BEFORE THE NEW YORK STATE SENATE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

PUBLIC HEARING:

TO EXAMINE THE MERITS OF EXTENDING

MAYORAL CONTROL OF SCHOOLS IN NEW YORK CITY

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

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

PRESIDING:

Senator Carl L. Marcellino
Chair

PRESENT:

Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr.

Senator Thomas D. Croci

Senator Simcha Felder

Senator Martin J. Golden

Senator Liz Krueger

Senator Jose R. Peralta

Senator Bill Perkins

Senator Toby Ann Stavisky

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

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

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

For the most part, that has not happened.

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

That's a disappointment.

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

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

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

Some questions -- answers to questions that

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

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

We understand he's busy.

Everybody is.

Everybody at this table is busy.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

So we're looking for answers today.

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

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

Senator Marty Golden and Senator Tom Croci.

Others will come and go as they can. Hearings are being held, meetings are being held,

throughout the day.

People will come in later. People will leave.

Hopefully, we will get the list.

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

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

Chancellor Fariña, please, take the microphone.

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

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

SENATOR MARCELLINO: With one correction, Chancellor.

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

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Okay, great. Thank you.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But perhaps the most --

What?

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Bless you.

[Laughter.]

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

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

measurable impacts on student achievement.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

That's the beauty of pre-K.

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

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

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

dual-language and bilingual programs.

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

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

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

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

This is why mayoral control is so important.

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

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

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

We have created meetings with CEC presidents

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

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

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

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

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

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

you overprogram me on Wednesdays.

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

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

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

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

In 2013, just 729 parents applied.

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

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

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

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

And this year we also started something

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

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

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

We have hired 250 new guidance counselors to support students.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

College access for all middle schools will

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In these particular schools we have training.

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

We've given them very targeted resources.

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

We have seen real progress.

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

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

We are receiving whatever support they need.

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

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

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

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

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

for students to thrive.

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

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

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

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

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

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you.

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

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

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

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

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

I think that's a bit much.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We're looking at school closures a little differently.

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

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

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

And those numbers don't generate the resources.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Not necessarily.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Again, lots of neighborhood community input.

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

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

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

to, to make sure there's no disruption.

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

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

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

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

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

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

There are four schools in the building.

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

There was plenty of capability to stay in the

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

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

And the mergers and consolidations work.

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

You don't remember.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thank you for coming.

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

SENATOR ADDABBO: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Who do you point a finger at?

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

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

We said we were going to do pre-K.

We said we were going to do middle school

after-school.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It's the mayor.

Then it's me.

Then it's my superintendents.

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

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

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

I evaluate all my superintendents on several things.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

to make them the citizens of tomorrow.

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

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

We have about 12 --

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

[Laughter.]

SENATOR ADDABBO: He might have come in.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But does he plan on coming back to Albany.

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

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

particular room.

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

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

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

And, I've met with caucuses.

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

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

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

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

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

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

structure for our children, educationally.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

So I do think the system is there.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And we always listen to recommendations from elected officials.

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

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

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

And I've discussed this with the State Commissioner.

We need help in terms of our CTE programs.

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

(The lights go out.)

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Okay.

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

It's a little annoying.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SENATOR ADDABBO: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

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

So, I am pleased that our members -- the list that I have established right now is:
Senator Croci, Senator Golden, Senator Peralta, Senator Stavisky, and Senator Perkins.

That's it.

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

I'm going to go left to right. Whichever

order, we'll get --

SENATOR PERKINS: (Indiscernible.)

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

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

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

Senator Croci.

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

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

But, Chancellor, I appreciate your appearance here today.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And something that the Chairman raised was the security.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

So we now have a system where, at dismissal

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

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

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

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

How do you de-escalate issues?

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

So I do think our schools are safe.

I certainly go into schools all by myself.

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

I don't take an entourage.

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

SENATOR CROCI: Thank you.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Senator Golden.

SENATOR GOLDEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

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

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

What money goes into the schools?

How that money is divided?

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

How much money goes into the construction projects?

What are the overruns on the construction projects?

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

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

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

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

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

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

What does this actually cost us?

And how would I find that in the computer?

And how can you help me on that?

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Well, that is a challenge.

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

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

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

One of things that I think that I can

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

Our lowest right now is at 82 percent.

No school will be less than 87.

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

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

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

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

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

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

And the other big issue that we have, and

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

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

SENATOR MARCELLINO: What's a "TCU"?

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

URSULINA RAMIREZ: The trailers.

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

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

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

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

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

These trailers were a disaster. They should

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

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

So I do believe that you have to build them.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Oh, I love that idea.

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

Moving along: overcrowding.

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

to reduce the overcrowding?

We did it.

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

Guess what?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The City knows this.

We all know this.

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

I don't want to stop anybody.

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

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

We're losing them to Texas, to California.

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

SENATOR GOLDEN: Pardon me?

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

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

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

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

Now, that's number one.

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

And how many kids are left out of the system?

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

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

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

Is that a lot of questions in one question?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SENATOR GOLDEN: That's my district.

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

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

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

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

high schools, that they can share resources?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

So we have made investments, and specifically to --

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Maybe I'm wrong there.

And how many -- go ahead.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And the Mayor here has to, I believe, lead

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

How do we stop the illegal conversions?

How do we balance the system?

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

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

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

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

SENATOR GOLDEN: Good.

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

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

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

But, we're looking down the road.

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

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

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

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

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

SENATOR GOLDEN: Yep.

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

And I asked her how she was doing.

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

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

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

But, I'm happy to discuss this further.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Well, I think

we've made a lot of strides on this.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

has to be a top priority.

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

I do think we've done a good job.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

regular basis.

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Absolutely.

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

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: At least once a week.

SENATOR GOLDEN: Okay. Thank you very much.

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

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

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Senator Peralta.

SENATOR PERALTA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Thank you for waiting.

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

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

chancellor.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: A few.

Ursulina has the exact number.

URSULINA RAMIREZ: Yep. One second.

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

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

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

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

Ursulina?

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

involvement.

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

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

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

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

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

URSULINA RAMIREZ: No.

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

SENATOR PERALTA: Okay. Good.

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

Is it working?

Is there enough input by the parents?

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

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

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

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

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

I sat on both.

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

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

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

visit schools that were on the co-location site.

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

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

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

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

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

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

So I think it is a very fair representation.

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

When they ask for more information, they've

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

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

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

So I think it is pretty independent.

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

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

They are listened to.

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

But listening and agreeing are not always the same thing.

And I think that's one of the things.

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

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

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

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

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

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

I said, Well, how do they get answered?

Well, someone calls them up, or whatever.

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

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

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

-- and called parents at home.

And one parent in particular hung up on me.

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

And she hung up, and I called her back.

And she said, Stop playing games.

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

"Oh, my God."

So I do believe in that.

I was a parent of public-school kids.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I represent him, certainly, under Joel Klein.

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

So --

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

That's another thing.

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

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

Really?

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

They're my kids.

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

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

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

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

possible.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Are the children moving forward?

Is the curriculum moving forward?

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

What if he's not the mayor again?

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

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

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

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

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

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

No one is going to take away community schools.

Also, evaluate us on our record, our promotion.

Our graduation rate is growing.

Our dropout rate is lessening.

Our attendance is moving.

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

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

And why did we have a different chancellor?

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

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

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

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

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

And then, all of a sudden, the stability went

away and we were caught in the middle.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And --

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

[Laughter.]

SENATOR PERALTA: And then that next

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: (Speaking in Spanish).

SENATOR PERALTA: (Speaking in Spanish).

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: (Speaking in Spanish.)

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

I think she's doing a great job.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: I wish you guys wouldn't

talk Greek.

Senator Stavisky.

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

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

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

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

A practical educator.

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

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

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

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

Then we said, which is -- nobody thought we

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

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

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

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

And "others" could be elected officials, parents.

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

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

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

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

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

How do you speak before an audience?

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

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

That's why I'm here today.

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

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

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

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

SENATOR MARCELLINO: The school is run by the secretaries.

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Oh, absolutely.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Sorry about that.

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

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: It's true.

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

-- and they are supervised by superintendents.

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

We're down to 44.

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

Are they impeding the ability of the principals?

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

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

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

and I spend at least an hour and a half.

SENATOR STAVISKY: You meet in a big room.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

support in the area they need it?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

really have to follow UPK?

To me, it's a natural progression.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

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

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

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

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

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you, Senator.

The Senator Perkins.

SENATOR PERKINS: Good morning.

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Good morning.

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

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

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

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

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

Nevertheless, we have them in the city.

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

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

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

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

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

are here.

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

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

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

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

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

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

But, again, it's parent choice.

There are other options.

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

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

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

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

SENATOR PERKINS: So 92 percent non-White.

URSULINA RAMIREZ: Correct -- or -- no.

SENATOR PERKINS: 55 and 37 is, what?

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

SENATOR PERKINS: Huh?

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

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

URSULINA RAMIREZ: Yes, that's correct.

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

URSULINA RAMIREZ: Yes.

SENATOR PERKINS: Right, 92.

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

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

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

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

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

I mean --

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

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: It's their choice.

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

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

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

but we can get back to you.

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

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

SENATOR PERKINS: Okay.

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

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

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

Many of the schools have an extended time.

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

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

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

SENATOR PERKINS: So...?

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: In public schools.

URSULINA RAMIREZ: In public schools.

SENATOR PERKINS: So...?

So -- but that -- I understand that.

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

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

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

In District --

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

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

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

There's one in your particular neighborhood. Okay.

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

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

rights movement.

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

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

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

And why are these schools not in other communities?

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

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

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Well, my goal --

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ethnically.

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

Could you generate that?

URSULINA RAMIREZ: We will get that for you.

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

And so -- and I don't -- now, how are we doing with our charter schools? How are they comparing?

Do you have statistics that represent success?

URSULINA RAMIREZ: We'll get you the specific statistics, but we are seeing success in both our -- some of our charter schools, and in our traditional public schools.

SENATOR PERKINS: And in terms of the charters, what do -- how do they compare?

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: To each other, or to the public schools?

SENATOR PERKINS: To the public schools, yeah, because --

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: In terms of ELA scores, public schools are doing a little bit better.

And in terms of math scores, the charter schools are doing a little bit better.

SENATOR PERKINS: So you have -- so you will send me that report?

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Yes, we have that report. It's public.

SENATOR PERKINS: Have you looked at what's happening with them in other parts of the country?

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: We've looked at some other cities, but all of them have implemented them a little differently.

And I think the biggest lesson learned from us, is that there needs to be more sharing of practices between the charter world and the public-school world.

SENATOR PERKINS: Just give me an example of what you mean.

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: We looked at, what are some of the practices, or some of the bottom-line philosophies?

I'll give you a two examples.

Un-Common-schools network is doing a

particularly strong engagement with something called "relay college," that they actually formed, and that does very specific training of principals and teachers in professional development.

And we have seen that some of those schools were getting good results, so we actually approached them about working, particularly in District 23, 19, and 17, I believe, in Brooklyn.

And we're piloting this year -- we've been doing this for over a year -- to see if we have better success using this process.

Another program that we hope to do, one of the other charter-schools networks is doing a particularly good job, not just of getting their high school kids into college, but keeping them there beyond freshman year.

And we're looking to see what they've done particularly well, to be able to replicate some of that work within our own high school --

SENATOR PERKINS: Which charter school is that, by the way?

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: That's the KIPP charter schools.

SENATOR PERKINS: KIPP charter schools?

And are there any others, other than KIPP?

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Well, one of these schools I visited, which was the all-girls prep, was doing some interesting work with departmentalization in math.

And it was one of the places where we started thinking about doing departmentalization in some subjects, only in elementary school, which was not a normal practice.

But I also want to say that I think they have a lot to learn from us as well. There's a lot of things that we do well.

So having them -- we've invited principals, who want to, to be part of our district principals conferences, if they choose to.

There are several principals who actually come to the public-school principals' meeting so they have someone else to talk to.

So I think there's a lot of common ground that we can learn from each other, and I look forward to seeing how else we might work together.

SENATOR PERKINS: So do you have a -- do you do any kind of a report when you make those type of analyses and those type of -- when you recognize those type of successes or even failures?

Do you have reports that represent that?

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: We haven't done --

SENATOR PERKINS: Because if you have -- nothing, you said -- I'm sorry.

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: I said, we haven't done it up until now. But --

SENATOR PERKINS: Well, why not?

If you have a thing that's working --

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Well, we get -- because we get academic results.

SENATOR PERKINS: You get bragging rights, to be able to report that.

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Yeah, okay.

URSULINA RAMIREZ: For the charters that we do authorize, because DOE is an authorizer for a handful of charters, we do have reports on their successes, and where they need areas of improvement.

SENATOR PERKINS: And the measures that -- and what -- and the practices and procedures that have resulted in those --

URSULINA RAMIREZ: And their successes.

SENATOR PERKINS: -- then using the regular traditional public school system, as you were supposed to do when they were born there to begin with?

Because, as you know, the whole purpose of

the charter movement --

URSULINA RAMIREZ: Yes, correct.

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Yes, was innovation.

SENATOR PERKINS: -- was as an experiment, not to proliferate, but to share moments of success, practices of success, that would then improve the public -- the traditional public school system.

In other parts of the country, that they did not -- they were not able to do that.

URSULINA RAMIREZ: And I think --

SENATOR PERKINS: You claim, in New York City, you've been able to do that.

So do you have a report that represents how this charter school helped us understand how best to teach kids in the regular traditional public schools?

Do you have bragging rights that you have compiled in terms of some kind of report?

Because if you do, that would be a good thing, not just for New York City, but for other parts of the country as well.

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Well, we just started, this year, the district-charter school partnerships -- which is, partially, to do exactly

as you say -- to ask charter schools and public schools to apply for these grants, where we can actually see how we each help each other.

I do think that the things that we learn the most from are things that are truly innovative.

Part of the reason why we started what we call the "PROS program," is to allow schools who want to try some of these innovative things, to not follow UFT rules, not follow DOE regulations.

One of the schools that we're looking at for innovation is a school that decide to have four days a week -- teachers working four days a week.

Students are in school five days, but the teachers work four days a week, up until 5:00.

They have after-school programs that fit into the program.

And to see if this indeed helps us with teacher retention, teacher recruitment.

We have another school that is looking at a very different way to serve special-needs kids, in terms of extra support, but in a different way.

So I think we're trying to be very innovative ourselves within our own framework.

We have -- we will have, at the end of this year, 200 schools that are PROS schools, that are

going to be public schools trying something different than they have in the past.

SENATOR PERKINS: So I just want to be clear:

So you have charter schools that have exemplified techniques, or other kinds of ways of success, that you -- that you have been able to bring toward -- to traditional public schools, and sort of replicate that success?

Do you have reports on that?

Because that's bragging rights.

And it would seem to me, that if charter schools are doing wonderful things that can be done in the traditional public schools, where the vast majority of the kids are, then that should be something that's reported, that we who are interested in these schools should know about, and there should be a document, what we've learned from charter schools, and how they've improved our traditional public schools, and why we should continue in that regard.

URSULINA RAMIREZ: And what I --

SENATOR PERKINS: Kind of an idea.

You understand what I'm trying to say?

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Yes.

URSULINA RAMIREZ: We hear what you're --

SENATOR PERKINS: But as long as they've been around, there's been no report that has said: Charter schools are doing wonderful things. A, B, C, or D is what we've learned, and look at how we've been able to put that into the traditional public school, where the vast majority of kids are.

URSULINA RAMIREZ: And the Mayor made an announcement on his Equity and Excellence Initiative, which was the district-charter school partnership which the Chancellor just discussed.

And it is getting -- it is being launched for this September of this upcoming year.

