

Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. There is strong representation of our communities entrusted to Senators Ramos and Giannaris, Assemblywoman Cruz, Assemblymen Aubry & DenDekker. I am here to amplify their message from the lens of a small nonprofit.

My name is Mallory Tompkins and I lead a school supporting the Queens communities of Jackson Heights, Corona, East Elmhurst, Elmhurst, Woodside, Astoria, Long Island City, and Queensbridge. Many of you have visited with our students or heard from them directly about ways we advance their path to college. We have 105 staff members. At great sacrifice, none of them have lost the opportunity to work their regular hours remotely during this crisis.

At 82nd Street Academics, all 895 of our students now have opportunities to engage with us in online learning. This engagement comes through cell phones, tablets, and computers. Normally, 60% of our students attend through government funding and 40% attend on family tuition and scholarships. We have returned all family tuition for the last semester of school and are providing online learning for free to all our families. While the sacrifice means extending a line of credit with the bank and losing the savings account we've spent the last three years building, it also means that students can continue to participate as their families experience death of a parent or job loss. It means our staff team can at least finish this school year without getting behind on their rent bills.

Can I tell you about one of our students this morning? I'd like to share with you for a moment about Johan. He comes from a single parent household with a mother who's been laid off indefinitely and is in his last semester of the 5th grade. Johan has attended our programs for the last four years. He's with us year round in our After School and Summer School programs. He comes to program full of energy and knows almost every staff member in the building. Most recently, he's joined our pilot program of online tutoring in Math and ELA. This program just started at the beginning of May and we are proud to have Johan on board to teach us how we can enhance it's impact.

One learning I gained from observing Johan's tutoring session in action was the availability of the Google. One of the reasons Johan joins us for tutoring is to work on his multiplication tables. During the lightning round the other day, Johan looks away from the camera on his screen and appears to be working on a double digit multiplication problem. Soon, I hear Siri on the other end of the phone informing Johan "5 times 7 equals 35". There is a collective pause while his tutor smiles and takes a moment to process what's happening, then asks Johan if he has any questions about his work.

On the surface, this is an amusing anecdote and gives us all a dose of what happens when students have a smart phone close at hand during class. Beyond this, my heart hurts for Johan and students in his

situation. Through online tutoring, I am determined to help Johan with his multiplication and to build the confidence to ask for help. What happens to all the other Johan's?

Whether you're looking at the lines in the street in front of food pantries at Assemblywoman Cruz's office and on Roosevelt avenue or you're hearing hard facts from other advocates, you know that families are thinking tonight how will they stretch their next check to keep food on the table. They've lost dignity and choice to be replaced with lines that are six blocks long. Many of our community members approach the culmination of Ramadan which is typically celebrated with sharing food, many of those families are eating school lunches.

We are a small business but more importantly, we are a school. I must now prepare staff members that have worked with us for more than four years to have a summer that does not include a paycheck from our school. I must maintain high engagement with them throughout the summer in hopes that they will return in the Fall though we risk losing their talents to other available jobs with increased security. Over three quarters of our staff are women of color. We have spent our entire reserve protecting the valuable efforts of employees and the life changing impact of education particularly on communities of color, we are at zero. Typically, in our government partnerships, 20% of the cost of the service is born by the school – there is not 20% left.

There is a solution in partnership between small businesses and government funding. We can continue to enhance online learning so that we can be impactful while waiting for the right time for students to rejoin our schools in person. Keeping our team employed will help them stay on top of rent bills, keep them off the overwhelmed food pantry lines, and maintain the institutional knowledge and training that is critical to student success.

I'm speaking on behalf of Johan and his friends this morning. In the diversity of Queens, Johan is not the exception – he's the rule. Do you know people like Johan in your neighborhood? Fifth grade for him will end next month but there's still time to prepare him for his first year of middle school.