

Volume 5

# FROM PANDEMIC TO PROGRESS

A BLUEPRINT FOR LIFTING UP PUBLIC EDUCATION IN NYC IN A POST-COVID AGE

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## **FROM PANDEMIC TO PROGRESS: A BLUEPRINT FOR LIFTING UP PUBLIC EDUCATION IN NYC IN A POST-COVID AGE**

**A 27-point plan to fundamentally transform early childhood education, put two teachers in every K-5 classroom, confront inequities across the system and expand pathways to college or career**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The blow to New York City’s children caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is without precedent. One year ago, all 1.1 million of our public school students were abruptly sent home to learn on screens. Even a well-run transition would have presented enormous challenges, particularly for students with the greatest needs. Instead, the scale of the upheaval in New York City, combined with City Hall’s lack of proactive planning to confront many challenges, has meant that the vast majority of our children have struggled – socially, emotionally, and academically – throughout the year. At the same time, we saw that when school buildings closed, thousands of families and children lost regular access to services, nutrition, and other supports, underscoring the centrality of city schools to our larger safety net system.

New York City, alone among other major school districts in the United States, began the 2020-2021 school year with limited in-person instruction for a small percentage of children. But the enormous physical constraints of educating students safely in a pandemic environment continues to deprive our children of comprehensive, in-person education and comes with costs that cannot yet be fully calculated.

More broadly, the burdens imposed by the pandemic showed just how close to the edge many of our families live. With schools and after-school programs effectively shut down, families have scrambled to find child care and stay connected to work, underscoring the fragile nature of our city's larger child care infrastructure. A year of physical distancing has taken a toll on all children, who need opportunity for socialization and play as part of their development. Meanwhile, our high school students, most of whom have not seen the inside of a classroom in over a year, are facing a future that includes both high unemployment and the highest college tuition rates in history.

**All of this demands bold action by the City of New York to lead us past the challenges of the pandemic, and towards a future that provides every child with the education and opportunities they deserve.**

**Scott Stringer has that plan, which is laid out here in eight parts and includes: making historic investments in early childhood education; a plan to put two teachers in every elementary classroom; confronting the many pre-existing challenges and inequities laid bare by the pandemic; addressing the social and emotional trauma of our children; dramatically expanding after-school and paid internship opportunities; and making CUNY community colleges free.**

For Scott, this is personal. Scott is the father of two children in the public school system, the proud son of a city teacher, and the product of city schools and CUNY himself. For Scott, standing up for public education in New York City is part of his DNA, and across his 30-year career in public service, he has fought to ensure high-quality schools in every neighborhood.

As a state assemblyman, Scott fought for New York City to get the state education aid it deserved. As Manhattan borough president, he created tactical centers — “war rooms”— to help build new schools in overcrowded districts. And as Comptroller, he has continually pushed the Department of Education to build a better, more equitable school system that delivered more for our students, and their teachers and families.

**As mayor, Scott will confront the challenges of COVID and give every student the resources and support they need to become life-long learners. Doing so will require transforming not just one aspect of our educational system, but the entire continuum of what we provide to our children from birth through college or career. This is his plan.**

**Part I: Provide high quality, affordable child care for every family who needs it.**

The first few years of life are critical for every child's development, with eighty percent of brain development [occurring in a child's first three years](#). And yet, as a society, we invest almost nothing in these earliest years. As mayor, Scott will create the largest city-run child care program in America, and make high quality, affordable child care a reality for working families across the city.

**Part II: Build a new paradigm for classroom instruction by putting two teachers in every elementary classroom.**

To give every child, in every classroom, enriched and personalized instruction, Scott will make New York City the first big-city school system to put two teachers in every elementary classroom – bringing our district schools into line with resources commonly available in most private schools as well as at wealthier schools where PTAs often raise funds privately to hire second teachers. To finally address persistent academic disparities in the early years, and more fully address the social and emotional impacts of COVID-19, it is critical that we invest more in classrooms – including in robust teacher training – not bureaucrats.

**Part III: Integrate our schools and diversify our teaching staff.**

The segregation in New York City's school system is morally wrong and educationally unsound. Decades of research point to the benefits – both academic and social – of racially and socioeconomically diverse schools. Scott will require every district to develop a tailored plan to increase diversity, and he will end the Specialized High School Application Test (SHSAT) and instead use the 7<sup>th</sup> grade math and ELA tests (which all students take, unlike the SHSAT) to determine eligibility for specialized high schools.

He will make permanent changes to reduce or eliminate the use of academic screens at the middle school level, reduce the number of high schools that screen students, and launch a first-ever teacher residency program, to recruit, support, and retain a diverse, high-quality workforce of educators.

**Part IV: Raise the number of school social workers to align with national standards and create Fastrack Benefits initiative to connect families to aid.**

COVID-19 has dealt a devastating blow to so many of our families, many of whom were already struggling. Mental health is part of good health, and it is important that our approach to mental health in schools is not limited only to those experiencing a crisis. When mental health professionals are available in schools, it increases the chances students will seek out and accept help when they need it most. As mayor, Scott will grow the number of social workers currently working in schools to align with national standards, while also adding behavioral specialists and restorative justice practitioners to provide direct, integrated, trauma-sensitive support to students experiencing emotional or behavioral crises. At the same time, Scott will drive collaboration between HRA and DOE through a new initiative, Fastrack Benefits, to ensure each school has the capacity to swiftly connect families to benefits for which they are entitled, whether food, housing or cash assistance.

**Part V: Guarantee all students have access to programs and services to which they are entitled.** Scott will ensure that students with disabilities receive the instruction and services to which they are entitled, and address areas of chronic shortages, such as bilingual special education and related services. More schools need to implement bilingual programs that are proven to be successful in improving outcomes for English Language Learners. To better address the barriers to learning for students experiencing homelessness and children living in foster care, Scott will establish an interagency office empowered to cut through bureaucratic red tape and ensure that the most vulnerable students get the support they need when they need it. And Scott will improve digital learning and guarantee that every child has access to free, high-speed internet service at home, as well as robust arts and physical education programming.

**Part VI: Dramatically expand after-school, youth employment, and paid internship opportunities.** The hours between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. are just as vital for student learning and development as the traditional school day, yet too often these opportunities are available only to those with the means to pay. While New York City has made real strides in recent years in expanding after-school opportunities, there are still far too many families who are unable to afford high quality after-school opportunities for their children. With historic levels of federal funding earmarked for afterschool and youth summer programming in the America Rescue Plan Act, New York City is in a position to dramatically build on the progress we've made so far. As mayor, Scott will work to expand universal free high-quality afterschool for children in grades K-8. For older students, the City needs to ensure that every high school student has access to a paid internship that is connected to their academic learning, allowing them to develop their skills and interests, and make informed choices about their futures.

**Part VII: Make CUNY community colleges free and revamp workforce development programs.** COVID-19 has devastated our economy, displacing hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers from their jobs. But we can and must create a stronger, more inclusive economy as we turn the corner on the pandemic. To do so, Scott will push to make CUNY community colleges free for all, guarantee paid internships for all CUNY graduating seniors, dramatically increase our investment in Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Early College High School programs, and strengthen partnerships with private industry to upskill students. Scott also supports efforts at the state level to make CUNY senior colleges free for all.

**Part VIII: Bring transparency to DOE spending and contracting.** Having served as the City Comptroller, Scott has a track record for exposing waste, bureaucratic bloat, and abuse in DOE procurement, contracting and budgeting. As mayor, Scott will bring that same commitment to all unnecessary spending and ensure education dollars are directed where they can have the most impact: classrooms.



The next mayor will be responsible for addressing not just our system's deep-seated inequities, but also the many ways student learning has been disrupted not just by COVID-19, but by years of disinvestment. Scott will be a champion for our schools in Albany, working with coalition partners to finally deliver the aid New York City schools were promised in the Campaign for Fiscal Equity. With increased support from the State, Scott will fully implement Fair Student Funding to ensure that resources are targeted toward schools and who most need them.

At the same time, with an infusion of new federal resources on the way, now is the time to finally bring our learning infrastructure into the 21st century. Scott fundamentally believes that the opportunities created by a high-quality public education are central to a healthy democracy and is committed to including student voice in decisions affecting schools; he will be ready on Day One with a vision that strengthens instruction, confronts persistent gaps, drives equity, provides students and families with the resources they need, and prepares our children to be life-long learners.

