

Contracts for Excellence

Queens Public Meeting, 7/29/08

90-27 Sutphin Blvd.

Queens, NY 11435

Public Comment

MS. REED:

The designation of schools in New York City is something that is decided by the State Education Department. And the funds that are granted must be used in the following areas: class size reduction; Time on Task; Teacher and Principal Quality Initiatives; Middle and High School Restructuring; Full-Day Pre-Kindergarten and Model Programs for ELL students.

We're going to have a presentation and I have -- and I want to introduce them to you, we have Sandy Brawer from the ISC who will be here to answer questions if you have. And we also have Sylvia Jamison who will help us if there's questions.

You will notice, ladies and gentlemen, in -- on the table you should have a yellow sheet and we really do invite you to write comments or if you have questions and we will make sure that this is forwarded to the chancellor's office. So you'll have an opportunity to do that. Also, we will provide you the BOE website where you can go in and actually look at this PowerPoint and many other things related to this area.

So the areas on which you may want to comment is how schools are planning to spend their discretionary funds; how the BOE is allocating targeted contract to fund schools, etcetera. So I'm going to give you a website and you'll see it later but it's contractsforexcellence@schools.nyc.gov.

So at this time I will turn it over to Gus Hatzidimitriou who is the senior/schools district improvement director. And he will be presenting the PowerPoint and he will be happy to answer any questions you have in this regard.

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

First of all, I need to apologize because I'm going to have my back to some of you, that's not by design, it just happens that this is the blank wall and where we have the technology set up.

This is a standard PowerPoint presentation that is being used throughout the city. So no matter what district you go to and whatever borough you're in,

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it's the same information that's being given out. It is an overview of this category of funding and I'm going to go over it. It's not very long, it's kind of brief. And then we'll take your questions and comments.

My two colleagues are from the ISC, Integrated Service Center of Queens and we're very fortunate. Mr. Brawer is the number two person in the entire borough and he's -- I'm honored to have him here supporting us today. So they are really expert on all fiscal matters. I deal primarily with programmatic issues so if there are questions that relate to program, I'll do my best to answer your questions along with the superintendent.

So without further ado, let me see if I can get this to move ahead. The left one? Yes. Thank you. Yes, there we go. Okay.

The funds, as the superintendent mentioned, are to be used for specific programmatic activities: Class Size Reduction, Time on Task, Teacher and Principal Quality Initiatives, Middle and High School Restructuring, Full-Day Pre-Kindergarten programs, Model Programs for English Language Learners.

Funds must go to students with the greatest educational need. ELL, English Language Learners, students in poverty, students with disabilities, students with low academic achievement or at risk of not graduating. And as it says there on the bottom, that the allocations described here are preliminary as per C 4 E regulations.

In fact, one thing that I noticed when I was preparing for this presentation is that on the Board of Ed website over on the side where there are usual press announcements, the chancellor has an announcement of these presentations. And in that announcement, where they're described, he also has links to the sites both for specific school information and general regulations about the Contract for Excellence --

MS. REED:

And we included an extra copy; please make sure you have that, of the link.

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

If you're a sort of individual who is not used to just putting in those codes and letters and so on into the computer, if you just go to the Board of Ed site and just click on what's there on the side, you can get to the same places. So they've made it, kind of, easy for you. Okay.

Contracts for Excellence 2009 - '10. I believe this is -- is this our third year, Mr. Brawer?

MR. BRAWER:

Yes.

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

Third year -- third one of this funding and this is the way the funds are for '09 - '10, which is this fiscal year.

In the Department of Education we have academic years, ladies and gentlemen. We're in the '09 and '10 academic year. When people talk about fiscal periods, they talk about the ten fiscal period, so it's a little confusing so I just made that clarification for you. So we're in the fiscal '10 period. The '09 period was the last one although academically and programmatically we're in the '09 - '10 year.

Given the severe economic downturn faced by the state and the nation, New York State held state foundation aid flat between FY '10 and FY '09, see that's why I made that statement, and is currently projecting no increase in foundation aid for FY '11. So the funding's going to stay the same. This means that for this current year, FY '10 and next, there are no new Contract for Excellence funds to apply towards new or expanded programs. So the funding is staying the same, that's what those two bullets actually mean.

The BOE '09 - '10 plan is thus maintenance of effort of its approved '08 - '09 plan. Please note that all proposed allocations described in this plan are preliminary, this is the same statement again about -- that the numbers might change. The important thing here is to realize that the funding is being used to maintain the programs that were largely put in place and chosen by the principals last year. Because I, sort of, get involved in these things and break the tail, the CEP, which is the Comprehensive Education Plan, for every school last year had an appendix. And in that appendix the principals chose, it was electronic; in detail all of the ways that they were going to use the Contract for Excellence funds. Those -- that structure largely carried over to this year's CEP. So there are opportunities for change but by and large most schools chose to use the same funding in similar kinds of ways from last year to the current academic year.