And what we can do, is develop a report to talk about the successes, both from the -- and the learnings that are happening within that program.

SENATOR PERKINS: But why haven't we done that up to now?

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Because it's individual strategies.

SENATOR PERKINS: The charter schools have been around here for how long?

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: I don't know.

Ten years?

URSULINA RAMIREZ: Some around ten years.

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: About ten years.

SENATOR PERKINS: Okay, it's been a decade of charters.

Where's the charter report on success, in terms of how it has helped our traditional public schools, where the vast majority of the kids go, and where the whole idea of the charter was towards that end?

That was the whole purpose of the charter: Not to expand the movement so that charter developments would get rich; but, rather, so that the children would get rich with education.

So where is that report that says the riches have been shared?

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Well, I will tell you that you will have it probably next year.

But I will tell you that, in cases where there are successes, it's a particular methodology --

SENATOR PERKINS: But if you've been compiling this information for ten years, why are we now waiting till next year to get a report?

What stage are we in?

I'm just saying --

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: No, no, I understand.

SENATOR PERKINS: -- because I'm bothered by it, because the children who, for the most part, in these schools, are children from neighborhoods that I represent, even in District 3, which is not quite Harlem, but it is the Upper West Side.

But be that as it may, and I've looked at this in other countries -- not in other countries -- in other cities and states, particularly in Albany where they all closed down, and other places of the country, they're all closed down.

How come the ones in New York City stand, but never -- as a success model, but they don't -- reports that brag about that, as it relates to our public schools in general?

URSULINA RAMIREZ: We will get back to you on the report.

SENATOR PERKINS: All right.

Thank you.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you, Senator.

We've been joined by Senator Krueger, but Senator Felder has a question.

SENATOR FELDER: Thank you.

Thank you very much.

My questions are in no particular order, so you'll have to forgive me.

I've been trying to listen.

You've mentioned listening a number of times, so I've been trying to listen throughout the hearing.

You mentioned that when you -- when the Mayor and you were up in Albany, you met with many people.

Did you meet with Senator Stewart-Cousins, the leader of the Democrat Minority?

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: I did on the prior trip to Albany, yes.

SENATOR FELDER: I'm talking with the Mayor.

When the -- when you -- and what about the Assembly Leader, Carl Heastie?

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: The Mayor met with Carl Heastie.

SENATOR FELDER: Okay. And what about Senator Flanagan, the leader of the Majority in the Senate?

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: I met with him on a prior trip to Albany.

SENATOR FELDER: Did the Mayor meet with him when he come up to Albany?

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: I have no idea.

SENATOR FELDER: Can you ask somebody?

I'm sure somebody knows the answer to that

question.

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Not on the last trip.

SENATOR FELDER: Yeah.

So I think -- I think -- I think -- I think that would have been a good thing.

I think it would have been a good thing to -- that the Mayor, since he's not coming to another hearing. And I -- so far, I haven't heard anyone explain why, and I think people are disappointed that, when he was up in Albany, I think we can agree, that we -- that it would have been the right thing.

You know, this -- the topic of mayoral control has become more political than -- than -- than real.

And the discussions about seven years, three years, one year, this is not, in my mind -- I speak for myself, so I apologize to my colleagues in advance -- this is not a lower --

SENATOR KRUEGER: We know you don't speak for us. It's okay.

SENATOR FELDER: Thank you.

Thank you.

SENATOR KRUEGER: Thank you.

SENATOR FELDER: You got me off track. Now I don't know what I wanted to say.

[Laughter.]

SENATOR FELDER: Anyway, this is not a Lower East Side bargain, where you walk into a store -- at least used to -- you walked into the store and you say, "How much is this suit?

The guy says, "200," because he wants 100.

Then the other guy says, "I'm giving you 50," because he wants to pay 75.

So, you know, people who say, no, I -- I mean, I've been looking at some of the -- the -- you know, the testimony that's been given to us. A lot of -- I've been trying to look through it.

I would just suggest -- I'm going to have to leave soon as well -- but it would be very helpful, if I had stayed longer, for people who come up to testify to just start out by saying whether they're in favor, or not in favor, or, they're in favor, but...

So -- because we kept on saying about that it's about the children.

So the years, I -- I -- in my mind, it's pretty clear that we're in favor -- "we," "Simcha Felder," I'm in favor of mayoral control.

And the only question is about improving. You know, highlighting the things that work well, and highlighting the things that can be improved.

So the -- the -- a lot of the discussions -- and I'm looking at you only because I'm about to ask you questions, but it's not addressed to you -- I think this is -- a lot of the discussions that have been taking place are political dreck.

And for those that don't know what that means, that's a Yiddish term for garbage, trash, or anything else you want.

So, in my mind, I think that it's important to focus on the education issues specifically, because one of the -- one of the people who was testifying had something called a "report card," and I think it's pretty good.

I don't necessarily agree with their assessment, but they go through items, such as, education, special transparency, accountability, special education, things like that.

And that's what I think -- that's the focus.

So having said that, and feeling a little better getting that off my mind, so what I wanted to know is, I'm curious, the mayoral-control issue, really, the groundwork for that was laid by

Mayor Giuliani.

I think that, without that, Mayor Bloomberg would never have been able to do it.

During that time -- I understand that you've been in education, an educator, for many, many years.

During that time, were you in favor of mayoral control of the system?

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: I think in terms of the stability of the system, I've always wanted that to be part of it.

I also --

SENATOR FELDER: Yeah, but that wasn't my question.

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: -- I think that, certainly, as a superintendent, I felt that it was important to not have a patronage system, where principals were often chosen for political reasons.

So that mayoral control did take that away.

SENATOR FELDER: All right. You and I know that you don't want to answer the question, so I won't ask it to you a third time.

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: No, I will say, yes, definitely, in the sense that there was too much patronage in the system, and people got jobs

they were not necessarily qualified for.

And with mayoral control, I think putting superintendents in charge of picking principals is a much better system in education.

SENATOR FELDER: Okay. I apologize.

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: No, that's okay.

SENATOR FELDER: Thank you for answering the question.

What -- so -- you know, when you go on interviews, they always ask you, What's your weakness?

Right?

So I'd like to ask you: What do you think are problems that have to be addressed in the education system as it is?

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Oh, my goodness.

We could have a whole other hearing on this.

I think making sure that --

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Don't encourage me.

[Laughter.]

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: I think the most important thing is that everyone has to see themselves invested, and need to support public education.

This is not parents who need to be invested.

This is everyone.

The CEOs of companies.

Public -- everyone has to see public education as an investment.

And I think, for too long, we've only tried to get parents and educators involved.

It's got to be everybody, and it's got to be everybody working together, because we're not going to have the workforce of tomorrow if not everyone is invested.

So I would say that's one of the things that is a real challenge, and it's one of the reasons, also, we have expanded the groups of people we speak to.

I actually meet with COs. I meet with the New York City Partnership.

Everyone needs to understand the importance of public education.

SENATOR FELDER: Okay.

I don't want to forget to thank you, and thank the Mayor, for the good -- all the good work, clearly.

And I just want to tell the Chair, I did get a response to my question.

My mother always said I was special.

So, I did get a response to my question.

But this question, you didn't answer me.

I'm asking you, I want to know, what you believe are the weaknesses in your educational system at this time that should be improved.

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Well, I certainly think our work with special-needs students and English-language learners needs, you know, more concentration.

It's not because we're not trying, but it's just a very heavy lift.

I think, also, you know, kids in temporary housing and homeless shelters; big, big issue.

And with all the support we're putting in it, it's almost like something that requires 24/7 kind of attention. So I think that's it.

I think one of the other major challenges is also recruitment of the best teachers, and making sure, particularly teachers to work with special-needs kids and English-language learners, we want to increase our dual-language programs, but we don't have enough teachers who speak two languages in academic ways.

So there's a lot of challenges. There's enough challenges to keep me busy for a very, very

long time.

But I think focusing on the successes, I mean, one of the things we've been doing a lot is partnering schools that are successful in something.

So, learning-partner showcase schools; so schools that have solved a problem, that can be partnered with another school who has the same problem.

But, challenges, there are more than enough to go around.

SENATOR FELDER: I would just say that, when somebody like me asks you what your weakness is, that may be a compliment, because it's clear to me that there have been many successes, without question.

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Thank you.

SENATOR FELDER: On another topic: Last time, when you were in Albany with the Mayor, I asked what the ratio of psychologists-to-student is in the system.

I'm wondering whether you have that information?

URSULINA RAMIREZ: Actually I do. One second.

SENATOR FELDER: Thank you.

So I'll go on to the next question.

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: And we've increased the number in this particular budget.

SENATOR FELDER: I'll go on to the next question while you find that.

I am concerned that, although the City has invested tremendous amounts of money in protecting our children, the issue of terrorism is on everyone's mind.

And at this point, in the city schools, we have security officers that do not carry guns. They are unarmed.

Now, I'm -- I -- I am very concerned that -- that, you know, a Brinks truck picking up $1 million from a bank has two guys, carrying guns, and that the schools do not have officers carrying guns.

I want to know what you think about that.

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: This would certainly not be one of the things that I would pursue.

We -- when we have emergencies, we call our NYPD that we work very closely.

But I don't think having school safety officers carrying guns is the answer to any of these problems.

SENATOR FELDER: What do you think is the answer?

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: I think better-trained school safety officers, which we already have.

Our crime is down 29 percent.

You know, anything can happen at any time and anyplace.

But I do believe that we have very good rules and regulations on how you enter a building.

They know who I am, and yet I have to show ID when I go into a building.

And I think that -- the things that we have in place right now are fine.

Having more guns in schools is not the answer to this issue.

SENATOR FELDER: Well, I wasn't suggesting that the kids should have guns.

I hope you know that.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: In terms of your other question, it's one to 133 students.

SENATOR FELDER: You have 1 psychologist for every 133 students?

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: That doesn't count guidance counselors and other -- and social workers.

Remember, there are many categories of student-support people.

SENATOR FELDER: And what was the number a year ago? Do you know?

URSULINA RAMIREZ: I will get you the number from last year.

SENATOR FELDER: If you don't mind, I'll continue with the questions.

I'm just curious, how many schools have you visited in my district?

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Your -- I don't know specifically by district, but by this time, I have visited over 200 schools. Probably more.

SENATOR FELDER: But I had to ask you a question that's self-centered entirely.

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Be my guest.

SENATOR FELDER: You know that.

So I want to know how many schools you --

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Is there a specific school in your district you want --

SENATOR FELDER: No. I just want to continue feeling special.

I want to know how many schools you visited in my district.

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: I can't give you

that number.

I mean, I have a school tracking record, that I actually write every school I visited to, so I'm happy to send that to you. I can do it from --

SENATOR FELDER: Yes.

But I don't want to know how many schools you visited.

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: No, no. I will let you know, specifically in your district --

SENATOR FELDER: I want to know how many of Simcha's schools you visited, please.

SENATOR KRUEGER: Can I make a friendly amendment?

SENATOR FELDER: Yes.

SENATOR KRUEGER: Thank you.

He's ceding time.

We all want to feel special.

So if you get him an answer, get us all answers.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Okay, I will.

SENATOR KRUEGER: Thank you.

SENATOR FELDER: Why did you some come so early?

SENATOR KRUEGER: I thought I came quite late.

I thought you would be done, but, no.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Move on.

SENATOR FELDER: You've been very helpful to me.

Another -- one other issue, is the discussion about schools for children that will not to go college, and who are extremely talented, but don't have any patience to sit.

I consider myself one of those people.

So years ago, they had schools that taught trades. And, you know, there's been so much discussion about Common Core.

At the end of the day, a certain amount of the population will never do well on any of those tests because God did not create these kids to sit anywhere. That they have their own talents, and will be brilliant plumbers, mechanics, painters, or whatever else.

So I'm just wondering if there's anything that you can do or speak towards, bringing back some of that, so that -- so that a kid that may not be a mathematician, but will be a great contractor and earn a good livelihood, doesn't have to feel like there's something wrong with them when they go to school.

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: I'm so glad you asked.

We have invested in 40 new, and strengthening the ones we have, what we call "CTE" programs.

CTE programs are multiple pathways.

That means, that you can go to college, you're still college-ready, but, if you choose to go directly into a trade, that's fine.

I mean, for example -- and, in fact, I think it was in your district, I went to something this Saturday, and I met with the head of the carpenters union. And one of the things that he told me, which I did not know, that the carpenters union also includes the divers union, because divers are carpenters underwater. And that jobs from the divers -- from divers start at $80,000 a year.

So we -- right away, we exchanged cards. And, I already have someone meeting with him, because we not only -- and this is why I talk about everyone has to be involved -- we have to get the unions more involved in working in our high schools and in our colleges, because having a union card -- the plumbers, the carpenters, union -- all these are jobs for the future, and I think it's really important.

Our CTE programs in pharma -- that's why I said I need your help.

We can create even more CTE programs if the state laws would change to allow the degrees or licensing for people.

Like, for example, if you have a pharmacy program, it's a classroom teacher, but it's a pharmacist.

If it's a health program, it's someone in the health.

And we cannot hire them long enough -- enough because the State has not processed these.

So this is something we really want to work on.

I definitely --

SENATOR FELDER: Yeah, I like the answer to that question, because I happen to have legislation -- proposed legislation on some of the -- what you discussed.

So, again, I want to just end my questions by thanking you, and thanking the Mayor, for the good work that's been done, and look forward for -- to improvements.

And thank you, Mr. Chair.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you, Senator.

At this point in time, all the members who have indicated they wish to question have done so, and we'll mercifully let you go, to get back to your -- the schools and running of the schools.

I just want to reiterate: I would have preferred -- no offense -- Mayor de Blasio being here. His testimony, his answering these kind of questions, in concert with you, would have been much more helpful to this Committee, and would have spoken volumes about the system and about mayoral control.

That was what we're here about:

What is the Mayor's input?

How does the Mayor handle this?

What would the Mayor be doing?

How has it made a difference to have mayoral control?

Your testimony, fantastic. I appreciate it.

But we needed to hear from him. We needed follow-up questions to be heard from him.

We have questions, which we've given you copies of, that need to be answered; and, hopefully, we'll get them.

You don't have to do it right now, but if you can get it to us, to my office, and I'll distribute

it to the members who have asked for them, make sure everybody gets a copy, what's proposed for them, so there's no loss in that.

But, again, I reiterate: It would have -- this would have been a better situation if the Mayor were here to defend his -- and I don't mean defend in a negative way -- but to defend his running of the city schools; that, I think is an imperative for us.

Thank you again.

CHANCELLOR CARMEN FARIÑA: Well, I thank you for the opportunity.

And I know I speak for the Mayor as well when I say, in this particular situation, we really are very united in terms of wanting stability, and to do what's best for the students of the city of New York.

So, thank you very much.

I look forward to many more conversations.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Moving right along, is Dennis Walcott here?

I know he was here earlier.

He left?

Mark Cannizzaro, executive vice president of CSA?

Mark.

MARK CANNIZZARO: Good morning.

Are you ready?

SENATOR MARCELLINO: We're ready.

MARK CANNIZZARO: Okay, great.

Good morning, Senator Marcellino, members of the Senate Education Committee.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Will the young lady who's leaning against the door jamb please stop, because you're turning lights on and off?

Thank you very much.

Is there a possibility of getting a piece of tape put over that switch?

There is tape put over the switch?

How about an electric prod?

[Laughter.]

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you.

I'm sorry.

MARK CANNIZZARO: That's okay.

My name is Mark Cannizzaro. I'm the executive vice president of the Council for School Supervisors and Administrators.

We are the union that represents school principals and assistant principals, as well as educational administrators, here in New York City.

