

Candidate Survey for Mayoral Candidates

Please return by Monday, July 8th to info@nyckidspac.org

June 2013

Candidate's full name	Christine Quinn
Staff contact and e-mail	Matt Tepper
Phone number	(917) 438-7063

Governance

Many New York City parents feel disenfranchised by the current system of mayoral control over public education and feel there are few checks and balances. Only 22% of New Yorkers believe that mayoral control should continue in its present form after the state legislature revisits the issue in 2015.

	Yes	No
Would you support changes to the system that would give parents a significant voice in decision-making and/or provide checks and balances to the current system?	Yes	
Which of the following changes to what is now called the Panel for Education Policy (the <i>de facto</i> Board of Education) would you support? Please check as many as you like.	Yes	No
· A directly elected Board of Education		No

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · A reconstituted Board of Education with a majority not appointed by the Mayor 		No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Community Education Councils (CECs) selecting parent representatives to the Board of Education 	Would consider supporting.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Having Board of Education members with set terms, who cannot be fired at will by the mayor 		No, though would consider set terms for PEP members.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The creation of an independent committee to nominate potential Board of Education members, from which the mayor will select the actual members 	Would consider supporting.	
<p>Which of the following measures to ensure that parents and community members have a say in their children's schools would you support? Please check as many as you like.</p>	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Expanding the powers of CECs, including giving them approval authority over school closings and co-locations? 		No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Authorizing 	Yes	

<p>municipal control; i.e., the City Council making law on educational policy, including school closings, etc.?</p>		
<p>· Allowing School Leadership Teams (SLTs) to regain the power to develop school based budgets?</p>	<p>Would consider supporting.</p>	
<p>· Reconstituting school based committees or SLTs to select principals?</p>	<p>I would strongly encourage and value the input of the SLTs and believe they should have an advisory role, but not veto power.</p>	
<p>· Restoring the district structure, with a superintendent who supervises principals and provides access for parents with issues and problems?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	

Do you have other proposals to provide a stronger parent voice and/or checks and balances in school governance?

I believe that giving parents a greater role within the existing system is essential to making the our schools work better. As mayor I will implement multiple reforms to empower parents. I would create a culture of commitment and urgency in the way we interact with families by ensuring that every Parent Coordinator and District Family Advocate is fully trained, supported, and resourced, introducing a CompStat for our Parent 311 hotline to track the amount of time it takes for a family’s issue to get resolved and make that information public so we can all be held accountable, revamping Community Education Councils to function more like Community Boards, which are respected and have a real voice in the city’s land use decisions and expanding the work of the Chancellor’s Parent Advisory Committee so it functions as a review board for certain policy decisions.

I have also proposed ways to make the system easier to navigate. This year, the City Council provided funds to InsideSchools to expand and enhance their high school search tool. Additionally, as mayor, I will create a guide describing the special education programs in the city so that parents can make informed decisions about where to send their children when school choice is an option, and provide parents of special needs children access to the online database that tracks their children’s Individualized

Education Program (IEP) progress.

I will also create Parent University, a multilingual online resource where parents can learn more about the classes their kids are taking and research other relevant subjects, like nutrition and expand the College Readiness Initiative, a way for parents of ninth graders to help their kids prepare for college and careers and also share data with parents to ensure their kids are on the right track.

What is your view of how parents should be involved in educational decision-making? Please be as specific as possible.

I believe that parents should be active participants in their children's educations and, as mayor, I will make this process much easier. Parents are the most important factor in a child's development, yet are often treated as an afterthought. Research has shown over and over again, however, that parental involvement results in higher grades and test scores, better attendance rates and improved behavior. I am committed to enfranchising parents and getting them as involved and active as possible in their children's educations. In addition to the initiatives laid out above, I will work with parents, including those on Community Education Councils and the Chancellor's Parent Advisory Committee on new policies that will further empower parents, because I believe a parent should be as involved as he or she wants to be.

Chancellor

We have had a series of Chancellors who have required a waiver from the NYS Education Department. The Mayor has defended his appointments based on his belief that the public education system needed a business manager.

As to the role of Chancellor, would you support:	Yes	No
· The Chancellor being chosen by Board of Education rather than the mayor?		No
· Selecting only a chancellor who does not		I believe that we need a Chancellor with educational

<p>require a waiver from the state (i.e., an educator)</p>		<p>experience, educational know-how, but I don't want to limit us by ruling people out who have different types of experience.</p>
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In what ways would you change the Chancellor's role, if any?

As mayor, I will select a chancellor who understands all facets of our large education system. He or she will need to have the proven ability to manage a large, complex organization, and to truly engage and empower all of the people invested and involved in our schools: teachers, parents, administrators, and especially students. He or she will need to understand how children learn and be able to direct the Department of Education with this in mind. Additionally, the chancellor will need to know the challenges that teachers and principals face every day, and appreciate how much effort and sacrifice goes into the education process. I will select a good listener who will seek community and parental input, with the flexibility and open-mindedness to adjust to the ever-changing educational landscape and incorporate changes like the Common Core into smooth practice.

Do you have any other proposals for changes in the Chancellor's role?

Please describe some successes you believe mayoral control of education has brought. Please describe some problems you see as well.

I support mayoral control of New York City's schools; it's important for all city agencies to have the buck stop with the mayor. I believe that mayoral control has allowed the Department of Education to cut through politics and move quickly to implement and expand programs that have benefitted the children of our city. Since the mayor took control of our schools, we have opened more Career and Technical Education schools, more early college high schools and the city's first 9-14 school, created the Office for Multiple Pathways to Graduation, and created systems that allow us to follow students' success from high school through CUNY. There has also been an expanded focus on middle schools, which I initiated and Chancellor Walcott has continued.