And here, this shows you the citywide C 4 E plan by allocation type. So, as you can see, the largest purple section is discretionary allocations to schools, 242 million dollars, sixty-three percent. That means that the money is going to where the schools chose to put it. So that is a decision that's made on the school level based on the needs of every building. I'm sure a lot of principals wish they had more money and could stretch it and utilize it to service children in larger numbers. But given the allocation, whatever they -- the allocation they were given, they were supposed to prioritize the funding and use it in ways that made sense for their particular building in collaboration with their school leadership team. Because as we know, all comprehensive education plans, at the school level, are not just decided by the principal alone but the principal in collaboration with an advisory body that's called the school leadership team. I may be explaining a little bit too much, but I don't know what the level of knowledge is of

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everybody in the room so I just want to make sure that I can make things as clear as possible. So that is the largest, the sixty-three percent.

The other portion here, targeted allocation to schools, that means money that went for programs that existed last year. And we're going to see the kinds of programs that that money went for. It was pre-kindergarten classes that existed last year and that needed to be maintained; what are called CTT classes, those kinds of classes are classes where you have a regular education teacher and a special education teacher in the classroom together and the children are mixed. Some are regular kids and some are special, a very successful model citywide for the way to approach handling the needs of special education kids and really just a good educational model in general. So we're going to see, in detail, on a subsequent slide where they give you more details about where that slice of twenty percent means.

Maintenance of effort is the general term but really what it means here, this eight percent, is being used for summer school. This eight percent is being used for summer school for, again, children who obviously are at risk and need assistance and so that funding went into the summer school pot. Then there are districtwide initiatives, the ten percent, which we'll see again on a subsequent slide some of those details.

Here you see, in the pie chart, what citywide, the choices that were made by schools. Overwhelmingly, class size reduction, thirty-nine percent, was the largest piece. And that, sort of, translates to every district as well. I believe it's the same for District 28, that most of the funding was used for class size reduction.

Now, let me explain a little bit about what that means. It means that because of the fiscal crisis, if you had a -- let's say you had thirty teachers in your building and because of the fiscal cuts you would not be able to maintain those thirty teachers, well the only way you could continue to service the same number of kids or a similar number of kids was by increasing class size if you'd have to cut, let's say, two positions. So the way the funding was used by a lot of schools is they did not cut those two positions, thereby reducing class size from what it would have been and it varies from case to case. In some cases it really did reduce class size, in other cases it was -- it prevented class size from increasing due to the fiscal crisis. And so that was a way that the funds were used throughout the city by a lot of schools, because of the fiscal crisis and to prevent the loss of positions. Now it wasn't absolute but it was a strategy that was put into place to help maintain, again, the good programs and the services to kids that existed last year.

Time on Task, I think that's the second largest piece, is to maintain instructional programs that help the neediest children by keeping the kids working on the same kind of instructional activities. And some examples of time on task are you might have a tutoring program that is supplemental

to AIS. Or you might have an instructional activity after school or before school or during the day; you might have small group instruction taking place. So all these kinds of uses are funded with the Time on Task category and again, within these categories there's choice that every principal had and every school leadership team on exactly how they can utilize the money. So when it comes down the school level, it actually translates to either portions of positions, sometimes materials to help kids, bringing in counseling services, all kinds of funding details that are designed to help maintain the instructional program and to especially assist the neediest children in the building.

The next piece, I think it's fourteen percent, is teacher and principal quality. This was used to maintain the, exactly as it says, for professional development purposes. To help principals, new principals, to help principals with issues in their buildings, to help new teachers, to help teachers who may need to improve their skills in a particular area. It's really a professional development piece broadly defined. That's the way my understanding is, that that money was primarily utilized.

Middle and high school restructuring, ten percent. That's a very, sort of, creative piece and it's designed, again, to assist schools that need to change their organizational structure in order to help students achieve. What does that mean? Well, you may use some of that funding to break up a large school into houses or to fund an administrator to be able to work with smaller groups of students in a building.

MS. REED:

If I could interject, as a former middle school principal one of the things we sought to do was to take a very large middle school and break it up into three academies. I was able to hire additional staff so that children got better attention and smaller size and it just worked marvelously for middle schools.

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

Sometimes, also, you can use it for something like, as you know, block scheduling.

MS. REED:

Yes.

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

Where what that means is that teachers are freed up. Let's say you're a middle school and you have your social studies teacher and your language arts teacher and they can get together and do common planning for how to work together in synchronizing what's being taught. For example, the

students in language arts might be reading a novel at the time of the Civil War when the social studies teacher is teaching about the Civil War and that way there's synchronization between that subject area and the other subject. And it works with all different subject areas.

It allows, again, an organizational flexibility in terms of being able to work with the students in creative kinds of ways in order, again, to -- always the ultimate goal is to increase student performance.

Then full-day pre-K. I don't have to tell you that full day pre-kindergartens are extremely popular and highly sought after. So a chunk of funding went to some schools to be able to maintain the full day pre-kindergarten programs that may have been threatened by the cuts that were on the horizon due to the fiscal crisis.

Model programs for ELLs, seven percent. There are programs that have been proven successful for English Language Learners. For example, there is a dual language program model where students whose native language is English work with students whose language is other than English and thereby they exchange and they help each other. The Native American speakers learn the foreign language and the foreign language speakers help the other students vice versa. That's called a dual language program. So model programs throughout the city that were specifically designed to help ELL students is what that funding is for. And that was a new category that came into being, what was it last year? Last year for the very first time because the state realized that English Language Learners was an at-risk population throughout the state and needed more attention and more resources. And so they created that category with the Contract for Excellence funds.

