after, the Mayor  
11 said, That's nice. We're moving forward.

12 And, again, this is why some of the concerns  
13 pop up when it comes to PEP and others, and other  
14 organizations or committees, because, are we really  
15 listening to what the recommendations are? And,  
16 will the agenda get in the way, even though the  
17 recommendation is contrary to what that particular  
18 mayor has on his agenda?

19 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Like I said,  
20 I will answer for myself and my interactions, and  
21 I take very seriously.

22 I will tell you that, our CEC Saturday  
23 meetings, which I really -- last almost three hours.  
24 And several of those presidents have become people  
25 I call for when I want opinions, because they are,

1 genuinely, the people who are closest to the parents  
2 in that district, and they're all different.

3 That's another thing.

4 When you're in the -- and, again, it doesn't  
5 even matter by borough. Within each borough, there  
6 are all these neighborhoods that have different  
7 interests.

8 You know, I don't want those kids in my  
9 building.

10 Really?

11 And what do those kids -- who are those kids?

12 They're my kids.

13 So how do you, you know, kind of balance  
14 everybody else's interests and come up with  
15 something?

16 I can't stress enough, that when I'm stuck,  
17 and I get stuck once in a while, what's best for  
18 kids?

19 And I don't think of my children, because  
20 I wasn't -- I was a mother who kind of said to my  
21 kids, you know, Get used to it. Life isn't always  
22 fair.

23 But -- so I think of my grandchildren  
24 because, for my grandchildren, I will go to hell and  
25 back to make sure they have the best things

1 possible.

2 So how does everybody look at everybody in  
3 their building, as their grandson and granddaughter,  
4 and make sure we're doing the best for them?

5 SENATOR PERALTA: Yeah. One -- just a --  
6 just two more questions, briefly.

7 So last year, as it was noted here by the  
8 Chairman, \$21.8 billion was invested in the  
9 Department of Education, which \$9.15 billion came  
10 from Albany; or, 41 percent.

11 So that is a majority -- if you were to  
12 compare it, that's a majority shareholder stake when  
13 it comes to education.

14 So why shouldn't we, as state legislators,  
15 have a say, where we revisit on a much shorter time  
16 span, whether it's two or three years, to review  
17 mayoral control, to see how the system is going, see  
18 how it's playing out?

19 Why not review the concept of mayor control  
20 on a timeline staggered, maybe a year after mayor  
21 elections so no one can say it is political, just to  
22 sort of see, how it's going?

23 How the money is being spent; is it being  
24 spent wisely?

25 Are the children moving forward?

1           Is the curriculum moving forward?

2           Because I understand the Mayor comes here and  
3 he says that he wants seven years, but that's with  
4 the assumption he's going to be the mayor again.

5           What if he's not the mayor again?

6           Now we are stuck with a mayor who we have no  
7 say, if we are to give him seven years.

8           We would have no say on how his curriculum is  
9 moving forward, we would have no say how the  
10 Education Department is moving, because we are  
11 stuck, and we gave him -- we've given him seven  
12 years.

13           So why not the two-year or three-year, kind  
14 of similar to what the Assembly just passed  
15 yesterday?

16           CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Well, let me  
17 answer this two different ways.

18           First and foremost, no matter what we do,  
19 I believe we're setting a foundation.

20           No one's going to take away pre-K.

21           No one is going to take away community  
22 schools.

23           Also, evaluate us on our record, our  
24 promotion.

25           Our graduation rate is growing.

1           Our dropout rate is lessening.

2           Our attendance is moving.

3           So those are successful things that anybody  
4 who comes after me has to continue or get better,  
5 because that's the foundation, that's the bottom  
6 line, that's the legacy.

7           I think, also, certainly, as a former  
8 principal, I was a principal when, every two years,  
9 or one year and a half, we had a different  
10 chancellor.

11           And why did we have a different chancellor?

12           Because the chancellor and the mayor at the  
13 time got mad.

14           One wanted one thing, one wanted another; it  
15 hit the papers.

16           And all of a sudden, us and -- and I remember  
17 one situation particularly, where the principals got  
18 together, we had had a phone call in the district  
19 that I was principal in, "Okay, what do we do?"

20           Do we stand up for the chancellor? Do we try  
21 to take the wrath of the mayor at the time?

22           It happened to be a chancellor that  
23 I particularly cared for, that I thought was doing  
24 really good work.

25           And then, all of a sudden, the stability went

1 away and we were caught in the middle.

2 I don't want the teachers and the principals  
3 to get caught in the middle of this.

4 So I think, if we do a particularly good job,  
5 which I think we actually are doing better than  
6 good, that that foundation has to be for someone  
7 else to improve on and make better.

8 No one, hopefully -- and that's, you know,  
9 one of the reasons I took on this job, and that's  
10 why I'm in a hurry to get it right, no one will undo  
11 what we say we've done and will work.

12 SENATOR PERALTA: And that's a very valid  
13 point.

14 But, again, the chancellor serves at the  
15 pleasure of the mayor.

16 So when the assumption is, when you're asking  
17 for seven years, is that you will be the next mayor.

18 And what happens if he's not the next mayor,  
19 and the next mayor comes in and doesn't choose  
20 Carmen Fariña as the chancellor?

21 And --

22 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: My husband will  
23 say "thank you."

24 [Laughter.]

25 SENATOR PERALTA: And then that next

1 chancellor will then have to work -- you're right --  
2 hopefully, with the foundation that you've laid out  
3 so they can build on it.

4 But what if that chancellor just doesn't  
5 build on that foundation?

6 Now we as state legislators will be stuck  
7 with the bill for the next four years of this  
8 individual's mayoralty.

9 And that's why, again, I ask the question:  
10 Why not two years, why not three years, as opposed  
11 to seven?

12 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: I think  
13 (indiscernible) my statement, that what the Assembly  
14 said, with three years, certainly, to me, is a good  
15 starting point.

16 Anything less than that, I think, would  
17 create more instability.

18 But any mayor has the right to choose his  
19 commissioners. You know, it's not just the  
20 chancellor, but, you know, the police commissioner,  
21 the fire commissioner. It's the way it's been done  
22 forever.

23 I think my job, and certainly the other  
24 commissioners' job, is to do the best job possible  
25 so everyone will be fighting against our record.

1           And I want to say publicly that I also think  
2           it's important that a chancellor be an educator.

3           And that that be part of what I think  
4           Mayor de Blasio, from the very beginning, when he  
5           was running for mayor, he said, One promise I can  
6           make you is that I want an educator.

7           And I think that's something the electorate  
8           holds the mayor accountable for.

9           You know, if that's what you run on, then  
10          that's what you vote for.

11          And if someone says, I want a CO, then that's  
12          what you vote for.

13          But I do think the mayor has the right to  
14          make these decisions.

15          SENATOR PERALTA: Well, I just want to end by  
16          saying, (speaking in Spanish).

17          CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: (Speaking in  
18          Spanish).

19          SENATOR PERALTA: (Speaking in Spanish).

20          CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: (Speaking in  
21          Spanish.)

22          SENATOR PERALTA: Can I just say, thank you  
23          very much.

24          I think she's doing a great job.

25          SENATOR MARCELLINO: I wish you guys wouldn't

1 talk Greek.

2 Senator Stavisky.

3 SENATOR STAVISKY: Maybe I should say,  
4 (speaking in Spanish).

5 You've touched on a question that I was going  
6 to ask you, and perhaps you can expand on it.

7 If you were writing a job qualification for  
8 chancellor, what would you put on the list of  
9 required experiences or education or, whatever?

10 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Well, obviously,  
11 an educator, but not a theorist.

12 A practical educator.

13 SENATOR STAVISKY: Somebody -- my husband  
14 used to call them "educationists."

15 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Well, I do think  
16 it's really typical of what we've done from the  
17 beginning.

18 We've said, no -- no one can apply to become  
19 a principal who hasn't had seven years -- the first  
20 chancellor's reg that I put in place: No one can  
21 become a principal without seven years pedagogical  
22 experience.

23 It can be a combination of teacher, guidance  
24 counselor, whatever, but, seven years.

25 Then we said, which is -- nobody thought we

1 would actually do: All superintendents have to  
2 reapply for their job. And only people who have  
3 been principals for a minimum number of years can  
4 become superintendents.

5 Because how do you have credibility; how do  
6 you get -- how do you tell people to do their job if  
7 you haven't done part of it yourself?

8 So I think qualification, and I'm not going  
9 to tell you how many years; but certainly, years, in  
10 terms of having served in some kind of educational  
11 program.

12 I'd say another qualification: demonstrated  
13 experience in working well with others.

14 And "others" could be elected officials,  
15 parents.

16 Certainly, in my whole history, I've done all  
17 those things. I've been able to talk to a variety  
18 of people.

19 And I think that should be part of the  
20 qualifications for this job, because you need to be  
21 able to do that.

22 And the other thing that I think -- I've  
23 thought a lot about in the past couple of years,  
24 particularly since I've taken on this job, being a  
25 good communicator.

1 I mean, we have added now, into all our  
2 professional development for administrators, a  
3 communications course.

4 How to be able to write well, so when you  
5 communicate with your parents, and everything else,  
6 you can do that.

7 How do you speak before an audience?

8 I mean, that's part of the Common Core for  
9 our kids, but it should be part of us.

10 It shouldn't be someone who doesn't think  
11 that they have to explain themselves.

12 That's why I'm here today.

13 I do believe being a good communicator, and a  
14 good listener, again, not always agreeing, but,  
15 listening, and being able to understand what people  
16 are saying in the context.

17 So I think those are three qualifications  
18 that I think are crucial.

19 SENATOR STAVISKY: On another issue, along  
20 with Senator Marcellino, we were both high school  
21 teachers. He just taught longer I did.

22 But I've always had the idea that a school is  
23 run by the principal, and --

24 SENATOR MARCELLINO: The school is run by the  
25 secretaries.

1 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Oh, absolutely.

2 SENATOR MARCELLINO: Sorry about that.

3 SENATOR STAVISKY: No, no, you're right.

4 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: It's true.

5 SENATOR STAVISKY: It's true, because  
6 secretaries know where the bodies are buried.

7 -- and they are supervised by  
8 superintendents.

9 And at one point there were over 100 --  
10 I think 110 superintendents.

11 We're down to 44.

12 We have one for each of the 32 districts,  
13 plus two for District 75, and then miscellaneous  
14 ones in the boroughs.

15 Are they impeding the ability of the  
16 principals?

17 Is there a way where we can return some of  
18 the school authority to the principal to administer  
19 whatever the superintendent and chancellor,  
20 et cetera, hand down?

21 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: I think so, but  
22 I think autonomy needs to be earned, not given away;  
23 and let me tell you what I mean by that.

24 Every superintendent was -- by the way,  
25 I meet with all the superintendents once a month,

1 and I spend at least an hour and a half.

2 SENATOR STAVISKY: You meet in a big room.

3 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Well, 44 is not so  
4 bad.

5 And, remember, that when they were  
6 (indiscernible), which was the prior system,  
7 although they had less schools, many of them did not  
8 have the rating power, as well as the support.

9 So it was a little, you know, truncated in  
10 ways it shouldn't be.

11 But these superintendents have the ability to  
12 both evaluate principals through the PPOs, as well  
13 as to visit schools and determine who needs more  
14 support.

15 They've also been clearly instructed that  
16 there has to be the right principal in every  
17 building so that students and teachers succeed.

18 But all the superintendents were told, and  
19 that's the way I've always run all my systems, to  
20 put their schools in tiers of three.

21 Who are the principals that you basically  
22 leave, more or less, alone? They make all their  
23 decisions.

24 Who are the principals in the meaning -- in  
25 the middle, who you actually give a little bit more

1 support in the area they need it?

2 Because, if I'm a principal, and I, all of a  
3 sudden, have to take on a special program that  
4 I know little about, I need support.

5 And, who are the principals that need more  
6 supervision when making certain types of decisions?

7 And one of the things we've said to look for,  
8 if you're a school with a, let's say, 30 percent  
9 turnover rate of teachers, I expect the  
10 superintendent to ask, Why?

11 Why are teachers not staying beyond a certain  
12 amount of time?

13 What are you doing as a principal that may  
14 not be encouraging teachers to stay, or supporting  
15 them, or whatever?

16 So I do think it's a very individualized  
17 system.

18 I do think that principals still have a lot  
19 of autonomy as a principal. There are a lot of  
20 decisions. Who you hire.

21 The curriculum is not open for discussion in  
22 terms of, I expect certain things.

23 You know, we had a few years where every  
24 teacher and every principal was doing their own  
25 thing.

1           So if you moved from an elementary school to  
2 a middle school, there was no continuity.

3           If you had five feeder schools, for example,  
4 elementary schools moving into one school, those  
5 teachers had to figure out what school you came  
6 from, to figure out what math curriculum you were  
7 using, what literacy curriculum you were using.

8           And that made middle school much more  
9 difficult, and it's already difficult enough.

10          Middle school is, obviously, to me, the most  
11 difficult grades to teach.

12          But you need to be able to have that  
13 consistency, so I think that's part of what the  
14 superintendents do.

15          SENATOR STAVISKY: Lastly, you spoke before  
16 about the gifted-and-talented programs, and those  
17 are programs that I happen to be interested in.

18          I know we disagree on the issue of  
19 specialized high schools.

20          But I am convinced that, with additional  
21 gifted-and-talented programs, particularly in the  
22 early grades, that it will become much less of an  
23 issue of diversity.

24          And, how are you going to implement the  
25 additional gifted-and-talented programs that I think

1 really have to follow UPK?

2 To me, it's a natural progression.

3 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: I totally agree  
4 with you, but let me tell how we're doing it a  
5 little bit different.

6 I go back to the days when I was a teacher of  
7 gifted-and-talented, when it was called "IGC."

8 And I was asked -- I said the other night,  
9 I must have a thing about people bringing me back  
10 from leaves.

11 The superintendent asked me if I would give  
12 up my maternity leave, to come back and teach the  
13 first gifted-and-talented program at the time in  
14 Brooklyn, and it started in third grade, and there  
15 was a difference why it started in third grade.

16 It started in third grade, because the  
17 ability to get the word out to all the parents of  
18 kids who were in second grade, across the district,  
19 because it wasn't just in one, school, were much  
20 better than if you started it younger.

21 So, to me, we have four new  
22 gifted-and-talented programs starting in September.

23 The other major difference, that is under,  
24 I guess, the State Legislature, now,  
25 gifted-and-talented teachers need to be certified.

1           There's a certification for  
2           gifted-and-talented, and very few universities  
3           actually give those courses.

4           So we're working with the New York Historical  
5           Society and Hunter College to give that  
6           certification to the teachers we hope to hire for  
7           these programs.

8           The other thing is in District -- let me  
9           see -- 7, 23, 16, I forgot the other one, but, there  
10          are four districts where we are going to be actually  
11          using multiple measures for all second-graders in  
12          that district.

13          So we are going to be asking all  
14          second-graders to be eligible (indiscernible), and  
15          we will pick the ones that meet the criteria. We  
16          have special rubrics.

17          And it's all done, and I'm happy to share it  
18          with you.

19          And those students will go to that  
20          third-grade gifted-and-talented, starting this  
21          September.

22          The other thing I promised the -- and this we  
23          did in conjunction with the CEC presidents. We had  
24          them all in on a Saturday, we discussed what the  
25          possibilities were to this.

1           And they will also have -- and it goes right  
2 to your issue -- honors programs in at least one of  
3 their middle schools for these kids who now will  
4 come up the pipeline.

5           And then -- this is how I do think we will  
6 better prepare the kids to be able to get to  
7 screened programs, specialized high schools, because  
8 it will be a program.

9           The reason I didn't do it in early childhood  
10 is, as a principal, I had a gifted-and-talented  
11 program. And what we found is that a lot of  
12 students -- remember, and I don't know if it's  
13 true -- if you did it, it was, basically, based on  
14 verbal ability, and a lot of it had to do with  
15 socioeconomics, and it doesn't show long-term  
16 giftedness.

17           So I would have, often, many students who  
18 would reach second grade, who still couldn't read  
19 and write, but were in that track.

20           So, as a principal, we moved more to a  
21 school-wide enrichment model, overall. And,  
22 actually, our test scores started zooming when we  
23 did that.

24           So I do think there's a lot of ways to  
25 approach this, but I think honors classes in middle

1 school are crucial, advanced placement in  
2 high school is crucial. And I think you're going to  
3 see a lot of more that of citywide.

4 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

5 And, lastly, let me just say, I do appreciate  
6 your coming into the districts.

7 We prefer that you come on a Thursday when  
8 we're in -- when we're not in Albany, but, you came  
9 to a CEC meeting in District 25 a couple of months  
10 ago.

11 And I can testify, the Chancellor had cards;  
12 she read the questions, and then answered the  
13 questions.

14 It was, obviously, not a pre-staged,  
15 whatever, and we thank you for that.

16 SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you, Senator.

17 The Senator Perkins.

18 SENATOR PERKINS: Good morning.

19 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Good morning.

20 SENATOR PERKINS: Thank you for being here,  
21 and for what you do for us, and for our children in  
22 the public schools.

23 I'm not an automatic supporter of mayoral  
24 control. It was born under the Bloomberg  
25 Administration, under a dictatorial approach.

1           And as a result, we have a -- you know, you  
2 started creating these charter schools, and they  
3 were not brought to our attention in terms of a, you  
4 know, sort of more open process.

5           And, in fact, some of -- it was a period in  
6 which such schools were proliferating throughout the  
7 country, as a matter of fact.

8           And, frankly, it turns out they -- most of  
9 the places where they existed, they didn't add up.  
10 And in many places they don't exist anymore.

11           Nevertheless, we have them in the city.

12           And -- so, first, I want to get an update,  
13 from your point view, about what's happening with  
14 the charters.

15           And, you know, I'm a product of the New York  
16 City Public School System, and -- the old-school.

17           So, I just want to get, sort of, your honest  
18 witness update on what's happening with these  
19 schools.

20           CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: I think, you know,  
21 charter schools, like parochial schools, like public  
22 schools, are all different, and they all have  
23 different purposes, but they're all our kids.

24           SENATOR PERKINS: They're all our kids,  
25 there's no question about that. That's why we all

1 are here.

2 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: And I visit  
3 charter schools to see, what are the things that we  
4 can learn from them?

5 We've worked with two or three particular  
6 schools on certain things.

7 And one of the pushes that I'm doing right  
8 now are in terms of using departmentalized  
9 instruction to teach math in fifth grade, which is  
10 one of the things I observed in a lot of the charter  
11 schools.

12 One of the charter-school networks on Common  
13 has been particularly helpful in helping us with  
14 professional development of principals, in terms of  
15 the teacher feedback.

16 And, also, I go to visit schools that, in  
17 many cases, particularly the independent charter  
18 schools that may need extra help and support, so --  
19 because if they're only one-of-a-kind, if I can put  
20 them in touch with another school that can help them  
21 in whatever area they need help.

22 So I think it's, pretty much, an individual  
23 situation, based on the individual school,  
24 principals, and needs.

25 But, again, it's parent choice.

1           There are other options.

2           And I do think that, working together, we can  
3 help, you know, all kids succeed.

4           SENATOR PERKINS: So in that regard, what are  
5 the demographics of the students?

6           Do you have a breakdown in terms of, you  
7 know, Black, White, Latino, et cetera?

8           URSULINA RAMIREZ: For our charter-school  
9 students, it is close to 50/50 in terms of  
10 male/female. Approximately, 55 percent Black,  
11 37 percent Latino, 2.2 percent Asian, 4 percent  
12 White, and 2 percent Other.

13          SENATOR PERKINS: So 92 percent non-White.

14          URSULINA RAMIREZ: Correct -- or -- no.

15          SENATOR PERKINS: 55 and 37 is, what?

16          CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: You're close to  
17 75 percent.

18          SENATOR PERKINS: Huh?

19          URSULINA RAMIREZ: You're close to  
20 75 percent, 80 percent.

21          SENATOR PERKINS: 55 and 37 is what --  
22 I thought I heard those numbers?

23          URSULINA RAMIREZ: Yes, that's correct.

24          SENATOR PERKINS: So 55 and -- I'm a  
25 public -- 55, 37. 92.

1           URSULINA RAMIREZ: Yes.

2           SENATOR PERKINS: Right, 92.

3           So that's sort of, like -- why is nobody else  
4 going to those schools if they're so good?

5           Why aren't White parents sending their  
6 children to charter schools?

7           CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Well, remember,  
8 there are lots of options.

9           You have independent schools, parochial  
10 schools, charter schools, and public schools.

11          And I think, also, a lot of it is based on  
12 demographics, where you live in the city.

13          I mean --

14          SENATOR PERKINS: Why are charter schools  
15 only in those places?

16          CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: It's their choice.

17          URSULINA RAMIREZ: We have charter schools in  
18 some -- in neighborhoods that have predominantly  
19 White communities, including District 3 and  
20 District 2 and District 15.

21          SENATOR PERKINS: And in District 3, which  
22 I also represent, what are the demographics of those  
23 kids?

24          URSULINA RAMIREZ: I don't have the specifics  
25 on the demographics of the students in District 3,

1 but we can get back to you.

2 SENATOR PERKINS: Do you think it's any  
3 different than the general demographic picture?

4 URSULINA RAMIREZ: I can't make that the  
5 assumption. I'd have to get back to you.

6 SENATOR PERKINS: Okay.

7 Assuming that it isn't, why don't -- why are  
8 these schools only attracting parents of color?

9 What is it that they're doing, or that  
10 they're not getting, in the traditional public  
11 school?

12 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: I mean, I think,  
13 to some degree, it's parent choice.

