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## Class Size Matters Testimony on Mayoral control

February 10, 2026

My name is Leonie Haimson, and I am the Executive Director of Class Size Matters. Thank you for holding this important hearing today, Chair Dinowitz and members of the Council Education Committee. I would like to highlight and challenge the myths surrounding Mayoral control of our schools, which are often repeated in defense of this governance system.

### Myth #1: Mayoral Control provides more Accountability

One of the pervasive myths surrounding Mayoral control is that it provides accountability by placing all authority and decision-making into the hands of a single elected official. Yet this has never worked in the more than twenty years of this flawed governance system.

The mayor is elected only once every four years, and voters make their choices on many issues in addition to education. And all too often, mayors have acted unilaterally, refusing to listen to the voices of parents, teachers, and affected communities or even adhering to their campaign promises.

When Michael Bloomberg first ran for mayor, he promised to lower class size in the early grades.<sup>1</sup> Yet class sizes increased sharply during the Bloomberg years, especially in the early grades, and by 2013, his last year in office, they had risen to the highest levels in 15 years.<sup>2</sup>

During his administration, the DOE also failed to use state funds meant for smaller classes appropriately, according to three different audits from the state and city comptrollers.<sup>3</sup> When asked what parents could do if they disagreed with his education policies, Bloomberg famously said, “they can boo me at parades.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> His 2002 campaign flyer put it this way: “Studies confirm one of the greatest detriments to learning is an overcrowded classroom ... For students, a loud packed classroom means a greater chance of falling behind. For teachers, [it] means a tougher time teaching and giving students attention they need.” <https://classsizematters.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/bloomberg-campaign-flyer-2001.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nydailynews.com/2013/11/18/new-york-city-class-sizes-average-25-children-after-growing-for-six-years/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://web.osc.state.ny.us/audits/allaudits/093003/093003-h/02s33.pdf> , <https://web.osc.state.ny.us/audits/allaudits/093006/05n3.pdf> , and <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/audit-report-on-the-department-of-educations-administration-of-the-early-grade-class-size-reduction-program/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.city-journal.org/article/grading-mayoral-control>

Similarly, Bill de Blasio also promised to lower class size if elected, yet never followed through.<sup>5</sup>

More recently, mayoral control was extended in 2022 for two years, at the same time as a new state law was passed requiring smaller classes in all grades. These two issues were seen as linked and that if Mayor Adams did not sufficiently comply with the class size law, he would risk him losing mayoral control. Yet following the passage of the class size law, Adams cut school construction by over two billion dollars, and slashed school budgets causing class sizes to increase rather than decrease.<sup>6</sup>

When the issue of Mayoral control arose once more in 2024, class size was again seen as one of the issues that would determine the future of this governance system.<sup>7</sup> For two months starting in December 2023 and January of 2024, the State Education Department held hearings that were attended by hundreds of parents and teachers, with about 95% speaking out in opposition to continuing the current system that had too often led to wasteful spending and damaging policies.<sup>8</sup> The State Education department also released a lengthy report, pointing out many of the flaws in the current system.<sup>9</sup> Yet Governor Hochul insisted that Mayoral control be included in the state budget and renewed for another four years.<sup>10</sup> The Legislature settled for another two.

So here we are again, with the same arguments being made that Mayoral control provides enhanced accountability, with little or no evidence to back that up.

## **Myth #2: Mayoral control is less corrupt**

Another widely repeated myth is that prior to the establishment of Mayoral control, Community School boards were chronically mired in corruption. In reality, the ability of Community School Boards to spend significant funds was eliminated in 1996 –six years before the establishment of Mayoral control. There were no Community School Board financial scandals after that date<sup>11</sup>

More importantly, the amount of money wasted via fraud, waste and corruption under Mayoral control has far exceeded any during the Community School Board days. Under Mayor Bloomberg, the DOE's spending on