Then we have a little small slice there to be determined. Apparently there are some -- one percent of funding that's yet to be allocated. My fiscal colleagues might be able to speak to -- okay. That is in process, I think that's what that slice of the pie is.

All proposed discretionary spending by program area. Again you see class size reduction is the largest; time on task next; teacher/principal quality nineteen percent; followed by ten percent is Ls and then four percent for middle and high school restructuring and to be determined two percent.

Discretionary allocations to schools, remember that chart at the very beginning when it was divided between two general categories? 242 million in restricted Contract for Excellence funds were released to 1,400 plus schools in May 2009. This is the largest amount of money. Guidance to schools was that Contract for Excellence funds should be used to establish continuity of service for existing C 4 E programs. Those are the programs that I told you that when they did their comprehensive ed plan

last year the principal sat down with their school leadership teams and filled that out based on their school needs.

However, if a school could not maintain effort due to significant changes in the student population or its overall instruction strategy, it could choose to reallocate funds to a different program area. So then at the school level, even though the tendency and the recommendation was to maintain the categories that they chose the year before, the BOE did allow principals to make changes because if your population changed from one year to the next or there was a significant instructional reason for making changes, they enabled schools to have that happen. So it wasn't, you know, lock-step -- a frozen kind of process, it had some flexibility to it. Although by and large most schools stayed, if you look at -- this is all, by the way, in the public domain. You could look, in detail, on the computer what every school chose to allocate its funding to last year, if you wanted to spend the time, and then compare it to this year. And if you did that, I'm fairly certain you would find that the overwhelming majority of schools stayed pretty much within the categories that they had the previous year.

Amount per school was the same as '08 - '09 and was determined using a formula based on student need and defined by the state education department and C4E regulations. Now that's an important statement because, as you know, expenses go up from year to year. So -- were there contractual increases, last year to this year? There were. And so the dollars stayed the same, ladies and gentlemen, but the costs went up. So that made it even more challenging for schools to maintain the same level of services but I believe most schools managed to do it by making adjustments and cutting things so we don't see radical changes in the categories.

Again, I speak a little bit from experience because one of the things that I do is I do a document -- I work with a document called the District Comprehensive Education Plan. And in that document, which we send to the state, we actually put in all the details, by school, as to what the Contract for Excellence funds were used for. So I saw the list last year and I just did the new list this summer. And in doing the two I noticed that there weren't really a lot of changes. So it's not just a general statement, I actually have looked at it.

Targeted allocations to schools, that's that other category that I told you came straight from the DOE to try and maintain those special programs that are much needed, twenty percent of the total. Seventy-six million is our estimate in this category since the preliminary posting of our plan. Schools receive allocations with -- chosen based on (A) overall student need and capacity to carry out the specific program. That means you have to have the population with the need and you had to have -- you should have been implementing the program successfully and well and that was factored into the decision by the DOE in continuing to allocate those funds.

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And sixty-one million were used for collaborative teaching , CTT, classroom. That's those classrooms that I mentioned to you before that have the special ed and the general ed teacher and the mixed population.

Then six million full-day pre-K. Again, there was a concerted effort to try and maintain those full-day pre-kindergarten services. Anyone who has very young children knows how important it is to be able to have your child in a pre-k program. And research nationally shows that the earlier you begin a child's education, that's why Head Start was such a popular program, the more successful children are in the future.

Seven million for autism spectrum disorder, ASD, classrooms. Those are special classrooms designed to assist autistic children. So if there's a concentration of population with that need in a particular building, they have a special program and services for those children. And so the DOE wanted to make certain that that continued.

And then two million for ELL summer school. That's summer school specifically designed for English Language Learners. So you have regular summer school and then you have summer school designed to help English Language Learners because, as I said, there's been a determination citywide and statewide and probably nationally that English Language Learners, a high level of new immigrants, need extra assistance in order to be able to succeed in school. And so this is designed to help them get that assistance over the summer.

Schools that received targeted C3 allocations in '08-'09, received those allocations again in '09-'10 as long as they retain the population necessary to maintain effort. As I said before, they still have to have the kids there and they should have been implementing the program successfully. I think there was a concerted effort to make sure that funds were not allocated to programs that weren't being run well. And there is an oversight that is constantly put into place to make certain that that information makes its way to the correct division and department that is reviewing these things.

For example, if a school was funded to support ten new CTT students in '08-'09 and has a net loss of eight students in '09-'10, that school received a fiscal year '10 C4E CTT allocation that is lower than in FY '09. All that means is if you have fewer kids the allocation was reduced as you would expect because the money follows the need and follows the needs of the children and the numbers of the children in your particular building. They're not going to keep giving you the same amount if the children that needed those funds are no longer there.

Districtwide initiatives, that's that other category in the pie chart. Thirty-nine million is our estimate in this category. While these funds will not appear on school budgets, the department is required to attribute dollars to

the impacted schools as part of the DOE citywide C4E plan, ten percent of the contract amount.