There are, however, problems with the way things are currently being run. The results of high stakes testing have become far too much of a focus in our system. We can and must do a better job of engaging families. As mayor, I will shift legislative authority over the Department of Education to the City Council, making it easier for city families with concerns about their children's education to go to the legislative body in charge of our schools. I will also actively work with teachers and parents, many

of whom feel ostracized or vilified by the current Administration, and work hard to give everyone a voice in our schools.

Testing

Another issue that parents feel passionately about is the need to reduce standardized testing, test prep, and their being used to evaluate schools, students, and teachers. What is your position on this matter?

Would you support:	Yes	No
· Eliminating the use of test scores as the primary basis for making promotional decisions?	Yes	
· Eliminating or minimizing test being used as the primary criteria on which school grades or progress reports are based (currently, school grades are derived about 85% from test scores)?	Yes	
· Eliminating school progress reports altogether?		No, because I think it's important for parents to have access to information, but I will eliminate the use of a single letter grade.
· Crafting a teacher evaluation system that depends as little as possible on standardized test scores?	Yes	
· Refusing to expand	Yes	

standardized testing into other grades (Pre-K to 2nd)?		
· Pledging not to create new local standardized exams?		No. I will not create new high stakes tests, but I do think there is value to the use of consistent formative assessments and I do not want to close us off from this option.
· Opposing the creation of 3-8 th grade standardized exams in subjects other than ELA, math and science?		No. Again, I do not believe in increasing the number of high stakes tests, but I am supportive of the Common Core, which requires assessments in subjects other than ELA, math, and science.
· Making admissions to all schools based on more holistic factors, and especially Gifted & Talented programs and the specialized high schools?	Yes	
· Encouraging other NYC high schools to join the portfolio/alternative assessment consortium as opposed to basing graduation decisions on the results of the Regents exams?	Yes	
· Developing a non-punitive process by which NYC parents can choose to have their children opt-out of the standardized	Yes	

testing?		
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Would you propose any other policy changes in this area?

This spring, I proposed an overhaul of the City’s gifted and talented admissions system. I proposed the following changes:

Move toward Multiple Measures of Assessing Giftedness
Fill underenrolled district gifted and talented kindergarten classes with students who are recommended by kindergarten teachers across the district. Additionally, fill seats in any grade opened through attrition with students recommended by teachers.

Open additional gifted and talented class sections for students in older grades in established gifted and talented programs and fill those sections through a process that includes multiple measures (teacher recommendations, parent observation, portfolio review, test scores, etc.).

Improve the Timing of the Process and Communication with Families
Reinstate an Office of Gifted and Talented within the Department of Education.

Accelerate the admissions notification timeline so families know if their child is eligible for gifted and talented programs before the deposit deadline at independent and parochial schools. Work toward the longer-term goal of communicating families’ school placements, if applicable, before those deadlines.

Align the application deadlines and notification dates for all public school kindergarten programs (charter, district, dual language, G&T, etc.)

Increase the Number of Gifted and Talented Seats across the City
Increase the number of district program seats available, and ensure that there are at least two full kindergarten sections of gifted and talented classes in every district.

Double the number of K-8 citywide programs so that there are two citywide schools in Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx, three in Manhattan, and one on Staten Island.

Make the City's Gifted and Talented Population More Representative of the Overall Student Population
Do extensive outreach to leaders in communities currently underrepresented in the gifted and talented program through partnerships with community based organizations, religious institutions, medical providers, preschools, and other child care programs.

Allow community members to nominate students to be assessed for gifted and talented programs. This will give those we work with in our outreach efforts concrete next steps to identify students for assessment, alert DOE officials to potentially strong students, and allow DOE to do more targeted outreach to specific families so they can make sure those children are registered for assessment. Make

nomination forms available in a variety of languages both online and in hard copy.

Increase the number of students taking the tests in all underrepresented districts, with the goal of increasing that number in the districts that had the lowest numbers of students tested by at least fivefold.

Determine eligibility for district programs using local norms, where all students scoring in the 90th percentile or higher qualify for programs in their district.

What do you think is the best use, if any, of standardized testing?

Standardized testing is best when used to give schools, teachers, parents, and students concrete, timely information that improves instruction and learning.

Resources and equity

The last few years have seen cuts of about 14% to school budgets. Class sizes have risen, and in the early grades are at the highest level in 14 years. Art, music, science, and afterschool programs have been eliminated from many schools. How would you address these issues? How would you go about guaranteeing the civil rights of all students and providing them with an equitable opportunity to learn, regardless of their background?

More specifically would you:	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that school budgets remain stable and/or increase in the future? 	I can't make promises for future spending without knowing what the city's budget will look like. I have always made education spending a priority, including saving the jobs of 4100 teachers, and will continue to do so as Mayor.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set reduced class size goals to achieve by the end of your first term? 	Yes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comply with the plan the city adopted in 	Yes	

<p>2007, as a response to the Contracts for Excellence state law, which calls for class size reduction in all grades?</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Commit to spending a larger percent of the city budget on reducing class size, and if necessary, raise revenue to fund this? 		<p>While I support the goal of smaller class sizes, I will not commit to specific, targeted tax increases at this time.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Re-evaluate “fair student funding” to discern whether it has provided more equity or, instead, incentives to principals to increase class size and/or get rid of their experienced teachers? 	<p>Yes</p>	

How would you address the need to reduce class size, the top priority of parents on the DOE’s own surveys?

We have to do what we can to reduce class size, recognizing that given the fiscal situation we’re in, we’re not going to be able to do it across the system overnight. We have to start with the youngest children and we have to do a better job planning for school capacity and enrollment. We know how many babies are born in the city every year – it shouldn’t be a shock 5 years later when those babies enroll in kindergarten.