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.classsizematters.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Bill-deBlasio.pdf> and <https://nyckidspac.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/NYC-Kids-PAC-Questionnaire-Bill-de-Blasio.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> See Class Size Matters & AQE letter to NYSED, December 2023, <https://classsizematters.org/class-size-matters-aqe-urges-state-education-department-to-require-doe-submit-a-class-size-corrective-action-plan/> and <https://www.nysenate.gov/sites/default/files/admin/structure/media/manage/filefile/a/2024-02/class-size-matters.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Sen. Robert Jackson said, “It’s about accountability and accountability to ensure that the (class size) law is followed. And if not, I would think there is going to be big trouble down the road.” <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/01/11/adams-public-school-class-size-00134894>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.nysed.gov/new-york-city-mayoral-control-hearings>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.nysed.gov/news/2024/state-education-department-releases-report-mayoral-control-new-york-city-schools>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-announces-highlights-fy-2025-budget>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/1996/12/23/nyregion/rare-alliance-gave-crew-more-control-of-schools.html>; <https://www.nytimes.com/1996/12/18/nyregion/scandals-at-the-school-boards-led-to-loss-of-their-powers.html>

outside consultants increased 455%, from \$177 million in 2004 to \$982.3 million in 2012.<sup>12</sup> The ARIS school data system was created, costing more than \$80 million, was rarely used, and was eliminated in 2014.<sup>13</sup> The special education data system called SESIS cost more than \$130 million and was so dysfunctional that it was scrapped, and subsequently replaced by a \$43 million program.<sup>14</sup> An investigation by the City Controller revealed that the DOE had awarded over \$2.7 billion in non-competitive contracts in fiscal year 2016, representing 64% of contract spending, while violating its own rules.<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, massive corruption scandals have occurred one after another under Mayoral control, showing how hundreds of millions of dollars have been stolen since this system was established. A sample of just some these scandals over the last twenty plus years is included in the Appendix to this testimony.

It is strange that when the mayor is in charge of our schools, these sorts of scandals seem to evaporate into the ether, while commentators continue to bewail the minor scandals that afflicted Community School Boards.

### **Myth #3: Universal PreK could not have happened without Mayoral control**

More recently, another claim has been made that the expansion of Universal PreK under Mayor de Blasio could never have happened without mayoral control.<sup>16</sup> In reality, starting in 1997, several years before mayoral control was instituted, Chancellor Rudy Crew greatly expanded PreK with state funding, but did it more care.<sup>17</sup> Intent on not further overcrowding public schools, he aimed at placing about 75% of these classes in Community Based Organizations.<sup>18</sup>

In contrast, the de Blasio administration spent nearly a billion dollars building their own Early Education Centers, some of them near CBOs with available seats. The cost per seat for these DOE pre-K projects ranged from \$25,000 to \$335,000. One project, the renovation of a leased former Dunkin Donuts on the ground floor of a parking garage, cost six million dollars to serve a class of only 18 students.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> <https://gothamist.com/news/the-doe-has-a-1-billion-dollar-consultant-problem>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.nydailynews.com/2014/11/16/city-schools-dumping-95-million-computer-system-for-tracking-student-data/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.chalkbeat.org/newyork/2021/10/8/22716822/sesis-special-education-nyc-schools-experis/>  
<https://www.nydailynews.com/2014/11/16/city-schools-dumping-95-million-computer-system-for-tracking-student-data/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.chalkbeat.org/newyork/2017/8/11/21100769/audit-nyc-issued-2-7-billion-in-noncompetitive-education-contracts-and-often-violates-its-own-rules/> and <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/follow-up-audit-report-on-the-department-of-educations-controls-over-non-competitive-and-limited-competition-contracts-and-contract-related-actions>

<sup>16</sup> This claim has been made by Richard Buery among others, who was Deputy Mayor under de Blasio.  
<https://www.vitalcitynyc.org/articles/why-mamdani-should-embrace-mayoral-control-of-schools>

<sup>17</sup> <https://nyassembly.gov/Reports/Ed/199703> and <https://fiscalspolicy.org/does-new-york-state-have-universal-pre-k>

<sup>18</sup> UPK was originally enacted in 1997 as part of the State Assembly's "LADDER" education reform initiative.