We thank you for this opportunity.

We thank you for holding it in our backyard. It does, certainly, make it convenient for us.

I will take Senator Felder's advice and tell you that we are in support of continued mayoral control of the school system.

I will further take his advice and say that we are also in support of some refinements to the current system.

We would like to see mayoral control extended, but not made permanent, at least not yet, if it is considered at some point.

We are looking for some refinements to the composition of the -- what's currently called the PEP (the Panel of Educational Policy), per the board's bylaws.

And we also are looking for some expansion of the authority of the current community education councils.

Much of what I heard, while I was waiting, are some of the things that we support.

We would like to see composition of the panel changed slightly, to a panel that has seven appointees by the Mayor, rather than eight; with the retention of the requirements that are currently

part of the panel's policy, to have at least two parents selected who have had children attend public schools and/or a student who was a public-school student within the last two years, to be part of the Mayor's selections.

We would like to see continued appointees, one by each borough president; the five borough presidents each be able to select.

And we would like the thirteenth selection to be a selection of the City Council. We feel that this change would give the City Council a voice at all PEP meetings, and be able to directly influence policy before anything got to them for any type of debate.

We support the continued authority of the PEP with mayor -- with the current statute, as far as relating to proposed regulations, capital plan, operating funds, allocations, and revenues --

(Audio/visual transmission stops.)

(Audio/visual resumes, in progress.)

MARK CANNIZZARO: -- closing and/or consolidation of schools in their districts.

Again, their vote, either for or against, could be reversed by a majority vote of the central board.

We just feel that will increase their authority, and create a stronger connection to parents in the community, that we think is -- has improved, but is still a little bit lacking.

For that reason, CSA would certainly like to see the continuation of mayoral control.

We do strongly advocate for the changes that we've asked for.

And, finally, we feel, probably, the number-one reason that we're advocating for this is, when we have a question, a problem, a suggestion, we're able to go to one place and have that discussion.

Thank you.

SENATOR ADDABBO: Mr. Cannizzaro --

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Just before, make note of the fact that we did invite the UFT to attend both hearings. They have declined to attend.

SENATOR ADDABBO: Mr. Cannizzaro, thank you very much for your time here today, and I really appreciate your suggestions, because like I mentioned to the Chancellor, when something like mayoral controls expires, we have the opportunity to certainly make improvements to the system.

So I thank you for your suggestions.

We have seen many administrative changes over the years with mayoral control, one of them being the role of the principal.

And all due respect to superintendents, superintendents have a lot of schools under their authority and a lot of schools to be interested in.

But the principal has one school: their own.

Can you see a change in the authority or the role the principal changes as we go through possibly improving mayoral control?

MARK CANNIZZARO: Well, I don't think that whether or not we have mayoral control speaks to the authority of the principal.

We have, obviously, and always, been strong supporters on the principal being the person that makes the decisions for his or her building.

You know, there's been a lot of talk about autonomy, and the autonomy of a principal.

CSA believes that, when someone is selected as a principal, that means they've earned autonomy, and should be able to operate their buildings as such.

Now, of course, just like we're asking for in mayoral control, checks and balances on everyone is certainly important and necessary.

But I think that that is more a -- that question that you've asked does not relate to mayoral control as much as it relates to philosophies and things of the times.

So, you know, as far as mayoral control is concerned, we still think we -- there's certainly more autonomy and more ability to run a building than there was in the previous system, for those of us who have been around long enough.

SENATOR ADDABBO: I only mention because previous changes to mayoral control has had changes within the roles, not only the parents, but also teachers and administrators.

So, that's why I had mentioned it.

But, again, I thank you for your input and your insight, and for your time here today.

MARK CANNIZZARO: Thank you.

SENATOR KRUEGER: Thank you.

Thank you very much.

MARK CANNIZZARO: Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR KRUEGER: I read your testimony before you got here, and I appreciated your recommendations for how we could make changes that would, I think, broaden the participation of others concerned about education.

So I am hoping that, in discussions of mayoral control, we might, some day, get to substance, and not just the politics, as my colleague Senator Feldman (sic) pointed out.

But I'm curious: You don't think that the Department of Education should be brought under the same standards as other city agencies for procurement?

Because that's been one of my concerns: that procurement ought to go through the same process as other city agencies, with normal auditing and review process.

The principals don't -- aren't concerned with that currently.

MARK CANNIZZARO: Well, I have to plead ignorance to knowing the exact, you know, procedures that the other agencies go through.

But we don't -- we feel that by making any tweaks that we've recommended, we think we can keep those checks and balances in place.

I do happen to agree a little bit -- a bit with the Chancellor, what she said earlier, is this particular PEP has been quite diligent when it comes to contracts and procurement, probably more so than we've seen in the past.

So, I don't -- wouldn't say that's been a concern, no.

SENATOR KRUEGER: And then, I think it was in a previous administration, there was, once upon a time, a proposal that principals would be provided a -- almost an administrative principal, to work side-by-side with them, so that you as principals could focus on the education, the students, the teachers, the classroom. And then recognizing the enormous administrative responsibilities you have over the schools, provide you someone who could take on those challenges.

I always thought that sounded like a great model.

I am so admiring of the work that principals do.

And I think all of us who work in our communities know, when you have a good principal, you have a school that functions; and when you don't, you have problems.

So I'm wondering where you all are on that once-upon-a-time proposal?

MARK CANNIZZARO: Anything this body can do to help that along the way, we would certainly appreciate.

SENATOR KRUEGER: And that model doesn't exist now anywhere?

MARK CANNIZZARO: No. It -- some of the high schools have what we call "assistant principals in charge of organization," and they do a lot of the work that you're referring to; but, yet, the administrative burdens on a principal are so huge.

We just sent a survey out, and the number-one comment about what could help folks improve their jobs, would be taking away some of the enormous workload, as far as paperwork and organization, administrative types of things.

So, as far as a principal and instructional leaders in the building, other assistant principals being able to get in the classrooms and really help move instruction, something like that would be certainly welcomed with open arms.

SENATOR KRUEGER: Thank you.

MARK CANNIZZARO: You're welcome.

SENATOR KRUEGER: Thank you.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Bill, do you have a question?

SENATOR PERKINS: You know, most folks are really preoccupied with salary and benefits, and so forth.

And as principals, you -- I guess you run the whole operation in the system.

Do you -- so how do you all -- what is your take on these charters?

I know it's about salaries and benefits, and such and so forth, but what's the story with -- how do -- how are charters doing with you guys?

MARK CANNIZZARO: So we -- first of all, CSA represents a small group of, I think, about nine charter schools.

So --

SENATOR PERKINS: How are they measuring up?

MARK CANNIZZARO: Oh, they're doing quite well.

The charters that we represent are independent charter schools, so they're all independent in what we call "conversion charters."

So, at one point --

SENATOR PERKINS: Could you explain what that means?

MARK CANNIZZARO: Sure.

So, they are single -- single operations. Okay?

And they were converted from one -- at one time, they were New York City public schools.

Okay, so now they've converted into charter schools.

Several years back, before I be -- before I came to CSA, is when they converted, but we've been working with them quite closely.

We actually think that the conversation has to be a little bit more about what you were alluding to earlier, I think, Senator.

We want to be able to put some of the rhetoric aside that we hear all the time.

These -- the children that go to our schools are our kids, and they are learning.

Some students, in both places, learning better than other students, and being given better opportunities.

And we want to be able to have an open and honest discussion, without the politics and the rhetoric and all of these things that have seemed to -- seem to dominate the press lately.

If there is something that can help my school, when I was a school principal, I don't care where I'm learning it from; I'm happy to learn it.

And I think that most people feel that way.

But we've gotten to this argument now, where one has to be better than the other, or not.

And that is what is dominating right now: It's, what's better?

And I don't think one system is necessarily better; or one child, because they go to a particular brand of school, is getting a better education than another.

I think we can all learn from each other, and we should all learn from each other.

SENATOR PERKINS: I guess I would agree with that, except that, at some point, you have to measure what folks are doing, to determine whether or not it's actually better.

And then the fact, if it is, take that lesson and replicate it, so that those who are not doing so better can do better.

MARK CANNIZZARO: That's 100 percent correct.

SENATOR PERKINS: That's the genius of that opportunity.

And, so, the whole idea of the charter school was that they would be better, and that they would teach us how to teach our children to do better.

So there would be lessons learned that could be replicated and provided to the other students that might not have those opportunities.

And so that's my concern, is what are we

learning from this model that is supposed to be there to teach us how to do better?

MARK CANNIZZARO: We're going to have a hard time -- we're going to have hard -- I agree with what you just said, as far as, you know, being able to learn and being able to measure.

But we're going to have the hard time measuring anything, accurately and honestly, when the discussion is "us verse you," because everyone is trying to protect their piece of the pie when that happens, and that's not a good thing.

And that's what's happening right now, it's that discussion.

So no one is going to let their guard down and say, Hey, you know what? Yeah.

You know -- and that's the issue that we have right now.

SENATOR PERKINS: So with all due respect, I agree with you, but I don't think that that's what I'm saying.

I'm just saying that, the whole idea of the charter movement was that it would be not a second set of per se; but, rather, an opportunity for us -- for the educators to get some models of success that can be replicated; not necessarily a

one-size-fits-all, but, you know -- but, you know, what can work.

And instead of learning from those, quote, labs of experimental opportunity, they've duplicated themselves, without letting us know what the benefit was that could be replicated.

And, so, folks are making large salaries, and contracts, and -- but when you look at the success of the students, they're not measuring up.

And I don't want to dismiss any of those that are, but, generally speaking, they're not competitive in the way that they were expected to be.

MARK CANNIZZARO: Well, I don't think we're disagreeing as much as you think we're disagreeing.

I think a lot of what we're saying is the same, and I agree.

Look, you're -- when you have any type of system, any type of new experimental type of things, different -- different procedures, different ways to educate children, not every one of those ways is going to measure up. Right?

And some of our schools in New York City are doing a wonderful job at a lot of things, and that needs to be replicated also.

SENATOR PERKINS: Sure, sure.

MARK CANNIZZARO: Right?

And that's one of the things that I think we are trying to do with some of the programs we have, both, interacting with charter schools, and that's just in the beginning, as well as interacting with each other, and to replicate some best practices, because best practices can be replicated in lots of different places and lots of different areas.

But I do agree with you, that what the intention is, and was, needs to be brought back into focus, so that we can do exactly what we're supposed to do.

And all children can benefit from something that is beneficial in any building, whether it's a traditional district school or a charter school or any other type of building where children are learning.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: The line of questioning is interesting, but, can we bring this back to mayoral control?

SENATOR PERKINS: Well, the essence of this stems from mayoral control, because, without it, you wouldn't have it.

It was the dictatorial behavior of the

Bloomberg Administration that brought this into the system.

That's why I'm bringing it up.

And there's never really been the kind of review of it, to measure whether or not --

SENATOR MARCELLINO: That we could do -- we could do in another hearing, and I don't mind doing it, because I think --

SENATOR PERKINS: -- but I'm saying, mayoral control is --

SENATOR MARCELLINO: -- I think your point is well-taken --

SENATOR PERKINS: -- what's measuring -- is what -- is why we're at this point.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: How is this --

SENATOR PERKINS: And so this is one of the flowerings of mayoral control, which is the charters.

But this is the Bloomberg's legacy that I'm talking about.

MARK CANNIZZARO: So if --

SENATOR PERKINS: This is what he was bragging about.

MARK CANNIZZARO: -- if -- if you --

SENATOR PERKINS: So I just want to make sure

that, if it works, then let's replicate it.

And if it doesn't work, then, that's it.

MARK CANNIZZARO: -- if the concern is about one person having too much authority and control, then I think some of the suggestions that we've placed in here does help to --

SENATOR PERKINS: Let me -- let me -- in response to that, let me just be -- it's not about the control. It's about whether or not the model works.

Not control.

MARK CANNIZZARO: Right.

SENATOR PERKINS: Okay?

If this model works, it has lessons, it has practices, it has procedures, whatever -- however you want to describe it, that can be replicated. Right?

Let's -- where is that at?

MARK CANNIZZARO: That's what I -- I just told you, we need to do better at replicating everywhere. Not just there, but everywhere.

SENATOR PERKINS: No, but that was specifically what that was for.

MARK CANNIZZARO: Okay.

SENATOR PERKINS: That was what the folks

thought was gonna happen, and that way, it would be replicated throughout the system.

MARK CANNIZZARO: Right. Like I said, I think we're agreeing more --

SENATOR PERKINS: Where is the report that says: A, B, C, we learned. X, Y, Z.

MARK CANNIZZARO: You asked that question earlier, and, you know, that report is not going to come from the CSA.

But I believe that report should be forthcoming, hopefully, from another agency.

SENATOR PERKINS: Thank you.

MARK CANNIZZARO: You're welcome.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: How many times do you meet with the mayor, relative -- or any other union, colleagues, relative to mayoral control, relative to the city schools?

MARK CANNIZZARO: So Earnest Logan, our president, meets with the Mayor from time to time.

To be honest with you, I couldn't give you a specific number, but I wouldn't say that it's less than four or five times in the last year.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Specifically dealing with non-contract mayoral control?

MARK CANNIZZARO: Dealing with a host of

issues, and I'm sure that that is included, yes.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: All right.

Thank you.

MARK CANNIZZARO: Thank you very much.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Any other questions?

Thank you for your testimony. We appreciate your coming.

MARK CANNIZZARO: And thank you for your time.

SENATOR KRUEGER: Thank you very much.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: The next group would be, Teresa Arboleda, Ellen McHugh, and Mona Davids.

And again I would ask, the people testifying, that we not read the testimony.

We have it. It will be made part of the record.

But we would appreciate it if you could summarize it, so we can get to the questions, and I think that would be the most important part of it.

Thank you.

Start whenever you wish.

TERESA ARBOLEDA: Good afternoon.

My name is Teresa Arboleda, and I was a former school-board member, a former CEC member, and now I'm the chair of the Citywide Council on

English-Language Learners.

As Carmen Fariña, I'm also a former English-language learner, although I was born and raised here. And my parents were also immigrants from Spain.

I'm also the president of the -- the chair of the legislative committee of the Education Council Consortium. It's a group that was formed, I believe, in early 2013, and it's comprised of members of the CECs and citywide councils, and we meet regularly with the Chancellor, and we address issues that affect the schools and communities in all the boroughs.

The ECC, we were made aware about mayoral control expiring, and we decided to form a committee and explore, and discuss, the ramifications and pros and cons about mayoral control.

And after a lot of discussion, we developed a resolution, and -- on May 23, 2015, before the last expiration.

And the basic idea is that, while we're not supportive of extending mayoral control, we do offer amendments in case it is renewed.

And the ideal situation would have been to hold extensive hearings with parents and schools,

and get different ideas, but, I don't think that is happening.

The issue of mayoral control cannot be about a particular mayor. It should be about the students.

And any system of governance must have checks and balances.

And we cannot have a new school system every time there's a new mayor.

It's not about the mayor.

It's important for the parents to know where to go when they have problems.

And the best way to do that is to have local districts and local staff, local superintendents, within the geographical area of where people live and the schools.

When mayoral control was first implemented, it was -- the system was turned upside down.

Parents didn't know what was happening. They didn't know what was going on. It was barely explained.

That's why we are so concerned about the governance of mayoral control, the system.

It's not about the mayor.

We cannot have a corporate structure.

The next mayor may want to have a corporate structure like the previous mayor.

We believe that students are not just data. They are people, and they're not to be passed around like chess pieces.

I mean, the enrollment procedures that were in effect was, they were just numbers.