How would you ensure that children are provided with a well-rounded education, including art, music, science, and physical education, and how would you fund this?

As mayor, I would:

1. Revise School Progress Report Methodology and Do Away with Single Letter Grades
 Currently, 85% of a school’s progress report score is based on test results, which only reinforces to schools, teachers, students, and families that test results are paramount in education. I believe it is crucial for families to have as much information and transparency as possible about their children’s education, but I will do away with giving schools an overly simplified single letter grade. Instead, I will create a school report that makes clear how a school is doing in more of the areas that contribute to

school quality, including art and physical education, richness of curriculum, school culture and parent involvement.

Additionally, instead of using progress report grades in making school closure decisions, I will create a red alert system for struggling schools, looking at early indicators like chronic long-term absences and graduation rates, and identify schools that need help well before they're slated to close. Then, I will provide them with intensive support to improve, so every student in every neighborhood has access to a high-quality school.

2. Require Project ARTS Funding be Used for Arts

Because I understand the significance of arts education in schools, I will require Project ARTS funding be used exclusively for arts education. This was the case up until 2007, when the funding was folded into a school's overall budget allowing principals to spend the money on other subject areas. Naturally, given the emphasis on high stakes tests, there has been a drastic reduction in arts programming throughout the city. The Center for Arts Education estimates that only 8 percent of New York City elementary schools offer the four arts forms required by state law – visual arts, music, dance and theatre. Similarly, they estimate 30 percent of all the city's public schools have no certified arts teacher on staff.

3. Restrict High Stakes Testing in Grades K-2

I support a bill sponsored by State Assembly Education Committee Chair Cathy Nolan to ban high stakes standardized testing in grades K-2 and I will make it a priority using the bully pulpit of the Mayor to get this bill passed in both State chambers and signed into law.

4. Expand the Number of Schools Using Alternative Performance Measures

I will expand performance based assessment in more public schools throughout the city. This will include continuing to push the state to increase the number of schools in the New York Performance Standards Consortium and replicating the Outward Bound model of Student-Led Conferences, where students maintain portfolios of their achievements in academics, service, fitness, and the arts, and present them in formal reviews that they themselves lead in front of their teachers and parents. Outward Bound reports that not only do Student-Led Conferences increase investment in learning from students, they increase parental engagement, and schools with average attendance rates of 50% at regular parent-teacher conferences have 100% attendance rates for Student-Led Conferences.

5. Eliminate Stand-Alone Field Testing

In 2012, 488,000 students across New York State took experimental field tests which have no impact on a student's grades and are used exclusively to try out questions for future exams at no cost to the state's contracted testing company Pearson. As mayor, I will continue her fight to push the State Department of Education and Pearson to eliminate these stand-alone field tests.

6. Make Physical Education Available in Every School

As mayor, I will ensure that every student in every school receives physical education (PE) by requiring that all new schools be constructed with either indoor or outdoor physical education space, helping existing schools forge partnerships with community based organizations that provide creative PE options, and adding PE to school progress reports to ensure that these classes are viewed as part of the core curriculum.

How would you go about developing and supporting measures to attract and retain experienced and high-quality teachers?

I will create a Mentor Teacher program where every new teacher in our public school system receives a year of intensive hands-on support from one of our city's best teachers. We'll identify top teachers and offer them the opportunity to leave the classroom temporarily to take on the challenge and responsibility of mentoring our novice teachers. We will enroll them in an elite master class run by CUNY, where they will share best practices and learn techniques for working with colleagues. After two years of service as a Mentor Teacher, they will return to the classroom, ensuring that we aren't taking our best educators away from students on a permanent basis.

Our schools have become increasingly segregated over time. How would you address the goal of increasing diversity in NYC public schools? Please be specific.

I believe there are several steps we could take to immediately to begin the process of making schools less segregated. First, we need to make sure that every family across the city has access to information to allow them to make the best school choices for their children. Allowing students to go to schools with hundreds of different strengths and specialties has the potential to be a real opportunity for all of our children. But we will never have real school choice in New York if there is unequal access to information. As Speaker, I have supported the expansion of InsideSchools's high school search engine, which will make the high school selection process easier for families by giving them a side-by-side comparison of schools that match their needs and interests.

Additionally, as mayor I will continue to pursue changes city's Gifted and Talented program, ensuring that all children across the city have an equal opportunity to these schools and programs. There are gifted, talented and promising children in all neighborhoods in all five boroughs, and the City needs to do a better job of identifying these children and providing the resources to accommodate them. As Speaker, I proposed increasing the number of district program seats available so that there are at least two full kindergarten sections of gifted and talented classes in every district, doubling the number of gifted K-8 citywide programs, and determining eligibility for district programs using local norms.

Further, I have expanded the City's "Respect For All" initiative, which promotes respect for diversity and fosters inclusive learning environments in our public schools. As Speaker I provided funding for the Department of Education to conduct high school anti-bias curriculum workshops, and I will continue to promote this program as mayor.

Any other comments on resources and/or equity?

School facilities

Overcrowding is a chronic and ever-worsening problem in NYC schools. The city has underinvested in school facilities over the last decade, resulting in most of our students attending schools in overcrowded and/or substandard conditions. There are thousands of children on waiting lists for their zoned elementary schools. Mandatory Kindergarten, expanded Pre-K and community schools with wrap-around

services will require even more space. And yet the current capital plan does not have enough new seats to keep up with future enrollment growth, not to mention eliminating existing overcrowding or reducing class size.