<sup>19</sup> <https://classsizematters.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/PreK-report-12.17.18-final-final.pdf>

The de Blasio administration also pushed thousands of PreK classes into already overcrowded schools, including some schools that had waiting lists for their zoned Kindergarten students. More than half of the 25,000 students who attended pre-K classes in DOE buildings in 2016-2017 were sited in 352 schools that were overutilized, contributing to worse overcrowding for about 236,000 students.<sup>20</sup>

Meanwhile existing CBOS and home-based centers were starved of students, putting them at extreme economic risk and forcing many to close. More than forty CBO directors in Brooklyn and Queens sent letters urging the mayor and school's chancellor to consider the financial impact of siphoning off thousands of their students, to no avail.<sup>21</sup>

Even now, three quarters of the elementary schools without enough space to meet the class sizes in the law offer PreK and 3K classes, and the DOE refuses to allow principals to shift any of these classes to nearby CBOs that continue to have thousands of empty seats – contrary to the recommendations of the Class Size Working Group.<sup>22</sup> We have estimated that siting some of these classes to nearby CBOs could free up as many as 450 classrooms, and save more than a billion dollars in school construction costs and many years of time.<sup>23</sup>

The refusal of DOE to do so is especially unfortunate, as PreK classes in CBOs rate higher in quality on average, according to one of the two rating systems used by DOE, and equal in the other.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, unlike classes sited in public schools, CBOs can provide extended day and extended year programs, extremely valuable to working parents. In a recent survey conducted by the Citizens' Committee for Children, one third of parents said they needed childcare from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.<sup>25</sup>

All this shows that one person rule without community input and checks and balances often leads to irrational and ineffective policies, as we have seen at the federal level as well. This was true in the case of de Blasio's implementation of UPK. Similarly serious faults were inherent in the way that his administration shut out thousands of students with disabilities from the UPreK program, even as they were rapidly expanding it for non-disabled students.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> <https://classsizematters.org/the-impact-of-prek-on-school-overcrowding-in-nyc-lack-of-planning-lack-of-space/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://brooklyneagle.com/80981/universal-pre-k-expansion-threatens-critical-partnership-school-directors-say/>; Some of these letters are here: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1PAhAv4GhCegV3h1tlfjQPGNdFyjQmtYv>. See also <https://www.centrernyc.org/prek-child-care-brief> and <https://www.chalkbeat.org/newyork/2021/3/1/22308265/nyc-prek-contracts-uncertain/> and <https://www.chalkbeat.org/newyork/2025/11/06/mamdani-universal-child-care-plans-balance-speed-and-stability/>

<sup>22</sup> [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gSiFUcuLOjJ49PLCMptkroFjXBHow2b\\_/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gSiFUcuLOjJ49PLCMptkroFjXBHow2b_/view)

<sup>23</sup> <https://classsizematters.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/CSM-letter-to-Commissioner-plus-comments-on-DOE-submitted-class-size-plan-7.28.25.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> <https://classsizematters.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/CSM-Testimony-on-proposed-CBO-closures-2.20.25.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.chalkbeat.org/newyork/2023/5/9/23717726/nyc-3k-prek-preschool-city-council-adams-pay-teachers/> and <https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cccnewyork.org/2023/04/CCC-2023-TYNY-Part-2.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.chalkbeat.org/newyork/2020/1/30/21121121/nearly-2-000-nyc-children-with-disabilities-could-be-stranded-without-pre-k-seats-this-spring/>

## Myth #4: Mayoral Control provides more transparency

There can be no real accountability without transparency, which has been sorely lacking under Mayoral control. Little data or information that should be publicly available is made available by the DOE, and requests are responded to with the command that one must file a Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) request. But even after submitting a FOIL request, one often must wait for a year or more, only for the DOE to respond that the information asked for cannot be found. Indeed, DOE has been reported to be the least responsive of all city agencies to FOILs.<sup>27</sup>

