



## Candidate Survey for City Comptroller's Office

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### Governance

Many New York City parents feel disenfranchised by the current system of mayoral control over public education and that there are few if any checks and balances. Though the City Comptroller may not have a direct influence on whether mayoral control will be changed or renewed in 2015, it is important to know what position he would take in this debate.

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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A directly elected Board of Education</li> </ul>		X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A reconstituted Board of Education with a majority not appointed by the Mayor  <i>[When mayoral control was renewed, I called for a reduction in mayoral appointees to the PEP. My appointee is Patrick Sullivan, often a lone voice of independence who regularly scrutinizes actual contracts.]</i></li> </ul>		X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Education Councils (CECs) selecting parent representatives to the Board of Education</li> </ul>		X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board of Education members with set terms, who cannot be fired at will</li> </ul>	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The creation of an independent committee to nominate potential Board of Education members, from which the mayor will select the actual members</li> </ul>		X
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.	Yes	No

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expanding the powers of CECs, including giving them approval over school closings and co-locations</li> </ul> <p><i>[I have recommended updating and aligning CEC duties so they're relevant within the current system structure, and giving them an advisory role in school closing and co-location decisions.]</i></p>	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Authorizing municipal control; i.e., the City Council with the power to legislate on educational policy, as it does with other city agencies</li> </ul>		X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allowing School Leadership Teams (SLTs) to regain the power to develop school based budgets</li> </ul>	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reconstituting school based committees or SLTs to select principals</li> </ul>		X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restoring the district structure, with a superintendent who supervises principals and provides access for parents with issues and problems</li> </ul>	X	

If you are elected City Comptroller, how will you fight for a stronger parental voice, particularly if the new mayor continues the Bloomberg administration's agenda?

As has been true during my tenure as the Borough President of Manhattan, I will continue to fight for stronger parental input by listening to and working closely with city families to identify and draw attention to the broad range of education issues they care about that impact their children – from class size and school overcrowding, to the importance of school/parent partnerships, to making sure that taxpayer money stays in the classroom instead of going into the pockets of outside consultants. I will continue to recommend reforms on a range of education issues, rooted in the work we do together, in audits, policy reports, press conferences, public hearings and other forums.

I will also continue to strengthen parental voice by creating every opportunity I can for families, the Department of Education and other elected officials to work together to get real results. I have done this successfully as Borough President, convening War Room meetings that have directly led to and influenced the opening of nearly a dozen Manhattan schools.

If you are elected City Comptroller, do you have any ideas or initiatives to put forward to ensure checks and balances in the running of our public schools?

As the chief fiscal watchdog of the City of New York, the Comptroller has a responsibility to ensure that the billions of dollars spent on our public school students each year are not only without waste and fraud, but also are used on programs that have a real effect in the classroom. I will issue performance audits of the Department of Education so that we can identify the programs that work and jettison the ones that don't. I will challenge the Mayor and the DOE on policies that have not been shown to prepare our students for college and career, while also working with the DOE to identify inefficiencies so that more money can be invested in the classroom. I'll also appoint an "IT Czar" who can scrutinize technical contracts that have been most prone to running off the rails. That includes auditing testing and testing-related technology contracts, where there has been ample waste and abuse. All told, I will be a voice for innovative, cost-effective policies that will help our children succeed.

## Testing

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

Would you support:	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eliminate the use of test scores as the primary basis for making promotional decisions</li> </ul>	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eliminate or minimizing test scores as the primary criteria to judge schools (currently, school progress report grades are derived about 85% from test scores)</li> </ul>	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eliminate school progress reports altogether</li> </ul> <p><i>[I'd like to believe that that there is still a way to build an effective system for measuring school, student and teacher performance, in consultation with families and educational professionals.]</i></p>		X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crafting a teacher evaluation system that depends as little as possible on standardized test scores</li> </ul>	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encouraging more NYC high schools to join the portfolio/alternative assessment consortium rather than basing graduation on the results of Regents exams</li> </ul>	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing a non-punitive process by which NYC parents can choose to have their children opt-out of the standardized testing</li> </ul>	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fighting against the test score based accountability even if the new mayor continues it</li> </ul>	X	

If you answered yes to the last question above, how would you help ensure our children, teachers and administrators are not judged based on test scores?