Do you support any of the following measures? Please check all that apply.	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · A more ambitious capital plan that would provide the space necessary to eliminate overcrowding and allow for smaller classes, as well as devotes sufficient funds to maintenance and repair. 	As soon as resources are available, I would absolutely prioritize school construction.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Invest a larger percentage of the city’s overall capital spending towards these goals. 	Would consider supporting.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Reform the blue book formula so it more accurately reflects overcrowding and incorporates the need for smaller classes. 	Yes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Commit to providing transparent enrollment projections. 	Yes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Require developers to provide space for schools in overcrowded areas or pay “impact” fees into a fund for school 	Would consider supporting.	

construction.	
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Do you have any other proposals to address overcrowding?

As Speaker I passed the SCHOOLS F.A.C.T. ACT (FACILITY ACCOUNTABILITY CAPACITY TRANSPARENCY), requiring the DOE to provide more accurate and detailed information on school capacity and facilities, allowing for more transparency regarding the types of spaces school buildings contain and allowing parents and school communities to know how the space in their schools is being used. This process will better inform parents of the options available to their children in a particular school and encourage greater communication between DOE and school communities.

Privatization

DOE is spending more than \$4 billion this year on private contracts, which represents the fastest growing part of its budget. More and more educational and support services are being outsourced and the budget for charter schools is approaching \$1 billion.

Would you:	Yes	No
· Reduce the spending on privatization, outsourcing, contracts and consultants?	Yes	
If your answered yes to the above question, how would you do so?	I would reduce the amount spent on consultants and reevaluate contracts like those that for pre-school special education.	
· Prevent the awarding of contracts to companies	Yes	

that have already been shown to have stolen funds or are suspected of corruption?		
If you answered yes to the above question, how would you do so?	I support shifting legislative authority over the Department of Education to the City Council, which will provide greater checks and balances.	
· Support the continued expansion of charter schools?	Yes	
· Support the practice of co-locating charter schools in existing DOE facilities?	Yes, but with significant improvements to the process.	
· Enforce the provisions in state law, which requires co-located charter schools to pay for the services and space that they now currently receive from the DOE for free?		I believe that charter schools are public schools serving public school students and should have access to public school facilities.

How would you work to ameliorate the divide and inequities between the charter school community and those in district public schools?

I support charter schools. Co-locations are an important part of making charter schools work in NYC. That said, you know a system isn't working properly when both the proponents and the opponents say it's not working. As mayor, I would continue co-locations - both charter-district and district-district - but we need to have a consistent transparent process that is the same in every neighborhood, in every building, and for every operator around co-locations. I've seen the negative results of poor colocation planning in my own district. PS11 and the Clinton Middle School for Writers and Artists are great

district schools that existed together well for a long time. But because the DOE didn't properly anticipate the growth of both schools they ultimately outgrew the available space, ended up at odds, and the community was left scrambling to find new space to relocate one of them. Given all the data we have there is no excuse for not better preparing for and responding to these issues.

Any other comments on privatization?

School closings, small schools and online learning

Mayor Bloomberg will have closed more than 150 schools during his administration, and created more than 450 new small schools. Most parents opposed these school closings because they disrupted our children's education and displaced the neediest students elsewhere. There is also discontent with the requirement that all new schools be small; i.e. 400 students or less; which leads to an inefficient use of resources and space, and difficulty in providing students with advanced coursework and a full range of extra-curricular activities. The rapid expansion of online learning has also been among this administration's priorities, replacing the personal contact between student and teacher by delivering course content and instruction through computers and software.

Would you:	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue the Bloomberg-era policy of closing schools and forming new schools, or instead pledge to do more to improve existing schools? 	As mayor, I will do more to improve existing schools.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relax the requirement that all new schools be of a small size? 	Yes – I support creating whatever size school works best for students, although I continue to support small schools, as well.	

<p>· Ensure that students have full, face-to-face, in-person access to teacher, or continue to expand online learning as the alternative?</p>	<p>I believe in exploring blended learning, which combines one-on-one and group instruction by a certified teacher with online learning. I feel strongly that teachers are an integral part of every classroom.</p>
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Other comments on school closures/new schools/online learning?

I believe that closing a school should be a tragic last resort and that we have a responsibility to do everything possible keep a neighborhood school open and thriving. As mayor, I will implement a “red alert” system, whereby struggling schools can be identified early on and supported fully.

Transparency

Even experts at the Independent Budget Office say the DOE’s budget has become less transparent than in the past, making it difficult if not impossible for parents and advocates to learn what funds are being spent on, not to mention give input about possible improvements in spending & priorities. Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) requests are rarely responded to, and never promptly, and there is much data that the DOE refuses to disclose, such as results of surveys and enrollment projections.

Which of the following measures to increase overall transparency would you carry out? Please check all that apply.	Yes	No
<p>· Itemized, fully detailed breakdowns of education budget comparable to other city agencies</p>	<p>Yes</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond to FOILs in a timely and complete fashion 	Yes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an online log which reports on which FOILs have been submitted and when they were responded to, with a link to the results [along the model of the Illinois board of education; see http://www.isbe.state.il.us/foia/default.htm] 	Would consider supporting.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More accurate reporting of class size and overcrowding 	Yes	

Any other suggestions as to how to increase transparency?

First I will create a Deputy Mayor for Education and Children, who will coordinate all of the education- and children related programs that are currently overseen by too many agencies that do not work in concert with one another (DoE, HRA, DoHMH, etc.). Additionally, as Speaker I have worked hard to make government more transparent and easier to navigate. I passed legislation increasing public access to city documents by requiring them to be posted online, and I passed the strongest campaign finance law in the country. I made the Council itself more transparent by live-streaming Council meetings and making the budgets for city agencies more detailed. It is my intention to continue this work as mayor, so that FOIL requests are not as common.

