

# MAYOR AND SUPERINTENDENT PARTNERSHIPS IN EDUCATION: CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

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## HEARING

BEFORE THE

### COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND LABOR

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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HEARING HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, JULY 17, 2008

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## C O N T E N T S

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	Page
Hearing held on July 17, 2008 .....	1
Statement of Members:	
McKeon, Hon. Howard P. "Buck," Senior Republican Member, Committee on Education and Labor .....	4
Prepared statement of .....	5
Miller, Hon. George, Chairman, Committee on Education and Labor .....	1
Prepared statement of .....	3
Letter from the National Alliance of Black School Educators .....	67
Statement of Witnesses:	
Bloomberg, Hon. Michael R., Mayor, the City of New York .....	20
Prepared statement of .....	23
Questions for the record and responses submitted .....	70
Duncan, Arne, Chief Executive Officer, Chicago Public Schools .....	33
Prepared statement of .....	36
Questions for the record and responses submitted .....	77
"FY2008 Recruitment & Workforce Planning Initiatives" .....	83
Fenty, Hon. Adrian M., Mayor, District of Columbia .....	10
Prepared statement of .....	12
Questions for the record and responses submitted .....	87
Hall, Beverly L., Superintendent, Atlanta Public Schools .....	28
Prepared statement of .....	30
Questions for the record and responses submitted .....	89
Klein, Joel I., Chancellor, New York City Department of Education .....	24
Prepared statement of .....	27
Questions for the record and responses submitted .....	70
Rhee, Michelle, Chancellor, District of Columbia Public Schools .....	13
Prepared statement of .....	17
Questions for the record and responses submitted .....	87



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PARTNERSHIPS IN EDUCATION:  
CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP**

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**Thursday, July 17, 2008  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Education and Labor  
Washington, DC**

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The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:12 a.m., in room 2175, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. George Miller [chairman of the committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Miller, Kildee, Payne, Woolsey, Hinojosa, McCarthy, Tierney, Wu, Holt, Davis of California, Davis of Illinois, Bishop of New York, Sarbanes, Hirono, Altmire, Yarmuth, Hare, Clarke, Shea-Porter, McKeon, Castle, Biggert, Platts, Kline, and Kuhl.

Staff present: Alice Cain, Senior Education Policy Advisor (K-12); Lynne Campbell, Legislative Fellow for Education; Alejandra Ceja, Senior Budget/Appropriations Analyst; Fran-Victoria Cox, Staff Attorney; Adrienne Dunbar, Education Policy Advisor; Sarah Dyson, Investigative Associate, Oversight; Denise Forte, Director of Education Policy; David Hartzler, Systems Administrator; Lloyd Horwich, Policy Advisor, Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secretary Education; Fred Jones, Staff Assistant, Education; Ann-Frances Lambert, Special Assistant to Director of Education Policy; Ricardo Martinez, Policy Advisor, Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning and Competitiveness; Stephanie Moore, General Counsel; Alex Nock, Deputy Staff Director; Joe Novotny, Chief Clerk; Rachel Racusen, Communications Director; Meredith Regine, Junior Legislative Associate, Labor; Daniel Weiss, Special Assistant to the Chairman; Margaret Young, Staff Assistant, Education; Mark Zuckerman, Staff Director Stephanie Arras, Minority Legislative Assistant; James Bergeron, Minority Deputy Director of Education and Human Services Policy; Robert Borden, Minority General Counsel; Chad Miller, Minority Professional Staff; Susan Ross, Minority Director of Education and Human Services Policy; Linda Stevens, Minority Chief Clerk/Assistant to the General Counsel; and Sally Stroup, Minority Staff Director.

Chairman MILLER [presiding]. A quorum being present, the hearing will come to order.

Today, the committee is conducting a hearing on mayor-superintendent partnerships in education and closing the achievement gap.

In recent years, one of the bright spots in education reform in this country has been the strong interest mayors and superintendents have taken to improve inner-city public schools. The purpose of today's hearing is to learn more about these admirable efforts and their successes in raising student achievement across the board.

At a time when our nation faces extreme economic challenges, we know that providing every child with a solid education is the ticket to building a more competitive workforce, a stronger economy, and a brighter future for our nation.

For decades, America's public education system has not served all children equally. Far too many children, especially low-income and minority children, were allowed to fall through the cracks. Many of us knew that this type of system was unacceptable and a serious threat to our democracy.

Six years ago, we set out to close the growing student achievement gap. We enacted the No Child Left Behind Act at the federal level to increase accountability in our schools and to ensure that no group of students could go ignored, and although the law itself is in need of significant changes, it has provided us with critical information on how our students are learning.

We know now that while the achievement gap has narrowed over the last 6 years, our schools and students are still not making enough progress. We also know that our students are falling behind students in other countries when it comes to mastering the basic skills, like math, science, and reading. As a nation, we cannot afford to continue on this path.

We know we need to do a better job of providing all students with an excellent education and that we prepare them to take the jobs of tomorrow, to be our next generation of innovators, discoverers, and leaders.

Today, we will hear from the mayors and superintendents of major U.S. cities about the innovative strategies they are using to try and close the achievement gap among our students. What is especially striking about the four cities represented here today—New York City, Washington, Chicago, and Atlanta—is that they all have had remarkable success with the very student populations that No Child Left Behind is designed to help.

In Atlanta, 100 percent of the city's elementary schools made Adequate Yearly Progress last year, even with 76 percent of the students living in poverty.

In Chicago, a city where nearly 85 percent of the children live in poverty, the number of students meeting, exceeding expectations of the Illinois Standards Achievement Test rose by 23 percent to 69 percent proficiency in math over the past 2 years. Similarly, student achievement in reading comprehension rose by 13 percent to 61 percent proficiency over the same period.

In New York City, 74 percent of the students were proficient in math this year, up from 57 percent last year, and 58 percent of the students were proficient in reading, up from 51 percent last year.

And here in D.C., elementary students increased their proficiency in math by 11 percent last year and increased their proficiency in reading by 8 percent.

None of these are small feats. As Congress considers how we can best improve our federal education laws, we need to pay attention to the impressive work that these members are doing and how they are doing it, and most importantly what you have learned along the way.

Keeping in mind that No Child Left Behind is a fundamental civil rights law, we need to know what tools you have found to be effective, what we can do to help empower, expand, and build upon your successes. I think that we can all agree that nothing is more important to making sure that every child in this country, regardless of race or income, receives a world-class public education.

And, again, I want to thank you for your time, your expertise, and your dedication in appearing before the committee today.

And with that, I would like to yield to Congressman McKeon, the senior Republican on the committee, for his opening statement.

[The statement of Mr. Miller follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. George Miller, Chairman, Committee on  
Education and Labor**

Good morning and welcome.

In recent years, one of the bright spots in education reform in this country has been the strong interest that mayors and superintendents have taken to improve inner-city public schools. The purpose of today's hearing is to learn more about these admirable efforts, and their successes in raising student achievement across the board.

At a time when our nation faces extreme economic challenges, we know that providing every child with a solid education is the ticket to building a more competitive workforce, a stronger economy, and a brighter future.

For decades, America's public education system has not served all children equally. Far too many children, especially low-income and minority children, were allowed to fall through the cracks.

Many of us knew that this type of system was unacceptable—and a serious threat to our democracy.

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We need to know what tools you have found effective, and what we can do to help empower, expand, and build upon your successes.

I think we can all agree that nothing is more important than making sure that every child in this country—regardless of race or income—receives a world-class public education.

I'd like to thank all of our witnesses for joining us.

I look forward to your testimony and learning more about how—together—we can make this vision a reality for America's schoolchildren.

Thank you.

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Mr. MCKEON. Thank you, Chairman Miller, and good morning.

It is a great privilege to be here among some of the most fearless education reform leaders in the country, and lest there be any doubt, fearlessness is exactly what we need from education reformers. We need leaders willing to take a chance on innovation over the status quo, leaders who are not afraid to buck the establishment and put the interests of the students ahead of the system.

Each one of our witnesses has risen to that challenge, and it is with great excitement that we bring you here today to share your success stories and offer your thoughts on systemic reform. We have leaders from some of the largest and most challenging school districts in the country, from New York to Chicago and from Atlanta to right here in the nation's capital.

The school system here in D.C. has been particularly troubling for many of us in Congress over the years, both because of its proximity to the Capitol where we work each day and because of its systemic struggles unmatched anywhere in the country.

Here in D.C., we spend more and get less than anywhere else in the country. For that reason, D.C. has been an ideal incubator for reform. There is nothing to lose and everything to gain by investing in these schools and testing innovative strategies that will benefit students.

I have been particularly pleased by the success of the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program which has proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that parents are desperate for new educational choices for their children. Today, some 1,900 children are attending the public or private school of their parents' choosing.

Although we expect it to take years for measurable academic gains to become evident, the early findings show that students receiving Opportunity Scholarships have made gains in reading and math. Their parents are much more satisfied with their new schools, believing them to be safer and more productive learning environments.

The D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program is an integral component of a much broader reform strategy. Along with the scholarship program, we are investing in strategies to improve the public



school system and replicate high-performing charter schools. Both of these tactics are essential for long-term reform.

But neither of these approaches will provide the immediate lifeline to children trapped in underperforming schools that can be offered through a scholarship, and so neither of these approaches would be complete without that essential third element: the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program.

Of course, we know there are many ingredients necessary to successful education reform, and I believe most of them are rooted in the notion of parental empowerment and a students-first mentality. Initiatives from tuition tax credits to funding portability should all be part of our national dialogue on educational reform.

This panel is extraordinarily qualified to discuss the range of policies that are making a difference in their schools. One of the common elements among the districts represented is that they all recognize the importance of good teachers. In fact, there are few factors that have a greater impact on student academic achievement than the quality of their teachers. I am anxious to hear about how these schools are recruiting the best and the brightest and rewarding them for their successes in the classroom.

There are so many cutting-edge strategies to reform our schools that I could continue all morning, but, in the interest of time and to give each of you as much of an opportunity to testify as possible, I will conclude my remarks with this: Education reform is one of the most difficult challenges facing our nation's mayors and local leaders, but it is also one of the most important.

Today, as we recognize the work being done, I hope it will serve as a wakeup call about just how much work remains to ensure that every child in America has access to the high-quality education he or she deserves.

Chairman Miller, I want to thank you for holding this important hearing, thank our witnesses for being here, and I yield back.

[The statement of Mr. McKeon follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Howard P. "Buck" McKeon, Senior Republican Member, Committee on Education and Labor**

Thank you Chairman Miller, and good morning. It is a great privilege to be here among some of the most fearless education reform leaders in the country.

And lest there be any doubt, fearlessness is exactly what we need from education reformers. We need leaders willing to take a chance on innovation over the status quo. Leaders who aren't afraid to buck the establishment and put the interests of the students ahead of the system. Each one of our witnesses has risen to the challenge, and it is with great excitement that we bring you here today to share your success stories and offer your thoughts on systemic reform.

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I have been particularly pleased by the success of the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program, which has proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that parents are desperate for new educational choices for their children. Today, some 1,900 children are attending the public or private school of their parents' choosing. Although we expect it to take years for measurable academic gains to become evident, the early findings

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Chairman Miller, I want to thank you for holding this important hearing and I yield back.

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Chairman MILLER. Thank you very much.

And pursuant to Committee Rule 12(a), any member may submit an opening statement in writing which will be made part of the record of this hearing.

And now I would like to introduce our witnesses.

First will be Adrian Fenty who is the mayor of Washington, D.C., and before his election as mayor, Mayor Fenty worked as the lead attorney for the D.C. Council Committee on Education, Libraries, and Recreation. He was elected to Ward 4 council seat in 1999 and then was elected to mayor in 2006—and my colleagues will appreciate this—he was the first person in history to win all 142 precincts in the District, and that is quite a feat. We all want to win every precinct in our district.

Since he has become mayor, he has made it very clear to the citizens of D.C. that their public schools are his highest priority and reorganizing the Department of Health and reforming child welfare and emergency medical services, all which come together around our children in the public schools.

Michelle Rhee is the chancellor of the D.C. schools, and she was earlier recruited by Teach for America to teach in Harlem Park, Baltimore, for 3 years. She founded the New Teachers Project, a non-profit organization that helps recruit and train new teachers for high-needs schools. In 2007, Mayor Fenty appointed her to the chancellor of the schools, and she has since implemented multiple initiatives aimed at improving Washington, D.C. public schools.

My colleague, Yvette Clarke, will introduce our next two witnesses, Mayor Bloomberg and Chancellor Klein.

Ms. CLARKE. Thank you, Chairman Miller.

To Chairman Miller, Ranking Member McKeon, and my colleagues, it is my honor to present to you Michael R. Bloomberg.

Michael R. Bloomberg is the 108th mayor of the City of New York. He attended Johns Hopkins University where he paid his tuition by taking loans and working as a parking lot attendant during the summer.

In 1966, he was hired by Solomon Brothers to work on Wall Street after having received an MBA at Harvard Business School. In 1988, Solomon was acquired, and he was squeezed out by a merger.

Chairman MILLER. Poor guy. [Laughter.]

Ms. CLARKE. He began a small startup company called Bloomberg LLP in 1988, and, today, Bloomberg LLP has over 250,000 subscribers to its financial news and information service. Headquartered in New York City, the company has 9,500 employees in more than 130 cities worldwide.

He officially entered public life in 2001 when he entered the race for mayor of the City of New York. His election came just 2 months after the tragic attack of 9/11 at a time when many believed that crime would return, business would flee, and New York might never recover.

In his first term, Mayor Bloomberg cut crime 20 percent, created jobs by supporting small businesses, unleashed a building boom of affordable housing, expanded parks and worked to revitalize the waterfront, implemented ambitious public health strategies, including the successful ban on smoking in restaurants and bars, expanded support for the community arts organizations, and improved the efficiency of government.

In 2005, Mayor Bloomberg was reelected by a diverse coalition of support that stretched across the political spectrum. In his second term, while balancing the budget and driving unemployment to a record low, Mayor Bloomberg has taken on a number of new challenges.

He launched an innovative program to combat poverty that encourages work and makes work pay. He has undertaken a far-reaching campaign to fight global warming and prepare New York for an estimated million more residents by 2030, and as co-founder of a bipartisan coalition of more than 200 mayors from every region of the country, Mayor Bloomberg is working to keep illegal guns out of the hands of criminals and off the city streets.

Mayor Bloomberg is the father of two daughters, Emma and Georgina.

It is, indeed, my honor to present to you, my colleagues, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member McKeon, Joel I. Klein.

Joel Klein became New York City school chancellor in July of 2002 after serving in the highest levels of government and business. As chancellor, he oversees more than 1,450 schools with over 1.1 million students, 136,000 employees, and a \$15 billion operating budget.

Mr. Klein's comprehensive reform program, Children First, is transforming the troubled public school system that existed when the mayor was elected into a system of great schools.

Before Mr. Klein became chancellor, he was chairman and executive officer of Bertelsmann, Inc., and chief U.S. liaison officer to Bertelsmann AG from January of 2001 to July of 2002. Bertelsmann, one of the world's largest media companies, has annual revenues exceeding \$20 billion and employs over 76,000 people in 54 countries.

From 1997 to 2001, Mr. Klein was an assistant attorney general in charge of the U.S. Department of Justice's antitrust division. Mr. Klein was widely credited with transforming the antitrust division into one of the Clinton administration's greatest successes. He also served as acting assistant attorney general and as the antitrust division's principal duty assistant attorney general. His appointment to the U.S. Justice Department came after Klein served 2 years, 1993 through 1995, as deputy counsel to President William J. Clinton.

Mr. Klein began his career as a law clerk, first to Chief Justice David Bazelon on the U.S. Court of Appeals of the D.C. Circuit from 1973 to 1974 and then Justice Lewis Powell on the U.S. Supreme Court from 1974 to 1975. He next worked in the public interest law firm, the Mental Health Law Project, in 1975 to 1976. For the following 5 years, he was an associate and partner at the law firm of Rogovin, Stern & Hugel, from 1976 to 1981.

Active in community work, Mr. Klein has participated in Big Brothers, served as chairman of the board of the Green Door, a pioneer community-based treatment program for mentally ill residents of the District of Columbia, and as the treasurer for the World Federation of Mental Health.

During a leave of absence from law school—we are going back here. [Laughter.]

Well, we just thought it was so interesting. Let me—

Chairman MILLER [continuing]. Longer than our witnesses.

Ms. CLARKE. I am going to close. I am going to close.

During a leave of absence from law school in 1969, he studied at New York University's School of Education and later taught math to sixth graders at a public school in Queens.

That gives you a full picture, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, of the dynamism of our chancellor, Chancellor Klein.

Chairman MILLER. I did not hear anything about his preschool experience—

[Laughter.]

Ms. CLARKE. Thank you, my colleagues.

Chairman MILLER. Our next witness will be Dr. Beverly Hall who was appointed superintendent of Atlanta Public Schools in 1999. Born in Jamaica, Dr. Hall immigrated to the United States upon completion of her high school education. Dr. Hall previously served as superintendent of the Newark Public Schools in New Jersey. She also served as deputy chancellor for instruction in New York City and as principal of two New York City public schools. She was recently honored with the Council of Great City Schools National Urban Superintendent of the Year Award.

And my colleague, Mr. Davis, will introduce Arne Duncan, the CEO of the Chicago city schools, and we will stop at high school.

[Laughter.]

Mr. DAVIS OF ILLINOIS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member McKeon, members of the committee.

Chicago is not quite as big as New York and, therefore, my introduction is not quite as long.

But since 1992, Arne Duncan has been an integral part of the education scene in Chicago, the third largest city in the United States of America. Prior to joining the public schools, Arne directed the Ariel Education Initiative established by John Rogers, founder and head of Ariel Capital, one of the nation's most successful businessmen.

In 1988, Arne joined the Chicago school system and, in 2001, he was appointed CEO. In partnership with the mayor of the City of Chicago and the Chicago City Council, the business community, colleges and universities, other educational programs and institutions, local communities, and our unique system of local school councils, Arne has transformed education in Chicago. Using a concept of smaller class sizes, smaller schools, charter schools, interaction with local communities, innovative approaches to recruiting teachers, providing opportunities for teachers to grow and develop, education has become a citadel of hope in Chicago.

Arne is intimately involved and associated with the communities where the schools are. It is not that uncommon to see him at a block club meeting or one of the local churches or community organization meetings or out on the school grounds involved in a pickup basketball game with some of the young persons.

I think that this approach has made him as successful as he has been. He provides not only leadership, but motivation and inspiration, and it is my pleasure, Mr. Chairman, to have him here today and introduce him to all of you.

Chairman MILLER. Thank you very much.

And I want to welcome all of our witnesses.

The Chair is going to use its privileges to recognize two young women from my district who just came into the committee room to listen to part of this hearing, Cara Chin and Emma Lynn Tringali from Benicia High School in California.

Welcome. Stand up. Yes. Come on. There you go. Thank you very much for being here. [Applause.]

I would say that the purpose of this hearing is, as you will hear from Chancellor Rhee, to make sure that our education system is focused on the students and not just on the adults. So welcome, and I hope you enjoy your tour of Washington, D.C.

Yes? What we are going to do is a little bit different this morning. A number of years ago before she was speaker, the speaker took us to Stanford University when Democrats were working on an innovative agenda, and we listened to the CEOs of the biotech companies and the high-tech companies and the venture capital community about education, about what it means to create an innovative agenda, and five members of Congress sat and listened to these individuals for over 2 hours until one of the CEOs raised a hand and said it was the first time they had ever been in a room with Members of Congress where they listened as opposed to talking.

We have a system here. When you begin to speak, a green light will go on, and then a yellow light will go on, which usually is after

4 minutes, and then a red light when we would like you to sum up your testimony. We are going to be a little liberal with the lights because I think it is very important that this committee hear about not only your accomplishments, but what it is you think the federal government could do to better deploy its assets, its resources, as I said, to reinforce and expand the changes that you and other school districts have brought about to bring about this growth in achievement and the closing of the gap. So I think it is very important that we hear from you.

We will then go to questions from members, but I want to make sure that we—this was a difficult hearing to assemble, given the busy lives of everybody at the witness table. So that is how I would like to begin, and we have discussed this with the minority, and I think there is agreement on this.

So, Mayor Fenty, we are going to begin with you.

**STATEMENT OF HON. ADRIAN M. FENTY, MAYOR, THE  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

Mayor FENTY. Thank you very much, Chairman Miller, Ranking Member McKeon, and distinguished committee members.

I am extremely honored to appear before you in the company of my esteemed fellow mayor and friend Michael Bloomberg and with representatives from the great cities of Atlanta and Chicago and New York. These are four of the great chancellors in the country right now.

On behalf of the residents of the District of Columbia, I would like to briefly talk to you about the daunting scholastic hurdles district students face, and what their government and community have done and continue to do to provide them the educational opportunities they both need and deserve.

I assumed the mayoralty of the District of Columbia in January 2007 with a determination and a mandate to completely transform a school system that spent more per pupil than any other system in the country, yet languished at or near the bottom of every national measure of academic achievement. Simply put, the District of Columbia was failing its children.

Many doctoral dissertations analyzing the merits of competing educational theories could be written to explain this failure, but, at its heart, the explanation was frustratingly simple: zero accountability. Because the multilayer bureaucracy created plenty of places for the buck to stop, we were caught in a never-ending cycle of finger-pointing and blame.

In municipal government, if the city fails to pick up the garbage, the mayor knows exactly which member of his or her Cabinet is answerable and what steps need to be taken to address the problem. Yet, when it came to perhaps the most vital charge of municipal affairs, the future of our children, no one could be held to account. As counterintuitive as it sounds, the mayor had absolutely no say whatsoever in the administration of the school system of the city.

My approach was, in objective terms, confoundingly simple: Just as much as the mayor is accountable for keeping the streets clear of snow, he or she must be responsible for ensuring that the city's children are afforded the very best life skills and educational resources that the nation's capital ought to provide them, and, if the

mayor failed in this charge, he or she then must accept the blame and the consequences.

I then selected a proven educational maverick and innovator, Michelle Rhee, as the first-ever chancellor of the District of Columbia Public Schools, and we got to work performing such radical yet obvious tasks as ensuring timely delivery of textbooks to appropriate classrooms, clearing out warehouses where textbooks and teaching supplies lay unused while our teachers were spending their own money to buy these same supplies, and establishing for the first time an integrated recordkeeping system that tracked school records—all four million pieces of paper that had previously been strewn on the floor in a storage room at our central administration offices.

And in the short time that we have been running the school system, we have recruited the business community to participate in a school cleanup program, begun an intensive facilities construction program to repair buildings that have been dilapidated for decades, and hired an ombudsman as a resource for parents needing help.

We have made the tough decision to close or consolidate 23 underenrolled schools to best utilize our resources. We installed more than 6,300 computers in schools around the city, created a Saturday tutoring program for our children that needed extra help. We have prepared the restructuring process for 27 schools to begin the process of helping failing schools achieve adequate yearly progress as required by the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

There truly also is a sense in the streets of this city, in the homes and the classrooms, that we are all in this together. Parents, teachers and, most of all, students truly understand that the bar has now been raised. But if more has been invested, it is because more is being expected. Our students seem to understand this and they have delivered.

I am extremely proud to be able to say that in the 13 months since taking over the schools, we have already made dramatic, meaningful, lasting changes. We have seen impressive gains in reading and math scores for our elementary and secondary students. We have brought innovative reforms to staffing and personnel, including a framework for outstanding teachers to trade tenure for bonuses based on student achievement that will make them some of the highest-paid teachers in the country.

This fall, we will take our first steps toward a comprehensive school staffing model that puts art, music, and physical education teachers, nurses, and counselors, and other key staff in every school building. We have developed an individualized reform plan for each of the schools that is in restructuring status under No Child Left Behind.

And we are also making tremendous progress on facilities improvements. Students must get the message that they can be successful in school and we are committed to their success by providing appropriate environments for learning.

Mr. Chairman, you may know that I spend a few weekends a year taking part in marathons and triathlons and this type of thing. We have done a great deal in our first year in charge of the schools, but I look at our work so far as just the warm-up. We have much further to go.

Chairman Miller, Ranking Member McKeon, and other members of the committee and really of the entire Congress, because of the District of Columbia's unique status, we have had to come to the Congress for support, both in getting our initial authorizing legislation passed and additional things along the way. I personally want to thank you and all of the Members of Congress for their support. It has truly made a difference in a short period of time in the lives of the students of the District of Columbia.

This concludes my prepared remarks, and I am happy to answer any questions.

[The statement of Mayor Fenty follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Adrian M. Fenty, Mayor, District of Columbia**

Chairman Miller, Ranking Member McKeon and distinguished committee members: I am honored to appear before you in the company of my esteemed fellow mayor and friend Mike Bloomberg and with representatives from the great cities of Atlanta and Chicago. On behalf of the residents of the District of Columbia, I would like to briefly talk to you about the daunting scholastic hurdles District students face, and what their government and community have done and continue to do to provide them the educational opportunities they need and deserve.

*Accountability*

I assumed the mayoralty of the District of Columbia in January 2007 with a determination to completely transform a school system that spent more per pupil than any other system in the country, yet languished at or near the bottom of every national measure of academic achievement. Simply put, the District of Columbia was failing its children.

Many doctoral dissertations analyzing the merits of competing educational theories could be written to explain this failure, but, at its heart, the explanation was frustratingly simple: Zero accountability. Because the multi-layer bureaucracy created plenty of places for the buck to stop, we were caught in a never-ending cycle of finger pointing and blame.

In municipal government, if the city fails to pick up garbage, the mayor knows exactly which member of his or her cabinet is answerable, and what steps need to be taken to address the problem; yet, when it came to perhaps the most vital charge of municipal affairs—the future of our children—no one could be held to account. As counterintuitive as it sounds, the mayor had absolutely no say whatsoever in the administration of the school system of the city.

I was determined to ensure an immediate and decisive end to the cycle of blame. My approach was, in objective terms, confoundingly simple: just as much as the mayor is accountable for keeping the streets clear of snow, he or she should—and must—be responsible for ensuring that the city's children are afforded the very best life skills and educational resources that the nation's capital ought to provide them. And, if the mayor failed in this charge, he or she must accept the blame and consequences.

I then selected a proven educational maverick and innovator, Michelle Rhee, as the first-ever Chancellor of the District of Columbia Public Schools, and we got to work performing such radical, yet obvious tasks as ensuring timely delivery of textbooks to appropriate classrooms, clearing out warehouses where text books and teaching supplies lay unused while our teachers were spending their own money to buy these same supplies, and establishing—for the first time—an integrated record-keeping system that tracked school records. Records, all 4 million pieces of paper, that had previously been strewn on the floor in a storage room at our central administration offices.

*Results of Reform*

There truly is a sense in the streets, homes and classrooms of this city that we are all in this together. Parents, teachers and, most of all, students, truly understand that the bar has been raised. But if more has been invested, it is because more is being expected. Our students seem to understand this and they have delivered.

I'm extremely proud to be able to say that in the 13 months since taking over the schools, we've already made dramatic, meaningful, lasting changes. We've seen impressive gains in reading and math scores for our elementary and secondary students. We've brought innovative reforms to staffing and personnel, including a



framework for outstanding teachers to trade tenure for bonuses—based on student achievement—that will make them some of the highest-paid teachers in the United States.

*Next Steps*

This fall, we'll take our first steps toward a comprehensive school staffing model that puts art, music and physical education teachers, nurses and counselors, and other key staff in every school building. We've made the tough decision to close or consolidate under-enrolled schools to do this. We've developed an individualized reform plan for each of the schools that is in restructuring status under the No Child Left Behind Act. We're also making tremendous progress on facilities improvements. Students must get the message that they can be successful in school and that we're committed to their success by providing appropriate environments for learning.

Mr. Chairman, you may know that I spend a few weekends a year taking part in marathons and triathlons. We've done a great deal in our first year in charge of the schools, but I look at this work as just the warm-up. We have much, much further to go.

Chairman Miller, Ranking Member McKeon, and other members of the Committee, I want to thank you for your support and for your interest in urban education. I look forward to working together to ensure a prosperous future for generations of District of Columbia students.

This concludes my prepared remarks, and I'm happy to answer any questions.

Chairman MILLER. Thank you.  
Ms. Rhee?

**STATEMENT OF MICHELLE RHEE, CHANCELLOR, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Ms. RHEE. Thank you.

Good afternoon, Chairman Miller, Ranking Member McKeon, and members of the committee.

I am honored to testify today about mayoral governance and closing the achievement gap. Considering the great challenges of D.C. Public Schools, we are fortunate to be the new kids on the mayoral governance block, and I am grateful to the leaders in New York and Chicago who have created incredibly strong models for mayoral governance. We have already been able to apply their lessons for reform to the unique needs and promise of Washington, D.C.

I have been proud to work with urban public school systems across the country for the last 15 years and for 1 year now as the chancellor of the D.C. Public Schools. Last summer, I entered a system that showed a 70 percentage point gap in achievement between our core minority students and our wealthier white students. We are the only district in the country on high-risk status with the Department of Education, and only 9 percent of our entering freshmen class graduate from college within 5 years.

I entered a system in which one-third of our schools had proficiency rates lower than 20 percent in either reading or math. In other words, four out of five students in those schools, or about 14,000 children, were not even meeting the most basic levels of proficiency. In a district that is 81 percent African-American, this is one of the greatest institutionalized injustices imaginable.