## Part I

### **Guarantee high quality, affordable child care for every family who needs it.**

The first few years of life are critical for every child's development, with eighty percent of brain development [occurring in the first three years](#) of a child's life. As a result, the research is clear that investments in early childhood education (ECE) are among the most critical we can make, estimating that every dollar spent on high-quality early childhood education [results in an economic return of over 800%](#). The simple truth, though, is that for far too many New York families, affordable, high-quality early education remains out of reach — especially for infants and toddlers in those most critical years. A lack of capacity in existing child care programs means that only 6% of children under two in New York can be served by

licensed child care centers, and soaring costs average roughly \$21,000 a year per child. And with providers unable to cover expenses at tuition rates that families can afford, those who care for our youngest children remain among the lowest paid professionals in the city – one in four live in poverty. The pandemic has only exacerbated these challenges. Low enrollment and new health and safety measures have created a perfect storm of falling revenue and rising expenses, threatening providers' livelihoods and what little capacity the city has for infants and toddlers. Changing this unequal system will unlock economic benefits by helping parents – especially mothers – get back into the workforce if that is their choice. But it is also a moral imperative. Every child deserves to receive the best care we can offer during their most formative years, no matter their background. And right now, that is not happening.

That is why Scott has proposed a revolutionary “NYC Under 3” plan that would make New York City a national leader in child care through groundbreaking investments in making high-quality early childhood care both affordable and accessible to every New York family. With about \$2 billion in federal stimulus on the way to help stabilize the child care sector, the largest federal investment in care in generations, we now have the opportunity to start laying the groundwork for a universally accessible and equitable system - one that is affordable for families, fairly compensates and honors the work of providers, and gives young children the start they deserve.

### **1. NYC Under 3: Providing high-quality, affordable early childhood education for infants and toddlers**

Scott’s “NYC Under 3” proposal is the first of its kind in the country – and its impact would be far reaching. When fully implemented, the proposal would sharply reduce child care costs for as many as 70,000 working families, triple the number of infants and toddlers in City-backed care, and dramatically expand access to high-quality child care centers in neighborhoods that have become “child care deserts.”

The plan accomplishes these goals by taking concrete steps to improve the affordability, accessibility, and quality of child care offerings by:



- ▶ Enabling more New York families to access care by dramatically increasing the amount of financial assistance available to working families with children under three, and expanding eligibility requirements to serve families who make up to 400% of poverty (around \$100,000 for a family of four).
- ▶ Investing \$500 million over five years to build and repair new child care facilities, and committing additional funds for start-up and expansion grants for child care providers in neighborhoods that lack accessible and affordable options.
- ▶ Supporting Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) so that they can meaningfully invest in training, professional development, and scholarships for ECE staff, and increasing compensation for the workforce, with the aim of ensuring that the dedicated and skilled teachers in community-based child care programs receive the salary parity they deserve with their counterparts in DOE schools.

This unprecedented investment in future generations could be funded by a modest payroll tax on only the top 5% of private employers in the city that have payrolls totaling \$2.5 million or more, leaving New York's small businesses unaffected. The NYC Under 3 Act sponsored by State Senator Jessica Ramos, Assemblymember Latrice Walker and Assemblymember Yuh-Line Niou (A5515 | S2830) would do just that. This proposal would make sure that every New York family can access the promise and opportunity of child care that sets every child up to thrive – unlocking economic benefits that even more [skeptical estimates](#) show will pay for themselves in time.

## Part II

### **Build a new paradigm for classroom instruction by putting two teachers in every elementary classroom**

The transition from early childhood education into elementary school is developmentally critical for children. It is the time when children build and develop core skills for learning in later grades. While City leaders have made historic investments in pre-K and 3K, unless children transition into strong learning environments in elementary school, the academic benefits of pre-K quickly fade. New York City needs to ensure that every elementary classroom is an environment that can support the types of instructional activities most beneficial to children's cognitive, behavioral, and social-emotional development and where students are supported through positive relationships with teachers and peers.

#### **2. Double the ratio of teachers to students by putting two teachers in every elementary classroom**

Scott fully supports the goal of reducing class sizes across all grades, which are the highest in the metropolitan area. Scott also believes that putting two teachers in every elementary classroom is an important long-term goal that will raise the quality of education for every child in the city. At a time when most public school students have spent more than a year struggling through remote learning, adding classroom resources is vital, both in the near- and long-term. We know that many children will need personalized support in the coming years to ensure that they are not permanently hindered in developing fundamental skills of literacy and numeracy as a result of disruptions caused by COVID-19. Well before the pandemic, it was clear that the city's 4<sup>th</sup> graders are significantly behind national standards in reading: just 27 percent are considered proficient or advanced readers.<sup>1</sup> The pandemic will only serve to exacerbate that challenge.

To facilitate student growth in the elementary years, classrooms must be strong learning environments that allow for rigorous curriculum to be provided in ways that are both engaging and developmentally appropriate for children. For example, high quality evidence-based reading instruction in the early elementary grades – with reading intervention at the earliest signs of trouble – is critical. Literacy instruction must be centered on the learning needs of an individual child and provide explicit support in developing the tools of reading, including phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency. Classrooms need to be staffed, organized, and supported in a way that allows for this type of explicit reading instruction, which is best suited for small group work and is beneficial for supporting all students to become proficient readers, but absolutely critical for children with specific learning disabilities. Yet, in a typical elementary classroom of 25 or even 30 students with one teacher, it is very hard not to present a lesson that targets the average student – to teach to the middle – without providing opportunity to provide more individual support to reach all students.

To fundamentally redesign education in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, elementary classrooms should have the staffing capacity to provide focused support for multi-sensory, structured literacy development and to support the types of experiential learning and child-centered instructional practices that are most beneficial for children. Having two teachers in kindergarten through fifth grade – a certified lead teacher and an assistant teacher at minimum in every classroom – will facilitate the types of learning environments needed to improve outcomes for New York City’s children.

Two teachers in every elementary classroom provides teachers with greater flexibility to meet students where they are in their learning across all subjects, address gaps, identify social-emotional challenges, and provide enrichment opportunities. With education at such an unprecedented crossroads, it is critical that the City take bold steps to give every child a chance to succeed.

Such staffing is already a reality for many private schools in our city, and even some

district public schools with affluent PTAs raise private funds to place additional teaching staff in younger grades. But access to educational excellence should not depend on your zip code; and closing the gaps to change that reality is an urgent, generation-defining issue that demands concrete and innovative action.

**Placing two teachers in every elementary school classroom will pay dividends in the near and long-term:**

- ▶ **In the near term, it will allow teachers to offer more personalized support** and meet students where they are academically, while also giving teachers more time to address the social and emotional fall-out suffered during the pandemic.
- ▶ **In the longer term, it will fundamentally raise the quality of instruction** and level the playing field by making sure that every child, in every school, is given the support they need not only to meet proficiency standards in reading and math, but to engage in learning that is both deeper and more purposeful.
- ▶ **Over time, by creating stronger classrooms, other benefits likely to be reaped include better teacher satisfaction and retention**, and lowering the percentage of students in New York City who are now referred into Special Education but might otherwise thrive with properly supported classrooms. Likewise, as teachers are able to tailor lessons to students' abilities, parents desire to enroll their children in Gifted & Talented classrooms may be minimized and, over time, perhaps eliminated when every classroom has the staff needed to challenge every student.

Scott's two teacher proposal will require a significant recruitment and training effort, and would serve as a pathway into the teaching profession, as discussed in greater detail below. It will also require that schools have sufficient supervisory staff, including Assistant Principals, to effectively oversee this new approach to classroom instruction and provide support to the expanded teaching staff.

To ensure a high quality build out, this proposal, as envisioned, would be implemented in phases. At full implementation, all classrooms in grades K-5 would be staffed with a lead classroom teacher as well as an Assistant Teacher, a skilled professional who works alongside the lead teacher and works as a core member of classroom instructional staff. In the first phase, classrooms up through second grade would be staffed with a Teacher Assistant over the course of three years, and older elementary grades would be implemented in phase two. To ensure high quality, the proposal would feature the following:

- ▶ **Principals would be allocated funds to hire an Assistant Teacher to work alongside a fully certified teacher in each elementary classroom, grades K-5.** While technically subordinate to the lead classroom teacher, an Assistant Teacher is a skilled professional and educator, perhaps new to the education field or a paraprofessional or apprentice teacher working towards certification. He or she works alongside the lead teacher in the classroom, providing personalized instruction to students in need, support in lessons, and leading small group learning activities.

