

TRANSCRIPT

marketplace  of ideas



featuring Oklahoma State Senator

PENNY WILLIAMS

On Promoting Access to
Preschool Education

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**DRUM
MAJOR**
INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC
POLICY

THE DRUM MAJOR INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY MARKETPLACE OF IDEAS SERIES

SPEAKERS:

HON. PENNY WILLIAMS

Oklahoma State Senate

HON. CHRISTINE QUINN

Speaker of the New York City Council

NANCY KOLBEN

Co-director, Winning Beginning NY Campaign
Executive Director of Child Care, Inc., the leading child care policy and advocacy organization in New York City

ADELAIDE L. SANFORD

Vice Chancellor of the New York State Board of Regents

Introduction by **RANDI WEINGARTEN**

President of the United Federation of Teachers

Moderated by **ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER**

Executive Director of the Drum Major Institute for Public Policy

ABOUT DMI'S "MARKETPLACE OF IDEAS" SERIES:

Never content just to argue theory, the Drum Major Institute provides a platform for policymakers who have successfully worked for social and economic fairness in our public institutions. For far too long the conservative right has defined the limits of what is "possible" in society and politics. The "Marketplace of Ideas" shows that we can transcend these artificial boundaries: it is possible to be progressive, practical, and effective. Previous speakers in the series have included Congresswoman Hilda Solis, who authored the nation's first environmental justice law; New York State Governor Eliot Spitzer, who fought as Attorney General to achieve new standards of corporate accountability; Oklahoma State Senator Penny Williams who ushered in universal preschool in her state; and Maine State Rep. Sharon Treat, who passed legislation increasing access to affordable prescription drugs.

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PANELISTS AND SPEAKERS

PENNY WILLIAMS served in the Oklahoma State Senate from 1998 to 2004. Born in New York City in 1937, she attended Sarah Lawrence College, University of Tehran and the University of Tulsa. She represented the city of Tulsa in the State House of Representatives and was elected to the State Senate in 1988, where she ultimately became chair of the education committee. Her efforts were instrumental in creating the Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics, providing public higher educational opportunities, and improving public elementary and secondary education. Before Senator Williams helped to establish a public university in Tulsa, it was the largest city in the United States without a public four-year college.

CHRISTINE C. QUINN was chosen as the Council Speaker for the New York City Council on January 4, 2006. Since being elected to the Council in 1999, Speaker Quinn has been a pioneer for equal rights, comprehensive health care, improved schools, and tenants' rights. As the first woman, openly gay and Irish Speaker, she brings a new perspective to the diverse challenges facing each of New York's distinct communities. This includes recognizing how critical early childhood education is. Speaker Quinn plans on extending the City's Universal Pre-Kindergarten from a half day to full day. She is working to allocate funding to extend this program so that working families that may not be able to take advantage of half-day pre-K can enroll their children in a full-day program. Before being elected to the City Council, Speaker Quinn served for 5 years as Chief of Staff to Councilmember Thomas K. Duane. She went on to serve as Executive Director of the New York City Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project. During her time with the Anti-Violence Project, Mayor Guiliani appointed her to be a member of the New York City Police/Community Relations Task Force. Speaker Quinn has been rated one of the fifty most powerful women in New York City by the *New York Post* and one of the 'Forty Under Forty' by *Gotham Magazine*. She served as a delegate to the 2000 Democratic National Convention and was appointed to the 2004 Convention's Platform Committee.

NANCY KOLBEN is Executive Director of Child Care, Inc. (CCI), the leading child care policy and advocacy organization in New York City. Child Care, Inc. is a child care resource and referral agency that supports parents in their search for child care and promotes quality early care and education options for all children and families. Ms. Kolben joined the organization more than 20 years ago and has helped to guide many of its important initiatives including the launch of Quality New York, a major citywide effort to promote national accreditation, the creation of an employer sponsored emergency child care program, a special facilities development initiative and the creation of the Child Care, Inc. Primer, an information resource for the field. She co-convenes the statewide Pre-K Coalition and manages the Early

Childhood Strategic Group in New York City. She co-directs the statewide Winning Beginning NY campaign which has recently published a statewide action plan as a blueprint for early care and education statewide. Winning Beginning is a partner in the Pre-K Now campaign to promote universal preschool.

