

Contracts for Excellence

District 2

333 Seventh Avenue

Room 713

New York, NY 10001

Public Comment

(Audio begins mid-sentence.)

MR. MARKOWITZ:

-- Contracts for Excellence. CEC ad boroughwide. This is the first year, that I'm aware of, that they farmed out, if you will, those public hearings to the CECs. I have mixed feelings about that. I'm very happy that representatives of the Department of Education are coming here tonight to talk this through with us in a small group and, in a word, as a presentation to the CEC. I'm not quite sure how I feel about the satisfying the city's legal requirement to hold a public hearing. I have a qualms on a number of grounds; one is that I don't like the idea that DOE Central is preempting our ability to set our own agendas. I'd also prefer that something like this be held citywide because of the nature of the Contracts for Excellence and also because in a lot of corners of town, not just this district or borough but the entire city, despite having taken Contract for Excellence money in the past, in a contract between the city DOE and the state, class sizes have nonetheless gone up, student-teacher ratios have nonetheless gone up. And most aggravating to me, again, personal opinion, not the counsel's, is a DOE spokesman was quoted on Gotham schools about a week ago saying, in so many words, I don't remember it verbatim, "We've got the money because our class sizes are crowded but it doesn't come with any strings, we could give it to the principals to spend how they want." We'll get into some of that later, I hope, but as a preface the point being very glad that the DOE is here for what I think of as a presentation but what DOE Central considers their legal obligation to have a hearing.

And with that, with apologies, because, again, very happy that Daria Rigney, our superintendent, is here captaining a team of people who I'll let her introduce behind me. So without further ado, District 2 Superintendent, Daria Rigney.

MS. RIGNEY:

So, hi, everybody.

[Applause]

MS. RIGNEY:

No applause, please. No, no, no, no, no. So I would first like to introduce my colleagues who are here in various capacities but basically to make this a very interactive presentation. First is Sarah Kleinhandler, and she is our Director of School Improvement. So she's the liaison between the district, not only this district but other districts, and the state. She's the person who writes the district CEP. She's the person who understands all the state data and translates it for everybody. And she sits on our district leadership team.

Jennifer Greenblatt, I think probably everybody knows, is our District Family Advocate, district parent support person and my right hand. And so she's here because she knows so much about the district and about parents' needs, and she can also answer any question. And she will be --

MS. GREENBLATT:

Can I just let everybody know that --

MS. RIGNEY:

Yes.

MS. GREENBLATT:

-- this is being taped tonight. Just making sure it's working. If it's not, I won't be here at the next meeting. But it's being taped by the Department of Education, so all your testimony will be recorded and transcribed. Thank you.

MS. SPEAKER:

New York is a one-party consent state, by the way, so you guys don't all have to consent to that. So --

MR. SPEAKER:

It's good to know.

MS. GREENBLATT:

It's okay, I consented to it, so I understand that.

MS. RIGNEY:

And finally --

MS. GREENBLATT:

I know that for many years.

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MS. RIGNEY:

-- Gene Monroe, who is the senior grants officer for District 2. So -- and he is here, and he, actually, is the senior grants officer for all -- other districts as well --

MR. MONROE:

Yes.

MS. RIGNEY:

-- District 1 --

MR. MONROE:

1, 2 and 4.

MS. RIGNEY:

-- District 2 and 4. And so it's all grants money that, in fact, he helps to administer.

And, again, as has been stated, this is basically to hear all your comments, to collect your comments. And if you don't feel comfortable making comments here, there's a Web site where you can write your comments. But everybody at Tweed has assured me that they want your comments. So they want to collect as much as possible what you think about what we're about to present.

So -- and although questions are -- of course, we love your questions -- I may not be able to actually answer your questions, but we will collect them and we will make sure that we get the answers.

So, great, let's start. And this is very --

MR. SPEAKER:

Help you with --

MS. RIGNEY:

Yeah.

MS. SPEAKER:

(Indiscernible)?

MS. RIGNEY:

Yeah, that would be great.

MR. SPEAKER:

The target's over there. Should we get you a chair right there?

MS. SPEAKER:

You want your chair?

MS. RIGNEY:

Yeah, but it did work before with just the cursor, so --

MS. RIGNEY:

Okay, so -- okay, that's great. And so they're going to jump in whenever.

So this is just basically an overview. And I guess this is a slide that I actually am going to read aloud because I think it's really important, because it describes the fundamental tenets of C4E. And the fundamental tenets -- also, I wanted to say that what I'm going to present to you is a preliminary plan. So, basically it's the DOE is submitting an amended version of this plan for the state Education Department once the public hearings and public comment period are complete. So it's really important that you know that it's preliminary. And if you want to read more about the program, if you want to read -- I mean, I know that there have already been questions about what specific schools are getting. All that information is on the Web site, which is further on in the presentation. So you'll be able to see all the data for every school and district.

And if you want to read more about the Contract for Excellence, the genesis of it, I know many people who have been around know about that very long and bitter fight and the court decision that was made to make things equitable for New York City children. Some of us were around for that. And it would be -- you can also read about that also on the Web site.

So, basically the funds have to support specific program initiatives. So they can only be used a certain -- for certain programs and for certain initiatives.

I hate to keep stopping, but I also want to say that when we talk about District 2, and you'll see the actual numbers in slides 10, 11 and 12, it's really important that you know that when they talk about District 2 here, they're talking about geographic District 2. So geographic District 2 has -- how many high schools?

MS. SPEAKER:

Sixty-three.

MS. RIGNEY:

Sixty-three high schools. So we're only about 24,000 students in elementary and middle, but we come to about 60,000 students once we get our high schools in. So we have many, many very large high schools.

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So the money that we look at, all the allocations here, include those high school students, many of whom qualify in several other categories that we'll talk about. So -- and so when we look at numbers, they're not just for the forty elementary and middle schools that you all represent.

So the kinds of things that are initiatives are: class size reduction, time on task, and we're going to look at each one of these individually; teacher and principal quality initiatives so we can make sure that the people who serve these students have the best qualifications possible; middle and high school restructuring; and pre-K and model programs for English-language learners.

And as far as populations, the money is very specifically target towards the students who need it the most, the students who are -- who need the most supports to be able to actually meet standards and to close the achievement gap, English-language learners, students in poverty, students with disabilities, and students with low academic achievement or at risk of not graduating.

We also know that we have schools within District 2 that are mostly high schools where all categories of these students are living together in a community (indiscernible). So it's really important that you know that these are the kids for whom much for the money is targeted.

Next slide?

So, I mean, I can read off the slide here, but we can also talk about it. So this really represents -- oh, I'm sorry, wrong slide.

MS. SPEAKER:

Am I wrong?

MS. RIGNEY:

No, no, no, you're good.

So some background here.

MS. SPEAKER:

No, no, I --

MS. RIGNEY:

No, you're right.