Oh, this kid fits here. This kid fits here.

No paying attention as to what that child's needs were.

We can't fall into the trap of one-size-fits-all.

We believe the present administration has made positive changes, and these changes should be firmly established by the law so that we can maintain stability and not be thrown into turmoil again.

Some of these changes that we like, these are not the only ones, but these are very important ones:

The appointment of a chancellor who was an educator.

The increased parental access to parents in the local geographic district.

Sensitivity to the needs of English-language

learners.

I can speak to that as president of the council.

They have expanded interpretation and translation services. There are more English classes for parents who don't speak English.

And, there's a less-contentious process for co-locations.

I'm a parent. I was on the CEC in District 3 when all the co-locations so-called "hearings" were conducted, and I can tell you it was not fun.

The resolution that you have before you, it reflects the wide opinions of the ECC members, but these are the most important points that we want to make.

And we hope the Legislature considers these amendments to the law.

The law should provide for the appointment of the PEP members to fixed terms. This will allow the PEP members to vote independently and not be afraid that they will be removed for a vote.

People who have been in the system for a while remember the "Monday Night Massacre."

I think you all know about it.

A vote was scheduled, and there were

X numbers on the panel. And then, when we went to the meeting, they were gone, and they were replaced.

We cannot have a mayor with absolute power. They're not a dictator.

Also, the public advocate has a report which agrees with this recommendation.

She also recommends that parents representing English-language learners, special ed, and a public-advocate appointee also be added to the PEP as members.

The method of electing parents to the CEC is not democratic.

You only have three officers of the PTA, or PA, voting for members.

Some people get on with just one vote.

Not that they beat other people by one vote.

By just one vote.

They just get one vote, and they get on, and that's very undemocratic.

So I think we should have all the parents of the geographical district under the superintendent be able to vote, just the public-school parents.

Also, the role of the superintendent, it must be clearly defined that they are the educational leader of that district -- of that geographical

district.

You cannot have network leaders who are in Manhattan, traveling to Queens, Staten Island, The Bronx, whatever.

So that is very important because, then, now the parents know that if they have a problem, it's in their local district.

Half the time, the parents didn't know who the network leader was.

Also, the law should be amended.

I know, right now, they say the chancellor must be an educator and needs a waiver.

We don't think there should be a waiver.

The chancellor must be an educator.

They know -- only an educator knows what to do with the schools.

And, also, the public-advocate report also indicates that they favor this.

Also, the two-year terms that now are in the law, we believe strongly that they should be changed to three years, because a lot of parents don't know what's going on. They don't realize, this is what I can do, this is what I can't do.

And by the time they know what to do, there -- the -- there's another election.

So I remember, when I was on the school board, it was a three-year term.

So I just think that would be more feasible.

Also, I -- I, as an English-language-learner advocate, when the councils -- when the law was changed the last time for the councils to allow for a seat on each local district, and when the Citywide Council on English-Language Learners was formed, it was very difficult to get parents, because, according to the law, you needed to be an ELL parent.

And most of them are not aware. You know, if they're immigrants, or they don't speak English, they're not aware of what they can do to participate to engage.

So a couple years ago, we proposed a change in the law.

And, Denny O'Donnell, and it was co-sponsored by Senator Lanza, we changed the law, that parents be allowed to serve after they've been out two years, you know, after they've received services.

It's much better, but, it's still not that great.

We believe that a parent who has been an ELL

at any time.

In other words, if the parent is in the eighth grade now, the kid is in the eighth grade, and they want to go, or, the sixth grade, and they were ELLs in the third grade, and now they're not.

We think that parents -- I mean, I -- I'm a grandma, and I'm still interested in that issue.

So I don't think they will lose at -- you know, the desire to advocate for those parents because they're out of the system, the ELL services.

And, there's also -- there are also issues on special ed that my colleague Ellen McHugh will address, and there two are different areas that she will address.

And I will read this:

Mayoral control cannot be made permanent, and must be reviewed periodically. We cannot have the budget dance when mayoral control is included as a part of the budget.

The governance policy, where the mayor controls the New York City public schools, must be thoroughly debated on its own.

The over one million students in New York City public schools cannot be held hostage to whatever political winds are blowing at the time.

As an entity with knowledge and experience with New York City public schools, the ECC is committed to working with the New York State Legislature to achieve the most equitable and fair governance system that will benefit the students in our public schools.

And we can be contacted; we would love to work with you.

ELLEN McHUGH: Flexibility is the hallmark of parent cooperation.

My name is Ellen McHugh.

I currently serve as one of the public-advocate appointees to the Citywide Council on Special Ed.

A good deal of what Theresa has said is always also what I would have said, although, and I thank you for the invitation.

I'm really surprised I'm here, unless it's to echo what Teresa is saying, which is a compliment, and I thank you for inviting us.

One of the problems with mayoral control, as I see it now, is the issue of whimsy.

On the whim of a mayor in the past, actions by the Citywide Council on Special Education were ignored.

On the whim of a mayor now, actions by the Citywide Council on Special Education were accepted.

One of the examples that we use in the testimony is SESIS (the special-education student information system), which is managed across the city, about $356 million in lost funding, because a system that was supposed to be developed to provide adequate information to staff and updates to parents about how their children with IEPs were progressing is cumbersome at best.

It takes a great deal of time to input, and created a situation in some schools, where, if you plugged in the toaster, you couldn't get on SESIS.

If you unplugged the toaster and plugged in the coffee machine, SESIS would blow up the coffee machine.

So there wasn't a lot of infrastructure to support SESIS.

Past administration refused to admit it.

Current administration asked to work with us to say, What can we do?

It's a benefit to us as parents to have that information.

In this, it was whimsy.

There wasn't any directive in the law that

they had -- that the mayor had to pay any attention to us.

There was only the whim of one mayor to agree, and another mayor to say, no, I'm not going to pay attention to it.

I've got to read this, because this recent report from the Center for American Progress finds:

That mayoral-controlled school districts have improved districtwide performance relative to average school-district performance statewide.

Mayoral governments is most effective when the mayor is active on the issue of education.

Mayors must be ready to engage stakeholders, leverage resources, and facilitate a positive policy environment to overcome barriers to school improvement.

A city must adapt mayoral control to their unique local context, variation in local cultures, and politics must be considered.

The idea of considering politics is something, I think, New York City and State engages in with great glee.

Mayoral control may require reinvention, which I think is where we are right now, and in order to continue to show gains over time, mayors

may need to revamp their strategies and practices as necessary.

We are encouraging, and hope, that we can spend time in a civil public discourse that includes parents, CEC members, education experts and advocates, principals and teachers, students, and other stakeholders in the discussion.

We must be deliberate in our conversations and respectful of opinions.

This will take time. Maybe two years, maybe more.

I do believe that the constructive and civil public discourse can develop a system of school governance that is reflective of the needs of the students of New York City.

One of the subsets of the resolution is an expansion of the Citywide Council on Special Education.

This is CCSE special-education wonk stuff.

If I get boring, stop me.

Prior to this, the CCSE was made up of only parents whose children were being served by a specific district, District 75, which is a construct that only exists here in New York City.

It doesn't exist across the state.

It doesn't exist in any other state that I know of, and I've asked.

I would like to see the current CCSE expanded so that the District 75 parents would have, and the CCSE parents would have, one council to attend instead of having two.

I think having -- this is me, I think having two councils can be -- can dilute the power or the impact of either council.

If we elect people across the boroughs to represent those special-education programs that are district-based, and those district programs that are District 75-based, we can create the commonality, and we can create a model, hopefully, of cooperation.

One of the problems that exists in this current school system is the division of, I don't know, administration, I guess is the best way to describe it, between District 75 principals and general-ed principals; between District 75 staff and general-ed staff.

We have schools that are co-located that have different bells, different doors, different PD, different parent-teacher dates.

It's just different.

And I think, in the long run -- well, I know, in the long run, that research has shown that the integration of students with special needs into classrooms or buildings has created a positive effect for both the child with the general-education need and the child with the IEP.

And after all, you can't develop leaders if leaders have never seen or been with people who are not like them, because they are going to be representing individuals who are disabled as those individual students age-up.

My son is -- for background, my son is deaf. He's 37, despite my youthful appearance, and he's married, thank God, to a girl from Colombia.

[Laughter.]

ELLEN McHUGH: They're both fully employed.

It is also something that is a result of their public-school education because, in the world of disability, less than 30 percent of the individuals who are disabled are employed, and of that number, only 33 percent are considered to be employed up to their ability.

So most of them are underemployed, even though they've gone through college, high school, career- and tech-ed training, whatever.

I hope that this has explained some of the reasons for the testimony we've offered.

And if you have questions, we would love to engage.

I like to talk.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Okay.

MONA DAVIDS: That's right, because I believe in order.

Good afternoon, Senator Marcellino, and members of the Senate Education Committee.

My name is Mona Davids.

I am a public-school parent, and I am also the founder and president of the New York City Parents Union. We were founded in 2011.

For those that are watching, that may not know of our organization, we are proud to say we are unbought and unbossed, and we're a grassroots organization of parent volunteers who assist other parents in navigating the school system, and ensuring that their children receive equal access to a high-quality education.

It's funny, being back in this room, Senator Marcellino.

A few years ago, actually, in, I think it was 2010 --

Was it 2010, Senator Perkins, for the charter-school hearings?

Yes.

-- in 2010, I attended a hearing.

I was then the founder and the president of the New York Charter Parents Association.

And many of the charter-school reforms, including the request for that hearing, was made by me to Senator Perkins. And that was a brutal fight, but it was about ensuring that --

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Well, Senator Perkins isn't that bad.

MONA DAVIDS: No, no, no.

It was a brutal --

SENATOR PERKINS: I lost the fight.

MONA DAVIDS: -- it was -- I don't think we lost the fight.

We were successful in getting quite a number of reforms, which the charter lobby has embraced.

And one of the things that also helped the district schools -- just for -- just to talk about that for one second -- is that we were able to make sure that district schools received matching funds when charters renovate and they co-located in a public-school building.

We were also able to put into the legislation that they serve a fair share.

So, you know, it -- it -- I believe it was successful.

No system is perfect.

The district school system is certainly not perfect, and neither is a very young system like the charter system.

In addition to that, the New York City Parents Union has been involved in quite a bit of legislation -- I'm sorry, quite a bit of litigation.

Some of the litigation that we are involved with currently is what many call the "teacher tenure" lawsuit. That's called Davids verse New York -- I am Davids -- filed in Richmond County.

I am here with two other plaintiffs in the "Davids verse New York" lawsuit, and our members, Sam Pirozzolo and Jacqueline Colson over there.

In addition to that lawsuit, other lawsuits that we've been involved with was a few years ago, when New York City, Michael Mulgrew -- Mike and Mike -- couldn't come together on the teacher-evaluation plan, and Cuomo decided to punish our children with the $250 million penalty.

I, Jacqueline, Sam, and other parents, with

the support of Mike Rubel (ph.), we successfully filed and got that injunction, stopping Cuomo from punishing our children because the adults couldn't get along.

That being said, we've been involved in other lawsuits, where there is inBloom (ph.) co-locations.

We -- if you look up, when it comes to school-litigation lawsuits, you'll either see my name or the New York City parent's name, and our parent-members names.

So I'm going to talk about our recommendations.

We support the concept of mayoral control.

Unfortunately, mayoral control under Mayor de Blasio is not working.

And we are recommending from you, if you do renew it, you only renew it for one year, and that steps be taken to provide some kind of checks and balances.

You've heard what the other parent-advocates have said.

The way it's structured now, it's a dictatorship, and a dictatorship leads to abuse, and that is what's going on in our school system.

And I will elaborate further when I speak

about the problems.

We strongly believe in accountability when it comes to our school system.

Unfortunately, mayoral control, at this juncture, is not about accountability. It's about whatever Mayor de Blasio, Chancellor Fariña, and the United Federation of Teachers, which I call "de Blasio, Inc.," wants.

With the political support of the United Federation of Teachers, Chancellor Fariña, and Michael Mulgrew, in our opinion, have reversed some positive gains, especially contractual gains, that we had under Mayor Bloomberg.

Now, people in this room will know I am not a Mayor Bloomberg fan, nor was I a Klein or Walcott fan. But one thing we knew was that, despite all of our disagreements, Bloomberg II was unbought and unbossed.

And Bloomberg, no matter what, was going to do what was in the best interests of our children.

How we got there was another story.

That being said, you have my testimony.

That's not what's happening now.

This is what we recommend to deal with "de Blasio, Inc." to, hopefully, continue to have a

strong mayoral-control system that respects parents, that ensures that every child receives equal access to a high-quality education, and also complies with the law.

The six things I'm going to speak about, very briefly, is:

Number one: The credit-recovery scheme and the free diplomas.

You showed up.

You showed up.

Everybody showed up.

If this was a New York City high school, we'd all get free diplomas because of the credit-recovery scheme. Everybody gets a diploma.

The "New York Post" has highlighted so many stories, reported by teachers -- not by parents; not, at first, by students -- by teachers, who are reporting that: We are feeling pressure. We are forced to do a cover-up. Even though these kids don't attend school, do no schoolwork, do no homework, do not sit for exams, we have to pass them.

That is a problem, because that is all part of "de Blasio, Inc.'s" agenda in being the "progressive messiah," as we call him, and to ensure

that the public thinks he's doing a great job in our schools, which, as you'll hear from other parent-advocates, that's not the case.

The second thing, what we call the "union job-protection scheme," also known as "renewal schools."

The renewal schools are a failure.

In the renewal schools we have credit recovery. We continue to have students who are pushed out, graduating, going to city university of New York or any other college, and forced to take remedial classes.

I don't exactly have the numbers, but probably somebody like Leonie or someone here would know exactly how much our per-pupil funding is for New York City public students, general-education students.

What is it, about $16,000 a year?

Why is it that our children are in the school system, the school district, the state, where the most, the highest amount, is spent on education, and our children are forced to go into debt so that they can take these remedial courses after getting their free diplomas?

The next thing is school safety.

There has been a surge, an explosion, of weapons; weapons, including loaded guns, in our schools, machetes in our schools, and other weapons.

And instead of addressing that problem, "de Blasio, Inc." -- UFT, Fariña, and Mayor de Blasio, because they're all one in the same -- "de Blasio, Inc." covers it up.

Not only do they put the safety of our children in jeopardy, they have the audacity to lie to parents and say, Oh, no, our schools are safe.

Well, the last time I checked, there are no guns being found in city hall; there are no guns being found at One Police Plaza, except for the guns the police officers are required to wear; and there certainly are no guns found at the Department of Education.

But all three of those places -- One Police Plaza, city hall, and Tweed -- all have metal detectors.

So, if you have metal detectors to protect yourself, and there aren't guns and loaded weapons and machetes being found every day, why can't we have that for our children in the public school system?

Because Mayor de Blasio, "de Blasio, Inc.,"

doesn't want the public to know about the surge in weapons.

The other issue is, Mayor de Blasio has also decided, unilaterally, without engaging parents, to change the school suspension policy and the discipline policy.

So, pretty much, what that means, we call that the "Kumbaya approach."

Oh, okay, you picked up a chair and you hit a student with the chair?

That's okay. Just don't do it next time.

Oh, you punched a student?

Oh, you spat on a teacher?

Oh, that's okay. Don't do it next time.

We'll send you home with a note to your mom, just letting them know what you did, but don't do it next time.

And because of this ridiculous suspension policy that's in place, it's resulted in a lot of assaults of students and an increased amount of bullying in the schools.

And when parents go to the DOE, when they call 311, when they call the superintendents, when they speak to the principal, they're given the runaround, because the principals can no longer

suspend students under the "Kumbaya policy." They have to get permission of the superintendents.