To make things worse, while PEP members are briefed privately by DOE officials on various issues including contracts, they are told not to share any of the information they received in those briefings with members of the public. The PEP members also lack the training in finances and contracting required by state law and are not allowed to see the actual proposed contracts they are voting on.<sup>28</sup> Meanwhile, the PEP Contract Committee, which represented one of the few opportunities for the public to hear from the DOE before the PEP vote, was eliminated in 2024.<sup>29</sup>

The lack of transparency also pervades other critical policy decisions, such as the selection of curriculum. When Mayor Bloomberg took control of our schools, new curriculums in reading and math were imposed on all but 200 elementary schools, without any public discussion, input, or justification. As Bas Braams, a professor of mathematics at New York University, observed at the time:

“The New York City schools system is the size of that of a small country. I find it remarkable that the NYC DOE would select a mandated core curriculum through a process in which there is apparently no proper documentation of the considerations that went into that choice . . . There appears to be no clear record of the Department's priorities, no record of any comparative evaluation of candidate curricula, and no record of the expert testimony and opinion upon which you relied.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> <https://www.chalkbeat.org/newyork/2017/4/18/21099726/requesting-public-records-from-nyc-s-education-department-be-prepared-to-wait-103-days/>

<sup>28</sup> Section 2102-a of the NY Education Law, passed in 2005, requires certain school board members to obtain a minimum of six hours of training on their financial oversight, accountability, and fiduciary responsibilities. The DOE is exempted as long as the Chancellor annually certifies to the State Education Department that the training of PEP members is as rigorous or better. <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/EDN/2102-A> Yet some PEP members have said that they lacked sufficient training, and when in 2022 we FOILED NYSED for a copy of these annual certifications by DOE Chancellors, the State said they had never received any. <https://nypost.com/2016/05/08/school-spending-panel-doe-bullies-us-to-side-with-de-blasio/> See also: <https://nycpublicschoolparents.blogspot.com/2024/11/doe-refuses-to-allow-pep-member-to-see.html>

<sup>29</sup> The last public meeting of the Contract Committee was held on September 23, 2024. There was a single public meeting of the Procurement Committee on February 24, 2025, according to the list at <https://learndoe.org/pep/category/webinar-recordings> .

<sup>30</sup> As quoted in “Children First”: A Short History” in *NYC Schools Under Bloomberg and Klein*, published in 2009, available at <https://3zn338.a2cdn1.secureserver.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/NYC-Schools-Under-Bloomberg-Klein-BOOK.pdf> The Bloomberg-era mandated curriculums, “Everyday Math” and the “Balanced Literacy” approach to reading, supplemented by a program called “Month by Month Phonics”, were widely criticized.

Sadly, this lack of consultation with experts and public discussion has continued to this day. In 2023, the DOE decided that all elementary schools must choose one of three literacy curriculums with all districts mandated to adopt one of them by September 2024.<sup>31</sup> Even the Chancellor’s own Literacy Advisory Council was not consulted as to their selection.<sup>32</sup>

HMH Into Reading, the most widely adopted program, is also the one most often criticized. Teachers, parents, and advocates alike described it as being overly prescriptive, not allowing for differentiated instruction or independent reading, composed primarily of brief reading excerpts in place of short stories or novels, and requiring frequent and time-consuming assessments. It has also been found to feature culturally and racially biased stereotypes.<sup>33</sup>

The only justification or rationale listed for the selection of HMH Into Reading by DOE was a single implementation study, involving only 387 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in three suburban schools, 58% of them white, a very different population from the composition of most students in NYC public schools. They were tested after seven months, and while their scores improved over that period, there was no control group to which this change could be compared.<sup>34</sup>

The lack of research provided when the DOE asks the PEP to approve expensive curriculums, ed tech programs, consultants, and teacher training programs is a pervasive problem that too often also contributes to wasteful spending.

## What should replace Mayoral control?

More than 95% of districts across the country have elected school boards, a system that was adopted centuries ago to insulate schools from the sort of backroom dealmaking that are all too common in politics. Electing a board that is exclusively concerned with running our schools would provide a level of accountability far stronger than the dictatorial system that exists currently.