14 Many of the schools have an extended time.

15 And, you know, again, parents choose for all  
16 kinds of different reasons.

17 SENATOR PERKINS: Okay. So -- but you have  
18 this significant disparity between where one group  
19 of parents send their children and another group of  
20 parents send their children.

21 URSULINA RAMIREZ: I also want to note that  
22 our -- as a system as a whole, the majority of our  
23 students are Black and Latino.

24 SENATOR PERKINS: So...?

25 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: In public schools.

1           URSULINA RAMIREZ: In public schools.

2           SENATOR PERKINS: So...?

3           So -- but that -- I understand that.

4           You know, I'm a native New Yorker, so  
5 I understand that.

6           But I'm trying to understand, what is it  
7 that -- why are White parents not using the  
8 so-called "charter schools"?

9           CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: They are if  
10 they're in neighborhoods where they live.

11          In District --

12          SENATOR PERKINS: What are the -- give me  
13 some statistics on that.

14          CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Well, I will tell  
15 you that there's one in my particular neighbor.

16          SENATOR PERKINS: But what are the  
17 percentage? Give me some numbers.

18          There's one in your particular neighborhood.  
19 Okay.

20          URSULINA RAMIREZ: I will get back to you on  
21 the specifics in the neighborhoods, so districts --

22          SENATOR PERKINS: Please do, when you get a  
23 chance, because I'm very concerned about that,  
24 because, you know, today is, you know, the day that,  
25 to some extent, we are acknowledging the civil

1 rights movement.

2 And the fact that, if today is Malcolm X's  
3 birthday, and he, amongst others, like Dr. King,  
4 were concerned about these kind of disparities,  
5 because they tend to reflect some sort of  
6 second-class arrangements.

7 You know, integration was an effort to get  
8 away from that.

9 And I still see that, in this city, since the  
10 Bloomberg Administration, most of our children --  
11 most of the children who are in these schools are  
12 children of color.

13 And why are these schools not in other  
14 communities?

15 Why are these communities able to get what  
16 they need at a so-called "traditional public  
17 schools"?

18 Whereas, these so-called "privatized" models,  
19 some of which are for-profit, are sort of where the  
20 parents have to go to get the same kind of -- the  
21 quality -- to get a quality education.

22 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Well, my goal --

23 SENATOR PERKINS: And the question is, also,  
24 whether or not they are even getting that quality  
25 education.

1 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: My goal is to make  
2 every school a school of choice.

3 And I will tell that you one of the major  
4 things that we've tried to do, certainly in the last  
5 year and a half, is to put out grants, where charter  
6 schools and public schools in the same building  
7 would find ways to collaborate and work together.

8 And that's, to me, where your issue of, how  
9 do you get people to work together and come  
10 together? is really, really important.

11 But in terms of very specifics by district,  
12 we're very happy to provide that so you can see the  
13 breakdown by different parts of the city.

14 SENATOR PERKINS: Right, but has it ever  
15 occurred to you that there's this sort of picture of  
16 two types of systems, with two different types of  
17 populations?

18 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: I think, in  
19 neighborhoods, they tend to be pretty similar by  
20 neighborhood in terms of different parts of the  
21 city. Some parts of the city may have more charter  
22 schools than others.

23 But in terms of the ones that are within a  
24 geographical neighborhood, I think the numbers tend  
25 to be really rather -- pretty much the same,

1 ethnically.

2 SENATOR PERKINS: Can you -- can you -- you  
3 say you have that report?

4 Could you generate that?

5 URSULINA RAMIREZ: We will get that for you.

6 SENATOR PERKINS: Yeah, please do, because  
7 I haven't seen that as I travel around my district  
8 and around other neighborhoods. So -- and it  
9 bothers me, because it reminds me of an era that  
10 I think we want to -- we don't want to repeat.

11 And so -- and I don't -- now, how are we  
12 doing with our charter schools? How are they  
13 comparing?

14 Do you have statistics that represent  
15 success?

16 URSULINA RAMIREZ: We'll get you the specific  
17 statistics, but we are seeing success in both our --  
18 some of our charter schools, and in our traditional  
19 public schools.

20 SENATOR PERKINS: And in terms of the  
21 charters, what do -- how do they compare?

22 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: To each other, or  
23 to the public schools?

24 SENATOR PERKINS: To the public schools,  
25 yeah, because --

1 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: In terms of ELA  
2 scores, public schools are doing a little bit  
3 better.

4 And in terms of math scores, the charter  
5 schools are doing a little bit better.

6 SENATOR PERKINS: So you have -- so you will  
7 send me that report?

8 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Yes, we have that  
9 report. It's public.

10 SENATOR PERKINS: Have you looked at what's  
11 happening with them in other parts of the country?

12 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: We've looked at  
13 some other cities, but all of them have implemented  
14 them a little differently.

15 And I think the biggest lesson learned from  
16 us, is that there needs to be more sharing of  
17 practices between the charter world and the  
18 public-school world.

19 SENATOR PERKINS: Just give me an example of  
20 what you mean.

21 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: We looked at, what  
22 are some of the practices, or some of the  
23 bottom-line philosophies?

24 I'll give you a two examples.

25 Un-Common-schools network is doing a

1 particularly strong engagement with something called  
2 "relay college," that they actually formed, and that  
3 does very specific training of principals and  
4 teachers in professional development.

5 And we have seen that some of those schools  
6 were getting good results, so we actually approached  
7 them about working, particularly in District 23, 19,  
8 and 17, I believe, in Brooklyn.

9 And we're piloting this year -- we've been  
10 doing this for over a year -- to see if we have  
11 better success using this process.

12 Another program that we hope to do, one of  
13 the other charter-schools networks is doing a  
14 particularly good job, not just of getting their  
15 high school kids into college, but keeping them  
16 there beyond freshman year.

17 And we're looking to see what they've done  
18 particularly well, to be able to replicate some of  
19 that work within our own high school --

20 SENATOR PERKINS: Which charter school is  
21 that, by the way?

22 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: That's the  
23 KIPP charter schools.

24 SENATOR PERKINS: KIPP charter schools?

25 And are there any others, other than KIPP?

1           CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Well, one of these  
2 schools I visited, which was the all-girls prep, was  
3 doing some interesting work with departmentalization  
4 in math.

5           And it was one of the places where we started  
6 thinking about doing departmentalization in some  
7 subjects, only in elementary school, which was not a  
8 normal practice.

9           But I also want to say that I think they have  
10 a lot to learn from us as well. There's a lot of  
11 things that we do well.

12           So having them -- we've invited principals,  
13 who want to, to be part of our district principals  
14 conferences, if they choose to.

15           There are several principals who actually  
16 come to the public-school principals' meeting so  
17 they have someone else to talk to.

18           So I think there's a lot of common ground  
19 that we can learn from each other, and I look  
20 forward to seeing how else we might work together.

21           SENATOR PERKINS: So do you have a -- do you  
22 do any kind of a report when you make those type of  
23 analyses and those type of -- when you recognize  
24 those type of successes or even failures?

25           Do you have reports that represent that?

1 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: We haven't done --

2 SENATOR PERKINS: Because if you have --  
3 nothing, you said -- I'm sorry.

4 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: I said, we haven't  
5 done it up until now. But --

6 SENATOR PERKINS: Well, why not?

7 If you have a thing that's working --

8 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Well, we get --  
9 because we get academic results.

10 SENATOR PERKINS: You get bragging rights, to  
11 be able to report that.

12 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Yeah, okay.

13 URSULINA RAMIREZ: For the charters that we  
14 do authorize, because DOE is an authorizer for a  
15 handful of charters, we do have reports on their  
16 successes, and where they need areas of improvement.

17 SENATOR PERKINS: And the measures that --  
18 and what -- and the practices and procedures that  
19 have resulted in those --

20 URSULINA RAMIREZ: And their successes.

21 SENATOR PERKINS: -- then using the regular  
22 traditional public school system, as you were  
23 supposed to do when they were born there to begin  
24 with?

25 Because, as you know, the whole purpose of

1 the charter movement --

2 URSULINA RAMIREZ: Yes, correct.

3 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Yes, was  
4 innovation.

5 SENATOR PERKINS: -- was as an experiment,  
6 not to proliferate, but to share moments of success,  
7 practices of success, that would then improve the  
8 public -- the traditional public school system.

9 In other parts of the country, that they did  
10 not -- they were not able to do that.

11 URSULINA RAMIREZ: And I think --

12 SENATOR PERKINS: You claim, in  
13 New York City, you've been able to do that.

14 So do you have a report that represents how  
15 this charter school helped us understand how best to  
16 teach kids in the regular traditional public  
17 schools?

18 Do you have bragging rights that you have  
19 compiled in terms of some kind of report?

20 Because if you do, that would be a good  
21 thing, not just for New York City, but for other  
22 parts of the country as well.

23 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Well, we just  
24 started, this year, the district-charter school  
25 partnerships -- which is, partially, to do exactly

1 as you say -- to ask charter schools and public  
2 schools to apply for these grants, where we can  
3 actually see how we each help each other.

4 I do think that the things that we learn the  
5 most from are things that are truly innovative.

6 Part of the reason why we started what we  
7 call the "PROS program," is to allow schools who  
8 want to try some of these innovative things, to not  
9 follow UFT rules, not follow DOE regulations.

10 One of the schools that we're looking at for  
11 innovation is a school that decide to have four days  
12 a week -- teachers working four days a week.

13 Students are in school five days, but the  
14 teachers work four days a week, up until 5:00.

15 They have after-school programs that fit into  
16 the program.

17 And to see if this indeed helps us with  
18 teacher retention, teacher recruitment.

19 We have another school that is looking at a  
20 very different way to serve special-needs kids, in  
21 terms of extra support, but in a different way.

22 So I think we're trying to be very innovative  
23 ourselves within our own framework.

24 We have -- we will have, at the end of this  
25 year, 200 schools that are PROS schools, that are

1 going to be public schools trying something  
2 different than they have in the past.

3 SENATOR PERKINS: So I just want to be clear:

4 So you have charter schools that have  
5 exemplified techniques, or other kinds of ways of  
6 success, that you -- that you have been able to  
7 bring toward -- to traditional public schools, and  
8 sort of replicate that success?

9 Do you have reports on that?

10 Because that's bragging rights.

11 And it would seem to me, that if charter  
12 schools are doing wonderful things that can be done  
13 in the traditional public schools, where the vast  
14 majority of the kids are, then that should be  
15 something that's reported, that we who are  
16 interested in these schools should know about, and  
17 there should be a document, what we've learned from  
18 charter schools, and how they've improved our  
19 traditional public schools, and why we should  
20 continue in that regard.

21 URSULINA RAMIREZ: And what I --

22 SENATOR PERKINS: Kind of an idea.

23 You understand what I'm trying to say?

24 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Yes.

25 URSULINA RAMIREZ: We hear what you're --

1           SENATOR PERKINS: But as long as they've been  
2 around, there's been no report that has said:  
3 Charter schools are doing wonderful things. A, B,  
4 C, or D is what we've learned, and look at how we've  
5 been able to put that into the traditional public  
6 school, where the vast majority of kids are.

7           URSULINA RAMIREZ: And the Mayor made an  
8 announcement on his Equity and Excellence  
9 Initiative, which was the district-charter school  
10 partnership which the Chancellor just discussed.

11           And it is getting -- it is being launched for  
12 this September of this upcoming year.

13           And what we can do, is develop a report to  
14 talk about the successes, both from the -- and the  
15 learnings that are happening within that program.

16           SENATOR PERKINS: But why haven't we done  
17 that up to now?

18           CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Because it's  
19 individual strategies.

20           SENATOR PERKINS: The charter schools have  
21 been around here for how long?

22           CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: I don't know.  
23 Ten years?

24           URSULINA RAMIREZ: Some around ten years.

25           CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: About ten years.

1           SENATOR PERKINS:   Okay, it's been a decade of  
2 charters.

3           Where's the charter report on success, in  
4 terms of how it has helped our traditional public  
5 schools, where the vast majority of the kids go, and  
6 where the whole idea of the charter was towards that  
7 end?

8           That was the whole purpose of the charter:  
9 Not to expand the movement so that charter  
10 developments would get rich; but, rather, so that  
11 the children would get rich with education.

12          So where is that report that says the riches  
13 have been shared?

14          CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA:   Well, I will tell  
15 you that you will have it probably next year.

16          But I will tell you that, in cases where  
17 there are successes, it's a particular  
18 methodology --

19          SENATOR PERKINS:   But if you've been  
20 compiling this information for ten years, why are we  
21 now waiting till next year to get a report?

22          What stage are we in?

23          I'm just saying --

24          CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA:   No, no,  
25 I understand.

1           SENATOR PERKINS:  -- because I'm bothered by  
2           it, because the children who, for the most part, in  
3           these schools, are children from neighborhoods that  
4           I represent, even in District 3, which is not quite  
5           Harlem, but it is the Upper West Side.

6           But be that as it may, and I've looked at  
7           this in other countries -- not in other countries --  
8           in other cities and states, particularly in Albany  
9           where they all closed down, and other places of the  
10          country, they're all closed down.

11          How come the ones in New York City stand, but  
12          never -- as a success model, but they don't --  
13          reports that brag about that, as it relates to our  
14          public schools in general?

15          URSULINA RAMIREZ:  We will get back to you on  
16          the report.

17          SENATOR PERKINS:  All right.

18          Thank you.

19          SENATOR MARCELLINO:  Thank you, Senator.

20          We've been joined by Senator Krueger, but  
21          Senator Felder has a question.

22          SENATOR FELDER:  Thank you.

23          Thank you very much.

24          My questions are in no particular order, so  
25          you'll have to forgive me.

1 I've been trying to listen.

2 You've mentioned listening a number of times,  
3 so I've been trying to listen throughout the  
4 hearing.

5 You mentioned that when you -- when the Mayor  
6 and you were up in Albany, you met with many people.

7 Did you meet with Senator Stewart-Cousins,  
8 the leader of the Democrat Minority?

9 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: I did on the prior  
10 trip to Albany, yes.

11 SENATOR FELDER: I'm talking with the Mayor.

12 When the -- when you -- and what about the  
13 Assembly Leader, Carl Heastie?

14 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: The Mayor met with  
15 Carl Heastie.

16 SENATOR FELDER: Okay. And what about  
17 Senator Flanagan, the leader of the Majority in the  
18 Senate?

19 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: I met with him on  
20 a prior trip to Albany.

21 SENATOR FELDER: Did the Mayor meet with him  
22 when he come up to Albany?

23 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: I have no idea.

24 SENATOR FELDER: Can you ask somebody?

25 I'm sure somebody knows the answer to that

1 question.

2 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Not on the last  
3 trip.

4 SENATOR FELDER: Yeah.

5 So I think -- I think -- I think -- I think  
6 that would have been a good thing.

7 I think it would have been a good thing to --  
8 that the Mayor, since he's not coming to another  
9 hearing. And I -- so far, I haven't heard anyone  
10 explain why, and I think people are disappointed  
11 that, when he was up in Albany, I think we can  
12 agree, that we -- that it would have been the right  
13 thing.

14 You know, this -- the topic of mayoral  
15 control has become more political than -- than --  
16 than real.

17 And the discussions about seven years,  
18 three years, one year, this is not, in my mind --  
19 I speak for myself, so I apologize to my colleagues  
20 in advance -- this is not a lower --

21 SENATOR KRUEGER: We know you don't speak for  
22 us. It's okay.

23 SENATOR FELDER: Thank you.

24 Thank you.

25 SENATOR KRUEGER: Thank you.

1           SENATOR FELDER: You got me off track. Now  
2 I don't know what I wanted to say.

3                           [Laughter.]

4           SENATOR FELDER: Anyway, this is not a Lower  
5 East Side bargain, where you walk into a store -- at  
6 least used to -- you walked into the store and you  
7 say, "How much is this suit?

8                           The guy says, "200," because he wants 100.

9                           Then the other guy says, "I'm giving you 50,"  
10 because he wants to pay 75.

11                          So, you know, people who say, no, I --  
12 I mean, I've been looking at some of the -- the --  
13 you know, the testimony that's been given to us. A  
14 lot of -- I've been trying to look through it.

15                          I would just suggest -- I'm going to have to  
16 leave soon as well -- but it would be very helpful,  
17 if I had stayed longer, for people who come up to  
18 testify to just start out by saying whether they're  
19 in favor, or not in favor, or, they're in favor,  
20 but...

21                          So -- because we kept on saying about that  
22 it's about the children.

23                          So the years, I -- I -- in my mind, it's  
24 pretty clear that we're in favor -- "we,"  
25 "Simcha Felder," I'm in favor of mayoral control.

1           And the only question is about improving.  
2           You know, highlighting the things that work well,  
3           and highlighting the things that can be improved.

4           So the -- the -- a lot of the discussions --  
5           and I'm looking at you only because I'm about to ask  
6           you questions, but it's not addressed to you --  
7           I think this is -- a lot of the discussions that  
8           have been taking place are political dreck.

9           And for those that don't know what that  
10          means, that's a Yiddish term for garbage, trash, or  
11          anything else you want.

12          So, in my mind, I think that it's important  
13          to focus on the education issues specifically,  
14          because one of the -- one of the people who was  
15          testifying had something called a "report card," and  
16          I think it's pretty good.

17          I don't necessarily agree with their  
18          assessment, but they go through items, such as,  
19          education, special transparency, accountability,  
20          special education, things like that.

21          And that's what I think -- that's the focus.

22          So having said that, and feeling a little  
23          better getting that off my mind, so what I wanted to  
24          know is, I'm curious, the mayoral-control issue,  
25          really, the groundwork for that was laid by

1 Mayor Giuliani.

2 I think that, without that, Mayor Bloomberg  
3 would never have been able to do it.

4 During that time -- I understand that you've  
5 been in education, an educator, for many, many  
6 years.

7 During that time, were you in favor of  
8 mayoral control of the system?

9 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: I think in terms  
10 of the stability of the system, I've always wanted  
11 that to be part of it.

12 I also --

13 SENATOR FELDER: Yeah, but that wasn't my  
14 question.

15 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: -- I think that,  
16 certainly, as a superintendent, I felt that it was  
17 important to not have a patronage system, where  
18 principals were often chosen for political reasons.

19 So that mayoral control did take that away.

20 SENATOR FELDER: All right. You and I know  
21 that you don't want to answer the question, so  
22 I won't ask it to you a third time.

23 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: No, I will say,  
24 yes, definitely, in the sense that there was too  
25 much patronage in the system, and people got jobs

1 they were not necessarily qualified for.

2 And with mayoral control, I think putting  
3 superintendents in charge of picking principals is a  
4 much better system in education.

5 SENATOR FELDER: Okay. I apologize.

6 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: No, that's okay.

7 SENATOR FELDER: Thank you for answering the  
8 question.

9 What -- so -- you know, when you go on  
10 interviews, they always ask you, What's your  
11 weakness?

12 Right?

13 So I'd like to ask you: What do you think  
14 are problems that have to be addressed in the  
15 education system as it is?

16 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Oh, my goodness.

17 We could have a whole other hearing on this.

18 I think making sure that --

19 SENATOR MARCELLINO: Don't encourage me.

20 [Laughter.]

21 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: I think the most  
22 important thing is that everyone has to see  
23 themselves invested, and need to support public  
24 education.

25 This is not parents who need to be invested.

1 This is everyone.

2 The CEOs of companies.

3 Public -- everyone has to see public  
4 education as an investment.

5 And I think, for too long, we've only tried  
6 to get parents and educators involved.

7 It's got to be everybody, and it's got to be  
8 everybody working together, because we're not going  
9 to have the workforce of tomorrow if not everyone is  
10 invested.

11 So I would say that's one of the things that  
12 is a real challenge, and it's one of the reasons,  
13 also, we have expanded the groups of people we speak  
14 to.

15 I actually meet with COs. I meet with the  
16 New York City Partnership.

17 Everyone needs to understand the importance  
18 of public education.

19 SENATOR FELDER: Okay.

20 I don't want to forget to thank you, and  
21 thank the Mayor, for the good -- all the good work,  
22 clearly.

23 And I just want to tell the Chair, I did get  
24 a response to my question.

25 My mother always said I was special.

1           So, I did get a response to my question.

2           But this question, you didn't answer me.

3           I'm asking you, I want to know, what you  
4 believe are the weaknesses in your educational  
5 system at this time that should be improved.

6           CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Well, I certainly  
7 think our work with special-needs students and  
8 English-language learners needs, you know, more  
9 concentration.

10           It's not because we're not trying, but it's  
11 just a very heavy lift.

12           I think, also, you know, kids in temporary  
13 housing and homeless shelters; big, big issue.

14           And with all the support we're putting in it,  
15 it's almost like something that requires 24/7 kind  
16 of attention. So I think that's it.

17           I think one of the other major challenges is  
18 also recruitment of the best teachers, and making  
19 sure, particularly teachers to work with  
20 special-needs kids and English-language learners, we  
21 want to increase our dual-language programs, but we  
22 don't have enough teachers who speak two languages  
23 in academic ways.

24           So there's a lot of challenges. There's  
25 enough challenges to keep me busy for a very, very

1 long time.

2 But I think focusing on the successes,  
3 I mean, one of the things we've been doing a lot is  
4 partnering schools that are successful in something.

5 So, learning-partner showcase schools; so  
6 schools that have solved a problem, that can be  
7 partnered with another school who has the same  
8 problem.