Special education

Under the current special education reform, schools are required to accommodate children with a large variety of special needs in general education or inclusion classes, often resulting in their being placed in extremely large class or with a teacher who is not adequately trained. In fact, principals have been instructed to accommodate children with Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) in general education classes

up to the legal limit (32 children per class in most elementary grades). While parents understand the benefits of inclusion, they worry that sufficient resources and staffing are not being provided either to meet the needs of students with disabilities or the rest of the students in the class.

Would you:	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Promise to release reports twice a year, showing how many students have IEPs that are out of compliance? 	<p>Would consider supporting.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Agree to commission a report, in consultation with Citywide Council on Special Education and the District 75 Citywide Council, by an independent research group on the implementation of the special education reform, including survey results from parents, students, administrators and educators at the school level 	<p>I am firmly committed to making sure that we have a full understanding of special education reform and to being transparent with that information. However, as you have mentioned in a previous question, the DOE currently spends more than \$4B on private contracts. I will consider approaching this issue in the fashion you have suggested, however I am not going to make a firm commitment at this time to hiring another private contractor.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Commission a study, again by an independent expert, analyzing the causes of the increase in the number and percent of students diagnosed with special needs? Such numbers have been on the increase in NYC in the past five years. 	<p>Please see above answer.</p>	

How will you make sure that the needs of students with disabilities are met, that they are provided with the individual attention and smaller classes that they require, and that the funding provided is sufficient and is properly spent to achieve these goals?

We need to move away from a system where families believe that they have no options but to send their children to public schools that don't meet their needs or enroll their children in private school to get the attention and small classes they require. I will examine the results of both rounds of special education reform, engage educators and families in planning next steps, and work with the state to make sure that we have appropriate funding for all of our children.

Estimates are that 25% of special needs students in NYC do not receive their mandated services. How would you ensure that all students with disabilities receive their services promptly?

Parents of general education school students are able to access their child's grades and attendance at the click of a button. Parents of students with disabilities, however, are unable to access key information related to their child's academic progress, such as if they are meeting the benchmarks on their IEPs, or if they are getting their mandated services promptly. As mayor, I will grant parents access to SESIS and empower parents with information to hold schools, teachers and their own child accountable. This information is crucial in determining whether or not a child is getting what he or she needs and is entitled to.

How would your administration deal with the over-representation/identification of students of color in special education?

Our special education classes shouldn't be a dumping ground for students. As mayor, I will require all schools to implement positive behavioral intervention systems, ensuring that students who have behavior challenges get the support they need to thrive academically in general education classes.

I have also proposed an intensive literacy program, to be implemented when I'm mayor. This program will focus on making sure that every student is reading on grade level by third grade, giving typically developing children the fundamental skills they need to be successful in general education throughout their education. I have proposed that we:

1. Improve Teacher Coordination Through All Grades

I will create geographically-based support structures to connect early childhood educators and elementary school principals, ensuring that standards, curricula, assessment, and professional development are aligned and that teachers are collaborating across grade levels to ensure student success. This will help prevent a teacher from blindly handing off a student to his or her new teacher each year and allow that student's educational needs to be addressed more rapidly in the school year. I will also empower teachers and school-based literacy coaches to provide small group interventions to students as soon as teachers diagnose a problem. This is especially important for English Language Learners, special education students, students with an interrupted formal education, and those who are over age and under credited.

2. Make Literacy Instruction a Part of Every Classroom

Under this strategy, schools will incorporate literacy instruction into every class and every subject area including the arts, mathematics, and science, not only creating a reading and writing culture within the school, but also an effective teaching practice that helps prepare students for real world applications. This will be accomplished by prioritizing school-based professional development and a mentor teacher program for all new teachers in the city that ensures teachers in all grade levels are trained to diagnose, assess, and remediate struggling readers and writers.

3. Support Summer and Out of School Time Learning Programs

National studies show that low-income students lose more than two months in reading achievement during the summer months while their middle-class peers make slight gains. To address this, in addition to extending the school day for the highest-needs schools, I will promote partnerships between schools serving low-income students and non-profit organizations to increase literacy rates in the summer, after school, and on weekends.

4. Engage Families

I will promote a Dual-Generation approach to increasing family literacy by connecting parents to adult education classes, as necessary, to increase parents' literacy so they can better support their children in school. I will also create an online Parent University to equip parents with the tools they need to support what their children are learning in school, from information about how to get the most out of reading with their child to how to help their child choose the right books for independent reading. Additionally, she will expand on the parent involvement and college readiness work developed by New Visions for Public Schools, using data tools, workshops, and one-on-one conversations to help parents understand literacy benchmarks, monitor their children's progress, collaborate with teachers and school staff, and access academic enrichment and other resources.

5. Create a New Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education and Children

This new office will oversee all agencies that work directly with children and better coordinate the many services available to kids and their families to keep them fit to learn. Specifically, one of the tasks the office will be to focus on the implementation of my plan to expand the community schools model throughout the city to help tackle barriers to learning that are often linked to poverty, starting with the schools in the city with the highest percentages of students qualifying for free or reduced price lunch.

Other suggestions to improve opportunities for students with disabilities?

Currently, parents of typically developing students are provided with a nearly 500 page directory of New York City's public high schools to help them determine which school their child should apply to. This guidebook reveals information to parents such as class size, courses offered, athletic and extra-curricular activities. However, no such guidebook or directory exists for the city's 55 special needs schools and more than 300 special needs programs. That means parents are forced to play a guessing

game each year on where to send their child. I will create a guidebook for these special education schools and programs, clearly indicating the range of services each offers to help parents make informed decisions about where to send their child. Currently, the only way to find out information about a special needs elementary school is for parents to research each school individually, often requiring in-person visits. When I am mayor, this information would be made available both in print and online where school choice is an option.