As Manhattan Borough President, I have raised concerns about the over-emphasis on testing and narrowing of curriculum in our schools, particularly given problems we've seen over the years related to the quality and reliability of the NYS exams. We should never use flawed tests to determine outcomes for students, teachers, administrators or schools, and tests should only be one part of a broader range of assessments that help us know what students understand, the skills they have developed and how they are progressing.

As mentioned, as Comptroller I will audit testing and testing-related technology contracts, as there has been ample waste and abuse in that area.

I will also take every opportunity to work with the next administration to address and reform testing and accountability policies and practices that have contributed to obvious imbalances in our classrooms, and unfairly punished city students and educators.

As City Comptroller, what other ideas/initiatives if any would you put forward on the issue of testing?

As noted above, we need a truly independent review of how testing helps or hinders our students and

what can be done to track their performance in a way that does not take away from critical learning time in the classroom. As Comptroller, I will explore different accountability measures used in cities across the country and evaluate pilot programs that will potentially reduce the burden testing creates, while maintaining accountability and transparency.

## 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. As City Comptroller, what would your position be on the following issues?

More specifically would you support:	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>That school budgets remain stable and/or increase in the future</li> </ul>	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring that the city complies with its state mandated plan to reduce class size in all grades</li> </ul>	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring that the city complies with the state law which calls for robust public input, including borough hearings, into the city’s class size reduction plan</li> </ul>	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Re-evaluate “fair student funding” to discern whether it provides real equity or incentives to principals choose between increasing class size and discarding their experienced teachers?</li> </ul>	X	

As City Comptroller, what ideas/initiatives if any would you put forward on issues of class size and funding?

As Borough President, I authored three reports on overcrowding in our schools and brought together parents, the DOE and elected officials to build new schools across the borough.

As Comptroller, I will continue that advocacy by conducting a needs analysis of school capacity/demographic shifts as part of a broader plan to address school overcrowding problems.

In addition, the City must address teacher attrition and focus on developing a culture in schools and the broader public education system that honors and encourages retention of great teachers. The next administration must also examine and consider limiting the practice of creating more and more new, small schools, unless or until it can identify new space and/or create new school buildings to address existing overcrowding problems, and has examined costs associated with having multiple school administrations (as opposed to a single administration) in a building.

Any ideas/initiatives you might offer as City Comptroller on how to help ensure that students are provided with a well-rounded education, including art, music, science, and physical education?

There are a number of things the next administration will need to address in order to restore a more balanced curriculum in city schools, including reforming policies related to the use of physical space in school buildings, accountability and testing practices, and funding.

First, the city will need to examine the impact of Office of Portfolio Management policies and practices

on the range of subjects in which city students are currently able to engage. Converting art, music, science and other dedicated rooms into classrooms to address overcrowding problems and create more space for new schools has never been, and will never be, a sustainable practice.

In addition, the next administration must examine how the current accountability system and high stakes testing have contributed to the narrowing of curriculum in city schools.

The city must also consider the impact of eliminating dedicated funding for the arts in schools. As comptroller, I would conduct an audit to determine which schools are complying with State law and providing meaningful arts education, and which are not.

Our schools have become increasingly segregated over time. As City Comptroller, what ideas/ initiatives if any would you offer to address the goal of increasing diversity in NYC public schools?

First, increasing diversity in schools must be seen and identified by the next administration as a priority in order for it to become a reality. Current DOE “school choice” policies, well intentioned as they may be, have done little to support the goal of increasing diversity throughout the NYC public school system.

The next administration should examine local and national best practices, such as the work of Manhattan’s Community School District 1 and controlled choice policies, and engage stakeholders with expertise in the area of increasing diversity in schools.

Any other comments on how you as City Comptroller might work to improve resources and/or equity in our public schools?

We need a Comptroller who will continue to fight for the promise of the *Campaign for Fiscal Equity* and will not only demand proper funding from Albany, but also work with Comptrollers in cities across the country to press Washington for additional assistance for urban schools.