ADELAIDE L. SANFORD is Vice Chancellor of the New York State Board of Regents. Her professional educational career spanned the primary grades through the college graduate school level. She was a classroom teacher, teacher of guidance, assistant principal and principal in the New York City School system. She taught education courses at Baruch College and at Fordham University. She was a visiting practitioner and teaching fellow at the Principals' Center at Harvard University Graduate School of Education. Honorary doctorates were conferred on Vice Chancellor Sanford by Mercy College, The Bank Street College of Education and Five Towns College. Five Towns College has established an annual scholarship award in the name of Adelaide L. Sanford. She was unanimously elected to a seven-year term as a Member-At-Large of the Board of Regents of the State of New York in 1986. In March of 2001, Adelaide Sanford was elected to the position of Vice Chancellor of the Board of Regents and re-elected to an additional three-year term in 2004. During her tenure with the Regents, she has served as Chair of the Regents' Committee on Low Performing Schools, Chair of the Visiting Committee on Low Performing Schools, Chair of the Committee on Higher Education and Chair of the Committee on the Professions. Nationally, Vice Chancellor Sanford serves on the national Commission on African American Education, led by Congressman Major Owens, and on the Advisory Committee on Multi-Cultural Education for the National Association of the State Boards of Education.

RANDI WEINGARTEN is president of the United Federation of Teachers, representing more than 140,000 active and retired educators in the New York City public school system since 1998. She is also a vice-president of the 1.2-million-member American Federation of Teachers and a board member of New York State United Teachers. Weingarten, a vice-president of the New York City Central Labor Council of the AFL-CIO, also heads the city Municipal Labor Committee, an umbrella organization for some 100 city employee unions. As a teacher of history at Clara Barton High School in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, from 1991 to 1997, Weingarten helped her students win several state and national awards. Weingarten holds degrees from Cornell University and the Cardozo School of Law. She worked as a lawyer for the New York firm of Stroock & Stroock & Lavan from 1983 to 1986. She has served on the Board of the Drum Major Institute for Public Policy since 2006.

Since 2002, **ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER** has led the effort to turn the Drum Major Institute, originally founded by an advisor to Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during the civil rights movement, into a progressive policy institute with national impact. Under Andrea's leadership as Executive Director, DMI has released several important policy papers to national audiences including: 'Congress at the Midterm: Their Middle-Class Record' and 'Principles for an

Immigration Policy to Strengthen and Expand the American Middle Class.’ Andrea studied public policy at the University of Chicago. Andrea has worked in various capacities to promote educational equity and youth empowerment. She directed a national campaign to engage college students in the discussion on the future of Social Security for the Pew Charitable Trusts, and served as Director of Public Relations of Teach For America before working as the education advisor to Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer. Andrea has been profiled in the *New York Times*, *New Yorker* magazine, *Latina Magazine* and in ‘Hear us Now,’ an award-winning documentary about her tenure as the student member of the New York City Board of Education. She has appeared on the ‘Lou Dobbs Tonight’ show on CNN and has been published in *New York Newsday*, *Crain’s New York Business*, *The Mississippi Sun Herald*, *New York Daily News*, *Alternet.com*, *Tom Paine.com*, *New York Sun*, *Colorlines Magazine*, *The Chief-Leader* and *City Limits* magazine. She is a contributor to The Huffington Post, on the Editorial Board of *The Nation* and was named a ‘40 under 40 Rising Star’ by *Crain’s New York Business*.

TRANSCRIPT

The transcript from this event has been edited for length and readability.