9 But, challenges, there are more than enough  
10 to go around.

11 SENATOR FELDER: I would just say that, when  
12 somebody like me asks you what your weakness is,  
13 that may be a compliment, because it's clear to me  
14 that there have been many successes, without  
15 question.

16 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Thank you.

17 SENATOR FELDER: On another topic: Last  
18 time, when you were in Albany with the Mayor,  
19 I asked what the ratio of psychologists-to-student  
20 is in the system.

21 I'm wondering whether you have that  
22 information?

23 URSULINA RAMIREZ: Actually I do. One  
24 second.

25 SENATOR FELDER: Thank you.

1           So I'll go on to the next question.

2           CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA:   And we've  
3           increased the number in this particular budget.

4           SENATOR FELDER:   I'll go on to the next  
5           question while you find that.

6           I am concerned that, although the City has  
7           invested tremendous amounts of money in protecting  
8           our children, the issue of terrorism is on  
9           everyone's mind.

10          And at this point, in the city schools, we  
11          have security officers that do not carry guns.  They  
12          are unarmed.

13          Now, I'm -- I -- I am very concerned that --  
14          that, you know, a Brinks truck picking up \$1 million  
15          from a bank has two guys, carrying guns, and that  
16          the schools do not have officers carrying guns.

17          I want to know what you think about that.

18          CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA:   This would  
19          certainly not be one of the things that I would  
20          pursue.

21          We -- when we have emergencies, we call our  
22          NYPD that we work very closely.

23          But I don't think having school safety  
24          officers carrying guns is the answer to any of these  
25          problems.

1           SENATOR FELDER:  What do you think is the  
2    answer?

3           CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA:  I think  
4    better-trained school safety officers, which we  
5    already have.

6           Our crime is down 29 percent.

7           You know, anything can happen at any time and  
8    anyplace.

9           But I do believe that we have very good rules  
10   and regulations on how you enter a building.

11          They know who I am, and yet I have to show ID  
12   when I go into a building.

13          And I think that -- the things that we have  
14   in place right now are fine.

15          Having more guns in schools is not the answer  
16   to this issue.

17          SENATOR FELDER:  Well, I wasn't suggesting  
18   that the kids should have guns.

19          I hope you know that.

20          SENATOR MARCELLINO:  In terms of your other  
21   question, it's one to 133 students.

22          SENATOR FELDER:  You have 1 psychologist for  
23   every 133 students?

24          CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA:  That doesn't count  
25   guidance counselors and other -- and social workers.

1 Remember, there are many categories of  
2 student-support people.

3 SENATOR FELDER: And what was the number a  
4 year ago? Do you know?

5 URSULINA RAMIREZ: I will get you the number  
6 from last year.

7 SENATOR FELDER: If you don't mind, I'll  
8 continue with the questions.

9 I'm just curious, how many schools have you  
10 visited in my district?

11 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Your -- I don't  
12 know specifically by district, but by this time,  
13 I have visited over 200 schools. Probably more.

14 SENATOR FELDER: But I had to ask you a  
15 question that's self-centered entirely.

16 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Be my guest.

17 SENATOR FELDER: You know that.

18 So I want to know how many schools you --

19 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Is there a  
20 specific school in your district you want --

21 SENATOR FELDER: No. I just want to continue  
22 feeling special.

23 I want to know how many schools you visited  
24 in my district.

25 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: I can't give you

1 that number.

2 I mean, I have a school tracking record, that  
3 I actually write every school I visited to, so I'm  
4 happy to send that to you. I can do it from --

5 SENATOR FELDER: Yes.

6 But I don't want to know how many schools you  
7 visited.

8 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: No, no. I will  
9 let you know, specifically in your district --

10 SENATOR FELDER: I want to know how many of  
11 Simcha's schools you visited, please.

12 SENATOR KRUEGER: Can I make a friendly  
13 amendment?

14 SENATOR FELDER: Yes.

15 SENATOR KRUEGER: Thank you.

16 He's ceding time.

17 We all want to feel special.

18 So if you get him an answer, get us all  
19 answers.

20 SENATOR MARCELLINO: Okay, I will.

21 SENATOR KRUEGER: Thank you.

22 SENATOR FELDER: Why did you some come so  
23 early?

24 SENATOR KRUEGER: I thought I came quite  
25 late.

1 I thought you would be done, but, no.

2 SENATOR MARCELLINO: Move on.

3 SENATOR FELDER: You've been very helpful to  
4 me.

5 Another -- one other issue, is the discussion  
6 about schools for children that will not to go  
7 college, and who are extremely talented, but don't  
8 have any patience to sit.

9 I consider myself one of those people.

10 So years ago, they had schools that taught  
11 trades. And, you know, there's been so much  
12 discussion about Common Core.

13 At the end of the day, a certain amount of  
14 the population will never do well on any of those  
15 tests because God did not create these kids to sit  
16 anywhere. That they have their own talents, and  
17 will be brilliant plumbers, mechanics, painters, or  
18 whatever else.

19 So I'm just wondering if there's anything  
20 that you can do or speak towards, bringing back some  
21 of that, so that -- so that a kid that may not be a  
22 mathematician, but will be a great contractor and  
23 earn a good livelihood, doesn't have to feel like  
24 there's something wrong with them when they go to  
25 school.

1 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: I'm so glad you  
2 asked.

3 We have invested in 40 new, and strengthening  
4 the ones we have, what we call "CTE" programs.

5 CTE programs are multiple pathways.

6 That means, that you can go to college,  
7 you're still college-ready, but, if you choose to go  
8 directly into a trade, that's fine.

9 I mean, for example -- and, in fact, I think  
10 it was in your district, I went to something this  
11 Saturday, and I met with the head of the carpenters  
12 union. And one of the things that he told me, which  
13 I did not know, that the carpenters union also  
14 includes the divers union, because divers are  
15 carpenters underwater. And that jobs from the  
16 divers -- from divers start at \$80,000 a year.

17 So we -- right away, we exchanged cards.  
18 And, I already have someone meeting with him,  
19 because we not only -- and this is why I talk about  
20 everyone has to be involved -- we have to get the  
21 unions more involved in working in our high schools  
22 and in our colleges, because having a union card --  
23 the plumbers, the carpenters, union -- all these are  
24 jobs for the future, and I think it's really  
25 important.

1           Our CTE programs in pharma -- that's why  
2           I said I need your help.

3           We can create even more CTE programs if the  
4           state laws would change to allow the degrees or  
5           licensing for people.

6           Like, for example, if you have a pharmacy  
7           program, it's a classroom teacher, but it's a  
8           pharmacist.

9           If it's a health program, it's someone in the  
10          health.

11          And we cannot hire them long enough -- enough  
12          because the State has not processed these.

13          So this is something we really want to work  
14          on.

15          I definitely --

16          SENATOR FELDER: Yeah, I like the answer to  
17          that question, because I happen to have  
18          legislation -- proposed legislation on some of  
19          the -- what you discussed.

20          So, again, I want to just end my questions by  
21          thanking you, and thanking the Mayor, for the good  
22          work that's been done, and look forward for -- to  
23          improvements.

24          And thank you, Mr. Chair.

25          SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you, Senator.

1           At this point in time, all the members who  
2           have indicated they wish to question have done so,  
3           and we'll mercifully let you go, to get back to  
4           your -- the schools and running of the schools.

5           I just want to reiterate: I would have  
6           preferred -- no offense -- Mayor de Blasio being  
7           here. His testimony, his answering these kind of  
8           questions, in concert with you, would have been much  
9           more helpful to this Committee, and would have  
10          spoken volumes about the system and about mayoral  
11          control.

12           That was what we're here about:

13           What is the Mayor's input?

14           How does the Mayor handle this?

15           What would the Mayor be doing?

16           How has it made a difference to have mayoral  
17          control?

18           Your testimony, fantastic. I appreciate it.

19           But we needed to hear from him. We needed  
20          follow-up questions to be heard from him.

21           We have questions, which we've given you  
22          copies of, that need to be answered; and, hopefully,  
23          we'll get them.

24           You don't have to do it right now, but if you  
25          can get it to us, to my office, and I'll distribute

1 it to the members who have asked for them, make sure  
2 everybody gets a copy, what's proposed for them, so  
3 there's no loss in that.

4 But, again, I reiterate: It would have --  
5 this would have been a better situation if the Mayor  
6 were here to defend his -- and I don't mean defend  
7 in a negative way -- but to defend his running of  
8 the city schools; that, I think is an imperative for  
9 us.

10 Thank you again.

11 CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Well, I thank you  
12 for the opportunity.

13 And I know I speak for the Mayor as well when  
14 I say, in this particular situation, we really are  
15 very united in terms of wanting stability, and to do  
16 what's best for the students of the city of  
17 New York.

18 So, thank you very much.

19 I look forward to many more conversations.

20 SENATOR MARCELLINO: Moving right along, is  
21 Dennis Walcott here?

22 I know he was here earlier.

23 He left?

24 Mark Cannizzaro, executive vice president of  
25 CSA?

1 Mark.

2 MARK CANNIZZARO: Good morning.

3 Are you ready?

4 SENATOR MARCELLINO: We're ready.

5 MARK CANNIZZARO: Okay, great.

6 Good morning, Senator Marcellino, members of  
7 the Senate Education Committee.

8 SENATOR MARCELLINO: Will the young lady  
9 who's leaning against the door jamb please stop,  
10 because you're turning lights on and off?

11 Thank you very much.

12 Is there a possibility of getting a piece of  
13 tape put over that switch?

14 There is tape put over the switch?

15 How about an electric prod?

16 [Laughter.]

17 SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you.

18 I'm sorry.

19 MARK CANNIZZARO: That's okay.

20 My name is Mark Cannizzaro. I'm the  
21 executive vice president of the Council for School  
22 Supervisors and Administrators.

23 We are the union that represents school  
24 principals and assistant principals, as well as  
25 educational administrators, here in New York City.

1           We thank you for this opportunity.

2           We thank you for holding it in our backyard.  
3           It does, certainly, make it convenient for us.

4           I will take Senator Felder's advice and tell  
5           you that we are in support of continued mayoral  
6           control of the school system.

7           I will further take his advice and say that  
8           we are also in support of some refinements to the  
9           current system.

10           We would like to see mayoral control  
11           extended, but not made permanent, at least not yet,  
12           if it is considered at some point.

13           We are looking for some refinements to the  
14           composition of the -- what's currently called the  
15           PEP (the Panel of Educational Policy), per the  
16           board's bylaws.

17           And we also are looking for some expansion of  
18           the authority of the current community education  
19           councils.

20           Much of what I heard, while I was waiting,  
21           are some of the things that we support.

22           We would like to see composition of the panel  
23           changed slightly, to a panel that has seven  
24           appointees by the Mayor, rather than eight; with the  
25           retention of the requirements that are currently

1 part of the panel's policy, to have at least two  
2 parents selected who have had children attend public  
3 schools and/or a student who was a public-school  
4 student within the last two years, to be part of the  
5 Mayor's selections.

6 We would like to see continued appointees,  
7 one by each borough president; the five borough  
8 presidents each be able to select.

9 And we would like the thirteenth selection to  
10 be a selection of the City Council. We feel that  
11 this change would give the City Council a voice at  
12 all PEP meetings, and be able to directly influence  
13 policy before anything got to them for any type of  
14 debate.

15 We support the continued authority of the PEP  
16 with mayor -- with the current statute, as far as  
17 relating to proposed regulations, capital plan,  
18 operating funds, allocations, and revenues --

19 (Audio/visual transmission stops.)

20 (Audio/visual resumes, in progress.)

21 MARK CANNIZZARO: -- closing and/or  
22 consolidation of schools in their districts.

23 Again, their vote, either for or against,  
24 could be reversed by a majority vote of the central  
25 board.

1           We just feel that will increase their  
2 authority, and create a stronger connection to  
3 parents in the community, that we think is -- has  
4 improved, but is still a little bit lacking.

5           For that reason, CSA would certainly like to  
6 see the continuation of mayoral control.

7           We do strongly advocate for the changes that  
8 we've asked for.

9           And, finally, we feel, probably, the  
10 number-one reason that we're advocating for this is,  
11 when we have a question, a problem, a suggestion,  
12 we're able to go to one place and have that  
13 discussion.

14           Thank you.

15           SENATOR ADDABBO: Mr. Cannizzaro --

16           SENATOR MARCELLINO: Just before, make note  
17 of the fact that we did invite the UFT to attend  
18 both hearings. They have declined to attend.

19           SENATOR ADDABBO: Mr. Cannizzaro, thank you  
20 very much for your time here today, and I really  
21 appreciate your suggestions, because like  
22 I mentioned to the Chancellor, when something like  
23 mayoral controls expires, we have the opportunity to  
24 certainly make improvements to the system.

25           So I thank you for your suggestions.

1           We have seen many administrative changes over  
2 the years with mayoral control, one of them being  
3 the role of the principal.

4           And all due respect to superintendents,  
5 superintendents have a lot of schools under their  
6 authority and a lot of schools to be interested in.

7           But the principal has one school: their own.

8           Can you see a change in the authority or the  
9 role the principal changes as we go through possibly  
10 improving mayoral control?

11           MARK CANNIZZARO: Well, I don't think that  
12 whether or not we have mayoral control speaks to the  
13 authority of the principal.

14           We have, obviously, and always, been strong  
15 supporters on the principal being the person that  
16 makes the decisions for his or her building.

17           You know, there's been a lot of talk about  
18 autonomy, and the autonomy of a principal.

19           CSA believes that, when someone is selected  
20 as a principal, that means they've earned autonomy,  
21 and should be able to operate their buildings as  
22 such.

23           Now, of course, just like we're asking for in  
24 mayoral control, checks and balances on everyone is  
25 certainly important and necessary.

1           But I think that that is more a -- that  
2           question that you've asked does not relate to  
3           mayoral control as much as it relates to  
4           philosophies and things of the times.

5           So, you know, as far as mayoral control is  
6           concerned, we still think we -- there's certainly  
7           more autonomy and more ability to run a building  
8           than there was in the previous system, for those of  
9           us who have been around long enough.

10          SENATOR ADDABBO: I only mention because  
11          previous changes to mayoral control has had changes  
12          within the roles, not only the parents, but also  
13          teachers and administrators.

14          So, that's why I had mentioned it.

15          But, again, I thank you for your input and  
16          your insight, and for your time here today.

17          MARK CANNIZZARO: Thank you.

18          SENATOR KRUEGER: Thank you.

19          Thank you very much.

20          MARK CANNIZZARO: Thank you, Senator.

21          SENATOR KRUEGER: I read your testimony  
22          before you got here, and I appreciated your  
23          recommendations for how we could make changes that  
24          would, I think, broaden the participation of others  
25          concerned about education.

1           So I am hoping that, in discussions of  
2           mayoral control, we might, some day, get to  
3           substance, and not just the politics, as my  
4           colleague Senator Feldman (sic) pointed out.

5           But I'm curious: You don't think that the  
6           Department of Education should be brought under the  
7           same standards as other city agencies for  
8           procurement?

9           Because that's been one of my concerns: that  
10          procurement ought to go through the same process as  
11          other city agencies, with normal auditing and review  
12          process.

13          The principals don't -- aren't concerned with  
14          that currently.

15          MARK CANNIZZARO: Well, I have to plead  
16          ignorance to knowing the exact, you know, procedures  
17          that the other agencies go through.

18          But we don't -- we feel that by making any  
19          tweaks that we've recommended, we think we can keep  
20          those checks and balances in place.

21          I do happen to agree a little bit -- a bit  
22          with the Chancellor, what she said earlier, is this  
23          particular PEP has been quite diligent when it comes  
24          to contracts and procurement, probably more so than  
25          we've seen in the past.

1           So, I don't -- wouldn't say that's been a  
2 concern, no.

3           SENATOR KRUEGER: And then, I think it was in  
4 a previous administration, there was, once upon a  
5 time, a proposal that principals would be provided  
6 a -- almost an administrative principal, to work  
7 side-by-side with them, so that you as principals  
8 could focus on the education, the students, the  
9 teachers, the classroom. And then recognizing the  
10 enormous administrative responsibilities you have  
11 over the schools, provide you someone who could take  
12 on those challenges.

13           I always thought that sounded like a great  
14 model.

15           I am so admiring of the work that principals  
16 do.

17           And I think all of us who work in our  
18 communities know, when you have a good principal,  
19 you have a school that functions; and when you  
20 don't, you have problems.

21           So I'm wondering where you all are on that  
22 once-upon-a-time proposal?

23           MARK CANNIZZARO: Anything this body can do  
24 to help that along the way, we would certainly  
25 appreciate.

1           SENATOR KRUEGER:   And that model doesn't  
2 exist now anywhere?

3           MARK CANNIZZARO:   No.  It -- some of the high  
4 schools have what we call "assistant principals in  
5 charge of organization," and they do a lot of the  
6 work that you're referring to; but, yet, the  
7 administrative burdens on a principal are so huge.

8           We just sent a survey out, and the number-one  
9 comment about what could help folks improve their  
10 jobs, would be taking away some of the enormous  
11 workload, as far as paperwork and organization,  
12 administrative types of things.

13           So, as far as a principal and instructional  
14 leaders in the building, other assistant principals  
15 being able to get in the classrooms and really help  
16 move instruction, something like that would be  
17 certainly welcomed with open arms.

18           SENATOR KRUEGER:   Thank you.

19           MARK CANNIZZARO:   You're welcome.

20           SENATOR KRUEGER:   Thank you.

21           SENATOR MARCELLINO:  Bill, do you have a  
22 question?

23           SENATOR PERKINS:   You know, most folks are  
24 really preoccupied with salary and benefits, and so  
25 forth.

1           And as principals, you -- I guess you run the  
2 whole operation in the system.

3           Do you -- so how do you all -- what is your  
4 take on these charters?

5           I know it's about salaries and benefits, and  
6 such and so forth, but what's the story with -- how  
7 do -- how are charters doing with you guys?

8           MARK CANNIZZARO: So we -- first of all, CSA  
9 represents a small group of, I think, about nine  
10 charter schools.

11           So --

12           SENATOR PERKINS: How are they measuring up?

13           MARK CANNIZZARO: Oh, they're doing quite  
14 well.

15           The charters that we represent are  
16 independent charter schools, so they're all  
17 independent in what we call "conversion charters."

18           So, at one point --

19           SENATOR PERKINS: Could you explain what that  
20 means?

21           MARK CANNIZZARO: Sure.

22           So, they are single -- single operations.  
23 Okay?

24           And they were converted from one -- at one  
25 time, they were New York City public schools.

1           Okay, so now they've converted into charter  
2 schools.

3           Several years back, before I be -- before  
4 I came to CSA, is when they converted, but we've  
5 been working with them quite closely.

6           We actually think that the conversation has  
7 to be a little bit more about what you were alluding  
8 to earlier, I think, Senator.

9           We want to be able to put some of the  
10 rhetoric aside that we hear all the time.

11          These -- the children that go to our schools  
12 are our kids, and they are learning.

13          Some students, in both places, learning  
14 better than other students, and being given better  
15 opportunities.

16          And we want to be able to have an open and  
17 honest discussion, without the politics and the  
18 rhetoric and all of these things that have seemed  
19 to -- seem to dominate the press lately.

20          If there is something that can help my  
21 school, when I was a school principal, I don't care  
22 where I'm learning it from; I'm happy to learn it.

23          And I think that most people feel that way.

24          But we've gotten to this argument now, where  
25 one has to be better than the other, or not.

1           And that is what is dominating right now:

2           It's, what's better?

3           And I don't think one system is necessarily  
4           better; or one child, because they go to a  
5           particular brand of school, is getting a better  
6           education than another.

7           I think we can all learn from each other, and  
8           we should all learn from each other.

9           SENATOR PERKINS: I guess I would agree with  
10          that, except that, at some point, you have to  
11          measure what folks are doing, to determine whether  
12          or not it's actually better.

13          And then the fact, if it is, take that lesson  
14          and replicate it, so that those who are not doing so  
15          better can do better.

16          MARK CANNIZZARO: That's 100 percent correct.

17          SENATOR PERKINS: That's the genius of that  
18          opportunity.

19          And, so, the whole idea of the charter school  
20          was that they would be better, and that they would  
21          teach us how to teach our children to do better.

22          So there would be lessons learned that could  
23          be replicated and provided to the other students  
24          that might not have those opportunities.

25          And so that's my concern, is what are we

1 learning from this model that is supposed to be  
2 there to teach us how to do better?

3 MARK CANNIZZARO: We're going to have a hard  
4 time -- we're going to have hard -- I agree with  
5 what you just said, as far as, you know, being able  
6 to learn and being able to measure.

7 But we're going to have the hard time  
8 measuring anything, accurately and honestly, when  
9 the discussion is "us verse you," because everyone  
10 is trying to protect their piece of the pie when  
11 that happens, and that's not a good thing.

12 And that's what's happening right now, it's  
13 that discussion.

14 So no one is going to let their guard down  
15 and say, Hey, you know what? Yeah.

16 You know -- and that's the issue that we have  
17 right now.

18 SENATOR PERKINS: So with all due respect,  
19 I agree with you, but I don't think that that's what  
20 I'm saying.

21 I'm just saying that, the whole idea of the  
22 charter movement was that it would be not a second  
23 set of per se; but, rather, an opportunity for us --  
24 for the educators to get some models of success that  
25 can be replicated; not necessarily a

1 one-size-fits-all, but, you know -- but, you know,  
2 what can work.