An innovative model for this type of dual teaching is found in many private schools that pair a lead teacher with a skilled educator early in their career who works in the classroom full time as an Assistant Teacher. For example, teacher residency programs provide pre-service teachers a year-long apprenticeship to practice their skills by working in a classroom alongside a mentor teacher. This model creates a natural career ladder into and through the teaching profession, providing opportunities for career advancement for the Assistant Teacher, as well as leadership opportunities for the more veteran mentor teacher.

Another model for dual teaching can be seen in classrooms with two certified teachers, although this is more costly. For example, in schools that provide special education students with the opportunity to learn side by side with non-disabled peers, these integrated, “inclusion” classrooms have co-teachers: two trained and certified teachers in the classroom, one as a general education teacher, and the other as the special education teacher. In each of these examples, the staffing structure allows for two professional educators to work with students.

While the core of this proposal imagines both teachers collaborating in the classroom, the ability to adapt its central purpose within individual schools or communities is important. For example, within schools that have physical space to add more smaller classrooms for early elementary grades, principals should be able to use the additional allocation for staffing for that purpose. Especially in areas with excess capacity in DOE pre-K centers or CBO-operated pre-K sites, schools should be given the opportunity to move some pre-K classes out of schools and use the space to create more, smaller classes for elementary grades, if they prefer.

➤ **Teacher teams would be provided additional time for planning and collaboration, as well as instructional support.**

The success of dual teaching strongly depends on both teachers' ability to collaborate, plan, and execute lessons in concert with one another. Equally important is how well teachers are supported in integrating their teaching styles and helped in navigating any challenges that may arise.

Because dual teaching can be a new experience for veteran teachers accustomed to working independently, it is vital that teachers receive additional time to prepare and plan as a team. On-site support of teacher teams is especially important both at the beginning of the school year, and at regular intervals to harmonize styles of teaching or classroom management.

Co-teaching also requires continuous support from an instructional leader. In a smaller elementary school setting, this is typically the principal, although an experienced, well-qualified grade level leader may also be appropriate in some schools. Strong instructional guidance ensures that teacher teams have the support they need to identify challenges and think creatively about approaches to building additional supports into classroom instruction.



- ▶ **DOE would establish guidance for K-5 instruction that emphasizes the value of small group instruction and play-based activities.**

Given the additional flexibility this new staffing structure allows, elementary schools should require that teachers in elementary grades devote attention to differentiated learning, working with small groups of students, and supporting both high achieving pupils and struggling learners through more flexible lesson plans.

Children who are learning to read must have direct, explicit, skills-based instruction, equipping them in the pillars of reading. Reading instruction in small groups allows teachers the ability to identify and intervene at the earliest signs of struggle. Clearly, a blend of whole group learning time as well as rigorous, small group activities is needed. What should be avoided is lectures and worksheets for young children. To encourage greater balance, principals and teacher leaders need additional time to review instructional quality in classrooms.

## Part III

### **Integrate our schools and diversify our teaching staff**

New York City is among the most segregated school systems in the nation. Half of all white students citywide are clustered in just 11 percent of City schools, all among the highest performing in the city. This is not just morally wrong, it is educationally unsound. Decades of research points to the benefits – both academic and social – of racially and socioeconomically diverse schools.<sup>2</sup>We know that students have improved academic outcomes, critical thinking, and creativity when they learn alongside classmates who are different from them, and as mayor, Scott would take a multi-pronged approach to integrating our school system that is centered on bringing students together in the classroom, rather than separating them. His key priorities are:

### **3. Support, fund, and require district-wide and cross-district plans to increase diversity**

Recent efforts at changing the racial and demographic makeup of schools, like those pioneered in District 15 in Brooklyn and District 3 in Manhattan, have provided a glimpse of what can be achieved through innovative, deliberate reform. These efforts have measurably increased diversity by giving admissions preference to low-income, English Language Learners and other groups of students and should be used to inform similar efforts in other districts. Likewise, supporting efforts towards cross-district desegregation and controlled choice can be effective tools in reducing segregation in elementary schools.

While there is no one-size-fits-all solution for every district, as mayor, Scott will require every district to set clear diversity goals, and to develop a concrete plan for reaching those goals within a specific time frame. Schools that are less diverse than their district's demographic population should be a priority focus of district plans. In districts that lack racial diversity due to persistent residential segregation, districts should consider interdistrict plans, and the City should explore adjusting district boundaries to increase the number of diverse districts.

### **4. Make permanent DOE's recent decision to end geographic screens at the high school level, and limit the use of academic screens**

Research shows that students gain improved academic outcomes and critical thinking skills when they learn alongside students who are different from them. Yet by siphoning off and corralling certain students based on their performance on high stakes tests or even using multiple measures like grades or auditions, the DOE actually creates a hierarchy of schools, preventing students from enjoying the benefits of rich learning communities.

The DOE's recent decision to end geographic screens for high schools was the right call and should be made permanent. Likewise, DOE's decision to remove middle school screens in this academic year – given the lack of grades, state test scores and other metrics due to COVID-19 – was a sensible decision that should inform future efforts to permanently phase out middle school screens, or to limit their use and introduce new approaches to enrollment that would proactively encourage integration, as has been suggested by the Center for New York City Affairs. Similarly, academic screens at the high school level should be comprehensively reviewed with the goal of scaling back their use and ensuring a limited and consistent set of admissions criteria.

#### **5. Start Gifted & Talented programs later and broaden access**

Left unresolved by the current administration is any meaningful reform of the city's Gifted & Talented program. While the DOE has rightly chosen to stop subjecting four year olds to a high stakes admissions test – something no other city in the nation does – its solution of interviewing children and then advancing some percentage on to a lottery seems makeshift and haphazard at best.

Scott believes that G&T programs should be deferred until a later age, beginning in fourth grade, when children's abilities can be more fairly judged. Participants should be selected through performance on third grade tests, with the highest performers offered entrance in classes that remain inside their local schools – thereby ensuring that zipcode does not determine access to enriched learning opportunities.

He also believes, however, that putting two teachers in every K-5 classroom could over time obviate the need for G&T classes, since all classes will be equipped to offer individualized attention to all students, including opportunities for enriched learning, as is commonly associated with G&T programs.

#### **6. End the Specialized High School Application Test (SHSAT) and reform the admissions process to high schools more broadly**

When you have an admissions process which last year offered just 10 out of 766 seats at Stuyvesant High School to Black students, you have a broken admissions process.

Over the last three decades, the Black and Hispanic populations have [dropped](#) from 14% to 4% at Stuyvesant, and from 50% to 14% at Brooklyn Tech. That is not acceptable, and as mayor Scott would work to overhaul the admissions process for our specialized high schools by taking the following steps:

- ▶ Scott would push the state Legislature to repeal the Hecht-Calandra Act, to enable the City to make changes at Stuyvesant, Bronx Science, and Brooklyn Tech. But as mayor he would not wait on Albany to make changes. The City already has authority to change admissions at the other five specialized high schools and Scott would pioneer changes there no matter what Albany does.
- ▶ Scott would start by ending the use of the high-stakes SHSAT test to determine eligibility for specialized high schools admissions and instead use the State's 7<sup>th</sup> grade math and ELA tests, which unlike the SHSAT all students take and which actually test students on content taught in classrooms, while exploring the potential of apportioning a percentage of seats to top performers in individual districts and/or schools.

## **7. Provide paid residencies to better prepare new teachers and diversify teaching staffs**

With a mother who taught in New York City schools and two sons in city elementary school, Scott knows firsthand that teachers are highly skilled professionals who need training and expertise to be successful. Just as doctors are required to complete a residency in a hospital setting to learn the profession and develop the skills they need to treat patients, teachers also need time in a classroom setting to hone the skills they need to be impactful. To make that happen, Scott has proposed a landmark teacher residency program – the largest in America – to invest in our students by making an unparalleled investment in our teachers.

Teachers are the most important in-school factor for improving student achievement. Throughout the pandemic we learned just how essential our educators are as they worked to keep children engaged and on track even in the most trying circumstances. Unfortunately, each year, thousands of teachers enter the profession

without receiving adequate preparation to develop the skills and capacities to succeed; as a result, many of these teachers end up leaving their classrooms, or the profession altogether. This takes an enormous toll on schools and classrooms — and especially on students.

Long before the pandemic, New York City struggled to retain teachers in the profession. A [2019 analysis](#) by the Comptroller's Office found that over 40 percent of teachers hired in the 2012-13 school year left the system within five years. This turnover has been a problem for City schools for decades, and is most profound in schools with the highest concentration of poverty, and among teachers of color. With the chaos of the pandemic and the sudden and unexpected challenges thrust on teachers, many express concerns that more teachers than usual will leave the profession in the coming years.