In recent years, several large urban districts formerly under Mayoral or state control have returned to elected school boards, including Detroit in 2017 and Newark in 2020.<sup>35</sup> In both cases, there is a general

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<sup>31</sup> <https://www.chalkbeat.org/newyork/2024/02/05/nyc-education-department-releases-reading-curriculum-mandate-decisions/>

<sup>32</sup> Personal communication from a member; composition of this Council listed here: <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/learning/subjects/literacy/literacy-advisory-council>

<sup>33</sup> NYU Metro Center found HMH Into Reading to be “culturally destructive in reinforcing stereotypes, centering White or Eurocentric ideas or culture, and offering little guidance for teachers to connect curriculum to students’ lives. HMH’s *Into Reading* communicates harmful messages to students of all backgrounds, especially Black, Indigenous, students of color, LGBTQIA+ students, and students with disabilities <https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/news/impact-nyc-department-educations-new-reading-mandate-children-especially-those-vulnerable-and> ; see also <https://ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/education/2023/09/06/some-public-school-parents-skeptical-of-new-reading-curriculum> and <https://gothamist.com/news/nycs-new-literacy-curriculum-criticized-as-uninteresting-rigid>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.hmhco.com/research/into-reading-implementation-research-study-results-20192020> .

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.freep.com/story/news/education/2016/11/08/detroit-school-board-election/93486614/>; and <https://newark.chalkbeat.org/2020/7/1/21310475/newark-schools-return-local-control>

acknowledgement that school governance has improved. Chicago has also moved towards an elected school board, with the half of its members now elected by voters, and will move to a fully elected board by 2027.<sup>36</sup> As Pauline Lipman, a Professor at the University of Illinois wrote, “There is a new sort of wave of fresh air in the city that’s calling for much more public accountability and democracy.”<sup>37</sup>

There is no reason that New York City should also not have an elected school board. A proposal of how this would be phased in would take some time to develop. Class Size Matters, along with other groups such as the Education Council Consortium, supports the creation of a Commission or Task Force that could develop specific proposals on how an elected school board should be designed, what powers it would have, and how it would be funded.

In the meantime, the simplest change would be to improve the composition of the Panel for Education Policy so that Mayoral appointees no longer hold the majority of seats. An alternative design could feature a Panel composed of six parent representatives directly elected by parents, representing districts of equal size, as well as one member appointed by the Public Advocate, one by the City Council, one appointed by the City Comptroller, and six members appointed by the Mayor. If the Mayor cannot convince two independent members to vote his way, it is most likely because his was not a good idea.

The Chancellor should be required to be an experienced educator and appointed by the Mayor from three candidates nominated by the Panel. The position of a School Inspector General should be created as check on corruption, as well as an Ombudsperson to address and resolve parental complaints and provide recommendations on how DOE policies and practices should be improved.

More input and authority should also be driven to the local level, by empowering Community Education Councils to approve school co-locations and closures, and School Leadership Teams over the selection of principals and school-based budgets.

Finally, the Department of Education should be made subject to city law, as is every other city agency. Currently, the system has no effective checks and balances at the local level. The mayor does not have unlimited control over the New York Police Department or the City Health Department; but he does over our schools. But the Council cannot do this when it comes to our schools. If there is evidence of clear and overt corruption, extreme waste, or abusive policies, the City Council should have a say, a reform known as municipal control.

If any of these recommendations were adopted, they would likely bring more accountability and transparency, improved decision-making, and enhanced public participation to our schools, which would benefit NYC students.

If the Council desires any changes to the current system they will have to advocate for them. The last City Council to take a real position on Mayoral control, to my knowledge, was when Chris Quinn was Speaker, and

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<sup>36</sup> <https://kidsfirstchicago.org/about-the-chicago-board-of-education>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.chicagomaroon.com/article/2019/4/30/state-bill-elected-chicago-school-board-could-soon/>

she advocated for municipal control.<sup>38</sup> A report recommending this change, as well as several other reforms was released by a City Council Working Group in 2009.<sup>39</sup> A resolution along the same lines was introduced in 2012.<sup>40</sup>

We also need significant improvements in the composition of the board and governance of the School Construction Authority, a public agency which is even less accountable than the DOE, but our recommendations regarding this issue must wait for another day.