The old ways of addressing this longstanding injustice have not been working. No matter how difficult, the solutions to these problems must be radical and unprecedented.

Many have asked me why, considering the severe dysfunction of the system, I would take on such a challenge. In fact, when Mayor Fenty first asked me about the possibility of my appointment as

chancellor, I declined. But it was not for the reasons that you might expect.

I have met enough students in this district to know that their proficiency levels do not reflect their ability. I know firsthand from speaking and working with students that our poor and minority kids have the aptitude that rivals anyone. Rather, I knew that I would not be able to create a system that was strong and just if I had to bow to the adult and political priorities that have prevented progress for children for years. I was not willing to lead a system that asked children to wait another patient moment while adult priorities and timelines diminished students' life outcomes.

When I raised this concern with the mayor, his response was clear and immediate. Education was his first and highest priority. He would back our students every step of the way, no matter what the political cost. I knew I was talking to someone who knew that the health and vitality of the city was dependent on the quality of education it delivered to its children, whose skills would be critical for driving the city's progress in future years.

Now, after 1 year as chancellor under the mayoral governance structure, I see even more clearly that it takes tremendous courage to stand by this kind of commitment. The deepest and most far-reaching results will be seen long after a leader has left office. With this in mind, placing self-interest and preservation behind student needs may be the most difficult and human challenge of every publicly elected official. But to truly honor the letter and spirit of *Brown vs. Board of Education*, it is absolutely necessary.

I can unequivocally say that without mayoral governance and without a mayor who is willing to prioritize educational reform no matter how muddy the political waters become, we would not have been able to achieve what we have in the past year in D.C. Public Schools.

For years in school districts across the country, school boards, sometimes led by principled and competent officials, have had difficulty making deep reforms that have equalized education. They are bound by the political tug-of-wars that block swift action.

Many superintendents have similar ideas to mine regarding school policy and education reform. In most cases, they know the same best practices that I do and they know the research that tells us what will be most effective, and they also know that they would apply these practices to meet their own district's needs. But they do not have the adequate authority to assess their students' needs and take action to meet those needs.

They spend much of their time jockeying with school boards who are as bound to politics as they are to the interests of children. Despite good intentions and the hard work of competent professionals over the years, this structure is one of the reasons that 54 years after desegregation we still struggle to achieve justice in education.

What is it about this governance structure that can enable us to change the tide?

First, unlike most superintendents, I report to a boss who knocks the barriers out of the way. He runs political interference when necessary and has not flinched once in supporting a decision that I felt was in the best interests of kids. Under mayoral governance, I believe we can finally reverse the longstanding failures of urban

public education. In many ways, D.C. is a microcosm of urban public education systems across the country. As our most pressing challenges exist on a national level, reform here can be used as a model across the country.

Second, one of the most striking challenges we face in Washington, D.C., and in other urban districts is the complete and utter lack of accountability. This year, I met students who appealed to me about teachers who did not show up to class. On one occasion, one of my staff members took a call from a teacher who had applied to teach summer school. After 20 minutes of conversation, the teacher told my staff member, "Hold on. I have to go dismiss my kids." And he knew at the time of this phone that he was talking to a member of the chancellor's staff.

In another example in the fall, I learned that one of our employees had failed to fill out one form for a special education child, and for another child, had failed to conduct a meeting. Her mistakes resulted in a half-a-million dollar cost to the system when by law we had to provide those students with private placements.

I called that employee into my office to ask her what had happened. I said, you know, "Tell me a little bit about why, because you failed to fill out the form for one child and you failed to have a meeting for another child, you cost this district a half-a-million dollars," and she replied to me, "You need to understand that I have a very difficult job, I have too much to do, and sometimes things are going to fall through the cracks."

I replied to her, "Well, no, you need to understand that if you are going to have this job, you have to take personal responsibility for ensuring that everything within your job purview gets done and gets done well. If you are going to take the paycheck home every 2 weeks, you have to take that on." And she looked at me very puzzled, and she said, "Well, that is not very fair."

So this is the kind of culture that we were actually dealing with in the public schools, and, at that time, I did not have the authority to make this employee and others accountable for meeting their job responsibilities. As a result, the mayor and I lobbied for a change in the law that would allow us to convert central office school district employees into at-will employees. With the support of the D.C. City Council, we became better able to ensure that our central office employees are now working within the best interest of students.

Also this year, we created a new performance evaluation system because many employees who had been with DCPS for years had never formally been evaluated. Already the combination of these two actions has begun to change the culture to one of accountability and professional striving.

Third, like many other school districts, DCPS has historically had a culture driven more by politics and adult concerns than by the needs of children. This tension is especially clear during the discussions of school closings and consolidations.

In D.C., the previous superintendent, after an extensive period of community engagement, released a Master Education Plan in which multiple collaborators concluded that due to underenrollment, it was necessary to close schools. The community agreed that

it would save the system millions of dollars that could be redirected towards classrooms.

Yet even for schools that are not performing at high levels, few families wanted their schools to close, and because elected officials must often serve their constituents in their particular ward, even in cities led by mayoral governance, a debate ensues in which everyone agrees that schools must close, but few politicians want to close schools in their own jurisdictions.

Fortunately, with the backing of our mayor, we were able to address this underenrollment by effectively closing 23 schools in the District and redirecting those resources for next school year. Next year, for the first time in the history of Washington, D.C. Public Schools, every single school in the District will have a librarian, a music teacher, an art teacher, and a physical education teacher.

In the years to come, I am confident that we can turn our children's potential into achievement. Due to much hard work in our schools this year, and with greater authority to act on and build upon the strong foundations built by those before me, our achievement gap between African-American and Caucasian students in 1 year has decreased by 6 points in reading and 5 points in math. The gap between Hispanic and Caucasian students has decreased 8 points in reading and 7 in math. And in one school, Lafayette Elementary, we have decreased the achievement gap between African-American and Caucasian students by 19 percentage points.

In the year before I became chancellor, 52 schools had raised their math and reading scores over the course of 1 year. Considering the significant systemic challenges that we saw, when we set our performance goals, we really wanted just to see a movement in that number of plus 57. We actually increased it to 99 this past year. One hundred and seventeen of our schools have increased their math scores, and 110 have increased their reading scores.

The number of schools with proficiency rates below 20 percent has been cut almost in half, decreasing from 50 to 29. Some schools have even doubled or tripled their average reading and math scores. While we still have significant challenges ahead, this kind of growth shows promise for the reforms that mayoral governance has enabled.

To further these gains and decrease the achievement gap, we must continue to increase the level of accountability for everyone in the system, including teachers. There is no other profession that simultaneously requires the most competent and innovative professionals and at the same time can discourage these professionals from bringing their gifts to our kids.

We must be able to significantly reward teachers who are successful and to exit those teachers who, even with the correct supports, are unable to increase student achievement and academic growth. We can do this by working closely with our teachers' union officials to create the contracts that will support these goals.

When we consider the difficulty of what we were asking teachers to do and the consequences to our students if we do not do those, it actually puzzled me that the issue of rewarding teachers for their success rather than seniority is a controversial one. Quality teachers in urban districts successfully raise academic achievement results in the face of poverty, violence, high rates of AIDS and

other STDs, low expectations, obesity, teen pregnancy, and other issues that enter our schools with our children. We should not be afraid to reward those who meet the very high demands we place upon them. Without investing in our teachers by rewarding them in a tangible, meaningful way, we make it very difficult for districts like ours to attract and retain the best teachers who can close the achievement gap.

We have seen through the years that desegregation has not been enough to bring the racial justice to education that we need. It has not yet become the great equalizer that Horace Mann intended public education to be. As we work to become what he envisioned for public education in this country, this year, we are introducing the most dramatic and rapid changes this system has seen since the desegregation of our schools.

If there has been one complaint that I have heard most frequently since I started, it is that we are moving too quickly. But our children have been waiting since long before 1954 for a just, challenging, and equal public education system. With mayoral governance under a mayor who is willing to make the education of the district's young people the number one priority, we can create accountability in systems that have not seen it before, we can support principals and teachers in setting high expectations for students, and we can ensure that we have the tools to meet those expectations. In D.C. and across the country, we can deliver high-quality public education to students that is theirs by right.

Thank you for your support, for your commitment to closing the achievement gap in D.C. and across the country, and I am happy to answer your questions.

[The statement of Ms. Rhee follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Michelle Rhee, Chancellor, District of Columbia Public Schools**

Good afternoon, Chairman Miller, Ranking Member McKeon and members of the Committee. I am honored to testify today about mayoral governance and closing the achievement gap. Considering the great challenges of DC Public Schools, we are fortunate to be the 'new kids' on the mayoral governance block. I am grateful to the leaders in New York and Chicago who have created strong models for mayoral governance. We have already been able to apply their lessons for reform to the unique needs and promise of Washington, DC.

I have been proud to work with urban public school systems across the country for the past 15 years, and for one year as chancellor of the District of Columbia Public Schools. Last summer I entered a system that showed a 70% achievement gap in some of our schools. We are the only district in 'high risk' status with the Department of Education, and only 9% of our entering freshmen graduate from college within 9 years of beginning high school. I entered a system in which one-third of our schools have proficiency rates below 20% in either reading or math. In other words, four out of five students in those schools—about 14,000 children—were not even meeting the most basic level of proficiency. In a district that is 81 % African-American, this is one of the greatest institutionalized injustices imaginable. The old ways of addressing this long-standing injustice have not been working. No matter how difficult, the solutions to this problem must be radical and unprecedented.

Many have asked me why, considering the severe dysfunction of the system, I would take on such a challenge. In fact, when Mayor Fenty first raised the possibility of my appointment as chancellor, I declined; but it was not for the reasons you might expect. I have met enough students to know that their proficiency levels do not reflect their ability. I know first-hand from speaking and working with students that our poor and minority students have aptitude that rivals anyone. Rather, I knew that I would not be able to create a system that was strong and just if I had to bow to the adult and political priorities that have prevented progress for children for years. I was not willing to lead a system that asked children to wait an-

other patient minute while adult priorities and timelines diminished students' life chances. When I raised this concern with the mayor, his response was clear and immediate. Education was his first and highest priority. He would back our students every step of the way, whatever the political cost. I knew I was talking to someone who knew that the health and vitality of a city depends upon the quality of education it delivers to its children, whose skills will be critical for driving the city's progress in future years.

Now, after one year as chancellor under a mayoral governance structure, I see even more clearly that it takes enormous courage to stand by this commitment. The deepest and most far-reaching results will be seen long after a leader has left office. With this in mind, placing self-interest and preservation behind students' needs may be the most difficult and human challenge of every publicly elected official. But to truly honor the letter and spirit of *Brown vs. the Board of Education*, it is absolutely necessary. I can unequivocally say that without mayoral governance, and without a mayor who is willing to prioritize educational reform no matter how muddy the political waters become, we would not have been able to achieve what we have achieved in DCPS this year.

For years in school districts across the country, school boards led by principled and competent officials have had difficulty making deep reforms that have equalized education. They are bound by the political tug-of-wars that block swift action. Many superintendents have ideas similar to mine regarding school policy and education reform. In most cases they know the same best practices that research tells us will be most effective, and they know how they would apply these practices to meet their own district's needs. But they do not have adequate authority to assess their students' needs and take action to meet those needs. They spend much of their time jockeying with school boards who are as bound to politics as they are to the needs of children. Despite good intentions and the hard work of competent professionals over the years, this structure is one of the reasons that 54 years after desegregation we still struggle to achieve justice in education.

What is it about this governance structure that can enable us to change the tide? First, unlike many other superintendents, I report to a boss who knocks barriers out of the way. He runs political interference when necessary and has not flinched once in supporting a decision I felt was best for students. Under mayoral governance I believe we can finally reverse long-standing failures of urban public education. In many ways DC is a microcosm of urban public education systems across the country: as our most pressing challenges exist on a national level, reform here can be used as a model for the country.

Second, one of the most striking challenges we face in DCPS and in other urban districts is an utter lack of accountability. This year I met students who appealed to me about teachers who did not show up to class. On another occasion, one of my staff members took a call from a teacher who had applied to teach summer school. After 20 minutes of conversation he told my staff member, "Hold on, I have to dismiss my class." This was a person who knew he was talking to someone in the chancellor's office.

In another example, in the fall I learned that an employee had failed to fill out a form for one of our special education students, and to conduct a meeting with another. Her mistakes resulted in a half-million dollar cost to the system when by law the students had to receive private placements. I called in the employee and asked her what happened. She told me "You need to understand. I'm a very busy person. Sometimes things fall through the cracks." I explained that this student's placement was under her job responsibility, and that if she did not feel up to these responsibilities then she may want to consider another job. She responded that this was "not fair." At the time I did not have the authority to make this employee and others, accountable for meeting their job responsibilities.

As a result, we lobbied for a change in the law that would convert central office employees to 'at-will' status. With the support of the DC Council we became better able to ensure that our central office employees are working in the best interest of students. Also this year, we created a new performance evaluation system. Many employees had been with DCPS for years and had never been formally evaluated. Already the combination of these two actions has begun to change the culture to one of accountability and professional striving.

Third, like many other school districts, DCPS also has historically had a culture driven more by politics and adult concerns than by the needs of children. This tension is especially clear during discussions of school closings and consolidations. In DCPS, the previous superintendent—after an extensive period of community engagement—released a Master Education Plan, in which multiple collaborators concluded that due to under-enrollment, it was necessary to close schools. The community agreed that it would save the system millions of dollars that could be redirected

to classrooms. Yet even for schools that are not performing at high levels, few families want their schools to close. Because elected officials must serve the constituents in their particular wards, even in cities led by mayoral governance a debate ensues in which everyone agrees that schools must close but few politicians want any schools to close in their own wards. Fortunately, with the backing of the mayor we were able to address under-enrollment effectively by closing 23 schools and re-directing resources to schools for next year. The mayoral governance structure has allowed us—for the first time—to bring a librarian, teacher, music teacher, psychologist, and physical education teacher to all schools that need them.

In the years to come, I am confident that we can turn our children's potential into achievement. Due to much hard work in our schools this year, and with greater authority to act on and build upon the strong foundations built by those before me, our achievement gap between African American and Caucasian students has decreased over the past year by 6 points in reading and 5 points in math. The gap between Hispanic and Caucasian students has decreased by 8 points in reading and 7 in math. One school, Lafayette Elementary School, has decreased its achievement gap between African American and Caucasian students by 19 percentage points. In the year before I began as chancellor, 52 schools had raised both their math and reading scores over the course of one year. Considering the significant systemic challenges we saw, when we set our performance goals we projected that as a district students could move that number to 57 for the next year. They moved it to 99. 117 of our schools have increased their math scores and 110 have increased their reading scores. The number of schools with proficiency rates below 20% has been almost cut in half, decreasing from 50 to 29. Some schools have even doubled or tripled their average reading and math scores. While we still have significant challenges ahead, this kind of growth shows promise for the reforms mayoral governance has enabled.

To further these gains and decrease the achievement gap, we must continue to increase the level of accountability for everyone in the system, including teachers. There is no other profession that simultaneously requires the most competent and innovative professionals and at the same time can discourage them from bringing their gifts to our students. We must be able to significantly reward teachers who are successful and to exit those who, even with the right supports, are unable to increase their students' academic growth. We can do this by working closely with union leaders to create the contracts that will support these goals. When we consider the difficulty of what we are asking teachers to do and the consequences to our children and cities for not doing it well, it puzzles me that the issue of rewarding teachers for success rather than seniority, is a controversial one. Quality teachers in urban districts successfully raise student achievement levels even in the face of poverty, violence, high rates of AIDS and other STDs, low expectations, obesity, teen pregnancy, and other issues that enter our schools with our children. We should not be afraid to reward those who meet the very high demands we must place upon them. Without investing in our teachers by rewarding them in a tangible, meaningful way, we make it very difficult to attract and retain the teachers who can close the achievement gap.

We have seen through the years that desegregation was not enough to bring racial justice to education, which has not yet become the 'great equalizer' that Horace Mann intended public education to be. As we work to become what he envisioned for public education in this country, this year we are introducing the most dramatic and rapid changes this system has seen since the desegregation of our schools. If there has been one challenge I have heard most frequently since I accepted this challenge, it has been that we are moving too quickly. But our students have been waiting since long before 1954 for a just, challenging, and equal system of public education. With mayoral governance under a mayor who is willing to make the education of a district's young people the number one priority, we can create accountability in systems that have not seen it before. We can support principals and teachers in setting high expectations for students and we can ensure that they have the tools to meet those expectations. In DC and across the country, we can deliver the public education to students that is theirs by right.

Thank you for your support and for your commitment to closing the achievement gap in DC and across the country. I am happy to answer your questions.

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Chairman MILLER. Thank you.  
Mayor Bloomberg?

**STATEMENT OF HON. MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG, MAYOR, CITY  
OF NEW YORK**

Mr. BLOOMBERG. Chairman Miller, Ranking Member McKeon, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for convening this hearing on urban education reform. There is nothing that you will ever do in your lives that is as important as what you are trying to do here.

I just wanted to say as an aside that you have just seen a demonstration of the brilliance of Mayor Fenty who had the good common sense, as I hope I did, of appointing a chancellor that is smarter than we are and supporting them. That is what is happening across this country. There are a lot of bright, young people. That is the nicest thing I have ever said about you—

[Laughter.]

[OFF MIKE] I know you are not talking about me.

Mr. BLOOMBERG. We all know what has to be done. What we have to do is find ways to do it.

Chairman Miller was in New York last winter. We did an event together. And I just wanted to thank him for playing an important role in the No Child Left Behind Act, which has brought accountability to public schools from coast to coast. It is hardly a perfect piece of legislation, but I think, in all fairness, Congress and the President and you in particular, sir, deserve credit for at least trying to address one of the issues that has not been faced in this country basically since public schools were founded.

And you are working towards authorizing a new and improved Act, and I think anything that we can do to help you, we will be there.

We have to focus on the achievement gap that Michelle and Mayor Fenty talked about between different races, different ethnicities, and if you take a look, it is between different economic groups because we tend to talk about minorities, but there are plenty of districts in this country where you see poor whites that have exactly the same gap between their performance and wealthier communities.

Our country is built on the principle that all those willing to work have a shot at success, and, in fact, if you take a look at our poverty measures, the new programs we are trying, what we are trying to do is to find those people who set their alarm clock and punch the time clock, but still cannot share in the great American dream.

What we have to do is to give our children the wherewithal to, when they get to that stage, be able to earn a living and have the dignity of a job and be responsible for themselves and their families, and they cannot do that unless we here find ways to reduce this terrible gap that undermines that.

Today in America, black and Hispanic 12th graders are reading at the same level as white eighth graders on average. Just think about that. It is a disgrace, and, unfortunately, there are too many people who are willing to accept the achievement gap as the inevitable result of social and economic factors that are out of the schools' control.

We can have a debate about the history of this country and we can look for excuses or we can look forward and try to do something about it, and in New York City where more than 70 percent



of our 1.1 million public schoolchildren are black and Hispanic, we have chosen to not sit back. We have chosen to not look for explanations as to why it exists. Our focus has been on going forward.

And over the last 6 years, where we have had a chancellor who has set a record as perhaps the longest-serving chancellor in our school system—and Dr. Hall can tell you in Atlanta one of the reasons that she has been successful is that she has had the time in office to really effect change and found ways to overcome the politics that constantly create this revolving door of management in our school systems which keep anybody from being able to succeed—we have done everything possible to reduce our achievement gap, and we have in some cases by as much as half.

But to make great progress, we need to zero in on two areas that go to the heart of improving No Child Left Behind and that have been key to turning New York City schools around. One is people, and two is accountability. And now bear with me for a couple of minutes, and I would just like to focus on those.

First, people: Studies have shown that if our best teachers taught our lowest-performing students, we would close the achievement gap to zero within 5 years, and by the best teachers, I mean those that have a proven track record of helping children to learn. Michelle mentioned it, but far too much emphasis is placed on seniority or academic credentials when what we should really be doing is looking at teachers' effectiveness, and that is what we are trying to do in New York City.

First, we showed our teachers just how much we value their important work by raising their salaries over the last 6 years by 43 percent in over three contracts. In return for the 43 percent, our teachers now teach longer days, more days in the year, give the principals more flexibility. Everybody has been a big winner.

And when I came into office, we could not replace the 12,000 teachers that quit or retired every year with certified teachers. Today, the number of teachers on a base of \$80,000 that quit or retire each year is down to 5,000, and we have between 50,000 and 60,000 teachers from across the country applying to get a job in the New York City Public School system, something that Joel Klein should be very proud of, but, most importantly, our children are the beneficiaries of it.

Higher salaries will also help us attract a new group of bright, young graduates who might otherwise opt for jobs in other fields or in teaching in other locations.

Second, we have improved the tenure process so that tenure becomes a meaningful decision based on student learning rather than a foregone conclusion. Sadly, our state legislature has hamstrung us a little bit, but the bottom line is if you want to teach in New York City public schools and you want to have a job for life, you have to earn it and show that if we are going to give you teaching tenure, then you have to teach.

Third, we have created financial incentives to encourage the most effective teachers and principals to choose work in the schools that need them the most. You can earn extra money if you go to those schools where the pedagogical problems are the most severe. You can earn extra money if you have the skill sets that are in short supply. The private world works that way. The only place I

know that does not work that way is in the educational system throughout this country.

Finally, we have reached breakthrough agreements with both our principals' union and our teachers' union to establish pay-for-performance bonuses, an idea that teachers' unions have traditionally opposed and opposed vehemently. But by structuring our pay-for-performance program in ways that puts the decisions in the hands of teachers and principals, we won support from the head of the local teachers' union, Randi Weingarten.

You may know that Randi is now the president of the national AFT, and I think that is a good thing because her willingness to experiment could result in more school districts opting for pay-for-performance programs.

It is very easy to blame the teachers' unions across the country, and I am certainly not going to let them off the hook, but we are responsible as well as they are. Having said that, we can change, and so can they, and if we work together, I think we have shown in New York that teachers' unions can be a force for progress and do not necessarily have to be the impediment to that progress.

Now pay for performance leads us to the second key to closing the achievement gap, and that is accountability. In New York City, we have established data-driven progress reports that give every school a grade every year. We send them out to every public school parent. It was an idea that, when Joel announced it, people were shocked. They said, "What happens if a school gets an F and the parent is told that their child is going to a school that is rated very low? Won't the parent scream?" Yes, that is exactly what we want. We want the parents, we want the teachers, we want the students to say, "That is not acceptable."

Our schools' letter grade is a progress report determined by many different factors including its success in narrowing the achievement gap, and these are progress reports in the truest sense of the word because we do not measure how many kids at a given school are proficient. We also measure something that we care much more about, and that that is year-to-year progress.

We have some schools—Stuyvesant is the one people talk about—where a very large number of those kids are going to be Nobel prizewinners, Rhodes scholars, scientists, and leaders. We also have plenty of schools where kids do not have the skills to get a job working in the most menial labor-intensive tasks in our city, and we have to do something about both. So we are concerned about progress as opposed to just taking a look at the status quo.

Based on the data we are collecting, there are now rewards for success in our schools and consequences for failure. If a school continuously fails its students, we will shut it down, and if a teacher continuously fails his or her students, we will work to give principals the tools to remove that teacher from the classroom.

Unfortunately, that has not been very easy to do in New York or in many other cities because of inflexible contracts with the teachers, but I think that we have to come to understand we should be treating teachers like the professionals that they are and that means not only paying them as professionals, which we have tried to do, but holding them accountable as professionals. If you

want to get paid more, you are going to have more responsibility and the consequences of failure are just going to be greater.

And I think if everybody did that, that would go a long ways towards ensuring that we have top-quality teachers in high-needs schools, the single most important factor in closing the achievement gap. To do it, however, throughout this country, we do need federal leadership.

And let me suggest one promising idea. Congress can use the power of the purse to withhold funds from districts that fail to take meaningful steps towards reform. Too often, I think, Congress, well meaning, votes money, but then does not have the procedures in place or perhaps the courage to stand up and say to the states and the cities and the districts that get federal money have a responsibility to perform or that money will not be there the next time around.

Rewards for success and consequences for failures—that is how it works in the real world and the world that our students will enter when they finish school. I think too often we are coddling our children, we are trying to prevent them from facing the consequences of their actions when, if they make a mistake and we explain to them that they have made a mistake, they can fix it. When they get out into the real world, the consequences are much more serious, and nobody is going to give them a second chance.

We have to do everything we can to prepare our students for that day and so that all of them, regardless of their skin color, regardless of their economic level, regardless of where they or their parents came from or where they live, really leave school with the ability to claim their piece of the great American dream.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, thank you.

[The statement of Mr. Bloomberg follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor, the City of New York**

Good morning. I want to thank Chairman Miller—whom we were pleased to welcome to New York last winter—and the members of this Committee for convening this hearing on Urban Education Reform. Chairman Miller played an important role in drafting the ‘No Child Left Behind’ Act, which brought accountability to public schools from coast to coast. Now, in working towards authorizing a new and improved Act, this committee has rightly focused on one of the most pressing issues in public education: the achievement gap that exists among students of different races and ethnicities.

Our country is built on the principle that all those willing to work hard have a shot at success. But the achievement gap undermines that. Today in America, Black and Hispanic 12th graders are reading at the same level as white 8th graders, and unfortunately, there are too many people who accept the achievement gap as an inevitable result of social and economic factors that are out of a school’s control. In New York City—where more than 70% of our 1.1 million public school children are Black and Hispanic—that’s not a conclusion we’re willing to accept.

That’s why over the past six years, we’ve done everything possible to narrow the achievement gap—and we have. In some cases, we’ve reduced it by half. But to make even greater progress, we need to zero in on two areas that go to the heart of improving NCLB, and that have been key to turning around New York City schools: People and Accountability.

First, people. Studies have shown that if our best teachers taught our lowest-performing students, we could close the achievement gap within five years. And by the best teachers, I mean those with a proven track record of helping children learn. Far too much emphasis is placed on seniority or academic credentials when what we really should be rewarding is effectiveness.

That’s exactly what we’re doing in New York City. First, we showed our teachers just how much we value the important work they do by raising salaries across the

board by 43%. Those higher salaries will also help us attract a new crop of bright graduates, who might otherwise have opted for jobs in other fields—or teaching jobs in other locations. Second, we’ve improved the tenure process so that tenure becomes a meaningful decision based on student learning rather than a foregone conclusion. Third, we’ve created financial incentives to encourage the most effective teachers and principals to choose to work in the schools that need them most. Finally, we reached breakthrough agreements with both the principals’ union and the teachers’ union to establish pay-for-performance bonuses—an idea that teachers’ unions have traditionally opposed. But by structuring our pay-for-performance program in a way that puts the decisions in the hands of teachers and principals, we won support from the head of the local teacher’s union, Randi Weingarten. As you may know, Randi is now the president of the national AFT, and I think that’s a good thing, because her willingness to experiment could result in more school districts adopting pay-for-performance programs.

Pay-for-performance leads us to the second key to closing the achievement gap: accountability. In New York City, we’ve established data-driven progress reports that give a letter grade to every single school, and we send them out to every public school parent. These are progress reports in the truest sense of the word, because they don’t just measure how many kids at a given school are proficient, they also measure something we care about much more: year-to-year progress. A school’s letter grade on its progress report is determined by many different factors—including its success in narrowing the achievement gap. Based on the data we’re collecting, there are now rewards for success in our schools—and consequences for failure. If a school continuously fails its students, we will shut it down. And if a teacher continuously fails his or her students, we will work to give principals the tools to remove that teacher from the classroom.

Unfortunately, this hasn’t been very easy to do in New York—or in many other cities—because of inflexible union work rules. I believe we should be treating teachers like the professionals they are. And that means not only paying them as professionals, but also holding them accountable as professionals. That would go a long way toward ensuring we have top-quality teachers in high-needs schools—the single most important factor in closing the achievement gap. But to do it, we need federal leadership—and let me suggest one promising idea: Congress can use the power of the purse to withhold funds from districts that fail to take meaningful steps towards reform.

Rewards for success and consequences for failure. That’s how it works in the real world—the world that our students will enter when they finish school. We’ve got to do everything we can to prepare them for that day, so that all of them—regardless of skin color—leave school ready to claim their piece of the American Dream.”

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Chairman MILLER. Thank you, Mr. Mayor.  
Chancellor Klein?

**STATEMENT OF JOEL I. KLEIN, CHANCELLOR, NEW YORK CITY  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Mr. KLEIN. Thank, Mr. Chairman, Mr. McKeon, members of the committee. It is a privilege to be back before you.

Thank you, Ms. Clarke, for your generous introduction, but, more importantly, for your kind support and your constant vigilance on this issue.

Mr. Chairman, I want to start with a point that I think is important because there are far too many people coming before this committee and in our nation today who are saying, “Well, education really cannot do this,” that to close the achievement gap, we have to look at a lot of other things. I agree we have to look at a lot of things, but I am here to tell you that education can, indeed, do this. The question is: Do we have the will as a people to get this work done?

From the day I started this job, people told me, they said, “Joel, you will never fix education until you fix poverty.” With all due respect, we will never fix poverty in this nation until we fix edu-

education, and we have to get on with the hard work of fixing education.