Additionally, roughly 60 percent of teachers in New York City schools are white, while less than 15 percent of the student body is. It is necessary that the City focus on cultivating a teaching workforce that is more representative of the students they teach. Research shows that teachers of color often have higher expectations for success of students of color and are less likely to interpret behavior of Black students as disruptive, potentially resulting in fewer disciplinary responses.

Alternative teacher preparation programs, such as the NYC Teaching Fellows and NYC Men Teach, are often successful at recruiting more teachers of color into the classroom. However, the structure of these programs requires rapid preparation in order to fill immediate vacancies in high need classrooms; this commonly results in low retention. A large-scale residency that similarly seeks to recruit more teachers of color, but centers on preparing them for long-term success through a full-year of paid apprenticeship in the classroom, will go a long way to diversifying the City's teaching workforce. An excellent model of this is the Urban Teacher Residency (UTR) pilot in several Title I schools in New York City where it places residents. A recent evaluation found that UTR-trained teachers had lower attrition by half when compared to other New York City Department of Education high school teachers.<sup>3</sup>

To guard against potentially higher turnover in the coming years, and to build a strong, diverse hiring pipeline into City classrooms across all grades, New York City needs a large-scale teacher residency program. Paired with Scott’s proposal to add a second teacher in elementary classrooms, a teacher residency program would help provide a pathway to train aspiring teachers while ensuring they gain valuable experience working in classrooms alongside a more veteran senior teacher.

The residency program would recruit 1,000 aspiring teachers – leveraging existing pipelines like current paraprofessionals, child care workers, or others – each year to work in the classroom alongside a mentor teacher; as teacher residents, they would be paid a stipend while completing coursework towards certification tuition-free, building the skills that will set them up for impactful and successful careers. Compensation and professional development for mentor teachers for the additional leadership tasks they assume when hosting a resident in their classroom is also necessary. Residents could serve as second teachers in the younger grades, helping to strengthen the teacher pipeline. However, a full residency program must be designed to train and prepare educators to work at all grade levels, and to target areas of most significant need such as English as a New Language, special education, and high school math, for example.

When teachers are set up for success in this way, it has a direct impact on their long-term retention in the profession. When they are not, schools suffer – attrition rates are often highest in school districts with high concentration of poverty and among teachers serving our most vulnerable children. A constant churn of inexperienced teachers is damaging for students, causing disruption and gaps in their learning and leaving them unprepared.

Scott’s plan helps prepare teachers for the profession and reduce turnover by:

- ▶ **Recruiting aspiring teachers of color** by intentionally establishing connections between the DOE and institutions of higher education.



- ▶ **Pairing residents with an accomplished mentor teacher in a high-functioning classroom.** By collaboratively teaching in partnership with an experienced teacher, residents will learn foundational experience along with guidance in developing their teaching practice.
- ▶ **Requiring a full year commitment for residents.** Being immersed in the life of a classroom for a full year exposes teacher candidates to the many complexities of learning and a full cycle of curriculum. Since many new teachers currently receive only a few weeks of in-classroom experience before beginning their jobs, this would transform the readiness and aptitude of the 6,000 new teachers the DOE currently hires each school year.
- ▶ **Providing a stipend for resident teachers to cover living expenses during the year of residency.** This allows them to focus on their training without being forced to take on student debt or juggling a secondary job.
- ▶ **Leveraging and collaborating with the City’s many excellent public and private teacher preparation programs to provide reduced tuition.** A close partnership between DOE and institutions of higher education in developing the residency program will ensure teachers are ready on day one to meet the needs in classrooms.
- ▶ **Targeting the neighborhoods with the highest turnover rates** to become residency sites. These are typically higher-need districts, and focusing on recruiting, preparing, and retaining teachers who reflect the diversity of these communities is critical.
- ▶ **Prioritizing residencies in the most needed content areas** including multilingual learners, special education, high school math, and STEM for all grades.

Our students deserve teachers who are equipped with the skills they need to start their careers ready to hit the ground running. This investment in a key aspect of their training will ensure that New York can recruit – and retain – high quality professionals to the teaching workforce and prepare them to make a difference for our students from their very first day in the classroom.

## **8. Strengthen school leadership and build a principal residency program**

Principals are the central pillars of every great school, and as such must bring an enormous range of managerial skills to the job. Effective principals create a supportive environment for teachers, build safe and productive school climates, facilitate collaboration between a range of school professionals, and ensure that every child gets the services they need – all while tending to myriad, unforeseen challenges that crop up in every school day. That said, the DOE needs to bolster its commitment to developing the next generation of school leaders, in part due to recent increases in principal retirements, and recruitment difficulties during the school years driven by the pandemic.

Scott will build a comprehensive and sustained principal residency program, designed to identify and provide mentorship to promising school leaders from within the ranks of today’s Assistant Principals and frontline teaching staff. Building on the success of current programs like the Advanced Leadership Program for Aspiring Principals (ALPAP) and the Leaders in Education Apprenticeship Program (LEAP), Scott will invest in strengthening school leadership and making sure that the city’s pipeline of future principals is designed to meet the enormous needs facing our school system.

## **Part IV**

### **Address the social and emotional health needs of students with real, on-the-ground professionals in every school**

Every school in New York City should be a supportive environment that encourages students to flourish and grow. When conditions in schools cause students to feel threatened, treated unfairly, or even criminalized, it has a devastating effect on students’ learning and emotional wellness. It has been well-documented that the disciplinary system in schools disproportionately targets students of color, including interactions with school safety agents and NYPD officers in schools.

To address this, Scott has called for removing all armed NYPD officers from patrolling public schools and to refocus the efforts of safety agents in schools to protecting school grounds rather than responding to student behavior. Instead, we need to dramatically increase the ranks of full-time mental health professionals in city schools, and ensure that their caseloads are limited to 250 or fewer students, in line with national standards.

Scott believes schools need better alternatives to exclusionary disciplinary practices with investments towards restorative and transformative justice practices, as well as whole-staff training in culturally responsive and sustaining education practices. Scott would work to ensure every school is able to support students experiencing emotional or behavioral crises rather than perpetuating the school-to-prison pipeline.

As mayor, Scott will expand the ranks of social workers and other mental health professionals to ensure schools have the human resources to both reduce suspensions and provide direct, integrated, trauma-informed support to students experiencing emotional or behavioral crises. At the same time, Scott will make sure every school has a direct liaison to the city's Human Resources Administration to swiftly connect families to benefits for which they are available, whether food, housing or cash assistance.

## **9. Expand the ranks of social workers and other mental health professionals**

Many students whose lives and families have been impacted by COVID-19 have experienced serious emotional trauma, particularly those who had significant mental health needs prior to the pandemic disruption. As the City emerges from the effects of this time of crisis, it will be more important than ever to ensure that robust mental health services are in place across all schools, and that there is a rich continuum of supports available specifically for students with significant mental health needs. And yet most schools across the City either do not have a dedicated full-time social worker, or the social worker on staff has a caseload that far exceeds professional recommendations.

That is why Scott has called repeatedly for the City to increase investments in on-the-ground mental health professionals who can provide direct, integrated, trauma-sensitive support to students experiencing emotional or behavioral crises. Specifically, at a minimum every school must be staffed with full-time social workers with caseloads of no more than 1:250 students. To achieve this, New York City would need to triple the number of social workers currently working in schools. When classes resume regular, in-person instruction, it is especially critical that schools avoid traumatic interventions from EMS or NYPD – which are currently disproportionately called upon to respond to children in emotional distress who are Black or Latinx. Having a full staff of mental health professionals, including social workers and behavioral specialists will help ensure schools are able to provide trauma-informed care.

As students have witnessed the devastating impact of police brutality on communities of color, many are awakening to their own raw emotions about social injustice and abusive and discriminatory practices of law enforcement. To best support students in the midst of social upheaval, schools must be safe places, where no student will be unfairly targeted by police. To that end, the DOE should begin robust training for school safety staff in culturally responsive and sustaining education (CR-SE). This can allow for a more successful realignment of the role of safety agents, to better reflect the values of safe and supportive school communities. Teachers should also be given clear examples of how to incorporate CR-SE and social emotional learning in lessons this fall, whether in classrooms or virtually.