MS. SPEAKER:

Okay.

MS. GREENBLATT:

She's right.

MS. RIGNEY:

You're right.

MS. GREENBLATT:

You're okay.

MS. RIGNEY:

Originally, the Contract for Excellence was supposed to phase in over five years; I think we all remember that. And each year the DOE was supposed to receive incremental funds on top of the funds that were given the year before. Because of the economic crisis, the state has only funded two years of C4E even though we are now in year three. So there were actually no new year three funds. We're just maintaining our effort, the effort for programs from last year. So it's really just making sure there's a maintenance of effort. The state at this point is unclear about when they'll be able to begin distribution the C4E funds again. So that's where we are.

So this pie graph represents a global overview of New York City's entire C4E allocation from the point of view of how all the funds have been allocated. There are much more descript -- much more detailed descriptions in later slides.

So the big chunk: discretionary funds. Discretionary funds are given directly to schools based on a formula that's developed by the state. And the schools can spend funds however they wish to in those first six program areas; so, making class size smaller, teacher quality, restructuring. So any one of those six categories we talked about.

Targeted funds are a different category, and those really are distributed to support specific programs that meet C4E eligibility standards. And that specifically is for populations, and that really is for the second group that we sought, where real -- the more students you have in the categories of English-language learners, in poverty, special ed students. That basically is who gets that targeted allocation.

Fiscal year '09, maintenance of effort, those are ones under contract law we're allowed to use in fiscal year '09 to support existing programs so that things are (indiscernible). We used these funds last year to support summer school programs, and we're proposing to continue using them again for summer school in the summer, in 2010.

And, finally, districtwide initiatives, and you know that district does not mean the local district; it means the district of New York City. Initiatives are programs that we fund centrally and that benefit many needy students across the city.

So, again, on further slides we will be able to look at what they actually mean.

This slide represents a global overview of New York City's C4E allocation from the point of view of the C4E program (indiscernible). So, in other words, if you look at all the funds that we're proposing to allocate by discretionary allocations, the targeted allocations, the maintenance of effort and the districtwide program allocations, this is how it all breaks out. So it comes to 387 million dollars. The four million dollars that's unscheduled is unscheduled because, I mean, this is basically as of 9/1, so those are funds that principals have not scheduled yet. So they're still waiting to be allocated.

Schools get their C4E discretionary money in a lump sum and they budgeted in each C4E program area so that we know how they're going to use it. But they've yet to budget four million dollars, which is less than two percent of the discretionary funds.

So they got the money. They just haven't told us yet how they're going to use it. It's not a bad thing, and it doesn't indicate anything untoward on behalf of anyone. It just means that some schools probably were basically waiting for the students to show up to figure it out.

People can interrupt with questions.

MR. MARKOWITZ:

No, no, no. Keep going.

MS. RIGNEY:

Yeah?

MR. MARKOWITZ:

Yeah.

MS. RIGNEY:

Okay. So this represents an overview or a subset of our total C4E funds. This is -- I'm sorry.

MS. SPEAKER:

(Indiscernible).

MS. RIGNEY:

Well, that's right. Yeah, no, this is right.

Discretionary funds that were allocated to schools to use as they see fit within the six C4E program areas; that was the first slide we looked at. In

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other words, if you look at how all the schools in New York City that were budgeted -- in all the schools in New York City that were budgeted, these funds we're proposing to spend them, this is how it breaks out. So you can see that the bulk of the way they're using their money is class size reduction.

Time on task, which translates really to providing other time for students to learn, so it's before school, it's after school, it's giving students small group instruction at times when, for instance, on a teacher's prep. So we'd pay a teacher to be able to do additional instruction, even individual instruction. So it's basically at the principal's discretion to provide very strenuous support for students who need it.

Yeah, and, again, we have the four million dollars unscheduled.

So this slide goes into detail about discretionary funds. So please note that all schools receive the same allocation as last year since this is just a maintenance of effort year. So we're just trying to make sure that things stay the way they were. We expect them to maintain programs that they started with these funds last year, unless they are unable to do so because they had changes in their population. So an awful lot of -- you know, they may have gotten an influx of English-language learners or students left or they've lost a special ed class. So it depends upon how -- who they have actually in their school.

And while schools have been budgeting these funds, their use of them is not approved until New York City's Contract for Excellence plan is approved by the state. So this is all part of that.

Principals are notified upfront that their proposed uses of these funds are subject to a public process and that they're expected to take feedback from parents, students, teachers into account.

In terms of timing, it's worth nothing that, just like Title I funding, we allocate funds to schools where in Title I funding they get the allocation in May, whereas we don't submit the DCE piece to the state for official approval until the end of August.

So, basically what they're saying is that the dollars have to be green for principals in September when they're making their plans. So just because that they don't get the money until October or November or May, in the case of Title I funding, doesn't mean that that's when they get the money. They actually get the money to spend when they would need the money, since it's September (indiscernible). Does that make sense?

MS. SPEAKER:

I might (indiscernible), but you're saying the state hasn't paid us either for -- they're behind in paying us but they still get to approve based on --

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MS. RIGNEY:

They're not a year behind. The money is in the --

MS. SPEAKER:

This has --

MS. RIGNEY:

This is -- the money is actually is in the principals' budgets but it's not actually been officially approved. I mean, the state knows that the principals need the dollars to be able to use for the year.

MS. SPEAKER:

No, but I thought -- maybe I'm mixing it up, but you said because of the downturn that we're in year three but we've only gotten two years, or --

MS. RIGNEY:

We've got -- we've just got the exact same amount that we got last year.

MS. SPEAKER:

Oh, we --

MS. RIGNEY:

We got the exact --

MR. SPEAKER:

(Indiscernible) increase --

MS. RIGNEY:

Right, there's no increase. It's exactly what it was. So, I mean, despite the fact that, in fact, teachers' salaries have gone up, so it's basically -- you know, it's not like they've gotten any more money.

MS. SPEAKER:

Okay, but they are getting -- I --

MS. RIGNEY:

Oh, yes, that's all --

MS. SPEAKER:

I --

MS. RIGNEY:

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It's in Galaxy. It's been allocated. This is just to let you know that just because it hasn't been -- I mean, you could say, well, why are we going through an approval process if they got the money already. Well, it's the same with Title I.

Yeah?

MS. SPEAKER:

(Indiscernible) has not released the contracts (indiscernible) will not release (indiscernible) city plan was approved. The city was supposed to hold hearings (indiscernible) not released all (indiscernible). The state has not given money to the city.