3 And instead of learning from those, quote,  
4 labs of experimental opportunity, they've duplicated  
5 themselves, without letting us know what the benefit  
6 was that could be replicated.

7 And, so, folks are making large salaries, and  
8 contracts, and -- but when you look at the success  
9 of the students, they're not measuring up.

10 And I don't want to dismiss any of those that  
11 are, but, generally speaking, they're not  
12 competitive in the way that they were expected to  
13 be.

14 MARK CANNIZZARO: Well, I don't think we're  
15 disagreeing as much as you think we're disagreeing.

16 I think a lot of what we're saying is the  
17 same, and I agree.

18 Look, you're -- when you have any type of  
19 system, any type of new experimental type of things,  
20 different -- different procedures, different ways to  
21 educate children, not every one of those ways is  
22 going to measure up. Right?

23 And some of our schools in New York City are  
24 doing a wonderful job at a lot of things, and that  
25 needs to be replicated also.

1           SENATOR PERKINS:    Sure, sure.

2           MARK CANNIZZARO:   Right?

3           And that's one of the things that I think we  
4           are trying to do with some of the programs we have,  
5           both, interacting with charter schools, and that's  
6           just in the beginning, as well as interacting with  
7           each other, and to replicate some best practices,  
8           because best practices can be replicated in lots of  
9           different places and lots of different areas.

10           But I do agree with you, that what the  
11           intention is, and was, needs to be brought back into  
12           focus, so that we can do exactly what we're supposed  
13           to do.

14           And all children can benefit from something  
15           that is beneficial in any building, whether it's a  
16           traditional district school or a charter school or  
17           any other type of building where children are  
18           learning.

19           SENATOR MARCELLINO:   The line of questioning  
20           is interesting, but, can we bring this back to  
21           mayoral control?

22           SENATOR PERKINS:    Well, the essence of this  
23           stems from mayoral control, because, without it, you  
24           wouldn't have it.

25           It was the dictatorial behavior of the

1 Bloomberg Administration that brought this into the  
2 system.

3 That's why I'm bringing it up.

4 And there's never really been the kind of  
5 review of it, to measure whether or not --

6 SENATOR MARCELLINO: That we could do -- we  
7 could do in another hearing, and I don't mind doing  
8 it, because I think --

9 SENATOR PERKINS: -- but I'm saying, mayoral  
10 control is --

11 SENATOR MARCELLINO: -- I think your point is  
12 well-taken --

13 SENATOR PERKINS: -- what's measuring -- is  
14 what -- is why we're at this point.

15 SENATOR MARCELLINO: How is this --

16 SENATOR PERKINS: And so this is one of the  
17 flowerings of mayoral control, which is the  
18 charters.

19 But this is the Bloomberg's legacy that I'm  
20 talking about.

21 MARK CANNIZZARO: So if --

22 SENATOR PERKINS: This is what he was  
23 bragging about.

24 MARK CANNIZZARO: -- if -- if you --

25 SENATOR PERKINS: So I just want to make sure

1 that, if it works, then let's replicate it.

2 And if it doesn't work, then, that's it.

3 MARK CANNIZZARO: -- if the concern is about  
4 one person having too much authority and control,  
5 then I think some of the suggestions that we've  
6 placed in here does help to --

7 SENATOR PERKINS: Let me -- let me -- in  
8 response to that, let me just be -- it's not about  
9 the control. It's about whether or not the model  
10 works.

11 Not control.

12 MARK CANNIZZARO: Right.

13 SENATOR PERKINS: Okay?

14 If this model works, it has lessons, it has  
15 practices, it has procedures, whatever -- however  
16 you want to describe it, that can be replicated.  
17 Right?

18 Let's -- where is that at?

19 MARK CANNIZZARO: That's what I -- I just  
20 told you, we need to do better at replicating  
21 everywhere. Not just there, but everywhere.

22 SENATOR PERKINS: No, but that was  
23 specifically what that was for.

24 MARK CANNIZZARO: Okay.

25 SENATOR PERKINS: That was what the folks

1 thought was gonna happen, and that way, it would be  
2 replicated throughout the system.

3 MARK CANNIZZARO: Right. Like I said,  
4 I think we're agreeing more --

5 SENATOR PERKINS: Where is the report that  
6 says: A, B, C, we learned. X, Y, Z.

7 MARK CANNIZZARO: You asked that question  
8 earlier, and, you know, that report is not going to  
9 come from the CSA.

10 But I believe that report should be  
11 forthcoming, hopefully, from another agency.

12 SENATOR PERKINS: Thank you.

13 MARK CANNIZZARO: You're welcome.

14 SENATOR MARCELLINO: How many times do you  
15 meet with the mayor, relative -- or any other union,  
16 colleagues, relative to mayoral control, relative to  
17 the city schools?

18 MARK CANNIZZARO: So Earnest Logan, our  
19 president, meets with the Mayor from time to time.

20 To be honest with you, I couldn't give you a  
21 specific number, but I wouldn't say that it's less  
22 than four or five times in the last year.

23 SENATOR MARCELLINO: Specifically dealing  
24 with non-contract mayoral control?

25 MARK CANNIZZARO: Dealing with a host of

1 issues, and I'm sure that that is included, yes.

2 SENATOR MARCELLINO: All right.

3 Thank you.

4 MARK CANNIZZARO: Thank you very much.

5 SENATOR MARCELLINO: Any other questions?

6 Thank you for your testimony. We appreciate  
7 your coming.

8 MARK CANNIZZARO: And thank you for your  
9 time.

10 SENATOR KRUEGER: Thank you very much.

11 SENATOR MARCELLINO: The next group would be,  
12 Teresa Arboleda, Ellen McHugh, and Mona Davids.

13 And again I would ask, the people testifying,  
14 that we not read the testimony.

15 We have it. It will be made part of the  
16 record.

17 But we would appreciate it if you could  
18 summarize it, so we can get to the questions, and  
19 I think that would be the most important part of it.

20 Thank you.

21 Start whenever you wish.

22 TERESA ARBOLEDA: Good afternoon.

23 My name is Teresa Arboleda, and I was a  
24 former school-board member, a former CEC member, and  
25 now I'm the chair of the Citywide Council on

1 English-Language Learners.

2 As Carmen Fariña, I'm also a former  
3 English-language learner, although I was born and  
4 raised here. And my parents were also immigrants  
5 from Spain.

6 I'm also the president of the -- the chair of  
7 the legislative committee of the Education Council  
8 Consortium. It's a group that was formed,  
9 I believe, in early 2013, and it's comprised of  
10 members of the CECs and citywide councils, and we  
11 meet regularly with the Chancellor, and we address  
12 issues that affect the schools and communities in  
13 all the boroughs.

14 The ECC, we were made aware about mayoral  
15 control expiring, and we decided to form a committee  
16 and explore, and discuss, the ramifications and pros  
17 and cons about mayoral control.

18 And after a lot of discussion, we developed a  
19 resolution, and -- on May 23, 2015, before the last  
20 expiration.

21 And the basic idea is that, while we're not  
22 supportive of extending mayoral control, we do offer  
23 amendments in case it is renewed.

24 And the ideal situation would have been to  
25 hold extensive hearings with parents and schools,

1 and get different ideas, but, I don't think that is  
2 happening.

3 The issue of mayoral control cannot be about  
4 a particular mayor. It should be about the  
5 students.

6 And any system of governance must have checks  
7 and balances.

8 And we cannot have a new school system every  
9 time there's a new mayor.

10 It's not about the mayor.

11 It's important for the parents to know where  
12 to go when they have problems.

13 And the best way to do that is to have local  
14 districts and local staff, local superintendents,  
15 within the geographical area of where people live  
16 and the schools.

17 When mayoral control was first implemented,  
18 it was -- the system was turned upside down.

19 Parents didn't know what was happening. They  
20 didn't know what was going on. It was barely  
21 explained.

22 That's why we are so concerned about the  
23 governance of mayoral control, the system.

24 It's not about the mayor.

25 We cannot have a corporate structure.

1           The next mayor may want to have a corporate  
2 structure like the previous mayor.

3           We believe that students are not just data.  
4 They are people, and they're not to be passed around  
5 like chess pieces.

6           I mean, the enrollment procedures that were  
7 in effect was, they were just numbers.

8           Oh, this kid fits here. This kid fits here.

9           No paying attention as to what that child's  
10 needs were.

11           We can't fall into the trap of  
12 one-size-fits-all.

13           We believe the present administration has  
14 made positive changes, and these changes should be  
15 firmly established by the law so that we can  
16 maintain stability and not be thrown into turmoil  
17 again.

18           Some of these changes that we like, these are  
19 not the only ones, but these are very important  
20 ones:

21           The appointment of a chancellor who was an  
22 educator.

23           The increased parental access to parents in  
24 the local geographic district.

25           Sensitivity to the needs of English-language

1 learners.

2 I can speak to that as president of the  
3 council.

4 They have expanded interpretation and  
5 translation services. There are more English  
6 classes for parents who don't speak English.

7 And, there's a less-contentious process for  
8 co-locations.

9 I'm a parent. I was on the CEC in District 3  
10 when all the co-locations so-called "hearings" were  
11 conducted, and I can tell you it was not fun.

12 The resolution that you have before you, it  
13 reflects the wide opinions of the ECC members, but  
14 these are the most important points that we want to  
15 make.

16 And we hope the Legislature considers these  
17 amendments to the law.

18 The law should provide for the appointment of  
19 the PEP members to fixed terms. This will allow the  
20 PEP members to vote independently and not be afraid  
21 that they will be removed for a vote.

22 People who have been in the system for a  
23 while remember the "Monday Night Massacre."

24 I think you all know about it.

25 A vote was scheduled, and there were

1 X numbers on the panel. And then, when we went to  
2 the meeting, they were gone, and they were replaced.

3 We cannot have a mayor with absolute power.  
4 They're not a dictator.

5 Also, the public advocate has a report which  
6 agrees with this recommendation.

7 She also recommends that parents representing  
8 English-language learners, special ed, and a  
9 public-advocate appointee also be added to the PEP  
10 as members.

11 The method of electing parents to the CEC is  
12 not democratic.

13 You only have three officers of the PTA, or  
14 PA, voting for members.

15 Some people get on with just one vote.

16 Not that they beat other people by one vote.

17 By just one vote.

18 They just get one vote, and they get on, and  
19 that's very undemocratic.

20 So I think we should have all the parents of  
21 the geographical district under the superintendent  
22 be able to vote, just the public-school parents.

23 Also, the role of the superintendent, it must  
24 be clearly defined that they are the educational  
25 leader of that district -- of that geographical

1 district.

2 You cannot have network leaders who are in  
3 Manhattan, traveling to Queens, Staten Island,  
4 The Bronx, whatever.

5 So that is very important because, then, now  
6 the parents know that if they have a problem, it's  
7 in their local district.

8 Half the time, the parents didn't know who  
9 the network leader was.

10 Also, the law should be amended.

11 I know, right now, they say the chancellor  
12 must be an educator and needs a waiver.

13 We don't think there should be a waiver.

14 The chancellor must be an educator.

15 They know -- only an educator knows what to  
16 do with the schools.

17 And, also, the public-advocate report also  
18 indicates that they favor this.

19 Also, the two-year terms that now are in the  
20 law, we believe strongly that they should be changed  
21 to three years, because a lot of parents don't know  
22 what's going on. They don't realize, this is what  
23 I can do, this is what I can't do.

24 And by the time they know what to do,  
25 there -- the -- there's another election.

1           So I remember, when I was on the school  
2 board, it was a three-year term.

3           So I just think that would be more feasible.

4           Also, I -- I, as an English-language-learner  
5 advocate, when the councils -- when the law was  
6 changed the last time for the councils to allow for  
7 a seat on each local district, and when the Citywide  
8 Council on English-Language Learners was formed, it  
9 was very difficult to get parents, because,  
10 according to the law, you needed to be an ELL  
11 parent.

12           And most of them are not aware. You know, if  
13 they're immigrants, or they don't speak English,  
14 they're not aware of what they can do to participate  
15 to engage.

16           So a couple years ago, we proposed a change  
17 in the law.

18           And, Denny O'Donnell, and it was co-sponsored  
19 by Senator Lanza, we changed the law, that parents  
20 be allowed to serve after they've been out  
21 two years, you know, after they've received  
22 services.

23           It's much better, but, it's still not that  
24 great.

25           We believe that a parent who has been an ELL

1 at any time.

2 In other words, if the parent is in the  
3 eighth grade now, the kid is in the eighth grade,  
4 and they want to go, or, the sixth grade, and they  
5 were ELLs in the third grade, and now they're not.

6 We think that parents -- I mean, I -- I'm a  
7 grandma, and I'm still interested in that issue.

8 So I don't think they will lose at -- you  
9 know, the desire to advocate for those parents  
10 because they're out of the system, the ELL services.

11 And, there's also -- there are also issues on  
12 special ed that my colleague Ellen McHugh will  
13 address, and there two are different areas that she  
14 will address.

15 And I will read this:

16 Mayoral control cannot be made permanent, and  
17 must be reviewed periodically. We cannot have the  
18 budget dance when mayoral control is included as a  
19 part of the budget.

20 The governance policy, where the mayor  
21 controls the New York City public schools, must be  
22 thoroughly debated on its own.

23 The over one million students in  
24 New York City public schools cannot be held hostage  
25 to whatever political winds are blowing at the time.

1           As an entity with knowledge and experience  
2 with New York City public schools, the ECC is  
3 committed to working with the New York State  
4 Legislature to achieve the most equitable and fair  
5 governance system that will benefit the students in  
6 our public schools.

7           And we can be contacted; we would love to  
8 work with you.

9           ELLEN MCHUGH: Flexibility is the hallmark of  
10 parent cooperation.

11           My name is Ellen McHugh.

12           I currently serve as one of the  
13 public-advocate appointees to the Citywide Council  
14 on Special Ed.

15           A good deal of what Theresa has said is  
16 always also what I would have said, although, and  
17 I thank you for the invitation.

18           I'm really surprised I'm here, unless it's to  
19 echo what Teresa is saying, which is a compliment,  
20 and I thank you for inviting us.

21           One of the problems with mayoral control, as  
22 I see it now, is the issue of whimsy.

23           On the whim of a mayor in the past, actions  
24 by the Citywide Council on Special Education were  
25 ignored.

1           On the whim of a mayor now, actions by the  
2           Citywide Council on Special Education were accepted.

3           One of the examples that we use in the  
4           testimony is SESIS (the special-education student  
5           information system), which is managed across the  
6           city, about \$356 million in lost funding, because a  
7           system that was supposed to be developed to provide  
8           adequate information to staff and updates to parents  
9           about how their children with IEPs were  
10          progressing is cumbersome at best.

11          It takes a great deal of time to input, and  
12          created a situation in some schools, where, if you  
13          plugged in the toaster, you couldn't get on SESIS.

14          If you unplugged the toaster and plugged in  
15          the coffee machine, SESIS would blow up the coffee  
16          machine.

17          So there wasn't a lot of infrastructure to  
18          support SESIS.

19          Past administration refused to admit it.

20          Current administration asked to work with us  
21          to say, What can we do?

22          It's a benefit to us as parents to have that  
23          information.

24          In this, it was whimsy.

25          There wasn't any directive in the law that

1 they had -- that the mayor had to pay any attention  
2 to us.

3 There was only the whim of one mayor to  
4 agree, and another mayor to say, no, I'm not going  
5 to pay attention to it.

6 I've got to read this, because this recent  
7 report from the Center for American Progress finds:

8 That mayoral-controlled school districts have  
9 improved districtwide performance relative to  
10 average school-district performance statewide.

11 Mayoral governments is most effective when  
12 the mayor is active on the issue of education.

13 Mayors must be ready to engage stakeholders,  
14 leverage resources, and facilitate a positive policy  
15 environment to overcome barriers to school  
16 improvement.

17 A city must adapt mayoral control to their  
18 unique local context, variation in local cultures,  
19 and politics must be considered.

20 The idea of considering politics is  
21 something, I think, New York City and State engages  
22 in with great glee.

23 Mayoral control may require reinvention,  
24 which I think is where we are right now, and in  
25 order to continue to show gains over time, mayors

1 may need to revamp their strategies and practices as  
2 necessary.

3 We are encouraging, and hope, that we can  
4 spend time in a civil public discourse that includes  
5 parents, CEC members, education experts and  
6 advocates, principals and teachers, students, and  
7 other stakeholders in the discussion.

8 We must be deliberate in our conversations  
9 and respectful of opinions.

10 This will take time. Maybe two years, maybe  
11 more.

12 I do believe that the constructive and civil  
13 public discourse can develop a system of school  
14 governance that is reflective of the needs of the  
15 students of New York City.

16 One of the subsets of the resolution is an  
17 expansion of the Citywide Council on Special  
18 Education.

19 This is CCSE special-education wonk stuff.

20 If I get boring, stop me.

21 Prior to this, the CCSE was made up of only  
22 parents whose children were being served by a  
23 specific district, District 75, which is a construct  
24 that only exists here in New York City.

25 It doesn't exist across the state.

1           It doesn't exist in any other state that  
2 I know of, and I've asked.

3           I would like to see the current CCSE expanded  
4 so that the District 75 parents would have, and the  
5 CCSE parents would have, one council to attend  
6 instead of having two.

7           I think having -- this is me, I think having  
8 two councils can be -- can dilute the power or the  
9 impact of either council.

10          If we elect people across the boroughs to  
11 represent those special-education programs that are  
12 district-based, and those district programs that are  
13 District 75-based, we can create the commonality,  
14 and we can create a model, hopefully, of  
15 cooperation.

16          One of the problems that exists in this  
17 current school system is the division of, I don't  
18 know, administration, I guess is the best way to  
19 describe it, between District 75 principals and  
20 general-ed principals; between District 75 staff and  
21 general-ed staff.

22          We have schools that are co-located that have  
23 different bells, different doors, different PD,  
24 different parent-teacher dates.

25                 It's just different.

1           And I think, in the long run -- well, I know,  
2           in the long run, that research has shown that the  
3           integration of students with special needs into  
4           classrooms or buildings has created a positive  
5           effect for both the child with the general-education  
6           need and the child with the IEP.

7           And after all, you can't develop leaders if  
8           leaders have never seen or been with people who are  
9           not like them, because they are going to be  
10          representing individuals who are disabled as those  
11          individual students age-up.

12          My son is -- for background, my son is deaf.  
13          He's 37, despite my youthful appearance, and he's  
14          married, thank God, to a girl from Colombia.

15                           [Laughter.]

16          ELLEN McHUGH: They're both fully employed.

17          It is also something that is a result of  
18          their public-school education because, in the world  
19          of disability, less than 30 percent of the  
20          individuals who are disabled are employed, and of  
21          that number, only 33 percent are considered to be  
22          employed up to their ability.

23          So most of them are underemployed, even  
24          though they've gone through college, high school,  
25          career- and tech-ed training, whatever.

1 I hope that this has explained some of the  
2 reasons for the testimony we've offered.

3 And if you have questions, we would love to  
4 engage.

5 I like to talk.

6 SENATOR MARCELLINO: Okay.

7 MONA DAVIDS: That's right, because I believe  
8 in order.

9 Good afternoon, Senator Marcellino, and  
10 members of the Senate Education Committee.

11 My name is Mona Davids.

12 I am a public-school parent, and I am also  
13 the founder and president of the New York City  
14 Parents Union. We were founded in 2011.

15 For those that are watching, that may not  
16 know of our organization, we are proud to say we are  
17 unbought and unbossed, and we're a grassroots  
18 organization of parent volunteers who assist other  
19 parents in navigating the school system, and  
20 ensuring that their children receive equal access to  
21 a high-quality education.

22 It's funny, being back in this room,  
23 Senator Marcellino.

24 A few years ago, actually, in, I think it was  
25 2010 --

1           Was it 2010, Senator Perkins, for the  
2 charter-school hearings?

3           Yes.

4           -- in 2010, I attended a hearing.

5           I was then the founder and the president of  
6 the New York Charter Parents Association.

7           And many of the charter-school reforms,  
8 including the request for that hearing, was made by  
9 me to Senator Perkins. And that was a brutal fight,  
10 but it was about ensuring that --

11           SENATOR MARCELLINO: Well, Senator Perkins  
12 isn't that bad.

13           MONA DAVIDS: No, no, no.

14           It was a brutal --

15           SENATOR PERKINS: I lost the fight.

16           MONA DAVIDS: -- it was -- I don't think we  
17 lost the fight.

18           We were successful in getting quite a number  
19 of reforms, which the charter lobby has embraced.

20           And one of the things that also helped the  
21 district schools -- just for -- just to talk about  
22 that for one second -- is that we were able to make  
23 sure that district schools received matching funds  
24 when charters renovate and they co-located in a  
25 public-school building.

1           We were also able to put into the legislation  
2 that they serve a fair share.

3           So, you know, it -- it -- I believe it was  
4 successful.

5           No system is perfect.

6           The district school system is certainly not  
7 perfect, and neither is a very young system like the  
8 charter system.

9           In addition to that, the New York City  
10 Parents Union has been involved in quite a bit of  
11 legislation -- I'm sorry, quite a bit of litigation.

12           Some of the litigation that we are involved  
13 with currently is what many call the "teacher  
14 tenure" lawsuit. That's called Davids verse  
15 New York -- I am Davids -- filed in Richmond County.

16           I am here with two other plaintiffs in the  
17 "Davids verse New York" lawsuit, and our members,  
18 Sam Pirozzolo and Jacqueline Colson over there.