Additionally, a school Mental Health Continuum would establish a team of clinicians who are able to respond to students in crisis, and provide direct mental health support to students and families as needed. This team of mental health professionals would coordinate with schools to enhance their capacity to support students in need of the most intensive supports. It has never been more critical to provide integrated investments in school mental health and to avoid exacerbating the damage and trauma from the COVID-19 public health and economic crises.

## **10. Invest in prevention and identification of adolescent depression and responses to early warning signs of self-harm and suicide**

Adolescents are perhaps the least recognized heroes of the pandemic. Asked to sacrifice their school routines, after school activities, sports, socializing – teenagers have been stripped of every activity that define the high school years in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19. As the pandemic drags on into a second year, the enormous toll this sacrifice has had on the City's youth can no longer be ignored. Pre-pandemic, suicide was the second leading cause of death among youth ages 15 to 19, with suicides on the rise among Black teens. With ongoing months of isolation, loss and disconnection from school communities, the Chancellor has indicated that suicide rates are increasing among City youth. School closures, remote learning, an unequal digital divide, and increases in domestic violence mean that our children need support and counseling to be universally available in our public schools.

As Mayor, Scott would ensure schools are prepared to support students with serious mental health needs through the following:

- **Significantly expand school-based mental health services.** Mental health is part of good health, period. It is important that our approach to mental health is not limited only to those experiencing a crisis, and part of this is normalizing access to mental health care in school. When mental health professionals are available in schools, it increases the chances students will seek out and accept help when they need it most.
- **Staff every public school with full-time mental health professionals, including social workers and school psychologists, to achieve the national-standard ratios of 1:250.** Scott will ensure schools are equipped with professionals who are dedicated and trained to guide behavioral interventions, respond to crisis events in a trauma-informed way, and work one-on-one with students as needed.

- ▶ **Expand small social emotional learning advisories in all middle and high schools.** Students who have a trusted group of peers and at least one adult to confide in have greater academic outcomes, as well as more positive social attitudes and behaviors. Many smaller schools already offer an advisory program and understand the benefits of a small group dynamic. These should be expanded to every middle and high school in the city.
- ▶ **Regular training for school-based staff and students** about early warning signs of self-harm and suicide, and who to talk to about a student in need of help.

## **11. Create “Fastrack Benefits” to help families connect to services within the trusted environment of their child’s school**

Often, families who qualify for various public benefits do not apply due to a language barrier, uncertainty about required documentation or eligibility requirements, or because the process is complex and uncertain. And yet, many public benefits, like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or the Earned Income Tax Credit provide direct assistance to families that can make a difference in supporting children in school. By bringing public benefits systems into school buildings, and proactively encouraging and supporting families to apply, parents can access support they need and get help in the process from a trusted individual within the school community.

In schools that already have an embedded community-based partnership, there likely exists a framework for referring families in need to a benefits caseworker who can support them through the application process right from their child’s school. But many schools do not yet have the capacity to guide families through the benefits application process. As mayor, Scott will take a multi-agency approach to ensure greater collaboration and partnership between city agencies to connect a family to needed resources. Fastrack Benefits, Scott’s newly proposed initiative, would be an interagency collaboration between HRA and DOE with a shared budget and reporting structure to ensure greater efficiency and outcomes for families navigating the City’s benefits systems.



## Part V

### **Guarantee all students have access to programs and services to which they are entitled**

In New York City, students with disabilities make up approximately 20 percent of the student body and typically have far lower outcomes than their general education peers across multiple categories, with associated long-term social and economic effects. Students with disabilities are disproportionately more likely to experience exclusionary discipline than non-disabled peers. Likewise, graduation rates among students with disabilities hover around 53 percent, compared with over 83 percent among non-disabled peers. While graduation rates have made clear and steady improvement over the years, the significant gap between disabled and non-disabled students persists, and those students with disabilities who do graduate often do not receive a standard Regents diploma.

Over 30,000 students did not receive all education services according to their IEP last year. The New York State Education Department has outlined the City's systemic and ongoing failures in meeting requirements for special education, with many schools lacking the appropriate programs and staff to provide services.

In addition to the recent history of problems with the special education system, closing school buildings due to COVID worsened the education prospects for children with disabilities, many of whom have not been able to access remote instruction or the necessary services they receive. For these reasons, many have fallen further behind or lost skills or progress they had been making when in school.

As mayor, Scott will work with educators, parents, students, and community providers to provide an inclusive, equitable, and excellent education for all students. This must begin with focusing greater attention on improving educational outcomes for students with disabilities. An annual assessment of what is working and what is

not will help clarify the problems associated with service delivery; and a clear set of benchmarks will help guide improvements to ensure students are receiving the education that is their constitutional right.

## 12. Better serve students with disabilities

In addition to increased staff in elementary classroom and improved teacher preparation as described in the first section of this report, Scott will:

- ▶ **Address chronic shortages in special education**, particularly in bilingual special education evaluations and classes by incentivizing dual certification, and in providing students with mandated services.
- ▶ **Expand successful programs, such as ASD NEST and Horizon**, serving children with autism, and ensure programs are placed in high-needs schools and historically marginalized communities.
- ▶ **End the contentious and litigious nature of special education in the City.** Nationwide, 45 percent of all special education legal hearings filed come from New York City. We must prioritize a systemwide culture shift to develop and implement IEPs in a collaborative way with families.
- ▶ **Work to ensure students have access to individualized supports**, even if those services are not immediately available in their school. As recommended by Advocates for Children and others, one approach could be to enlist a corps of specialized staff, with expertise in behavioral and literacy supports, that can be deployed to provide individualized services in schools that have limited options.

## 13. Expand programming for English language learners

Approximately one in eight students in New York City are learning English as a new language. When offered appropriate and effective support, including bilingual programs, this group of students typically performs very well academically. Yet, too few schools are staffed and resourced in ways that allow them to offer such programs, and some estimate that just 18 percent of English Language Learners

(ELLs) are currently enrolled in such bilingual programs at school. As mayor, Scott would work to expand the most effective dual-language and bilingual programs in neighborhoods and schools with high populations of English language learners. As discussed above, Scott has a robust proposal to create a teacher residency program to recruit and train educators to work in areas of the most significant need, including teaching English as a New Language.

Additionally, as Mayor, Scott would unlock the potential of Transfer Schools to support older, multi-lingual youth. Estimates indicate that a significant portion of out-of-school-out-of-work youth are recently arrived immigrant youth ages 14-21. These immigrant youth are especially at risk of not graduating high school because they are less likely to receive adequate language proficiency services in the time needed to meet graduation requirements. It is especially critical then, that they are quickly connected to transfer high schools with robust programming to support older immigrant youth. Some transfer schools have an exceptionally strong track record in supporting this group of students. As mayor, Scott would work to expand successful transfer school models that integrate language development along with project-based and work-based learning.

#### **14. Preserve and expand Community Schools**

As we come out of the pandemic, additional support will be needed in all schools to help ensure students have the time and resources to get back on track. Extended day programming, social-emotional and mental health interventions, and health and wellness offerings will be critical. When schools have an embedded community-based organization within the building, they are better able to offer aligned programming and wrap-around services that support positive student outcomes. New York City's Community Schools initiative already has a proven track record and sets an important precedent.

The New York City Community Schools initiative has been a nationwide model for this approach to providing in-school supports and services. An impact [study](#) by

RAND found that DOE Community Schools improved graduation rates, attendance, and math scores compared with similar non-Community Schools. Other [research](#) has found evidence of economic impact as well: every dollar invested in Community School school models yields as much as \$11.60 in economic benefits. In New York City, Community Schools typically have a higher concentration of students in poverty.

As mayor, Scott would ensure all current 267 Community Schools are funded to maintain their contract with a community-based organization, and would seek to expand that number through federal, state, and city revenues.

### **15. Establish interagency coordination to support students experiencing homelessness and those living in foster care**

More than 111,000 students in New York City experience homelessness throughout the school year, either living in unstable, temporary arrangements or in homeless shelters. These students comprise an astonishing 10 percent of our school system, and yet there is a disturbing lack of coordinated effort in supporting their success in school. Because of this lack of collaboration, academic outcomes for students experiencing homelessness fall far behind students who are permanently-housed. Many are rightfully concerned that student disengagement as a result of the switch to remote learning has been especially problematic for these students, who often lack reliable internet access or adequate technology to maintain connection with school.