The superintendents cannot suspend the students either because she has to get permission of Fariña.

Fariña and "de Blasio, Inc." are not suspending students because they want to continue to mislead the public that the schools are safe, so that they can cover up that -- this -- these new policies of theirs that they put forth, without parents' consultation or engagement, is working.

Parents' intimidation and retaliation, this is what happens when you have a dictatorship; when you have an abusive dictatorship.

I think, probably, Leonie is -- may talk about this as well, and other people have spoken about the PEP (the Panel for Educational Policy.)

We call it the "rubber stamp."

We called it the "rubber stamp" when Bloomberg was there, and we're calling it an even bigger rubber stamp now.

One of the members, The Bronx PEP member brought up the fact that the DOE is not complying with state education law in disclosing all of the information about the contracts; posting the

contracts online, as they're required to do, so that the public can see and folks can do their investigation.

And then when PEP members, such as Mr. Powell, started asking, "Well, okay, I see something on the agenda about ABC contract. Nobody sent me ABC contract. I'm on the contract committee. What's going on?" Guess what?

Instead of answering the man's questions, who is there, supposed to represent the parents and community and the public, and to ensure that there's no financial mismanagement or chicanery or bad deals, parents like him, and many other parents throughout the school system on every level, are isolated.

They're then intimidated by DOE, by their principals, by their superintendents.

And it's gotten to the point where it's a regular occurrence, where if you speak out or if you ask any question, all of a sudden, you'll have a knock on your door that night or the next night and it will be ACS, because that's what they're doing to intimidate the parents.

And you need to think about that, because this really impacts parents.

It -- it's unconscionable to do that to any parent who is simply seeking accountability, or asking questions about the education their children are receiving, or other problems in the school.

The other intimidation tactic that they use, "de Blasio, Inc." -- de Blasio, UFT, and Fariña -- is that they are now calling the police on parents.

So if a parent, who they think is a problem parent because the parent asked questions; or in the case of the Brooklyn father, the parent wanted to know why that teacher kept on letting his son soil himself and sit for the whole day in his own excrement, for that parent to ask that teacher a question, they were rewarded with being arrested in front of their child, in front of the school, because that's what they do.

Not just him, he's not the only one. We have other parents.

It's one of their number-one tactics.

So once that arrest has happened at the school, the parents can no longer enter the school building. The parent cannot be involved in their child's education.

It's not one case, it's not two cases, it's not three, it's not four.

This is a serious problem.

And then when you dig deeper, these parents, all of them, have questioned either the governance of the school system or the running of the school or brought up situations and demanded answers about why the kids in their schools are failing.

So we have a problem here, and parents have no recourse, we have nobody to turn to, because, once a year, or every few years, when mayoral control may be renewed, you have this hearing, but what happens in the meantime?

When a parent is arrested at the school, who's going to take the child home? Who's going to take care of the child?

But this is what's happening in our schools.

And this is a real problem.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Before you go on, the number about State aid per pupil, the best we could come up with is, the State puts in about $9100 per pupil.

The City of New York has its own number and a contribution to that. They add to that.

But it varies, from district to district, and school to school.

So we do not have a solid number that we can

give you at this point in time, relative to the City contribution, and what the total amount combined is (indiscernible).

It's going to be different from place to place.

We probably could work that out over time, but we don't have a lot of time right now.

MONA DAVIDS: Thank you, sir.

The other problem with mayoral control, we have Mayor de Blasio.

Before we had Public Advocate de Blasio.

Public Advocate de Blasio believed in transparency.

Public Advocate de Blasio demanded of the Bloomberg Administration that they answer FOILs in a timely fashion.

Public Advocate de Blasio made so many pronouncements about how he was going to be transparent.

But there's no transparency within the Department of Education.

Right now, I know I do, I know probably quite a number of reporters here, and probably a number of parent-advocates on both sides, are waiting on FOILs.

Our freedom-of-information requests are hardly ever answered.

I'm waiting on FOILs that are over a year old.

I'm sure other people are waiting on FOILs that are just, you know, as old.

And what happens is, we continue getting these, oh, you know, timely letters saying that, we need more time, we need more time, we need more time, because they know we parents and we parent-advocates don't have the resources now to go and get an attorney to file a lawsuit to compel them to comply with the Freedom of Information Law.

It's another abuse under mayoral control.

The compliance, when it comes to open-meetings law, I'm sure Leonie Haimson, from Class Size Matters, is going to speak about it, and I have it, briefly, talking about it in my testimony.

But to summarize:

Mayor de Blasio and "de Blasio, Inc." have decided that they're going to close school-leadership team meetings; that they're now private, because they don't want the community and the public.

And this is an administration that says: We're open. Everybody's welcome. We want everyone to be involved.

But they've closed school-leadership team meetings, forcing parents, parent-advocates, advocacy groups, and the public advocate to file a lawsuit, to force -- to try to force them to actually follow your law.

Even though the judge agreed with Class Size Matters and Public Advocate James, "de Blasio, Inc." -- Fariña, de Blasio, and UFT -- are still not opening the meetings and complying with the law, until they complete their appeal.

Since they were so successful at closing SLT meetings, they've now decided that they're going to close parent-association and parent-teacher-association meetings.

So, now, they're doing the same thing.

Oh, well, you know, we don't care. It's a PA meeting. It's not open to the public.

Well, yes, it is open to the public.

We've had, Robert Freeman, who you know from the Committee of Open -- Committee on Open Governments, he's done an opinion on it.

It's in the law.

You know.

But, "de Blasio, Inc." doesn't have to comply with it because, what can we do, what can reporters do, and what can you do?

Our recommendations, to close -- oh, sorry.

Number seven, before I close:

As I mentioned earlier, when it comes to charter schools, I firmly believe in holding them accountable.

When it comes to our children, I firmly believe that we must do, always, what is in the best interests of the children.

And I believe in school choice, because I don't see why anyone must be forced to send their child to a burning building.

But I do agree, sometimes you don't know that, you know, the other building has structural problems too.

That being said, Mayor de Blasio and "de Blasio, Inc." are carrying out a vendetta.

With the parents union, we go up against the education-reform lobby, we go up against what we call the "status quo," the unions, because, no matter what, if you look at our history and what we've done, we're about what's in the best interests

of all children.

The Charter Schools Act governs charter schools.

I'm a firm believer in following the law.

Charter schools are autonomous. Charter schools are their own districts. They're their own LEA.

"De Blasio, Inc.," because of mayoral control that you have given him, is carrying out a personal vendetta against Eva Moskowitz.

And everybody in this room that knows me know I don't always agree with Eva.

As a matter of fact, I think I've been on just about every co-location lawsuit, fighting Eva, before the law was changed.

The charter-rent lawsuit, I was on it, parents union was on it, and other parents in this room.

But it's always about what's in the best interests of the children.

Withholding the $750,000 -- illegally withholding the $750,000 -- for those students, those Black and Latino students in success academy, is not fair.

It's an attack on those families, it's an

attack on those children, and it's just to get even with a personal vendetta.

There is no justification for withholding that pre-K money.

That money came from you; it came from the Governor; it came from the state budget.

Charters are their own LEA.

Just because the City disperses the funds to CBOs and to their district schools under their authority, doesn't mean mayoral control gives Mayor de Blasio and "de Blasio, Inc." the right to do a vendetta against one woman, but punishing thousands of students.

And I'm going to read this.

In closing:

Allow me to note that all of us have been learning about the true meaning of mayoral control as we watch a second mayor utilize it.

Our challenge, is to fashion an education-governance system that can work well with -- and for any mayor and all parents and students.

We have yet to achieve this.

In my testimony, I have solid recommendations on an independent oversight board that consists of

parents and community stakeholders.

I have, step-by-step, what we're seeking.

Metrics to be made; milestones.

Quarterly meetings with this legislative board, with the DOE, so that when situations, like what I've just shared with you that is going on with parents in the school system, you can bring that up at those quarterly meetings with whoever the mayor is and whoever his chancellor is.

Mayoral control is supposed to be there to serve the needs of the children, to educate the children, to make sure that someone is held accountable.

Right now, mayoral control is not working.

So, we may support the concept, but we certainly do not support "de Blasio, Inc."

Thank you.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Okay. Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you.

If I could, if you might stay for a moment, just to --

MONA DAVIDS: Sorry.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: -- if my colleagues may

have...

We heard directly from Chancellor Fariña that suspensions would occur if someone had a weapon or brought a weapon, because I brought up the "Post" article that recently -- or, either yesterday or the day before, talked about the increase in the number of weapons picked up in schools, and the police commissioner actually telling the parents to pat-down their kids before they leave the house, which is something I've never heard in my life, and I taught for 20 years -- 20-plus years in the city of New York in those schools.

So it was interesting, though, she did say that there would be suspensions.

You're saying there are no suspensions?

MONA DAVIDS: There are no suspensions for bringing the weapons into the school.

I would be glad to send you some information about some of these cases that were highlighted in the "Post," where, if your staff, Senator Marcellino, wants to follow up and hear for yourself, from those sources --

SENATOR MARCELLINO: I would appreciate that.

MONA DAVIDS: -- confirmed sources, they're not suspending the kids.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Okay. Please do, send us specific examples, and we'll try to follow up on that.

With respect to the open-meetings law, the only way you can be excluded to a meeting is if they're talking about personnel issues or negotiations in a contract.

Those are the only two ways people can be excluded from a public meeting from a public entity.

So, saying that you cannot attend -- a member of the general public cannot attend a school-board meeting or PTA meeting, is simply not the case, unless --

MONA DAVIDS: That --

SENATOR MARCELLINO: -- personnel matters are being discussed, or unless we are talking about private contract -- you know, negotiations, or union contract, or something to that extent.

So if you're saying that's occurring, if we can get something on that in writing, we'd appreciate that.

MONA DAVIDS: I will send that to you in writing.

I can -- not just that, I can speak personally.

I was on an SLT.

My SLT, after Carmen Fariña put out this edict, started keeping people, the public, out.

Speaking, when it comes to parent associations, because of the fact that I am the lead plaintiff in Davids verse New York, you can imagine the pushback and the attacks that I have personally experienced, as well as our other plaintiffs.

That being said, even with my school, and one of the examples for Bob Freeman was my school, they refused to let in a reporter. They refused to let in a representative from StudentsFirst.

And then parents like myself, who are parents in the school, they called the police and had us removed.

And before they did that, they checked with Tweed.

So -- and I'm just one example, and I know of this happening to other parents.

And it's not like Chancellor Fariña doesn't know. She knows everything, because we document everything.

And that is why we even had the reporter there and we had other witnesses there.

So this is -- this is a problem.

And they can get away with it because no one is holding them accountable.

"De Blasio, Inc." is not here, Senators.

UFT, the Mayor, they're not here. They've made their deal.

But it's our children in the school system.

And I appreciate so much, you allowing us to be here and talk about how mayoral control has impacted our children.

I hope that, going forward, you have more communication and outreach with the parents.

I've looked at your speaker list.

And, just looking at your speaker list, I think there are, maybe, two speakers on that list with children currently in the school system.

Two. And I'm one of them.

So there's a problem here, and I'm pretty sure the other parent is going to say something similar to what I've said.

And at your Albany hearing, again, you had one parent who had a child in the school system.

So if we parents, who are the real stakeholders, who manage to get invited to this, parents with children who are still in the school system, parents of children who reflect the

demographics of children condemned to failing, if we are saying this system is not working, and if you are seeing how you yourself have been treated today with "de Blasio, Inc." missing, there is a problem here.

So, again, we support mayoral control.

I urge you to please look at our recommendations about the independence monitor, and to really engage the parents; truly engage the parents.

And to give us some contact of someone that we can reach out to when we are ignored by this Mayor and by this Chancellor.

There needs to be some types of checks and balances, and there simply are none.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: We thank you very much.

MONA DAVIDS: Thank you, sir.

[Applause.]

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Just as a matter of clarifying things, and making sure everybody is fully aware:

When I taught, I was a UFT delegate, and a chapter chairperson for my high school.

And as I said to you before, the UFT was invited.

They declined to attend both hearings.

That's their call.

And when I was an assistant principal, board administration, I was a member of the CSA.

So -- so everyone knows where we are coming from.

SENATOR ADDABBO: Can I say something?

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Sure.

SENATOR ADDABBO: Also, Mr. Chair, I do want to encourage all parents and those interested in this issue, it doesn't take a hearing, it doesn't take a press conference, or a trip up to Albany.

E-mails, phone calls, visiting your electeds, parents need to be heard. Parents have a vested interest in their children's education.

And from now, until the time that we decide on mayoral control, or not, I do encourage all parents to reach out to their elected officials.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Absolutely.

The next panel will consist of Tenicka Boyd, Martha Zornow, Khari Shabazz, and Jacob Mnookin.

If they could come, please.

And as I said to you -- the prior people, if you could summarize, it would be helpful, since we have copies of your written testimony, and that will

be put into the record, in its entirety.

So, you have no fear of that.

Whoever is going speak first.

TENICKA BOYD: Good evening -- or, good afternoon.

I'm Tenicka Boyd. I'm the senior director of organizing at StudentsFirstNY.

I guess I'm the second New York State public-school parent. My daughter attends PS 321 in Brooklyn.

I work at StudentsFirstNY. We're an advocacy organization. We organize traditional district public-school parents in 16 communities across New York City; so that's communities in Jamaica, Queens; Harlem; east New York; Brownsville; and communities like that.

I really want to center this idea in the magnitude of what we're talking about here.

We're talking about 1.1 million students that Mayor de Blasio is in charge of, and, also, many of those students are students of color. Many of those students, also, are legally zoned to historically and persistently failing school.

So the magnitude of that is really, really great.

One out of 340 Americans is a New York City public-school student.

So when we talk about mayoral control, we really need to center the lives marginalized in low-income students, especially students of color.

There's about seven things that I think that we really need to look under the hood when we talk about mayoral control under Mayor de Blasio, and I'll be, I think, much quicker than Mona.

So, a few things.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Bless you.

TENICKA BOYD: Thank you.

So, the Mayor has talked a lot about making sure that all second-graders can read by 2026.

The Mayor will be long gone after that, and so I really think we need to think about the deadlines that the Mayor has set for himself and the students of New York City as we think about mayoral control.

Another thing, we're still dealing with a tremendous amount of dropout factories.

We have students from Boys and Girls High School, Automotive High School, Clinton High School in the Bronx, where 46 percent of children are graduating in four years.

Of the 46 percent of those students, only 13 percent of those students are graduating with a high school diploma that means anything.

So we're still giving students these meritless diplomas and these empty credentials.

Another thing, 8 out of 10 New York City public-school students who are graduating are also taking remedial courses; again, so they're not college-ready.

They don't have the skills to be successful and really raise themselves out of intergenerational poverty, which is something that is essential for any public school system.

Also, one of the first things that Mayor de Blasio did as an act of mayoral control, is he cut the school day by 2 1/2 hours a week.

Right?

And so when we think about things that we know are good for students, it's -- really, it's more instructional time and longer school days.

And this mayor has been consistent in cutting the instructional time of students, and students in low-income communities and communities of color, our most marginalized students who need it the most.

Also, this mayor is ignoring solutions.

We know that school choice and expanding school choice is something that is very important.

It has allowed students who, again, are zoned to legally and persistently failing schools, opportunities to have a different pathway for success and career-readiness.

And this mayor has not done that.

Also, accountability is really non-existent.

So the Mayor has a school-renewal plan, and the school-renewal schools where 93 percent of the students are still failing. Many of those students are, again, low-income students and students of color.

So you're talking about plans like washers and driers and glasses, all of which sounds very nice and, I'm sure, socially conscious.