19           In addition to that lawsuit, other lawsuits  
20 that we've been involved with was a few years ago,  
21 when New York City, Michael Mulgrew -- Mike and  
22 Mike -- couldn't come together on the  
23 teacher-evaluation plan, and Cuomo decided to punish  
24 our children with the \$250 million penalty.

25           I, Jacqueline, Sam, and other parents, with

1 the support of Mike Rubel (ph.), we successfully  
2 filed and got that injunction, stopping Cuomo from  
3 punishing our children because the adults couldn't  
4 get along.

5 That being said, we've been involved in other  
6 lawsuits, where there is inBloom (ph.) co-locations.

7 We -- if you look up, when it comes to  
8 school-litigation lawsuits, you'll either see my  
9 name or the New York City parent's name, and our  
10 parent-members names.

11 So I'm going to talk about our  
12 recommendations.

13 We support the concept of mayoral control.

14 Unfortunately, mayoral control under  
15 Mayor de Blasio is not working.

16 And we are recommending from you, if you do  
17 renew it, you only renew it for one year, and that  
18 steps be taken to provide some kind of checks and  
19 balances.

20 You've heard what the other parent-advocates  
21 have said.

22 The way it's structured now, it's a  
23 dictatorship, and a dictatorship leads to abuse, and  
24 that is what's going on in our school system.

25 And I will elaborate further when I speak

1 about the problems.

2 We strongly believe in accountability when it  
3 comes to our school system.

4 Unfortunately, mayoral control, at this  
5 juncture, is not about accountability. It's  
6 about whatever Mayor de Blasio, Chancellor Fariña,  
7 and the United Federation of Teachers, which I call  
8 "de Blasio, Inc.," wants.

9 With the political support of the  
10 United Federation of Teachers, Chancellor Fariña,  
11 and Michael Mulgrew, in our opinion, have reversed  
12 some positive gains, especially contractual gains,  
13 that we had under Mayor Bloomberg.

14 Now, people in this room will know I am not a  
15 Mayor Bloomberg fan, nor was I a Klein or Walcott  
16 fan. But one thing we knew was that, despite all of  
17 our disagreements, Bloomberg II was unbought and  
18 unbossed.

19 And Bloomberg, no matter what, was going to  
20 do what was in the best interests of our children.

21 How we got there was another story.

22 That being said, you have my testimony.

23 That's not what's happening now.

24 This is what we recommend to deal with  
25 "de Blasio, Inc." to, hopefully, continue to have a

1 strong mayoral-control system that respects parents,  
2 that ensures that every child receives equal access  
3 to a high-quality education, and also complies with  
4 the law.

5 The six things I'm going to speak about, very  
6 briefly, is:

7 Number one: The credit-recovery scheme and  
8 the free diplomas.

9 You showed up.

10 You showed up.

11 Everybody showed up.

12 If this was a New York City high school, we'd  
13 all get free diplomas because of the credit-recovery  
14 scheme. Everybody gets a diploma.

15 The "New York Post" has highlighted so many  
16 stories, reported by teachers -- not by parents;  
17 not, at first, by students -- by teachers, who are  
18 reporting that: We are feeling pressure. We are  
19 forced to do a cover-up. Even though these kids  
20 don't attend school, do no schoolwork, do no  
21 homework, do not sit for exams, we have to pass  
22 them.

23 That is a problem, because that is all part  
24 of "de Blasio, Inc.'s" agenda in being the  
25 "progressive messiah," as we call him, and to ensure

1 that the public thinks he's doing a great job in our  
2 schools, which, as you'll hear from other  
3 parent-advocates, that's not the case.

4 The second thing, what we call the "union  
5 job-protection scheme," also known as "renewal  
6 schools."

7 The renewal schools are a failure.

8 In the renewal schools we have credit  
9 recovery. We continue to have students who are  
10 pushed out, graduating, going to city university of  
11 New York or any other college, and forced to take  
12 remedial classes.

13 I don't exactly have the numbers, but  
14 probably somebody like Leonie or someone here would  
15 know exactly how much our per-pupil funding is for  
16 New York City public students, general-education  
17 students.

18 What is it, about \$16,000 a year?

19 Why is it that our children are in the school  
20 system, the school district, the state, where the  
21 most, the highest amount, is spent on education, and  
22 our children are forced to go into debt so that they  
23 can take these remedial courses after getting their  
24 free diplomas?

25 The next thing is school safety.

1           There has been a surge, an explosion, of  
2 weapons; weapons, including loaded guns, in our  
3 schools, machetes in our schools, and other weapons.

4           And instead of addressing that problem,  
5 "de Blasio, Inc." -- UFT, Fariña, and  
6 Mayor de Blasio, because they're all one in the same  
7 -- "de Blasio, Inc." covers it up.

8           Not only do they put the safety of our  
9 children in jeopardy, they have the audacity to lie  
10 to parents and say, Oh, no, our schools are safe.

11           Well, the last time I checked, there are no  
12 guns being found in city hall; there are no guns  
13 being found at One Police Plaza, except for the guns  
14 the police officers are required to wear; and there  
15 certainly are no guns found at the Department of  
16 Education.

17           But all three of those places -- One Police  
18 Plaza, city hall, and Tweed -- all have metal  
19 detectors.

20           So, if you have metal detectors to protect  
21 yourself, and there aren't guns and loaded weapons  
22 and machetes being found every day, why can't we  
23 have that for our children in the public school  
24 system?

25           Because Mayor de Blasio, "de Blasio, Inc.,"

1 doesn't want the public to know about the surge in  
2 weapons.

3           The other issue is, Mayor de Blasio has also  
4 decided, unilaterally, without engaging parents, to  
5 change the school suspension policy and the  
6 discipline policy.

7           So, pretty much, what that means, we call  
8 that the "Kumbaya approach."

9           Oh, okay, you picked up a chair and you hit a  
10 student with the chair?

11           That's okay. Just don't do it next time.

12           Oh, you punched a student?

13           Oh, you spat on a teacher?

14           Oh, that's okay. Don't do it next time.

15           We'll send you home with a note to your mom,  
16 just letting them know what you did, but don't do it  
17 next time.

18           And because of this ridiculous suspension  
19 policy that's in place, it's resulted in a lot of  
20 assaults of students and an increased amount of  
21 bullying in the schools.

22           And when parents go to the DOE, when they  
23 call 311, when they call the superintendents, when  
24 they speak to the principal, they're given the  
25 runaround, because the principals can no longer

1 suspend students under the "Kumbaya policy." They  
2 have to get permission of the superintendents.

3 The superintendents cannot suspend the  
4 students either because she has to get permission of  
5 Fariña.

6 Fariña and "de Blasio, Inc." are not  
7 suspending students because they want to continue to  
8 mislead the public that the schools are safe, so  
9 that they can cover up that -- this -- these new  
10 policies of theirs that they put forth, without  
11 parents' consultation or engagement, is working.

12 Parents' intimidation and retaliation, this  
13 is what happens when you have a dictatorship; when  
14 you have an abusive dictatorship.

15 I think, probably, Leonie is -- may talk  
16 about this as well, and other people have spoken  
17 about the PEP (the Panel for Educational Policy.)

18 We call it the "rubber stamp."

19 We called it the "rubber stamp" when  
20 Bloomberg was there, and we're calling it an even  
21 bigger rubber stamp now.

22 One of the members, The Bronx PEP member  
23 brought up the fact that the DOE is not complying  
24 with state education law in disclosing all of the  
25 information about the contracts; posting the

1 contracts online, as they're required to do, so that  
2 the public can see and folks can do their  
3 investigation.

4 And then when PEP members, such as  
5 Mr. Powell, started asking, "Well, okay, I see  
6 something on the agenda about ABC contract. Nobody  
7 sent me ABC contract. I'm on the contract  
8 committee. What's going on?" Guess what?

9 Instead of answering the man's questions, who  
10 is there, supposed to represent the parents and  
11 community and the public, and to ensure that there's  
12 no financial mismanagement or chicanery or bad  
13 deals, parents like him, and many other parents  
14 throughout the school system on every level, are  
15 isolated.

16 They're then intimidated by DOE, by their  
17 principals, by their superintendents.

18 And it's gotten to the point where it's a  
19 regular occurrence, where if you speak out or if you  
20 ask any question, all of a sudden, you'll have a  
21 knock on your door that night or the next night and  
22 it will be ACS, because that's what they're doing to  
23 intimidate the parents.

24 And you need to think about that, because  
25 this really impacts parents.

1           It -- it's unconscionable to do that to any  
2 parent who is simply seeking accountability, or  
3 asking questions about the education their children  
4 are receiving, or other problems in the school.

5           The other intimidation tactic that they use,  
6 "de Blasio, Inc." -- de Blasio, UFT, and Fariña --  
7 is that they are now calling the police on parents.

8           So if a parent, who they think is a problem  
9 parent because the parent asked questions; or in the  
10 case of the Brooklyn father, the parent wanted to  
11 know why that teacher kept on letting his son soil  
12 himself and sit for the whole day in his own  
13 excrement, for that parent to ask that teacher a  
14 question, they were rewarded with being arrested in  
15 front of their child, in front of the school,  
16 because that's what they do.

17           Not just him, he's not the only one. We have  
18 other parents.

19           It's one of their number-one tactics.

20           So once that arrest has happened at the  
21 school, the parents can no longer enter the school  
22 building. The parent cannot be involved in their  
23 child's education.

24           It's not one case, it's not two cases, it's  
25 not three, it's not four.

1           This is a serious problem.

2           And then when you dig deeper, these parents,  
3 all of them, have questioned either the governance  
4 of the school system or the running of the school or  
5 brought up situations and demanded answers about why  
6 the kids in their schools are failing.

7           So we have a problem here, and parents have  
8 no recourse, we have nobody to turn to, because,  
9 once a year, or every few years, when mayoral  
10 control may be renewed, you have this hearing, but  
11 what happens in the meantime?

12           When a parent is arrested at the school,  
13 who's going to take the child home? Who's going to  
14 take care of the child?

15           But this is what's happening in our schools.

16           And this is a real problem.

17           SENATOR MARCELLINO: Before you go on, the  
18 number about State aid per pupil, the best we could  
19 come up with is, the State puts in about \$9100 per  
20 pupil.

21           The City of New York has its own number and a  
22 contribution to that. They add to that.

23           But it varies, from district to district, and  
24 school to school.

25           So we do not have a solid number that we can

1 give you at this point in time, relative to the City  
2 contribution, and what the total amount combined is  
3 (indiscernible).

4 It's going to be different from place to  
5 place.

6 We probably could work that out over time,  
7 but we don't have a lot of time right now.

8 MONA DAVIDS: Thank you, sir.

9 The other problem with mayoral control, we  
10 have Mayor de Blasio.

11 Before we had Public Advocate de Blasio.

12 Public Advocate de Blasio believed in  
13 transparency.

14 Public Advocate de Blasio demanded of the  
15 Bloomberg Administration that they answer FOILs in a  
16 timely fashion.

17 Public Advocate de Blasio made so many  
18 pronouncements about how he was going to be  
19 transparent.

20 But there's no transparency within the  
21 Department of Education.

22 Right now, I know I do, I know probably quite  
23 a number of reporters here, and probably a number of  
24 parent-advocates on both sides, are waiting on  
25 FOILs.

1           Our freedom-of-information requests are  
2           hardly ever answered.

3           I'm waiting on FOILs that are over a year  
4           old.

5           I'm sure other people are waiting on FOILs  
6           that are just, you know, as old.

7           And what happens is, we continue getting  
8           these, oh, you know, timely letters saying that, we  
9           need more time, we need more time, we need more  
10          time, because they know we parents and we  
11          parent-advocates don't have the resources now to go  
12          and get an attorney to file a lawsuit to compel them  
13          to comply with the Freedom of Information Law.

14          It's another abuse under mayoral control.

15          The compliance, when it comes to  
16          open-meetings law, I'm sure Leonie Haimson, from  
17          Class Size Matters, is going to speak about it, and  
18          I have it, briefly, talking about it in my  
19          testimony.

20          But to summarize:

21          Mayor de Blasio and "de Blasio, Inc." have  
22          decided that they're going to close  
23          school-leadership team meetings; that they're now  
24          private, because they don't want the community and  
25          the public.

1           And this is an administration that says:  
2       We're open. Everybody's welcome. We want everyone  
3       to be involved.

4           But they've closed school-leadership team  
5       meetings, forcing parents, parent-advocates,  
6       advocacy groups, and the public advocate to file a  
7       lawsuit, to force -- to try to force them to  
8       actually follow your law.

9           Even though the judge agreed with  
10       Class Size Matters and Public Advocate James,  
11       "de Blasio, Inc." -- Fariña, de Blasio, and UFT --  
12       are still not opening the meetings and complying  
13       with the law, until they complete their appeal.

14           Since they were so successful at closing SLT  
15       meetings, they've now decided that they're going to  
16       close parent-association and  
17       parent-teacher-association meetings.

18           So, now, they're doing the same thing.

19           Oh, well, you know, we don't care. It's a  
20       PA meeting. It's not open to the public.

21           Well, yes, it is open to the public.

22           We've had, Robert Freeman, who you know from  
23       the Committee of Open -- Committee on Open  
24       Governments, he's done an opinion on it.

25           It's in the law.

1           You know.

2           But, "de Blasio, Inc." doesn't have to comply  
3 with it because, what can we do, what can reporters  
4 do, and what can you do?

5           Our recommendations, to close -- oh, sorry.

6           Number seven, before I close:

7           As I mentioned earlier, when it comes to  
8 charter schools, I firmly believe in holding them  
9 accountable.

10          When it comes to our children, I firmly  
11 believe that we must do, always, what is in the best  
12 interests of the children.

13          And I believe in school choice, because  
14 I don't see why anyone must be forced to send their  
15 child to a burning building.

16          But I do agree, sometimes you don't know  
17 that, you know, the other building has structural  
18 problems too.

19          That being said, Mayor de Blasio and  
20 "de Blasio, Inc." are carrying out a vendetta.

21          With the parents union, we go up against the  
22 education-reform lobby, we go up against what we  
23 call the "status quo," the unions, because, no  
24 matter what, if you look at our history and what  
25 we've done, we're about what's in the best interests

1 of all children.

2 The Charter Schools Act governs charter  
3 schools.

4 I'm a firm believer in following the law.

5 Charter schools are autonomous. Charter  
6 schools are their own districts. They're their own  
7 LEA.

8 "De Blasio, Inc.," because of mayoral control  
9 that you have given him, is carrying out a personal  
10 vendetta against Eva Moskowitz.

11 And everybody in this room that knows me know  
12 I don't always agree with Eva.

13 As a matter of fact, I think I've been on  
14 just about every co-location lawsuit, fighting Eva,  
15 before the law was changed.

16 The charter-rent lawsuit, I was on it,  
17 parents union was on it, and other parents in this  
18 room.

19 But it's always about what's in the best  
20 interests of the children.

21 Withholding the \$750,000 -- illegally  
22 withholding the \$750,000 -- for those students,  
23 those Black and Latino students in success academy,  
24 is not fair.

25 It's an attack on those families, it's an

1 attack on those children, and it's just to get even  
2 with a personal vendetta.

3 There is no justification for withholding  
4 that pre-K money.

5 That money came from you; it came from the  
6 Governor; it came from the state budget.

7 Charters are their own LEA.

8 Just because the City disperses the funds to  
9 CBOs and to their district schools under their  
10 authority, doesn't mean mayoral control gives  
11 Mayor de Blasio and "de Blasio, Inc." the right to  
12 do a vendetta against one woman, but punishing  
13 thousands of students.

14 And I'm going to read this.

15 In closing:

16 Allow me to note that all of us have been  
17 learning about the true meaning of mayoral control  
18 as we watch a second mayor utilize it.

19 Our challenge, is to fashion an  
20 education-governance system that can work well  
21 with -- and for any mayor and all parents and  
22 students.

23 We have yet to achieve this.

24 In my testimony, I have solid recommendations  
25 on an independent oversight board that consists of

1 parents and community stakeholders.

2 I have, step-by-step, what we're seeking.

3 Metrics to be made; milestones.

4 Quarterly meetings with this legislative  
5 board, with the DOE, so that when situations, like  
6 what I've just shared with you that is going on with  
7 parents in the school system, you can bring that up  
8 at those quarterly meetings with whoever the mayor  
9 is and whoever his chancellor is.

10 Mayoral control is supposed to be there to  
11 serve the needs of the children, to educate the  
12 children, to make sure that someone is held  
13 accountable.

14 Right now, mayoral control is not working.

15 So, we may support the concept, but we  
16 certainly do not support "de Blasio, Inc."

17 Thank you.

18 SENATOR MARCELLINO: Okay. Thank you very  
19 much.

20 [Applause.]

21 SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you.

22 If I could, if you might stay for a moment,  
23 just to --

24 MONA DAVIDS: Sorry.

25 SENATOR MARCELLINO: -- if my colleagues may

1 have...

2 We heard directly from Chancellor Fariña that  
3 suspensions would occur if someone had a weapon or  
4 brought a weapon, because I brought up the "Post"  
5 article that recently -- or, either yesterday or the  
6 day before, talked about the increase in the number  
7 of weapons picked up in schools, and the police  
8 commissioner actually telling the parents to  
9 pat-down their kids before they leave the house,  
10 which is something I've never heard in my life, and  
11 I taught for 20 years -- 20-plus years in the city  
12 of New York in those schools.

13 So it was interesting, though, she did say  
14 that there would be suspensions.

15 You're saying there are no suspensions?

16 MONA DAVIDS: There are no suspensions for  
17 bringing the weapons into the school.

18 I would be glad to send you some information  
19 about some of these cases that were highlighted in  
20 the "Post," where, if your staff,  
21 Senator Marcellino, wants to follow up and hear for  
22 yourself, from those sources --

23 SENATOR MARCELLINO: I would appreciate that.

24 MONA DAVIDS: -- confirmed sources, they're  
25 not suspending the kids.

1           SENATOR MARCELLINO: Okay. Please do, send  
2 us specific examples, and we'll try to follow up on  
3 that.

4           With respect to the open-meetings law, the  
5 only way you can be excluded to a meeting is if  
6 they're talking about personnel issues or  
7 negotiations in a contract.

8           Those are the only two ways people can be  
9 excluded from a public meeting from a public entity.

10          So, saying that you cannot attend -- a member  
11 of the general public cannot attend a school-board  
12 meeting or PTA meeting, is simply not the case,  
13 unless --

14          MONA DAVIDS: That --

15          SENATOR MARCELLINO: -- personnel matters are  
16 being discussed, or unless we are talking about  
17 private contract -- you know, negotiations, or union  
18 contract, or something to that extent.

19          So if you're saying that's occurring, if we  
20 can get something on that in writing, we'd  
21 appreciate that.

22          MONA DAVIDS: I will send that to you in  
23 writing.

24          I can -- not just that, I can speak  
25 personally.

1 I was on an SLT.

2 My SLT, after Carmen Fariña put out this  
3 edict, started keeping people, the public, out.

4 Speaking, when it comes to parent  
5 associations, because of the fact that I am the lead  
6 plaintiff in Davids verse New York, you can imagine  
7 the pushback and the attacks that I have personally  
8 experienced, as well as our other plaintiffs.

9 That being said, even with my school, and one  
10 of the examples for Bob Freeman was my school, they  
11 refused to let in a reporter. They refused to let  
12 in a representative from StudentsFirst.

13 And then parents like myself, who are parents  
14 in the school, they called the police and had us  
15 removed.

16 And before they did that, they checked with  
17 Tweed.

18 So -- and I'm just one example, and I know of  
19 this happening to other parents.

20 And it's not like Chancellor Fariña doesn't  
21 know. She knows everything, because we document  
22 everything.

23 And that is why we even had the reporter  
24 there and we had other witnesses there.

25 So this is -- this is a problem.

1           And they can get away with it because no one  
2           is holding them accountable.

3           "De Blasio, Inc." is not here, Senators.

4           UFT, the Mayor, they're not here. They've  
5           made their deal.

6           But it's our children in the school system.

7           And I appreciate so much, you allowing us to  
8           be here and talk about how mayoral control has  
9           impacted our children.

10          I hope that, going forward, you have more  
11          communication and outreach with the parents.

12          I've looked at your speaker list.

13          And, just looking at your speaker list,  
14          I think there are, maybe, two speakers on that list  
15          with children currently in the school system.

16          Two. And I'm one of them.

17          So there's a problem here, and I'm pretty  
18          sure the other parent is going to say something  
19          similar to what I've said.

20          And at your Albany hearing, again, you had  
21          one parent who had a child in the school system.

22          So if we parents, who are the real  
23          stakeholders, who manage to get invited to this,  
24          parents with children who are still in the school  
25          system, parents of children who reflect the

1 demographics of children condemned to failing, if we  
2 are saying this system is not working, and if you  
3 are seeing how you yourself have been treated today  
4 with "de Blasio, Inc." missing, there is a problem  
5 here.

6 So, again, we support mayoral control.

7 I urge you to please look at our  
8 recommendations about the independence monitor, and  
9 to really engage the parents; truly engage the  
10 parents.

11 And to give us some contact of someone that  
12 we can reach out to when we are ignored by this  
13 Mayor and by this Chancellor.

14 There needs to be some types of checks and  
15 balances, and there simply are none.

16 SENATOR MARCELLINO: We thank you very much.

17 MONA DAVIDS: Thank you, sir.

18 [Applause.]