Other policies

Cellphone ban

Yes	No
	No

Most parents believe that for safety reasons their children should be allowed to carry cellphones to and from school. Would you continue the official policy of prohibiting students from bringing their cell phones to school?

Privacy protections

The state and the city are currently sharing highly sensitive, personally identifiable student data with a corporation named inBloom Inc., which is storing it on a vulnerable data cloud and making it available to for-profit vendors without parental consent. At the same time, inBloom has stated it will not be held responsible if the data leaks out either in storage or transmission.

Would you agree to:	Yes	No
· Pull NYC student data out of the inBloom cloud as soon as possible?	I will work with the state and direct the DOE to make student privacy a priority in data usage and storage.	
· Pledge not to share personally identifiable student data with <i>any third</i>	I will work with the state and direct the DOE to make student privacy a priority in data usage and storage.	

<i>party</i> without parental consent?	
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School to prison

Many parents and advocates are concerned by the number of police in our schools and the high rate of students who are arrested for minor offenses. What would you do to protect children with minor behavioral issues from being suspended or otherwise forced into the school to prison pipeline?

I believe we need a more sophisticated approach to discipline in our schools. Arresting children - disproportionately black male children - for minor disciplinary infractions has far-reaching effects on many aspects of our society. A student who is subjected to multiple suspensions or arrests is less likely to graduate than his or her peers and could be denied future employment opportunities due to a criminal record. I see an opportunity to break the school-to-prison cycle and will pursue this opportunity as mayor.

As Speaker, I have been able to achieve successful results through a two-pronged approach to increasing safety. First, we passed a law that provides an unprecedented amount of school discipline data. Second, we worked with the Department of Education to change school discipline regulations. As a result, the DOE reported a 36 percent reduction in suspensions citywide this year.

The Council's Student Safety Act (Local Law 6 of 2011) helps keep our children and our school employees safe by exposing the impact of school safety practices. The law requires the DOE to submit data that shows the total number of students in each school that have been subjected to a superintendent or principal's suspension. These reports must include a student's race/ethnicity, gender, and whether the student is receiving special education services or is an English Language Learner.

The Student Safety Act also mandates that the NYPD produce quarterly reports to the Council. These reports detail the number of individuals arrested and/or issued a summons by school safety agents or police officers assigned to the school safety division of the New York City police department.

Last year, we worked closely with advocates throughout the city and with the DOE to get them to make changes to the City's discipline code. As a result of our work, students in grades K-3 can no longer be sentenced to a Superintendent's suspension, an out of school suspension lasting 6-10 days.

Thanks to my efforts and those of parents, community members and my colleagues, the DOE added a new section to the Discipline Code outlining a progressive ladder of support and disciplinary consequences. Now, there's a focus on preventative steps all schools can take to support students, including guidance services and intervention behavioral supports to encourage pro-social student behavior and positive connections to the school community.

As mayor, I will go even further, requiring all schools to use proactive, positive behavioral intervention systems as a first line of action when responding to student behavior. Additionally, she would hold

schools accountable by measuring their success with the approach on a revised school progress report.

Credit recovery

To inflate their graduation rates, some schools have implemented sub-standard credit recovery programs based on online learning or packets of homework that allow students who have failed their courses to graduate on time. How would you address this issue to ensure that receiving a high school diploma actually means that a student is equipped to become a productive citizen?

As Mayor, I will push the state to allow municipalities across New York to raise their legal drop-out age to 18. While this alone will not solve the dropout crisis or increase graduation rates, it will send a powerful message to the city's children that the City wants and expects them to be in school until they graduate, or, at least until they reach legal adulthood.

Moreover, I believe that the City must connect high school graduation with a good paying job not only by increasing the number of jobs in the city but by improving the K-12 job pipeline. I will do this by expanding vocational schools and 6-year High School-Associate Degree programs. Additionally, I will introduce a thoroughly reinvented workforce development system that's driven by real-world demand, has clearly defined metrics and goals, and rewards lasting results. These programs show students the tangible value of completing school.

I will also implement an alert system to notify parents, teachers, administrators and counselors when a middle school student has certain flags that correlate with dropping out such as high rates of absenteeism, suspension or poor grades. These issues alone may not indicate a student is on a path to drop out of school, but when looked at as a whole, it can be easier to identify and address problems sooner.

And I will continue to implement programs with demonstrated effectiveness at engaging parents across the city. I will bring Student-Led Conferences (SLCs), a staple of the City's Outward Bound Schools, to schools across the city. These conferences form the core of student assessment and are led by students, not by teachers. Panelists include parents, community members, working professionals, and educators. Not only do these conferences increase investment in learning from students, they increase parental engagement. Outward Bound reports that schools with average attendance rates of 50% at regular parent-teacher conferences have 100% attendance rates for Student-Led Conferences. Additionally, I have pledged to expand on the 9th Grade Parent Involvement in College Readiness initiative, developed by New Visions for Public Schools. Using data tools and aligned events like the Freshman Academy, schools involved in the initiative help parents understand college readiness benchmarks, monitor their children's progress and support their college and career aspirations, collaborate with teachers and schools staff, and access academic enrichment and other resources to support their children's progress.

Most importantly, though, we have to start young and ensure all students are reading proficiently by the end of third grade and ensure that as students move from "learning to read" to "reading to learn", they

continue to take steps forward so they are college or job ready by the 12th grade.

Open-ended questions

Please summarize your record of achievements in public education as a policymaker.

Chris knows that well-educated and well-prepared kids are the key to New York City's future. That's why she has focused on early childhood education, improving our middle schools, protecting teachers from lay-offs and making it easier for parents to navigate the school bureaucracy.