But what's really important for those students is to be able to have the skills -- the reading and math skills, and the Mayor has yet to put forth a plan to address that 2 1/2 years in.

So, what I'll say, in closing, is I really want to center the lives of a few parents that I work with each and every day.

One of those parents is Nikea (ph.) Porter. She's the mother of a second-grader from PS 305 in

Bed-Stuy, which is a part of the Mayor's school-renewal plan.

Her son is a year away from taking the state and math test, but she doesn't feel like he's properly prepared.

That school only has 3 percent -- 3 percent -- of the students who are reading at grade level.

She is deeply concerned.

She's been an advocate as long as I can remember.

She's sent e-mails, she's appeared on NY1, really encouraging the Mayor to raise the standards for students in this renewal-school plan.

Camille Artimas (ph.) is a mother who stood outside of this very building this morning and talked about her daughter, who, in the past 2 1/2 years, she's transferred to three different schools, from everywhere from Bed-Stuy, to Bushwick, to find a quality school for her child.

She's wait-listed for high-performing charter schools, but there are not enough seats, and so she is stuck with persistently and failing schools.

And she is really afraid of the number of vacancies in her daughter's school, and the Mayor is

replacing some of these teachers who are leaving the school system with "ATR" teachers; teachers from the absent teacher reserve.

That's a system where we're spending $100 million a year on teachers who are not teaching in the classroom. These are excess teachers, many of whom are from failing schools.

And those teachers are not in Park Slope where I send my daughter to school.

They're going to places where marginalized parents are left to live in far -- you know, Far Rockaway, east New York, and Brownsville, and communities like that.

And the Mayor needs to be held accountable for the lack of quality teachers that he's placing with our most marginalized and vulnerable students.

Nikea and Camille's stories -- you know, they're sad, and they're stories that I hear every day; but, unfortunately, they're not unique.

They're stories of many New York City public-school parents, and they're stories that I really think that we should center as we think about how we extend mayoral control to this particular mayor, and, also, as we think about accountability.

Thank you.

MARTHA ZORNOW: Good afternoon, Senators.

My name is Martha Zornow. I'm the founding principal of Girls Prep Bronx Middle School, a public charter school located in District 8 in The Bronx.

We are one of the options that parents have to choose a high-quality education in their neighborhood.

We're part of the public prep network, a non-profit network of schools serving 1500 students.

We had a bunch of our parents here today.

We have a few hearty ones left.

And one of our hallmarks is that our parents come out to support, because having the choice of a high-quality public school for their children is very important in their lives.

I've been an administrator for over seven years, and an educator for fifteen.

I started in The Bronx as a New York City teaching fellow, but after a few years in a struggling school, I left for public schools in Westchester to learn how to be a teacher.

Most recently, I served as the tenured principal of Seven Bridges Middle School in

Chappaqua for four years, but I left to run Girls Prep Bronx Middle School in 2014.

I felt deeply that the discrepancy between what was available in Chappaqua and what was available in District 8 was absolutely unfair, and it was incumbent on me to come down and do what I could.

At public prep, our philosophy is to start early with the end in mind: To put all of our students on a path to college completion. No remedial courses, go to high school, ready to go.

Our curriculum is as rich and strong as anything available in Westchester.

We want to ensure that our students attain high levels of achievement across academic disciplines, but also in the arts, music, theater, dance, that they do original science, while also helping our skills -- helping our students to develop the character skills and core values that they need to overcome the inevitable hurdles on the way to college.

We serve students across New York City, but we're deeply proud to be part of a vibrant community in the South Bronx.

We just finished our random lottery for the

2016-17 school year; and, yes, we do, even in middle school, admit new students.

There were 176 applications for 25 open seats.

As proud as I am that so many families want to come, I'm horribly disappointed that we cannot meet the demand of the community to serve more children, desperate for a quality public education, in their neighborhood.

We believe that your ZIP code should never determine the quality of your education.

This means that we need to disrupt the systems that perpetuate education equality in our city.

The de Blasio Administration claims to have similar goals, but, we have to question the unequal treatment by us by Mayor de Blasio.

If the Mayor had had his way, Girls Prep Bronx Middle School would never have opened.

From the outset, he challenged our ability to co-locate with another public school -- actually two.

We fought this with our vibrant parent community, and we have gone on to build a collegial relationship with both the Zone Middle School and

the District 75 School with whom we share our building.

Mayor de Blasio's unequal treatment did not stop at co-location.

Funding for traditional public schools has gone up six times faster than funding for public charter schools, and Mayor de Blasio does not support fair funding for us.

We -- while Chancellor Fariña speaks about the importance of the arts, space is not available.

You cannot run a band or a visual-art program on a cart in a classroom; and, yet, there is no space to do that.

We -- initially, our network was not given the opportunity to serve 4-year olds in UPK, and we really had to fight for that.

We were initially excluded from offering after-school programs for students in Grade 6, and we had to fight to participate in that so that our students can have the rich range of enrichment opportunities after school in a safe place, until 6:00, that they deserve.

This fits a troubling pattern that public charter-school leaders have encountered, in which the Mayor claims to care deeply about providing

programs and opportunities for all children, but then goes on to exclude our children from the same neighborhoods.

This is a political choice by the Mayor.

He's influenced by status quo interests instead of New York parents and families.

Today's hearing is about accountability.

As a public-school charter leader, this is something we are very familiar with.

We have to justify our continued operation to our authorizers in a renewal process every three or five years, and we have annual accountability; and we think the Mayor should face the same.

This rigorous system accountability keeps us sharp, and we know that if we deviate from our mission, we lose the privilege of serving children.

We believe that mayoral control is the correct policy, but, the Mayor really needs to face the same kind of rigorous accountability that our school face, with clear, annual, or more frequent, milestones and metrics.

When a mayor, any mayor, favors one type of public-school student over another and faces no consequences, this problem must be addressed through hearings like this one.

And you as state leaders can hold the Mayor accountable just as the State holds us accountable.

I hope this Committee will use today's hearing to force the Mayor to be more accountable to the families of the South Bronx desperate for a great public school, and have a more-inclusive approach to meeting those families' needs.

To do this, the Mayor must be a leader who puts the needs of all public children first, including those who attend public charter schools.

Thank you so much for having me here today.

KHARI SHABAZZ: Good afternoon.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Good afternoon.

KHARI SHABAZZ: My name is Khari Shabazz. I'm currently the principal of Success Academy, Harlem West, located on 114th Street, between 7th and 8th.

I also come to you as a parent, a single father, in Harlem, where I raised my son, who is now 22, and a graduate of the University of Albany.

I went to his graduation this weekend.

And I did not keep him in New York City public schools because of some of the brutality and the dangers that you've heard today. But, we do live in Harlem.

And like all public schools, we have our kids come to us through a random lottery. There's high demand for spaces in our school. About -- at the high level, about 10 applications for every one seat.

And, we're here today to talk about how mayoral control sort of affects my school in very large ways.

We do agree that mayoral control allows for efficiency, it allows for accountability, and we do believe that it provides for stability; however, it can be abused in many ways, as you heard today.

And, specifically, as related to success, Mayor de Blasio prevented some schools from co-locating. He rolled back promises, and as a result, our children were homeless, and, in search of a school.

And as you can know, that is definitely emotionally harmful to children and families.

As a principal, I need the resources to run my school; however, I get less than the public-school counterparts, the traditional public-school principals, in my school, and we think that's unfair.

We need to have a mayor who understands that

all school principals, all schools, need to have equitable funding, and the per-pupil expenditure should be the same.

When speaking about that, Mayor de Blasio in particular said that, "We do not support initiatives that take away from one group and give to another."

And that is very divisive and misleading, because that's not how it works.

And instead of taking that opportunity to be for all children, he decided that he was going to be part of the machine that you've heard about today, in terms of being connected to the UFT, and not his own man.

Our school day starts at 7:15 in the morning; we end school at 5:15.

We have incredible curriculum, where our children are getting a world-class education. And to not get the same per-pupil funding is rather disrespectful to our children and families.

Mayoral control even impacts us in ways profoundly, as you heard earlier today, in terms of our discipline, and in terms of school safety.

At success academies, we do have a policy where we suspend children; however, I'm in a building where there are kids who are dangerous to

the building itself, and they're there day after day.

In terms of making sure that we are safe, we are located on the fifth floor of a building that has four -- has five floors, and we have to expend adult energy to make sure that our children are able to travel through the school, and through a neighborhood, quite frankly, that's particularly violent.

One of the things that I love about working for success, giving those issues that we have, is that our children are getting a world-class education. They're deconstructing myths and they're smashing stereotypes.

They perform in the top 1 percent in math, in the top 3 percent in ELA across, and that's in the state, and, they are doing fantastic things in our classrooms.

We want to make sure that we remove the politics, so we, too, also call for the Mayor to have some accountability for what he is doing with control of New York City schools.

I want to thank you for taking this opportunity to hear about success academies and about the role that we have, and I appreciate the

opportunity to talk to you today.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you.

[Applause.]

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Next panel will be --

JACOB MNOOKIN: Excuse me, I'm sorry.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: I'm sorry.

One more.

JACOB MNOOKIN: I'll be quick.

Good afternoon.

Thank you very much for having me.

My name is Jacob Mnookin. I'm the founder and executive director of Coney Island Preparatory Public Charter School. We serve almost 800 students across our elementary, middle, and high schools.

When I founded Coney Island Prep, in just four rooms at a local New York city Housing Authority community center, we were the only charter school in south Brooklyn.

Before we even had our own building, we received hundreds of applications.

The stories we heard from parents painted a clear picture of a community where many families did not feel that their traditional public school could keep their children safe and allow them to learn.

As a leader -- as a school leader in

New York City under multiple administrations, I've seen the success of mayoral control.

Strong mayoral leadership is best for New York City's children, far better than the previous system of school-board leadership; however, educators like myself, as you have heard today, have concerns about the actions of the current administration.

That's why today's hearing is so important.

It is through hearings like these that the Mayor is held accountable for his management of the city schools, where his leadership team must prove themselves worthy of the privilege of extended control of our schools.

It is unfortunate that the Mayor did not attend the hearing today to hear these concerns.

The current administration has consistently proven that it does not wish to treat all public-school students equally.

Public charter schools have been forced to fight tooth and nail for resources, while, at the same time, they have been mischaracterized and attacked by the Mayor and the city's Department of Education.

Coney Island Prep was forced into a combative

relationship with the Mayor and his allies for space for our students after his election.

Since then, we've continued to struggle with the Mayor's Administration, which seems to believe that co-located charters owe extra rent money than traditional schools do not.

Because of the Mayor's attitude and divisive approach, the cooperative relationship the DOE used to have with charters has become a combative one.

Together with parents, we have spoken out against the unfair treatment of our kids.

Despite public outcry, the Mayor and his administration have worked tirelessly to build roadblocks, slowing the growth of public charter schools.

More than eight times as many students applied for our kindergarten program than we have seats; almost four times as many for fifth grade.

New York families are desperate for the opportunity to choose charters.

By reinforcing inequality in school resources, the Mayor has not only limited opportunities for students, but he has also eliminated the -- limited the opportunity for partnership between the administration and public

charter-school leaders.

This division helps no one, and hurts students most of all.

Playing politics in this way has real consequences for students and families.

As an educator, students are my greatest concern.

All public-school students deserve to be treated equally no matter what politics are at play.

The Mayor must address these inequalities present in the public school system of New York City.

These hearings provide that opportunity.

I do not wish to see control of the school system returned to a school board, but this administration, and future administrations, must prove themselves worthy of mayoral control by representing all children in our city.

Thank you.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you.

[Applause.]

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Next panel, Kathyrn Wylde -- hope I'm pronouncing the names correctly -- Marcus Winters, Laura Altschuler, and Leonie Haimson.

Come up and share the microphones. There's only two mics, but, as they speak, but you're more than welcome to move a chair, sit it next to the table.

Please.

KATHRYN WYLDE: Thank you, Senators Marcellino and Addabbo.

I appreciate you taking the time to make this much focus on New York City schools.

I'm Kathyrn Wylde, president and CEO of the Partnership for New York City. We represent the city's business leadership.

Yesterday we released a letter from more than 100 top CEOs in the city.

Our members employ over a million New Yorkers, and feel very strongly in support of the continuation of mayoral control as a solid governance system that holds the Mayor accountable to the voters, to parents, and employers.

We had experience, for more than 40 years, of chaos in the governance of our school system through the '60s and for years beyond.

Those who have been around know that that system was -- did not work, not only for the children in the schools where we saw consistent

decline in performance, but it also was a time during which we saw more than a million middle-class New Yorkers leave the city, most of them parents, looking for decent schools for their kids. We saw many of our leading employers leave the city at the same time.

So this is not just an issue that's important from the standpoint of the education of the kids. It's also an issue that's important to everyone in the city.

And I want to reiterate that, and that's the lens through which the business community looks at education.

In addition, they look at this as, in terms of the future: Where are these kids going? How well are these kids going to be prepared for jobs, college, careers, and advanced training and education.

And we think, again, that mayoral control provides the basis for establishing strong partnerships.

Between the -- 1968 and 2003, we, basically, opened no career- and technical-education programs. And it's only post mayoral control that there has been a real effort to engage employers in skills,

training, and development.

In fact -- and then, in fact, that area is being greatly expanded now, and we're very hopeful that that will continue to be another area that we can improve.

The ability to employers to work -- employers to work efficiently with the school system, again, really depends on a good governance system, a solid governance system.

And we think it's imminently clear that current the system is far better than anything that's gone before it.

We're very concerned that, regardless of who was mayor, regardless who is chancellor, that there be a way that we can see who is responsible.

Under the old system, no one was in charge.

So that's, basically, our message.

We feel very strongly on this subject.

We have, over the years, been advocates for increased investment in the schools: for stronger school leadership, for charter schools, for school reform.

We've been very active in Albany on all those topics, and this is one that we've been involved with for long before it was enacted, because the

problems were obvious. And we worked with the Legislature to craft the legislation that developed this -- the system we have now.

We strongly support its extension.

MARCUS A. WINTERS: Good afternoon.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important topic.

My name is Marcus Winters. I'm an economist who studies education policy as a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, and also as an associate professor in the College of Education in the University of Colorado in Colorado Springs.

I've studied several aspects of New York City's public school system, including as related to school choice and accountability, in charter schools and accountability.

I want to begin my remarks by saying, as you suggested to start with, that I do recommend extending mayoral control of the city schools for a substantial period of time.

I believe mayoral control in New York City has proven to be a far better system than what we had before.

Put simply, a mayor is in a better position to lead and be held accountable for the performance

of a major urban school system than as any other body.

That said -- and my endorsement of mayoral control comes, despite the fact that I'm a vocal critic of many of the policies of this current administration.

That said, I do think there are areas that the body -- that this body should discuss with the Mayor within the current conversation of mayoral control.

I'm going to focus my testimony today on the issue of school accountability, and what's happened with the accountability system in New York City.

School assessment accountability system is extremely important to any urban system, especially one the size, complexity of -- and importance of New York City's.

The aspects of the accountability system represents the district's view of what makes for an effective school.

And it provides the district with an opportunity to push its lowest performers to improve.

Under the previous administration, the city schools were assessed according to student

performance and growth on standardized tests, along with surveys of parents, teachers, and students.

And at the end of this, they received a grade, from A through F, that assessed their overall performance on all these measures.

Over time, the current administration has fund -- has changed its accountability system in a way that has fundamentally altered the city's vision of what makes for an effective school.

The first, and most obvious, change to the accountability system was the decision to end the practice of presenting each school with a letter grade.