19 SENATOR MARCELLINO: Just as a matter of  
20 clarifying things, and making sure everybody is  
21 fully aware:

22 When I taught, I was a UFT delegate, and a  
23 chapter chairperson for my high school.

24 And as I said to you before, the UFT was  
25 invited.

1           They declined to attend both hearings.

2           That's their call.

3           And when I was an assistant principal, board  
4 administration, I was a member of the CSA.

5           So -- so everyone knows where we are coming  
6 from.

7           SENATOR ADDABBO: Can I say something?

8           SENATOR MARCELLINO: Sure.

9           SENATOR ADDABBO: Also, Mr. Chair, I do want  
10 to encourage all parents and those interested in  
11 this issue, it doesn't take a hearing, it doesn't  
12 take a press conference, or a trip up to Albany.

13           E-mails, phone calls, visiting your electeds,  
14 parents need to be heard. Parents have a vested  
15 interest in their children's education.

16           And from now, until the time that we decide  
17 on mayoral control, or not, I do encourage all  
18 parents to reach out to their elected officials.

19           SENATOR MARCELLINO: Absolutely.

20           The next panel will consist of Tenicka Boyd,  
21 Martha Zornow, Khari Shabazz, and Jacob Mnookin.

22           If they could come, please.

23           And as I said to you -- the prior people, if  
24 you could summarize, it would be helpful, since we  
25 have copies of your written testimony, and that will

1 be put into the record, in its entirety.

2 So, you have no fear of that.

3 Whoever is going speak first.

4 TENICKA BOYD: Good evening -- or, good  
5 afternoon.

6 I'm Tenicka Boyd. I'm the senior director of  
7 organizing at StudentsFirstNY.

8 I guess I'm the second New York State  
9 public-school parent. My daughter attends PS 321 in  
10 Brooklyn.

11 I work at StudentsFirstNY. We're an advocacy  
12 organization. We organize traditional district  
13 public-school parents in 16 communities across  
14 New York City; so that's communities in Jamaica,  
15 Queens; Harlem; east New York; Brownsville; and  
16 communities like that.

17 I really want to center this idea in the  
18 magnitude of what we're talking about here.

19 We're talking about 1.1 million students that  
20 Mayor de Blasio is in charge of, and, also, many of  
21 those students are students of color. Many of those  
22 students, also, are legally zoned to historically  
23 and persistently failing school.

24 So the magnitude of that is really, really  
25 great.

1           One out of 340 Americans is a New York City  
2 public-school student.

3           So when we talk about mayoral control, we  
4 really need to center the lives marginalized in  
5 low-income students, especially students of color.

6           There's about seven things that I think that  
7 we really need to look under the hood when we talk  
8 about mayoral control under Mayor de Blasio, and  
9 I'll be, I think, much quicker than Mona.

10          So, a few things.

11          SENATOR MARCELLINO: Bless you.

12          TENICKA BOYD: Thank you.

13          So, the Mayor has talked a lot about making  
14 sure that all second-graders can read by 2026.

15          The Mayor will be long gone after that, and  
16 so I really think we need to think about the  
17 deadlines that the Mayor has set for himself and the  
18 students of New York City as we think about mayoral  
19 control.

20          Another thing, we're still dealing with a  
21 tremendous amount of dropout factories.

22          We have students from Boys and Girls High  
23 School, Automotive High School, Clinton High School  
24 in the Bronx, where 46 percent of children are  
25 graduating in four years.

1           Of the 46 percent of those students, only  
2           13 percent of those students are graduating with a  
3           high school diploma that means anything.

4           So we're still giving students these  
5           meritless diplomas and these empty credentials.

6           Another thing, 8 out of 10 New York City  
7           public-school students who are graduating are also  
8           taking remedial courses; again, so they're not  
9           college-ready.

10          They don't have the skills to be successful  
11          and really raise themselves out of intergenerational  
12          poverty, which is something that is essential for  
13          any public school system.

14          Also, one of the first things that  
15          Mayor de Blasio did as an act of mayoral control, is  
16          he cut the school day by 2 1/2 hours a week.

17          Right?

18          And so when we think about things that we  
19          know are good for students, it's -- really, it's  
20          more instructional time and longer school days.

21          And this mayor has been consistent in cutting  
22          the instructional time of students, and students in  
23          low-income communities and communities of color, our  
24          most marginalized students who need it the most.

25          Also, this mayor is ignoring solutions.

1           We know that school choice and expanding  
2 school choice is something that is very important.

3           It has allowed students who, again, are zoned  
4 to legally and persistently failing schools,  
5 opportunities to have a different pathway for  
6 success and career-readiness.

7           And this mayor has not done that.

8           Also, accountability is really non-existent.

9           So the Mayor has a school-renewal plan, and  
10 the school-renewal schools where 93 percent of the  
11 students are still failing. Many of those students  
12 are, again, low-income students and students of  
13 color.

14           So you're talking about plans like washers  
15 and driers and glasses, all of which sounds very  
16 nice and, I'm sure, socially conscious.

17           But what's really important for those  
18 students is to be able to have the skills -- the  
19 reading and math skills, and the Mayor has yet to  
20 put forth a plan to address that 2 1/2 years in.

21           So, what I'll say, in closing, is I really  
22 want to center the lives of a few parents that  
23 I work with each and every day.

24           One of those parents is Nikea (ph.) Porter.  
25 She's the mother of a second-grader from PS 305 in

1 Bed-Stuy, which is a part of the Mayor's  
2 school-renewal plan.

3 Her son is a year away from taking the state  
4 and math test, but she doesn't feel like he's  
5 properly prepared.

6 That school only has 3 percent --  
7 3 percent -- of the students who are reading at  
8 grade level.

9 She is deeply concerned.

10 She's been an advocate as long as I can  
11 remember.

12 She's sent e-mails, she's appeared on NY1,  
13 really encouraging the Mayor to raise the standards  
14 for students in this renewal-school plan.

15 Camille Artimas (ph.) is a mother who stood  
16 outside of this very building this morning and  
17 talked about her daughter, who, in the past  
18 2 1/2 years, she's transferred to three different  
19 schools, from everywhere from Bed-Stuy, to Bushwick,  
20 to find a quality school for her child.

21 She's wait-listed for high-performing charter  
22 schools, but there are not enough seats, and so she  
23 is stuck with persistently and failing schools.

24 And she is really afraid of the number of  
25 vacancies in her daughter's school, and the Mayor is

1 replacing some of these teachers who are leaving the  
2 school system with "ATR" teachers; teachers from the  
3 absent teacher reserve.

4 That's a system where we're spending  
5 \$100 million a year on teachers who are not teaching  
6 in the classroom. These are excess teachers, many  
7 of whom are from failing schools.

8 And those teachers are not in Park Slope  
9 where I send my daughter to school.

10 They're going to places where marginalized  
11 parents are left to live in far -- you know,  
12 Far Rockaway, east New York, and Brownsville, and  
13 communities like that.

14 And the Mayor needs to be held accountable  
15 for the lack of quality teachers that he's placing  
16 with our most marginalized and vulnerable students.

17 Nikea and Camille's stories -- you know,  
18 they're sad, and they're stories that I hear every  
19 day; but, unfortunately, they're not unique.

20 They're stories of many New York City  
21 public-school parents, and they're stories that  
22 I really think that we should center as we think  
23 about how we extend mayoral control to this  
24 particular mayor, and, also, as we think about  
25 accountability.

1 Thank you.

2 MARTHA ZORNOW: Good afternoon, Senators.

3 My name is Martha Zornow. I'm the founding  
4 principal of Girls Prep Bronx Middle School, a  
5 public charter school located in District 8 in  
6 The Bronx.

7 We are one of the options that parents have  
8 to choose a high-quality education in their  
9 neighborhood.

10 We're part of the public prep network, a  
11 non-profit network of schools serving 1500 students.

12 We had a bunch of our parents here today.

13 We have a few hearty ones left.

14 And one of our hallmarks is that our parents  
15 come out to support, because having the choice of a  
16 high-quality public school for their children is  
17 very important in their lives.

18 I've been an administrator for over  
19 seven years, and an educator for fifteen.

20 I started in The Bronx as a New York City  
21 teaching fellow, but after a few years in a  
22 struggling school, I left for public schools in  
23 Westchester to learn how to be a teacher.

24 Most recently, I served as the tenured  
25 principal of Seven Bridges Middle School in

1 Chappaqua for four years, but I left to run  
2 Girls Prep Bronx Middle School in 2014.

3 I felt deeply that the discrepancy between  
4 what was available in Chappaqua and what was  
5 available in District 8 was absolutely unfair, and  
6 it was incumbent on me to come down and do what I  
7 could.

8 At public prep, our philosophy is to start  
9 early with the end in mind: To put all of our  
10 students on a path to college completion. No  
11 remedial courses, go to high school, ready to go.

12 Our curriculum is as rich and strong as  
13 anything available in Westchester.

14 We want to ensure that our students attain  
15 high levels of achievement across academic  
16 disciplines, but also in the arts, music, theater,  
17 dance, that they do original science, while also  
18 helping our skills -- helping our students to  
19 develop the character skills and core values that  
20 they need to overcome the inevitable hurdles on the  
21 way to college.

22 We serve students across New York City, but  
23 we're deeply proud to be part of a vibrant community  
24 in the South Bronx.

25 We just finished our random lottery for the

1 2016-17 school year; and, yes, we do, even in middle  
2 school, admit new students.

3 There were 176 applications for 25 open  
4 seats.

5 As proud as I am that so many families want  
6 to come, I'm horribly disappointed that we cannot  
7 meet the demand of the community to serve more  
8 children, desperate for a quality public education,  
9 in their neighborhood.

10 We believe that your ZIP code should never  
11 determine the quality of your education.

12 This means that we need to disrupt the  
13 systems that perpetuate education equality in our  
14 city.

15 The de Blasio Administration claims to have  
16 similar goals, but, we have to question the unequal  
17 treatment by us by Mayor de Blasio.

18 If the Mayor had had his way, Girls Prep  
19 Bronx Middle School would never have opened.

20 From the outset, he challenged our ability to  
21 co-locate with another public school -- actually  
22 two.

23 We fought this with our vibrant parent  
24 community, and we have gone on to build a collegial  
25 relationship with both the Zone Middle School and

1 the District 75 School with whom we share our  
2 building.

3 Mayor de Blasio's unequal treatment did not  
4 stop at co-location.

5 Funding for traditional public schools has  
6 gone up six times faster than funding for public  
7 charter schools, and Mayor de Blasio does not  
8 support fair funding for us.

9 We -- while Chancellor Fariña speaks about  
10 the importance of the arts, space is not available.

11 You cannot run a band or a visual-art program  
12 on a cart in a classroom; and, yet, there is no  
13 space to do that.

14 We -- initially, our network was not given  
15 the opportunity to serve 4-year olds in UPK, and we  
16 really had to fight for that.

17 We were initially excluded from offering  
18 after-school programs for students in Grade 6, and  
19 we had to fight to participate in that so that our  
20 students can have the rich range of enrichment  
21 opportunities after school in a safe place, until  
22 6:00, that they deserve.

23 This fits a troubling pattern that public  
24 charter-school leaders have encountered, in which  
25 the Mayor claims to care deeply about providing

1 programs and opportunities for all children, but  
2 then goes on to exclude our children from the same  
3 neighborhoods.

4 This is a political choice by the Mayor.

5 He's influenced by status quo interests  
6 instead of New York parents and families.

7 Today's hearing is about accountability.

8 As a public-school charter leader, this is  
9 something we are very familiar with.

10 We have to justify our continued operation to  
11 our authorizers in a renewal process every three or  
12 five years, and we have annual accountability; and  
13 we think the Mayor should face the same.

14 This rigorous system accountability keeps us  
15 sharp, and we know that if we deviate from our  
16 mission, we lose the privilege of serving children.

17 We believe that mayoral control is the  
18 correct policy, but, the Mayor really needs to face  
19 the same kind of rigorous accountability that our  
20 school face, with clear, annual, or more frequent,  
21 milestones and metrics.

22 When a mayor, any mayor, favors one type of  
23 public-school student over another and faces no  
24 consequences, this problem must be addressed through  
25 hearings like this one.

1           And you as state leaders can hold the Mayor  
2           accountable just as the State holds us accountable.

3           I hope this Committee will use today's  
4           hearing to force the Mayor to be more accountable to  
5           the families of the South Bronx desperate for a  
6           great public school, and have a more-inclusive  
7           approach to meeting those families' needs.

8           To do this, the Mayor must be a leader who  
9           puts the needs of all public children first,  
10          including those who attend public charter schools.

11          Thank you so much for having me here today.

12          KHARI SHABAZZ: Good afternoon.

13          SENATOR MARCELLINO: Good afternoon.

14          KHARI SHABAZZ: My name is Khari Shabazz.  
15          I'm currently the principal of Success Academy,  
16          Harlem West, located on 114th Street, between  
17          7th and 8th.

18          I also come to you as a parent, a single  
19          father, in Harlem, where I raised my son, who is now  
20          22, and a graduate of the University of Albany.

21          I went to his graduation this weekend.

22          And I did not keep him in New York City  
23          public schools because of some of the brutality and  
24          the dangers that you've heard today. But, we do  
25          live in Harlem.

1           And like all public schools, we have our kids  
2           come to us through a random lottery. There's high  
3           demand for spaces in our school. About -- at the  
4           high level, about 10 applications for every one  
5           seat.

6           And, we're here today to talk about how  
7           mayoral control sort of affects my school in very  
8           large ways.

9           We do agree that mayoral control allows for  
10          efficiency, it allows for accountability, and we do  
11          believe that it provides for stability; however, it  
12          can be abused in many ways, as you heard today.

13          And, specifically, as related to success,  
14          Mayor de Blasio prevented some schools from  
15          co-locating. He rolled back promises, and as a  
16          result, our children were homeless, and, in search  
17          of a school.

18          And as you can know, that is definitely  
19          emotionally harmful to children and families.

20          As a principal, I need the resources to run  
21          my school; however, I get less than the  
22          public-school counterparts, the traditional  
23          public-school principals, in my school, and we think  
24          that's unfair.

25          We need to have a mayor who understands that

1 all school principals, all schools, need to have  
2 equitable funding, and the per-pupil expenditure  
3 should be the same.

4 When speaking about that, Mayor de Blasio in  
5 particular said that, "We do not support initiatives  
6 that take away from one group and give to another."

7 And that is very divisive and misleading,  
8 because that's not how it works.

9 And instead of taking that opportunity to be  
10 for all children, he decided that he was going to be  
11 part of the machine that you've heard about today,  
12 in terms of being connected to the UFT, and not his  
13 own man.

14 Our school day starts at 7:15 in the morning;  
15 we end school at 5:15.

16 We have incredible curriculum, where our  
17 children are getting a world-class education. And  
18 to not get the same per-pupil funding is rather  
19 disrespectful to our children and families.

20 Mayoral control even impacts us in ways  
21 profoundly, as you heard earlier today, in terms of  
22 our discipline, and in terms of school safety.

23 At success academies, we do have a policy  
24 where we suspend children; however, I'm in a  
25 building where there are kids who are dangerous to

1 the building itself, and they're there day after  
2 day.

3 In terms of making sure that we are safe, we  
4 are located on the fifth floor of a building that  
5 has four -- has five floors, and we have to expend  
6 adult energy to make sure that our children are able  
7 to travel through the school, and through a  
8 neighborhood, quite frankly, that's particularly  
9 violent.

10 One of the things that I love about working  
11 for success, giving those issues that we have, is  
12 that our children are getting a world-class  
13 education. They're deconstructing myths and they're  
14 smashing stereotypes.

15 They perform in the top 1 percent in math, in  
16 the top 3 percent in ELA across, and that's in the  
17 state, and, they are doing fantastic things in our  
18 classrooms.

19 We want to make sure that we remove the  
20 politics, so we, too, also call for the Mayor to  
21 have some accountability for what he is doing with  
22 control of New York City schools.

23 I want to thank you for taking this  
24 opportunity to hear about success academies and  
25 about the role that we have, and I appreciate the

1 opportunity to talk to you today.

2 SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you.

3 [Applause.]

4 SENATOR MARCELLINO: Next panel will be --

5 JACOB MNOOKIN: Excuse me, I'm sorry.

6 SENATOR MARCELLINO: I'm sorry.

7 One more.

8 JACOB MNOOKIN: I'll be quick.

9 Good afternoon.

10 Thank you very much for having me.

11 My name is Jacob Mnookin. I'm the founder  
12 and executive director of Coney Island Preparatory  
13 Public Charter School. We serve almost 800 students  
14 across our elementary, middle, and high schools.

15 When I founded Coney Island Prep, in just  
16 four rooms at a local New York city Housing  
17 Authority community center, we were the only charter  
18 school in south Brooklyn.

19 Before we even had our own building, we  
20 received hundreds of applications.

21 The stories we heard from parents painted a  
22 clear picture of a community where many families did  
23 not feel that their traditional public school could  
24 keep their children safe and allow them to learn.

25 As a leader -- as a school leader in

1 New York City under multiple administrations, I've  
2 seen the success of mayoral control.

3 Strong mayoral leadership is best for  
4 New York City's children, far better than the  
5 previous system of school-board leadership; however,  
6 educators like myself, as you have heard today, have  
7 concerns about the actions of the current  
8 administration.

9 That's why today's hearing is so important.

10 It is through hearings like these that the  
11 Mayor is held accountable for his management of the  
12 city schools, where his leadership team must prove  
13 themselves worthy of the privilege of extended  
14 control of our schools.

15 It is unfortunate that the Mayor did not  
16 attend the hearing today to hear these concerns.

17 The current administration has consistently  
18 proven that it does not wish to treat all  
19 public-school students equally.

20 Public charter schools have been forced to  
21 fight tooth and nail for resources, while, at the  
22 same time, they have been mischaracterized and  
23 attacked by the Mayor and the city's Department of  
24 Education.

25 Coney Island Prep was forced into a combative

1 relationship with the Mayor and his allies for space  
2 for our students after his election.

3 Since then, we've continued to struggle with  
4 the Mayor's Administration, which seems to believe  
5 that co-located charters owe extra rent money than  
6 traditional schools do not.

7 Because of the Mayor's attitude and divisive  
8 approach, the cooperative relationship the DOE used  
9 to have with charters has become a combative one.

10 Together with parents, we have spoken out  
11 against the unfair treatment of our kids.

12 Despite public outcry, the Mayor and his  
13 administration have worked tirelessly to build  
14 roadblocks, slowing the growth of public charter  
15 schools.

16 More than eight times as many students  
17 applied for our kindergarten program than we have  
18 seats; almost four times as many for fifth grade.

19 New York families are desperate for the  
20 opportunity to choose charters.

21 By reinforcing inequality in school  
22 resources, the Mayor has not only limited  
23 opportunities for students, but he has also  
24 eliminated the -- limited the opportunity for  
25 partnership between the administration and public

1 charter-school leaders.

2 This division helps no one, and hurts  
3 students most of all.

4 Playing politics in this way has real  
5 consequences for students and families.

6 As an educator, students are my greatest  
7 concern.

8 All public-school students deserve to be  
9 treated equally no matter what politics are at play.

10 The Mayor must address these inequalities  
11 present in the public school system of  
12 New York City.

13 These hearings provide that opportunity.

14 I do not wish to see control of the school  
15 system returned to a school board, but this  
16 administration, and future administrations, must  
17 prove themselves worthy of mayoral control by  
18 representing all children in our city.

19 Thank you.

20 SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you.

21 [Applause.]

22 SENATOR MARCELLINO: Next panel,  
23 Kathryn Wylde -- hope I'm pronouncing the names  
24 correctly -- Marcus Winters, Laura Altschuler, and  
25 Leonie Haimson.

1           Come up and share the microphones. There's  
2           only two mics, but, as they speak, but you're more  
3           than welcome to move a chair, sit it next to the  
4           table.

5           Please.

6           KATHRYN WYLDE: Thank you,  
7           Senators Marcellino and Addabbo.

8           I appreciate you taking the time to make this  
9           much focus on New York City schools.

10          I'm Kathryn Wylde, president and CEO of the  
11          Partnership for New York City. We represent the  
12          city's business leadership.

13          Yesterday we released a letter from more than  
14          100 top CEOs in the city.

15          Our members employ over a million  
16          New Yorkers, and feel very strongly in support of  
17          the continuation of mayoral control as a solid  
18          governance system that holds the Mayor accountable  
19          to the voters, to parents, and employers.

20          We had experience, for more than 40 years, of  
21          chaos in the governance of our school system through  
22          the '60s and for years beyond.

23          Those who have been around know that that  
24          system was -- did not work, not only for the  
25          children in the schools where we saw consistent

1 decline in performance, but it also was a time  
2 during which we saw more than a million middle-class  
3 New Yorkers leave the city, most of them parents,  
4 looking for decent schools for their kids. We saw  
5 many of our leading employers leave the city at the  
6 same time.

7           So this is not just an issue that's important  
8 from the standpoint of the education of the kids.  
9 It's also an issue that's important to everyone in  
10 the city.

11           And I want to reiterate that, and that's the  
12 lens through which the business community looks at  
13 education.

14           In addition, they look at this as, in terms  
15 of the future: Where are these kids going? How  
16 well are these kids going to be prepared for jobs,  
17 college, careers, and advanced training and  
18 education.

19           And we think, again, that mayoral control  
20 provides the basis for establishing strong  
21 partnerships.

22           Between the -- 1968 and 2003, we, basically,  
23 opened no career- and technical-education programs.  
24 And it's only post mayoral control that there has  
25 been a real effort to engage employers in skills,

1 training, and development.