As Comptroller, Scott has repeatedly scrutinized how the City's policies overlook the specific and numerous barriers faced by students in temporary housing. A [2018 audit](#) by the Comptroller found significant gaps in how the Department of Education supports regular attendance for students who live in shelters. It found that, despite established regulations to reduce chronic absenteeism, in 75 percent of the student absences sampled, there was no evidence that anyone from the Department of Education attempted outreach to families to provide follow-up or support.

To begin to address the myriad challenges these young people face in navigating their days, the City needs bold interagency collaboration and effective mediation and support in both schools and shelters. Currently, there is no one individual with proper authority to ensure support across multiple agencies is available to students. Additionally, for the more than 6,000 students in foster care, there is currently no one at DOE solely dedicated to supporting these students, among the most vulnerable and at-risk in the City.

As Mayor, Scott would continue to [advocate](#) for the most vulnerable students and:

- **Establish an interagency position empowered to cut through bureaucratic red tape and force decision-making so that students experiencing homelessness get what they need when they need it**, and that schools and shelter providers have the mechanisms in place to ensure students are able to remain engaged and learning.
- **Ensure dedicated staff to establish best practices in supporting students in foster care**, by collecting and sharing innovative practices in schools that have been most successful serving these students and families.

## **16. Ensure every child receives high-quality arts, physical and health education, and access to athletics**

When Scott became Comptroller, he [reviewed every single school across the City](#) and found that far too many NYC children were attending schools without sufficient arts and physical education. Yet the [research](#) is clear that students who receive high-quality arts instruction perform better across their academic careers. Likewise, health and physical education promotes academic success and is critical for long-term physical health.

Yet as of 2014, nearly a third of NYC schools did not have a full-time certified arts teacher and 20% did not have any certified art teachers at all. Similarly, almost one-third of NYC schools lacked a full-time certified physical education teacher and a

dedicated space they can use for physical fitness — particularly alarming facts when over 13 percent of NYC students can be classified as obese. These gaps were largely concentrated in under-resourced schools, many of which predominantly serve students of color. These are inequalities that are not just unacceptable — they are violations of State education law.

Scott has been a longstanding champion of the fight to erase these gaps and get our children the arts and physical education they deserve, and he was instrumental in pushing the Department of Education to make an unprecedented [\\$23 million investment](#) in arts education during the 2014-2015 school year. As Mayor, he will continue making sure that both arts and physical education are treated as the critical components of a well-rounded education that they are — not as any sort of luxury or add-on.

Scott's plan would act to correct these disparities by:

- **Creating separate budget lines for arts and physical education to ensure the specific attention these areas require**, and focus efforts to support schools that lack the basic staffing and facilities necessary and bring them up to standards.
- **Encourage schools to offer 60 minutes of physical education and/or recess** in accordance with recent [recommendations](#) by the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- **Pursuing innovative partnerships with New York's arts and cultural organizations** to provide enrichment opportunities for students, and collaborative arrangements with local organizations to leverage existing physical recreation space for schools that currently lack their own.
- **Bringing equity to funding for Public School Athletic League (PSAL) funding** and ensure all school communities have access to citywide competitive sports programming.



Every child, in every neighborhood in the city, deserves to attend a school that can offer them a complete educational experience – arts and physical education included. Scott’s proposals recognize that these essential components help our students in countless ways – setting them up for richer, healthier lives. Acting decisively to correct the current imbalance is not just about paint and dodge balls, or about the legal obligations at play. It is about ensuring that our education system lives up to the ideals of inclusivity and equity that are at its heart.

**17. Improve digital learning and guarantee that every child has access to free, high-speed internet service at home and establish a true 1:1 device policy**

The sad truth is that New York City is a technological backwater when it comes to education. It is time for New York City to embrace the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the advantages technology can bring to the classroom. The pandemic has revealed the scope of inequitable access to technology that affects low-income families, and an educational policy that ensures each child has a device appropriate to their grade level is paramount. With federal funding in the America Rescue Plan Act dedicated to purchase technology for schools, New York City is well-positioned to provide necessary devices for all students. Access to affordable, high-speed internet must be universal.

But digital access is not just about solving a temporary problem caused by the pandemic. Our students need to be prepared with a 21<sup>st</sup> century education. We must use the experience we have had with remote learning to inform future digital educational policy. Specifically, the Department of Education should create guidance on best practices in curriculum, instruction, and assessment in the digital landscape. Remote learning may now be a regular part of schooling for years to come, and we must ensure well-developed and thoughtful implementation practices guide digital learning that is both sustainable and equitable.

We also need to reconsider our reliance on textbooks, which become quickly dated and do not deliver sufficient supports to teachers in delivering high quality lessons.

It is time to shift to innovative digital learning management systems that offer professional resources and more individualized pathways for students to connect with learning content. This doesn't mean students need to abandon paper and pencils, but costly and outdated textbooks are an unnecessary waste. Furthermore, transitioning the school system to a single, centralized digital learning platform will save teachers and administrators from having to navigate a complex web of digital tools, each with their own policies regarding protection of student data.

As New York's students have been expected to learn remotely amid the pandemic, far too many of them cannot even access the education that is their constitutional right. Approximately 100,000 students lack reliable internet access across approximately 40,000 households. And while the DOE has worked to supply iPads to students who need them, distribution has been slow; three months into this school year, as many as 60,000 students were still waiting to receive the Wi-Fi-enabled device they had requested from DOE. Now, one year into the pandemic, we know that thousands of students have stopped engaging in remote lessons, and the lack of technology is clearly a key factor.

The truth is, this digital divide is not new – and unless we act, it won't go away when this pandemic is over. That is why Scott has forcefully pushed to eliminate this gap and make digital equality a reality, by leveraging the City's purchasing power to connect low-income families with affordable internet access and providing Wi-Fi enabled devices to every student.

Specifically, Scott would:

- ▶ **Leverage the City's purchasing power and bring together all Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and carriers** to provide universal, affordable, and reliable broadband for all students. "Internet Passports" would give low-income families the ability to purchase high-speed broadband service so no students are left behind by the digital divide. Further, the City should make the most of franchise agreements with the ISPs, many of which are soon to be up for renegotiation, to incentive these companies to offer deeply discounted rates to support NYC

school children if they want to keep doing lucrative business in New York. Scott will also take proactive steps to ensure that students in temporary housing are provided the necessary support to access the internet.

➤ **Issue every student who needs one a device when they enroll in public school.** Different devices could be issued at major grade transition points and the type of device should vary based on a student's grade level. For example, a student entering kindergarten would be provided an iPad to use through elementary school, while a student entering middle or high school would be provided a Chromebook or other laptop with a keyboard. Such a policy should be implemented within a framework that values and cultivates both collaboration and independent learning, and ensures ongoing professional development to address teachers' technological skill and ability to integrate technology into the curriculum.

➤ **Make sure students and families have digital and technical support to use devices effectively.** Providing devices to the students along with an accessible, responsive, culturally competent "Help Desk" that speaks the languages of our city is a necessity for ongoing support.

Our schools' use of technology and digital learning is not going to subside after the pandemic; it is only going to grow. But through urgent, decisive action, we can make sure that the digital divide that currently shuts out far too many of our students is closed. When our children are unable even to access the learning and support they receive from our schools each day, the opportunity gap gets wider and wider. Putting an end to that must be a top priority – not only as we continue to navigate the pandemic, but beyond.

## **18. Establish free "high dosage tutoring" through a NYC Tutoring Corps**

For students who have fallen significantly behind, especially older students who may be at risk of not graduating, intensive skill-based instruction will be necessary for their academic recovery. Most students in New York City would benefit from regular tutoring to support mastery of subject skills. This is why millions of middle-class

families engage private tutors to support their children — because it works. But for families without the financial resources to hire a private tutor to help students stay afloat academically, there needs to be an effective in-school intervention that can prepare them to graduate high school on time, and be ready for college and career.

One promising academic intervention is “high dosage” tutoring — an intensive form of one-on-one or small group instruction — that has been [shown](#) to contribute to significant learning gains; additionally, it can be administered either in person, or remotely, as needed. [Best practices recommend](#) that volunteer tutors commit to a full year of service in exchange for a modest stipend. With the federal funds in the American Rescue Plan Act allocated for evidence-based interventions to address learning loss and additional funding for the AmeriCorps service program, stipends for tutors could largely be covered through these sources. Tutors must receive intensive training before beginning to work with students, with periodic observations and feedback throughout the year of service. Each tutor is paired with a small cohort of students, with whom they meet regularly. Evidence suggests that for best results tutoring is built into the school day, as a regular class period, and aligned with classroom lessons.