How do I know it can be done? Because my colleagues across this table are doing it. Every one of them understands how much further they need to go, but every one of us also knows that we have seen it happen, that education can transform the lives of kids from the most dysfunctional, high poverty backgrounds. That is what is happening in New York City.

This year, we won the Broad Prize as the best school district, and the feature of our success was closing the achievement gap. We did it. It is a multiple-year analysis, 100 different urban districts. This year, in New York City, on grades three to eight exams, we went up as a city 7 points in English, 9 points in math. Our African-American and Latino students did twice as well as our white students in closing the achievement gap. Those gaps are not closed, but those gaps are closing.

And I want to tell you a story because I think it is really powerful and puts the lie to those who say education cannot be the game-changer, and that is, under the mayor's leadership, we fought and we fought hard to make New York a charter-friendly city. We believe competition works. It works for the public schools. It gives options to our parents.

You know what happened this year? We had some 8,000 charter students take those tests. Those 8,000 kids in New York City are over 90 percent African-American and Latino, and they are 80 percent Title 1 high poverty students. That cohort, which is seen to be a "hard-to-educate group," that cohort outperformed the State of New York, which is much, much more middle class, much, much less minority students. The fact of the matter is we can do this work.

Now you asked a question, Mr. Chairman. What can the federal government do? The federal government, I think, is indispensable to showing the political will and muscle. Will it be easy? Of course not.

Every one of us has spoken, talked about accountability, and the thing that made No Child most valuable is it put accountability into the DNA, and there are a lot of people that do not like accountability, and I can tell you, on days when I have had a bad day and I get a call from my colleague on the right over here and he tells me, "Why did you screw that up?" I am not so keen on accountability those days either. I can understand, but the truth of the matter is accountability is absolutely indispensable. Indeed, I would urge the federal government not to ratchet down, but to ratchet up accountability.

The first time I ever heard that concept was from someone I think who will surprise you, the great labor leader Al Shanker, 15 years ago at the Pew Forum. You know what he said when he talked about changing education? And I want to quote him. He said, "The key is that unless there is accountability, we will never get the right system." "Unless there is accountability, we will never get the right system." "As long as there are no consequences if kids or adults do not perform"—if kids or adults do not perform—"as long as the discussion is not about education and student outcomes"—about student outcomes—"then we are playing a game as

to who has the power,” and that is what Michelle was talking about, and as we talk about who has the power, our kids pay the price.

Now I have two suggestions. Each one of them is something this committee has heard a lot about, but I think they are both important.

We have to move to a growth model, and we have to move to the kind of robust growth model we have in New York City. You call the school failure or something. It diffuses public focus. Sure, when kids are in an F school in New York City, our parents scream. We actually give them the opportunity to transfer out. But if they do not scream, you do not create the political muscle for real change, and what is of greater shame than telling a parent that her kid is in an F school is not telling her and pretending it is not an F school, and I think we need to have an accountability system that is open, transparent, and known to every kid.

Second of all—and I know this is hard, Mr. Chairman, but I know you are the man to get it done—we need national standards and national assessments. The kids in Idaho, the kids in California, the kids in New York are competing globally, and they are competing against countries that have national standards and rigorous assessments.

A lot of people have knocked testing. I would be the first to tell you we can improve our testing, and one of the ways to do that is get the best minds in this country to study the global standards that are out there and bring to this nation an insistence on high-quality standards.

You know, graduating high school is important, but, for many of our kids, they simply get a diploma. They do not get the skills necessary to finish college and compete in the 21st century, and believe you me our competitors throughout the world are focused on this issue, and for us to have 50 different standards in all these different assessments and create all the problems with that is a huge mistake. Let’s be tough. We owe it to our kids. We owe it to our nation.

The second thing is invest, invest, invest in high-quality teachers, everything everyone is saying here. Do not diffuse federal funding. What is the biggest challenge? The recent ASPEN study pointed it out. The most important thing in a kid’s education—we know it, you know it—is the quality of her teachers. As to that most important thing, that is where you close your achievement gap. Great teachers close achievement gaps. As to that most important thing, our poor kids, our minority kids, they are not getting remotely their equitable share.

Where should the federal government play? It should play by incentivizing two things.

Incentivize performance. Do not worry, as the mayor said, about all the qualifications, all right. I have met lawyers with the greatest degrees in the world. I would not let them handle a parking ticket for me. Incentivize. Incentivize performance. When Michelle Rhee taught in Baltimore, she moved her kids to an entirely different level. She does the work she does now because she knows what success with kids is all about. She does not make excuses.

Those who do the kind of work she did, give them lots of financial reward. Those who do not have to exit the system.

And, second, those who take on the toughest challenges, who in our city go to Central Brooklyn where Yvette is from, who go to Harlem, who go to South Bronx, the poorest congressional district in the nation, those people who take on the toughest challenges, they should be rewarded.

Our principals in New York City—if they do that, we give them \$25,000 a year if we think they are the top drawer, and for 3 years, they commit to turn around schools, and then there is another \$25,000 that they can make if they have really good accountability system results.

We can do this. It is not going to be easy. But I have to tell you the clock is ticking on us. I have been meeting with people throughout the world who come to New York to discuss what they are doing, and I will tell you people get it. It is time for us to get it.

[The statement of Mr. Klein follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Joel I. Klein, Chancellor, New York City  
Department of Education**

Good morning Chairman Miller and members of the Committee on Education and Labor.

Fifteen years ago, the iconic teacher's union leader, Al Shanker, made a point that we are still working to make real in American public schools.

"The key is that unless there is accountability, we will never get the right system," he said. "As long as there are no consequences if kids or adults don't perform, as long as the discussion is not about education and student outcomes, then we're playing a game as to who has the power."

No Child Left Behind focused this nation on accountability. Chairman Miller, you and your colleagues deserve great praise for this. In New York City, we have refined accountability, giving schools and families tools to assess where students are and devise plans to improve and giving administrators the information necessary to ensure that schools are fulfilling their responsibilities to students.

When the right people are held to high standards and expected to meet them, you see results.

And that's what we've been seeing in New York City. We are getting results.

Last September, we won the largest and most prestigious education award in the country, the Broad Prize for Urban Education, largely because of the progress we've made reducing the achievement gap.

Since we started this work in 2002, our students have outpaced gains made by students in the rest of the State in math and reading—and our African-American and Latino students have gained on their white and Asian peers.

In fourth-grade math, for example, the gap separating our African-American and white students has narrowed by more than 16 points. In eighth-grade math, African-American students have closed the gap with white students by almost 5 points. In fourth-grade reading, the gap between African-American and white students has narrowed by more than 6 points. In eighth-grade reading, the gap has closed by about 4 points.

Let's also look at our charter schools: the City's 60 charters serve a population that is more than 90% African-American and Latino and 80% poor, compared to 40% and 45%, respectively, in schools statewide.

Yet charter students are head to head with students who, by anyone's prediction, would be much more likely to succeed. This year, about 85% of City charter students met State math standards, beating students statewide, and about 67% of City charter students met State reading standards, just shy of the statewide average.

What does this show? Achievement for high-needs students is not a dream. It's happening. What we must do now is make this a reality for all students.

We must make sure that as a country, the results we are seeing are meaningful in terms of our students' results. All schools—whether in New York or Kansas—must provide students with the same high-quality education and must be held to the same high standards.

And we must track individual students over time, using a “growth model,” as we do in New York City. Comparing this year’s fourth graders to next year’s fourth graders as Federal law now requires does little to ensure that we’re helping individual students advance.

We must also not lose sight of the importance of our most important asset—our educators. Nationally, this means holding educators to high standards, and by that I mean student outcomes. That means making sure students, particularly those with the highest needs, have teachers who can produce results. Substantial Federal investment in pay differentials to attract the highest performing educators to the highest needs schools is critical. Similarly, substantial Federal financial support to attract successful math and science instructors to schools would help, and a major Federal commitment to reward teachers who get results would have a big impact.

We know that we have much hard work ahead of us, but we are confident that we are on the right track and, with your help, we can get this done.

Chairman MILLER. Dr. Hall?

**STATEMENT OF BEVERLY L. HALL, SUPERINTENDENT,  
ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Ms. HALL. Thank you, Chairman Miller, Ranking Member McKeon, and members of the committee.

I have great respect for your work, and I have great respect for the work of my colleagues who join me here today.

And thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak.

We are clearly not here to declare victory. Nevertheless, seeing the academic gains that urban schools are making nationally is encouraging and, often, that is not heard enough.

I invite everyone here, when you have an opportunity, to visit Atlanta public schools and see for yourself the tangible evidence of what I will be sharing today.

First of all, I accepted the invitation to share with you the coming together of an entire community in Atlanta around a school system that was stagnant—stagnant—and is now being fixed. Atlanta has an elected school board. It is not under mayoral control.

Since 2000, the district has posted academic gains every year with no slippage, even as the state continues to raise the bar, and our schools are closing dramatically the gaps with the state.

Allow me to just give you four facts.

Eight years ago, only 47 percent of our fourth graders met or exceeded standards in reading. We were trailing the state by 18 points. Today, that gap has just about disappeared. Eighty-six percent of our fourth graders meet or exceed standards, trailing the state now by 2 percentage points, and I am especially proud that 32 percent of those fourth graders are exceeding the state standard, and on this measure, they are actually leading the state.

Again, the standards are much more rigorous than when I arrived there in 1999-2000.

The other important factor is that Atlanta in 2006-2007 made adequate yearly progress in every one of our elementary schools. The Council of the Great City Schools says they know of no other urban system that can make that claim. All of our elementary schools made adequate yearly progress.

Graduation rates are up. Carver High School was our lowest-performing high school that was left after I closed the two lowest, the two who were lower than Carver. The graduation rate tripled from 23 percent in 2003 to now 66 percent in 2007, and Carver has ex-



perienced a 50 percent increase in the number of neighborhood children enrolling.

When I got to Atlanta, I realized that if we began to show these kinds of gains, people would question whether or not it was because of the tests, knowing that there is such disparity between and amongst all of the state tests, and so we volunteered to be a part of the 11 urban systems to participate in the Trial Urban District Assessment so that our success could be validated with the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

And, by the way, I join my colleagues in really emphasizing that I, too, support national testing for all of our systems.

However, it is important to note that on this Trial Urban District Assessment, Atlanta public schools was the only one of the 11 participating districts to demonstrate what is called significant improvement in all grades and subjects tested since 2003. In writing, the most recent NAEP assessments show that Atlanta public schools have made gains at seven times the national rate.

Now demographically Atlanta looks like all the other urban districts. Our student body is racially diverse. We are 91 percent minority—84 percent black, 5 percent Hispanic, 9 percent white, and 1 percent other. Seventy-six percent, or three in four of our students, are approved for free or reduced meals, which is 22 percentage points more than the State of Georgia as a whole, and the vast majority of Atlanta students really qualify for free lunch. That is 36,000 of our 50,000 students living near or below the poverty line.

Even with so many of our students facing challenging odds, each year, these academic gains have spread to more and more students in more and more grade levels, and the gains have spread from reading and mathematics to other subjects as well. When I got to Atlanta, you could predict by the geographical location of the school whether or not that school would be performing at a high level. Now that is clearly not the case. From north to south, east to west, we have schools that are performing across the board at very high levels.

When I arrived, again, it was clear that the district needed total transformation like you hear being mentioned about Washington, D.C., and we have found that what works is a set of steps that are simple to describe, but complicated to implement in a system with so many constituents and so many moving parts.

First, we have a powerful coalition of business and community leaders and parents who came together. They understood that comprehensive school reform was critical to Atlanta's revitalization and economic health. This coalition focused on recruiting quality candidates for the school board and supported the board and the superintendent and the schools. I was the fourth superintendent in 10 years, and having this coalition of supporters with a firm grasp of the work ahead was crucial in making my tenure stay stable enough to get the job done.

This coalition also understood that, in the case of urban school district reform, patience really is a virtue. There are no quick fixes. Sustainable reform takes time, and at first, the rewards seem incremental. Eventually, however, they add up to dramatic improvement that is sustainable over time.

Second—these are not ranked in order of importance, but for the purpose of presentation—we improved the quality of our staff, including those in the central office. You heard about the issues in Washington, D.C. That could be transferred to Atlanta as in many other urban areas. So we looked at improving the central office staff, our principals, and our teachers throughout hiring, through making it clear what expectations were, by using meaningful evaluations linked to student outcomes, and continuous professional development. We have, indeed, replaced 89 percent of Atlanta’s principals since 1999.

Third, we created a tailored accountability target for each school and based my annual evaluation and those of the principals and staff on meeting those targets.

And, by the way, we began this before No Child Left Behind.

These targets focus not just on increasing the percent of students that meets the standard, but also the percent that exceeds them because we know for our students to go on to be successful, particularly in post-secondary options, they must exceed the minimum standards that are set by the state.

And, most importantly, at schools that meet 70 percent or more of their target, the entire staff from the bus driver to the custodian to the teacher to the principal all receive additional compensation.

Fourth, we implemented comprehensive research-based reforms districtwide, focusing on, of course, job-embedded professional development, utilizing, through Title 2 funding and other supports, coaching. We have model teacher leaders and lots of mentors in our schools so that we can, indeed, change the practice where it is most important, where the rubber meets the road, between the teacher and the students.

And, fifth, we continuously evaluate and refine our programs, based on the results that we are getting as well as feedback that we consistently seek from central office, principals, teachers, and students.

The Atlanta public schools are still climbing the tough path to total transformation, but with the achievement gaps narrowing and the strong support of the community, we actually believe now that that goal is in sight.

And so, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I thank you, again, for the opportunity to share Atlanta’s story with you, and I will be pleased to respond to specific questions that you might have.

[The statement of Ms. Hall follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Beverly L. Hall, Superintendent, Atlanta Public Schools**

Atlanta Public Schools is one of 35 school districts serving the metro area. Although the City of Atlanta’s population has remained relatively static, declining birth rates in the city have lowered enrollment from about 60,000 students during the mid-1990s to our current level of 50,000 students.

The racial make-up of our student body is relatively stable at 84 percent black, 9 percent white, 5 percent Hispanic and 1 percent other. Three in four of our students are approved for free or reduced-price meals, and of these, 94 percent receive free meals—that’s roughly 36,000 of our 50,000 students living near or below the poverty line.

The introduction of the Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests in 2000 gave us a needed, if depressing, baseline for student performance.

- In grade 4, 47 percent of our students met or exceeded expectations in reading, compared with 65 percent statewide.
- In grade 6, 40 percent of our students met or exceeded expectations in language arts, compared with 61 percent in the state.
- In grade 8, 36 percent of our students met or exceeded expectations in mathematics, compared with 54 percent statewide.

Atlanta Public Schools trailed the state by 14 or more points in every tested subject and grade level.

Our students were also not performing as well as those in the state in writing. In 1999, Atlanta fifth- and eighth-graders trailed the statewide percentage of students who met or exceeded the standard on the state writing assessment, and two out of every three eighth-grade students did not meet expectations.

Although graduation rates rose by 10 percentage points between 1996 and 1999, by the end of 1999 a full 40 percent of those who had entered ninth-grade four years earlier did not receive diplomas.

*What does APS look like today?*

Using our focus on instruction and student success, proven, research-based methods and an accountability system tailored to each school, more than eight years after initiating our comprehensive reform agenda, I am pleased to say that the transformation initiatives are paying off:

- The district has demonstrated continued steady improvement as evidenced by increasing test scores over time. There has been no exception to this trend since 2000.

- In 2008, APS students posted meaningful academic gains on the state assessments for the eighth consecutive year. In fact, our preliminary data suggest that in all grades and subjects tested last year, our students met or exceeded their 2007 performance.

- The number of APS schools making Adequate Yearly Progress continues to increase. This year all 62 elementary schools, including our charter schools, met AYP for the first time in history. No other large urban school district can make that claim, according to the Council of Great City Schools. Venetian Hills Elementary, which was in Needs Improvement status in 2002, was named a 2007 “Blue Ribbon” school by the U.S. Department of Education—a total transformation.

- Secretary Spellings recently called APS “a model for the country,” based on our students’ performance on the 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress. APS was the only one of the 11 districts voluntarily participating in the Trial Urban District Assessment to demonstrate significant, consistent improvement in all grades and test areas since 2003. The most recent NAEP writing assessments show that Atlanta’s scores have grown at seven times the national rate.

- The local donor community stands behind me and my reform efforts.
- Since 1999, I have implemented system-wide reform at each school level:
- Elementary: APS maintained or closed the gap with the state on 28 of 30 comparable subject area assessments, and 100 percent of our elementary schools made Adequate Yearly Progress.

- Middle school: Transformation of all middle schools is about to launch with a tailored strategic plan for each.

- High school: by 2012, all APS high schools will be transformed into small, personalized learning environments focused on college and careers. Carver High School, now the four New Schools at Carver, has experienced a 50 percent increase in the number of neighborhood children enrolling, and the graduation rate has jumped from 23 percent in 2003 to 66 percent in 2007. The system’s overall graduation rate is 68 percent which is comparable with the state and exceeds the national average of 50 percent for students of color. The number of students attending college in our Project GRAD target schools has increased by 400 percent.

*How was this remarkable turnaround accomplished?*

The impetus for change came from the business community and the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce in the 1990s when, after realizing the direction in which the district was moving, and the negative impact it was having on economic development, they made a conscious effort to turn things around.

First, a coalition of business and community leaders set out to improve the caliber of those running for school board. They did so by helping recruit candidates and holding seminars regarding effective boardsmanship.

The second step was to hire a superintendent (for the 1999-00 school year) who was reform-minded and had a sense of what needed to be done to turn things around.

I made a comprehensive series of changes to reform the district, none of which can be discounted.

1. Reorganized central office and revised central office job descriptions and annual staff evaluations in ways that signal (to the incumbents) that their major task is to support school-based staff in their efforts to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

2. Incorporated the extent to which students perform at higher performance levels directly into central office staff and school-based staff annual evaluations, assuring that they all focus on this ultimate outcome.

3. Did not tolerate the presence of chronically ineffective staff (at any level) who did not, or could not, benefit from professional development.

4. Upgraded the quality of school principals through more effective recruiting, mentoring once they were hired, and through holding them accountable for the performance of their students. Those principals who were deemed not to be qualified were removed from those positions. Approximately 89 percent of our schools have gotten new principals since 1999.

5. Required the development of a district-wide Strategic Plan, as well as individual School Achievement Plans, that required staff to specify how they were going to address system-wide initiatives. These plans also provided a roadmap by which supervisors could judge the progress of their staff and suggest program improvements.

6. Established mechanisms for gathering input from central office staff, principals, teachers, and students regarding how the district was functioning and ways how it could be improved.

7. Provided principals with the tools they needed to effectively monitor and adjust the quality of instruction in their schools.

8. Provided schools with various forms of technology and taught staff how to use it to improve school efficiency and/or student learning.

9. Set clear expectations for what constitutes "best practices" by teachers, and provided on-going training for teachers regarding how to meet those expectations at the highest levels.

10. Improved the overall quality of teaching through aggressive recruiting techniques, and the use of alternatively prepared teachers like Teach for America corpsmembers.

11. Upgraded the quality of classroom teaching by designing and implementing (on an on-going basis) targeted professional development

12. Introduced a variety of specific program initiatives to give staff the necessary structure to help them address specific teaching and learning issues. These initiatives included the Comprehensive School Reform Models, Project GRAD, High School Learning Communities, etc.

13. Conducted, on an on-going basis, special studies to respond to areas identified by data as problem areas. For example, data indicated weaknesses at the middle school level, the high school level and in science. Based on these analyses special program efforts were designed to address the weaknesses.

14. Solicited, on an on-going basis, grants and other support from outside organizations to finance efforts that were beyond the funding that was raised locally.

15. Provided public recognition (and bonuses) to staff in schools that were unusually effective.

16. Taught staff at all levels (central office and in the schools) to access and use a wide variety of data for making resource allocation decisions, and for adjusting instruction for individual students.

17. Enhanced security operations in the schools to assure the best possible environment for effective teaching and learning.

18. Worked, in an on-going manner, with business, civic and parents groups to gain support for several tax levies that were used to enhance the reform efforts.

19. Elevated the professionalism and quality of the school district's business functions in order to build and maintain the public's confidence in the district to wisely spend and account for public tax dollars.

20. Improved the physical character of the schools, making them safer, more functional and more attractive.

The Atlanta Public Schools hasn't claimed victory yet. We are still climbing the tough path to total transformation, but with achievement gaps melting away and the strong support of our community, our goal is in sight.

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Chairman MILLER. Thank you very much.  
Mr. Duncan, one of the pioneers here.

**STATEMENT OF ARNE DUNCAN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,  
CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you, Chairman Miller and members of the House Education and Labor Committee. Thank you so much for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of Chicago Public Schools.

Let me also thank my good friend, Representative Danny Davis, for his longstanding commitment to public education and all of his hard work on our behalf. Thank you so much.

I would further like to thank committee members Judy Biggert and Phil Hare for their bipartisan support and good common-sense approaches to education policy. Their work in this committee and devotion to promoting high standards, quality teachers, and viable school options has been a great benefit to me in Chicago.

Our Chicago Public Schools serve over 400,000 children. Eighty-five percent of our children live below the poverty line, and 90 percent come from the minority community. All of them have potential.

Tapping the great potential of underprivileged, inner-city children represents the greatest educational challenge and opportunity facing our country. In many ways, we are meeting this challenge, but we still have a long way to go and we must be relentless in challenging the status quo and courageous in staying the course.

In Chicago, virtually every important indicator of progress is moving the right direction—test scores, attendance rates, and graduation rates. We are lucky enough to be on a winning streak.

In 2001, less than 40 percent of our children met state standards. Today, almost two-thirds do, and more than two-thirds of our eighth graders are at or above state standards.

Over the last 5 years, our high school students have improved at twice the rate of the State of Illinois and three times the rate of the country on the ACT test that helps to determine college admission. More and more of our high school students are taking college-level classes, and more and more of them are doing well enough to receive college credit.

On the national test comparing Chicago to other cities in NAEP that others have talked about, we have gone up 11 points since 2002 while the nation has gone up 3, so we are working hard to close the achievement.

Hispanic students, who represent over a third of our population, scored the highest of any other big-city school district in the country, and so gains are being made among key subgroups as well.

We began tracking college acceptance rates 3 years ago, and those numbers have risen every year. Today, over half our graduates go to college. One of the numbers I am most proud of is last year's. Our seniors' graduating class won \$84 million in competitive grants and scholarships beyond the normal financial aid, and we are hoping for the class that just graduated that number will be over \$100 million.

This progress can be attributed to a few simple strategies that we have relentlessly pursued since the City of Chicago, under the leadership of Mayor Daley, assumed full control of the school system in 1995. I want to talk through five sort of core strategies that shaped our work.

The first thing we did was to end social promotions, which is the shameless practice of passing children each year even though they are not ready and ultimately graduating them without the skills they need to succeed.

Before the accountability and intervention measures of No Child Left Behind, Chicago took initiative to hold students accountable to annual state assessments, identified students in the most chronically failing schools, and to provide intervention services, including mandatory summer school, after-school programs, and alternative schools with smaller class sizes and extended-day programs.

We got back to basics with our curriculum. We put great emphasis on literacy and placed hundreds of reading coaches into schools and created a daily requirement of 2 hours of reading every single day, every school, every grade, every child. We have since expanded this approach to math and physical science, and we are now looking at the social sciences.

Third, we began opening a great new array of innovative schools through our Renaissance 2010 initiative. This fall, we will have about 75 charter schools operating amongst our 625 schools in Chicago. We have many, many different approaches to education. Some are single-sex schools. We have many military academies. We want to open some residential schools in Chicago. Almost all of these new schools and charter schools are succeeding, and they all have waiting lists of parents eager to enroll their children in our system.

I see myself as a portfolio manager. We need to continue to create more of what folks are looking for and we must continue to meet that demand that parents are asking for in terms of quality.

More recently, we have become even more aggressive about opening new schools—we have 35 new schools opening this fall—but also closing down schools that are failing. We are one of the few districts in the country that literally shut down underperforming schools and replaced the entire school staff.

This turnaround school strategy has taken some of our lowest-performing schools and within just a couple of years doubled or tripled student performance—same children, same families, same socioeconomic challenges, same neighborhoods, same school buildings, but different teachers, new leadership, and a new educational approach—and the results are dramatic. As Chancellor Klein said, it puts the lie to any myth of what poor children can or cannot do.

This is the kind of bold reform that simply would not be possible without the extraordinary support of Mayor Daley and other local elected officials. This is tough work. Superintendents across the country would love to have Chicago's governance structure because the buck stops with the mayor. He stands with us in challenging the status quo, pushing the envelope, and driving change.

The fourth thing we have tried to do is to dramatically expand learning opportunities by investing heavily in preschool, after school, Saturday school, and summer school. The outmoded notion that school should only operate 5 days a week and 180 days per year makes no sense for any of our children, whether they come from two-parent working families, whether they come from single moms who are sometimes working one, two, even three jobs trying to make a living, or whether it is our 9,000 children who are home-

less. All of our children need to be worked with as many hours as possible, and in an ideal world, every one of our children should be constructively engaged from birth to age 18 for as many hours as possible.

Finally, our fifth and last major strategy involves raising the quality of principals and teachers, and this effort includes several important dimensions. As you have heard repeatedly this morning, in our world, talent matters tremendously, and nothing is more important than getting the best and brightest adults working with our children every single day.

We have boosted the standards for principal selection and actually cut in half the number of people eligible to become principals and will challenge a new generation of school leaders to meet these higher standards. This past fall, we hired 171 new principals, creating a new generation of leadership in more than a quarter of our schools.

At the same time, we are much more aggressively recruiting teachers, attracting more than 10 resumes now for every opening. A decade ago, we would have been lucky to receive two. As a recent independent report from the Illinois Education Research Council confirmed, the quality of teaching, even in hard-to-staff schools, is dramatically better today than it was a decade ago.

Recruitment is critical, and we are very proud of those efforts, but retaining that great talent is probably even more important and is definitely a tougher challenge, and we will try to work equally hard in that area.

In just 6 years, we have gone from 11 National Board Certified teachers to more than 860, and our goal is to get to 2,400 National Board Certified teachers by the year 2011, and we track very closely the number of teachers leaving the system. The extent of the teachers leaving CBS after 3 years dropped from 36 percent in 2003 to 15 percent in 2007, so cut that in more than half, and we still have some hard work to do there.

We recognize the need to continue to do a better job of retaining quality teachers in our lowest-performing schools. All new teachers get a mentor, and in particularly tough neighbors, about 300 teachers this year have worked more intensely with coaches from the Chicago New Teachers Center with plans to expand the two-year-old program to another 30 schools.

We must continue to think differently, not just about how we recruit and retain and support teachers, but how we compensate them, and thanks to the largest competitive grant we ever received, a \$30 million federal Teacher Incentive Fund grant from the Department of Education, we have worked with our teachers' union to introduce the first pay-for-performance program in the history of Chicago Public Schools that offers bonuses to great teachers. In fact, the very first payments will be happening this summer based upon rising student achievements.

Performance-based pay for teachers will be expanded from 10 to 20 high-needs schools this fall, and there is tremendous demand amongst schools for this amongst the best teachers. For the initial pilot, we had over 120 schools apply, and we would only go to schools where 75 percent or more of the teachers wanted this. There is tremendous demand.

Let me just conclude with a couple of ways in which we would love to continue to partner with the federal government. As others here have said, the No Child Left Behind Act with a focus on accountability was a huge step in the right direction. The focus on subgroups is a huge step in the right direction.

But the one thing that was interesting is I think there is always this debate around what is loose and what is tight, and I want to echo my colleagues in saying that I think this part could really be improved, I think, fairly dramatically. It is pretty interesting. What was very loose was the goals that we were all shooting for. Fifty different bars do not make sense. What was tight was how you get there, and some of those things did not quite make sense, choice before tutoring and other things. I think, if we reversed that, if we were tight on the goals that hold us all to very clear standards, but were loose in how we got there and allowed creativity and economy at the local level to get to those standards, I think that would make a lot of sense.

Secondly, I completely agree with Chancellor Klein, the focus on growth and gain, what we call value added, is so much more important than the absolute bar. Like other school systems, we have some of the best schools in the country, we have a lot in the middle, and, unfortunately, we also have some of the worst. I am not interested in what their absolute performance is. I am interested in how much better those schools are getting, how much better those students are doing each year. The only way to measure that is not by looking at absolute test scores. It is by looking at gains, by value added, and those growth models are so important.

And then finally, continue to fund innovation. I know, Chairman Miller, you worked so hard on the Teacher Incentive Fund model. That is truly a cultural breakthrough for us in Chicago and other places. So continue to use, as the mayor said, the power of the purse to fund those things that really force us and push us to think outside the box and trying to dramatically change the life chances of our children.

Thank you.

[The statement of Mr. Duncan follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Arne Duncan, Chief Executive Officer, Chicago  
Public Schools**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of the Chicago Public Schools.

Let me also thank Representative Danny Davis for his longstanding leadership on a myriad of policy issues from this committee that have benefited the Chicago Public Schools.

I would further like to thank committee members Judy Biggert and Phil Hare for their bipartisan support and good commonsense approaches to education policy. Their work on this committee and devotion to promoting high standards, quality teachers, and viable school options too has benefited Chicago.