As Speaker, Chris:

Supporting teachers, principals, and other school professionals

- Saved more than 4,000 teachers from layoffs in the 2011-2012 budget
- Saved 650 paraprofessionals (school aides, parent coordinators) from layoffs in the 2012-2013 budget.
- Secured custodial jobs and prevented reductions to services provided by DOE custodians annually through restorations to custodial services budget.
- Restored \$120 million in classroom funding in FY 2009
- Provided nearly \$80 million to the Teacher's Choice program, which provides funding to educators to purchase instructional materials and classroom supplies.
- Secured \$16 million to offset a health insurance rate increase for child care providers in the Early Learn system in FY 2013.
- Provided mentoring and coaching for approximately 150 assistant principals annually through the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators' School Based Intermediate Supervisors Institute (SBISI) Mentoring Program. Additionally, approximately 20 mentors/coaches receive extensive training and will continue to engage in their own professional development so they can provide support to the school leaders they mentor throughout the year.

Middle Schools

- Convened a Middle School Task Force of educators, academics, advocates and parents that led to the release of a report that was later adapted to become DOE's Blueprint for Middle School Success.
- Secured nearly \$25 million for the lowest performing middle schools to implement the Middle School Task Force's recommendations.
- Partnered with the Department of Education to launch the Middle School Quality Initiative, which provides schools with targeted funding for literacy-focused training and instructional materials, professional development on Common Core-aligned literacy strategies, and technical support to ensure every 8th grader leaves middle school reading on grade level. The MSQI will expand to work with more than 24,000 students in 89 schools this fall.
- Secured \$6.2 million as part of a public private partnership with the Robin Hood Foundation to

launch a public private partnership that will create extended learning time in 20 middle schools next year. Starting this fall, these schools will be able to offer their students an additional ten hours per week of literacy-focused support embedded within an engaging, high-interest extended learning day.

- Provided hands-on STEM education to 35,670 students and professional development in science to 344 teachers in 136 schools throughout the City annually through a partnership with Urban Advantage.

Early Childhood Education

- Helped expand full day pre-Kindergarten in the five boroughs by nearly 10,000 seats.
- Secured State legislation making kindergarten mandatory in NYC, which will draw up to 6,000 additional students each year into critical early childhood programming.
- Established a Childcare Loan Pilot Program to help middle-income parents afford quality center-based care.
- Restored 7,300 child care seats in FY 2013 to help families maintain access to care.
- Provided technical assistance to 47 childcare centers through a partnership with CUNY's Professional Development Institute to improve quality and help programs achieve financial sustainability.

Adult Education

- With council funding, DYCD's adult literacy programs over 5,000 New Yorkers, allowing them to secure jobs, enter postsecondary education or training, or earn a high school equivalency diploma.
- Connected seniors to technology education by funding for OATS and the Senior Planet Exploration Center.
- Launched "Bridge to Tomorrow", a program that identifies New Yorkers in need of a GED at the city's Workforce 1 Centers and connects them with prep courses and other resources. 74% of students who accessed the GED through the program passed the exam, compared to 59.5% statewide.
- Created the GED Alumni Network "You Can Too", to connect GED students and potential students with GED recipients for mentorship and support.
- Organized adult education fairs in Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx that connected hundreds of New Yorkers with GED, GED Prep, ESL and basic literacy courses.

Keeping Parents Involved and Informed

- Partnered with the New York Immigration Coalition on a program that has provided approximately 9,000 consular ID's to immigrant parents, allowing them access to their children's schools.
- Funded Advocates for Children's Jill Chaifetz Education Hotline which serves 2,000-3,000 families each year and helps them navigate school applications, special education issues, and other education questions.
- Worked with the DOE to set up a special parent hotline through 311 and established office hours at borough enrollment centers during which parents could appeal school decisions, in

anticipation of problems with the DOE's introduction of special-ed reforms in Fall 2012.

- Negotiated a chancellor's regulation that provided language access services for New York City parents. \$2.5 million has been allocated annually for ESL and Adult Literacy classes.

Fought for safe and supportive school learning environments

- Created the Respect For All Initiative, one of the strongest anti-bullying programs in the nation that creates clear and standardized systems for reporting, investigating, and addressing bullying, intimidation, and bias-based harassment.
- Passed the Student Safety Act, requiring the Department of Education and NYPD to report on student suspensions, arrests, and other disciplinary actions.
- Successfully advocated for sweeping changes to DOE's Discipline Code, decreasing reliance on suspensions, increasing positive behavioral interventions and restorative justice techniques in order to keep students in the classroom and learning.
- Created an advisory group of LGBT parents that meets directly with the Department of Education

Facilities and Overcrowding

- Pushed for accelerated removal and remediation of PCBs in NYC public schools and successfully negotiated an additional \$30 million to remove these toxic chemicals.
- Passed two beills that increase accountability and transparency of DOE remediation of PCB's in New York City's schools by requiring DOE to notify parents when they are doing testing or removing PCB light fixtures and to report on testing and removal of PCBs.
- Passed the Schools FACT Act requiring the Department of Education to provide more accurate and detailed information on school capacity and facilities.
- Dramatically improved transparency of the DOE capital plan and increased opportunities for City Council and Community Education Council involvement in the capital planning process. SCA now solicits input from NYCC and CECs on the November Proposed Amendment to the 5 year Capital Plan and considers recommendations for inclusion in subsequent amendments.

Supporting Vulnerable Students

- Secured \$150K in funding to launch the New York City Community Learning Schools initiative with the UFT, Children's Aid Society, and others. Six schools were in the initiative in Year 1 and nine more are slated to join in Year 2.
- Provided \$1 million in annual funding to support dropout prevention and intervention programs, resulting in lower rates of suspension, chronic absenteeism and improved ratings of culture and climate.
- Partnered with the DOE to create the English Language Learners Success Initiative Grant, which awarded 110 schools with up to \$100,000 in grants to improve instructional services for English Language Learners.
- Successfully advocated to restore cuts to Student Metrocards, the cost of which could have broken the budgets of over 500 thousand students and working families across the city, especially those who are not earning a living wage.