2 In fact -- and then, in fact, that area is  
3 being greatly expanded now, and we're very hopeful  
4 that that will continue to be another area that we  
5 can improve.

6 The ability to employers to work -- employers  
7 to work efficiently with the school system, again,  
8 really depends on a good governance system, a solid  
9 governance system.

10 And we think it's imminently clear that  
11 current the system is far better than anything  
12 that's gone before it.

13 We're very concerned that, regardless of who  
14 was mayor, regardless who is chancellor, that there  
15 be a way that we can see who is responsible.

16 Under the old system, no one was in charge.

17 So that's, basically, our message.

18 We feel very strongly on this subject.

19 We have, over the years, been advocates for  
20 increased investment in the schools: for stronger  
21 school leadership, for charter schools, for school  
22 reform.

23 We've been very active in Albany on all those  
24 topics, and this is one that we've been involved  
25 with for long before it was enacted, because the

1 problems were obvious. And we worked with the  
2 Legislature to craft the legislation that developed  
3 this -- the system we have now.

4 We strongly support its extension.

5 MARCUS A. WINTERS: Good afternoon.

6 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on  
7 this important topic.

8 My name is Marcus Winters. I'm an economist  
9 who studies education policy as a senior fellow at  
10 the Manhattan Institute, and also as an associate  
11 professor in the College of Education in the  
12 University of Colorado in Colorado Springs.

13 I've studied several aspects of  
14 New York City's public school system, including as  
15 related to school choice and accountability, in  
16 charter schools and accountability.

17 I want to begin my remarks by saying, as you  
18 suggested to start with, that I do recommend  
19 extending mayoral control of the city schools for a  
20 substantial period of time.

21 I believe mayoral control in New York City  
22 has proven to be a far better system than what we  
23 had before.

24 Put simply, a mayor is in a better position  
25 to lead and be held accountable for the performance

1 of a major urban school system than as any other  
2 body.

3 That said -- and my endorsement of mayoral  
4 control comes, despite the fact that I'm a vocal  
5 critic of many of the policies of this current  
6 administration.

7 That said, I do think there are areas that  
8 the body -- that this body should discuss with the  
9 Mayor within the current conversation of mayoral  
10 control.

11 I'm going to focus my testimony today on the  
12 issue of school accountability, and what's happened  
13 with the accountability system in New York City.

14 School assessment accountability system is  
15 extremely important to any urban system, especially  
16 one the size, complexity of -- and importance of New  
17 York City's.

18 The aspects of the accountability system  
19 represents the district's view of what makes for an  
20 effective school.

21 And it provides the district with an  
22 opportunity to push its lowest performers to  
23 improve.

24 Under the previous administration, the city  
25 schools were assessed according to student

1 performance and growth on standardized tests, along  
2 with surveys of parents, teachers, and students.

3 And at the end of this, they received a  
4 grade, from A through F, that assessed their overall  
5 performance on all these measures.

6 Over time, the current administration has  
7 fund -- has changed its accountability system in a  
8 way that has fundamentally altered the city's vision  
9 of what makes for an effective school.

10 The first, and most obvious, change to the  
11 accountability system was the decision to end the  
12 practice of presenting each school with a letter  
13 grade.

14 In fact, the current system doesn't provide  
15 the summary measure of the school's overall  
16 performance at all.

17 That decision to eliminate the summary letter  
18 grade was made, despite empirical evidence that  
19 schools who received a failing grade under the prior  
20 system made substantial improvements the following  
21 year.

22 That was the finding of some of my work, with  
23 my colleague, Joshua Cowen (ph.) at Michigan State  
24 University, and another -- by economist  
25 Jonah Rockoff (ph.) at Columbia, and Leslie Turner

1 who's now at the University of Maryland.

2 In our paper, we also show that the  
3 improvements that came from the upgrade stuck with  
4 the kids a couple years later, suggesting that there  
5 were real gains made by the students not caused by  
6 testing manipulation.

7 In a forthcoming report, I returned to the  
8 issue of New York City's school-grading system, and  
9 what my analysis shows is that, the test-scores  
10 improvement following the F grade, that we saw early  
11 in the policy, was still detectable the last year  
12 the grades were given.

13 So there was still a positive effect from the  
14 policy that was going on.

15 And then what I further show is that this  
16 effect dissipated immediately following removal  
17 of the summary letter grades.

18 So, basically, what we're seeing is that  
19 there was a positive-treatment effect. The F grades  
20 were working to make the worst schools better.

21 Once those F grades were gone, that positive  
22 treatment went away.

23 To a great degree, New York City's prior  
24 accountability system met many of the criteria that  
25 we need of an effective accountability system.

1 Schools were ranked according to a  
2 well-understood grading system. The results were  
3 wildly reported.

4 And what we saw from research is that that  
5 policy was working to help the most -- the system's  
6 worst schools to improve.

7 The most recent manifestations of New York  
8 accountability system lacks that under --  
9 well-understood scale that we saw in the prior  
10 system.

11 At least as important as issuing the summary  
12 letter performances, and I think that's of  
13 tremendous importance, are the factors that underlie  
14 the district's assessment of school quality.

15 And that also has changed from -- in this  
16 current administration in ways that I think are  
17 problematic.

18 So when the City first removed the letter  
19 grades, they actually reported almost identical  
20 information about school quality.

21 That has been changing over time.

22 So, the year after that, the school -- the  
23 City fundamentally changed the parent surveys.

24 So, that used to be very focused on the  
25 parents' perceptions of the school's expectation for

1 the child's performance and how they're reaching  
2 that.

3 Most of -- all of those questions have been  
4 replaced with, I think, questions that I think are  
5 less helpful about the parents' perception.

6 More problematic, in my opinion, are the  
7 planned upcoming changes that have been signaled by  
8 the Administration.

9 According to the technical documents of last  
10 year's school-quality reports, the Administration  
11 plans to phase out important measures of student  
12 achievement -- student academic progress on  
13 standardized tests from the school-quality reports,  
14 starting next year.

15 Despite the controversy surrounding them,  
16 these measures of student test-score growth are  
17 essential for separating the school's contribution  
18 to student learning from that of family background.

19 To put the extent of the change into context,  
20 measured student progress on the tests accounted for  
21 60 percent of the school's overall score under the  
22 prior accountability system.

23 Now that said, the old system wasn't perfect,  
24 and, in fact, it was tweaked over time. And not all  
25 the changes this current administration has done is

1 all bad.

2 In particular, a central feature of the  
3 current system is the focus of reviews of  
4 experienced educators who spend time in the schools.

5 I think that's a helpful thing.

6 There are things that qualitative assessments  
7 of school quality can tell us that test scores and  
8 surveys might miss.

9 That said, objective measures of school  
10 performance are essential for anchoring that  
11 accountability system.

12 Without the grounding of student test-score  
13 growth, these quality -- qualitative assessments  
14 could be rubber stamps over time, just as subjective  
15 teacher evaluations were for so long.

16 Now -- so I would strongly suggest that this  
17 body keep control of New York City schools in the  
18 Office of the Mayor, but I would also suggest that  
19 the Legislature make clear its expectations that,  
20 whoever is mayor, operates the schools within a  
21 framework that prioritizes student learning and  
22 presents the public with useful and actionable  
23 information about school performance.

24 Thank you very much.

25 LEONIE HAIMSON: Thank you,

1 Senators Marcellino and Addabbo, for allowing me to  
2 testify today.

3 My name is Leonie Haimson. I'm the executive  
4 director of Class Size Matters, a citywide advocacy  
5 organization dedicated to providing information on  
6 the benefits of smaller classes.

7 I'm also the co-chair of the national  
8 organization Parent Coalition for Student Privacy;  
9 on the steering committee of the statewide coalition  
10 New York State Allies for Public Education; and on  
11 the board of The Network for Public Education.

12 I'm also a member of NYC Kids PAC, which  
13 released an education report card for the Mayor  
14 yesterday, copies of which you should have received  
15 along with my testimony.

16 This report card grades the Mayor in several  
17 education categories, based primarily on whether he  
18 followed up on his campaign promises.

19 The members of NYC Kids PAC include four  
20 sitting presidents of citywide and community  
21 education councils, three past presidents of CECs,  
22 and one sitting member of the Panel for Educational  
23 Policy.

24 So I hope you take these -- this report card  
25 seriously.

1           It exhibits particular disappointment with  
2           the lack of parent input at the school district and  
3           citywide levels.

4           Citywide and community education councils  
5           remain largely disempowered, with little or no say  
6           as to co-locations and space planning, and DOE has  
7           argued in court that school leadership teams have  
8           only advisory powers, in an effort to keep their  
9           meetings closed to the public.

10          As Mona mentioned, we're one of the  
11          plaintiffs on that lawsuit, which we won in the  
12          State Supreme Court, which the DOE has now appealed  
13          to the Appellate Court.

14          School overcrowding and class size also  
15          continue to be major concerns.

16          For the purpose of this testimony, however,  
17          I speak only for my organization Class Size Matters.

18          I have opposed mayoral control, and have done  
19          so since its inception in 2003.

20          Unlike others who have switched their  
21          positions depending on who was mayor and what  
22          policies he espouses, I have been consistent in my  
23          views.

24          I was part of the parent commission on school  
25          governance that issued a report in 2009, that

1 recommended a school board without a mayoral  
2 majority, replaced, in part, by six parents to be  
3 selected by CECs.

4 Last year I co-authored a column in the  
5 "Gotham Gazette," with Shino Tanikawa, the president  
6 of the NYC Kids PAC, and the community education  
7 council in District 2 in Manhattan, in which we  
8 pointed out many of the weaknesses in the system.

9 And that op-ed is appended to this testimony.

10 I also want to mention that I think it's  
11 unfortunate that more parent-leaders were not  
12 allowed to testify today, including Shino, who  
13 represents a school district that I think is  
14 composed of four Senate Districts, it's that large.

15 So I really would appreciate if you allowed  
16 more parents to testify, and you opened up this  
17 hearing more to the public.

18 Why have we consistently opposed this  
19 governance system?

20 Mayoral control, as it exists here, in  
21 Chicago, and a few other cities around the country,  
22 is inherently undemocratic, and provides no real  
23 checks and balances to autocratic rule.

24 As a result, it has too often suffered from  
25 insufficient input from parents and community

1 members closest to the ground; the result being  
2 damaging policies and unwise spending.

3 Our entire system of democratic rule, from  
4 the federal government, on down, relies on the  
5 separation of powers.

6 Can you imagine if our Governor decided to  
7 dismiss the State Legislature on the grounds that it  
8 was an inefficient governance system?

9 I don't think you guys would like that very  
10 much.

11 It is simply unacceptable, and I think  
12 racist, that the only places where mayoral control  
13 currently exists have student populations that are a  
14 majority of students of color.

15 Suburban/rural, cities and towns in the rest  
16 of the state, and the country, would never accept  
17 such a system which disempowers voters, including  
18 the towns that many Senators represent; and neither  
19 should we in New York City.

20 I would add that nearly every poll that has  
21 surveyed New York City voters have found that a  
22 majority are against mayoral control, and in favor  
23 of the executive sharing power with an independent  
24 school board or the city council.

25 And we're not alone.

1           In Chicago where mayoral control was first  
2           instituted, there is now a big push, including  
3           legislation, to replace the governance system with  
4           an elected school board.

5           The same is happening in Detroit which has  
6           suffered under one-man rule by the governors and  
7           elected emergency manager.

8           Both cities have suffered a real lack of  
9           accountability in the top-down management of their  
10          schools.

11          What about the record here in New York City?

12          Despite claims of great progress, we analyze  
13          the test scores of city students on the NAEPs, the  
14          most reliable national assessments that exist.

15          When gains in student test scores, since  
16          mayoral control was instituted in 2003, are  
17          disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and economic  
18          status, it is apparent that New York City schools  
19          have come out second-to-last among the 10 cities in  
20          terms of improved achievement.

21          Though it's true that graduation rates have  
22          increased, our gains mirror increased rates  
23          nationally, and many have also argued that it's the  
24          increased pressure on our schools to inflate their  
25          figures through discredited methods, such as credit

1 recoveries and the like, that have achieved these  
2 rate increases.

3 The justification for mayoral control is  
4 often that the previous system was scandal-ridden  
5 with corrupt local school boards exhibiting  
6 patronage and the like.

7 But the reality is, that the community school  
8 boards had the power to hire and fire taken away  
9 from them in 1996, which was years before mayoral  
10 control was instituted.

11 Moreover, the waste and fraud that continues  
12 under the current system far outstrips what occurred  
13 previously.

14 There were multiple multimillion-dollar  
15 no-bid contracts awarded under Mayor Bloomberg, that  
16 subsequently were found out to be wasteful and/or  
17 corrupt.

18 One of the largest related to a contract  
19 awarded Custom Computer Specialists, to provide  
20 Internet wiring, with the vendor hired by  
21 Ross Lanham, a DOE consultant.

22 As a 2011 report from the special  
23 investigators found, Lanham and CCS were involved in  
24 a massive kickback scheme that stole millions from  
25 the DOE. The CEO of CCS and Lanham also started a

1 real-estate business together.

2 Lanham was later indicted and sent to jail,  
3 and the FCC excluded the DOE from more than  
4 100 million of E-rate funds because of the  
5 (indiscernible) scandal.

6 Yet, in 2015, I learned that a new contract,  
7 amounting to \$1.1 billion over 5 years, renewable to  
8 2 billion over 9 years, was about to be awarded to  
9 the same vendor for more Internet wiring and  
10 equipment.

11 After the media was alerted, the contract was  
12 hurriedly renegotiated by DOE, down, in 24 hours, to  
13 627 million, suggesting how inflated it was in the  
14 first place.

15 Yet, the Panel for Educational Policy  
16 rubber-stamped the contract, 10-to-1, with the only  
17 The Bronx representative voting no.

18 Luckily, city hall was alerted to the  
19 controversy through the media, and, subsequently,  
20 canceled the contract.

21 They later rebid the contract to other  
22 vendors, at a savings estimated between a hundred  
23 sixty-three and seven hundred twenty-seven million  
24 dollars.

25 An E-rate consent decree was issued by the

1 FCC, imposing a \$3 million fine on what they called  
2 "massive fraud," and ordering that an independent  
3 monitor and auditor be hired at city expense, while  
4 warning the DOE to refrain from engaging with any  
5 companies previously involved with Lanham.

6 Yet, as we recently learned, the DOE has  
7 awarded nine new contracts to CCS since the special  
8 investigator report, worth more than 20 million, and  
9 seven of them are current.

10 In fact, we learned that the company has  
11 received over 158,000 in payments from the DOE and  
12 the School Construction Authority in just the last  
13 two weeks.

14 Since the CCS controversy, along with former  
15 member Patrick Sullivan, we formed a citizens'  
16 contract-oversight committee, and we've identified  
17 many wasteful contracts, including several awarded  
18 companies previously found to have overcharged the  
19 City and the State by millions of dollars. These  
20 include a contract, approved just last night to the  
21 PEP, to a special-ed vendor found to have submitted  
22 nearly \$3 million in non-reimbursable expenses to  
23 the State, according to a December audit from the  
24 State Comptroller's Office.

25 Yet never, to my knowledge, has the PEP voted

1 to reject a single DOE contract.

2 So when Senator Peralta asked about that, I  
3 think what the DOE was responding to was the five  
4 co-location proposals that were either revised, and  
5 one of them was canceled; not the contracts.

6 I've asked a current member of the PEP if  
7 they've ever actually voted down a contract, and  
8 I've also asked past PEP members, and they both said  
9 no.

10 In addition, as has been recently reported,  
11 the PEP members have never been provided with the  
12 minimum of six hours of training on their  
13 financial-oversight accountability and fiduciary  
14 responsibilities required of all school-board  
15 members by a 2005 state law, despite requests to  
16 receive this training from at least one board  
17 member; nor does the board has an internal audit  
18 committee, as the law requires.

19 The lone member who voted against the  
20 CCS contract recently resigned under pressure, and  
21 both he and another former member,  
22 Norm Fruchter (ph.), have stated publicly for the  
23 record, that the panel does not provide sufficient  
24 checks and balances to mayoral control.

25 I would be remiss if I didn't speak about

1 class size, the top concern of parents, according to  
2 the DOE's own surveys.

3 In -- June 20 -- 2003, the Campaign for  
4 Fiscal Equity case, the state's highest court found  
5 that students were deprived of their constitutional  
6 right to a sound, basic education because class  
7 sizes were too large.

8 In 2007, the Contracts for Excellence law was  
9 passed by the Legislature, which required  
10 New York City to reduce class sizes in all grades;  
11 yet, class sizes sharply increased, and, now, in --  
12 Grades K through 3 are more than 14 percent larger  
13 than when the original decision was made.

14 Though average class sizes have stabilized  
15 since 2013, the number of students in classes of  
16 30 or more in the early grades continues to go up.

17 This fall, there were over 48,000 students in  
18 classes of 30 or more in the early grades, more than  
19 350,000 students in classes that large in all  
20 grades -- more than one-third of all public-school  
21 students in gen ed, inclusion, and gifted classes.

22 In their C4E plan, the DOE said they would  
23 now focus their class size-reduction efforts on the  
24 renewal schools; yet, our analysis showed that  
25 nearly 40 percent of these schools did not reduce

1 class size one iota. About 60 percent continue to  
2 feature classes of 30 or more, and only 7 percent  
3 have capped class sizes at appropriate C4E levels,  
4 of 20 in K through 3, 23 in Grades 4 through 8, and  
5 25 in core high school classes.

6 And, honestly, I do not think the program can  
7 succeed with classes as large as they continue to be  
8 in these schools.

9 So what should be done?

10 I would like to propose, as our parent  
11 commission did seven years ago, that an office of an  
12 inspector general be created to report on -- to the  
13 public on any case of malfeasance, corruption, or  
14 mismanagement by school-system employees;

15 As well as an ombudsperson, to address and  
16 resolve parents complaints, and provide regular  
17 reports on how services and policies could be  
18 improved.

19 CEC should also be given the authority to  
20 approve co-locations, as they currently do have  
21 in-school rezonings.

22 I also think it would be useful for the city  
23 comptroller and the public advocate to have their  
24 own appointees on the panel.

25 As to the school board itself, if its members

1 cannot be elected directly by the citizens of  
2 New York, as happens in the rest of the state, at  
3 the very least, the DOE should be made subject to  
4 city law.

5 Currently, the Department of Education is the  
6 only city agency exempt from laws passed by the city  
7 council, other than oversight legislation.

8 I don't think many people realize what a  
9 unique position the DOE is in, in not having any  
10 local checks and balances in this way.

11 The police department, housing, and  
12 children's services, all the other city agencies,  
13 are under the mayor's control; and, yet, subject to  
14 the checks and balances of the city council.

15 Yet, I've never heard anyone claim that this  
16 system unacceptably dilutes the mayor's authority  
17 when it comes to addressing either crime or the need  
18 for more housing.

19 Why should our public schools be any  
20 different?

21 Why should they have fewer checks and  
22 balances than any other city agency?

23 Thank you for your time, and I'd be happy to  
24 answer any questions you might have.

25 SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you.

1 LAURA ALTSCHULER: Thank you.

2 First of all, Senator Marcellino and  
3 Senator Addabbo, thank you for your time and  
4 patience.

5 Education is important to us, and we all  
6 appreciate it.

7 I'm Laura Altschuler, a past president of the  
8 League; currently on the board of directors.

9 As you know, the League operates on three  
10 levels. And the national League of Women Voters  
11 really began building a foundation to equal access  
12 to public education; followed by the state League,  
13 which was also part of the strong push for financing  
14 education and the campaign for fiscal equity; and  
15 here in the New York City League, we actually did a  
16 study on how the schools should best be served.

17 And -- I'm paraphrasing my testimony, but you  
18 won't object, I'm sure.

19 SENATOR MARCELLINO: Bless you.

20 LAURA ALTSCHULER: We didn't support mayoral  
21 control initially, but we concluded, after  
22 observation and study, that making the City  
23 Administration responsible for the operation of the  
24 school system afforded much greater transparency and  
25 accountability.

1           And I would like to say, when we say  
2           "control," we really mean responsibility.

3           Someone who was here earlier mentioned that  
4           there should be more parents here, you know, who  
5           have children in the schools.

6           I attended the New York City public schools,  
7           my children went to the New York City public schools  
8           and, currently, my grandchildren are.

9           And I think it's important that people  
10          continue to be interested in education whether or  
11          not they have children in the public schools.

12          And we at the League are very much -- you  
13          know, feel that that needs to continue.

14          We actually urge the renewal of mayoral  
15          control for six years; and the reason why, we think  
16          the children and our schools as are important as our  
17          infrastructure, for building bridges or replacing  
18          water mains.

19          There's is -- there are certain things that  
20          take a very long time to achieve, and they don't  
21          happen with one year or two years of change.

22          And that's why I like the word "mayoral  
23          responsibility."

24          Since I just told you how long I have been  
25          involved in education in the city, you will know

1 I've lived through teacher strikes,  
2 decentralization. Before that, centralization. And  
3 then, again.

4 And you have to have someone who continues to  
5 be responsible, and people need someone that they  
6 can go to, whoever is in charge, the assistants, or  
7 whatever.

8 But you cannot have what we had before, and  
9 that's why we think, whether you call it "mayoral  
10 control" or "mayor responsibility and control," it  
11 must continue.

12 But there's always time for improvement, and  
13 with your permission, I just want to make a few  
14 specific recommendations.