Chicago Public Schools serve over 400,000 children. 85% percent of our children live below the poverty line. 90% are minorities. All of them have potential.

Tapping the potential of underprivileged, inner-city children represents the greatest educational challenges facing our country.

In many ways we are meeting this challenge. In many other ways we are still falling short.

In Chicago, virtually every important indicator of progress is moving in the right direction: test scores, attendance, and graduation rates. We're on a winning streak.



In 2001, less than 40 percent of our kids met state standards. Today, almost two thirds do and more than two-thirds of our 8th graders are at or above state standards.

Our high school students are out-gaining the State of Illinois and the nation on the ACT test that is needed for admission to college.

More and more of our high school students are taking college-level courses and more and more of them are testing well enough to earn college credits.

On the national test comparing Chicago to other cities (NAEP) and to the nation—we've gone up 11 point since 2002 while the nation has gone up just 3, so we're closing the gap.

Hispanic students scored the highest of any other big city school district on this test so gains are being made among key subgroups as well.

We began tracking college acceptance rates three years ago and the numbers have risen every year. Today, over half of our graduates go to college.

This progress can be attributed to a few simple strategies that we have relentlessly pursued since the City of Chicago—under the leadership of Mayor Richard Daley—assumed full control of the school system in 1995.

The first thing we did was end social promotions—which is the shameless practice of passing children each year even though they are not ready—and ultimately graduating them without the skills they need to succeed.

Before the accountability and intervention measures of NCLB, Chicago took the initiative to hold students accountable to annual state assessments, to identify students in the most chronically failing schools, and to provide intervention services including mandatory summer school, after school programs, alternative schools w/ smaller class sizes and extended day programs.

We got back to basics with our curriculum, aligning it to the state academic standards all the way down to optional daily lesson plans. We put great emphasis on literacy with reading coaches in schools and a daily requirement of two hours of reading time—every school, every student, every grade, every day.

We have since expanded this approach to math and physical science and now we are looking at the social sciences.

We began opening new schools to offer more educational options including five citywide high school military academies ranging from the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps. This past year the military academies had some of the highest attendance rates in the city. We are looking at an Air force Academy for the fall of 2009 for students.

This fall, Chicago will also have about 75 charter schools operating among the 625 schools in our system. Some of them are single-sex high schools—many others have specialized areas of focus while others are simply traditional public schools operating outside of conventional restrictions.

Almost all of them are succeeding—and they all have waiting lists with parents eager to enroll their children in our system.

More recently, we have become even more aggressive about opening new schools—and closing down schools that are failing.

We are one of the few districts in the country that has shut down underperforming schools and replaced the entire school staff.

This turnaround school strategy has taken some of our lowest-performing schools and doubled or tripled test scores within a few years.

Same kids—different teachers—new leadership and a new educational approach—and the results are dramatic.

This is the kind of bold reform that would not be possible without the strong support of the Mayor and local elected officials.

Superintendents all across the country envy Chicago's governance structure because the buck stops with the Mayor and he stands with us in challenging the status quo, pushing the envelope and driving change.

The fourth thing that we have done is to greatly expand learning opportunities by investing heavily in pre-school, after school, and summer school.

The outmoded notion that schools should only operate for 6 hours a day and 180 days per year makes no sense in an information society where success is a function of knowledge.

In an ideal world, every one of our children should be constructively engaged from birth to age 18—for as many hours as possible.

The last major strategy involves raising the quality of principals and teachers and this effort includes several important dimensions.

We boosted the standards for principal selection—cutting the eligibility list in half and challenging a new generation of school leaders to meet these higher standards.

At the same time, we are much more aggressively recruiting teachers—attracting more than 10 resumes for every opening. A decade ago, we would get maybe two or three.

As a recent independent report from the Illinois Education Research Council confirms, the quality of teaching—even in hard-to-staff schools is dramatically better today than a decade ago.

Over six years, CPS has dramatically improved the quality of its teaching force.

- We have gone from just 11 national-board certified teachers to more than 860—with hundreds more in the pipeline.

- The percentage of teachers leaving CPS after just three years dropped from 36 percent in 2003 to 15 percent in 2007.

We recognize that need to do a better job retaining quality teachers in our lowest performing schools.

- All new teachers get a mentor, and in particularly tough neighborhoods about 300 teachers this year worked more intensely with coaches from the Chicago New Teachers Center, with plans to expand the two-year-old program to another 30 schools this fall.

- CPS has narrowed (by 27 percent) the quality gap between CPS teachers and the area with the highest caliber teachers, near Urbana-Champaign between 2001 and 2006.

Thanks to the federal Teacher Incentive Fund grant, we worked with our teacher's union to introduce a pay for performance program that offers bonuses for great teachers. In fact, the very first payouts are happening this month.

Performance-based pay for teachers will also be expanded from 10 to 20 high-need schools this fall.

Our biggest challenges today are reforming high schools and increasing funding.

Chicago has a comprehensive high school reform effort underway that includes intensive coaching and mentoring as well as an overhaul of the curriculum. It started in 14 schools two years ago and expands to 45 by this fall and we expect it will yield positive results.

We have also developed a host of programs aimed at transitioning students into high school, increasing college enrollment, raising college entrance exam scores, and providing more coaching and counseling for high school students.

For all our progress, however, we still have a long way to go to close the achievement gap—and getting there requires more support from every level of government.

Our state ranks among the worst states in the country for education funding, providing barely a third of the overall cost. Today, Chicago spends \$2000 less per student than Boston. We spend about half of what some of our suburbs spend.

We are certainly grateful for every dollar we get from Washington—and we welcome even more money to expand Head Start, tutoring and after-school programs.

We also appreciate the core goals of the No Child Left Behind law, including performance transparency among subgroups and higher standards for all, but we think the law can be improved in other ways that will advance the same goals.

Should you take up the issue of reauthorizing or reforming NCLB, we will gladly provide more detailed comments.

I just want to thank you again for the opportunity to be here.

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Chairman MILLER. Thank you.

We are going to start with the questioning and try to be concise and not run over because I know my colleagues all have questions.

But, Chancellor Klein and Chancellor Rhee, you both mentioned in your statement—and, to some extent, you, Dr. Hall—it is very often suggested that the system really cannot perform because these students in many cases are mired in poverty and bad health and lack of access to resources that others are, and I do not make light of that argument. I spent my whole life working with children and families at risk.

But you both touched upon the idea that when you have been able to develop and work with teachers that have the capacity and have the effectiveness that they are able to work in these environments and achieve the results that we have been talking about or you have been talking about here this morning, and I just wonder if you might elaborate on that a little bit.

Michelle, you mentioned that—you said, “quality teachers in urban districts successfully raise student achievement levels even in the face of poverty, violence, and high rates of AIDS.” Now, see, again, not to minimize that because we want those children to be free of those—and that is what the Congress should be working on, but that is not to suggest that you cannot have success in the schools in those areas as difficult as it is.

Ms. RHEE. I mean, I see this every single day in our schools. So, for every one who says that it is not possible, I can take you into any one of our schools today and show you it is possible.

I went to a school of ours not long ago where, you know, if you sort of looked at it from the outside, it was the typical D.C. public school. Across the street from the school, there is a liquor store and a nightclub. As I was walking up to the school, there are broken beer bottles and cigarette butts everywhere. So it was sort of, you know, a typical school in many ways.

I walked into the school, walked into one classroom, and what I saw was absolutely amazing, the fourth grade teacher teaching a class, and she was teaching a unit on Greek mythology. So the class was all sort of reading this chapter book together, and when I walked in, they had gotten to the point in the story where the teacher said, “Okay. Well these kids have traveled back in time, back into the time of Greek gods, and now they have to get back to the future. So look across the room at all the posters of the Greek gods and tell me which god do you think they should call on if they have to get back, you know, travel back in time?”

So I looked at the wall, and I am looking and sort of choose my choice, and the first kid raises his hand, and he says, “I would choose Zeus because Zeus is the god of gods. He is the boss of the other gods. If he tells you to do something, you have to do it. So I figure cut out the middle man and go straight with Zeus.” I was like, “That is a great answer.”

The second kid raises her hand. She said, “I would choose this god.” It was the god of women, children, and families. “And she said, “Because these kids who have to travel back in time, this god—she is going to take care of her people. She is going to make sure they are okay, so I would choose this god.” Another great answer.

The third kid raises his hand. He says, “I would choose this god.” It was the god of art, music, and literature. So I am thinking to myself, “Okay, Kid. That was a total misfire.” And then he goes on to say, “If you remember, the way the kids traveled back in time is because they found an old Greek lyre, and they strummed the lyre, and they got transported back in time. So I figure if they have to go back, it has something to do with the lyre, they should talk to the god of music.”

These kids gave five different answers before someone came up with my very lame answer of the god of travel, and what I saw in that classroom was that, I mean, this teacher was enthusiastic, she was engaging the kids, they were invested in what they were doing, 100 percent of them were focused on the classroom.

I walked across the hallway to the next classroom, exact opposite—

Chairman MILLER. I am going to have you give Dr. Hall an opportunity here.

Go ahead.

Ms. RHEE. Walked across the hall to the other classroom, and I saw the exact opposite. It was literally, you know, a teacher standing at the door, you know, flicking the light switch on and off, counting down, you know, "10, nine—I am waiting. I am waiting," you know. Kids were sitting there, and you are looking at them, and they are like, "We are waiting, too, for something to happen," and literally in the same school, you know, the same very, very dilapidated school building with no air conditioning and, you know, the ceiling tiles falling off the roof, two groups of kids getting diametrically opposite schooling experiences because of the teachers who were in front of them every single day.

Chairman MILLER. Dr. Hall?

Ms. HALL. One of the most depressing pieces of data that I will share with you today is when I got to Atlanta in 1999, we did a survey of the teachers to find out their perceptions of what was going on in the public schools at that time, and our kindergarten teachers, all of us know that kindergarten teachers are traditionally the most optimistic people. When I was a principal of an elementary school, if I was depressed, I would go down into the kindergarten classroom, and I would feel good again.

Well, 90 percent of Atlanta's public schoolteachers at that time said they did not believe the children in their classrooms would graduate from high school—not college, from high school. It was very depressing.

And as we tried to factor that into everything else we were doing, I was convinced that that was because the teachers themselves had not experienced success in terms of teaching and then ultimately the kids learning, and, of course, we are not able to change all the teachers, none of us can, but we decided that we would go at really providing those teachers with a kind of job-embedded professional development, coaching, mentoring, and support so that they would change their practices and begin to experience their success, success in terms of student outcomes.

I would guarantee you today that if that survey was administered, 100 percent of our kindergarten teachers would say not only are they going to graduate high school, but they are going to graduate from really high-performing colleges because they now feel a sense of efficacy in terms of how they are teaching.

At the same time that we got the results of that particular survey, we also were surveying teachers who had left Atlanta public schools after a year—anywhere from 1 to 2 to 3 years in, and 90 percent of them said they came from area colleges totally unprepared to teach in Atlanta Public Schools. So there is clearly a linkage between how the teachers feel about their being able to deliver instruction and how they feel about outcomes to kids.

Once they begin to be effective, that is not to play down the impact of poverty and entrenched poverty on our children, but I still think that once teachers are able to deliver instruction the way that leads to children learning, it can help mitigate again some of the expectations that enter the classroom based on the economic levels of the children.

Chairman MILLER. Thank you.

My time has run out. I wanted to ask Mayor Bloomberg and Mr. Duncan about community buy-in. I know that you now have a report card where the community gets to participate, and in visiting some of your charter schools, there is a sense that the community really has adopted this asset as critical to the future of their kids and their community. Some of the strategic learning programs that I visited—

If I can impose on my colleagues, I would just like to give you a quick minute to discuss that kind of involvement where now the community is having that kind of say.

Mr. BLOOMBERG. In New York, we have a wealthy business community. They want to be involved.

Michelle, Joel, and I were out at a conference in Idaho last week, and somebody came up to Joel and I—we were having a cup of coffee—and said, you know, “I am going out there. I am going to raise a billion dollars, and we are going to fix the public schools in this system.” I did not have the heart to tell him that we spend \$15 billion a year in New York City.

Money is great, but the bottom line is this country needs doers. We can sit around and we can complain and we can talk about one of the ways of teaching reading versus another or teaching math versus another. The truth of the matter is we know what to do.

And I think the parents are there. Parents want to be involved. They want to help their kids. They do not need to run the school systems. When we talk about parental involvement, there is this misconception that the teachers should have to sit there and let the parents tell them how to teach. They should not. The teachers are the professionals, and the management of the schools is who decide how you teach and what teaching methods.

What the parents need to do is to know what the teachers need for help at home, and the teachers need to know what the situation is at home, and one of the things that Joel did, which I think is a game-changer—and the only thing I did not like about it was it was not my idea because it was so obvious when he came up with it. I thought, “Oh, damn it. I should have thought of that.”

He put a new person in every single one of our 1,400 public schools called a parent coordinator. That person’s job is to provide the communications between parents and teachers that elected officials always talk about, but really do not ever deliver because they are talking about having another level of politics involved, another level of elected officials involved. What we need is the ability to share information, and the parent coordinators carry a cell phone. You can call 311 to get their phone number. You walk into the school. It is up on the wall.

I cannot tell you it is a game-changer at the high school level, but certainly at the elementary school and even the middle school level, it is one of the best things, I think, that Joel ever did. It was adding 1,400 people, but we have 120,000 people that work in our public school system. The difference is this is providing a real service, and it is that interaction you talked about.

Chairman MILLER. Mr. Duncan?

Mr. DUNCAN. On the charter school issue, I am just very, very pragmatic. I just want more schools that work, and, to me, the ide-

ological battle really misses what is right for children. What I always say is there is no second grade in the world that can tell you whether I go to a charter school or something else. They know whether their teacher cares about them. They know whether the principal has high expectations. They know what to say. And we just need to create more great schools.

Our charter schools in Chicago work extraordinarily well. We have waiting lists of about 8,000 children, and these are all schools of choice. No child is ever assigned to them, and so I always say, you know, the day parents stop asking for these, I will stop creating them. But there is a tremendous demand that we need to continue to meet. I am a big fan of the charters, I have also closed three charters for non-performance, and so we hold them to a very strict standard.

We have done a couple things differently than other places around the country. First is a very rigorous front-end process. We make it very, very tough. We have many more applicants each year to create more schools than we select. So we are very, very tough in the screening process, a lot of community engagement on the front end.

Secondly, every school opens with a 5-year performance contract, so there is very clear accountability. If they are not succeeding, we will close them down at the end of that. We also give them additional autonomy and sort of free them from the bureaucracy. But, at the end of the day, parents are desperately looking for these options, and we need to continue to create a supply to meet that demand.

Chairman MILLER. Thank you very much.

And thank you to my colleagues.

Mr. McKeon?

Mr. MCKEON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

This has been one of the best hearings I have ever participated in. I want to commend all of you. I wish we could clone you and have you work in a lot of other places around the country.

I think, Mayor Bloomberg, when you said we all know what to do, we just need more doers, I think that really hits the nail on the head. We all have lots of time. We talk about education, and then we get in fights about it, and then we get into partisanship about it, but, meanwhile, a day goes by, a week goes by, a month goes by, a kid is lost.

I visited a prison in my district, and as I was walking through with the warden—1,700 inmates—I asked him kind of a naive question, “How many of these inmates are college graduates?” He looked at me like I was from another planet. You know, “Where have you been all your life? None of them.” I said, “How many of them are high school graduates?” He said, “Maybe a handful.”

We are spending a lot of money keeping people locked up, but if we took care of them, a little more preschool education, a little more resources put into the teachers—you know, the talk about going into one classroom and seeing fantastic things happen, going across the hall to another one—we have six children, 29 grandchildren. Education to me is crucial, and I visit lots of classrooms. I see some exciting things happening. We never hear about that. We just hear about the bad things that are happening.

And I know when our children were in school, we had like three third grade teachers. Everybody knew which was the best teacher and the way to get your student in that class. My wife became PTA president, you have to get involved, and then we were able to get our children into that class. You know, that teacher may have been paid less than the teacher on either side.

We have a lot of screwed-up things that if we go back to some basics, yeas, we know we need the best teachers, we know there are different things that create that. Some of it, though, just is they either have it or they do not.

I wish we could change the way we educate our teachers. You know, you get somebody that graduates from college. Then they take their student teaching. They walk in the classroom and the first day decide they do not like kids. Now they have 4 or 5 years invested. Why don't we have them get in the classroom in their first year to see if maybe they might like this? And then why don't we have mentors there to help them to get through that first year, the second year, and work on their longevity, and then pay them what they are worth so that they do not move to private industry?

You know, I was on a school board for 9 years. I was a mayor. I had a lot to do with education on the school board, nothing to do with it as mayor. I see, you know, where, as mayors, you not only have the responsibility, you have the ability to get something done. That is only in a few places in the country. Mostly, it is totally separate. The mayor gets blamed for everything, but has nothing to do with it. I am glad that we have a few places that are giving, you know, some authority to go along with the perceived responsibility.

I have a district where we have some large schools, not compared to any of the cities you come from, but maybe 20,000 students in a high school district. Then I have a district where we have six students in a high school academy, and we have a school that was built for 100, and we have 60 kids. Our problem probably is we cannot get enough kids, you know, because of declining population in a rural area, and that is one congressional district, and we sit here trying to solve problems throughout the whole nation, and there is such diversity in just my district, and then you compare to districts to districts.

I have thousands of square miles. I was talking to a friend from New York who said, "I can walk around my district in 1 day," and then we sit here and try to grapple with those things and think we can solve all the problems from here, and what we really need are leaders like you in every school district in the country, every community in the country, committed teachers, leaders that make things happen.

I think I could get on a soapbox, but maybe could I ask one question? You know, we have cut back funding and now, this year, it looks like almost eliminating the Reading First program. I would like to ask each of you: What has been the impact of Reading First program on the academic achievement scores for the schools in your district? What are some of the challenges your district faced in implementing the program? And what is the impact of last year's cut, and what will be the future impact of this year's elimi-

nation of the Reading First program on the students in your schools?

Mr. DUNCAN. I am happy to start.

As I talked about earlier, the heart of our education curriculum strategy is around reading. We think that is the fundamental school skill, and if our children can read and write, think critically, express themselves verbally on paper, they can do anything they want. If they do not do that well, frankly, nothing else we do matters.

So we have invested very heavily to put reading coaches into schools, hundreds of reading coaches. Some schools have two. It was interesting to me that historically we had all kinds of other specialists, which is important, P.E., art, and music, but something so fundamental as reading coaches, reading specialists we did not have, and particularly at the primary grades.

If we do not build that base, if we do not teach kids to read, guess where they end up? They end up in special ed, and they end up dropping out, and they end up in the prisons that you talked about. And so lack of resources means that we are cutting back on the number of reading specialists going into schools, cut back on professional development, and we need to continue to dramatically invest in those areas that are the highest leverage, and I do not think any of us could argue there is nothing on the curriculum side and the instruction side more important than instruction in reading and literacy.

Ms. HALL. I mean, the impact in Atlanta will be the same. We have used the Reading First coaches to really provide the job-embedded professional development I have talked about, and we will have to find another way because we cannot not fund that position. We are going to have to look to see how do we continue to provide literacy coaches.

And we are actually now expanding in Atlanta. We are also placing literacy coaches in our high schools, but the Reading First coaches were fundamental because I believe the victory is going to be won in the elementary schools of America. We have to get kids performing at or above grade level before they leave our elementary schools, and, you know, we have been using our Reading First dollars to provide that kind of support for teachers.

Mr. KLEIN. I think, unfortunately, Mr. McKeon, this Reading First is caught up in one of these ideological fights, and I do not think it is a constructive fight. There is nobody here who would not tell you the greatest challenge we have—and it has to be at the earliest age—is to get our kids reading. You can pretty well predict what is going to happen to a child depending on early grade reading.

And the war has become one of a phonics-based curriculum versus whole language, and I know to anybody outside the education world—the truth of the matter is kids need phonics, they need significant, particularly high poverty kids, vocabulary improvement, which is absolutely critical. They need to learn to read in context. So they need to read a lot. And, finally, comprehension. If you can decode, that is essential, but if you can only decode, it is vastly insufficient.



And when my colleague, Arne, says hold some things tight and some things loose, I think the school districts ought to have discretion over certain areas like that so that we can detoxify all these political fights which have their adherence to one particular thing.

And, finally, reading curriculum has to be in the hands of your most talented teachers because that is your greatest challenge, and that is why I think the federal government every time, whether it is supporting coaches, supporting people who will take the reading art form of teaching to a very different level.

Ms. RHEE. In our analysis of the Reading First program in the District, what we found was that there were significant gains being made in the schools that were actually implementing the program with fidelity, but in other schools that were supposedly implementing the program that did not, we did not see very many gains at all.

So I think the lesson for us is that this is all tied back to human capital. When we did not have a leader in the school but had a very clear grasp on what the program was supposed to be doing and how then that leader did not ensure that those staff members were trained properly, they attended the training, and they were then implementing the curriculum.

So I think it for us all falls back to the fact that we have to have a focus on human capital. We have to make sure that we have leaders with a very clear vision and that they can manage their staff to ensure that whatever reading curriculum they are using that they are implementing it well.

Mr. MCKEON. Several years ago—if I could just, Mr. Chairman—we had—

Chairman MILLER. You are on your colleagues' time. You can do whatever you want.

Mr. MCKEON. Thank you.

Several years ago, we had a young man sitting right there who was teaching in the D.C. system, and he said he had been teaching for a couple of years, and he was ready to quit because he was supposed to be teaching third graders how to read, and nobody ever taught him how to teach reading. Fortunately, somebody got hold of him, principal, they got him some extra training, and a few years later now, he was fully enjoying his work and, you know, he was getting satisfaction the kids were learning. So that intervention was very important.

But this program, rather than kill it, I would sure like to see us fix it and keep the funding going out there for reading.

Chairman MILLER. Mr. Kildee?

Mr. KILDEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Klein, you mentioned that Congress should ratchet up accountability, and how should we do that? We get asked very often for more flexibility. Can we provide flexibility and maintain or strengthen accountability?

Mr. KLEIN. Yes, here is how I think you should do it. Thank you. I think you should ratchet it up in two ways.

One, I really think we have to move to a growth model. Every one of us who deals in this area understands the number of students who are proficient in math can depend on what community

you are in and not what the school is doing, and so if you focus on progress, you can compare apples to apples.

Second—and I know this is politically complex. My mayor always says, “We will never have national standards. The Democrats will not do standards. The Republicans will not do national.”—but we need to have a national standard, a national assessments, so that then everybody can understand, if you are proficient in math in California and you are proficient in math in New York, that means the same thing because, right now, you have different states with different benchmarks. And Beverly talked about this.

So, to me, if you look at our global competitors, you look at the countries that are doing well educationally on the global exams, you look at those countries, they all have national standards and national assessments, and we could, instead of having 50 separate set of assessments, if we pooled our money, brought in the leading experts in the world, people in industry and people in universities, and said, “What is an American child going to need in the 21st century to compete effectively? Here are the standards. When do you need to master algebra? When do you need to be able to do physics and chemistry and all of the other challenges?” Then I think that would put real pressure.

Now, you know, it would make it harder for people like if they were really tough, but I think you have to make it harder for people like me because it is not about me, it is about my kids, and 68 percent of American kids exit high school, all right, out of 100 who start in the ninth grade—68 percent. By the time they graduate college, 3 years in a 2-year school or 6 years in a 4-year school, only 18 percent out of that 68 percent—and most of them drop out in the first year.

So getting them a high school degree is critical, but if you only get them a high school degree, you have not begun to do the work, and the only way to do this is for all of us to say, “This is what it means to be an educated kid coming out of the 12th grade in America today,” because the piece of paper and the graduation ceremony are terrific, but if the kid does not have the skills, we have cheated that kid.

Mr. KILDEE. Thank you very much.

As a corollary to that, Mr. Duncan, you mentioned that basically goals are good in No Child Left Behind, but how we get there needs some changes or maybe some flexibility. Could you expand upon that?

Mr. DUNCAN. Well, I think philosophically I am pretty much on the same page, but I think, again, we need these national standards, national benchmarks, and it has to begin from international comparison. Our students today in Chicago are not competing against Chicagoans, against children from Illinois or against children from New York. They are competing on an international economy, and the fact that we have 50 different bars for our children and 50 different hurdles our children are trying to jump over, that does not make any sense.

And given, I think, the good pressure of No Child Left Behind, states have incentives to continue to lower standards, to dummy them down so that more and more students appear to be passing, and, again, while that helps people politically, it sets students up

for failure later in life, and so I think by having some very clear, you know, high standards, a clear common benchmark that we are all shooting for together, but then give us all lots of autonomy to get there, but then hold us accountable for the results.

And so I do not think you should tell us how to do it, but to all be as creative as he can and Michelle and Beverly and myself, but, you know, hold us accountable for the results and then watch best practices. So, again, I think this loose-tight debate, I think, is a really important one, and I think the initial steps of No Child Left Behind were absolutely in the right direction philosophically. I think those two levers were sort in the wrong proportion.

Mr. KILDEE. Let me ask you this, too. We are talking amongst ourselves up here about some differentiated consequences. Right now, if a school misses by an inch or misses by a mile, they have missed, and the consequences are the same. Could you talk about, maybe you two—

Mr. DUNCAN. Yes, I think that is—

Mr. KILDEE [continuing]. Differentiated consequences?

Mr. DUNCAN [continuing]. Really important. I think often we are killing an ant with a sledgehammer, and I think we each have schools literally—I mean, these are sort of the exception, but it is important—where one or two children did not meet the bar, and then the whole school is labeled a failure.

And so I think what you need to do is where certain children—white, black, Latino, whatever it might be—are not being successful, we need to focus on those students very specifically and not label entire schools a failure and do other things.

Secondly, going back, if you change the model and look less at absolute test scores, but look at growth, look at gain, that is a much more precise, much more accurate measure of are you changing students' lives? What value are you adding to them every single year? So a different model will help you get where you are trying to go.

Mr. KILDEE. Could Ms. Rhee just respond briefly, Mr. Chairman?

Ms. RHEE. I absolutely agree. I just talked yesterday with a principal. Her school did not meet AYP. They missed the math target by .21 percentage points. Now that school actually saw huge growth this year. So a level of disappointment from that school, I mean, and I could not really sort of answer that question well. It is significant because we have, you know, one school that is missing it by .21 percentage points and other schools that are missing it by 21 percentage points. They cannot be classified, in my opinion, in the same way, and the real way to look at this is, again, as my colleague just said, is by growth.

Mr. KILDEE. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MILLER. Mr. Castle?

Mr. CASTLE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I, too, think this has been an excellent panel with a lot of great discussion. I would like to get into a little bit of a different area, developing some of the things that you have stated, and that is what we are doing at the federal level and what we can do.

I am a strong believer that No Child Left Behind has produced incentives that have been helpful in terms of education. I think you

have struck on that, and, as you, I am sure, know, there is a lot of dissension about that, politically here in Congress and certainly among educators in this country. Time is up. We need to rewrite this, and we were unable to get that done this year, at least so far, and we go into continuing with the way it is if we do not rewrite it, and my sense is we need to continue to work on this.

So my question to you is—and I have heard you. I have listened to everything you have said here this morning. I have listened to your suggestions—what concepts or ideas do you have in terms of how we should handle No Child Left Behind, and, for that matter, is there any federal role in education with respect to the reauthorization, the changes in place?

I have listened to the national standards and assessments—I am, by the way, one Republican who does not believe that is necessarily a bad idea—and I have listened to the growth model. I am interested in development of the growth model. Is the growth model separate from some sort of a measurement of standards and assessments, or is it in combination with that so you could have either or or on the way to meeting certain standards at some point?

And one other question I would throw in there: Do you believe in some sort of a uniform graduation rate in this country? As you may know, the measurement across the various states is essentially different from state to state with respect to graduation rates. I happen to believe that we should have some sort of standardized rate. So I am interested in that.

I would be interested in your viewpoints, any suggestions you have in what we could be doing to both get this No Child Left Behind reauthorization done and perhaps to improve it. It is an open-ended question to anybody who is willing to volunteer.

Mr. BLOOMBERG. Let me first just add one thing. I am not a professional educator. My background is employing people, and whether they miss by 1 percent or 10 percent, you either get the job or you do not.

In New York City—and I assume it is true throughout this country—we are giving our youngsters high-stakes tests all the time. The youngster has to decide whether to hang around with people that have a gun or drugs. They have to decide whether to drink and drive. They have to decide whether to get pregnant, get married, stay in school. These are all the high-stakes tests that our kids are facing every single day.

And the comment of national and testing actually came from Bill Bennett when he was Secretary of Education, and there was a movement towards national testing.

I think you have to be careful in terms of setting a limit or a standard for what percentage of the kids graduate. In New York City, we have raised our standards, not only in our school system, but the standards to work in New York City. You have to have a high school diploma in order to get a job with our sanitation department—or a GED—and that does not mean necessarily that all high school diplomas are the same.

In the real world, we do not test our people other than maybe in the first application for a job whether you have a diploma. After that, we start to talk to them and see whether they really know what they are talking about, whether they can frame a question

and understand an answer and work together collaboratively and collectively.