MR. MARKOWITZ:

May I --

MS. SPEAKER:

They haven't -- can I just say one thing? They haven't --

MR. MARKOWITZ:

No, no, no, excuse me. A point of order. I want to keep this evening a little structured for a couple reasons, and with all due respect to my friend Lanie (ph.), a couple things. One is I'm trying to keep the pace of this going, which is why I was squelching questions earlier, but the other reason is so that we can keep this recorded both on the state tape and on the CEC tape. So I beg your indulgence. It goes against my nature to structure these kinds of things. But for those two reasons, please, because I know we have other things to cover tonight; I want to make sure everybody's time gets respected, all the comments get recorded. So, please, when you hear something that you think is really worth coming back to, hold that thought so we could double-back on it.

All right, please, thanks.

MS. RIGNEY:

So, again, if people want more information about the formula that the state uses to determine how much monies things get, they can look on the Contract for Excellence School Allocation Memo, or the SAM. They can find it by going to the Office of Programs, Budget and Operations. It's the first SAM listed under Externally Restricted Allocations.

This slide goes into detail about the targeted funds. And, again, targeted funds are for the special populations, the populations most in need.

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Note that schools that received C4E allocations in 2008/2009 receive those allocations again in 2009/2010 as long as they retained the populations. So you can't get the money if you don't have the kids.

Necessary to maintain effort. Funds that were previously in schools that lost the population needed to support these programs are being proposed for redistribution to other schools that gain the populations; so we know the kids went somewhere. However, the total amounts allocated to each of the initiatives described above remains steady from fiscal year '09 to fiscal year '10.

In terms of CTT classrooms, because you can see that is how many, many principals used the money for class size reduction, CTT classes do reduce people-teacher ratio for GENT (ph.) students, and they are an important and value instructional intervention, as we all certainly know in District 2 where we have CTT in almost every school and pretty much every grade.

Under C4E regulations, assignment of additional teachers to a class and to facilitate student attainment of state learning standards is an eligible expense. So in cases where there is not enough real estate to actually open another classroom, another teacher can be hired to be able to support the number of -- to just bring the pupil-teacher ratio down.

And this slide goes into detail about the districtwide initiatives and the fiscal year '09 maintenance of effort. In terms of districtwide initiatives, we're proposing to continue funding the same programs as we did last year. The last thing we want to do is cut programs that were successful, of course. The only difference is that, since the English-Language Learner Success and Middle School Success grant programs are in their second year of implementation and schools have received fixed sums of money, we're adding a college and AP prep program to make up the difference. So the other programs, in brief, are: One is Multiple Pathways, which is a program for students who are trying to get their high school diploma; Principal Training, and that is the Leadership Academy, and School Restructuring, and that's maintaining -- or reconfiguring/phasing out/closing high schools. And reconfiguring (indiscernible) are meant to small schools that serve high-need students.

MS. GREENBLATT:

Can I add one?

MS. RIGNEY:

Yeah.

MS. GREENBLATT:

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History (indiscernible) initiative is now referring to District 2, which we're referring to an issue that's very (indiscernible).

MS. RIGNEY:

So by "district" they mean the District of New York.

For fiscal year '09, maintenance of effort, and that is really what we're proposing here. Even though the DOE received new C4E funds in 2008/09, we are allowed under law to use thirty million dollars of any new allocation to support existing programs that meet the C4E eligibility standards. All the other new funds had to support new or expanded initiatives. So we used this thirty million dollars to support summer school last year and would like to do that again this year because those were students who really need it the most.

So this basically looks at District 2, our District 2, but, again, includes all the high schools. And I actually have that breakdown, if you are interested in hearing about it, how much of it is high schools, how much of it is elementary and how much for it is middle. And it's -- actually K to 5 or K to 8 also I have.

So this basically shows us how District 2 has proposed to spend their discretionary dollars; and basically a subset of all the allocations in the district. And, again, there is a Web site where if you want to look up your school and see exactly how your principal has chosen to spend their discretionary money, that is available for you to see, talk about. It would be great to discuss about SLT.

And as far as them not adding up -- somebody said they don't add up exactly, but that's basically because of this -- the unscheduled dollars, the four percent.

So this is just really a further breakdown to see where the money is going, how it's being spent, creation of additional classrooms, all the class size reduction, how reducing teacher-student ratio -- remember, again, CTT is in there; time on task, I mean, that is what time on task means; it's basically all the summer school program, before- and after-school, dedicated instructional time, individual. So it's all the ways in which kids are supported not through their regular programs.

And as far as teacher and principal quality, programs to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers, mentoring for new teachers, coaches, and then principals get leadership coaches that help them in their schools.

Next slide.

MS. SPEAKER:

Oh, that's --

MS. RIGNEY:

No, this is good.

And then instructional changes in middle- and high school. Again, I think many of you know about the chancellor's initiative to make small schools so that we know that many of our children, especially our most fragile kids, get lost in big schools, and so instructional changes are really to help them.

Full-day pre-K and model programs for English-language learners, and we have many in District 2.

Next slide.

So while many schools are still allocating funds to class size reduction activities, given the overall economic circumstances, school budgets have been cut; everybody knows that. And even with stimulus money, C4E funds, while allocated by the state in the same amount, do go as far as they did last year because, in fact, as a result of the contracts, you know, costs go, everything. I mean, money just doesn't buy us much, whether it's materials or personnel.

So we don't expect to see significant decreases in class size. Of course, there are pupil-teacher ratio in 2009, 2010, and of course that's a very big issue here. But this is the reality.

Many schools are using C4E to keep class sizes and pupil-teacher ration lower than they would have been otherwise, which is an acceptable use of funds. But for these funds in the absence of other funding, probably class size would have increased.

And, finally, we are, you know, we do, again, invite public comment. I know that Jennifer has been encharged with making sure that this tape is pristine and sent back tomorrow morning. And I, so we are going to really ask you to speak into it because we don't want to miss a word.

And, again, there is the Web site here, so we want to know that if you are not comfortable speaking of you think of something that you wish you'd said and you forgot to, please make sure that you just write it out and send it to them, so, because they want to hear it.

So, comments?

MR. SPEAKER:

First of all, thank you very much.

MS. RIGNEY:

No problem.

MR. MARKOWITZ:

Without raising a question but just because I'm an engineer (sic), just for a little perspective, very, very loosely, we're not talking about a lot of money here. We're talking about less than two percent of the city's budget for schools out of the twenty-two billion. So a million sounds like a lot but it's out of twenty-two billion.

And the only other number crunch, for perspective, I had was that, in very, very loose terms, they didn't have the number of kids in the city, off the top of my head. It's, very loosely, a little less, as far as I could tell, dead-on proportional on a per-kid basis between District 2 and citywide. But the real thing I want to give you for perspective is this is not, by a long shot, the bulk of the DOE budget for your kids. It's less than two percent. So we are talking about something at the margins.

With that, let me swing the microphone around the table. Anybody, comment? Question?

MS. SPEAKER:

The question I have is I, you know, you said there's no increase in funding, and I'm just not sure, not having looked at it that closely. But under the court settlement was there, as a part of the settlement, a necessary increase every year? I'm just not sure of that after the Court of Appeals rendered their decision, and I don't know if you know the answer to that.