## Appendix: A sample of corruption scandals under Mayoral control

- 2002-2008: A DOE consultant Ross Lanham stole more than \$3 million for internet wiring. The vendors he hired, which included Verizon and Custom Computer Specialists, were also implicated in this fraud.<sup>41</sup> As a result, FCC excluded NYC from more than \$100 million of E-rate funds for many years.<sup>42</sup>
- 2008: George Raab was hired as the DOE chief financial officer but left after only 11 months. He hired several consultants who were later found to have colluded during the time they worked at DOE to set up an office at a private investment firm, which Raab and two of these consultants joined immediately after resigning from his position at Tweed. Another consultant he hired, William Howatt, was a hypnotherapist, paid \$374,000 while living at his home in Nova Scotia, to help DOE's mid-level managers "improve their ability to adapt to change"<sup>43</sup>
- 2007-2011: Judith Hederman, a high-level DOE official, colluded with the CEO of a company called Future Technology Associates, which was later found to have overcharged DOE for consulting services by \$74 million.<sup>44</sup> Their no-bid contracts were approved and then renewed by the Panel for Education Policy, despite a series of exposes in the Daily News that revealed that the company was

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<sup>38</sup> [https://council.nyc.gov/press/wp-content/uploads/sites/56/2016/12/speaker\\_quinn\\_mayoral\\_control\\_testimony\\_3\\_25\\_09.pdf](https://council.nyc.gov/press/wp-content/uploads/sites/56/2016/12/speaker_quinn_mayoral_control_testimony_3_25_09.pdf)

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.scribd.com/document/11796897/2-6-09-Summary-of-Mayoral-Control-WG-Recs-Final>

<sup>40</sup> <https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=1134060&GUID=8D5764F9-9099-4DB3-8D9A-16CFC10B40CC&Options=&Search=>

<sup>41</sup> <https://nycsci.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/Reports/04-11-Lanham-Rpt.pdf> ; see also <https://ny.chalkbeat.org/2011/4/29/21088133/report-on-thieving-doe-consultant-damning-for-ibm-and-verizon>

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/27/nyregion/new-york-schools-missing-out-on-millions-in-technology-funding-comptroller-says.html> and <https://nycsci.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/Reports/05-11-RaabGeorge-Ltr.pdf>

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/25/nyregion/report-finds-new-york-city-schools-official-misused-time.html>

<sup>44</sup> <https://archive.nytimes.com/query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage-9805EED61F3EF93AA1575AC0A9679D8B63.html>

overcharging the DOE, billing them \$250,000 a year for each of 63 overseas employees, while the company's only known addresses were mail drops in Florida and Brooklyn.<sup>45</sup>

- 2015: Under Mayor de Blasio, the DOE proposed a \$1.1 billion contract to a firm called Custom Computer Specialists for internet wiring, renewable to \$2 billion over nine years, despite the fact that the firm had been involved in the Lanham kick-back scheme just a few years before.<sup>46</sup> After reporters were alerted, the contract was hurriedly renegotiated overnight, with the price cut in half to \$627 million, with no other change in terms, suggesting how inflated it had been in the first place.<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, the Panel for Educational Policy rubberstamped the contract, 10-1, with only the Bronx borough president appointee voting no.<sup>48</sup> Because investigative journalist Juan Gonzalez continued to write about this scandal, City Hall eventually cancelled the contract and forced DOE to rebid it, at a savings of between \$163 million and \$727 million.<sup>49</sup>
- 2021: Eric Goldstein, the head of the DOE Office of School Support Services from 2008 to 2018, was arrested for bribery in return for renewing the contract of a company called Somma that manufactured chicken nuggets, despite the fact that their products had been found to contain pieces of bone and metal and were a serious safety hazard. He later was sentenced to up to 20 years in prison.<sup>50</sup>
- 2022: Chancellor David Banks promoted Mayor Adams' partner, Tracey Collins, as "senior adviser to the deputy chancellor of school leadership," while awarding her a 23% raise to \$221,597 a year.<sup>51</sup> She retired in 2024 amid allegations that she had rarely showed up for work.<sup>52</sup>
- 2022: Terence Banks arranged for his brother, Chancellor Banks, to meet with representatives of a company called 21st Century Education, who had hired Terence to lobby for their program focused