### 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.

Which if any of the following measures would you support? Please check all that apply.	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A more ambitious capital plan that would provide the space necessary to eliminate overcrowding and allow for smaller classes, as well as sufficient funds to maintenance and repair.</li> </ul>	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest a larger percentage of the city’s overall capital spending towards these goals.</li> </ul>	X	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reform the blue book formula so it more accurately reflects overcrowding and incorporates the need for smaller classes.</li> </ul>	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require transparent enrollment projections.</li> </ul>	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Propose that developers must provide space for schools in overcrowded areas or pay “impact” fees into a fund for school construction.</li> </ul>	X	

As City Comptroller, what ideas/initiatives would you put forward to address school overcrowding?

I would work with the next administration to fully implement recommendations I offered in my time as Manhattan Borough President, through three groundbreaking reports on school overcrowding and ongoing work with parents, the DOE and other elected officials in War Room meetings that I convened to address school overcrowding problems. Among them, the DOE and City should conduct proactive, neighborhood-level planning and revise flawed “Blue Book” formulas. I would continue to call for DCP to provide annual enrollment projections based on appropriate data and public input. And I believe the City Comptroller should conduct a needs analysis of school capacity within goals to reduce class size and overcrowding.

### Privatization

DOE is spending more than \$4 billion this year on private contracts, which represents the fastest growing part of its budget. The budget for charter schools alone is approaching \$1 billion.

Would you support:	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reducing the spending on privatization, outsourcing, contracts and consultants</li> </ul>	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preventing the awarding of contracts to companies that have been shown to have stolen funds or are suspected of corruption</li> </ul>	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Halting the continued expansion of charter schools <i>[There is a place for charter schools, but their expansion cannot come at the expense of district schools.]</i></li> </ul>		X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ceasing the practice of co-locating charter schools in existing DOE facilities <i>[I have supported calls for a moratorium on new co-locations, until such time as a better process can be worked out.]</i></li> </ul>	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requiring that co-located charter schools pay for the services and space that they currently receive from the DOE for free</li> </ul>		X

As City Comptroller, what ideas/initiatives if any would you put forward on the issues of privatization and contracts?

The Comptroller must demand that all City agencies perform the required cost-benefit analysis under the Outsourcing Accountability Act in order to provide full public disclosure regarding decision-making about outside contracting. In addition, I will work with OMB to update “Checkbook NYC” to include user-friendly analysis tools that make the budget decipherable to the average citizen as well as

information from the “Actual Budget” and historical data to allow the public to compare trends over time. Next, I will establish a “Contractors Inspector General” charged with being the lead point person on investigating and auditing outside contracting at City agencies. Lastly, I will have my contract unit involved in the process earlier. By attending pre-bid conferences, my team will be able to flag problematic contracts ahead of time and work with the Department to streamline bidding and increase efficiency. Transparency in budgeting has long been a problem at DOE and nowhere has this been more apparent than in their treatment of outside consultants. I believe that sunlight is the best disinfectant and as Comptroller, I will shine a bright light on these contracts at DOE and elsewhere.

As City Comptroller, what ideas/initiatives would you propose to ameliorate the divide and inequities between charter schools and district public schools?

As a start, the next administration must acknowledge the painful and unnecessary divide between communities, which has been largely fueled by DOE mismanagement. The years of select voices being heard and preferential treatment being given to some schools over others – particularly when it comes to space in public school buildings – must end.

A thorough examination and assessment should be conducted of City DOE policies and practices that have contributed to tensions between schools and communities, including school closings, co-locations and long-term space planning. This should include a look at how the DOE has historically managed hearings related to these policies, and its responsiveness to comments and feedback that parents and other stakeholders have offered. Findings should inform the next administration about ongoing and future DOE policy and practices. Decisions cannot continue to be made in a vacuum. There is tremendous value in community voice, and kids do best when schools and parents are working together.

A thorough assessment should also be conducted of every existing and proposed future school co-location, and determinations made where serious inequities (physical and otherwise) and/or meaningful collaborations exist between schools. This could include focus groups, surveys and/or other conversations with school administrators, teachers, other school-based staff and families regarding their experiences and perceptions of the co-location. The DOE should prioritize buildings with particularly challenging situations for mediation and other interventions aimed at improving relationships between co-located schools.