The beauty of this intervention is that it does not depend on recruiting fully licensed teachers. Instead, tutors would need to be knowledgeable in course content, believe in the potential of every student, and be skilled at explaining concepts, but do not require a full teaching credential. Tutors who are enthusiastic and committed for a full year of service have been shown to be the key in making the intervention successful.

To build out a full-fledged NYC Tutoring Corps, the City will need to recruit a team of mostly college students, recent college graduates and retirees who are willing to commit to a full year of service in New York City public schools. However, all models should be considered. [Recent research](#) suggests that to quickly scale an effective tutoring model to respond to COVID-related learning disparities in all grades, high school students could tutor elementary students for course credit; college-students could tutor middle school students using federal work-study funds; and college

graduates could tutor high school students using federal AmeriCorps funding. In any scenario, however, experts emphatically agree that students work with the same tutor over time, and during an extended day in some form, and should supplement rather than supplant learning. The City should partner with institutions of higher education, including CUNY, to prepare a training program for tutors. Schools will need an additional staff member to coordinate the work of tutors and to ensure they are provided regular observation and feedback, and to navigate conflicts that may arise.

## Part VI

### **Dramatically expand afterschool, youth employment, and paid internship opportunities**

After a year when public school students have largely been tethered to a digital device to learn necessary skills and content and the lines between school and home are blurred, it is abundantly clear that the hours between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. are just as vital for student learning and development as the traditional school day. These hours after the school day provide time for much-needed physical activity, developing social and emotional skills by connecting with friends and peers, and opportunities to engage in culturally responsive learning in new ways that both build upon and reinforce concepts introduced in the classroom. Many working caregivers need to know their children are occupied and safe until the end of the work day. Unquestionably, the afterschool hours are learning hours, and as students begin to resume in-person classes, it will be increasingly important to ensure all students have the opportunity to participate in high quality afterschool programming. While New York City has made real strides in recent years in expanding after-school opportunities, there are still far too many families who are unable to secure affordable high quality after-school opportunities for their children. Demand for afterschool is high in New York, with some [estimating](#) that just one in five families are able to secure afterschool programming. Even in schools that do offer free

afterschool, there are often only enough seats for a small portion of the student body to participate and spots are first-come, first-serve. We should no longer tolerate that just one in five students can have the afterschool they need – this is not real access if there isn't a seat for every child who wants or needs one.

### **19. Provide universal free, high-quality afterschool programming in every K-8 school**

As a father of two young boys, Scott strongly believes that rich afterschool opportunities are an intrinsic part of learning. Part of the long-term strategy for recovering from COVID must include a bold investment in afterschool programs. To start, Scott will:

#### **Provide universal access to free afterschool programming for all students**

**K-8.** Building on a model of expanded learning that provides recreation tied to academic enrichment, the goal would be to provide free or affordable afterschool programming to all students. As more children participate, schools will have increased opportunities to extend learning experiences for students.

**Deepen ties with Community-Based Organizations:** In order to broaden opportunities, the City's rich network of community based organizations are critical partners. Yet after the past year of unstable and insecure funding, many CBOs have been unable to retain a steady workforce. Even before the pandemic, CBO providers that offer year-round programs and summer learning opportunities did not have secure funding until July 1 when the City's budget is finalized. For these providers, having a summer component baked into their afterschool contracts would help them plan for more seamless programming for participants. Many of those employed in the afterschool workforce are among the City's most economically fragile, yet bring great perspective and enthusiasm to the children and youth they work with. Providing a micro-credentialing program through CUNY can help build the skills of these workers. Additionally, ensuring a well-trained workforce will be a valuable way to assure high quality in afterschool programs, as well as a rich alignment to the

learning standards being taught during the traditional school day.

## **20. Increase career exploration, paid internships, and youth employment opportunities for all high school students**

For high school students, schools are ideally positioned to provide a connection between what is learned in the classroom, and the workforce opportunities that will be available to them after they graduate. Yet too often, our education system takes a one-size fits all approach that relies on classroom instruction and assessment, but undervalues applied learning opportunities where students can be credited for their learning in the world of work, including internships, apprenticeships, or other experiences that directly connect students to workplace experience. The City needs a truly inclusive youth development strategy that is framed around cultivating youth talent. This will require a seamless combination of strong education and workforce policies that result in students being empowered to make informed decisions about pivotal education experiences that will prepare them for family-sustaining careers.

Graduation from high school is no longer enough. Yet too few students are offered the tools and resources to learn about opportunities that await them after high school, or how to reach those goals. When young people have the opportunity to engage in their interests, independently of parents and teachers, they develop confidence, as well as an improved sense of their own skills and talents and greater agency in planning for their futures. That means giving students hands-on, real world experiences that connect their academic learning to credited, paid work; to allow them to explore and develop their skills and interests, networks and social capital; and make informed post secondary choices. It also means schools need staffing and assessment regimes to provide this support, and are encouraged to use Regents exams alternatives, including those already allowed by NY State Education Dept (such as the CDOS). Work-based learning opportunities, especially when connected to students' school experience, are an important way to both expose students to career pathways aligned with their interests and to expose employers to local talent.



To create strong work-based learning opportunities for students, there must be a shift in how high schools are supported in creating these experiences for students. This must include shifting the focus of high school accountability measures towards how well students are supported in creating an informed post-secondary plan. Some of the tools to make this shift are already available in the NYC Career Readiness Framework and high schools should be coached through the components of this framework and supported in increasing work-based learning offerings. With this goal, all high schools must be equipped to:

- ▶ **Expand student work-based learning experiences, by creating** more school-connected youth apprenticeships, internships, or credit-bearing work experiences that meet standards for rigor.
  - » **Pilot universal paid internships for high school students.** As [recommended](#) by Here to Here, a pilot initiative of work-based learning for all high school students in 40 schools would cost approximately \$14 million annually, and would provide a valuable benchmark for this promising model.
- ▶ **Align staffing and professional development to support work-based learning programming.** High schools should have dedicated staff to coordinate and develop internship opportunities, help connect experiences to classroom instruction, and ensure quality of career development programming.
- ▶ **Implement informed postsecondary choice as the key performance metric for school.** High schools should be encouraged to shift away from five required Regents exams to two (Math, ELA), and substituting work-based learning activities and assessments for high stakes tests.
- ▶ **Offer universal school-connected SYEP.** Every high school student should have the option of a paid summer job that connects to their skills and interests and is aligned to developmental milestones. For example, in grades 9-10, students might participate in job shadowing or informational interviews; by 11th grade, students are prepared to participate in a work-based learning opportunity.

## **21. Dramatically increase our investment in Career and Technical Education (CTE), early-college programs, and College Now in our DOE schools**

As Mayor, Scott will invest in Career and Technical Education and ensure that these schools and programs meet rigorous standards for industry-aligned curriculum, teacher certification, work-based learning, and job-placement. A focus on IT, STEM, healthcare, and other high-paying fields is essential.

Building on the success of K-14 models like P-tech, Scott will quadruple the number of early-college programs, which provide students with an associate degree upon graduation and work closely with an employer partner. Early college programs—whether CTE or otherwise—represent a promising partnership between CUNY and the DOE and a proven model for boosting high school graduation and college attendance. Over the next four years, they should be expanded to 34 schools, with at least one early college high school in each of New York City’s 32 community school districts.

In conjunction with these efforts, under Scott, DOE and CUNY will work together to expand College Now, which allows over 20,000 students to take college credit courses while still enrolled in high school. Given CUNY’s impressive investment in online education in recent years, massively scaling this program is viable. DOE and CUNY should aim to target 75,000 high school students by 2025, so that 75% of incoming freshmen will already have some college credit upon entering.

## **22. Build STEM learning labs in each community school district**

High quality STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) programming exposes young people to engaging, hands-on learning that deepens creative problem solving skills, collaboration, and confidence in their own technical abilities. Too often, students aren’t made aware of the opportunities and careers STEM education can lead to. This is often caused by aging infrastructure in so many schools that limit students’ access to the educational materials that are fundamental

to high quality STEM learning. As mayor, Scott would prioritize a modern educational infrastructure that provides access to the technology and opportunities to discover and apply STEM learning. The key to this will be to establish a network of STEM hubs or learning labs in each community school district that are outfitted with cutting edge equipment and knowledgeable personnel to aid in learning. Building on the success of learning centers like the [Brooklyn STEAM Center](#) and [NYC First STEM Centers](#) in Roosevelt Island and Washington Heights, these hubs can provide tailored programming to meet each district's specific needs such as student access to credit-bearing courses, internships, high quality afterschool, or teacher access to professional development in computer science and technology fields.