In fact, the current system doesn't provide the summary measure of the school's overall performance at all.

That decision to eliminate the summary letter grade was made, despite empirical evidence that schools who received a failing grade under the prior system made substantial improvements the following year.

That was the finding of some of my work, with my colleague, Joshua Cowen (ph.) at Michigan State University, and another -- by economist Jonah Rockoff (ph.) at Columbia, and Leslie Turner

who's now at the University of Maryland.

In our paper, we also show that the improvements that came from the upgrade stuck with the kids a couple years later, suggesting that there were real gains made by the students not caused by testing manipulation.

In a forthcoming report, I returned to the issue of New York City's school-grading system, and what my analysis shows is that, the test-scores improvement following the F grade, that we saw early in the policy, was still detectable the last year the grades were given.

So there was still a positive effect from the policy that was going on.

And then what I further show is that this effect dissipated immediately following removement of the summary letter grades.

So, basically, what we're seeing is that there was a positive-treatment effect. The F grades were working to make the worst schools better.

Once those F grades were gone, that positive treatment went away.

To a great degree, New York City's prior accountability system met many of the criteria that we need of an effective accountability system.

Schools were ranked according to a well-understood grading system. The results were wildly reported.

And what we saw from research is that that policy was working to help the most -- the system's worst schools to improve.

The most recent manifestations of New York accountability system lacks that under -- well-understood scale that we saw in the prior system.

At least as important as issuing the summary letter performances, and I think that's of tremendous importance, are the factors that underlie the district's assessment of school quality.

And that also has changed from -- in this current administration in ways that I think are problematic.

So when the City first removed the letter grades, they actually reported almost identical information about school quality.

That has been changing over time.

So, the year after that, the school -- the City fundamentally changed the parent surveys.

So, that used to be very focused on the parents' perceptions of the school's expectation for

the child's performance and how they're reaching that.

Most of -- all of those questions have been replaced with, I think, questions that I think are less helpful about the parents' perception.

More problematic, in my opinion, are the planned upcoming changes that have been signaled by the Administration.

According to the technical documents of last year's school-quality reports, the Administration plans to phase out important measures of student achievement -- student academic progress on standardized tests from the school-quality reports, starting next year.

Despite the controversy surrounding them, these measures of student test-score growth are essential for separating the school's contribution to student learning from that of family background.

To put the extent of the change into context, measured student progress on the tests accounted for 60 percent of the school's overall score under the prior accountability system.

Now that said, the old system wasn't perfect, and, in fact, it was tweaked over time. And not all the changes this current administration has done is

all bad.

In particular, a central feature of the current system is the focus of reviews of experienced educators who spend time in the schools.

I think that's a helpful thing.

There are things that qualitative assessments of school quality can tell us that test scores and surveys might miss.

That said, objective measures of school performance are essential for anchoring that accountability system.

Without the grounding of student test-score growth, these quality -- qualitative assessments could be rubber stamps over time, just as subjective teacher evaluations were for so long.

Now -- so I would strongly suggest that this body keep control of New York City schools in the Office of the Mayor, but I would also suggest that the Legislature make clear its expectations that, whoever is mayor, operates the schools within a framework that prioritizes student learning and presents the public with useful and actionable information about school performance.

Thank you very much.

LEONIE HAIMSON: Thank you,

Senators Marcellino and Addabbo, for allowing me to testify today.

My name is Leonie Haimson. I'm the executive director of Class Size Matters, a citywide advocacy organization dedicated to providing information on the benefits of smaller classes.

I'm also the co-chair of the national organization Parent Coalition for Student Privacy; on the steering committee of the statewide coalition New York State Allies for Public Education; and on the board of The Network for Public Education.

I'm also a member of NYC Kids PAC, which released an education report card for the Mayor yesterday, copies of which you should have received along with my testimony.

This report card grades the Mayor in several education categories, based primarily on whether he followed up on his campaign promises.

The members of NYC Kids PAC include four sitting presidents of citywide and community education councils, three past presidents of CECs, and one sitting member of the Panel for Educational Policy.

So I hope you take these -- this report card seriously.

It exhibits particular disappointment with the lack of parent input at the school district and citywide levels.

Citywide and community education councils remain largely disempowered, with little or no say as to co-locations and space planning, and DOE has argued in court that school leadership teams have only advisory powers, in an effort to keep their meetings closed to the public.

As Mona mentioned, we're one of the plaintiffs on that lawsuit, which we won in the State Supreme Court, which the DOE has now appealed to the Appellate Court.

School overcrowding and class size also continue to be major concerns.

For the purpose of this testimony, however, I speak only for my organization Class Size Matters.

I have opposed mayoral control, and have done so since its inception in 2003.

Unlike others who have switched their positions depending on who was mayor and what policies he espouses, I have been consistent in my views.

I was part of the parent commission on school governance that issued a report in 2009, that

recommended a school board without a mayoral majority, replaced, in part, by six parents to be selected by CECs.

Last year I co-authored a column in the "Gotham Gazette," with Shino Tanikawa, the president of the NYC Kids PAC, and the community education council in District 2 in Manhattan, in which we pointed out many of the weaknesses in the system.

And that op-ed is appended to this testimony.

I also want to mention that I think it's unfortunate that more parent-leaders were not allowed to testify today, including Shino, who represents a school district that I think is composed of four Senate Districts, it's that large.

So I really would appreciate if you allowed more parents to testify, and you opened up this hearing more to the public.

Why have we consistently opposed this governance system?

Mayoral control, as it exists here, in Chicago, and a few other cities around the country, is inherently undemocratic, and provides no real checks and balances to autocratic rule.

As a result, it has too often suffered from insufficient input from parents and community

members closest to the ground; the result being damaging policies and unwise spending.

Our entire system of democratic rule, from the federal government, on down, relies on the separation of powers.

Can you imagine if our Governor decided to dismiss the State Legislature on the grounds that it was an inefficient governance system?

I don't think you guys would like that very much.

It is simply unacceptable, and I think racist, that the only places where mayoral control currently exists have student populations that are a majority of students of color.

Suburban/rural, cities and towns in the rest of the state, and the country, would never accept such a system which disempowers voters, including the towns that many Senators represent; and neither should we in New York City.

I would add that nearly every poll that has surveyed New York City voters have found that a majority are against mayoral control, and in favor of the executive sharing power with an independent school board or the city council.

And we're not alone.

In Chicago where mayoral control was first instituted, there is now a big push, including legislation, to replace the governance system with an elected school board.

The same is happening in Detroit which has suffered under one-man rule by the governors and elected emergency manager.

Both cities have suffered a real lack of accountability in the top-down management of their schools.

What about the record here in New York City?

Despite claims of great progress, we analyze the test scores of city students on the NAEPs, the most reliable national assessments that exist.

When gains in student test scores, since mayoral control was instituted in 2003, are disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and economic status, it is apparent that New York City schools have come out second-to-last among the 10 cities in terms of improved achievement.

Though it's true that graduation rates have increased, our gains mirror increased rates nationally, and many have also argued that it's the increased pressure on our schools to inflate their figures through discredited methods, such as credit

recoveries and the like, that have achieved these rate increases.

The justification for mayoral control is often that the previous system was scandal-ridden with corrupt local school boards exhibiting patronage and the like.

But the reality is, that the community school boards had the power to hire and fire taken away from them in 1996, which was years before mayoral control was instituted.

Moreover, the waste and fraud that continues under the current system far outstrips what occurred previously.

There were multiple multimillion-dollar no-bid contracts awarded under Mayor Bloomberg, that subsequently were found out to be wasteful and/or corrupt.

One of the largest related to a contract awarded Custom Computer Specialists, to provide Internet wiring, with the vendor hired by Ross Lanham, a DOE consultant.

As a 2011 report from the special investigators found, Lanham and CCS were involved in a massive kickback scheme that stole millions from the DOE. The CEO of CCS and Lanham also started a

real-estate business together.

Lanham was later indicted and sent to jail, and the FCC excluded the DOE from more than 100 million of E-rate funds because of the (indiscernible) scandal.

Yet, in 2015, I learned that a new contract, amounting to $1.1 billion over 5 years, renewable to 2 billion over 9 years, was about to be awarded to the same vendor for more Internet wiring and equipment.

After the media was alerted, the contract was hurriedly renegotiated by DOE, down, in 24 hours, to 627 million, suggesting how inflated it was in the first place.

Yet, the Panel for Educational Policy rubber-stamped the contract, 10-to-1, with the only The Bronx representative voting no.

Luckily, city hall was alerted to the controversy through the media, and, subsequently, canceled the contract.

They later rebid the contract to other vendors, at a savings estimated between a hundred sixty-three and seven hundred twenty-seven million dollars.

An E-rate consent decree was issued by the

FCC, imposing a $3 million fine on what they called "massive fraud," and ordering that an independent monitor and auditor be hired at city expense, while warning the DOE to refrain from engaging with any companies previously involved with Lanham.

Yet, as we recently learned, the DOE has awarded nine new contracts to CCS since the special investigator report, worth more than 20 million, and seven of them are current.

In fact, we learned that the company has received over 158,000 in payments from the DOE and the School Construction Authority in just the last two weeks.

Since the CCS controversy, along with former member Patrick Sullivan, we formed a citizens' contract-oversight committee, and we've identified many wasteful contracts, including several awarded companies previously found to have overcharged the City and the State by millions of dollars. These include a contract, approved just last night to the PEP, to a special-ed vendor found to have submitted nearly $3 million in non-reimbursable expenses to the State, according to a December audit from the State Comptroller's Office.

Yet never, to my knowledge, has the PEP voted

to reject a single DOE contract.

So when Senator Peralta asked about that, I think what the DOE was responding to was the five co-location proposals that were either revised, and one of them was canceled; not the contracts.

I've asked a current member of the PEP if they've ever actually voted down a contract, and I've also asked past PEP members, and they both said no.

In addition, as has been recently reported, the PEP members have never been provided with the minimum of six hours of training on their financial-oversight accountability and fiduciary responsibilities required of all school-board members by a 2005 state law, despite requests to receive this training from at least one board member; nor does the board has an internal audit committee, as the law requires.

The lone member who voted against the CCS contract recently resigned under pressure, and both he and another former member, Norm Fruchter (ph.), have stated publicly for the record, that the panel does not provide sufficient checks and balances to mayoral control.

I would be remiss if I didn't speak about

class size, the top concern of parents, according to the DOE's own surveys.

In -- June 20 -- 2003, the Campaign for Fiscal Equity case, the state's highest court found that students were deprived of their constitutional right to a sound, basic education because class sizes were too large.

In 2007, the Contracts for Excellence law was passed by the Legislature, which required New York City to reduce class sizes in all grades; yet, class sizes sharply increased, and, now, in -- Grades K through 3 are more than 14 percent larger than when the original decision was made.

Though average class sizes have stabilized since 2013, the number of students in classes of 30 or more in the early grades continues to go up.

This fall, there were over 48,000 students in classes of 30 or more in the early grades, more than 350,000 students in classes that large in all grades -- more than one-third of all public-school students in gen ed, inclusion, and gifted classes.

In their C4E plan, the DOE said they would now focus their class size-reduction efforts on the renewal schools; yet, our analysis showed that nearly 40 percent of these schools did not reduce

class size one iota. About 60 percent continue to feature classes of 30 or more, and only 7 percent have capped class sizes at appropriate C4E levels, of 20 in K through 3, 23 in Grades 4 through 8, and 25 in core high school classes.

And, honestly, I do not think the program can succeed with classes as large as they continue to be in these schools.

So what should be done?

I would like to propose, as our parent commission did seven years ago, that an office of an inspector general be created to report on -- to the public on any case of malfeasance, corruption, or mismanagement by school-system employees;

As well as an ombudsperson, to address and resolve parents complaints, and provide regular reports on how services and policies could be improved.

CEC should also be given the authority to approve co-locations, as they currently do have in-school rezonings.

I also think it would be useful for the city comptroller and the public advocate to have their own appointees on the panel.

As to the school board itself, if its members

cannot be elected directly by the citizens of New York, as happens in the rest of the state, at the very least, the DOE should be made subject to city law.

Currently, the Department of Education is the only city agency exempt from laws passed by the city council, other than oversight legislation.

I don't think many people realize what a unique position the DOE is in, in not having any local checks and balances in this way.

The police department, housing, and children's services, all the other city agencies, are under the mayor's control; and, yet, subject to the checks and balances of the city council.

Yet, I've never heard anyone claim that this system unacceptably dilutes the mayor's authority when it comes to addressing either crime or the need for more housing.

Why should our public schools be any different?

Why should they have fewer checks and balances than any other city agency?

Thank you for your time, and I'd be happy to answer any questions you might have.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you.

LAURA ALTSCHULER: Thank you.

First of all, Senator Marcellino and Senator Addabbo, thank you for your time and patience.

Education is important to us, and we all appreciate it.

I'm Laura Altschuler, a past president of the League; currently on the board of directors.

As you know, the League operates on three levels. And the national League of Women Voters really began building a foundation to equal access to public education; followed by the state League, which was also part of the strong push for financing education and the campaign for fiscal equity; and here in the New York City League, we actually did a study on how the schools should best be served.

And -- I'm paraphrasing my testimony, but you won't object, I'm sure.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Bless you.

LAURA ALTSCHULER: We didn't support mayoral control initially, but we concluded, after observation and study, that making the City Administration responsible for the operation of the school system afforded much greater transparency and accountability.

And I would like to say, when we say "control," we really mean responsibility.

Someone who was here earlier mentioned that there should be more parents here, you know, who have children in the schools.

I attended the New York City public schools, my children went to the New York City public schools and, currently, my grandchildren are.

And I think it's important that people continue to be interested in education whether or not they have children in the public schools.

And we at the League are very much -- you know, feel that that needs to continue.

We actually urge the renewal of mayoral control for six years; and the reason why, we think the children and our schools as are important as our infrastructure, for building bridges or replacing water mains.

There's is -- there are certain things that take a very long time to achieve, and they don't happen with one year or two years of change.

And that's why I like the word "mayoral responsibility."

Since I just told you how long I have been involved in education in the city, you will know

I've lived through teacher strikes, decentralization. Before that, centralization. And then, again.

And you have to have someone who continues to be responsible, and people need someone that they can go to, whoever is in charge, the assistants, or whatever.

But you cannot have what we had before, and that's why we think, whether you call it "mayoral control" or "mayor responsibility and control," it must continue.

But there's always time for improvement, and with your permission, I just want to make a few specific recommendations.

Fixed terms for the members of the Panel of Educational Policy:

They should serve fixed terms of two or three years.

Right now, they serve at the pleasure of the mayor or the borough president who appointed them.

Now, we're assuming that they were appointed because of expertise and judgment. And they should be free to study, review, vote, on educational policy without fear of being replaced by, or disagree with, an appointing official.

This happened, to the detriment of the school system, in an earlier administration.

The Department of Education should follow the procurement rules and regulations which apply to other city agencies, including, but not limited to, publicly advertising contract opportunities, and holding hearings on non-competitively-bid contracts.

We're not talking about what individual principals or school system might need, but these large citywide contracts should abide by the same.

And, the meetings of the Panels of Educational Policy and community district educational council should be public and subject to the state and city public-meeting laws. Agendas should be published in advance on the department's website, and meetings webcast.

And on -- the community district educational councils should be consulted before any school, traditional or charter, elementary, middle, or high school, is open, closed, consolidated, restructured, renamed, or collated within district.

Everyone in the community, and especially the parents, need to be involved in this.

And the provisions of mayoral control in school governments approved by the State of New York

should be made a part of the New York City Charter.

Most people do not know that the Department of Education is not in the city charter.