Funds allocated to central programs that directly benefit high need schools. Seven million went to multiple pathways to graduation initiatives for over-aged and under-credited students. My understanding is that is a high school program, Multiple Pathways. It is to help students graduate that are older and don't have the credit that they should have.

Ten million went to principal training initiatives. Five million went to school restructuring initiatives. Seven million went to year two of ELL success and middle school success grants targeting specific schools. Ten million went to college and AP prep for high need, nine to twelve students. Please note, it says, this is new for '09-'10 and replaces the high allocation in '08-'09 for middle school success program which tapers in its second year.

So what this means, ladies and gentlemen, is that these are specific programs that are directly funded by Central at the school level. So the money is not allocated into the school budget, the services are funded centrally and they find their way into the school. Am I correct, Mr. Brawer, in explaining it?

MR. BRAWER:

That is correct.

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

Okay. Great.

Maintenance of effort, thirty million, eight percent of the total contract amount. Description, the department proposes to spend these funds to maintain summer programs impacting the students with the lowest academic achievement in the city. In other words, these are funds that are set aside to help fund the summer school programs that will take place. Which, again, by their very nature those are the students that are promotion in doubt and are in need of assistance. And so, again, the funds are targeting students most in need through that summer school activity.

And one of the things that, again, I get involved with the superintendants is in the latter part of the year don't we work on promotion in doubt letters and sending them out to the public and parents and so on?

MS. REED:

Absolutely.

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

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Right. So again, that's something that we --

MS. REED:

Early spring.

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

Early spring.

MS. REED:

April to early spring.

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

So at the school level the principals are asked to identify the children that look like they're having difficulty and need either summer school or some other kind of assistance. And there's a notification process that the superintendant can tell you even more about.

Proposed discretionary spending in CEC District 28. Schools in this district were allocated discretionary Contracts for Excellence funds. Schools have proposed to spend these funds as follows. So these are the choices that the schools in District 28 made in using the Contract for Excellence funds. Again, it mimics a lot of the percentages that are citywide, not absolutely but along general lines. Class size reduction, 45.2 percent. Again, for the reason that I mentioned about being able to keep class size from becoming larger and keeping the number of positions as stable as they can in the school building. Time on Task, that again very popular. It competes with teacher and principal quality initiatives; they're only one percentage point different. Time on-Task are instructional programs to assist specific school student population need by instructional initiatives and activities.

Teacher and principal quality initiatives, as I mentioned, those are professional development activities in the building. Middle and High School Restructuring, again a very small percentage but an important percentage Full-Day Pre-K, 3.2 percent and model programs for Ls.

I guess what this means, Mr. Brawer, looking at it, that the DOE, and Sylvia also, the DOE maintained full-day pre-K programs on its own directly but also principals had the option of supporting pre-K programs in their building in addition to what was being done by the DOE, does that sound correct?

FEMALE SPEAKER:

Yeah. They're all the funding sources for pre-K. We have the universal pre-K program. So this funded, last year, the amount of additional classes that were needed for full-day pre-K. And I'm assuming that there are a lot

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of pre-K classes already in 28 and there are no additional full-day pre-K classes to be opened. Yes.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

I have a question about the UPK funding, not this funding. I understand that UP-K funding doesn't necessarily -- when you talk about a district, doesn't have to necessarily be inside of an existing public school it could be in, by way of some sort of CBO.

MR. BRAWER:

That's correct.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

So what I want to know is how many District 28 UPK programs are funded CBO versus inside of an existing public school because for the parents in the community that's what a lot of the confusion is when you talk about UPK. UPK doesn't mean it's necessarily going to be at PS-160 or 144. It could be in Vanessa Spark's Daycare Center down the street.

MR. BRAWER:

So UPK is -- obviously if we're doing pre-Ks we'd rather have them in our building and run by our program. But space is an issue and that's why they've identified funding can also be used in CBOs, community based organizations. So we have a combination of both throughout the city. And I'm sure -- I don't have that information with us but we can provide it, that's not a problem.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

Because a concern of mine of that is last year 5,000 or several thousand seats were cut from ACD daycare centers throughout the city. I don't know exactly how many fell within District 28. So it seems to me that money is being taken away, when you're talking about the CBOs, one hand and those parents were told that they need -- they have to put their children into the public school but then you're saying but we're going to provide UPK money for some CBOs -- to me it's confusing and it doesn't make sense. Either the UPK programs are going to be funded inside of the elementary school building or they're not. If they're not being funded for the UPK programs in an elementary school building due to space, then I don't understand why any seats were taken away from existing daycare centers.

Now some communities, I'm going to speak for the Jamaica community, we have a large number of ACD centers throughout Jamaica, more so than, I think, anyplace else in the district. So we've lost a number of those four-year old seats in our centers. But then this UPK money goes -- comes

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along and you say okay, we're going to take this from you -- we're going to take three classes from you but we just have enough money to fund one.