MR. SPEAKER:

Well, the primary agreement is, alluded to earlier was that the money was to be given over five years. However, everyone knows of the economic troubles of the country. The state apparently doesn't have the money to allocate this year. We don't know whether or not they will allocate additional funds next year or the year after. And we don't know if they're going to make it up, given that they didn't give it this year. So it's to be determined by the state.

MS. SPEAKER:

I guess my question is, though, did the settlement mandate it? And if not, can people go back to court over the decision?

MR. SPEAKER:

I'm sure it's always an option to go back to court, but it's found that the state really doesn't have the money. (Indiscernible).

MR. SPEAKER:

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I actually had a similar question. Let me rephrase. Is the city in violation of the law?

MS. SPEAKER:

No, the state.

MS. SPEAKER:

State.

MR. SPEAKER:

State.

MS. SPEAKER:

State.

MR. SPEAKER:

Sorry. Is the state in violation of the law by not giving over the state -- the, excuse me, Court-mandated amount of money? Also, for perspective, if anybody could share with us how much it was supposed to have ramped up over the 387 million dollar level last year for this year. Again, I'm kind of oriented toward are we nibbling around the margins, was it supposed to go up one percent, was it supposed to triple, or where are we, what should it have gone up --

MR. SPEAKER:

I don't have all the details, but I can always take it back to the central people and then we can get you some numbers.

MR. MARKOWITZ:

Go ahead, please.

MS. SPEAKER:

Is any of the money under creation of additional classrooms, in class size reduction being used to build new schools, or is that -- are you only allowed to use that money to create more class space within a given school property?

MR. SPEAKER:

Well, we think there was a portion, and I'll research it some more, that can't go into capital planning; we need additional space. But the money that was allocated to schools in discretionary funds can be used for space as they already have to create additional classes. And the other option is if they

don't have the room, then they can send a second teacher into the classroom to increase the teacher-pupil ratio.

MR. MARKOWITZ:

Yeah, I'm getting a friendly reminder, because we've all got name cards up here but it's being recorded twice over. Even for councilmembers, please, let me encourage you to identify yourselves when you're speaking into the mic. It'll help whoever's listening to the tape later.

I'm Michael Markowitz. I have the big booming nasal voice. There you go. Who's next?

MS. TONNICOLLOUGH:

Shino Tonnicolough (ph.), Councilmember. Daria, thank you for coming tonight and spending the time. And I know you won't take this personally because I know you didn't do the PowerPoint. I've commented on many government plans, primarily environmental. Never have I been asked to comment on a PowerPoint slide show. I just don't know where to begin because there's so much that's not there. How are we expecting principals to spend their money in reducing class size knowing that the class size is to not go down in many of the schools in District 2 and citywide?

So we've given them the authority to spend the money however they see fit. It seems like in some areas it didn't accomplish what it was meant to do. So, moving forward into the second year of this funding, what are we going to do differently that we can ensure the money we're spending will result in some positive results?

And there are just so many programs in here without any narrative attached to it, I really just don't know what I'm really commenting on.

So I would like to have the real plan. I'm sure this is not what the city's submitting to the state. There must be a 500-page document somewhere. I would like to take a look at that.

MS. RIGNEY:

I think on the Web site you're going to find a lot of those 500 pages. I certainly -- you couldn't find it yet? I will definitely find out.

MS. SPEAKER:

Whole bunch of it's all tables but not narratives.

MS. RIGNEY:

All right. Okay.

MR. MARKOWITZ:

Yeah, I would second what Shino said in spades. I also went looking and was very frustrated that we were not getting what's getting submitted to the state. It's just as simple as that.

MS. FLORENCE:

I just had -- this is Diana Florence, Councilmember. I just had one comment. What I've noticed, this is now my, sort of, second DOE presentation. And what I noticed is there's a lot of generalizations about numbers and we sort of take -- it seems that DOE sort of takes an arbitrary number and says so there's 500 kids registered in kindergarten and (indiscernible), for example, when we know that's not really indicative of who's going to be on the board in 5 years, for example.

And I similarly think here, and it could be my own inexperience with dealing with DOE and being on this side of it, I am a new councilmember, but, I mean, for example, I think you mentioned that there's sixty-one million that's going to the CTTs, and CTTs reduce class size, or, rather, they reduce the pupil -- the teacher ratio. I mean, is that really -- that's not really -- that's really very disingenuous because that produces the ratio in that one class. But if there's six kindergartens and there's one CTT that has, you know, twenty-four and the rest of them have twenty-four and they have one teacher, I mean, it's really benefiting a very small group, even if that, even if the numbers, and I'm not a numbers person, but if it averages out smaller, it seems to me disingenuous. I mean, we all, it seems, should have the goal of actually reducing class size, not actually making it look like on paper that if we average it out there's small -- there's smaller classes, because if there aren't actual smaller classes, then, really, what's the point?

So it seems to me that counting that in doesn't really seem -- it seems disingenuous in terms of actually accomplishing that.

MS. RIGNEY:

Well, CTTs are not across the board. The fact is it's one way to reduce class size and make a much more effective pupil-teacher ratio. But the benefits of CTT for so much of this money is to really help the kids who need it the most. And special ed students who are in CTT do incredibly -- you know, the data is dazzling, certainly in our district, the difference between how kids do in CTT as opposed to self-contained classes.

So, I mean, it actually seems kind of like a low-hanging fruit that it would both reduce class size and it helps the kids who need it the most. So, yeah, it can't be -- because you'd never have CTT in every classroom, so you'd have to use some other -- I mean, in many schools the classes across a grade might be reduced and one way that you would reduce one of those classes is by making it CTT on every grade.

MS. FLORENCE:

Well, to be clear, though, it's not that I'm anti-children with needs. You know, I mean, I'm pro in getting them up to speed and giving them the attention they need. I just, I feel like here we're members of the council for all of District 2, and the majority of kids, thank goodness, don't have issues. The majority of -- if there's a -- I think in my school there's six kindergartens; there's one CTT class. And I'm just saying that if we want to reduce class sizes, if that's the point of this, and, frankly, if that's how the Contract for Excellence is publicized that it reduces class sizes, shouldn't it kind of be reducing class sizes for all the kids and not just a specific compilation? I know that that's part of the settlement that they're supposed to be addressed, but it just seems to me that it's not -- it's just not fully doing what it's supposed to -- it's advertising to be doing.

MS. GREENBLATT:

That it's one way.

MR. SPEAKER:

Even though we are here for a Contracts for Excellence hearing, I want everyone to keep a global perspective of a school budget. C4E is only one piece, and in some cases a very small piece. For example, a school may receive money in what we call a thirty grade class add (ph.) reduction for K to 3 where they can use to fund several classes to make the numbers low because of class size. There are other funding areas such as Title I, that they can also use to reduce class size.