The danger with just saying X percentage have to graduate is every state, every school district will just meet that standard because they want to get the money. If you have a national test that tries to measure academic achievement and ability to reason and knowledge of the law and knowledge of accounting, things that every single one of us has to know—you know, we tend not to focus on the fact that this is a country of laws and that all of us have a budget. We have to get a paycheck every couple of weeks, and we have to figure out how much we can afford to spend on this and that and the other thing.

Those are the kinds of things we should measure in testing, and those should be our objectives rather than just a physical number. We are trying to raise the number of our students that graduate, and the papers, the editorial boards, tend to hold you responsible for having that number higher, and we are all proud of it when we increase it. But the real answer here is we are not trying to give our students a piece of paper. We are trying to give them an education.

Mr. CASTLE. I agree with that entirely, by the way, Mayor, and in talking about graduation, I am just concerned about the differing methods of graduation rates that are used around the country. I am not trying to determine the number who should graduate.

Mr. BLOOMBERG. Everybody measures differently, and I think of one criticism I have always heard again, again, and again from Joel and everybody else about No Child Left Behind is you can dumb down your standards in order to qualify—

Mr. CASTLE. Exactly.

Mr. BLOOMBERG [continuing]. And the requirement to be able to function in a worldwide society is not different from one place to another.

Mr. CASTLE. Precisely.

Chairman MILLER. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. Payne?

I would just say that Mayor Bloomberg is going to have to leave in about 4 or 5 minutes. If you have a question you want to direct to him first and then—

Mr. PAYNE. No. Well, no. Just to commend him on the outstanding work that he has done in New York. And I was just going to mentioned that former Mayor Koch graduated from Newark South Side High School.

But just a question about national standards. Number one—and, Dr. Hall, you may recall Newton Street School in Newark—now there is a program at Seton Hall University where they have the college there, my alma mater Seton Hall, and the teachers' union and the central office have come together to see about improving the educational system at that particular school, which has been a failing school. So we are watching this model pretty closely to see if that could change things around.

But I just have a question about national standards, which I think is certainly something that we should strive towards. However, in our city, even though now we are starting to embark on a school improvement program, many of the schools in the city are

over 100 years old. I spoke at a graduation of Charlton Street School about a year or 2 ago, built in 1848.

So, talk about national standards is great, but what about the inequity in funding? We have the Abbott decision in New Jersey, we are struggling to continue to have it funded because we all know that there is totally inequity in funding, I think. Jonathan Kozol talked about that in "Savage Inequalities" when he talked about the difference in school funding, and if you have a wealthy school system or if you have philanthropic corporations like, say, we have in New York or Atlanta, you get a lot of cooperation from the business community. If you are in an area that has no businesses and has a very low tax base and you are saying we should have national standards, however, there is not equity in funding, how do we overcome that?

Mr. BLOOMBERG. Let me say something before I have to go.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am sorry I do have another appointment.

As we talked before, my mother graduated from a high school in your district. The high school is still there, still functioning, same building. I do not have any idea what the quality of it was then or is now. My mother did learn to read, although they made her write with her right hand, and she had learned to write with her left before then, so she now does it both ways.

I think two answers to your question: One, we focus on what we call fair funding. We found when we took office that the schools where the parents did not have much political power, which were mainly minority schools, but not always, they got underfunded by \$2,000 or \$3,000 a year per capita on a base of about \$14,000 a year.

What we have tried to do when we had more money is we did not take away money from those that were being highly funded, but we gave all the money to those who were being lower funded so that now fundamentally in New York City all schools get funded by the chancellor the same per capita. There are some small adjustments for English language learners, small adjustments for special ed. There are some federal and state programs that require us to do some things differently, but fundamentally we are trying within the New York City school system to give every principal the resources per capita that the other principals have. That is one answer to your question.

The other thing is it is true that some districts do not have money and some districts do. New York City exports \$12 billion to our state government that then redistributes that throughout the state to help areas of our state that have not had the luxury of lots of businesses generating taxes.

And my third answer is life is not fair. I think it is true that there are parts of this country where they do not have the tax base, maybe the cost of living is a little bit less, but not enough, but those kids are going to have to compete on a world basis anyways, and, you know, the teachers are going to have to do more with less, and the elected officials are going to have to find ways to do more with less. They have a greater challenge.

But sitting around and not giving them an education because you do not have the resources is not the right answer because, whether

you give them an education or not, they are going out into the same world with the kids who happen to be luckier, who happen to grow up from wealthy families or families that look like the Norman Rockwell painting of two kids and two parents, or families that value education.

We have a group of kids in our school system. Parents have come to the United States to work, do not plan to stay here very long, do not see there is any reason to learn English, and they come from a tradition where education is not valued. Those kids need the same education that my kids do. It is tougher for us to give it to them, and maybe they will not get there, but I can tell you exactly what happens if you do not give them the education.

Congressman, you talked about going to the jails. You can sit there and you can say if you do not get an education—you can plot statistically, not every one, but on average exactly what is going to happen to that child for the rest of that child's life, and shame on all of us if we let it happen. And I just wanted to say thank you for all of you for your focus—

Chairman MILLER. Mr. Mayor, thank you for taking your time.

Mayor Fenty, you face the same problem. I do not know if you wanted to comment. I know you were also leaving, but if you wanted to comment on this before you leave—

Mayor FENTY. No, I just want to appreciate your indulgence, Mr. Chairman. I would just urge, as I leave and the real experts are going to stay, that if you can, in addition to funding some of the changes recommended in No Child Left Behind, look at the teacher quality issue. On the local level, I know it is a political football and a political nightmare.

On the national level, it is probably even more of one, but to the extent that we can provide more resources at the local level so that these four individuals and others like them can incentivize teachers, rather than having to keep them around through the tenure and other ways, the children are going to be a lot better off.

So we are dealing directly with that right now. We have a lot of support from Congress, and I think we make that nationwide in the next No Child Left Behind Act, I think the country is going to be better off for it.

Chairman MILLER. Thank you.

And, again, thank you for your time.

Mayor FENTY. Thank you.

Chairman MILLER. Mrs. Biggert?

Mrs. BIGGERT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for having this great hearing.

You know, in 1995, I served in the Illinois state legislature when we turned the Chicago Public Schools over to Mayor Daley, and I think when you look back in a career and as a legislator—I think that that will be one of my proudest moments because I think it really changed the dynamics in Chicago so much, and I am very proud of that vote, and I am very proud of Mr. Duncan for all the work that he has done to make the Chicago public schools so good.

We have been talking a lot about teachers and the importance of teachers and just what does it take to hire. You know, even when you have so many people or you do not have, to hire a really

good teacher, what do you look for to make sure that you have the best available?

Maybe, Chancellor Rhee, you could start with that.

Ms. RHEE. So, before I came into this role as chancellor, for 10 years, I ran an organization called the New Teacher Project that was dedicated to recruiting and retaining teachers in urban school districts across the country, and I think that what we learned through that process was a few sort of key things: one, that you really have to think about teacher recruitment in urban and high-needs rural districts in a very different way.

The people coming into those challenging situations have to have a very specific mindset. They have to truly believe that it is possible for poor minority children to learn at the same high levels. They have to understand very clearly what the challenges are that they are going to face in terms of the poverty and the violence and the sort of environmental factors that they are going to be confronted with and still believe that despite all of those obstacles that they are personally responsible for making sure that every single one of their kids grows academically, and I think that mindset is one of the most important things that we can have.

We know that subject area knowledge matters greatly. There is less sort of evidence about the route that people take into education having a correlation between that and student achievement. We have seen that there are lots of alternative certification programs—Teach for America, the New Teacher Project, some of the teaching fellows programs that are in existence—that broaden the net, that bring, you know, talented mid-career professionals, for example, into teaching, and it is important to sort of look at how we broaden the number of people who are potentially interested in education.

And I think that at the end of the day—and we talked a lot about this amongst the four of us—we have to have a system and a culture in which we can provide the right incentive. We have to have good support mechanisms in place for those teachers. But, at the end of the day, we have to ensure that the teachers who are producing the dramatic results for our kids are recognized and rewarded in that way.

The last thing I am going to say is that there is a tremendous amount that can be done at the systemic level that can help to recruit the best teachers into the highest needs school districts. The earlier that school districts hire, the more likely it is that they will be able to bring in the best candidates, and there are lots of barriers to being able to hire teachers early.

There are the teachers' unions' contracts and how they govern and the movement of current teachers. There are budgeting issues. There are school closure and consolidation issues. All of those things have to be moved up in the timeline so that the new teachers can be hired earlier, in the February and March timeframe, because that is when the best candidates are available.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Thank you. I think that was very complete.

So maybe I will turn to another since I do not have too much time. Mr. Duncan, you have worked, I know, a lot with parents to bring parents into the schools, and there was some talk about this, that you do not want to mention that maybe sometimes parents are trying to get too involved in the schools.



But how do you get parents involved in their children's education really, and it is so important, you know, from probably before birth, so that the kids are ready for school, but also that they participate, not to run the schools, but really to back up their kids to help them as they move to the school system?

Mr. DUNCAN. I think so often it is very easy to criticize parents and say they are not engaged enough or that is part of the problem, and before I came to the board, I worked in the inner-city community for a long time and saw that parents, despite whatever education or lack of education they had, were extraordinarily interested in their children's education and wanted something better, and so before we blame parents, I think we need to really be self-critical and look in the mirror first.

I would say historically we have had a culture in which, frankly, parents were not invited in. They were supposed to drop their children at the school door, you know, come pick them up at the end of the day, maybe come a couple of times a year for report card pick-up, but they were really kept outside, and what we are trying to do is dramatically change that culture.

Going into this fall, we will have 150 schools that are what we call community schools that are open 12, 13, 14 hours a day, 6 days a week, with a wide variety of after-school programming not just for children, but for all their brothers and sisters and parents—GED classes, ESL classes, family literacy night, family counseling, pot luck dinners.

We have schools now where you literally have 100 to 150 parents come to school every day not for their children's education but for their own, and I am just convinced that when families learn together and where schools truly become the heart and the center of a neighborhood, a community anchor, there are just tremendous dividends for children.

And so I really think that we have to collectively continue to challenge a culture that kept parents out and really think about how do we invite them, how do we open the doors, you know, computer classes and many things that we can and should do that parents want to have to access to, and we should co-locate all those services in our schools.

I would say our schools are these great community assets. We have 600 schools, every neighborhood in Chicago. Every one has classrooms. They all have computer labs. They all have libraries. They all have gyms. Many have swimming pools. Those do not belong to me. They do not belong to the engineers' union. They belong to the community. We have opened 25 health clinics in the schools.

And so the more we open our doors, the more we get a mindset in which parents are welcome and needed, I think we can reach the vast majority of parents. There may be some parts where we cannot, but we can get a heck of a lot of more than we are getting today.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Thank you.

Chairman MILLER. Thank you.

Mrs. McCarthy?

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have a lot of questions. So I want to thank everybody for their testimony, but, hopefully, I will get as many questions in as I can.

A couple of them are going to be to Chancellor Klein, and then I am going to open up the other questions to everybody.

I see in July of 2009 the contract that you had with the teachers and the schools, the principals expires. Do you think that will have a good chance of being renewed during that time?

Also, one of the things that we sort of thought was collaborating with one of nine partnership support organizations hired to provide support for the New York City schools, and I was just wondering how that worked.

The other thing is when you are looking at the school and working on bringing the scores up, how have you been dealing with children that are being served with IDEA learning disabilities, and have you been able to also reduce class size? Has that made a difference?

And we are dealing with suburban schools, but, obviously, we know that. I live in a suburban area. I have several minority schools, underserved schools, one that has been taken over by the state for the last 6 years and not seeing too much of an improvement.

So, if I could throw those questions out, especially on the performance pay. That was the other thing I wanted to go back on. Seeing Randi Weingarten now being the head of the AFT, do you think that she can basically say this is working in New York, which is certainly a cosmopolitan area where we try to test an awful lot of things? Do you think she would be open for us to work with her on the federal level to see if we could get something like this done?

Thank you.

Chairman MILLER. Chancellor Klein, deal or no deal? [Laughter.]

Mr. KLEIN. I think the answer is deal. I would not speak for Randi. I give her a lot of credit for having negotiated this deal with us. My sense is, like Arne and Michelle and Beverly have talked about, once people get used to it, it becomes easier to expand it. I expect it will be expanded. Our principals are an entirely different field.

In fact, our IDEA students, our students with special needs, are, indeed, improving. This year, they actually outperformed the other students in general ed on our exam. They are still way, way too low, but, sure, they are moving forward.

I think reducing class size—we have reduced it across the board, not as much as we would have liked because we have invested heavily in our teachers' pay as a way to retain and keep, and, you know, in a world of limitless dollars, you know, I could tell you a million things that I could use more money for, but you have to make strategic choices.

And I know, speaking for myself, and I believe for those of us who do this work, teacher quality is the biggest investment, and we keep doubling down and tripling down in that area, and I would continue to do so. I wish I could lower class sizes. I wish I could have more wraparound programs, after school and everything else, but I am absolutely convinced that the game-changer in terms of student performance is the quality of the teachers.

I know Mr. McKeon said before—I thought it was funny, but it is actually sad—that people know who the best teachers are, and

they get involved and get them for their kids. I tell everyone that works for me your assignment is to be the voice for the voiceless.

There are many people in America who have purchase in public education, know how to get their kids in the best schools, get their kids to the best teachers, but how about the kids who really do not have a champion or a rabbi to make sure that they are taken care of? And that is the assignment of the rest of us and making sure that the dichotomy that Michelle talked about of going literally across the hall to two different classes that are day and night with the same high poverty kids—we have to redress that. The way I like to say it is a class of 20 with a poor teacher is not remotely as good as a class of 30 with a great teacher, and that has been our principal focus.

Ms. RHEE. Can I make one quick statement on that?

This is where I get myself in trouble. I always get myself in trouble for being very frank, but I feel like it is important to do this.

I think that, though there have been some instances across the country where the school districts have been able to work in collaboration with the teachers' unions to push pay for performance and differential pay structures, I think, for the most part, there is still a significant amount of opposition and pushback to this.

My colleague in P.G. County, John Deasy, who was trying to push a pretty, you know, sort of minimal pilot program, you know, had national folks sending letters out to all of his members saying, "Do not vote for this." And my own union president here in Washington, D.C., faces tremendous pressure from his colleagues saying, "You better not sign this contract. It is going to ruin everything for the rest of us."

So I do not want us to sort of sit here and pretend that we are all heading down this path of ensuring that we have performance pay that is based on student achievement levels in this country. That is not the case. That is not the dynamic that is in play in most of our school district, and I think that from my vantage point, being a Democrat, I think it is incredibly important for the Democratic Party to step up on this and to really push the unions across the country to say that we have to recognize and reward our most effective educators.

If we want teaching to become the profession that we all know that it should, that has to happen, and that we have to really challenge and push the teachers' unions and the leadership right now in this country to have this differential pay not based on the sort of softer things, but really focused on student achievement level.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. I should say the chairman actually tried to do that, and I still think that we will be working on that with Leave No Child Behind.

Chairman MILLER. Thank you.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. I yield back.

Chairman MILLER. Mr. Tierney?

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chancellor Rhee, you and I talked a little bit earlier, and you were talking about the fact that you and your counterpart in the teachers' union are going to go out into the community. So I would ask you at this point in time to foresee what you see as the two or three most significant arguments against performance pay that

will be brought in to those discussions and your answers and the union's answer to those.

Ms. RHEE. Yes. So the union president and I will be out talking to teachers, talking to community members about what we believe the benefits of this contract will be.

For the most part, what we have been hearing is that people are scared that the system is not going to be fair. So I think that it is important for us as we go out to talk about a number of things, first, that teachers will have options about which pay system they want to be in so that they know that they are empowered, that all of our teachers know very clearly that regardless of which option you choose, that every teacher's salary is going to go up significantly. I think that is an important thing to think about.

But, most importantly, I think it is giving the teachers some evidence that we are not going to be making these decisions capriciously or arbitrarily and that they are not going to be left just in the hands of principals to make, but that we were going to be basing those decisions on the data.

I think when you talk like that, one of the first things that comes up from people, is they say, well, you know, you are not taking into account the fact that we do not control everything, you know, our kids are coming in with all of these sort of strikes against them, and we cannot control the parents sort of backing us, and that sort of thing, so we cannot really control whether or not the student achievement levels are going to move or not, and, at that point, you know, from my vantage point, is when we have to stay we need educators in our school district who are saying that, despite all of those obstacles, you really do believe that as a teacher you have the ability to move the achievement of your kids, and if you do not believe that, then this is probably not the district for you to teach in.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you.

I think money is a big factor here. Obviously, these contracts—whatever you think of the contracts that have been negotiated in the past between municipalities and teachers, they are there and they have to be dealt with. So, if you are going to move teachers in a particular direction, they have to be negotiated, something has to be offered up. A lot of times that is money, and a lot of our communities say they do not have the money.

So I am looking at the partnership between mayors and superintendents and wondering does that have to be the partnership there, that the mayor has that control over the school system so that the money is more likely to come when those deals are struck, or can we still move in this direction when you have a school committee in charge of the schools—a school board in a sense—and find a way to do that because most communities I am aware of do not have financial flexibility on the school committee. It is going to go to the mayor and the city council at some point anyway or the board of selectmen or whatever.

Mr. KLEIN. That is where I think there is an important federal role. You know, the marginal dollars in education matter. The federal government puts in significant dollars, and I think you could incentivize this by putting in dollars to pay for excellence, to pay for high-quality, high-achieving teachers, and then school districts

would be able to devise plans, and I quite frankly think, as I said in my opening testimony, Mr. Tierney, that would be the best use of federal money because there is something wrong when our kids with the greatest needs are not remotely getting their fair share of the highest quality teachers, and teaching is the magic ingredient in education.

And so if you were to take the Title 1 monies, for example, and recast them into significant incentive programs to pay for people who are getting results tied to a meaningful federal accountability system so that it would not be arbitrary and also to say to people if you are a great math teacher, instead of teaching in this neighborhood, we will pay you additional with federal dollars to go teach in Central Brooklyn or the South Bronx. That would have a huge impact.

And I commend this committee because you put this forward, and we wish you had put it forward in more robust form, but you put it forward, and I think you have to keep putting it forward because that is where you are going to get your returns.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MILLER. Thank you.

Mrs. Davis of California.

Mrs. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you to all of you. You are an impressive group, and it is wonderful to have you here.

I would like to zero in on one issue of the investing in quality teachers—and it is a bias of mine, so I will state that upfront, and I think the chairman knows that—National Board for Professional Teaching.

And, Mr. Duncan, you have mentioned the growth in 6 years, 11 to 800 and something, I think. Could you tell me just a little bit more about how you got there in terms of the incentives?

And I would really be interested, Chancellor Rhee, also in your appraisal of that because I think one of the concerns that we all have is how do you get the best teachers into the schools that need them the most, and yet, on the other hand, you really have to build within your teacher cadre the best, and I am wondering whether there are other—I know there are other vehicles, it is certainly not a panacea in any way, but ways to help teachers go in that journey of collective teaching.

As far as I know, that is one of the best tools, and I would really be interested in whether that is something that we should put some higher priority on in No Child Left Behind, find a way to talk about it so, you know, it does not include the bias of national standards. Help me to try and think about this a little bit more.

Mr. DUNCAN. We made a big bet on this for a couple of reasons. First of all, I worried a lot about a lack of career ladders for teachers, how do you sort of keep them motivated, how do you not lose them. I am also a big believer in external standards because I always worry about the dumbing down of local stuff. So I, for example, I love the international baccalaureate curriculum. I love advanced placement because there is a bar that we all have to reach.

Well, NBC, National Board Certification, is that same national standard. It is very, very rigorous. As you know, only about half

the teachers roughly that go through each year pass. But we started early on. We just thought this was a huge area where, again, we had not played at all where we could get dramatically better.

And what I like most about it is it is basically your best teachers going back to get better, and I know this has gotten large. Early on, I tried to meet with all the new National Board Certified teachers every single year, and what I heard consistently is they all said it was about the hardest thing they had ever done professionally, and they also said it was the most valuable. Not one ever came back and said it was not worth the journey.

And I just think when we talk to our students about being lifelong learners and continue to improve, we need to walk the walk, not just talk the talk, and so when you have your best teachers going back and getting better, I think it just sets a tone that is so critically important.

Mrs. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Can I ask you what incentive did you use? Do you think it should be monetary? Otherwise, what—

Mr. DUNCAN. Well, it is almost embarrassing. We gave some very, very small monetary incentives, and we had a great partnership. This is actually a total win-win with the union. The union was, you know, right along for the ride—

Mrs. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Yes.

Mr. DUNCAN [continuing]. And we have an outside fund, the Chicago Public Education Fund, a local foundation that has been a great partner, who really took the lead in driving this. We gave some small financial incentives early. We actually recently negotiated the teachers' contract, and, for the first time, we actually put a little bit more money in there. It is about, you know, \$750 a year.

So folks are not doing this for the money. Yes, I think it is important to have that. What we really tried to create was a sense of prestige, that these are really our future leaders and how do we better use them. I would love to—we are very resource constrained—pay them more, but they are not doing it for the money. They are doing it because they think it is the right thing to do.

Mrs. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. And quickly, because we are on limited time and I want to go to the others as well, how does that jive with the idea that we should be rewarding people for the achievement of their students, because one of the major criticisms is that that does not guarantee that they are getting kids where they need to go?

Mr. DUNCAN. It does not. That is a great question. I do not think it is contradictory. I think we should absolutely reward folks for student performance and for growth. I think part of how those get better is going through the NBC process. So I think this is a strategy for teachers, as they continue through that career ladder, for them not to get stale and continue to get better and challenge themselves. I do not see this as mutually exclusive at all.

Mrs. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. And, Dr. Hall, you can chime in, too. Chancellor Rhee?

Ms. RHEE. I think a couple of things. One, we have been looking very specifically at how to move away from the input, measuring the inputs of teachers and more looking at the output, so basically measuring teacher quality by the effectiveness of the teachers in the classroom.

And I think one thing that is worth saying is that—you asked the question how do we make sure that we get the best teachers to the children who need them the most, and one of the things that I think that is relevant to say here, particularly as we are talking about differentiated compensation—and Chancellor Klein alluded to this earlier—is that it is important not just to give a financial incentive to people who are moving into lower-performing schools or more high poverty schools because, quite frankly, we have lots of teachers in those schools right now who are not performing particularly well, and to subsidize those people, in my mind, is a waste of money.

It has to be coupled with if you are showing results, if you are working in one of those schools and you are producing results for kids, then something should absolutely click on and you should get some kind of a differential pay, but we should not incent people simply for being at those schools. So that is the first thing.

I think the second piece—

Chairman MILLER. I am going to have to cut you off.

I know Dr. Hall wanted to respond, and I have to get through these. We are going to have votes here in just a minute, so I am going to marshal the time a little more. I am sorry to do that, Michelle.

Dr. Hall, did you want to comment on—

Ms. HALL. I just wanted to say we, too, have been supporting the National Board Certified teachers' development. The numbers are increasing in Atlanta public schools for all of the reasons that Arne articulated.

We do have a career ladder for teachers in Atlanta because we think that is a part of the problem. Before, if you were a master teacher, the only way you could see yourself moving forward would be to leave a classroom and we are trying to change that through having these different roles—model teacher leader roles, coaching, et cetera—and we have felt that the National Board Certified teacher process helps to qualify those people.

But, of course, we are also looking at whether or not these people were good teachers to begin with looking at what they were doing before we vet, and we have provided small monetary incentives for them to participate. At one time when we had Governor Barnes in Georgia, he also had at the state level some statewide incentives for the teachers to participate, but we have continued to do that locally because we are trying to get teachers who are already demonstrating that they could do the job to really becoming more proficient. We think this process leads to that, and then we utilize them in the system.

Chairman MILLER. Mr. Davis of Illinois?

Mr. DAVIS OF ILLINOIS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

You know, as I listened to the discussion, I could not help but be reminded of two of my experiences. One, I spent 6 years working in probably one of the most difficult situations in the Chicago schools. I never will forget the day that we collected 38 handguns, five blackjacks, four pairs of brass knuckles, and 10 switchblades. It has been a while.

But my point is and my question, Arne, is I know that you have been successful beyond the concept of monetary incentives. I mean,

yes, you have the grant, but that has not covered nearly the kind of impact that has been needed to get teachers into some of the underperforming schools and some of the difficult situations.

I also served on the local school council at the jail, and you have teachers in there.

What are the other approaches, though, that you have used beyond the notion of pay for performance or monetary incentives to get teachers into some of these difficult situations?

Mr. DUNCAN. I think we have all tried to create a sense of mission, and I think teachers are not in teaching to make a million dollars, and I think any money we give them is a small piece of what this is about.

Teachers go into teaching because they are very idealistic, because they want to make a difference in students' lives. They come in with the best of intentions and, historically, unfortunately, we have burned out too many of them.

And so what we have to do is to continue to fuel the sense of idealism, to support them, to listen to them. Many teachers struggle with classroom management skills, many teachers struggle when they do not feel listened to, and so how we better mentor, how we better support, and how we really put a spotlight on those teachers that are doing a great job—

As you know, we have taken teachers on bus tours of communities that historically they might have been scared of. We have used local ministers and local business leaders to really embrace them and say we want you to come to North Lawndale, we want you to come to Austin, we want you to come to Englewood, we will be here to support you, and I think teachers want to be part of that broader community that is making significant changes.

Mr. DAVIS OF ILLINOIS. Thank you very much.

Mayor Bloomberg discussed this with Representative Payne a great deal before he left, the notion of national standards, and I adhere to that, and I accept that, and I understand the need for that. But I am concerned. How do we compensate for some of the funding inequities that we know exist at local levels where you may find one school district spending one-third or half of what another school district is spending per pupil?

Are there some approaches to compensation where at least in terms of the labeling, we look for some additional support or additional help for those districts that have putting forth the best good forth effort that they have and yet they are going to come up short because of all the inequities that already exist?

Mr. KLEIN. I think it is a great question, and I know the mayor talked about it. Let me add two thoughts.

I think we start on the same page, that is lowering the standards because you invest less resources is not going to serve our children. I think the reason to have the standards is to say this is what the future of this country depends on.

And the second thing I would do, if I were working through all these issues, and I am just going to put out an idea, the devil is in the details, but you could have a local state index of what is expected in this investment and then tie federal dollars to those expectations.



Obviously, some communities have far less resources. Some states use one formula across the state. Other states allow it to be based on real estate taxes, which is inevitably inequitable because higher valued communities are able to put more money. But if I were to do this, I would certainly try to create some form of national index.

And the thing that everybody has to understand is we are in this together. You know, people talk about kids in prison, kids who are unemployed or underemployed, those are going to be costs to this nation. They are not going to be costs to my community. They are going to be costs to this nation. And, on the other hand, successful kids competing in a global economy are going to be benefits. So, if I were to do it, I would work through such a formula.

Mr. DUNCAN. If I could add quickly, what I really think is if we went to national standards, that would force these hard conversations around funding gaps that people sort of skirt now, and if people really understood how critically it was important to get everyone to this bar where you had these huge inequities, I think it would shine a spotlight on funding that is separate and unequal, and so I think it would help us get to where we need to go and not take away from the top, but bring up the bottom, which I think we desperately need to do.

Mr. DAVIS OF ILLINOIS. Well, Dr. Hall, would you—

Ms. HALL. I would also like to add that there has been a real perception out there that there is an awful lot of waste within many of our urban school districts in terms of our business operations and what we are really doing with the dollars that we do have, and I think now there are enough districts that are doing a good job of managing the dollars, driving more and more as best they can to instruction, and people often look at that also and begin to change the conversation in terms of what is really going on as opposed to continuing this belief that we really do not know what to do with the dollars when we do have them, and I think that is a part of the conversation we certainly did not enter into today, but needs to also be heard.

Chairman MILLER. Mr. Altmire?

Mr. DAVIS OF ILLINOIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Each of you, in your testimony, talked about standardized testing and the idea of teaching to the test versus a depth of understanding of concepts, and I wanted, in, you know, what is going to be 4 minutes for four of you, if you could each quickly just summarize what is the evidence, to your knowledge, that indicates that even though test scores may have gone up—or is this your experience—that the depth of understanding of subject matter and curriculums has gone down? What is your view on that argument?

Mr. KLEIN. So my argument is that the reason I think the depth of understanding has gone on is because I have read the tests and I know what it takes to pass a math test and to pass an English language arts test. I would be the first to admit—and, indeed, one of the reasons I am a proponent of national standards and national assessments—is we need to raise our standards and we need to raise the quality of our testing.

Having said that, in New York City, when a child reads at level one on a grade of four on our standardized test, that means that child does not read, and that is a failure, and if you do not read, then your ability to do deep cognitive thinking, your ability to engage in significant problem solving is not going to happen. So I would be the first to say we could raise the standards and make them harder.

But do not buy the argument—I think it is a fallacious argument—that when more kids are reading on grade that does not mean that their education is not improving. Should it improve much more? Are there other things we should test? Yes.

But when Beverly Hall reports the results she is reporting, or Michelle or Arne, when they report those results, what that reflects is increased—not yet perfect, but increased—teaching quality and learning in our schools, and there is not a teacher in the world who does not think that a level one student is performing at an entirely different level from a level three, and that is what is so critical to this discussion.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Anyone else?