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<sup>45</sup> <https://www.nydailynews.com/2011/09/29/alleged-fraud-by-future-technology-associates-was-like-taking-millions-from-a-baby/>; <https://www.nydailynews.com/2009/07/28/computer-geeks-at-future-technology-associates-earn-more-than-joel-klein-does/> and <https://nycpublicschoolparents.blogspot.com/2020/12/patrick-sullivan-on-does-acquisition-of.html>

<sup>46</sup> <https://nycpublicschoolparents.blogspot.com/2015/02/was-company-due-to-receive-125-billion.html>  
<https://nypost.com/2015/02/24/doe-hiring-tech-firm-linked-to-kickback-scheme/>

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.nydailynews.com/2015/02/24/new-contract-from-citys-department-of-education-to-questionable-technology-firm-does-not-compute/>

<sup>48</sup> The sole PEP member who voted no, Robert Powell, was later "iced off the panel" by Chancellor Farina.  
<https://nypost.com/2016/05/08/school-spending-panel-doe-bullies-us-to-side-with-de-blasio/>

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.nydailynews.com/2015/12/23/gonzalez-big-school-contract-revealed-spurring-nyc-to-seek-new-deal-that-saves-millions/>

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.nydailynews.com/2021/09/29/former-nyc-education-bigwig-arrested-in-school-food-corruption-scandal/>; <https://apnews.com/article/nyc-school-lunch-bribery-trial-chicken-tenders-4bc46291a0ec6306a22edaa6a940312f>; <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edny/pr/former-new-york-city-department-education-ceo-school-support-services-and-three>

<sup>51</sup> <https://nypost.com/2022/10/08/chancellor-banks-and-mayor-adams-hire-each-others-beaus/>

<sup>52</sup> <https://nypost.com/2024/09/28/us-news/nyc-mayor-eric-adams-girlfriend-joined-on-45k-worth-of-trips/>; <https://www.chalkbeat.org/newyork/2024/11/08/eric-adams-partner-tracey-collins-retires-amid-investigations/>

on artificial intelligence, robotics, and automation. The company subsequently received more than \$1.4 million in DOE funds.<sup>53</sup> Chancellor Banks, as well as two Superintendents from the Bronx and Staten Island, subsequently appeared in a video promoting the company, filmed at a 2023 science fair held at Yankee Stadium.<sup>54</sup>

- Terence Banks also lobbied for DOE to purchase the product of a company called Saferwatch, which had received funding to pilot the program in several public schools. It was subsequently reported that Terrence as well as David Banks were under investigation by the federal government for these activities.<sup>55</sup>
- 2023: The sister-in-law of Mayor Adams, Sharon Adams, was hired as “strategic initiative specialist” at the DOE at a salary of a \$150,000, less than a week after her husband, Bernard Adams, the Mayor’s brother, was forced to resign from his job with the city. Her salary was later increased to \$171,241.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> <https://apnews.com/article/new-york-mayor-federal-investigation-banks-b2369819ff7ccd4e630899eb08538bae>

<sup>54</sup> <https://www.thecity.nyc/2025/08/18/banks-brothers-investigation-eric-adams/>

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.thecity.nyc/2024/09/13/philip-banks-saferwatch-schools-eric-adams/>

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.thecity.nyc/2023/06/08/eric-adams-sharon-bernard-city-job/> ; as of 2025, she was still listed in SeeThroughNY and was paid a salary of \$167,223.