So C4E, in some cases, the funding that they receive in C4E can only appoint one teacher. So they target that one specific class that they think has the most problems that need to catch up, and they may run that particular class, but they also have other funding sources that they can target other areas.

MR. MARKOWITZ:

You have to come on up.

MS. TAYLOR:

This is Councilmember Christina Taylor. I want to switch tracks. On page 9 of the presentation, you're talking about high school students and there's a thirty million dollar allocation, which I believe I understood you to say it's targeted to summer school programs. Do I understand that correctly?

MR. SPEAKER:

No, citywide.

MS. RIGNEY:

Citywide.

MS. TAYLOR:

Yeah. And I'm just curious, you mentioned that this is the best way or one of the best ways to support high school students who are struggling? What's the basis for that belief that summer school is the best way?

MS. RIGNEY:

The basis for that belief? Well, many high school students get to pass classes in high school that they couldn't pass all year. So if they get credit accumulation, you know that at least they're moving towards the next year in high school. So, I mean, I -- whether it's the best way is to actually make sure that they get what they need in elementary and middle school (indiscernible) high schools. But, I mean, we know that for many students, especially in our large high schools, they need to have summers to be able to pass regions, get credit accumulation.

So that's just one way. Again, as Gene said, I mean, this is just one small part of the budget. So, this is summer school.

Did you want to say something else?

MS. TAYLOR:

Yeah, and maybe I should ask a different question, which is, why are we using summer school as a way to make up for what's not happening during the school year? Or do I misunderstand the allocation?

MS. RIGNEY:

That's actually not within my purview to even -- since we don't even have high schools within our jurisdiction, that's a decision made by high school principals and high school superintendents. But I'm sure it will be attended to.

MR. MARKOWITZ:

I want to pull it back out a sec and then I'll pass it right over. About the structure of this as the hearing, is there also a hearing for the Manhattan Chapter of the Citywide Councils on High Schools, or is there a similar hearing for the Citywide Council on High Schools?

MS. RIGNEY:

Yes, there is.

MR. MARKOWITZ:

Okay, so just in case people couldn't hear in the back, yeah. So this is just the one specific to CEC elementary and middle schools.

So, another technicality follow-up, if I might. The sheets in the presentation that talked about proposed discretionary spending in CEC 2, at that point, that 11.5 million dollars on page 10, is that just for the elementary and middle schools under our umbrella, or is that inclusive of the high schools?

MS. RIGNEY:

Everything includes the high schools.

MR. MARKOWITZ:

All right. So that's 11.5 million over 60,000 kids, and --

MS. RIGNEY:

Yeah, I actually --

MR. MARKOWITZ:

-- if you'll forgive me, I ran the numbers both ways; that's about 150 bucks per kid. So, again, I'm back to where I started. This is nibbling around the margins. It's not huge blocks of money.

MS. RIGNEY:

So, I actually have a -- I have a further breakdown that I got sort of hot off the press. And of the 18,883,000 dollars in the sum of fiscal year '10 proposed allocation, elementary, that's just K to 5s, are getting 2,700,000 dollars of it; K to 8s are getting half a million dollars of it; and middle schools are getting 1.1 million dollars of it. So that kind of puts the perspective. It's basically four million dollars out of the eighteen million.

MR. MARKOWITZ:

I confess, I'm actually a little more confused. Is that starting with the number -- all right, so we've gotten the overhead presentation at page 10 that says CEC 2 money is eleven and a half million dollars, but then I'm looking now at a total --

MS. RIGNEY:

But this is discretionary.

MR. MARKOWITZ:

Oh, just the discretionary page, I'm sorry. Okay. So --

MS. RIGNEY:

So this is targeted and discretionary, the total, and that's the breakdown by school type so that you can see where actually the numbers are when you

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look at just the schools that are within the purview of CEC D2 and my superintendency. So it's elementary and middle schools. So it's considerably smaller than the sum.

MR. MARKOWITZ:

All right, pardon me while I smirk. So now for elementary and middle schools under the purview of this council, we're in the ballpark of four million out of the eighteen million coming here geographically; and roughly fourteen million of that which is coming here geographically is going to the high schools in our geographic area; roughly four million to the elementary and middle schools in our geographic area.

More councilmembers, or should we -- oop, I'm sorry, Cynthia.

MS. ALVAREZ:

Hi. Councilmember Cynthia Alvarez. In terms of the middle school restructuring, how is the funding allocation once you restructure it? It's in the same building but it's not per school. How's the transitional money allocated, and then how it's divided after?

MR. MARKOWITZ:

Yeah, she's got to get real close.

Yeah, it's on; you just to get real close.

MS. RIGNEY:

I think Gene's going to take this one.

MR. MONROE:

Well, just like all the schools receive the allocation for the discretionary portion, the school that's under restructure, they can choose their strategy and use some of that discretionary money toward the restructuring. So it's not a mandate for them to use that money (indiscernible), but that's one of the avenues that they can --

MS. SPEAKER:

Can you explain how the Leadership Academy improves existing principal quality?

MS. RIGNEY:

So the Leadership Academy provides mentors to new principals all over the city. I think some of them are retired principals, is that right?

MS. GREENBLATT:

Right.

MS. RIGNEY:

And I think they actually do it for three years, Sarah, at this point?

MS. KLEINHANDLER:

I think so, yes.

MS. RIGNEY:

One year is man -- yeah, one year is mandated. I think there's a suggestion that the Leadership Academy -- and as I say, they're mostly retired principals. So they provide support. I think they have about fifteen schools that they visit. I mean, many of them are full time. So they -- we actually have some retired principals in District 2 who do that work. So they provide support especially for new principals.

MR. MARKOWITZ:

Another, kind of, technicality question. It's still a lot of money, please don't get me wrong. It's still 387 million dollars. How does the oversight work or the tracking work to ensure this is incremental money, not just replacement money, so that when the state shows up with 387 million, the city just doesn't pull 387 million off the table?

MR. MONROE:

The state actually has many monitors assigned to different districts throughout the city. And at some point, they did it last year, where they select a number of schools in each district; then we have to work with them step by step, ensure them how the money's specifically spent and who's school, and we have to be able to demonstrate that money is no supplanting tax levy funds; it's supplemental.

Any funds, reimbursable funds such as Title I, Title IIA, which is the early grade money, has to be supplemented. Okay? And I myself as an NGO, every year we have this big report that we have to submit to the state, and it's called a comparability report, and basically it's demonstrating to the state that schools that receive Title I or any reimbursable sources are being treated fairly as a school that does not receive this fund.

MR. MARKOWITZ:

Okay, new councilmember hand up.

MS. SILVER:

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Thank you. Mary Silver, Councilmember. I'm just look at page 10 where it says "full day pre-K". Is that accurate that not one dollar was spent on pre-K in District 2?