I'm trying to understand this whole UPK piece because, you know, the early childhood place, that's the segue into the elementary school and if people are confused as to how this funding, you know -- it seems a whole mishmash of where the money is going and who's getting what and how is it being spent and all we care about in the elementary schools is that we don't have early childhood seats and over-crowded classrooms. And then you hear, well this money is allocated -- you know, a portion of this money can be allocated for UPK. You know, it gets very confusing so I would -- not at this time, at some point I would like for you or somebody else, I'll ask the council, to come back and revisit it because that pre-K through 3 or pre-K through 2 is very important.

We have a whole school, an early childhood school, in our district that is just -- am I right, Emily, pre-K through 2. And so I'm very curious to know how it is funded.

MR. BRAWER:

I'm going to defer to my superintendent.

MS. REED:

I think that's something, certainly, that should be addressed and we need to get all of the information and bring that up at a later time.

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

Just from general knowledge, I know that there is a separate pre-K department that oversees all of the pre-K programs in the city. And I think they're organized -- there are borough pieces to it. So at some point --

FEMALE SPEAKER:

That's certainly something that --

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

That's something that you can --

FEMALE SPEAKER:

-- we can follow up with and have --

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

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Right, you can follow up. And if the board in general is interested, we might even invite someone from that department to talk to us.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

I have a question along those lines. Additionally, how do they figure out how the funding goes by district if UPK you don't have to be living in that district --

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

Can you just hold that for a minute, let me get through this and then as part of the general -- because I want to finish Contract for Excellence.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

Okay.

MS. REED:

And then if there are issues related to universal pre-kindergarten we'll do the best to answer them based on our general knowledge but you might need a specialist who is more conversant with the ins and outs of universal pre-K to come in and answer that.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

That's not really --

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

Because it's kind of a specialized area and my knowledge, again I defer to my colleagues from the ISC, it's a very well established program. I know that it's been around for quite some time, the universal pre-K program, significant state allocations and its pretty well established throughout the city, although there have been changes in its implementation due to the general, you know, reorganization of the DOE in general. So that's something that perhaps you can table, unless Mr. Brawer, do you have any special --

MR. BRAWER:

Why don't we finish the Contract --

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

Let's finish this, then we can discuss it.

MS. BRAWER:

-- and then we can get back to it.

MS. REED:

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There isn't very much left to this. Okay. Let's go on.

C3 plan, all funds by program strategy. Class size reduction. And here you see the breakdown within the categories. Creation of additional classrooms, you see twenty percent. Reducing teacher/student ratio through team teacher strategies, 25.2 percent; a total of 45.2 percent.

Time on Task, before and after school programs, summer school programs, dedicated instructional time, individualized tutoring and you see the various percentages that make up for that 24.1 percent.

So this gives you some idea of the kinds of things that take place within those general buckets, within those general categories.

Teacher and principal quality initiatives. Programs to recruit highly qualified teachers. This, as you know from the No Child Left Behind Law, you have to have teachers teaching within license and they have to be what's called, highly qualified or else they are identified and they have to get the correct licensure for the particular grade level and classes that they're teaching.

Professional mentoring for beginning teachers and principals, I mentioned that earlier and it's self-explanatory. Instructional coaches for teachers, leadership coaches for principals, that's all to help both the quality of instruction improve, meet the needs of particular student populations in the building and ultimately help drive instruction towards higher student achievement which is always the bottom line of everything that we should be doing in schools.

Next, the '09-'10 C3 plan. All funds by program strategy. Again, this is a continuation.

Middle and high school restructuring. Instructional changes, structural changes. The instructional changes might be like what I mentioned about block scheduling earlier; in programming teachers and freeing up teachers to have common planning time. The structural changes might be hiring and being able to have supervisors supervise houses within a school in order to be able to break up the organizational structure into smaller run communities that have been shown to be more effective, particularly for meeting the needs of high risk students.

Full day pre-K, self explanatory. Model programs for Ls. Innovative programs for ELL students. Teacher recruitment, parent involvement. Well, the teacher recruitment and parent involvement sections -- percentages are negligible. The innovative programs for Ls is the majority of the funding. And I gave you some examples like the dual language program earlier for how that funding could be utilized.

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Special note on class size reduction. As teachers' salaries rise, more funds are required to maintain the same number of teachers as last year, that's what I mentioned to you earlier. Impacted by register changes and average teacher salary changes, even schools that allocate the same amount of money year over year to class size reduction activities may experience slight increases in class size or pupil/teacher ratio. The severe economic downturn faced by the state and the nation required an average of 4.9 cut to schools causing a large number of schools to eliminate a teaching position which could also have some impact on class size, depending on the position. Any schools chose class size reduction or pupil/teacher ratio strategy to avoid increased class size.

What all of these bullets really mean is that the class size reduction strategy attempted to soften the blow of the cuts, due to the severe economic crisis but didn't meet them a hundred percent. So even though positions were saved, and in the majority of schools the register did not go up in a particular class, this was not absolute. That in some cases the register did go up because of the salary increases, the amount of money available and other factors. So it varies from building to building and even within a building class, the class and how it played out.

