

Good Afternoon,

Thank you for the time to testify.

I am a veteran Special Education Teacher in New York City and a parent of a student who receives Specialized Instruction and Support Services. I am asking that y'all deny the extension for Mayoral Control of New York City School. We, the people of New York City, need a democratic system for running the Department of Education. A system that centers student, family and teacher voice. There are over 705 democratically elected school boards in the state of New York Alone, I implore y'all to let New York City join them.

In addition to teaching democratic values to my teenagers through project-based learning, community action projects, flexible seating charts and restorative practices as a teacher I had to build my own Corsi-Rosenthal Merv filter for my poorly ventilated classroom because the Intellipure NON HEPA filters purchased by the previous mayor were clinically shown to be sub par. My immunocompromised disabled students needed safe air.

As a teacher I had to hack ed tech software systems, google docs and zoom meetings for cellphones because the Apple iPad delivered to students through the city contract with Apple didn't actually allow students to type assignments while attending a virtual lesson!

As a teacher I had apologize and create sensory breaks schedules for students forced to sit through the 4 days of NWEA Map Growth Corporate testing this year which abhorrently denied teachers the capacity to set the grade level or number of questions for teenagers AND provided no meaningful discrete data I could use in instruction!

As a teacher I had to frantically create an entire Special Education Recovery System curriculum for my students with disabilities who needed the extra time to acclimate to the executive functioning, sensory, and social demands of returning to school buildings. Because the only curriculum provided by the city for all students with disabilities in all grades was Voyager Sopris Learning Company Rewards brand PHONICS program!

The list of examples could go on. I marvel at the brilliance, ingenuity, adaptability, resilience and fortitude of my fellow public school teachers. Instead the real work of creating communities of liberation and learning is relegated to the margins while teachers are unduly burdened with implementing private consultancy funded initiatives that actively damage the students and their relationships to school. Responding to the whims of new mayoral initiatives is actively harming students. I plead for a democratic model, where we, the teachers and parents of New York city students can make decisions on policy in our classrooms and schools.