MS. RIGNEY:

No additional pre-Ks.

MS. SILVER:

No additional pre-Ks.

MS. RIGNEY:

Right. So it's just the pre-Ks that were are.

MS. SILVER:

Right, well, you know it worked down too

MS. RIGNEY:

Right, right, and that was for space issues because we had -- one, you have kindergarten students who need students. Pre-K is, you know --

MS. SILVER:

Right.

MS. RIGNEY:

-- not mandated.

MS. SILVER:

Right. The same of that, of course, is that there are children most in need pre-K.

MS. RIGNEY:

Would that we could. I mean, the really --

MS. SILVER:

Would that we could.

MS. RIGNEY:

Would that we had the space.

MS. SILVER:

Let's figure it out, because there are plenty of kids in District 2 who --

MS. RIGNEY:

Absolutely.

MS. SILVER:

-- end up in high school having to do summer school because we never got them in pre-school. So it's a bad

MS. RIGNEY:

Right.

MS. SILVER:

-- cycle to start. And, obviously, I'm master gabbyist (ph.) here, but I did want to point that out.

Secondly, could I ask for some feedback about our District -- our geographic District 2 high schools? I know that Sarah cares about them. We care about them. You know, what kind of benefits do these kids have? Was there significant class reduction in District 2? Please.

MS. KLEINHANDLER:

So as Gene said, four schools from each district are selected randomly to monitor every year for their contract (indiscernible). And last year we monitored Norman Thomas High School, and -- I feel that might have been -- Cascades, right, which is alternative high school downtown.

So they were able to reduce class size with the Contract for Excellence money and they did use the money for a summer school program.

So they're using it in a right way, and the hope is that it's really improving student achievement for the youngsters who are really the lowest achieving in the school.

I don't have the newest data on Norman Thomas High School; I have their state accountability, but of course their (indiscernible) has not come out. And Cascades, the same thing; they reduced class size dramatically there and they also instituted a summer program as well. And I believe that Cascades has come off of the state list. So -- they had used it in the right way. I mean, I can give you more specific information school by school, which is also in the District 2 DCEP.

And to comment on the narrative portion of what the buckets -- the Contract for Excellence buckets mean, that's also in the DCEP and Contract for Excellence section. So if anybody wants to see that, it's a public document.

MS. SPEAKER:

And, Sarah, they reduced it by adding teachers or by smaller class size?

MS. KLEINHANDLER:

Norman Thomas, if I remember correctly, they added more classes, additional teachers. So -- and there are smaller in-community high schools, so they were able to add teachers and each of the small learning communities. So that's how they reduced class size there.

MR. MARKOWITZ:

Last two around the Council table, then we'll throw it open to the public. I have the speaker list here. I'm guessing that now that you've heard the presentation, more than just four of you will have something on here.

And, I got to speak candidly, as I always do. A year ago, the state formally scolded the city for breaking the contract, for taking money at, I think it was, seventy schools they specifically tallied where the state gave money for the purpose of seeing class size and/or student-teacher ratio go down. And the state specifically chided the city for taking the money, and then school class sizes went up, or the student-teacher ratio went up, in those, roughly, seventy schools.

The original contract was give us the money, the class size will go down. The after-the-fact rationalization from the DOE was, well, it would have gone up worse without the money. So this is all floating around in the back of my head. And I wish it were as simple as you give money, class size goes down. Flash forward to this year, and in the press this year already, bottom line: Roughly twenty, twenty-five percent of the kids in New York City are in classes that are so big that they exceed the UFT contract limit, and even that is nobody's idea of target size, nor is it the goal of class sizes in the Campaign for Fiscal Equity lawsuit that's driving this Contract for Excellence program.

With that, thank you for letting me get that off my chest. Four names on the list; more are welcome. First up is Irene Kaufman, with Vicky Arbetrio (ph.) on deck, and Lynn Lanie Hanson, and Alfred Gonzalez batting cleanup. We got to put the microphones back together here.

MS. KAUFMAN:

Irene Kaufman, Public School Parent Advocacy Committee. As far as comments going back to the DOE, the most important comment I think any of us can make is, no matter how much money you use for C4E, if more schools are not built, there will not be any real way to reduce class size. You can put extra teachers in every room, which for now would -- I think is what they should have to do while class sizes are so large, but there really has to be more building, and the rest of this is kind of a shell game until that happened. So that is my main comment for the DOE. Thank you very much.

MR. MARKOWITZ:

Thank you, Irene. Also let me add, please, when you come up, not just say your name but school affiliation also. And I'm getting a hand signal from Vickie -- rather save for later, all right, Vickie, we're going to come back around.

Lanie Hanson.

MS. HANSON:

Hi. I'll try to be short, even though this is my life. There was a lot of misinformation, disinformation and lack of information in that PowerPoint which I don't hold Daria for. I've seen the same PowerPoint more times than I can imagine a different CECs.

It leaves out a lot of information. First of all, it leaves out the fact that as part of the Contracts for Excellence the city was mandated to be reducing class sizes in all grades over the next five years to no more than twenty in grades K through 3 and twenty-three in all other grades by the 2011 to 2012 school year.

We are now in the third year of our five-year plan. The first year the city made none of its targets. And as Michael said, the state severely chided the city and said that they would be under a corrective action plan and that the pupil-teacher ratio had increased in more than half of all schools.

The following year, which was last fall, actually class sizes went up substantially for the first time in ten years. In every grade but 4th went down a little and 6th remained unchanged. In more than half of the schools that got this money and said they were going to be using it to reduce class size specifically, not just add teachers but to reduce class sizes, class sizes actually went up.

In District 2 schools last year, average classes increased in grades K through 3 and grades 6 through 8 by an average of two percent from already high levels.

Now, I'm glad you mentioned the early grade class size reduction because just a week and a half ago Comptroller Thompson released an audit of the early grade class size reduction program. This was state funds, hundreds of millions of state funds, that had been granted New York City but have now been folded into the operating budget. And DOE promised the state that as part of their overall class size reduction program they would continue this program as is.

And if you go on the Web site there's budget allocation memos with specific rules that are supposed to be used to reduce class sizes to no more than twenty in K through 3.

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Comptroller Thompson found that, again, many, many millions of dollars were being given to schools, they were not reducing class size with it, they were using it for all sorts of other purposes that he could not determine.

The reaction by the Department of Education to this audit, and I -- first I want to quote from the Contracts for Excellence plan that was submitted to the state in 2007, the official plan, quote: "The Department continues to be committed to reducing class size in early grades via the Early Grade Class Reduction Program."

So when this audit by the state comptroll -- the city comptroller was released, DOE's response was the Early Grade Class Size Reduction Program no longer exists.