Public comment. We will take public feedback into account in the coming months as we continue to develop a citywide Contracts for Excellence plan. The deadline for public comment is October 8th, thirty days from the date that the comprehensive '09-'10 proposed plan was posted to the department website. The public may comment on any aspect of the plan, including how schools have planned to spend their discretionary funds with the six allowable program areas. How the BOE is allocating targeted contract funds to schools; how the BOE is allocating funds for districtwide initiatives. New York City class size reduction plan, a public process itself, educators, parents and all members of New York City community with feedback should e-mail us at, and it gives the e-mail address there.

And as I mentioned at the outset, that if you go to the DOE website where the press announcement is you'll find links also to being able to fill out surveys, the ones that you have on paper here, there's something similar online that you could fill out as well if you choose to do it, you're text savvy and you'd rather do it online then do it in the paper way, you still have that ability as well.

MS. REED:

You can feel welcome to leave a comment tonight. And if you don't want to, you can fax it. If you get home and you want to spend time later filling this out, any questions or any concerns about this please communicate this and we will make sure that this is forward.

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

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And, you know, people who are not here who don't have these yellow sheets can go online and comment as well, if they wish to, as well. So it's a very open-ended process that they're trying to put into place.

MS. REED:

And we will make it available to any parent that may be coming in to the district office to visit. We will happily share this information.

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

Okay. That's it for the formal presentation, ladies and gentlemen. I hope you found it useful and we'll take questions. Yeah?

MALE SPEAKER:

I'm just a little bit confused about the class size reduction.

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

Uh-huh.

MALE SPEAKER:

That was one of the targeted areas.

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

Right.

MALE SPEAKER:

And this is the third year of the plan?

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

Right.

MALE SPEAKER:

Okay. But are you saying that there were no real class size reductions because of the fiscal crisis?

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

No. I'm saying that in many cases there were class reductions but because of the fiscal crisis it varies from class to class and school to school.

MALE SPEAKER:

So that you could have actually had increases in size.

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

That's what the PowerPoint indicated.

MALE SPEAKER:

Right.

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

That because of certain constraints you could have actually had a slight increase in a particular class or in a particular school. And that is a function of the inability of the funding to take into account all of the need in the particular building in terms of maintaining the same level of positions. My fiscal colleagues might be able to explain it a little better. Am I explaining it as well as I can? Let me pass this to you.

MR. BRAWER:

Money is given to schools -- first of all, I just want to reiterate, there were two pieces. There were dollars that were allocated, how they were allocated, what was discretionary given to schools, what was targeted for certain programs like CTT classes and pre-K and the like. And what you're seeing here in terms of what was used for Time on Task or reduced class size came out from the schools. So when schools get money that's the way the department is being run lately, schools get dollars; they plan with their teams and they decide on how they're going to be using funds to best meet the needs of their students.

And the plans that you're seeing here, the dollars that are identified how much was used for reduced class size and how much was used for -- came out of school decisions in terms of how best to meet the needs of their school.

Now obviously the impact of the budget reductions this year impact on the ability to maintain class sizes in certain areas, certain grades. And that's decisions based upon the number of students in a grade, classrooms in a building, the dollars available and schools will make those decisions. So in some cases yes class size will go up, in some places class size will go down actually. In some cases they'll be able to be maintained.

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

And let me just get one other point. I think you said at the beginning that it's the third year of the plan, there's no new monies allocated.

MR. BRAWER:

That's correct.

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

So then probably what's happened in the last two years will continue again, in that you're going to see some more increases because the fiscal crisis --

MS. BRAWER:

If the funding stays flat and the salaries go up, it's a natural -- and if the student population stays the same it's a natural progression. But, you know, we're making all efforts to reduce class size. And reduced class size doesn't just mean let's have twenty kids in a class in the lower grades it also means reducing student/teacher ratio which also has another impact.

You know, years ago the state used to allocate and be very strict with us and say you have to allocate -- you have to open up classes of twenty kids otherwise you can't use state funding. While the federal government recognized that that's not the be all and end all and they allowed their money to be used for reducing class size to twenty kids but also to do other things that reduced student/teacher ratio.

The state finally came along because we all complained about that for years because places that were overcrowded never got to be able to use the state funding because they never could get class sizes to twenty kids in a class. So now the funding is much more flexible to allow us to reduce student/teacher ratio as well which helps, you know, do more one-to-one and small group instruction.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

Stupid question but I need clarification. Schools get their money from what sources? I mean, listen the reason why I'm asking that, because I think for me, visually, I have to be able to visualize. The school gets their monies from sources A, B, C, D and E, okay. Because when people go back to their SLTs because the principals tell parents whatever they want to tell them. And if you don't know any better you have no reference to challenge what they say, you don't know.

But if you know -- I know my school gets money from A, B, C, D and E. And if that principal only presents and tells you that there's A, B and C you could then say to him or her where's D and E.

So what are the sources, because you know CFE, everybody just used to ask of them -- CFE is the Contract for Excellence money that came from the state for that almost twenty-year fight for New York City not being given its fair share of money, is that correct? So that's one part of it.

MR. BRAWER:

Campaign for fiscal equity.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

Campaign for fiscal equity, that's that CFE one. That's one pot of money and that pot of money doesn't go to all schools, is that correct? Does every school in the city get a piece of that money?