Internet links are provided in footnotes throughout this transcript as resources for readers seeking to better understand the policy discussion. While we hope they are helpful, the Drum Major

Institute for Public Policy is not responsible for the content or continued functioning of these links.

RANDI WEINGARTEN: My name is Randi Weingarten and I am the president of the little teachers’ union in New York City, the United Federation of Teachers (UFT).¹ What you may not know is, other than being the president of the teachers’ union, where we now have about 160,000 members, I am also a proud board member of DMI. I am really pleased that all of you are here. But more important than all of you being here, I am really pleased at the work that DMI does.

Today, this Monday morning as we’re all waking up, is the latest in the series of the Institute’s Marketplace of Ideas. This series is meant to be a platform and a sounding board for policy makers who believe, as the Institute does, that it is possible to be progressive, practical and effective. That’s what the Institute is about. One of the most progressive, practical and effective ideas that we know is this morning’s topic, which is promoting access to preschool education. More and more and more, this should be not only on the country’s front burner, but on the city’s front burner. Those of us who have done anything in education understand in our gut that preschooling is one of those keys to helping kids have a level playing field. If you help kids have a level playing field then you get what we want, which

Those of us who have done anything in education understand in our gut that preschooling is one of those keys to helping kids have a level playing field. If you help kids have a level playing field then you get what we want, which is for kids not only to dream their dreams but to realize their dreams and therefore to have an amazing citizenry instead of having constant, constant, constant challenges in public education.

—Randi Weingarten
United Federation of Teachers

is for kids not only to dream their dreams but to realize their dreams, and therefore to have an amazing citizenry instead of having constant, constant, constant challenges in public education.

Now the UFT has been a staunch advocate of universal preschool. We know, as I said, that when kids get a jump start on literacy, when they get a jump start on

understanding words, when they get a jump start on understanding how to play with other kids, it makes a huge difference—not just in 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade, but all the way up the ladder. And if you don’t believe me, just ask any of our thousands of early childhood teachers how wonderful it is when they see and when they have, in kindergarten and 1st grade, somebody who’s gone to preschool versus somebody who has not.

¹ <http://www.uft.org/about/>

But it goes beyond just the UFT, and this is where I get to introduce our keynote speaker. Universal preschool was one of Sandy Feldman,² my predecessor's, passions. She went around the country and around the world to find great universal preschool programs. Ultimately, the folks in the middle of the country—New Mexico³ and Oklahoma in particular—had been far more progressive, effective and practical about this issue than we have been in New York. Our guest today is someone who knows a whole bunch about universal preschool, and that is Oklahoma State Senator Penny Williams.

Penny Williams is a native New Yorker. She was educated at Sarah Lawrence College, the University of Tehran, and the University of Tulsa. She represented the city of Tulsa in the Oklahoma State House of Representatives before being elected to the Oklahoma State Senate, where she served with distinction from 1998 to 2004, becoming the Chair of the Education Committee. Penny was instrumental in creating the Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics, and providing public higher educational opportunities and improving public elementary and secondary education.

In 1998, Senator Williams co-sponsored legislation allowing school districts to receive state funding for all four-year-olds enrolled in a preschool program, regardless of family income. This is Oklahoma, not New York.

—Randi Weingarten
United Federation of Teachers

Before Senator Williams helped to establish a public university in Tulsa, the city had the dubious distinction of being the largest US city without a public four year college. In 1998, Senator Williams co-sponsored legislation allowing school districts to receive state funding for all four year olds enrolled in a preschool program, regardless of family income. This is Oklahoma, not New York. The bill, revised and with bi-partisan support, was passed and included added funding for disabled, bilingual and poor children. By the end of the 2002-2003 school year, an estimated 65% of four-year-olds were benefiting, and 494 out of 543 of the state's school districts were participating.⁴ The state's early childhood four year old program, which Senator Williams was instrumental in starting, is highly regarded nationwide. A study by the National Institute for Early Education Research of all early childhood programs across the country ranked Oklahoma not just highly, but first in the nation in providing school access for four year olds.⁵ Now it is my pleasure to introduce Oklahoma State Senator Penny Williams.