### 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 oppose school closings because they severely disrupt children’s education and merely displace the neediest students elsewhere. There is also discontent with the DOE’s policy that all new schools are 400 students or less; which leads to an inefficient use of resources and space, and makes it difficult to give students advanced coursework and a full range of extra-curricular activities. The rapid expansion of online learning has also been a priority of this administration, delivering course content and instruction through computers and software.

Would you support:	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focusing on improving existing schools rather than continuing the Bloomberg policy of closing schools and forming new ones</li> </ul>	X	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relaxing the requirement that all new schools be of a small size</li> </ul>	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuing to expand online learning as the alternative to instruction and personal contact from teachers</li> </ul>		X

If you answered yes to any of the above, how would you counter-balance a Mayor with a different agenda?

First, online learning is a critical tool that should be seen as a necessary compliment to teacher-led classroom instruction, *not* as an alternative. I recently issued a report noting that slow Internet speeds significantly hamper our students' ability to take advantage of modern e-learning tools. We need to fix our infrastructure to have truly successful 21<sup>st</sup> century schools.

As for being a counter-weight—the truth is that the Comptroller *always* has disagreements with the Mayor on a whole host of issues. However, while the Comptroller must be fiercely independent and willing to take on City Hall, s/he must also be able to work in cooperation with the DOE to analyze policy, root out waste, and ensure that our students are getting the resources they need. We have a strong Mayor system under our Charter, but that doesn't mean that I won't stand up and fight every day for what I think is in the best interest of our kids.

As City Comptroller, what other ideas/initiatives would you offer, if any, in relation to school closures/new schools/online learning?

Closing schools should always be a last resort -- I have long disagreed with the DOE's policy of shutting school doors without first taking the appropriate steps to ensure it has done everything in its capacity to give schools the supports they need to succeed. The next administration should conduct thorough needs assessments of every school under its purview, to understand the range of challenges each one confronts as well as its strengths. This process should include conversations with school staff, families and stakeholders in the local community. Appropriate supports and resources should be identified for and implemented in each school, based on findings of the needs assessment.

## Transparency

The City Comptroller should take a central role in helping to enhance transparency at the DOE, through audits and reports. Many experts say the DOE's budget has become even less transparent under mayoral control, making it difficult to discern how public funds are spent. Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) requests are rarely responded to in a timely fashion and the DOE refuses to disclose much important data.

Which of the following measures to increase overall transparency would you support? Please check all that apply.	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require that DOE provide itemized, detailed breakdowns of education budget similar to other city agencies</li> </ul>	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respond to FOILs in a timely and complete fashion</li> </ul>	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide an online log which reports on which FOILs have been submitted and</li> </ul>	X	



when they were responded to, with a link to the results [along the model of the Illinois board of education; see <a href="http://www.isbe.state.il.us/foia/default.htm">http://www.isbe.state.il.us/foia/default.htm</a> ]		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require more accurate reporting of class size and overcrowding</li> </ul>	X	

What other initiatives/audits as City Comptroller would your office pursue to increase transparency?

As Borough President, transparency has been a hallmark of my tenure. From opening up the Community Board application process to launching TranspareNYC.org to take the politics out of community grants, I have long sought to make government better by making it more accessible and open to all. See my answers above re: performance audits and targeting outside consultant spending for greater scrutiny. In addition, I will increase transparency in the setting of prevailing wages and publish more information about the investments and actions of our pension system.

### 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 placement in extremely large classes or with teachers 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 to meet the needs of students with disabilities or the rest of the students in the class.

Would you consider:	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Releasing regular reports, showing how many students have IEPs that are out of compliance?</li> </ul>	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commission a study 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.</li> </ul>	X	

As City Comptroller, what other ideas or initiatives, if any, would you put forward in the area of special education reform?

The DOE simply has not provided adequate data or information about the results of its special education reform. City families deserve a real, independent analysis of the results, to date, that includes information about student academic and other outcomes, the nature and range of training teachers have received, capacity building efforts schools have undertaken, challenges schools have encountered and areas where they have found success, and efforts made to ensure that parents have adequate information about and resources related to the reform.