So you can get a sense here that there's a lack of integrity, a lack of commitment and a lack of determination on the part of the Department of Education to actually reduce class size, and they've been fighting this tooth and nail ever since this law was first passed. They were supposed to hold hearings in June like the rest of the state did. When I discovered over the summer that they hadn't, I woke up to it. First, DOE said they didn't have to hold hearings. And when I reached the state, finally they said yes, you have to hold hearings. But it's very unfortunate that they're holding hearings after they've already allocated the money but the state has not released these funds.

So they're also -- they're required to hold borough hearings. They're not complying with that part of the either.

So I'm going to pass out to UCC members a summary and fact sheet and a sample resolution. We are going to be calling on the state not to release these funds until they prove that they're actually reducing class sizes and using the money appropriately. As part of that, we're also going to be asking the state to order New York City to place the 1,500 teachers on absent teacher reserve that are getting full salary to do nothing, to be immediately placed in classrooms to reduce class size.

Beyond that, there is a serious issue about supplantation. Joe Klein has already said class sizes will go up again this year and went up last year because of city budget cuts. And that shows you that there is no real maintenance of effort. They should have kept that money in for class size reduction. They were getting more money from the state last year. Class sizes went up. They're not doing maintenance of effort and they're not reducing class size. Thank you.

[Applause]

MR. MARKOWITZ:

Thank you, Lanie. Feel free to clap. Thank you very, very much.

Alfred Gonzalez.

By the way, Lanie, thank you for handing those around. I have the electronic versions and I apologize to my fellow councilmembers for not hitting the forward button.

MR. GONZALEZ:

Good evening, everybody. I'm Alfred Gonzalez and I'm District 2 rep for New York too (indiscernible). Basically I just want to make a short comment combined with what Lanie and Irene had to say, is that, and please take this back to Department of Education. If the Department of Ed is really sincere about lowering class size, they have to build more buildings; that's all there is to it. I mean, I don't see any other way that -- we can talk about shifting kids around, you know, I'm not real -- lowering class size and adding more adults to a classroom, that's not lowering class size. Lowering class size is bringing it down to twelve or fifteen or even likely you're talking about twenty students, which is manageable for a teacher and which is fair to the students. You have twenty-eight -- if you have twenty-eight kindergartners in a classroom, that is just not fair to the students, I don't care how many adults you have in the room. All right, that's my feeling about that.

And I'd go to many schools. I was a cluster teacher for many years. I lived in District 2 for thirty years and I've taught in District 2 for fourteen years. There's no room. Every cluster teacher is at -- in danger of losing their room, of giving it over to another classroom. At my school, PS 116, we eliminated pre-K. We're talking about the need of helping these high school kids. And we know, like, from the history with Head Start, remember Head Start? I mean, there was such research on that about how that helped kids later on in life.

You know, so if we really sincerely want to help the high schools that are in trouble, if the mayor is really -- I mean, what he wants to do is raise those high school graduation rates. I mean, I think that's what this is all about as well. So if that is really sincere effort, then they have to lower the class size for the younger kids, get pre-K back in there for everybody, and let's keep this fight up, people. Thank you so much.

MR. MARKOWITZ:

Thank you, Alfred.

One last round around the table. Yes, please. Two over here on the right.

MS. URBAN:

Lisa Urban, Councilmember. I just have a question for Daria on the presentation. Since we've been talking about that the middle schools and

elementary schools get so, so much less than what the high schools receive, is there a formula or was that in the contract itself where the formula was allocated that the high schools would get that much more, or is it just because of the number of students that are actually in the high schools that they receive it? If what we're saying is correct, and I believe it is, that we need to not only address high school students that are having the issues but also address the students in the lower grades that are having learning issues -- in order to bring up the high school students -- or high school graduation rates, wouldn't it be fairer to be able to target the children as they go through the schools as opposed to just (indiscernible) upper level classes?

MS. RIGNEY:

So the money is given out strictly on a needs basis. The reason why the high schools get that money is because the students in those schools need it. They are predominantly English-language learners, they are students who qualify for a pre-reduced lunch, they are students who still live in poverty, and they are students with special needs.

There is a misalignment in the populations of the elementary and middle schools, which this body represents, and the high schools. The high schools -- there are six small high schools, actually founded by District 2. Many of our District 2 elementary and middle school students attend. The rest of the high schools -- Sarah said sixty-three, so they are small schools, medium-size schools and large schools -- they are not necessarily -- the students who attend those schools are not necessarily the same students who attend elementary or middle school in District 2.

I'm sure you've all heard about the high school choice process. I mean, students put down, I think, twelve choices. And basically Manhattan is the hottest borough to go -- you can imagine if you were a, you know, kid in Queens or Brooklyn, you'd want to go to school in Manhattan.

So kids want to go to school in Manhattan, so we have a huge influx of students from all the other boroughs who want to go to, whether it's Washington Irving or Norman Thomas or Stuyvesant, or wherever. So those are not necessarily -- I mean, we would love it if it were as clear a track where we could actually capture those kids and make sure that they do well in upper grades, but, in fact, they're in other districts, they're in other schools, they're in other boroughs.

So is there a responsibility to them? Of course there is, but it's not actually -- they're not the same kids. So that's --

MR. MARKOWITZ:

Sure.

MS. URBAN:

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So then -- it's Lisa Urban again. So then my question to you is, and I have gone through the high school choice application process with my older child, so I'm familiar with how it's done. And what I'm wondering, then, is that if these high schools that are within the district, aside from the six or schools that are the more -- the schools that have more District 2 students attend, whether there should be some other way of allocating those funds so that it's not done just because we have the sixty-three high schools within the district but that we also are more spread out so that it deals with our children within our district.

I mean, I know that some of the high schools specifically take District 2 kids before they take other high school kids, so -- or other district kids in the selection process, or they give --

MS. RIGNEY:

Preference.

MS. URBAN:

-- preference, thank you, to District 2 students. So is there a way that it can be allocated so that it's a little fairer over -- to the District 2 children that it's supposed to be supporting, not only in high schools but in the lower grades?

MS. RIGNEY:

So, again, the money is given out strictly on the basis of need. So if the students are not -- if it's not allocated, it means that the students aren't qualifying under the categories that were stipulated.

And there is -- in the eyes of the state, District 2 means the geography of District 2. So the state is giving -- this is money from the state. So in the state's eyes -- yes?

MS. SPEAKER:

I don't have anything.

MS. RIGNEY:

All they see are the geographic boundaries of District 2. So, community District is actually elementary and middle schools, but geographic District 2 is everybody within our geographic -- all the schools within our geographic bounds. So since it's a state grant, it's state money, that's how it has to be given out. Does that make sense?

MS. URBAN:

Yes.

MR. MARKOWITZ:

If I'm hearing you right, the state looks where the kids are going to school, not where they're commuting from?

MS. RIGNEY:

Exactly.