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

The money came in the form of Contracts for Excellence.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

What I'm asking, this is the state money, correct?

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

Yes.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

It comes from the state here. Does every school in the city get a piece of that money?

MR. BRAWER:

No, because the Contract for Excellence money came down with restrictions.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

Right. So that's what I'm asking.

MS. REED:

So we have to follow the restrictions. We would rather have no restrictions on the funds and be able to allocate to all students.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

But there are restrictions. Okay. So if I'm in a school, I know my school may not get CFE money. But where do -- what are the other sources that my school receives money? The city, the federal government. And I think for people it needs to be that simple, it needs to be explained that simply because once they have the foundation they can learn all of the other pieces. But if you don't know the foundation, all you hear are these figures being thrown around, you don't know where this money's coming from.

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

One thing that you can do nowadays is you can go to the public view of the school budget, right on your school's site. And that'll give you the general budget of the building with the categories.

MR. BRAWER:

What she's talking about is allocations and where the monies come from.

MS. REED:

Yeah. I mean, does it come from Mr. Brawer? Does it come from Joe? That's what I want to know. Where does it come from?

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

There are different levels of funding. There are tax-levy based funding.

MS. REED:

Okay.

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

There's grants and there's allocated grants.

MS. REED:

Right.

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

There's grants that you apply for and there's grant that you're -- entitlement grants. And those are three different major categories of funding.

MS. REED:

Okay.

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

If you remember, in the past years the department used to allocate funding in tax levy for all different specific pieces, library, school aides, everything was categorized. Now we do fair student funding. We do a per pupil account so everybody gets a fair amount and there's a dollar value, everyone can see it. It's all on the web. The department has an allocation address that you can see everything that's been given to a school and there should be no one that doesn't understand that or doesn't know how to get that. And we can show you how to get that, if anyone wants that information we can share that with you. We do that every year when we do our budget presentations.

So it's out there. It's visual for everyone to see. And then what we're showing now is how people have used the money in the schools because we believe that the schools know best in terms of how to make decisions for schools, not someone sitting in an office or tweed or anywhere else. The schools should be making decisions for how best to educate their students.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

I have a question on slide 12, the model program for ELLs. This just strikes me the portion that CZ 27 got is much, much lower than any other thing. It's only, like, .5 percent.

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

I'll take a look at that slide.

MR. BRAWER:

But again, it's not much lower allocation. It's what the schools in that district and what the schools in your district have decided that's a priority to use these funds for. There's no difference in allocation. These categories are not allocation to a school. The allocation is the lump-sum dollar value of discretionary dollars, one piece.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

Okay.

MR. BRAWER:

And then the schools have all these different choices to make and they decide how they're going to apportion their moneys to best meet the needs of their school.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

Okay. Because every other one seems like it's about, you know, three percent.

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

You've also go to remember that the ELLs have -- it's a new category. It only came into being last year.

MR. BRAWER:

Right.

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

So the program that had existed prior to that, so some schools didn't take advantage of it as quickly as they could have. It all depends on the population and how it's received in that particular building.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

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Right. And also schools received funds targeted at students with limited English proficiency. So they received other pots of funds.

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

Right. Remember these are supplemental funds.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

No, I understand that. It just seemed like every other one is the one you see the percentage.

MR. BRAWER:

I want to reiterate, very strongly, these categories -- don't look at this as an allocation to each category. These are not allocations. The allocation was the big pie chart that you saw and it was a big amount that said discretionary funds and that's what went to schools. A pot of monies that here's your allocation for C4E. Now these are the categories that you can choose to use the funds in. This is described by the state. We don't determine that. The state determines what the categories are. And so now schools decide, based upon their needs, how they want to use the money and it gets built up as you're building the budgets. And this is what the schools have decided in District 28 to use the funds. There's no allocation that says well we're going to give you an amount of 1.7 million dollars to create additional classrooms.

They got an amount, here's your dollars. You decide what you want to -- and this gets built up from the bottom up.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

Okay. So it's just collectively all the schools from District 28.

MR. BRAWER:

Exactly. Of how they decided to use it.

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

How they decided to use it.

MR. BRAWER:

That's correct.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

So I'm just going to ask that question again, from before. If UPK money isn't discretionary, how is the money determined -- the usage within the district considering that pre-K is universal and anyone can attend those

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schools within the district, including the universal pre-Ks that aren't in the schools?

MR. BRAWER:

Okay. What happens every year, there's a review of pre-K. There's a limited pot of money because the state, again, has a different pot, universal pre-K is just for that, it's dictated just for that use of dollars.

So what happens is, every year they relook at well what's the expectation of money? Is it going to be the same? Is it going to be less? Is it going to be more? Are we going to be able to open up more classes? And they look around and they speak with schools in terms of well, they ask principals who has the ability, if they want, if there's more money, to open up additional classes, either half day or convert to full day classes. Who, because their population isn't growing, needs to reduce?

Now one of the things that we do not want to do is reduce pre-K classes. We try not to. We always want to continue to grow, not to reduce. So if we reduce somewhere, we want to open up somewhere else overall in the city.