15 Fixed terms for the members of the Panel of  
16 Educational Policy:

17 They should serve fixed terms of two or  
18 three years.

19 Right now, they serve at the pleasure of the  
20 mayor or the borough president who appointed them.

21 Now, we're assuming that they were appointed  
22 because of expertise and judgment. And they should  
23 be free to study, review, vote, on educational  
24 policy without fear of being replaced by, or  
25 disagree with, an appointing official.

1           This happened, to the detriment of the school  
2 system, in an earlier administration.

3           The Department of Education should follow the  
4 procurement rules and regulations which apply to  
5 other city agencies, including, but not limited to,  
6 publicly advertising contract opportunities, and  
7 holding hearings on non-competitively-bid contracts.

8           We're not talking about what individual  
9 principals or school system might need, but these  
10 large citywide contracts should abide by the same.

11           And, the meetings of the Panels of  
12 Educational Policy and community district  
13 educational council should be public and subject to  
14 the state and city public-meeting laws. Agendas  
15 should be published in advance on the department's  
16 website, and meetings webcast.

17           And on -- the community district educational  
18 councils should be consulted before any school,  
19 traditional or charter, elementary, middle, or  
20 high school, is open, closed, consolidated,  
21 restructured, renamed, or collated within district.

22           Everyone in the community, and especially the  
23 parents, need to be involved in this.

24           And the provisions of mayoral control in  
25 school governments approved by the State of New York

1 should be made a part of the New York City Charter.

2 Most people do not know that the Department  
3 of Education is not in the city charter.

4 We've been sort of wanting that every time  
5 there was a change in city government.

6 So in designating the mayor as the New York  
7 City official responsible for the operation of  
8 New York City's public schools, the State of  
9 New York has recognized the department as a city  
10 agency; and, as such, it belongs in the New York  
11 City Charter.

12 At present, there is no delineation of powers  
13 or responsibilities of the Department of Education  
14 in the New York City Charter.

15 This was justified by the temporary nature of  
16 the government structure; but "temporary" is now  
17 15 years, and going on.

18 There is ample opportunity to amend the  
19 charter if changes in governance are enacted, but to  
20 ignore the existence of an agency which accounts for  
21 20 percent of the city's budget cannot be justified.

22 And an overly extended debate about mayoral  
23 control is problematic, and no one has suggested a  
24 reliable alternative.

25 And we're certainly not proposing a return to

1 the previously-constituted board of education.

2 In fact, a failure to renew mayoral control  
3 will result in reversal to a system which no longer  
4 exists.

5 More than one million children attend our  
6 city's public schools. Their education is of  
7 primary importance to their and our future, and the  
8 governance of our schools should not be part of  
9 negotiations over issues which really have nothing  
10 to do with education.

11 Extending investment tax credits to wealthy  
12 New Yorkers who contribute to private and parochial  
13 schools will not improve public education. If  
14 anything, it will reduce in -- result in reduced tax  
15 revenues which the State uses to fund our schools.

16 And we really appreciate the time that you  
17 have taken to listen to the League's testimony.

18 And, I'm not going ask if you have any  
19 questions, because I have a feeling that I'm the  
20 last speaker, and that's probably the last thing  
21 that you want.

22 But we are here to answer you today; or, if  
23 you -- we have people in the state who are always  
24 available from the League of Women Voters.

25 Thank you so much.

1           SENATOR MARCELLINO: Appreciate you coming,  
2 and we appreciate your testimony, but you're not the  
3 last speaker.

4           LAURA ALTSCHULER: Oh, okay.

5           SENATOR MARCELLINO: We do have two more to  
6 come.

7           LAURA ALTSCHULER: Oh, I was just looking at  
8 the list that I read.

9           SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you very much,  
10 though, for your testimony.

11           We appreciate you coming.

12           LAURA ALTSCHULER: Thank you.

13           SENATOR MARCELLINO: Let's call  
14 Richard Kahan.

15           RICHARD KAHAN: I think I owe you both a  
16 drink.

17           It's very kind of you to stay this long and  
18 listen to all of the testimony.

19           SENATOR MARCELLINO: That's why they pay us  
20 the big bucks.

21           RICHARD KAHAN: And I do have a fond memory  
22 of working with the State Senate when  
23 Warren Anderson was the head.

24           A lot of people think that we have a  
25 convention center in Battery Park City here, because

1 of the -- because we had a democratic mayor and a  
2 democratic governor at the time, Hugh Kerry and  
3 Koch.

4 Not at all true.

5 It's Warren Anderson that made the things  
6 possible, on his time table.

7 I appreciate the opportunity to testify in  
8 favor of mayoral control.

9 The Urban Assembly has 21 schools,  
10 9,000 students. We have no screening whatsoever.  
11 20 percent special ed, et cetera.

12 A very underprivileged population, we've done  
13 very well with that.

14 We have graduation rates that exceed the  
15 city's significantly, and given our  
16 African-American, Latino, population, by about  
17 13 percent for that population. 80 percent of our  
18 kids are going to college.

19 And I dare say, that many never would have  
20 gone to college, let alone graduate, were it not for  
21 small schools, which is what we are.

22 In addition, our colleagues at New Visions  
23 and Outward Bound, and international schools, who  
24 you heard from, Joe Luft (ph.), in Albany, shared  
25 the same view.

1           We are all predominantly small schools that  
2           came out of the reforms made possible in the  
3           Bloomberg Administration.

4           And I will say that I'm not an educator.  
5           I've watched from a distance for most of my life,  
6           until the last 10 or 12 years.

7           And what I heard one mayor after another say  
8           was: If I had control over this, I'd fix it. But,  
9           I don't have control.

10           "I'd blow up 110 Livingston," that was a  
11           direct quote from one of the mayors, "if I had  
12           control over the DOE."

13           Then, all of a sudden, came along the man  
14           that said: I want control, and I want you to hold  
15           me accountable.

16           I thought that was the craziest political  
17           statement I ever heard, and at one point I told him  
18           that.

19           But he meant it, and I think it made all the  
20           difference in the world.

21           And, personally, that was the point at which  
22           I looked and said, You know, I'd like to get  
23           involved in education now, because this is serious.  
24           Nobody is passing the buck anymore.

25           So without mayoral control, those reforms,

1 and other reforms, would not have taken place.

2 I give this administration credit for  
3 pre-K -- universal pre-K. If they did nothing else,  
4 that is a great legacy. For the renewal schools,  
5 community schools.

6 But it's is not just about this  
7 administration either.

8 There will be other administrations. None of  
9 them will have the opportunity to and the time to  
10 create sustainable reform programs without a number  
11 of years to do it in.

12 If you have an idea today, it will take a  
13 year or two to implement it. Then you want to test  
14 it and you want to measure it, and you want to see  
15 what's wrong, you want to fix things, you want to  
16 tinker.

17 And at the end of that process, you have  
18 something else you'd like to do to raise the bar  
19 even higher.

20 That is not a one-year process, and it's not  
21 a two-year process.

22 It takes time, and we can't do it without  
23 multi-year mayoral control.

24 I thank you very much.  
25

1 SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you.

2 Mr. Walcott.

3 DENNIS WALCOTT: How are you?

4 SENATOR MARCELLINO: Okay. Good to see you.

5 DENNIS WALCOTT: Thank you, sir.

6 SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you for coming  
7 back.

8 DENNIS WALCOTT: Oh, my pleasure.

9 No, I had to run across the street to testify  
10 before the city council for my regular job now.

11 SENATOR MARCELLINO: Did you see the Mayor  
12 over there?

13 DENNIS WALCOTT: I did not.

14 [Laughter.]

15 DENNIS WALCOTT: I went straight in, and  
16 testified before the city council about libraries  
17 today.

18 So...

19 SENATOR MARCELLINO: Bless you. Worthy  
20 places.

21 DENNIS WALCOTT: I totally agree with you.

22 And in Queens, as Senator Addabbo knows, we  
23 have 63 great libraries.

24 But I'm not here today to talk about  
25 libraries for this building.

1           And I want to say, good afternoon to you,  
2           Chair, and to Senator Addabbo, and to all the other  
3           Senators here earlier.

4           As you know, my name is Dennis Walcott,  
5           former New York City schools chancellor; and, also,  
6           former deputy mayor of education under  
7           Mayor Bloomberg; and current president and CEO of  
8           the Queens Library System.

9           And I want to thank you for the opportunity  
10          to discuss this critical issue of mayoral control of  
11          the schools; or, really, dealing with school  
12          governance, and what it actually means.

13          And as you may know, my history with school  
14          governance goes back to the beginning of this prior  
15          administration, in 2002.

16          But my involvement with education, both,  
17          formally, was not through Mayor Bloomberg, but  
18          really started before then, when I was appointed to  
19          the old Board of Education by Mayor Dinkins, back in  
20          1992, 1993.

21          And then, in the mid-1990s, I was appointed  
22          by Chancellor Rudy Crew, as a trustee of a local  
23          school board, the one up in district Harlem,  
24          District 5, that had been suspended, and I became  
25          president of that trustee board.

1           And I have the unique and dubious distinction  
2 of having served as the last Board of Education  
3 president, from June 30th to August 11th of 2009.

4           So when I was here earlier and I heard  
5 Senator Addabbo's question about, what's next if  
6 it's not renewed? that was what was next, and it had  
7 lapsed at that particular point, as you remember,  
8 and there was a lot of horse-trading on who would be  
9 on the board, and, the Board of Education back then,  
10 who would become the president?

11           And I became the Board of Ed president as a  
12 result of the votes of Mayor Bloomberg, and  
13 Helen Marshall, who was borough president of Queens  
14 at that time.

15           And it shouldn't be that way.

16           In 2002, when Mayor Bloomberg sought  
17 school-governance reform, we aimed to achieve  
18 accountability and responsibility for the schools,  
19 not just as a prize for any one mayor in particular,  
20 but as a fundamental change in the governance  
21 structure that would secure the future of our city's  
22 1.1 million schoolchildren.

23           The state's resulting historic  
24 school-governance legislation provided an  
25 unprecedented opportunity to transform a largely

1 underperforming bureaucracy into an exemplary system  
2 focused on what is best for children.

3 The school system we inherited was a deeply  
4 troubled one, which, despite the best intentions and  
5 the good work of many dedicated people, did not  
6 provide and meet the needs of our children with  
7 education that they needed and deserved.

8 The seven-member Board of Education, beset by  
9 competing agendas, failed to provide the kind of  
10 coherence and accountability and effectiveness  
11 needed to ensure a high-quality education for every  
12 child across the city.

13 And as you know, you indicated you were a  
14 teacher, and we were all involved. You had a  
15 disjointed system that was dysfunctional. And you  
16 had one district that operated one way, another  
17 district that operated another way.

18 And it was really total chaos.

19 Instead, equity, patronage, and waste, and  
20 dysfunction plagued the system back then.

21 School funding was based on more on who you  
22 knew in the politics than based on the need.

23 Many teachers had to wait months for a  
24 paycheck.

25 I'm not sure exactly when you started, but

1 I know when we became in place, in 2002 --

2 SENATOR MARCELLINO: '68.

3 DENNIS WALCOTT: 1968.

4 -- and I know when we started in 2002, before  
5 control was given, teachers still had to wait up to  
6 two to three to four months, sometimes, to get paid,  
7 and that was across the system.

8 And that shouldn't be that way, and we were  
9 able to address that right away.

10 Our poorer students were trapped in  
11 lowest-performing schools in the city and had few  
12 options.

13 Only half of the students were graduating at  
14 some schools, and the rate was closer to 20 percent  
15 at some of the other schools.

16 School-governance reform gives New York  
17 City's mayors the ability to develop and implement a  
18 clear and bold vision for teaching and learning, to  
19 plan strategically to bring together the resources  
20 and agencies of the city around education and put  
21 the children's interests first.

22 As a result, since the establishment of the  
23 school-governance system, dropout rates have plunged  
24 by half; graduation rates have risen from, on  
25 average, 50 percent, to now, as the Chancellor

1 indicated earlier, to, roughly 70.5 percent -- a  
2 significant increase after stagnation under the  
3 prior governance structure.

4 Rather than being consigned to failing  
5 schools, students have benefited from the best  
6 school-choice system, that can always be improved  
7 on; teachers are paid on time; we've allocated funds  
8 throughout our schools more equitably to meet the  
9 needs of our students; and students' achievements  
10 have increased across the board.

11 The fate of control should not depend on the  
12 policy of the programs of any particular  
13 administration.

14 That's why I'm here today.

15 It's not about one mayor or another mayor.

16 It is about this mayor, the prior mayor, and  
17 future mayors to come.

18 And, it should always be debated, but at the  
19 same time, governance is extremely important as it  
20 exists. It is a system that we need to maintain.

21 The governance structure we have today makes  
22 clear with whom the debate should take place, which  
23 was impossible with the multi-headed hydra of the  
24 old Board of Education.

25 Mayoral control is about making the mayor,

1       elected by the people of New York City, take  
2       responsibility for the education of our city, and  
3       effectuate the best education possible for our  
4       children.

5               The school-governance structure the State  
6       established in 2002, and has since renewed, must  
7       outlive any mayoralty if we are to continue the  
8       tremendous progress over the 14 years.

9               We must not add layers of bureaucracy to the  
10       checks and balances. We have systems in place, like  
11       your Committee, and other committees, as well as the  
12       State Education Department, as well as the  
13       comptroller and the state comptroller, to do the  
14       appropriate monitoring and provide the  
15       check-and-balance system to the current system.

16              And we must try to maintain that. The future  
17       of our children and city depends on it, and the  
18       accountability should rest with the mayor.

19              And that's why I'm here today.

20              And thank you for the opportunity to testify  
21       before, you, Senator Addabbo, and also the others  
22       who were here before.

23              SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you very much,  
24       Mr. Walcott, for coming and being here.

25              Your experience and expertise is respected,

1 and your testimony is appreciated.

2 DENNIS WALCOTT: Thank you, sir.

3 SENATOR MARCELLINO: If there was one thing  
4 that you could change in the current system of  
5 mayoral control, what would it be?

6 DENNIS WALCOTT: Great question.

7 I think more regular meetings than you may  
8 have them, but from a committee structure, with the  
9 Department of Education, I think that type of  
10 information going back and forth.

11 And as I heard the Chancellor indicated, and  
12 I indicated, that Albany was my sixth borough, on  
13 the regular dialogue between Albany and the DOE is  
14 extremely important, as well as with city hall.

15 And so, to me, I think increasing that; and,  
16 therefore, that would, both, increase the  
17 accountability mechanisms, but more importantly,  
18 provide the regular information to the elected  
19 officials that they need to have.

20 So that would be one thing.

21 I think, and I think the Chancellor talked  
22 about this as well, always finding new ways to  
23 improve transparency of information.

24 People are starving for information.

25 And while we did it in our administration,

1 I know the current mayor is doing it, always looking  
2 for new ways to get information out to our parents,  
3 to empower them, to make sure that they're fully  
4 invested.

5 And people always talk about parental  
6 involvement.

7 And I know that we try very hard, the current  
8 administration is working hard at it.

9 Finding new ways to deal with parental  
10 involvement in the accountability is extremely  
11 important.

12 I think the ability to make sure that the  
13 Chancellor, through the Mayor, has the ability to  
14 have the coherent system that's in place, and was in  
15 place before, and making sure you always deal with  
16 the coherence of the system, is extremely important  
17 in how you constantly ramp that up.

18 And as Mayor Bloomberg always said to all of  
19 us, about the next administration, and future  
20 administrations, is to build on the success, and how  
21 to learn about what happened before, and analyze it  
22 and build off of that.

23 I think all those are parts of next steps to  
24 make the system better, to serve the needs of the  
25 children.

1           And I think with the debate that's going on  
2 with Albany right now, especially with the State  
3 Education Department, once we have a system that is  
4 in alignment with SED, and dealing with a curriculum  
5 that everyone signs on to as an approved of, that's  
6 at high standards, I think that then allows that  
7 next step to take place as well.

8           And, to me, with that, then you get to a  
9 higher milestone, as far as education outcomes for  
10 our children.

11           SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you.

12           DENNIS WALCOTT: Thank you, sir.

13           SENATOR ADDABBO: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

14           I want to thank Mr. Walcott for being here,  
15 and I want to wish you much success on your new  
16 position --

17           DENNIS WALCOTT: Thank you, sir.

18           SENATOR ADDABBO: -- with the Queens  
19 libraries. And I do look forward to working with  
20 you in that respect.

21           I really appreciate your insight here,  
22 because, again, that resumé of yours runs the gamut,  
23 as, you know, a member of the old -- the head of the  
24 old Board of Ed, deputy mayor of education,  
25 chancellor of education.

1           Again, I think this is a great moment for us  
2 to get this kind of input.

3           Take us back to 2009, when there was the work  
4 to renew mayoral control, and at the time.

5           Because I mentioned it earlier, when you got  
6 this moment of an expiration, we have this  
7 opportunity to improve.

8           And back in 2009, there were improvements.

9           We improved the role of the PEPs, the CECs,  
10 the parental input.

11           Take us through that process of renewal, as  
12 we grapple with it now.

13           DENNIS WALCOTT: Sure, I mean, I would love  
14 to.

15           And I remember it very well, in that, we  
16 didn't necessarily see eye-to-eye back then.

17           And people had their inputs, as far as what  
18 should be the role of parent-coordinators, the role  
19 of the CECs, the role of the PEPs.

20           And there was a lot of debate, as you well  
21 know, and that's why it lapsed at that particular  
22 point in time.

23           But I think out of that process came a system  
24 that was healthier. We established the arts  
25 council, the arts committee, of the PEP, and had to

1 have regular reports.

2 And also, financially, we were in a different  
3 position than this current mayor is in right now,  
4 having more money to fund things.

5 But I think it allowed for more robust debate  
6 to take place, and then from that debate, we did  
7 some fine-tuning to the CEC, we did some fine-tuning  
8 to the PEP as well.

9 And I think the Chancellor alluded to that  
10 this morning, as far as those next steps that were  
11 taken, to try to improve engagement of the parents  
12 itself.

13 But I also remember the downside of it, and  
14 that it did lapse, and it was an unknown, what was  
15 going to happen, because, it was the end of June  
16 through August, if I'm not mistaken, around it  
17 lapsing, and the old Board of Ed.

18 And I can tell you, quite frankly, the  
19 trading that took place around making sure who was  
20 appointed to the board, and that scares me more than  
21 anything else.

22 And I think, for an improvement plan, if  
23 you're asking about that, I think the Chancellor hit  
24 on a lot of things.

25 I think what this administration has done has

1 built on what we started and established.

2 And, Senator, I'm not sure if you mentioned  
3 it, or I heard it somewhere else, but, I mean, the  
4 system is still relatively new.

5 If you remember the old system existed for --  
6 since '68 to 2002, with the decentralized model.

7 And so this has been in place now, 14 years,  
8 and I think it's important that we take a look at  
9 it, and always try to fine-tune.

10 But I think that where we're at right now is  
11 pretty good. I mean, we didn't ignore a lot from  
12 the renewal back in 2009.

13 And, quite frankly, I think it's extremely  
14 important for it to go way beyond the year,  
15 two years, and, quite frankly, even beyond the  
16 three years, because whether it's this mayor or  
17 another mayor, for planning purposes, for coherence,  
18 for stability of the staff patterns, to make sure  
19 that people know what's coming up in the future for  
20 even accountability, they need to have a multi-year  
21 renewal to address that, but I think just  
22 fine-tuning around the edges.

23 And I think part of the frustration is that,  
24 there just needs to be more information flow, more  
25 sharing of information, making sure that information

1 is going out there.

2 And I understand the political dynamics and  
3 all that, but, quite frankly, I think the dynamics  
4 of pedagogy and instruction have to trump the  
5 dynamics of any of the politics that may exist.

6 And, quite frankly, now, not being in city  
7 government, I have the ability to just say that.

8 But I think it's more important to always  
9 focus the attention, as you've done as a teacher,  
10 and as you've done in serving your respective  
11 communities, on the outcome for students, and how we  
12 increase the outcome, from an educational and  
13 pedagogical point of view.

14 SENATOR ADDABBO: Thank you for your  
15 testimony, and for highlighting what would happen  
16 should mayoral control lapse and us going backwards  
17 to another structure.

18 So, thank you very much.

19 DENNIS WALCOTT: Thank you, sir, for the  
20 question.

21 SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you very much.

22 DENNIS WALCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

23 I appreciate it very much, and thank you.

24 Have a good afternoon.

25 SENATOR MARCELLINO: Before we adjourn, as

1       you just -- you've heard from other speakers, and my  
2       colleagues here, too, we're all deeply disappointed  
3       that we didn't get the Mayor here.

4               We would have all liked to have heard him,  
5       and we all would like to have been able to ask him a  
6       few follow-up questions to the last meeting.

7               So I think an opportunity was missed by the  
8       Mayor, by not showing up, and, I don't know how to  
9       fix that.

10              But, I thank the people who came and offered  
11       their testimony, and their written testimony will be  
12       part of the public record.

13              And I am told that, anyone who would like  
14       to -- where can we see this?

15              This is -- oh, this video of this hearing  
16       will be available -- if anyone wants to go to sleep  
17       at night, the video of this hearing will be  
18       available at the Senate Finance Committee website.

19              So, that could be -- you can hear this all  
20       over again.

21              Thank you, and the meeting is adjourned.

22                      (Whereupon, at approximately 3:23 p.m.,  
23       the public hearing held before the New York State  
24       Senate Standing Committee on Education concluded,  
25       and adjourned.)