More generally, I would recommend that the next administration examine the ways in which the DOE's failure to fully integrate, align and prioritize the important work of the Division of Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners with other key divisions (e.g., the Office of Portfolio Management), policies (e.g., proposed unzoning of some elementary school districts) and major

educational initiatives (e.g., implementation of the Common Core), may inadvertently compromise the underlying goals of special education reform. I will also ensure that the DOE has/is applying for all eligible reimbursements from the Federal Government. As Borough President, I uncovered the fact that the DOE had failed to even apply for millions of dollars in federal reimbursement for occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech services for special needs students.

## 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.

Do you support:	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pulling NYC student data out of the inBloom cloud as soon as possible?</li> </ul>	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>That the DOE should not share personally identifiable student data with <i>any third party</i> without parental notification and consent?</li> </ul>		X

As City Comptroller, are there any other ideas or initiatives you will propose in the area of protecting student privacy?

I'd like to address my answers above. The DOE should *notify* every parent when their children's data is shared with third parties (even when the data is made anonymous). However, it is critical to the future of our education system that the DOE is able to work with other agencies to research student performance across various metrics and take advantage of the incredible universities of NYC to perform research that can improve student outcomes. Many other municipalities share educational records between city agencies under the "research" exception to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and allow researchers to determine risk factors for dropping out/falling behind. The third party researcher (usually a university) publishes a report **without** personally identifying information, but with conclusions that allow cities to identify characteristics that often lead youth to struggle in school so that the city can tailor services to meet the needs of these youth considered "at risk."

We cannot abandon this critical research. At the same time, we must insist that universities (or any other third parties) have strict privacy protections in place *before* data is turned over for a given study (inBloom has heretofore not provided ample understanding of the sensitivity of student data and the need to establish clear protections). In addition, we must establish penalties for noncompliance.

## 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. As City Comptroller, what ideas/initiatives would you put forward, if any, to help ensure that children with minor behavioral issues are not suspended or otherwise forced into the school to prison pipeline?

Under Mayor Bloomberg, the number of police operating in NYC public schools – known as "School Safety Agents" – has increased by 35 percent to more than 5,240 (by comparison, NYC's public schools have about 3000 guidance counselors). This force alone would be the fifth-largest police force in the nation. This explosion in personnel has been accompanied by a parallel surge in spending on police in schools – up 65 percent since 2002 to more than \$221 million per year. Despite these enormous costs, SSAs receive only 14 weeks of training, compared with six months for police officers in the Academy, leaving them unprepared for many scenarios that may arise in schools.

Just as having safe streets is a building block of the City’s quality of life, so school safety is critically important to enable student learning. At the same time, our schools cannot use “zero tolerance” approaches that hurt children rather than putting them on the pathway to success.

We need to make a major shift in tone in our public schools, particularly where students of color and students with disabilities are disproportionately and involuntarily engaged in the school-to prison pipeline. The next administration should focus on creating healthy school cultures, where students, teachers and parents feel welcome and safe. NYPD should not be – as it has become too often – the default crisis intervention team for students who need support. We must acknowledge and work to address the fact that years of budget cuts have stripped schools bare of critical staff, including social workers, psychologists, guidance counselors, nurses and school aides, who help support and respond to a range of student needs.

### Open-ended questions

In the event your education platform as City Comptroller differs significantly from that of the new mayor, how will you fight for what you believe?

I will always, as I have done in my 20 years of work as an elected official, create every opportunity I can to work collaboratively with all stakeholders, to make change for New Yorkers and improve the education system for city schoolchildren. As has also been true during my career, I will use every tool at my disposal to advocate for and ensure that the concerns and voices of the families I represent are heard.

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

Please see below.

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?

### Reports and Initiatives Focusing Specifically on Parent/School Relationships

Through the course of my service as Manhattan Borough President, my office wrote three reports detailing recommendations to reform and strengthen Community and Citywide Education Councils (CECs) – parent bodies established by State legislators as part of mayoral control law to ensure that parents across the city had a meaningful voice in conversations about education policy decisions impacting their children.