- Required the DOE to better track students in closing schools, to ensure they are not being lost in the process.
- Required the DOE to track students who are discharged from schools.

Health and Wellness

- Provided funding for the CHAMPS Middle School Sports and Fitness League, an initiative of the New York City Department of Education that promotes student physical activity during the critical years of middle school through before-and after-school sports programs in over 200 middle schools in all five boroughs
- Provided funding for the construction of 2 Edible SchoolYard gardens, to build gardens and kitchen classrooms where children can engage in hands-on learning
- Provided funding for GrowNYC’s Learn It Grow It Eat It, a comprehensive school garden education program at 5 schools in the South Bronx and East Harlem.

Please describe the ways in which, as a public official, you have demonstrated responsiveness to parental concerns or community members in the area of public education?

I have made it a priority throughout my time in the City Council to listen and be responsive to the needs and concerns of my constituents. When New Yorkers come to me with a problem – about overcrowding at schools in my district or not being able to find the funds their child needs to pay tuition and be the first in their family to go to college, I do everything in my power to find a solution.

When parents in my Council district made it clear that we had serious overcrowding problems throughout the district, I made sure that the city purchased 75 Morton Street for educational use. The City recently signed the contract and is moving forward with site selection. I have also gotten the DOE and the School Construction Authority (SCA) to build a brand new building with double the capacity for PS 51 as part of the Studio City rezoning in Hell's Kitchen and I am finalizing negotiations that will have SCA purchase space at the Foundling Hospital for a new elementary school which will open next year and work towards alleviating overcrowding in Greenwich Village.

When the DOE threatened to relocate pre-k seats in Greenwich Village because of overcrowding, parents in my district were understandably upset. I got the DOE to create a task force to find alternative space for the program. Within a week, we found space in a non-DOE building in the neighborhood, ensuring local access to early childhood education for families without exacerbating public school overcrowding.

When it became clear that the Clinton School for Writers and Artists had outgrown the space it shared with PS11, I helped them secure space in former Catholic school building that will serve as their home until their permanent home is finished construction.

When I met a mother earlier this summer who proudly told me that her daughter had recently graduated from high school near the top of her class but was a few thousand dollars short of being able to depart for college in the fall, I was determined to make sure that this young woman had a way to reach her dreams. We met with her and helped her apply for additional scholarships, negotiate with the school, and find employment. I am proud to report that she'll be enrolling at Howard University in just a few

weeks.

I have been passionate about meeting the needs of people across the city as Speaker, and I will continue to make this my first priority as Mayor.

What would be your top educational priorities if elected mayor?

As mayor, my top priorities would be:

Increasing Parent Engagement and Involvement

I will do this by increasing transparency systemwide, tracking and making public data on the amount of time it takes for a family's concerns to be resolved, giving parents information so they know what their children need to prepare for college and careers and keep them on track for success, and creating a new online resource will provide concise, informative video courses on everything from developing school-readiness skills, to making the transition to middle school, to helping children get organized.

Reducing the Emphasis on Testing

With a system that is so reliant on testing, students do not have time to learn all the skills they need to succeed in college and beyond. I will prioritize revising school progress report methodology and do away with single letter grades, requiring Project ARTS funding be used for arts, restricting high stakes testing in grades K-2, expanding the number of schools using alternative performance measures, eliminating stand-alone field testing, and making physical education available in every school.

Creating a Mentor Teacher Program

In order to help ensure the city's classrooms are staffed by the best teachers possible, I will create a new program that will allow some of the city's best educators to leave the classroom for two years and serve as mentors to help train, guide and teach the newest teachers in the city.

Making New York City the Literacy Capital of the World

I will create the most intensive literacy support program in the country that focuses on increasing collaboration, starting strong through an integrated pre-k through 3rd grade approach, incorporating literacy instruction in all subject areas, and providing extra support for those students that need it.

How would your approach differ from the current Mayor, and in what ways would you emulate his policies?

As I noted earlier, I think that the expansion of CTE and early college high schools, as well as the creation of the Office of Multiple Pathways to Graduation and the Middle School Quality Initiative have been great for our city's education system. I will continue to seek out models that effectively educate all of our different students and replicate them in neighborhoods across the city so every child has access to a school that meets his or her needs

As Speaker, I have noticed a growing feeling among parents that they are being kept out of the system. I am also keenly aware that our teachers are working in a city that feels increasingly hostile toward them and the work they do. I would work to remedy both of these situations immediately. *People* are what make a school great and I will prioritize making our school system one where all people – parents, students, teachers, principals – are welcomed, valued, and heard.

Anything else you would like to share?

As Mayor, I will reform New York City’s English Language Learner (ELL) and bilingual education system. I will provide support for students from pre-kindergarten all the way through high school graduation, and will offer additional support for students post-graduation to ensure their continued academic success. Specifically, I will:

- Increase the number of bilingual preschool programs.
- Increase support for ELL high school students
- Allow English Language Learners to use portfolios when applying for selective high schools
- Include ELL resources in non-traditional graduation routes
- Increase wrap-around services to Latino and immigrant students at CUNY
- Require Parent Coordinators to have an action plan in place to ensure that every parent of an ELL student is adequately informed about a child’s educational options and fully enforce the requirement that every school adheres to parent preferences on ELL education

	Yes	No
Would you agree for a member of our group to interview you in person, if we have follow up questions?		

Thank you so much for taking the time to answer our questions.