Mr. DUNCAN. Just quickly, I think, again, the quality of the assessment is really the key to your question. I think it is one of the things that Illinois has done pretty well, and the tests themselves are a lot less about filling the bubble sheet and more about writing essays and critical thinking and reading the passage and, you know, articulating your views upon that. I think those are the skills our students need to be successful. The quality of the assessments is the key to your question.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Great.

Ms. RHEE. That would be the same because we have what we call within the D.C. assessment the constructed response where we have open-ended questions and students are required to solve proof or write essays, and that is a very good indication of the quality of instruction that they are getting.

I think the other thing that we have tried to really talk to our principals about is the fact that the research shows that children who have access and exposure to a broad-based curriculum, including music and art, et cetera, actually do better academically. So we are trying to move schools and principals away from just thinking about how do we only teach these tested subject areas to the understanding that a broader curriculum is going to result in better academic achievement overall.

Ms. HALL. And I will just close by saying what I said earlier. When I went to Atlanta, I knew that when the students began to show gains that people would question whether or not it had to do with the type of assessment. Hence, our volunteering to participate in the National Assessment of Educational Progress TUDA initiative, and I think that has validated.

Sure, I was scared because we were digging out of a very deep hole, and I knew initially we were not going to look that good, but over time, what it has said is, yes, the gains are real. What is showing up on the state assessment is also showing up on the National Assessment of Education Progress, and we are not there. I mean, we have a long way to go, but we are showing sustainable, you know, progress every year building one year on the other,

grade level by grade level, which says that the teaching and learning is improving across all the schools.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Thank you all very much.

Chairman MILLER. Mr. Hinojosa?

Mr. HINOJOSA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to commend you for bringing us the best of the best of witnesses to come and talk about these issues that are so important to us.

I am going to be brief in saying that I strongly support the points that you all have made, especially with the foundation of the art of learning, and that is to have reading and writing literacy and that that can possibly be started early in the first, second, and third year of a child, to have family literacy, which teaches parents the importance of that art of loving books so that they can read and write early, first, second, third, fourth year.

So that leads me then to the concern that I want to address, and that is the graduation rates. Our crisis in graduation rates is particularly concentrated in our large urban school districts, and I would ask Chancellor Klein and then Dr. Duncan of Illinois to please address the question that I am going to carefully word.

You need to know that Congressman Davis here and Representative Bobby Scott, Raul Grijalva from Arizona, and I introduced the Graduation Promise Act to address the schools that are struggling the most to produce high school graduates. So my question is what graduation rates do your schools need to meet the adequate yearly progress either by meeting the target or making safe harbor that impacts the No Child Left Behind?

Mr. DUNCAN. A couple thoughts: If you are trying to stop the dropout rate, you cannot wait until junior, senior year. You have lost those students. So we have tried to put a huge focus on freshman and sophomore year.

We have created a scorecard that we produce every single year for every high school. One of the most important indicators is what we call the freshman on track rate.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Okay.

Mr. DUNCAN. We put a huge amount of our internal accountability system, how we rate principals, how we pay them, based upon their ability to drive the freshman on track rate because if you are waiting to—our graduation rate is a 5-year cohort rate, and if you wait until the end of that, you have lost those students, and so we tried to put a huge spotlight on what goes on during that freshman year. What we have seen is a huge drop for us between eighth and ninth grade around attendance, and, obviously attendance, when you are missing days, leads to truancy which leads to dropout.

So they actually brought back 19,000 of our incoming freshman this year a month early for a program called Freshman Connections to get a series of academic supports, but also social and cultural, and ease that transition to high school. There are lots of other things we are trying to do, smaller schools, more innovative schools. Half of our new schools are high schools. So there is a disproportionate push there.

But at the end of the day you have to do it much earlier than we have thought about. What we are doing is holding schools each

year accountable for dramatically increasing their freshman on track rate, and then over time, we think that will lead to driving down those dropout rates.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Very good answer.  
Chancellor Klein?

Mr. KLEIN. I agree it was a very good answer, and I would echo it. We are doing very similar things.

We look at ninth grade to tell because you can almost predict the kids who do not accumulate the credits and do not pass the necessary state tests in the ninth grade—they are on a spiral downward.

What we have done in New York—we have shut down about 40 large dysfunctional high schools, and we have opened up—we are working with the Gates Foundation and others—250 new small high schools, and we have almost in those schools doubled the graduation rate. You know, we put a lot of high poverty kids who were 2 years behind in a school with 3,000 kids, and we wonder why they do not succeed, and we have totally transformed that.

The final thing—and I think this came up in some of the questioning—I would say is graduation rates vary so much both from the way different states calculate them and also from the requirements they set. So, to me, in New York, we just raised the standard—and I supported my commission around this—from a passage rate of 55 percent to a passage rate of 65 percent in order to get your degree on the Regents, the state exams.

Now that is going to make it harder for me to graduate kids, and that could negatively affect my graduation rate, but the truth is if you cannot get 65 percent on a math or an English Regents, it does not matter that you get a degree. You will not be prepared. So I think Congress could do that.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Thank you, Chancellor. Good answer.

Mr. Chairman, do I have one question—

Yes. To Chancellor Rhee, what are you doing to ensure that you have enough well-prepared teachers for students who are English language learners?

Ms. RHEE. We are putting in place a very aggressive recruitment effort on the front end. We are looking specifically to recruit mid-career professionals through a program called D.C. Teaching Fellows, so people who have the content knowledge and the ability to speak very fluently in another language who might be working in another profession and giving those people incentives to become certified through their first year of teaching.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MILLER. Ms. Woolsey?

Ms. WOOLSEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, wonderful witnesses. I have learned so much from you today.

My background before I got here was human resources. I was a human resources professional for 20 years, and I am a huge supporter of pay for performance. I actually designed pay plans and performance evaluation systems, trained and implemented over the years.

My companies were high-tech manufacturers. So I know absolutely for sure that when you are measuring an assembler or a technician that you can measure quite easily because they have widgets that they work with, the widgets are all the same, and you measure the quality of a printed circuit board when it is finished. It either works or it does not work. And so you can measure quality.

But when it came to measuring employees who actually had experience and responsibility over other people, it became much more difficult. So we know that children and students and teachers are not widgets. We know that we cannot measure, if they are plugged in, if they work or not, because they are all designed differently. And I know for sure that one of challenges you have in introducing pay-for-performance programs is to make sure that they are fair and objective and defensible.

So would you tell us how you are working on keeping your systems, your programs, fair and objective and defensible, because that is what it is going to take, I believe, to get all the teachers to buy into what would be in their best interests in the long run?

Dr. HALL?

Ms. HALL. Well, we have come at pay for performance a little differently from everybody else here, I think. We decided that we would set specific targets, student achievement targets, school by school based on where the school is and where it needs to be in order to be successful, and that we would reward the entire school community if they meet those targets.

It has been transformational—and that is not being overstated—in terms of its impact on the school community coming together and everyone taking ownership ultimately for student achievement results. Whether you are a core teacher, a non-core teacher, whether you are, you know, the bus driver who needs to get the kids there in time in the morning and understands why, everyone is invested in whether or not the school meets 100 percent of its targets, 90 percent, 80 percent, because they get compensated proportionately up to 70 percent or more.

And so we have found that people have found that to be extremely fair. Even our “higher-performing” schools who initially found the targets to be even tougher because they are almost where they need to be, but they still have groups of students that they need to move and more students they need to have exceeding standards, they, too, have come to embrace the notion that paying everyone who meets these targets—and each year, we recalculate them based on how the school has done the year before—is fair and equitable, and so—

Ms. WOOLSEY. So they each got the same amount of dollars or the same—

Ms. HALL. Depending on the percent—

Ms. WOOLSEY [continuing]. Percentage?

Ms. HALL. Well, no. The classified employees, the non-instructional, get a different scale from the teacher and the principals, but, yes, they all get some compensation based on whether or not the school meets 70 percent or more of their targets.

Mr. KLEIN. What we did on that was actually very similar, but it had a fascinating twist in it and we negotiated it with the union,

and that is if we give each school a target, you are expected to move your kids up by X percent, if you meet the target, for each teacher in the school, you get \$3,000. So if you have 100 teachers, you get \$300,000.

Then you form in the school a committee, a compensation committee, which you will be very familiar with, and that has the principal and his designee and two teachers elected by the teachers. The four of them sit down, and they now take that \$300,000 and divide it up. They can give everyone the same. The one thing they cannot do under contract is base it on seniority, and, this year, 200 of our schools were eligible, I think a significant number are going to get those bonuses, and then we will see what kind of differentiation.

But do it at the local level and let there be some creativity.

Mr. DUNCAN. A couple quick things: I think the idea of not being all or nothing, but gray data so the real high performers get dramatically more, and, you know, you can participate at different levels.

Secondly, obviously, the devil is in the details. How you compensate the P.E. teacher, the librarian, again, you have to look at the whole school and look at the growth of that school so that everyone buys in.

And then, third, I think something we have all tried to do is not just talk about teachers, but focus on every adult in the building—the custodian, the security guards, the lunchroom attendant. When you go into a very high-performing school, every adult in that building is saying, “Are you taking your homework home? Where is your backpack? What is going on?”

And so we are really trying to not do us versus them, but get everyone pushing the same direction. The idea of team, I think, is really important.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MILLER. Mr. Sarbanes?

Mr. SARBANES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I was the liaison for the city-state partnership for 8 years, which was the partnership that you are familiar with, Chancellor Rhee, in Baltimore City between the State of Maryland and Baltimore City. It was a unique governance structure. It remains unique in the country, I think, because the governor and the mayor of Baltimore jointly appoint the board that oversees.

And the mayors are not here, but my question is about governance structures. We have one exception. But how important do you think it is that the mayor have the control over the system that is indicated in a number of these, or is it just getting the right people because you could say there are four or five models for the way you govern things. You could get the right people to work, and everybody will say the model is a great one. If you get the wrong people, it will not and they will say the model is no good. So just your thoughts real quick.

Ms. RHEE. So I would say it is a little of both. I think, having worked with most of the large urban school districts in this country over the past 15 years, I will say that I think that the school board structure is a very, very difficult one to navigate through.

I have worked in cities where the business community has come together to sort of, you know, elect a slate of reform-minded school board members, and I think something happens when you become a school board member that you sort of lose your mind or something, and then they all kind of, you know, go off the reservation.

So I think it is very, very, very difficult to have a school board structure where, you know, you are not sort of caught up in the politics. I think there is no way in my mind that I would have been able to make the reforms that I have over the past year without the full backing of the mayor. There is just no way that it would have happened.

Mr. SARBANES. Dr. Hall, do you want to respond to that because you have a different situation, right?

Ms. HALL. Yes. You know, I went to Atlanta from Newark, and, at the time, I was the state-appointed superintendent of Newark. There was no board. If you recall, when the State of New Jersey took over that system, the board was eliminated, and the superintendent was sort of the czar, and that had both its pluses and its minuses because what happened was a tremendous alienation from the community feeling that this is being imposed on them.

And I guess Atlanta where there had been a history of problems with the school boards and the superintendent—I spoke about the superintendent’s level when I got there, and what we had, however, in Atlanta was a community, I guess, feeling that this just had to stop. They had had enough. They had reached the point where they were going to hold both the superintendent and the board accountable for getting this thing done, and we also had a governor at that time, Governor Barnes, who was also very, very fed up with what was going on with the Atlanta Public Schools.

Mr. SARBANES. Okay.

Ms. HALL. So, when we had all those forces working together, we were able to put in place a board and to put into the law governing the Atlanta Public Schools certain requirements from the board. There is a very strong ethics component in the charter governing Atlanta Independent School District that if board members actually step what I call below the line into managing the District, there are very real consequences, including removal from the board of education.

Mr. SARBANES. Okay. To be continued. Thank you.

Chairman MILLER. To be continued.

Thank you very much for your time, your expertise, and all the work that you are doing in the districts.

And members will have 14 days to submit extraneous material and questions for the hearing record

And the committee will stand adjourned.

Thank you to everyone.

[Statement of the National Alliance of Black School Educators, submitted by Mr. Miller, follows:]

NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF BLACK SCHOOL EDUCATORS,  
310 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, SE,  
Washington, DC, July 16, 2008.

Hon. GEORGE MILLER; HOWARD P. McKEON; MIKE CASTLE;  
*Committee on Education & Labor, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR HONORABLE COMMITTEE MEMBERS: On behalf of our President Dr. Deborah Hunter-Harvill and the National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE) and

our 140 affiliates, we appreciate this opportunity to make further comments beyond our September 10th testimony on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Our organization has over 5400 members, with a structure comprised of commissions and affiliates that represent teachers, school board members, retired educators, superintendents of schools, central office staff, administrators, principals, and higher education faculty and researchers. The diverse professional roles of our members offer wide expertise that produces rich and coordinated conversations and actions that speak directly to the needs of children of African descent. NABSE continues to commend you on your efforts to improve our nation's educational opportunities. As the Congress moves forward on its reauthorization of the ESEA, your precedent-setting action of providing America's citizenry with your thinking in draft discussion documents is powerful. We urge you to continue this transparency throughout the process of reauthorizing the ESEA. We would like to direct our commentary today to the issue of quality education as a right for every American child, or as popularly termed "Education as a Civil Right."

There are three views on how to ensure "Education as a Civil Right." The first is to amend the United States Constitution to include education as an explicit fundamental right. The second is that education is an implicit fundamental right under the current U.S. constitution and that a future Supreme Court should confirm this right when it comes before The Supreme Court again. The third view is that education is already an explicitly recognized constitutional right under all fifty state constitutions and need only be appropriately implemented.

The National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE) wishes to explore the third concept, with a focus on Congress's role in assisting states in fulfilling their constitutional obligations and Congress's responsibility, pursuant to the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, to do so. Forty eight years ago, Congress and education advocates joined on a path toward leveling the playing field intentionally for underserved children. The authorization of the ESEA of 1965, coupled with provisions of Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, initiated the appropriate and necessary role of the federal government in guaranteeing equal educational opportunity nation wide.

Notwithstanding the important impact of this legislation, neither state nor federal efforts have yet produced the same educational resources for African American and other minority and disadvantaged students that are available to other groups. It is in the national interest to markedly increase the educational resources and financial capital available to poor children of African descent, poor schools, and poor school districts. It is precisely for this reason that the federal government must continue to play a strong supplemental role. Research shows that the level of educational attainment is heavily dependent on the quality of the educational opportunities over a long period of time. However, in playing that supplemental role through its carrot and stick approach, we suggest that Congress anchors another concept in its reauthorization.

A tremendous amount of language and ink are spent in the current law on accountability, bench marks, sanctions, and mandatory restructuring. We have always supported measures of accountability; however, we propose that that accountability more rigorously be applied at the state level. It is, in fact, the states who have the constitutional authority and obligation to guarantee that Education is a Civil Right.

The legal grounding of educational rights has changed considerably over the history of the ESEA. At the time of ESEA's first enactment, state educational rights were entirely undeveloped. All fifty states had constitutional clauses that obligated them to provide education, but the import of the clauses was largely ignored or unenforced. In subsequent years, however, state supreme courts established that these clauses guarantee a certain qualitative level of education, warrant application of state equal protection to educational funding schemes, or create a fundamental right to education. Based on these conclusions, courts have ordered major remedies in over half of the states. Even when remedies were not forthcoming, courts still established that students have a state constitutional right to education.

Three important principles have emerged from these state court decisions, some of which reveal that the traditional thinking about education and the federal role are no longer accurate. First, the constitutional responsibility for delivering education rests solely with the state. School districts only exercise delegated authority. The state always remains responsibility for ensuring that school districts have sufficient resources to deliver education and that they deliver it in a manner consistent with constitutional standards. Any failure in these respects is ultimately attributable to the state. Second, the constitutional right to education has quantifiable and qualitative components. These components are explicitly identified in state Supreme Court decisions and in the expansive statutory and regulatory frameworks of every state. Third, federal involvement in education does not jeopardize principles



of federalism. Congress's current legislation poses no risk because its role has been limited to supplemental funds and entails little, if any, substantive monitoring of educational opportunities. However, even an effort in regard to substantive measures would no longer pose federalism concerns because states have developed their own standards, on which Congress need only to rely.

Given the changes in state educational rights, the nature of Congress's role must also change. Now more than ever, it is incumbent upon Congress to incorporate in its role the monitoring of substantive opportunities that students receive, and ensuring they are equal. Past objections to such a role are largely premised on the same rationale that dominated the Supreme Court's decision in *San Antonio v. Rodriguez*. The Court rejected the federal courts' substantive involvement in education primarily for two reasons. First, at the time, there was a lack of any meaningful or enforceable state rights to education. Second, the Court's believed it was incapable of making qualitative judgments about education without usurping states' rights and exceeding judicial competency. Since *San Antonio*, state constitutions and state supreme court decisions have resolved both of these issues by explicitly recognizing educational constitutional rights and defining their qualitative components. In fact, these very developments in state law now dictate that Congress must act.

Congress has an obligation, pursuant to the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, to ensure that states are, in fact, delivering an education consistent with the states' own qualitative measures. Doing so does not require Congress to make any substantive decisions about education. Rather, it simply entails Congress monitoring whether states are meeting their respective substantive constitutional obligations. States are free to determine what type of education they wish to provide, or offer no education at all. But once a state exercises its discretion to provide education as a constitutional right and it determines that right has qualitative components, the federal equal protection clause imposes an obligation to provide that right to all students on an equal basis. Thus, it is also Congress's responsibility to ensure that it does not allocate funds to state systems that deliver unequal educational opportunities in violation of equal protection. Section 5 of the Fourteenth Amendment specifically authorizes and obligates Congress to further the dictates of equal protection through its legislation.

In too many communities, data reveal that certain students are not receiving educational opportunities that comport with their state constitution. In most states, poor, minority, and rural school districts struggle to provide an adequate education, while their suburban counterparts have all of the requisite resources. Such systems fail the requirements of equal protection, and Congressional action that sanctions or furthers these failures is inconsistent with Congress's own equal protection responsibilities.

Congress, however, can separate itself from equal protection violations and, in fact, further equal educational opportunities in two ways. First, it can require the federal government to monitor whether states are meeting their own qualitative constitutional responsibilities in education, conditioning the receipt of federal funds on states' meeting their own standards, or making progress toward them. Second, Congress can use its spending power to assist states in closing the gaps of unequal educational opportunities. The amount of supplemental funds it has provided in the past, and the manner in which it has disbursed them, have been insufficient to close these gaps. Congress must increase the spending levels and it must adjust the criteria by which it awards these funds to ensure that the funds equalize opportunities between schools, rather than only within schools. Ultimately, such changes are consistent not only with Congress's equal protection obligations, but also with its own stated purpose of the ESEA: To respond to "the special educational needs of low-income families and the impact that concentrations of low-income families have on the ability of local educational agencies to support adequate educational programs" and "to expand and improve their educational programs by various means (including preschool programs) which contribute particularly to meeting the special educational needs of educationally deprived children."

Respectfully Submitted,

QUENTIN R. LAWSON, *Executive Director,*  
*National Alliance of Black School Educators.*  
 DR. LARUTH GRAY, *Consultant,*  
*to the NABSE Board of Directors.*

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[Questions submitted to witnesses and their responses follow:]

U.S. CONGRESS,  
Washington, DC, July 24, 2008.

Hon. MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG, *Mayor,*  
*City of New York, New York, NY.*

DEAR MAYOR BLOOMBERG: Thank you for testifying at the July 17, 2008 hearing of the Committee on Education and Labor on “Mayor and Superintendent Partnerships in Education: Closing the Achievement Gap.”

Representative Ruben Hinojosa (D-TX), chairman of the Higher Education, Lifelong Learning and Competitiveness Subcommittee and member of the Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education Subcommittee, has asked that you respond in writing to the following questions:

1. In the Department’s report, there is no data provided from Illinois or New York on the academic achievement of English language learners in the content areas. How do you hold schools and the district accountable for ensuring that English language learners achieve to the same standards as all other students and for ensuring that they have full access to the curriculum in a manner that is understandable to them as required under the Supreme Court case *Lau v. Nichols*?

2. What graduation rates do your schools need to meet to make AYP either by meeting the target or making “safe harbor”?

3. I along with Rep. Scott, Rep. Grijalva, Rep. Davis, and many of my colleagues on this committee introduced the Graduation Promise Act to address the schools that are struggling the most to produce high school graduates. What are your views on the need for a large scale effort in this area?

Please send an electronic version of your written response to the questions to the Committee close of business on Wednesday, July 30, 2008—the date on which the hearing record will close. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

GEORGE MILLER,  
*Chairman.*

U.S. CONGRESS,  
Washington, DC, July 20, 2008.

JOEL I. KLEIN, *Chancellor,*  
*New York City Department of Education, New York, NY.*

DEAR MR. KLEIN: Thank you for testifying at the July 17, 2008 hearing of the Committee on Education and Labor on “Mayor and Superintendent Partnerships in Education: Closing the Achievement Gap.”

Representative Ruben Hinojosa (D-TX), chairman of the Higher Education, Lifelong Learning and Competitiveness Subcommittee and member of the Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education Subcommittee, has asked that you respond in writing to the following questions:

1. In the Department’s report, there is no data provided from Illinois or New York on the academic achievement of English language learners in the content areas. How do you hold schools and the district accountable for ensuring that English language learners achieve to the same standards as all other students and for ensuring that they have full access to the curriculum in a manner that is understandable to them as required under the Supreme Court case *Lau v. Nichols*?

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Please send an electronic version of your written response to the questions to the Committee close of business on Wednesday, July 30, 2008—the date on which the hearing record will close. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

GEORGE MILLER,  
*Chairman.*

**New York City Department of Education Response to July 23rd Questions  
for the Record**

QUESTION 1

In the Department's report, there is no data provided from Illinois or New York on the academic achievement of English Language Learners in the content areas. How do you hold schools and the district accountable for ensuring that the English Language Learners achieve to the same standards as all other students and for ensuring that they have full access to the curriculum in a manner that is understandable to them as required under the Supreme Court case *Lau v. Nichols*?

The Office of English Language Learners (ELLs) continues to implement Children First reform initiatives that bolster a more rigorous and responsive education for ELLs. By building on the momentum of the Chancellor's seven ELL directives (2003), and refining initiatives to help schools meet comprehensive accountability measures, the Office is creating a stronger, more supportive staffing infrastructure, rigorous professional development, coherent programs, better materials and resources, and comprehensive parent outreach.

The Best Practices Initiative identifies schools that have shown significant academic improvements for ELLs and shares with schools citywide how these improvements were made. ELL specialists visit schools that have demonstrated strong gains for ELLs in English language arts, mathematics, science and/or social studies based on a review of ELL performance data. In addition, practices and outcomes from schools that have piloted academic interventions geared toward improving ELLs academic achievement are studied and shared. Schools are recruited and encouraged to share innovations and practices that have produced reliable results through citywide conferences and/or intervisitations. Descriptions of promising practices are provided on the Web site for similarly situated schools interested in replicating them.

The Bilingual Special Education Initiative is building a better process to ensure the provision of equitable instructional outcomes for ELLs with special needs. Through the initiative, the Office of ELLs works closely with the Office of Special Education Initiatives to support districts and schools with intervention strategies, assessments, and instruction for ELLs with special needs. The initiative contributed to a recent guide, "Practitioner's Guide with Primary Emphasis on Assessing Achievement as Part of an Evaluation for Special Education," which, along with training modules, has been disseminated citywide and provides the basis for wide-scale professional development for clinicians.

The Classroom Resource Initiative works with all initiatives to identify, develop, and disseminate the core curriculum instructional materials and assessments necessary for schools to best support their ELLs. In 2007-08, core instructional materials for ELLs have been purchased centrally and delivered to schools. Periodic assessments for ELLs have been implemented citywide. Also, specialized SIFE diagnostic assessments are in the final stages of development.

The Dual Language Network Initiative provides planning, implementation and global technology grants along with technical assistance, resources and citywide networking events for schools implementing dual language programs and those interested in the dual language model. Each year, the initiative links schools (and other interested parties) with local, state and nationwide researchers and practitioners, providing high quality networking events, like the 2008 Dual Language Symposium and the Dual Language Leadership Institute. The initiative continues to expand the number of programs in New York City (currently 70), as well as language offerings—which now include Haitian Creole, Russian, Korean, and French—adding to existing Spanish and Chinese programs. Plans to offer more dual language programs that extend into middle school and high school are being developed by several schools in order to develop program sustainability. The initiative partners with researchers from the Center for Applied Linguistics and leaders in the dual language field—Dr. Sonia Soltero, Dr. Margarita Calderon, Mimi Met, Dr. Sandra Mercuri, Lore Carrera-Carillo, and Annette Smith—to help cohorts of schools create action plans for stronger programs. These experts work closely with groups of principals, administrators and teachers of prospective and actual programs through a Dual Language Leadership Institute. Also, the initiative identifies and coordinates intervisitations with exemplary programs so that they can share their best practices with other schools.

Language Allocation Policy (LAP) Initiative: Released in 2004, the Language Allocation Policy provides a coherent policy for the distribution of English and native language use in ELL instruction. A LAP tool kit, created in 2004 and revised in 2007-08, provides resources and structures to support school-based teams with planning for ELL instruction. The LAP Initiative continues to update resources and pro-

vide professional development on how to prepare a LAP that guides the schools in creating programs for ELLs that are challenging and rigorous. In addition, because the LAP is now a part of the school's Comprehensive Education Plans, ELL specialists assist schools in creating and revising LAPs on an annual basis to ensure that there is instructional coherency within and across ELL programs.

The Literacy Initiative provides a variety of professional development opportunities, resources and intervention programs for ELL educators and staff with the goal of narrowing the achievement gap between ELLs and English proficient students. Large conferences, like Scaffolding the Academic Uses of English for ELLs, targeted workshops on assessments and strategies, and the multi-leveled ELL Literacy Leadership Institute (ELL-I) build school communities committed to ELL literacy. The ELL-I works with administrators, teachers, and parent coordinators so that school communities analyze their practices, establish long term goals for literacy development for ELLs, and develop action plans to achieve these goals. The institute relies on the expertise of ELL literacy researchers and authors such as Diane August (Center for Applied Linguistics), Margarita Calderon (Johns Hopkins University), Pauline Gibbons and Jennifer Hammond (University of Technology in Sydney, Australia), Myriam Met (University of Maryland), Mary Capellini, David and Yvonne Freeman (The University of Texas at Brownsville), and Katharine Davies Samway (San Jose University), Lori Helman (University of Minnesota), Sandra Mercuri (Fresno Pacific University). Launched in the 2006-07 school year, the institute has already reached more than 350 school staff from 100 school teams and expects an additional 300 to participate during the 2008-09 school year. Also, ELL specialists are creating a K-12 English as a Second Language scope and sequence document that is aligned to the English Language Arts standards. This document will provide guidance for educators who are strengthening their curriculum. Finally, the initiative provides schools citywide with literacy and language support interventions designed to differentiate literacy instruction for ELLs. Web-based programs for elementary and middle school ELLs like Achieve 3000, Award Reading, and Imagine Learning English give students additional demonstrations of classroom concepts using technology while providing teachers with information on usage and pre- and post-assessment results. Programs like Reading Instructional Goals for Older Readers (RIGOR) focus on accelerating language, literacy and content understanding for struggling learners.

The Math Initiative strives to raise the academic achievement of ELLs by building a strong network among school-based math and ELL leaders through professional development events, conferences and action plans. The initiative provides schools with access to expert mathematics researchers such as Mark Driscoll (Center for Leadership and Learning Communities), Grace Kalemnik (Center for Leadership and Learning Communities), Donna Gaarder (WestEd), Harold Asturias (Lawrence Hall of Science) and Nicholas Branca (San Diego State University). In 2007-08, the Math Initiative, in addition to enhancing the content and methodology of middle school math educators, focuses on the development of mathematics academic language in middle and high school students. Through workshops, institutes, seminars and a citywide conferences, the initiative provide educators with the theoretical underpinnings and the practical strategies required to raise ELL achievement in mathematics. The initiative continues to strengthen a math leadership structure which uses QTEL math institute strategies to create curriculum enhanced lessons. More than 4,200 professionals have participated in mathematics initiative professional development since 2004.

The Middle School Initiative works closely with middle school staff through targeted professional development institutes. The 2007-08 year features ongoing institutes e.g., Looking at ELLs Work in the Middle School, Middle School Mathematics and Academic Language Seminar, Tertulia and Professional Learning for Spanish NLA Teachers, Differentiated Instruction for Effective Teaching of Mathematics for ELLs, Using Released Test Items to Improve ELL Mathematics Instruction, and Scaffolding Academic Uses of English in Middle School ELA for ELLs. Also, all Office of ELLs-sponsored conferences on world and dual language programs, strengthening academic language, mathematics, science, best practices and ELL subpopulations (e.g., SIFE, LTEs) provide sessions and panel discussions specifically for middle school staff featuring experts and middle school practitioners. Finally, the initiative provides coaching to more than thirty high-needs middle schools as well as one-on-one technical assistance from ELL specialists through the Adopt-a-Middle-School program.