MS. GIA:

This is Sara Gia (ph.), Councilmember. I just wanted to comment that per page 5 of the PowerPoint slide show, a grant program whose purpose is to reduce classes, only thirty-nine percent of the funds are being used to reduce class sizes. And I know it's really important for teachers and principals to have mentors and for all these other programs to be funded, and I wouldn't want to take anything away from the students and the staff, but for grant -- maybe that's why the program's not working, because only thirty-nine percent of this money is being directed toward class size reduction.

I used to be a middle school teacher and I taught 7th grade. My class sizes would fluctuate between thirty-three to thirty-six kids. And I've worked in a small school. And having another adult in the class was just someone else taking up oxygen. It really wasn't helpful.

And I really do agree with the people who have spoken today advocating for new schools. And the city -- I know that this isn't within the control of the people who are here today from the DOE, but the city currently has land that it's considering selling, and it has options and it is looking for something to do with this land. Instead of selling it to developers, instead of building new condos that are going to bring in children that we can't get schooled, we should really take it to task, take our -- the mayor, take our city councilmembers to task and make sure that when these plots of land come up that they're used for schools and that they're used wisely and not just to benefit to the people who have already benefited from, I guess, taxpayer money.

MR. MARKOWITZ:

Thank you very much. Last call. There were a couple -- I want to move on with the agenda, but I did see some people came in who didn't have a chance to sign up on the speaker list. So we got two hands up there. Tricia, I know you were here first. Go ahead, take a turn at the mic.

After these two, we're going to thank our guests and move on with the evening's agenda.

Go forward.

MS. SPEAKER:

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Can I just ask you quickly? We have two agendas here. Is there -- I just want to be clear, are we not doing the zoning conversation tonight before I answer (sic) this question?

MR. MARKOWITZ:

The other --

TRICIA:

We just have a couple people asking about the --

MR. MARKOWITZ:

Yeah, let me deal with the mechanics. Without going into a lot of the detail, we're actually having two different kinds of meetings back to back. And in the typical CEC 2 format, a calendar meeting is this kind of -- we try to have guests kind of meeting, public input. The working business meeting is open for public observation, but that's our chance to deal with the internal laundry. You're welcome to stay for it, but it's not an opportunity for public input.

With respect to zoning, last Thursday night we had a special working business meeting open to the public to try and get off the ground how we were going to map out the next couple months with DOE. Following up on that's a topic on the working business meeting. But just in terms of structuring committees and future meetings, still not public input.

TRICIA:

Okay.

MR. MARKOWITZ:

So, Trish.

TRISH:

No, it's okay.

MR. MARKOWITZ:

All things considered, if you have something to say about zoning, feel free to use the public session now or the second one later tonight.

TRISH:

I think it would be out of context now. I think it'd be better for us to just hear, you know, when they're ready for the public.

MR. MARKOWITZ:

Okay.

TRISH:

Or whatever. I just want to -- you know, something you said really struck with me, and what Alfred just said as well, and then -- and what just said, is that, you know, I have to say as being someone who has just sustained unprecedented building -- residential building from 2002 through this year in Lower Manhattan, 13,500 new dwellings, okay, that basically the Department turned a blind eye to, Now, this is basic infrastructure. So, frankly, when I hear it's not in the budget, you know, imagine what you would say to someone if you weren't going to pick up their trash or you weren't going to provide electrical, you know, grids, power grids. This is something that we have to really just get out of our vocabulary at this point. It's the same thing with class size reduction.

You know, if it weren't for Lanie standing up here and correcting these statistics and helping people understand that these are things that have -- where a blind eye has been turned to the most basic of elements in our society that it annoys me more than I can even convey, as respectful as I am to Daria and this whole group here, and you being sent here, to have to continue discussing this at all. I really feel as though, you know, as somewhat our class sizes went up the year that we subverted, thank God, three of our classrooms to the Tweed Courthouse, that in November of last year Joe Klein said we did not need. That's frightening. There's 120 children over there that had no place in our school. And after they're over there, our class sizes are up. We're at twenty-five, twenty-six in K. We were at twenty last year. We're at twenty-eight and thirty in the upper grades. PS150's at twenty-eight in their classrooms. This is completely unacceptable. I don't need to look at any PowerPoint presentation. I don't need to discuss it anymore. It just needs to be changed.

And I think all of us now understand the facts that the money thing -- I'm really -- I can't listen to it anymore, because if you add up the income of that kind of building, they have to provide what we have provided for them. And that's all I need to say.

MR. MARKOWITZ:

Thank you, ma'am. And I apologize --

[Applause]

MR. MARKOWITZ:

-- I've forgotten your name.

ARCELIA:

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Thank you. My name is Arcelia (ph.). I came from PS 51. And I'm so angry with the ladies that are (indiscernible) because there's a lot of new construction, and it's good idea. The -- this new construction has new employments and all that stuff. But that's not true, because bring a lot of works for peoples that's not from the city. They're bringing out for the out-of-states.

So my second thing, that it's good idea put two teachers in the classroom, but it's still -- it's the same thing. If before it's thirty-three kids in one classroom, so now it's thirty-three, plus the teacher, plus the -- all the teacher. That's really good idea, but if it was small classes and always every year and every meeting it's the same thing. So it don't make any sense to come and just hear that and nobody do anything.

And the other thing is there's no case to have a pre-K, I don't believe that. One, because if you started early education, the kids live better later on. So as the beginning (indiscernible) a little kid, from my opinion, is when they're little, that's the kids can learn more. Kids in foreign 2nd grade can be like at level M, O reading, writing, understand the reading, what it's about a book. That's my opinion.

If you cut pre-K, so why people's acts -- why kids don't run away? Just answer that question. Why? Why you think? Because nobody fights for him. Nobody fight for the kids for learning, for got the right to get better life. Thank you.

MR. MARKOWITZ:

Thank you very much.

[Applause]

Just so we can have it later, could you please make sure to write down your name? Thanks. And Tricia also so we can backfill it.

TRICIA:

Okay. I forgot to. Do you want me to say who I am.

MR. MARKOWITZ:

No, it's --

With that, and while I'm collecting my thoughts, something I'd been stewing on earlier is one of my kids was lucky enough to be in CTT, and I really think it's a terrific program. However, it's a program for accommodation of kids with special needs and model kids, and it creates confusion and a sense of injustice when I hear it used as a class size reduction strategy, not as a targeted strategy to deal with kids who need extra attention. And that creates a muddle throughout the rest of the school

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population, especially if they read about it as a way to get every deserving kid a shot at smaller class size when actually the qualification to get in is quite different.

Again, thanks for letting me get that off my chest. And thank you all. I'd like to have a nice, big, warm round of applause for the DOE and the presentation team. Thank you very much.

[Applause]

Okay, on to the next order of business. And let me tell you that I want to cruise through this and again invite you all to stay for the working business meeting.