Now some places have to reduce because they're overcrowding. If there's no way to open then they'll look to see if the CPOs. They'll also look at areas to see, well do areas have waiting lists of kids that they can't service, and those are areas that should be targeted for are there CPOs in the area or are there schools we can.

So there's an analysis done by the pre-K office. I know the director, Sherry Copeland, she does all of Queens and I'm sure that she can come here and talk to you.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

She should come here because last year when the chancellor came on in the middle of the year and said there, you know, 10,000 pre-K seats that aren't filled, our district had waiting lists.

MR. BRAWER:

Right.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

So that's why I want to understand how they allocate by district. There could be people that live in Brooklyn that are working in Queens and using the pre-K seats in Queens. They need to determine where the most need is, not based on what's existing in the rest of the grades in the district.

MR. BRAWER:

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I understand. I don't think it's totally based upon -- I mean, each district has to get its share because we have to be equal around the city and all for pre-K.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

Right.

MR. BRAWER:

And it may be you may have a big need but there may not be places to put it also. We need to continue to build CBOs or build space in schools that may not be there right now. So that's why some places might be oversaturated with children and not having enough seats and some maybe have more seats and have an under saturation of children to attend.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

So it's just space. It's space.

MR. BRAWER:

It's space, it's need, it's the need to be equitable to offer it around to everyone in the city and it's dollars. I mean, there's many times we would prefer to have more full-day pre-K but the state or legislators don't want to change and universal pre-K can only be used for half-day pre-K.

MR. HATZIDIMITRIOU:

And as our superintendant will tell you, equity is one of the key concepts that we constantly hear from the chancellor's office to every department in the DOE. So sure, equity is always at the forefront of these decisions that are being made.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

So for a full-day UPK at a full, the other half of the day is funded by --

MS. REED:

It could be funded by C4E to convert it to a -- right.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

Okay.

MR. BRAWER:

-- to a full-day pre-K. Half might be funded by --

FEMALE SPEAKER:

But if a school has two half-day pre-Ks, those are both financed by --

MR. BRAWER:

They're probably universal.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

Okay.

MR. BRAWER:

More likely. I mean, it could vary but more likely, yes.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

I haven't heard anything regarding the, because I came in a little late, regarding the gifted and talented programs. Is that a separate funding? Is that, like, completely separate?

MR. BRAWER:

Yeah. Again, this was a hearing for Contract for Excellence funding because there's a time frame to get responses from the public and get a response to the state. So that's what this hearing is about.

I don't know if you want a specific question about gifted and talented.

MS. BURKE:

Actually yes, I do. My son is currently --

FEMALE SPEAKER:

Can you state your name and what school, please?

MS. BURKE:

My name is Tanya Burke. My son is Justin Burke. He goes to PS-220. He's in the gifted and talented program. He scored a ninety-nine on the test when he was in pre-K. And I'm having difficulty at this time, with him, in the program because I am not being provided busing for him.

MALE SPEAKER:

They don't provide busing for gifted and talented.

MS. BURKE:

Oh, really.

MALE SPEAKER:

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I don't know. We went to a hearing last year and that's what they said, they don't provide busing.

MS. BURKE:

Children in his class have busing.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

Do they live in the area?

FEMALE SPEAKER:

Well there's supposed it. If it's over half a mile, they do.

MS. BURKE:

There's a group of kids that live in Jamaica that do not have busing. But most of -- all the other kids in that class have busing.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

Is the program at 200 a districtwide school?

(Speaking over each other)

MS. REED:

Excuse me for one minute. The one thing that we want to do is just finish this. If you could just wait one minute.

MS. BURKE:

Sure.

MS. REED:

So we can complete that. Are there any more questions in regard to this presentation? Please make certain, if you do have comments that you would like to send, please fill out the form that we have provided. In the handout we have the e-mail contacts where you can go online. You can look at this PowerPoint presentation and you can make comment.

MALE SPEAKER:

I think there's one more question here.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

If parents or anything else wanted to come and ask if they could maybe see this or not and ask for more funding in a certain category or, you know, to try to get the principal to change his monies budget --

FEMALE SPEAKER:

I think that's something that would have to happen at the school level with SLT --

MALE SPEAKER:

The school leadership team.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

Because the funds are given to the school.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

Right.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

And those decisions, even though there could be many types of money, have to be made at that table and it should include teachers, it should include parents and the administration. Because the department is not going to go back and tell the school what they need to do.

One of the things that the chancellors try to do is to make certain that the decisions are being made at the school. So that discussion has to take place in the school setting.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

But it's a possibility that that can happen?

FEMALE SPEAKER:

Well, I think most of the things, probably at this point, have been allocated. But I think that's something that -- most probably. There are some opportunities during the year where some things could be reallocated but that's something that's probably set. The programs, staffing, that's something that really should be at the table. People start talking about that around February, March, April getting ready for the next year. But that certainly should be something that's on the table, something that's discussed with everyone.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

And please keep in mind that these funds are maintenance and effort. So it's based on how schools spent the funds last school year unless there were significant changes to the population.

MS. REED:

And many schools are similar. I won't say exactly the same but similar.

All right. Any more questions? Okay. We can close up.