The most recent of these, *A Vote for Change*, emerged out of work done by the 2011 CEC Task Force – an unprecedented coalition of parent leaders from across the five boroughs and elected officials, including Borough Presidents from the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens and the City’s Public Advocate – who came together following the Department of Education botched handling of the 2011 CEC elections.

Over the course of four months, the Task Force developed a set of strong recommendations for strengthening CEC elections, training and support, and ensuring that parents have a more meaningful voice in decisions that impact city schoolchildren, including on issues such as co-locations and school closings. We subsequently worked with the DOE to establish improved timelines for the CEC elections and rid the process of the highly confusing “advisory vote.”

In 2010, my office also launched a virtual town hall – *Your School, Your Voice* -- to capture the voices and hear the priorities of parents and other education stakeholders, as the city transitioned to a new school

chancellor.

Also in 2010, I released a report with detailed stories that schools had shared with my office over the course of a year, about problems that parents across the city have spoken to with regards to inequities in their children's co-located schools. We recommended reforms to poorly conceived and executed DOE school co-location policies and practices, including improved timelines and planning processes, more meaningful community engagement throughout the process, and revision of the DOE's "Blue Book" formula, to more accurately assess and utilize space in school buildings.

### **Reports and work on School Overcrowding**

As Manhattan Borough President, I released three reports addressing the city's chronic and severe school overcrowding problems, detailing recommendations to improve educational conditions for city schoolchildren through improved planning processes, community engagement and reforms to the DOE's "Blue Book." These included a recommendation that DCP provide annual enrollment projections based on appropriate data and public input, and that the City Comptroller conduct a needs analysis of school capacity within goals to reduce class size and overcrowding.

### **Military Recruitment**

As Manhattan Borough President, I successfully secured passage of a Chancellor's regulation strengthening the restrictions on military recruiting in public schools.

### **War Room Meetings**

As Manhattan Borough President I convened war room meetings to bring parents, the DOE and other elected officials around the same table to have real conversations about overcrowding and other space challenges in schools. This truly neighborhood-level planning influenced and resulted in the development of nearly a dozen new schools in Manhattan.

### **Other Important Education Work**

I have been a staunch advocate for early childhood education. Last year, I proposed the use of Social Impact Bonds to fund 1000 more Early Head Start seats for young families in the five boroughs.

I have stood with parents and advocates during every budget season to protect vital early child care and education seats and after school programs that educate, engage, enrich the lives of and keep city children safe.

Alongside parents, I have called on the DOE to fix rather than simply close schools that need support, and outlined steps to improve DOE co-location policies and practices that have unnecessarily divided parents and communities.

I have fought to keep teachers and taxpayer dollars where they belong -- in the classroom -- by shining a light on the DOE's skyrocketing spending on external consultants, and failure to recoup millions of dollars in Federal Medicaid funds.

And I have been proud to have as my appointee to the Panel for Educational Policy, Patrick Sullivan, a Manhattan parent who has served tirelessly, honorably, and with tremendous integrity over the course of many years, and fought for parents and children of every background, in every borough in New York City.

What would be your top educational priorities if elected City Comptroller?

I would continue to fight to ensure that parents have a strong voice in their children's education – both at the school level and in broader education policy conversations that impact their children. This would include a continued focus on school and classroom overcrowding issues which compromise the quality of education city kids receive.

As Manhattan Borough President, I shined a light on wasteful, exorbitant DOE spending on external consultants and the DOE's failure to collect millions of dollars in Federal Medicaid reimbursements that could have benefitted our students. As the City's chief fiscal watchdog, I will continue to work to root out waste and inefficiency at the DOE to make sure that taxpayer money stays in the classroom where it belongs, on programs that really work.

Finally, I would focus on the need to break DOE out of its hardened silo. By coordinating and aligning the work of City agencies dedicated to improving child outcomes, and engaging more stakeholders in the conversation, the City can more effectively identify waste and efficiencies, and leverage its fiscal resources and human capital.

Anything else you would like to share?

I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts and plans for strengthening our education system with NYC Kids PAC and I would be honored to have your endorsement as our next Comptroller.

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