We've been sort of wanting that every time there was a change in city government.

So in designating the mayor as the New York City official responsible for the operation of New York City's public schools, the State of New York has recognized the department as a city agency; and, as such, it belongs in the New York City Charter.

At present, there is no delineation of powers or responsibilities of the Department of Education in the New York City Charter.

This was justified by the temporary nature of the government structure; but "temporary" is now 15 years, and going on.

There is ample opportunity to amend the charter if changes in governance are enacted, but to ignore the existence of an agency which accounts for 20 percent of the city's budget cannot be justified.

And an overly extended debate about mayoral control is problematic, and no one has suggested a reliable alternative.

And we're certainly not proposing a return to

the previously-constituted board of education.

In fact, a failure to renew mayoral control will result in reversal to a system which no longer exists.

More than one million children attend our city's public schools. Their education is of primary importance to their and our future, and the governance of our schools should not be part of negotiations over issues which really have nothing to do with education.

Extending investment tax credits to wealthy New Yorkers who contribute to private and parochial schools will not improve public education. If anything, it will reduce in -- result in reduced tax revenues which the State uses to fund our schools.

And we really appreciate the time that you have taken to listen to the League's testimony.

And, I'm not going ask if you have any questions, because I have a feeling that I'm the last speaker, and that's probably the last thing that you want.

But we are here to answer you today; or, if you -- we have people in the state who are always available from the League of Women Voters.

Thank you so much.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Appreciate you coming, and we appreciate your testimony, but you're not the last speaker.

LAURA ALTSCHULER: Oh, okay.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: We do have two more to come.

LAURA ALTSCHULER: Oh, I was just looking at the list that I read.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you very much, though, for your testimony.

We appreciate you coming.

LAURA ALTSCHULER: Thank you.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Let's call Richard Kahan.

RICHARD KAHAN: I think I owe you both a drink.

It's very kind of you to stay this long and listen to all of the testimony.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: That's why they pay us the big bucks.

RICHARD KAHAN: And I do have a fond memory of working with the State Senate when Warren Anderson was the head.

A lot of people think that we have a convention center in Battery Park City here, because

of the -- because we had a democratic mayor and a democratic governor at the time, Hugh Kerry and Koch.

Not at all true.

It's Warren Anderson that made the things possible, on his time table.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify in favor of mayoral control.

The Urban Assembly has 21 schools, 9,000 students. We have no screening whatsoever. 20 percent special ed, et cetera.

A very underprivileged population, we've done very well with that.

We have graduation rates that exceed the city's significantly, and given our African-American, Latino, population, by about 13 percent for that population. 80 percent of our kids are going to college.

And I dare say, that many never would have gone to college, let alone graduate, were it not for small schools, which is what we are.

In addition, our colleagues at New Visions and Outward Bound, and international schools, who you heard from, Joe Luft (ph.), in Albany, shared the same view.

We are all predominantly small schools that came out of the reforms made possible in the Bloomberg Administration.

And I will say that I'm not an educator. I've watched from a distance for most of my life, until the last 10 or 12 years.

And what I heard one mayor after another say was: If I had control over this, I'd fix it. But, I don't have control.

"I'd blow up 110 Livingston," that was a direct quote from one of the mayors, "if I had control over the DOE."

Then, all of a sudden, came along the man that said: I want control, and I want you to hold me accountable.

I thought that was the craziest political statement I ever heard, and at one point I told him that.

But he meant it, and I think it made all the difference in the world.

And, personally, that was the point at which I looked and said, You know, I'd like to get involved in education now, because this is serious. Nobody is passing the buck anymore.

So without mayoral control, those reforms,

and other reforms, would not have taken place.

I give this administration credit for pre-K -- universal pre-K. If they did nothing else, that is a great legacy. For the renewal schools, community schools.

But it's is not just about this administration either.

There will be other administrations. None of them will have the opportunity to and the time to create sustainable reform programs without a number of years to do it in.

If you have an idea today, it will take a year or two to implement it. Then you want to test it and you want to measure it, and you want to see what's wrong, you want to fix things, you want to tinker.

And at the end of that process, you have something else you'd like to do to raise the bar even higher.

That is not a one-year process, and it's not a two-year process.

It takes time, and we can't do it without multi-year mayoral control.

I thank you very much.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you.

Mr. Walcott.

DENNIS WALCOTT: How are you?

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Okay. Good to see you.

DENNIS WALCOTT: Thank you, sir.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you for coming back.

DENNIS WALCOTT: Oh, my pleasure.

No, I had to run across the street to testify before the city council for my regular job now.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Did you see the Mayor over there?

DENNIS WALCOTT: I did not.

[Laughter.]

DENNIS WALCOTT: I went straight in, and testified before the city council about libraries today.

So...

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Bless you. Worthy places.

DENNIS WALCOTT: I totally agree with you.

And in Queens, as Senator Addabbo knows, we have 63 great libraries.

But I'm not here today to talk about libraries for this building.

And I want to say, good afternoon to you, Chair, and to Senator Addabbo, and to all the other Senators here earlier.

As you know, my name is Dennis Walcott, former New York City schools chancellor; and, also, former deputy mayor of education under Mayor Bloomberg; and current president and CEO of the Queens Library System.

And I want to thank you for the opportunity to discuss this critical issue of mayoral control of the schools; or, really, dealing with school governance, and what it actually means.

And as you may know, my history with school governance goes back to the beginning of this prior administration, in 2002.

But my involvement with education, both, formally, was not through Mayor Bloomberg, but really started before then, when I was appointed to the old Board of Education by Mayor Dinkins, back in 1992, 1993.

And then, in the mid-1990s, I was appointed by Chancellor Rudy Crew, as a trustee of a local school board, the one up in district Harlem, District 5, that had been suspended, and I became president of that trustee board.

And I have the unique and dubious distinction of having served as the last Board of Education president, from June 30th to August 11th of 2009.

So when I was here earlier and I heard Senator Addabbo's question about, what's next if it's not renewed? that was what was next, and it had lapsed at that particular point, as you remember, and there was a lot of horse-trading on who would be on the board, and, the Board of Education back then, who would become the president?

And I became the Board of Ed president as a result of the votes of Mayor Bloomberg, and Helen Marshall, who was borough president of Queens at that time.

And it shouldn't be that way.

In 2002, when Mayor Bloomberg sought school-governance reform, we aimed to achieve accountability and responsibility for the schools, not just as a prize for any one mayor in particular, but as a fundamental change in the governance structure that would secure the future of our city's 1.1 million schoolchildren.

The state's resulting historic school-governance legislation provided an unprecedented opportunity to transform a largely

underperforming bureaucracy into an exemplary system focused on what is best for children.

The school system we inherited was a deeply troubled one, which, despite the best intentions and the good work of many dedicated people, did not provide and meet the needs of our children with education that they needed and deserved.

The seven-member Board of Education, beset by competing agendas, failed to provide the kind of coherence and accountability and effectiveness needed to ensure a high-quality education for every child across the city.

And as you know, you indicated you were a teacher, and we were all involved. You had a disjointed system that was dysfunctional. And you had one district that operated one way, another district that operated another way.

And it was really total chaos.

Instead, equity, patronage, and waste, and dysfunction plagued the system back then.

School funding was based on more on who you knew in the politics than based on the need.

Many teachers had to wait months for a paycheck.

I'm not sure exactly when you started, but

I know when we became in place, in 2002 --

SENATOR MARCELLINO: '68.

DENNIS WALCOTT: 1968.

-- and I know when we started in 2002, before control was given, teachers still had to wait up to two to three to four months, sometimes, to get paid, and that was across the system.

And that shouldn't be that way, and we were able to address that right away.

Our poorer students were trapped in lowest-performing schools in the city and had few options.

Only half of the students were graduating at some schools, and the rate was closer to 20 percent at some of the other schools.

School-governance reform gives New York City's mayors the ability to develop and implement a clear and bold vision for teaching and learning, to plan strategically to bring together the resources and agencies of the city around education and put the children's interests first.

As a result, since the establishment of the school-governance system, dropout rates have plunged by half; graduation rates have risen from, on average, 50 percent, to now, as the Chancellor

indicated earlier, to, roughly 70.5 percent -- a significant increase after stagnation under the prior governance structure.

Rather than being consigned to failing schools, students have benefited from the best school-choice system, that can always be improved on; teachers are paid on time; we've allocated funds throughout our schools more equitably to meet the needs of our students; and students' achievements have increased across the board.

The fate of control should not depend on the policy of the programs of any particular administration.

That's why I'm here today.

It's not about one mayor or another mayor.

It is about this mayor, the prior mayor, and future mayors to come.

And, it should always be debated, but at the same time, governance is extremely important as it exists. It is a system that we need to maintain.

The governance structure we have today makes clear with whom the debate should take place, which was impossible with the multi-headed hydra of the old Board of Education.

Mayoral control is about making the mayor,

elected by the people of New York City, take responsibility for the education of our city, and effectuate the best education possible for our children.

The school-governance structure the State established in 2002, and has since renewed, must outlive any mayoralty if we are to continue the tremendous progress over the 14 years.

We must not add layers of bureaucracy to the checks and balances. We have systems in place, like your Committee, and other committees, as well as the State Education Department, as well as the comptroller and the state comptroller, to do the appropriate monitoring and provide the check-and-balance system to the current system.

And we must try to maintain that. The future of our children and city depends on it, and the accountability should rest with the mayor.

And that's why I'm here today.

And thank you for the opportunity to testify before, you, Senator Addabbo, and also the others who were here before.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you very much, Mr. Walcott, for coming and being here.

Your experience and expertise is respected,

and your testimony is appreciated.

DENNIS WALCOTT: Thank you, sir.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: If there was one thing that you could change in the current system of mayoral control, what would it be?

DENNIS WALCOTT: Great question.

I think more regular meetings than you may have them, but from a committee structure, with the Department of Education, I think that type of information going back and forth.

And as I heard the Chancellor indicated, and I indicated, that Albany was my sixth borough, on the regular dialogue between Albany and the DOE is extremely important, as well as with city hall.

And so, to me, I think increasing that; and, therefore, that would, both, increase the accountability mechanisms, but more importantly, provide the regular information to the elected officials that they need to have.

So that would be one thing.

I think, and I think the Chancellor talked about this as well, always finding new ways to improve transparency of information.

People are starving for information.

And while we did it in our administration,

I know the current mayor is doing it, always looking for new ways to get information out to our parents, to empower them, to make sure that they're fully invested.

And people always talk about parental involvement.

And I know that we try very hard, the current administration is working hard at it.

Finding new ways to deal with parental involvement in the accountability is extremely important.

I think the ability to make sure that the Chancellor, through the Mayor, has the ability to have the coherent system that's in place, and was in place before, and making sure you always deal with the coherence of the system, is extremely important in how you constantly ramp that up.

And as Mayor Bloomberg always said to all of us, about the next administration, and future administrations, is to build on the success, and how to learn about what happened before, and analyze it and build off of that.

I think all those are parts of next steps to make the system better, to serve the needs of the children.

And I think with the debate that's going on with Albany right now, especially with the State Education Department, once we have a system that is in alignment with SED, and dealing with a curriculum that everyone signs on to as an approved of, that's at high standards, I think that then allows that next step to take place as well.

And, to me, with that, then you get to a higher milestone, as far as education outcomes for our children.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you.

DENNIS WALCOTT: Thank you, sir.

SENATOR ADDABBO: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank Mr. Walcott for being here, and I want to wish you much success on your new position --

DENNIS WALCOTT: Thank you, sir.

SENATOR ADDABBO: -- with the Queens libraries. And I do look forward to working with you in that respect.

I really appreciate your insight here, because, again, that resumé of yours runs the gamut, as, you know, a member of the old -- the head of the old Board of Ed, deputy mayor of education, chancellor of education.

Again, I think this is a great moment for us to get this kind of input.

Take us back to 2009, when there was the work to renew mayoral control, and at the time.

Because I mentioned it earlier, when you got this moment of an expiration, we have this opportunity to improve.

And back in 2009, there were improvements.

We improved the role of the PEPs, the CECs, the parental input.

Take us through that process of renewal, as we grapple with it now.

DENNIS WALCOTT: Sure, I mean, I would love to.

And I remember it very well, in that, we didn't necessarily see eye-to-eye back then.

And people had their inputs, as far as what should be the role of parent-coordinators, the role of the CECs, the role of the PEPs.

And there was a lot of debate, as you well know, and that's why it lapsed at that particular point in time.

But I think out of that process came a system that was healthier. We established the arts council, the arts committee, of the PEP, and had to

have regular reports.

And also, financially, we were in a different position than this current mayor is in right now, having more money to fund things.

But I think it allowed for more robust debate to take place, and then from that debate, we did some fine-tuning to the CEC, we did some fine-tuning to the PEP as well.

And I think the Chancellor alluded to that this morning, as far as those next steps that were taken, to try to improve engagement of the parents itself.

But I also remember the downside of it, and that it did lapse, and it was an unknown, what was going to happen, because, it was the end of June through August, if I'm not mistaken, around it lapsing, and the old Board of Ed.

And I can tell you, quite frankly, the trading that took place around making sure who was appointed to the board, and that scares me more than anything else.

And I think, for an improvement plan, if you're asking about that, I think the Chancellor hit on a lot of things.

I think what this administration has done has

built on what we started and established.

And, Senator, I'm not sure if you mentioned it, or I heard it somewhere else, but, I mean, the system is still relatively new.

If you remember the old system existed for -- since '68 to 2002, with the decentralized model.

And so this has been in place now, 14 years, and I think it's important that we take a look at it, and always try to fine-tune.

But I think that where we're at right now is pretty good. I mean, we didn't ignore a lot from the renewal back in 2009.

And, quite frankly, I think it's extremely important for it to go way beyond the year, two years, and, quite frankly, even beyond the three years, because whether it's this mayor or another mayor, for planning purposes, for coherence, for stability of the staff patterns, to make sure that people know what's coming up in the future for even accountability, they need to have a multi-year renewal to address that, but I think just fine-tuning around the edges.

And I think part of the frustration is that, there just needs to be more information flow, more sharing of information, making sure that information

is going out there.

And I understand the political dynamics and all that, but, quite frankly, I think the dynamics of pedagogy and instruction have to trump the dynamics of any of the politics that may exist.

And, quite frankly, now, not being in city government, I have the ability to just say that.

But I think it's more important to always focus the attention, as you've done as a teacher, and as you've done in serving your respective communities, on the outcome for students, and how we increase the outcome, from an educational and pedagogical point of view.

SENATOR ADDABBO: Thank you for your testimony, and for highlighting what would happen should mayoral control lapse and us going backwards to another structure.

So, thank you very much.

DENNIS WALCOTT: Thank you, sir, for the question.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you very much.

DENNIS WALCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I appreciate it very much, and thank you.

Have a good afternoon.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Before we adjourn, as

you just -- you've heard from other speakers, and my colleagues here, too, we're all deeply disappointed that we didn't get the Mayor here.

We would have all liked to have heard him, and we all would like to have been able to ask him a few follow-up questions to the last meeting.

So I think an opportunity was missed by the Mayor, by not showing up, and, I don't know how to fix that.

But, I thank the people who came and offered their testimony, and their written testimony will be part of the public record.

And I am told that, anyone who would like to -- where can we see this?

This is -- oh, this video of this hearing will be available -- if anyone wants to go to sleep at night, the video of this hearing will be available at the Senate Finance Committee website.

So, that could be -- you can hear this all over again.

Thank you, and the meeting is adjourned.

(Whereupon, at approximately 3:23 p.m., the public hearing held before the New York State Senate Standing Committee on Education concluded, and adjourned.)