The Native Language Arts (NLA) Initiative provides bilingual administrators and educators with critical native language classroom resources and professional development institutes necessary to provide native language learning according to state standards. Native language classroom libraries are strengthening classroom instruc-

tion in bilingual classrooms citywide. Since 2003, \$2.27 million dollars have been spent on Spanish classroom libraries, \$1.21 million on Asian Language libraries (including Bengali, Chinese, Korean, and Russian), and \$72,000 on Haitian Creole classroom libraries. Schools have implemented academic interventions with supports in Spanish (Achieve, Imagine Learning, Destination Math, RIGOR), Mandarin (Imagine Learning), Vietnamese (Imagine Learning), Haitian Creole (Imagine Learning), Japanese (Imagine Learning), Korean (Imagine Learning), Portuguese (Imagine Learning), and French (Imagine Learning). This year, several NLA committees are creating resources for NLA teachers, e.g., a six level Scope and Sequence and Curriculum for High School Spanish NLA to strengthen programs citywide so that more students reach proficiency at the AP level. In 2007-08, special offerings for NLA educators included institutes on Spanish, literacy and science. A series of Spanish NLA professional development provides an opportunity for teachers to strengthen their language and literature content, learn new strategies to add to their repertoire, and visit the rich and varied Spanish cultural resources available to our students.

The Parent Outreach Initiative. Parents of ELLs especially should feel welcome in NYC schools and be fully informed of the instructional program options available to their children. More than 3,500 parents participate each year in activities sponsored by the ELL Parent Outreach Initiative, in collaboration with other DOE offices (e.g., Office of Parent Engagement, Translation and Interpretation Unit). Annual citywide conferences provide parents of ELLs with an opportunity to see key officials and policymakers; attend informational workshops; meet school and community-based organization; and peruse educational materials from publishers that showcase learning materials for ELLs in a variety of native languages. The initiative also provides specialized training focused on literacy and math so that parents can participate in the academic lives of their children (e.g., The Math and Parents in Partnership Program is in its third year). The initiative conducts outreach and training sessions for school staff and community groups in order to increase the capacity and awareness of those who work with ELL parents. Finally, the initiative develops school-based resources to assist staff who work with ELL parents (see ELL Parent Information Case).

Quality Teaching for English Learners (QTEL) Professional Development Institutes: Educational consultants at WestEd, in collaboration with Office of ELLs staff, provide a host of multi-day professional development opportunities for educators (bilingual and monolingual) and region and school-based leaders. The institutes have reached almost 500 educators in 2007-08 and thousands of educators citywide since 2003.

- Beginning ESL is for secondary ESL teachers who work with beginning ESL students. This institute promotes communicative competence in English for secondary students by presenting activities that stimulate students' conversational situations, enhancing their capacity to produce well-defined spoken and written text.

- "Building the Base I" gives participants a firm grasp of QTEL strategies-mainly effective scaffolding strategies to facilitate the linguistic transition of ELLs. It provides a solid base for any educator called to teach ELLs or foreign language students, especially those with ELLs in their general education classrooms.

- English Language Arts QTEL for secondary school English Language Arts teachers develops participants' understanding of how to scaffold instruction for ELLs with grade-appropriate rigorous texts within a variety of genres. The institute provides the theoretical understanding and corresponding strategies so that educators can effectively engage ELLs in acquiring the standards-based content and academic language needed to succeed in secondary school.

- Math QTEL pivots around instructional scaffolding-providing support structures-to help ELLs transition to English while strengthening academic language in mathematics. It develops participants' theoretical understanding and practical knowledge of effective practices for teaching students who are learning English and math content simultaneously. The institute includes practical lesson planning and building thematic units, while also arming teachers with the attitudes, knowledge, and dispositions to work effectively with adolescent language learners.

- Science QTEL for secondary education science teachers develops participants' theoretical understanding and practical knowledge of effective instructional practices for teaching students who are learning English and science content simultaneously. This institute is for science teachers who need strategies to raise the academic performance of ELLs in their classrooms.

- Social Studies QTEL for high school social studies teachers develops participants' expertise in teaching English learners rigorous content and uses of academic English to succeed in US History and Government courses. The institute provides

teachers with a firm foundation of the theoretical understanding and practical applications necessary for scaffolding standards-based, grade-appropriate content.

- Spanish QTEL helps bilingual, dual language and foreign language educators develop tools and processes for teaching academic Spanish to native Spanish-speaking students.

The Science Initiative provides staff development to raise the academic achievement of ELLs in science. Working closely with West Ed, the initiative provides institutes that strengthen content, provide strategies for ELLs in science, and connect teachers with the wealth of science institutions around the city that are available to students. Workshops and institutes establish school-level partnerships encouraging ESL and science teachers to participate as teams.

The Secondary Schools Initiative ensures that middle and high schools, both large and small, receive support for a quality education that moves ELLs towards achieving post-secondary success. Sustained professional development builds academic literacy and language in content area subjects such as mathematics, social studies, English, and science. Secondary schools are provided with exemplars of a standards-based curriculum, instructional materials provided in home languages and accessible English, and high quality teachers with expertise in English language development. Under the initiative, groups of educators are developing scope and sequence documents for ESL, foreign language, and native language arts for grades 6-12. These will be accompanied by curriculum maps and units of study. Also, the initiative developed a summary of research and promising practices, Designing Better High Schools for ELLs, to help high schools structure their ELL programs to be more flexible and responsive to the needs of adolescent ELLs.

The Small Schools Initiative provides sustained support to school leaders and their teams as they develop a quality program for ELLs. ELL specialists work with small school communities to identify common areas of need. A comprehensive technical assistance support program helps schools review and conduct needs assessment surveys to identify and address high-needs areas for ELLs small schools. The initiative also provide professional development, such as a four-day institute for teachers, coordinators and administrators on programming and scheduling rigorous instructional programs aligned to CR Part 154 mandates. A tool kit is being developed targeting the needs of small schools. In collaboration with of the Office of Portfolio Development, new small schools opening in the 2008-09 school year will receive summer professional development and technical assistance.

The Social Studies Initiative strives to raise ELL academic achievement through project-based learning and an English as a Second Language (ESL)/Literacy approach. The Global History and Geography Enrichment Program is designed for ESL/bilingual teachers to support ninth and tenth graders at beginning and intermediate literacy levels with Regents requirements. Teams of ELL specialists, teachers, social studies content experts and literacy consultants have developed a Global History & Geography Curriculum Guide for ELLs. This curriculum guide, which can be used as a supplement to the ninth grade Global Studies Core Curriculum, provides exemplars that effectively integrate specific reading and writing strategies as well as scaffolds to teach Global Studies. In 2007-08, the guide, consisting of lessons and student journals, was piloted in classroom during and after school. In some settings, the content area specialist co-taught with the ESL specialist to effectively support students with content area knowledge as well as academic language. Professional development includes institutes on using the guide along with content libraries and instructional materials. Additional professional development will be provided in the 2008-09 school year for schools that opt to use the guide.

Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE) Grants Project provides funding, professional development and technical assistance so that schools create instructional models to accelerate language and academic learning for SIFE. The initiative has expanded support to include long-term ELLs, provided more tailored professional development and instructional service options for 47 grant recipients, and refined its structure to provide funding and technical assistance to demonstration sites within the school system. The initiative also continues to work with the CUNY Graduate Center on ongoing research and diagnostic assessments as well as with state policymakers on SIFE identification. A diagnostic assessment to identify Spanish and English speaking SIFE will be available beginning September 2008.

The World Languages Initiative prepares City students to be well-equipped with cultural and foreign language skills required for our global society. The initiative provides a citywide conference that provides educators with school planning information and classroom strategies for developing effective world language programs. Targeted institutes focus on helping educators develop curriculum. Additionally, ELL specialists and leaders from the field are working together to develop a scope and sequence for Spanish and Chinese. The scope and sequence (grades K-12) docu-

ments will guide world language instruction that is aligned to national and State standards. Also, a learning community of teachers, in collaboration with The World Language Department of Queens College, work together to write curriculum units to foster students' awareness of world cultures and strengthen linguistic skills.

The Writing Initiative looks at writing as an integral part of the success of each ELL in every subject. This initiative provides one- and two-day professional development sessions that look at the various genres in which ELLs are required to perform, such as expository (e.g. reports and essays) writing. Professional development sessions give participants practical and research-based strategies that build ELLs' writing skills, allowing students to express their opinions, write about a wide array of subjects, and convey meaning accurately within content-areas.

#### QUESTION 2

What graduation rates do your schools need to meet to make AYP either by meeting the target or making "safe harbor"?

For NCLB/state accountability, the graduation rate cohort will be used to determine if the district or school meets the graduation-rate requirements. The state standard for graduation rate is 55%. The graduation-rate cohort consists of all students, regardless of their current grade status, who were enrolled in the school on October 6, 2005 (BEDS day) and met one of the following conditions: first entered grade 9 (anywhere) during the 2002-03 school year (July 1, 2002 through June 30, 2003); or in the case of ungraded students with disabilities, reached their seventeenth birthday during the 2002-03 school year. For a school to meet AYP in ELA and/or math via safe harbor at the secondary level, it must make the State Standard or its Progress Target for graduation rate.

#### QUESTION 3

I along with Rep. Scott, Rep. Grijalva, Rep. Davis, and many of my colleagues on this committee introduced the Graduation Promise Act to address the schools that are struggling the most to produce high school graduates. What are your views on the need for a large scale effort in this area?

The New York City Department of Education strongly supports the need for a large scale effort to address schools that are struggling the most to produce high school graduates. In particular, we support the Graduation Promise Act's provisions to authorize \$2.5 billion in new funding to:

- Create a federal-state-local secondary school reform partnership focused on transforming the nation's lowest performing high schools;
- Build capacity for high school improvement and provide resources to ensure high school educators and students facing the highest challenges receive the support they need to succeed;
- Strengthen state systems to identify, differentiate among, and target the level of reform and resources necessary to improve low performing high schools and ensure transparency and accountability for that process;
- Advance the research and development needed to ensure a robust supply of highly effective secondary school models for those most at risk of being left behind, and identify the most effective reforms; and
- Support states to align their policies and systems to meet the goal of college and career-ready graduation for all students.

In offering this support, it is necessary to put school turnaround and replacement efforts into the context of overall secondary school reform in New York City and discuss how these efforts move us toward high school diplomas that signify college- and work-readiness for the 21st century.

Six years ago, Mayor Bloomberg and Chancellor Klein created Children First, a bold agenda to reform New York City's public schools—the nation's largest school system. Children First directly addresses the greatest challenge and opportunity in public education today: preparing our students to succeed, to become thoughtful and productive citizens, and to contribute to the city's vibrancy and competitive advantage. Under Children First, the overarching goal of the New York City Department of Education (DOE) is to develop, support, and sustain 1,450+ great schools, providing every student in the city access to a high quality education and the chance to succeed. The DOE is not building a great school system, rather a system of great schools.

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Note. Progress Targets are determined at the secondary level for groups that do not meet the State Standard. To make AYP for graduation rate, the "All Students" group must meet the State Standard or its Progress Target.

Significant progress has been made under Mayor Bloomberg and Chancellor Klein. Launched in 2003, Children First has stabilized a formerly unbalanced system, eliminated layers of bureaucracy, pushed more than \$350 million from central and regional administration into the schools, and set new and rigorous academic standards supported by strong curricula. Today, the system is stronger and tangible progress has been made—the four-year high school graduation rate has reached 60%, the highest level since the city began calculating the rate in 1986.

The NYC DOE's new eighth grade promotion standards hold students to higher expectations and will ensure that students who are promoted out of middle school are effectively prepared for the rigors of high school-level work. Once students successfully meet this threshold, they are provided with a portfolio of high quality secondary school options that put them on a path to realize their educational and life goals.

Building a portfolio of high-quality education options that meet the diverse needs of New York City's 1.1 million students and their families has been a centerpiece of the reforms. To accomplish this, internal DOE stakeholders—the Chancellor's Office, the Office of Portfolio Development, the Office of Multiple Pathways to Graduation, the Division of Teaching & Learning—have collaborated with external support partners to develop a range of meaningful programs designed to target high-need student populations, organized around two complementary sets of strategies aimed at improving the 4-year and 6-year graduation rates:

1. Preventative Strategies that focus on providing students with rigorous, personalized, and engaging academic options that would prevent them from falling off-track and becoming over-age-under credited (OA-UC). The Gates Foundation has been a strong partner in this work, which includes:

- New small schools that offer high quality educational options to all students based on the principles of academic rigor, personalization, and community-based partnerships; to date, the DOE has created over 230 new schools.

- Charter Schools are independent public schools, governed by their own not-for-profit boards of trustees, which operate on the terms of five-year performance contracts known as charters. All students eligible for admission to a traditional public school can apply to a charter school. Students are admitted through a lottery, but charter schools do give preference to siblings of students already enrolled in the school and students living in the charter school's district.

- Small learning communities (SLCs)—small academic communities of approximately 400 students within larger comprehensive middle and high schools. Each SLC has a dedicated group of administrators and staff focused on providing students with a challenging curriculum and helping them graduate on time and prepared for college or the workplace.

- Career and technical education (CTE)—Rigorous career and technical education options attract students by enhancing the range of pathways and options that lead directly into meaningful post-secondary educational and/or workforce opportunities for our students. High quality CTE programs directly align to the needs and demands of industry and equip students with the relevant skills and competencies to successfully compete in the 21st century economy.

2. Recuperative Strategies that focus on improving academic outcomes for students who have already become OA-UC by putting them back on-track and creating multiple pathways to graduation. Multiple pathway options for over-age under-credited students include:

- Transfer High Schools are small, academically rigorous high schools designed to reengage students who have dropped out or who have fallen behind and now have fewer credits than they should for their age (these students are called "over-age and under-credited"). These schools provide a personalized learning environment and connections to career and college opportunities. Students graduate with a high school diploma from their transfer high school. Each transfer school determines admissions criteria individually. Guidance counselors at students' original high schools must contact each prospective school directly to set up an interview for admission or to learn more about the school.

- Young Adult Borough Centers are evening academic programs designed to meet the needs of high school students who might be considering dropping out because they are behind academically or because they have adult responsibilities that make attending school in the daytime difficult. Eligible students are at least 17.5 years old, have been in school for four or more years, and have 17 or more credits. Students graduate with a diploma from their home school after they have earned all of their credits and passed all of the required exams while attending a YABC.

- Learning to Work Programs offer in-depth job readiness and career exploration opportunities designed to enhance the academic components of select Young Adult Borough Centers, Transfer Schools, and GED programs. The goals of Learning to



Work are to assist students in overcoming some of the obstacles that impede their progress toward a high school diploma and lead them toward rewarding post-secondary employment and educational experiences. Learning to Work offers academic support, career and education exploration, work preparation, skills development, and internships.

- GED Programs with Learning to Work are available for students who wish to prepare for the General Education Development (GED) exam. Students who receive a passing score on the GED exam earn a High School Equivalency Diploma. We have developed new full and part-time GED programs that are blended with the Learning to Work program. These programs prepare students for the GED and help them develop connections to meaningful post-secondary opportunities.

Actively managing this portfolio of school options is a critical lever in sustaining and expanding opportunities for all students to reach graduation. Rather than prescribing interventions, federal and state efforts should build capacity within local districts to continually optimize their portfolio of school options, replacing poor performing schools, improving underperforming school and documenting effective practices of high performing schools.

An actively managed portfolio of schools, coupled with empowered leadership and strong accountability are key levers to ensure that all of our students are prepared for postsecondary success. The next generation of accountability must increase the emphasis on graduation rates and postsecondary readiness, which are often overlooked in the current focus on improving student test scores. In order to make these factors an integral part of the next wave of accountability, fewer, higher, and clearer standards should be defined at federal and state level, with then maximum discretion for district innovation to achieve results, including increased funding with fewer strings attached.

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U.S. CONGRESS,  
Washington, DC, July 24, 2008.

ARNE DUNCAN, *Chief Executive Officer,*  
*Chicago Public Schools, Chicago, IL.*

DEAR MR. DUNCAN: Thank you for testifying at the July 17, 2008 hearing of the Committee on Education and Labor on “Mayor and Superintendent Partnerships in Education: Closing the Achievement Gap.”

Representative Ruben Hinojosa (D-TX), chairman of the Higher Education, Lifelong Learning and Competitiveness Subcommittee and member of the Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education Subcommittee, has asked that you respond in writing to the following questions:

1. In the Department’s report, there is no data provided from Illinois or New York on the academic achievement of English language learners in the content areas. How do you hold schools and the district accountable for ensuring that English language learners achieve to the same standards as all other students and for ensuring that they have full access to the curriculum in a manner that is understandable to them as required under the Supreme Court case *Lau v. Nichols*?

2. What graduation rates do your schools need to meet to make AYP either by meeting the target or making “safe harbor”?

3. I along with Rep. Scott, Rep. Grijalva, Rep. Davis, and many of my colleagues on this committee introduced the Graduation Promise Act to address the schools that are struggling the most to produce high school graduates. What are your views on the need for a large scale effort in this area?

Representative Danny K. Davis (D-IL), member of the Higher Education, Lifelong Learning and Competitiveness Subcommittee and member of the Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education Subcommittee, has asked that you respond in writing to the following questions:

1. The Chicago bonus pay program is known for having worked closely with teachers and teachers’ unions to develop it. Can you give more detail on what this united effort looks like and how it has helped the program?

2. Can you discuss how the stakeholders established the formula for the bonus pay, such as what variables are considered and what percentage each variable carries?

3. In your testimony, you mentioned the teacher pipeline efforts. Could you explain these efforts in greater detail?

4. Could you share with the Committee more details about how Chicago encourages high quality teachers to teach in the lowest performing schools?

Please send an electronic version of your written response to the questions to the Committee close of business on Wednesday, July 30, 2008—the date on which the

hearing record will close. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

GEORGE MILLER,  
*Chairman.*

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CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS,  
S. CLARK ST., 5TH FLOOR,  
*Chicago, IL, July 30, 2008.*

Hon. GEORGE MILLER, *Chairman,*  
*Committee on Education and Labor, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. MILLER: Representative Ruben Hinojosa (D-TX), chairman of the Higher Education, Lifelong Learning and Competitiveness Subcommittee and member of the Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education Subcommittee, has asked that you respond in writing to the following questions:

1. In the Department's report, there is no data provided from Illinois or New York on the academic achievement of English language learners in the content areas. How do you hold schools and the district accountable for ensuring that English language learners achieve to the same standards as all other students and for ensuring that they have full access to the curriculum in a manner that is understandable to them as required under the Supreme Court case *Lau v. Nichols*?

ELLs are tested in Reading and Math in grades 3-8, and Science in grades 4 & 7 on the state assessment. ELLs participate in the bilingual program that provides them instruction (to the same standards) in the native language and English as a Second Language (ESL). Students are assessed on their English proficiency annually and take classes in their native language and English, depending on their English proficiency. Students are allowed to participate in the bilingual program for three years or longer, if necessary, until they have demonstrated English proficiency on the state assessment.

2. What graduation rates do your schools need to meet to make AYP either by meeting the target or making "safe harbor"?

The high school graduation rate must be 75% in school year 07-08 to make AYP. There is no safe harbor for graduation rate.

3. I along with Rep. Scott, Rep. Grijalva, Rep. Davis, and many of my colleagues on this committee introduced the Graduation Promise Act to address the schools that are struggling the most to produce high school graduates. What are your views on the need for a large scale effort in this area?

It is clear that large-scale federal reform is necessary to address the dismally high dropout rates that our highest-need schools are facing. In Chicago alone, nearly 42% of our students drop out of high school without attaining a diploma and there are over 20 comprehensive high schools with drop out rates higher than 50%. Despite these startling figures, there is hope. We know that by better targeting our most needy students through engaging, rigorous and relevant curriculum, social and emotional supports, and personalized learning environments with caring adults we can reach those who are most at-risk and steer them on a path toward success. Achieving these things will require providing high-quality options for all students, developing capacity of teachers and leaders within secondary schools, and targeting resources towards those schools and students that have the highest need.

Representative Danny K. Davis (D-IL), member of the Higher Education, Lifelong Learning and Competitiveness Subcommittee and member of the Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education Subcommittee, has asked that you respond in writing to the following questions:

1. The Chicago bonus pay program is known for having worked closely with teachers and teachers' unions to develop it. Can you give more detail on what this united effort looks like and how it has helped the program?

In 2006, CPS convened a team of educators and community stakeholders, including CTU representatives, CPAA representatives, teachers (DRIVE), funders/foundations, and other central office administrators in researching and developing the TIF grant proposal. After receiving the TIF grant award in November 2006, the REAL Program (now called Chicago TAP) established a planning committee to continue the planning and implementation activities. The planning committee included many of the same people from the original grant committee. Concurrently, CPS and CTU were negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the REAL Program pilot with the assistance of Franczek and Sullivan. During the negotiations, we also received guidance and support from national AFT personnel, Louise Sundan (Minnesota TAP) and Rob Weil, National AFT Educational Issues. As a result of the

agreement, we established a Joint Council, chaired by Arne Duncan and Marilyn Stewart, consisting of 5 members selected by CPS and 5 members selected by CTU to continue monitoring and guiding the direction of the program’s implementation. The Joint Council currently consists of three (3) teachers and one (1) principal in Chicago TAP schools, six (6) CPS or CTU administrators, and the president of The Chicago Public Education Fund. This group meets twice per month and has shown great commitment and dedication to making sure that this program is implemented with fidelity and also transparency.

2. Can you discuss how the stakeholders established the formula for the bonus pay, such as what variables are considered and what percentage each variable carries?

Based on the nationally recognized TAP model, the performance bonus awards are comprised of two components:

- Teachers Skills, Knowledge and Responsibilities (SKR) as measured by teachers’ observations using the TAP Instructional Rubric and an end-of-year Responsibilities Survey
- Student Achievement gains as measured by Value Added (School wide Gains and Classroom-level Gains)

In Year 1 of implementation for each Cohort, the performance bonus award is weighted 25% based on Teachers’ SKR score, and 75% based on School-wide Student achievement gains. Below, the percentages change over time and classroom level student achievement gains are phased in as the implementation progresses.

The table below illustrates the percentages of each variable.

	Year 2*	Year 3	Year 4
Teachers’ SKR (4-6 Observations and Responsibilities Survey) .....	40%	40%	40%
	(Average \$1,600)	(Average \$1,600)	(Average \$1,600)
School-wide gains .....	50%	40%	40%
	(Maximum \$2,000)	(Maximum \$1,600)	(Maximum \$1,200)
Classroom level gains .....	10%	20%	30%
	(Maximum \$400)	(Maximum \$800)	(Maximum \$1,200)

For teachers in non-tested subjects or grades (Kindergarten, 1st grade, Art, PE, etc.), the performance bonus award is weighted 40% based on Teachers’ SKR score and 60% based on School-wide Student Achievement Gains.

3. In your testimony, you mentioned the teacher pipeline efforts. Could you explain these efforts in greater detail?

TEACHER PIPELINE PROGRAMS

Like many public school districts across the nation, the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) continues to experience a growing need for high-quality teachers who are committed to raising academic achievement in the most challenged schools. One avenue toward meeting this demand is through the Teacher Pipeline Programs which are designed to attract educators and professionals into CPS classrooms.

The Teacher Pipeline Programs aligns its purpose with the Human Capital Initiative to ensure that outstanding leaders are staffed into CPS classrooms. The second purpose is to identify and aggressively recruit high quality teachers within 6 to 18 months from their certification especially in those subject areas of high need. Therefore, CPS will hold a pipeline of quality teachers to address teacher vacancies for two academic years. Listed below are overviews and outcomes for the three programs: Teaching Residency & Internship Program (TRIP), Student Teaching Program, and Alternative Certification Program.

I. TEACHING RESIDENCY & INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS

Overview: The CPS Teaching Residency and Internship Programs are designed to provide talented education majors with an opportunity to experience living and teaching in the city of Chicago with hopes they return to the district as new hires upon graduation and certification. This highly selective program attracts the best teachers nationally and is a model for other programs. Pre-service teachers teach under the guidance of veteran CPS and Nationally Board Certified Teachers. These teachers are identified 12 to 18 months from their certification.

Outcomes

- Over 825 online applications were received, representing 47 universities

- Applications received represented 24 states including: Kentucky, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, California, Oregon, Arizona, North Dakota, Georgia, Louisiana, Florida, New York and Maine.

- University representation include: University of IL Urbana, University of Michigan, DePaul University, Illinois State University, Michigan State University, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Clark-Atlanta University, Miami University of Ohio, University of Missouri in Columbia, Ohio University, Loyola University of Chicago, Western Illinois University, etc.

- 70 Interns participated in 2006 and 19 Interns participated in 2007
- 93 Teaching Residents participated in 2006 and 86 Teaching Residents participated in 2007

Comment: The program retired in 2007 and is currently being restructured for summer 2009 to increase capacity and ensure the program is aligned with other district initiatives.

## II. STUDENT-TEACHING PROGRAM

Overview: This program assists outstanding pre-service teachers by offering a unique urban teaching experience, support and guidance through the final phases of the traditional teacher certification program. Upon successful completion of their CPS student teaching experience, the Student Teaching Program aggressively seeks to retain and hire those effective student teachers. CPS student teachers are highly recommended teacher candidates, as they have already demonstrated their commitment and passion to CPS. These teachers are identified 6 to 12 months from their certification.

### OUTCOMES

#### Outcomes

Ethnicity	Fall 2007	Winter 2008	Spring 2008	Total	Percentages
Asian/Pacific Islander	39	6	66	111	6%
Black/African American	117	10	109	236	12%
Latino/Hispanic	102	8	125	235	12%
Native American	0	0	2	2	0.10%
White / Caucasian	365	72	546	983	50%
Did not disclose	176	23	199	398	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>799</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>1047</b>	<b>1965</b>	<b>100%</b>

Gender	Fall 2007	Winter 2008	Spring 2008	Total	Percentages
Female	503	82	663	1248	63%
Male	142	20	223	385	20%
Undisclosed	154	17	161	332	17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>799</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>1047</b>	<b>1965</b>	<b>100%</b>

Other Program Statistics 2007-2008	Total
Number of Universities Represented	86
Student Teachers with Advanced Degrees (Masters/Doctorates)	630=32%
Student Teachers with Bachelor's Degree (BA)	952=48%
Degree Type not disclosed	383=19%
Student Teachers in high need subject areas: math, science, world language, special education, etc.	731=37%
Student Teachers in non-high need subject areas: English, Art, Music, Elementary, etc	929=47%
Student Teachers that failed to disclose area of certification	305=16%
Student Teacher that failed to disclose name of University	406=21%
Number of CPS Participating Elementary & Secondary Schools	341
In-state Universities	40
Out-of-State Universities	45
Virtual Universities	2
States Represented	20
Average Grade Point Average	2.80

Recently, the Student Teaching Program piloted the Student Teaching Application Process where individuals must be selected to conduct their student teaching work in the district. This will become a standard practice within the coming year.

## II. ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

Overview: These programs are designed to attract outstanding leaders to become teachers in CPS and to significantly impact the academic achievement of our city's children. Individuals enrolled in these highly-selective programs provide classroom learning with the content knowledge based on academic and professional experiences. Their backgrounds lend themselves to teaching high-need subject areas as math, science, world languages in Spanish and Chinese, bilingual elementary education, and special elementary education. These teachers are identified 6-8 months from their certification.

*Outcomes*

The Chicago Teaching Fellows Program experienced another successful recruitment season for the 2007-2008 academic year. Listed below are the following outcomes:

1. Recruitment data for 2007-2008 Academic Year:
  - 5,592 logins
  - 2,075 applications submitted
  - 1,688 Eligible Candidates
  - 1,026 Scheduled Interviews
  - 122 Have successfully completed the Summer Institute and are eligible to teach in the fall as Teacher of Record.
2. Demographics

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	6	5.00%
Black/African American	32	26.00%
Latino/Hispanic	11	9.00%
Native American	0	0.00%
Other	2	2.00%
White/Caucasian	71	58.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>122</b>	

NOTE: This is self-reporting information. 58.19% of the Fellows identified themselves as non-minority and the remaining 41.80% as minority. (51/122)

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Female	77	63.00%
Male	45	37.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>122</b>	

## 3. Education

<b>Degrees</b>	<b>Total</b>
J.D.	5
M.A.	15
M.B.A.	11
M.P.A.	2
M.S.	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>

4. Could you share with the Committee more details about how Chicago encourages high quality teachers to teach in the lowest performing schools?

Overview: The Department of Human Resources—Recruitment & Workforce Planning partnered with The New Teacher Project to recruit and identify high quality teachers for the reconstituted schools known as the Model Hiring Initiatives (MHI) for Turnaround Schools.

The expected outcome for this initiative is to ensure vacancies are staffed by a highly qualified and effective teacher by the start of the school year. Also, this initiative will provide: (1) a branded marketing campaign (2) hiring strategies focused

on building rigorous teacher selection models especially in high need subject areas such as math, science, physical education and other subject areas when needed (3) workshops for schools to learn about effective hiring practices, projecting vacancies, marketing, and creating interview protocols at the school and (4) focused support for principals to ensure teacher vacancies are filled with quality educators by the start of the new school year.

For the 2008-2009 school year, CPS will open six reconstituted (turnaround) schools. Three schools will be managed by the Chief Education Office and three will be managed by the Academy of Urban School Leadership.