Public libraries, as centralized resources for learning in every community, would provide an ideal partner for expanding STEM learning throughout the City. By directing resources for capital investments and equipment like 3D printers, laser cutters, and other tools for a well-equipped maker space, public libraries can be leveraged to bring the vision for STEM learning labs to scale citywide. These spaces could offer a range of programming and workshops, from computer science to robotics to mechanical engineering to digital fabrication.

## Part VII

### **Create pathways to careers by making CUNY community colleges free, and support efforts to make all CUNY senior colleges free as well**

COVID-19 has devastated our economy, displacing hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers from their jobs. Education and the opportunities it can provide must be part of the solution as we turn the corner on the pandemic. To do so, Scott is proposing tuition-free access to all CUNY community colleges and expanding access to ASAP – which have a proven track record of providing the degrees, certificates, and licenses that workers need to move up the ladder and close the opportunity gap. He also supports efforts at the state level to make CUNY senior colleges free for all.

Scott knows that as New York recovers and rebuilds, bold action is required to make sure that we correct imbalances and avoid going back to the old ways of operating. We can take ambitious steps to rebuild an economy that reflects our city's commitment to lighting the path forward, not only for the hard-working middle class, but for those fighting to get there. Scott also strongly believes that New York City's Green New Deal provides a model for greening infrastructure while also training a workforce for green job opportunities and creating a more inclusive economy. To do so, Scott is proposing tuition-free community college at our world-class City University of New York (CUNY) campuses, and a diverse array of workforce development initiatives to break down barriers to success and create powerful pathways of economic mobility for adults of all ages.

Scott's proposals to build a more inclusive post-pandemic economy are:

### **23. Make CUNY community colleges free for all and revamp workforce development programs to build back a more equitable and inclusive economy**

The City University of New York is the most powerful engine of economic mobility in the five boroughs and perhaps the entire country. Educating and training over 180,000 New Yorkers each year across its 25 campuses, its scope and track record is unrivalled. From high school graduates to displaced workers, part-time learners to disconnected youth, first-generation students to mid-career learners, no other institution has the ability to reach and uplift a broader range of New Yorkers.

For generations of New Yorkers, the promise of a free CUNY tuition was part of the City's covenant with its young people. The fiscal crisis of 1976 ended that access, but at a time of severe displacement, and with wages all but stagnant, it is time to reclaim that promise.

Working with State partners, Scott will introduce a true, K-14 education model that firmly recognizes the fundamental importance of higher education in today's economy, making CUNY community colleges free for all local students. He will also eliminate non-tuition barriers, providing ASAP support to all full-time students

enrolled in two-year associate degree programs at CUNY colleges— with financial assistance for books and transportation as well as structured academic supports like tutoring and personalized academic advisory. CUNY’s ASAP [has been found](#) to nearly double graduation rates among participants.

#### **24. Offer paid internships for all CUNY graduating seniors to help them bridge the gap between college and career**

For a CUNY student approaching their final years of school, a paid internship is more than a paycheck. It is an opportunity to pursue their field of interest, to obtain critical experience, to develop a pathway to a career, and to gain access and connections that are not always available to the BIPOC, immigrant, and low-income students who make up the vast majority of CUNY enrollment.

In 2019, however, just 21 percent of CUNY students participated in an internship and only 12 percent were in a paid internship<sup>4</sup>. This put CUNY students at a severe disadvantage in the job market where building relationships is key. Moreover, with many of the summer and post-college employment opportunities in retail, accommodations, and food services disappearing, true career-path employment has never been more important.

Moving forward, the City should work with private sector employers and continue to extend a portion of SYEP funding to CUNY students who have selected a major, are on a career track, and are eager to get a foot in the door. This funding should come with no strings attached, allowing CUNY students to pursue the typical eight week, full-time internship, rather than a part-time, six week program designed for high school students.

Meanwhile, CUNY must build out its campus Career Engagement and Development Centers and upgrade its online tools to help students find paid work that aligns with their course work. Together, job counselors, City staff, and private employers can build a universal, guaranteed paid internship program for all CUNY students

entering their final year of study, doubling down on CUNY's extraordinary record as an engine for economic mobility.

## **25. Strengthen partnerships with private industry to upskill New Yorkers, improve career pathways, and expand apprenticeship opportunities**

As Mayor, Scott will work closely with business leaders to develop new job training programs and scale up existing ones; establish paid-internship and work-based learning programs; help CUNY and workforce development organizations keep their curriculums up-to-date; and develop new certificate programs in conjunction with CUNY's Workforce Innovation Lab.

Meanwhile, the City will expand and restructure its modest Apprenticeship NYC program, building a public-private partnership to introduce more Registered Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship programs in healthcare, finance, logistics, design, early education, cyber-security, green infrastructure, and software development. These programs should be focused on diversifying those fields and increasing economic mobility for those without a college degree. For example, Scott will continue to work with the CUNY Building Performance lab to place STEM students in opportunities where they can help create a greener City. Scott's plan will result in both private and public sector green jobs, and he will ensure that DCAS is a partner in building a strong green jobs workforce.

## **26. Expand bridge programs that help connect language education to job training and opportunities**

For many New Yorkers who are looking to improve their employment prospects, job training is not enough. More than two million adults in New York City lack basic literacy skills, English language proficiency, or a high school diploma. To better support the capacity and potential of these New Yorkers to thrive in living wage jobs, the City needs to address their post-Secondary training needs alongside English language proficiency and literacy.

CUNY, with its robust network of community colleges, continuing education and certification programs, and English language and remedial education courses, has already begun to build out a wide range of these “Bridge Programs.” To accelerate these efforts, the City should direct a larger share of workforce development dollars to CUNY programs, as well as successful bridge programs run by Community Based Organizations.

## Part VIII

### **27. Bring transparency to DOE spending and contracting**

The Department of Education, with its **\$34 billion** annual budget, is the largest single City agency by far. Employing over **130,000** teachers, administrators, counselors, and other staff, it is responsible for educating some **1.1 million** school children from pre-K through high school. Such a massive agency requires a particular level of oversight and accountability to ensure that resources are being deployed effectively and efficiently, and yet for years the agency has evaded many of the same accountability and transparency measures required of other city agencies.

For instance, because the Department is technically governed by New York State law, it is not subject to NYC Procurement Policy Board rules. Instead, DOE has its own Procurement Policy and Procedures (PPP), approved by the Panel for Education Policy (PEP). All DOE contracts are supposed to be reviewed and approved by the PEP. Yet numerous audits and analyses by the Comptroller’s Office have documented instances of poor financial and program management, including a failure to abide by the approved PPP. Among the deficiencies spotlighted by Scott in his time as Comptroller include:



- Contracts are presented to the PEP retroactively;
- PEP presentations contain only outlines or minimal information for PEP review;
- Contracts are submitted without completed VENDEX Vendor and Principal Questionnaires;
- Vendor performance is not evaluated;
- Overuse of non-competitive procurement methods;
- Overuse of Emergency Procurement for goods and services that should be known in advance with a fair degree of accuracy, such as food and bus transportation.

As the City Comptroller, Scott has a long track record for exposing waste and abuse in DOE procurement, contracting and budgeting. As mayor, Scott will bring that same commitment to rooting out all unnecessary spending and ensuring education dollars are directed where they can have the most impact: classrooms. Similarly, Scott will demand that the DOE be fully transparent in its budgeting and procurement, so that parents and policymakers alike can more fairly assess how the agency spends its dollars.

#### ENDNOTES

- 1 U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2019 Reading Assessment.
- 2 Stuart Wells, Amy; Fox, Lauren; Cordova-Cobo, Diana. (Feb 9, 2016). How Racially Diverse Schools and Classrooms Can Benefit All Students. The Century Foundation. <https://tcf.org/content/report/how-racially-diverse-schools-and-classrooms-can-benefit-all-students/>
- 3 Rockman, et al. New Visions for Public Schools – Hunter College Urban Teacher Residency Project. A Different, More Durable Model. September 2018. Accessed from: [http://rockman.com/docs/downloads/TQPXCombinedReport\\_10.23.18-1.pdf](http://rockman.com/docs/downloads/TQPXCombinedReport_10.23.18-1.pdf).
- 4 <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/lifting-up-new-yorkers/#:~:text=In%202019%2C%20just%2021%20percent,where%20building%20relationships%20is%20key>.