

Testimony for the Rockefeller Institute of Government's Hearing on the Foundation Aid Formula

July 16, 2024

Good afternoon.

My name is Dr. Terrain Chambers Reeves.

I am an educator at Edward R. Murrow HS, a 3,600-student high school in Midwood, Brooklyn.

The current Foundation Aid formula was created in 2007 and is broken. Over the past 17 years, while funding has been provided to our schools, it has not kept up with our students' needs. Those needs have evolved and grown exponentially, especially since the beginning of the pandemic. It has not provided adequate funding for our neediest students: children who are homeless, children who require special education services, or children who have experienced trauma.

My school has three full-time social workers, one full-time psychologist, and two part-time psychologists for 3,600 students. We have part-time OT/PT providers and part-time mental health counseling providers for our neediest students.

The city provides funding for 225 children in temporary housing at our school. However, our school has approximately 400 students in temporary housing, many of whom are not included in the city's budgeting for our school.

During my first year in college, I was homeless myself. I experienced abuse and trauma at the hands of my mother while in high school. My guidance counselor took money from her pocket to provide me with food and clothing.

Years later, my colleagues and I are doing the same thing many of our educators and support staff did for us when we were in school: providing supplies due to the lack of funding from the city and state.

WE SHOULD BE ASHAMED! NOTHING HAS CHANGED!

Public schools SHOULD serve children of all abilities and identities. We MUST adequately and equitably fund our public schools to meet the diverse needs of OUR students and ensure their success and OUR shared prosperity. We MUST prioritize public education AND invest in a just and prosperous future for all New Yorkers. We CANNOT continue with this band-aid approach.

Thank you.