*Chief Education Office*

Harper High School

Nicolas Copernicus Elementary School

Robert Fulton Elementary School

*Academy of Urban School Leadership*

Orr Academy High School

Howe School of Excellence

Morton School of Excellence

The branded marketing campaign for the Turnaround Schools is:

*Teach Chicago Turnarounds—Change Schools, Change Lives*

<http://www.teachchicagoturnarounds.org/>

Approximately 275 educators will be hired to change the school climate by teaching and aggressively setting high expectations for positive learning and success. As of July 28, 2008—about 88% of qualified teachers have been identified to teach in the Elementary and High School Turnaround Schools.

Listed below are indicators of how the recruitment efforts have progressed.

- 2,172 individuals have submitted resumes
- After the initial screening, 404 candidates have been identified as qualified teachers
  - 62% have advanced degrees
  - 30% have graduated from a school considered a “Top 50 School of Education” by U.S. News & World Reports
  - 3% are Nationally Board Certified Teachers
  - Over 9,500 hits have been recorded on the Teach Chicago Turnarounds website across 37 countries/territories as of July 28, 2008.

#### TURNAROUND SCHOOL TEACHER COMPETENCIES

The collaborative efforts among the Chicago Public Education Fund, The New Teacher Project, Public Impact, CPS Department of Human Resources—Recruitment & Workforce Planning and the Office of School Turnaround resulted in a systematic approach to identifying principals specifically for Turnaround Schools. The outcome led to identifying a set of principal competencies needed to open and operate a reconstituted school. Those set of principal competencies became the foundation to recruit and select teachers who held the same dispositions and instructional effectiveness.

The competencies for Turnaround School Teachers are the following:

I. Driving for Results Cluster—Relentless focus on learning results.

- Achievement: The drive and actions to set challenging goals and reach a high standard of performance despite barriers.
- Initiative and Persistence: The drive and actions to do more than is expected or required in order to accomplish a challenging task.
- Monitoring and Directive: The ability to set clear expectations and to hold others accountable for performance.
- Planning Ahead: A bias towards planning to derive future benefits or to avoid problems.

II. Influencing for Results Cluster—These enable working through and with others.

- Impact and Influence: Acting with the purpose of affecting the perceptions, thinking and actions of others.
- Interpersonal Understanding: Understanding and interpreting others’ concerns, motives, feelings and behaviors.
- Teamwork: The ability and actions needed to work with others to achieve shared goals.

III. Problem Solving Cluster—These enable solving and simplifying complex problems.

- Analytical Thinking: The ability to break things down in a logical way and to recognize cause and effect.

- **Conceptual Thinking:** The ability to see patterns and links among seemingly unrelated things.

IV. **Personal Effectiveness Cluster**—These enable success in a highly challenging situation.

- **Self-Control:** Acting to keep one's emotions under control, especially when provoked.

- **Self-Confidence:** A personal belief in one's ability to accomplish tasks and the actions that reflect that belief.

- **Flexibility:** The ability to adapt one's approach to the requirements of a situation and to change tactics.

- **Belief in Learning Potential:** A belief that all students, regardless of circumstances, can learn at levels higher than the current achievement indicates.

Each candidate was interviewed through a rigorous selection model. The manner in which we did this was by developing and utilizing selection tools to determine the appropriate teachers for the reconstituted schools.

Turnaround School Principals are the ultimate hiring authority for their respective schools. A comprehensive training module was provided for the six Turnaround School Principals to integrate and implement the Teacher Turnaround School Competencies. Five sessions were delivered by The New Teacher Project and the Department of Human Resources provided feedback on how to integrate theory with practices and CPS policies. As stated previously, the schools have identified 88% of the instructional staff based on these Teacher Turnaround School Competencies.

Sincerely,

ARNE DUNCAN,  
*Chief Executive Officer.*

## **FY2008 Recruitment & Workforce Planning Initiatives**

### OVERVIEW

The Chicago Public Schools (CPS) recruitment strategy is to attract and focus on quality candidates versus the quantity of candidates. This is the district's guiding principle in identifying individuals who hold the highest potential for success in teaching children and leading school reform in a large urban setting.

The Department of Human Resources—Office of Recruitment and Workforce Planning developed various teacher pipeline programs and recruitment enhancement strategies to ensure challenged schools had early and direct access to quality teacher candidates who are committed to delivering effective instruction.

Listed below are various initiatives that are based on these principles:

- I. **Teacher Pipeline Programs**
  - Alternative Certification Program
  - Student Teaching Program
  - Teaching Residency & Internship Program
- II. **Recruitment Enhancement Strategies**
  - Model Hiring Initiative—Turnaround Schools
  - Model Hiring Initiative—Area 14
- III. **Recruitment Enhancement Strategies**
  - Strategic Human Resources—Principal Workshops
  - Fellowship in Urban School Leadership
- IV. **University Outreach**
  - Dean's Summit

### I. TEACHER PIPELINE PROGRAMS

Like many public school districts across the nation, the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) continues to experience a growing need for high-quality teachers who are committed to raising academic achievement in the most challenged schools. One avenue toward meeting this demand is through the Teacher Pipeline Programs which are designed to attract educators and professionals into CPS classrooms.

The Teacher Pipeline Programs aligns its purpose with the Human Capital Initiative to ensure that outstanding leaders are staffed into CPS classrooms. The second purpose is to identify and aggressively recruit high quality teachers within 6 to 18 months from their certification especially in those subject areas of high need. Therefore, CPS will hold a pipeline of quality teachers to address teacher vacancies for two academic years. Listed below are overviews and outcomes for the three programs: Teaching Residency & Internship Program (TRIP), Student Teaching Program, and Alternative Certification Program.

A.) *Teaching residency & internship programs*

Overview: The CPS Teaching Residency and Internship Programs are designed to provide talented education majors with an opportunity to experience living and teaching in the city of Chicago with hopes they return to the district as new hires upon graduation and certification. This highly selective program attracts the best teachers nationally and is a model for other programs. Pre-service teachers teach under the guidance of veteran CPS and Nationally Board Certified Teachers. These teachers are identified 12 to 18 months from their certification.

*Outcomes*

- Over 825 online applications were received, representing 47 universities
- Applications received represented 24 states including: Kentucky, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, California, Oregon, Arizona, North Dakota, Georgia, Louisiana, Florida, New York and Maine.
- University representation include: University of IL Urbana, University of Michigan, DePaul University, Illinois State University, Michigan State University, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Clark-Atlanta University, Miami University of Ohio, University of Missouri in Columbia, Ohio University, Loyola University of Chicago, Western Illinois University, etc.
- 70 Interns participated in 2006 and 19 Interns participated in 2007
- 93 Teaching Residents participated in 2006 and 86 Teaching Residents participated in 2007

Comment: The program retired in 2007 and is currently being restructured for summer 2009 to increase capacity and ensure the program is aligned with other district initiatives.

*B.) Student-teaching program*

Overview: This program assists outstanding pre-service teachers by offering a unique urban teaching experience, support and guidance through the final phases of the traditional teacher certification program. Upon successful completion of their CPS student teaching experience, the Student Teaching Program aggressively seeks to retain and hire those effective student teachers. CPS student teachers are highly recommended teacher candidates, as they have already demonstrated their commitment and passion to CPS. These teachers are identified 6 to 12 months from their certification.

Recently, the Student Teaching Program piloted the Student Teaching Application Process where individuals must be selected to conduct their student teaching work in the district. This will become a standard practice within the coming year.

*C.) Alternative certification programs*

Overview: These programs are designed to attract outstanding leaders to become teachers in CPS and to significantly impact the academic achievement of our city's children. Individuals enrolled in these highly-selective programs provide classroom learning with the content knowledge based on academic and professional experiences. Their backgrounds lend themselves to teaching high-need subject areas as math, science, world languages in Spanish and Chinese, bilingual elementary education, and special elementary education. These teachers are identified 6-8 months from their certification.

Outcomes: The Chicago Teaching Fellows Program experienced another successful recruitment season for the 2007-2008 academic year. Listed below are the following outcomes:

*A.) Recruitment data for 2007-2008 Academic Year:*

- 5,592 logins
- 2,075 applications submitted
- 1,688 Eligible Candidates
- 1,026 Scheduled Interviews
- 122 Have successfully completed the Summer Institute and are eligible to teach in the fall as Teacher of Record.

II. RECRUITMENT ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMS

Overview: In partnership with The New Teacher Project, the Office of Recruitment & Workforce Planning developed teacher recruitment supports for specific schools called Model Hiring Initiatives (MHI) for Turnaround Schools and Area 14. The majority of work is completed during the summer months in anticipation for the first day of school.

The expected outcome for both initiatives is to ensure vacancies are staffed by a highly qualified and effective teacher by the start of the school year. Also, both initiatives will provide: (1) a branded marketing campaign (2) hiring strategies focused on building rigorous teacher selection models especially in high need subject areas such as math, science, physical education and other subject areas when needed (3) workshops for schools to learn about effective hiring practices, projecting vacancies,



marketing, and creating interview protocols at the school and (4) focused support for principals to ensure teacher vacancies are filled with quality educators by the start of the new school year.

A.) *Model hiring initiative—turnaround schools*

For the 2008-2009 school year, CPS will open six reconstituted (turnaround) schools. Three schools will be managed by the Chief Education Office and three will be managed by the Academy of Urban School Leadership.

*Chief Education Office*

Harper High School

Nicolas Copernicus Elementary School

Robert Fulton Elementary School

*Academy of Urban School Leadership*

Orr Academy High School

Howe School of Excellence

Morton School of Excellence

The branded marketing campaign for the Turnaround Schools is:

Teach Chicago Turnarounds—Change Schools, Change Lives

<http://www.teachchicagoturnarounds.org/>

Approximately 275 educators will be hired to change the school climate by teaching and aggressively setting high expectations for positive learning and success. As of July 28, 2008—about 88% of qualified teachers have been identified to teach in the Elementary and High School Turnaround Schools.

Listed below are indicators of how the recruitment efforts have progressed.

- 2,172 individuals have submitted resumes
- After the initial screening, 404 candidates have been identified as qualified teachers
  - 62% have advanced degrees
  - 30% have graduated from a school considered a “Top 50 School of Education” by U.S. News & World Reports
  - 3% are National Board Certified Teachers
  - Over 9,500 hits have been recorded on the Teach Chicago Turnarounds website across 37 countries/territories as of July 28, 2008.

B.) *Model hiring initiative—Area 14*

In partnership with The New Teacher Project, Office of Recruitment & Workforce Planning have provided focused teacher recruitment support for the Englewood Community in Chicago, known as Area 14. This area is comprised of 23 elementary schools that reside in a neighborhood experiencing poverty and high criminal activities. The goal is to collaborate with each Area 14 school to ensure that (1) the schools are able to hire as early as possible; (2) school staff is trained and given resources to make the best teacher hiring decisions; and (3) all teacher vacancies are filled with quality teachers before the start of the 2008-2009 school year.

This strategy provides intensive recruitment enhancements that are supported by technology and prescreening of candidates. As of July 1, 2008 the following indicators have occurred that successfully demonstrates how this initiative as progressed.

- Over 1,000 resumes have been prescreened and analyzed for Area 14 schools
- After the Initial Screening, 463 candidates have been identified as qualified teachers
  - Nearly 40% of these candidates hold multiple endorsements
  - Many candidates have more than 2 years of experience of classroom teaching
  - Many candidates are qualified to teach in high-need subject areas

### III. PRINCIPAL INITIATIVES

School leaders must have strong competencies in evaluating instruction, implementing data-driving decisions, and providing staff development. Also, principals are charged with having an efficient operations building that produces the school's capacity to be effective, accountable, and successful. The recruitment pipeline for identifying administrators who hold these competencies were generously supported by The Chicago Public Education Fund.

A.) *The fellowship in urban school leadership*

Overview: The Fellowship is a school leadership experience that provides future district administrators an opportunity to explore the strategies and methods that are transforming Chicago Public Schools. Fellowship in Urban School Leadership invites outstanding experienced and aspiring principals from around the country to experience why CPS is a national model for urban school reform. Fellowship participants share a passion and commitment to urban school leadership and an interest in building careers at CPS. Focused on instructional leadership, change management and data-driven decision making, this fellowship offers a rigorous combination

of professional development, school-based project practicum, principal mentor and a former successful CPS principal that serves as a supervising principal for the Fellows. Complimentary housing, local transportation and cultural events provide candidates a comprehensive understanding of what a world-class city has to offer and in return, a clear understanding of what students expect and need.

Listed below are program characteristics that were delivered from July 6, 2008 through July 25, 2008.

- Fellows were hosted at various CPS summer schools to identify day to day school operations and priorities implemented at the school level.
- Fellows shadowed a CPS principal and participated in school activities, programs and explored various cultural venues that enhanced school-based learning.
- Fellows participated in professional development specifically designed for this program; entitled “Leadership for Change”, which was delivered by Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Management.
- Fellows completed data-driven projects that were unique to their host schools.
- As prospective district administrators, Fellows had the opportunity to meet with CPS educational leaders to observe, share experiences, ideas and best practice reflecting our commitment to be the best urban school district in the nation.

B.) *Strategic human resources—principal workshops*

In partnership with The New Teacher Project, the Office of Recruitment & Workforce Planning scheduled another series of workshops, entitled “Principal Strategic Human Resources Workshops.” The curriculum is focused on the essential skills administrators need in order to effectively recruit, select, cultivate and hire high-quality teachers, particularly those in shortage subject areas.

The relevance of this strategy is providing new district principals the tools and skills needed to identify those teachers whom they view as effective instructors committed to improving student achievement. Also, these sessions emphasize the importance of early hiring and early staffing which aligns with the district’s Early Hiring Incentives for schools.

In its second year, 109 principals who are considered first year principals in CPS were invited to attend. These sessions were scheduled throughout February thru April and focused on the following areas:

- Developing Strategic Staffing Plan
- Marketing Your School
- Building an Interview Model
- Conducting the Interview

It is critical that school leaders have the tools and foundation to implement hiring strategies that attracts qualified and effective teachers since they are the hiring authorities at the school-based level as noted within the Board of Education policies.

#### IV. UNIVERSITY OUTREACH

In its second year, Recruitment & Workforce Planning hosted the Annual Dean’s Summit to provide information regarding the district’s priorities and hiring needs for the upcoming year. Over 70 national universities and 5 foundations were invited to attend.

Listed below were the initiatives discussed at the Annual Dean’s Summit.

*My voice, my survey*

Summary: This session discussed the findings of a district initiated report about satisfaction levels of parents and students regarding their school’s performance on academics and school environment. The information enabled university students to be better prepared in understanding the school climate and the level of family involvement for each participating school.

*Turnaround schools*

Summary: The Office of School Turnarounds presented the district’s mission to lead the transformation of the lowest performing schools into higher achieving schools—without moving students from their respective schools. These strategies include maximizing internal capacity; developing coordinated programmatic strategies, and establishing funding partners with nonprofit and corporate communities.

*Leadership and talent management for principals*

Summary: In February 2007, Chicago Public Schools and the Chicago Public Education Fund implemented an initiative focused on aggressively recruiting transformational leadership talent who have succeeded in significantly improving the academic achievement in high needs schools. These initiatives include The Fellowship in Urban School Leadership for external CPS candidates and Pathways to School Leadership for current CPS educators who hold high-potential talent.

*Student teaching program*

Summary: The program is designed to identify quality student teachers by offering an intensive student teaching experience that will support their career development during the final phases of their certification program. The 2008 Student Teaching Application, Screening Model and the University Agreements were discussed and the process on how the district identifies and supports Student Teachers.

U.S. CONGRESS,  
Washington, DC, July 23, 2008.

Hon. ADRIAN M. FENTY, *Mayor,*  
*District of Columbia.*

DEAR MAYOR FENTY: Thank you for testifying at the July 17, 2008 hearing of the Committee on Education and Labor on “Mayor and Superintendent Partnerships in Education: Closing the Achievement Gap.”

Representative Ruben Hinojosa (D-TX), chairman of the Higher Education, Lifelong Learning and Competitiveness Subcommittee and member of the Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education Subcommittee, has asked that you respond in writing to the following questions:

1. In the Department’s report, there is no data on certified bilingual or English as a second language teachers for Washington, D.C. For Georgia, it was reported that there was a need for an additional 5,000 teachers in this specialty area over the next 5 years. What are you doing to ensure that you have enough well-prepared teachers for students who are English language learners? What are you doing to equip your current teachers to meet the needs of these students?

2. What graduation rates do your schools need to meet to make AYP either by meeting the target or making “safe harbor”?

3. I along with Rep. Scott, Rep. Grijalva, Rep. Davis, and many of my colleagues on this committee introduced the Graduation Promise Act to address the schools that are struggling the most to produce high school graduates. What are your views on the need for a large scale effort in this area?

Representative Danny K. Davis (D-IL), member of the Higher Education, Lifelong Learning and Competitiveness Subcommittee and member of the Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education Subcommittee, has asked that you respond in writing to the following questions:

1. As you are aware, I also serve as Chairman of the House Authorizing Subcommittee on the District of Columbia, and the Subcommittee recently finished considering legislation to bring the District’s Charter School program and board under the City’s control. It seems that here in the District, and around the country for that matter, we have gotten so far away from the original conception of charter schools, which were to be innovative models of education, experiments in fact, that would ultimately transfer into our public schools. However, that is not what we are seeing. Instead, we just see the creation of more charter schools. The KIPP model does not make its way into Hines Junior High, but into a new KIPP school. What is your administration doing to make the sharing of information between public charter schools and traditional public schools more of a priority than the addition of new charter schools?

2. In your opinion, how do we make the District’s public schools more attractive to parents?

3. What parental involvement initiatives are you or Chancellor Rhee proposing to supplement the City’s comprehensive educational reform efforts?

4. Last week, the City Council approved new regulations for homeschooling. The standards set for homeschooling parents are created by, enforced by, and assessed for compliance by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) at its sole discretion. Such a set of regulations provides no impartial due process protections for homeschooling parents given that the standards are set, controlled, and measured by OSSE. How will you direct OSSE to preserve the due process rights for parents conducting constitutionally-protected activities?

Please send an electronic version of your written response to the questions to the Committee close of business on Wednesday, July 30, 2008—the date on which the hearing record will close. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

GEORGE MILLER,  
*Chairman.*

U.S. CONGRESS,  
Washington, DC, July 23, 2008.

MICHELLE RHEE, *Chancellor,  
District of Columbia Public Schools, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MS. RHEE: Thank you for testifying at the July 17, 2008 hearing of the Committee on Education and Labor on “Mayor and Superintendent Partnerships in Education: Closing the Achievement Gap.”

Representative Ruben Hinojosa (D-TX), chairman of the Higher Education, Lifelong Learning and Competitiveness Subcommittee and member of the Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education Subcommittee, has asked that you respond in writing to the following questions:

1. In the Department’s report, there is no data on certified bilingual or English as a second language teachers for Washington, D.C. For Georgia, it was reported that there was a need for an additional 5,000 teachers in this specialty area over the next 5 years. What are you doing to ensure that you have enough well prepared teachers for students who are English language learners? What are you doing to equip your current teachers to meet the needs of these students?

1. What graduation rates do your schools need to meet to make AYP either by meeting the target or making “safe harbor”?

2. I along with Rep. Scott, Rep. Grijalva, Rep. Davis, and many of my colleagues on this committee introduced the Graduation Promise Act to address the schools that are struggling the most to produce high school graduates. What are your views on the need for a large scale effort in this area?

Please send an electronic version of your written response to the questions to the Committee close of business on Wednesday, July 30, 2008—the date on which the hearing record will close. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

GEORGE MILLER,  
*Chairman.*

#### **Responses to Questions for the Record From Ms. Rhee**

DEAR CHAIRMAN MILLER: Thank you for inviting me to testify at the July 17, 2008 hearing of the Committee on Education and Labor on “Mayor and Superintendent Partnerships in Education: Closing the Achievement Gap.”

I appreciate the opportunity to respond to Representative Ruben Hinojosa’s follow up questions. The questions, along with my answers, follow below:

1. In the Department’s report, there is no data on certified bilingual or English as a second language teachers for Washington, D.C. For Georgia, it was reported that there was a need for an additional 5,000 teachers in this specialty area over the next 5 years. What are you doing to ensure that you have enough well prepared teachers for students who are English language learners? What are you doing to equip your current teachers to meet the needs of these students?

This year, DCPS instituted a certification process for language programs at all our schools. This will ensure that schools have effective English Language Learners (ELL) and Language Delivery Models. We want to ensure that we also have enough certified teachers to fulfill the needs of our ELL’s. The certification process for schools will allow us to manage programs and make accurate estimates about personnel needs.

In addition, while the number of DCPS students with ELL needs has not increased recently, the interest in learning a second language as enrichment has. Therefore, we are developing new language immersion programs and are making special efforts to recruit teachers trained in Dual Language and Foreign Language Instruction and provide current teachers with new training opportunities in these areas to staff those programs.

We have partnerships with the Chinese Embassy and the Embassy of Spain that allow us to bring teachers from both countries to the District to teach our students. About 18 teachers from these countries will be teaching in DCPS schools during coming school year. These relationships are great benefits to DCPS, addressing some of our major language needs as well as offering a cultural exchange that benefits our countries and our students.

Another challenge continues to be closing the achievement gap experienced by many of our ELL’s. Toward this end, we are instituting an aggressive professional development plan for all teachers for the upcoming year which will include Cross-Cultural Language and Academic Development Training (CLAD) and Content and

Language Integration as a Means of Bridging Success (CLIMBS). CLAD is a course designed to prepare ESL teachers around core teaching areas, such as lesson planning around themes and focusing on scaffolding. CLIMBS is a course designed to help all educators in applying the WIDA English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards in their classroom instruction using a sheltered instruction approach.

In addition, by examining the data in schools across our district, we are trying to identify the existing programs and practices that are most successful for our ESL students, so that we can replicate those practices. This year teachers will receive mentoring and embedded professional development to implement those practices in their classrooms.

Finally, will work with The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) over the coming year to redefine our certification guidelines for ESL teachers and create new pathways to ESL certification in partnership with some of our local universities. Regarding recruitment, we continue to recruit nationally and internationally. As we prepare for the coming school year, we are working closely with schools to ensure that our classrooms are equipped with appropriate materials in the languages that our students speak.

2. What graduation rates do your schools need to meet to make AYP either by meeting the target or making “safe harbor”?

The three indicators for AYP for DCPS are proficiency rates on Reading and Math, testing participation rate, attendance rate (for elementary and middle schools only) and graduation rate (for high schools only). The graduation rate is defined as “the total number of graduates for a given year with a regular diploma divided by the sum of the number of graduates (for that year) and dropouts for the current year and the three preceding years.” This definition was developed by a previous DCPS administration and will be used until SY2009. We expect, in cooperation with OSSE, to create a new definition that will go into effect after SY2009. The current graduation rate target for DCPS schools is 66.23%. Schools that meet or exceed this target achieve this component of AYP. Schools below the target also can achieve AYP if their graduation rate has increased by one percentage point from the prior year. The Class of 2007 graduation rate is included in the 2008 AYP calculations for high schools.

3. I along with Rep. Scott, Rep. Grijalva, Rep. Davis, and many of my colleagues on this committee introduced the Graduation Promise Act to address the schools that are struggling the most to produce high school graduates. What are your views on the need for a large scale effort in this area?

I certainly think that a strong effort is needed in this area. Under my leadership, we are conducting transcript audits of all DCPS High School students, to ensure that every student is on track to graduate and that every schedule reflects the courses that students truly need in order to fulfill the district’s graduation requirements. In addition, we are structuring our course offerings at 9th and 10th grade so that students are better prepared to be successful in reading and mathematics. We are providing a double dose of these subjects to students who are performing below grade level, at these grade levels, to help them “catch up”, so that they can begin to experience the academic success that will keep them in school. We are also providing a variety of pathways to enable students to make up classes that are required for graduation that they have failed, including evening classes, weekend course offerings and alternative settings. By creating these additional options, we are helping prevent students from falling too far behind their peers, which means, again, that they will be more likely to stay in school. Finally, we are planning professional development for our high school teachers that will help them develop challenging lessons that have “real world” applications, to keep students engaged and motivated to learn.

Best wishes,

MICHELLE RHEE, *Chancellor.*

U.S. CONGRESS,  
Washington, DC, July 23, 2008.

BEVERLY HALL, Ed.D., *Superintendent,  
Atlanta Public Schools, Atlanta, GA.*

DEAR DR. HALL: Thank you for testifying at the July 17, 2008 hearing of the Committee on Education and Labor on “Mayor and Superintendent Partnerships in Education: Closing the Achievement Gap.”

Representative Ruben Hinojosa (D-TX), chairman of the Higher Education, Lifelong Learning and Competitiveness Subcommittee and member of the Early Child-

hood, Elementary and Secondary Education Subcommittee, has asked that you respond in writing to the following questions:

1. In the Department's report, there is no data on certified bilingual or English as a second language teachers for Washington, D.C. For Georgia, it was reported that there was a need for an additional 5,000 teachers in this specialty area over the next 5 years. What are you doing to ensure that you have enough well prepared teachers for students who are English language learners? What are you doing to equip your current teachers to meet the needs of these students?

2. What graduation rates do your schools need to meet to make AYP either by meeting the target or making "safe harbor"?

3. I along with Rep. Scott, Rep. Grijalva, Rep. Davis, and many of my colleagues on this committee introduced the Graduation Promise Act to address the schools that are struggling the most to produce high school graduates. What are your views on the need for a large scale effort in this area?

Please send an electronic version of your written response to the questions to the Committee close of business on Wednesday, July 30, 2008—the date on which the hearing record will close. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

GEORGE MILLER,  
*Chairman.*

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#### **Responses to Questions for the Record From Ms. Hall**

1. In the Department's report, there is no data on certified bilingual or English as a second language teachers for Washington, D.C. For Georgia, it was reported that there was a need for an additional 5,000 teachers in this specialty area over the next 5 years. What are you doing to ensure that you have enough well prepared teachers for students who are English language learners? What are you doing to equip your current teachers to meet the needs of these students?

The Atlanta Public Schools' enrollment is about 3 percent English language learners, and we have not been experiencing the same dramatic growth in English language learners that the suburban districts in the metro area and many of the rural counties in the state are seeing. Despite this, we still need both teachers who specialize in English-for-Speakers-of-Other-Languages and content-area teachers familiar with delivering instruction effectively to ELL students. To develop our workforce of ESOL teachers, the district offers a year-long endorsement program, one of many in-house professional development opportunities, that allows APS teachers certified in other areas to add the ESOL qualification to their state certificates. On a larger scale, our ESOL teachers are currently undergoing "Train the Trainer" courses so that they will be able to go into every school and train the entire faculty in the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), a research-based framework of best practices for ELL students. This protocol focuses on individual assessment of students and differentiation of instruction based on a student's level of language skill. This approach is revolutionary for our ESOL teachers because it focuses on content-area instruction in addition to English language instruction. Research shows that this type of assessment and differentiation also benefits native English speakers in the classroom.

2. What graduation rates do your schools need to meet to make AYP either by meeting the target or making "safe harbor"?

In Georgia, high schools must achieve a 70 percent graduation rate to make AYP. Schools not achieving this rate can make AYP if the graduation rate improves 10 or more percentage points over the prior year, so long as the current year's rate is 50 percent or greater. In other words, a school that increased the graduation rate from 41 to 51 percent would make AYP, and a school that increased from 25 to 35 percent would not.

3. I along with Rep. Scott, Rep. Grijalva, Rep. Davis, and many of my colleagues on this committee introduced the Graduation Promise Act to address the schools that are struggling the most to produce high school graduates. What are your views on the need for a large scale effort in this area?

In Atlanta, we have found that the wholesale transformation of our high schools is absolutely critical to preparing students for success in the 21st century. The large, impersonal, cookie-cutter comprehensive high school model fails to provide the rigor, relevance and relationships that our children need, especially those students most in need of academic and social support. When I came to Atlanta, we targeted two of our strategic initiatives toward our high schools' performance: Project GRAD (Graduation Really Achieves Dreams), which is a K-12 initiative partially funded

through Title I funds, and high school reform, which is partially funded by the Gates foundation.

We introduced Project GRAD in 2000, and our first crop of Project GRAD scholars graduated from our high schools in 2004. The success of this program is irrefutable: from 2003 to 2007, graduation rates for Project GRAD high schools have improved stunningly. Project GRAD is now in three high schools—and all three schools now exceed the national graduation average for urban schools. South Atlanta High School's rate rose from 37 percent to 74.7 percent in just four years. Washington increased their rate from 62 percent to 86.8 percent. And Carver's rate leapt 43 percentage points from 23 percent to 66 percent.

The challenges of reaching more students to raise these rates to our 90 percent systemwide on-time graduation goal led us to implement our second initiative: transforming our high schools into small learning communities and small schools. We piloted this program with the creation of the New Schools at Carver: five small schools, each with its own unique thematic focus. Carver's reform is a model of sea change. In addition to the aforementioned 43 percentage point graduation rate increase, all five of the new schools at Carver met the academic requirements for AYP in 2007, attendance is above 90 percent, and 85 students are already dually enrolled and earning credits at Georgia State University. Carver is located in a challenging neighborhood, but through high expectations, intimate learning environments and instruction relevant to 21st century skills, we're taking away the excuses and showing that we can and should expect success in urban schools. We will roll out this type of transformation to all high schools by the 2010-11 school year.

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[Whereupon, at 1:04 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