SENATOR PENNY WILLIAMS: Thank you so much. I brought my satchel and my blank pad so I could learn from you today, too. Oklahoma is pretty red now, except

² <http://www.aft.org/about/resolutions/2004/feldman.htm>

³ <http://www.ped.state.nm.us/prek/downloads/rfp032906/NM%20PreK%20Program%20Standards%20%2706-%2707.pdf>

⁴ By 2006, the proportion was 70% of four-year-olds in the state's preschool program, with another 22% in Head Start or Special Education programs, totaling 92% of four-year-olds in a public education program. "The State of Preschool: 2006," The National Institute for Early Education Research, p 122-123. <http://nieer.org/yearbook/pdf/yearbook.pdf>

⁵ Ibid.

for our leadership. Our leadership is blue in Oklahoma. The congressional delegation we send to Washington is red. But we have had a commitment that I would say goes over thirty years, and as Eric Sevareid⁶ said about the United States, this is the experimental laboratory of the 20th century. It is my belief that the states are really the experimental laboratory for America. It's also my belief that Tulsa, in the case of Oklahoma, started experimenting way before the state did, because we're not the capitol. Oklahoma City is the capitol. We don't have a lot of money in Tulsa. Whatever we may have had from the oil industry long ago, when we were the oil capitol of the world, we no longer have. So we cooperate with each other. We find ways to work with each other, leveraging little pots of money into making bigger pots of money. I come from a town that is very supportive of innovation and collaboration.

I would have to say Oklahoma is a schizophrenic state. On the one hand we are, oddly enough, number one in early childhood programs. And on the other hand, we are number one in the number of women in prison.

—Oklahoma State Senator Penny Williams

I would have to say Oklahoma is a schizophrenic state. It is really a split personality state. Because on the one hand here we are, oddly enough, number one in early childhood programs. And on the other hand, we are number one in the number of women in prison.⁷ That's a number one title we've held for a long time. So it's not just in football, it's in lots of things that we're not crazy about.

Oklahoma's tradition has been one of access. But when you wanted to do something new it was hard. Sometimes we'd take a little bit of money, but it had to be spread equally. It was like taking a Dixie cup of water and throwing it out there on Lake Keystone, where I live. You can't see the effects of it. It vanishes.

The story of what we did in Oklahoma is really a story of individuals, rugged individuals, especially women, who learned how to work this good old boy system and back our way into a commitment to children.

—Oklahoma State Senator Penny Williams

We started with looking, in the early 1980s, at higher education. A bunch of us in the legislature banded together and tried to make our high school superintendents aware of what it would take if they really wanted their students to go to college, what they needed to do to start early. And in the '80s we also, way against

the establishment, got an independent higher education study passed through the legislature. It was only because one person, who was a freshman legislator, would not take anything else. The story of what we did in Oklahoma is really a story of individuals, rugged individuals, especially women, who learned how to work this good old boy system and back our way into a commitment to children. Because Oklahoma is always last or in the bottom five states on funding for education and other essential services, some people call us 'the bottom-of-the-bucket state.' How

⁶ <http://www.museum.tv/archives/etv/S/html/S/sevareideri/sevareideri.htm>

⁷ <http://www.wpaonline.org/institute/hardhit/states/ok/ok.htm>

do you get beyond that? The problem was our low sense of possibilities. How do we get beyond this history and tradition of not being committed to education? We started wanting students to be ready for college, ready for high school, and then we went on back down to birth. We finally said, these children have to come to school ready to learn.

The things that happened nationally were also the same forces that converged in Oklahoma, such as the “Nation at Risk” report in about 1983.⁸ I went to a meeting of governors in North Carolina with Jim Hunt⁹ and mostly southern governors—and they were like little boys. They got up on a stage, preening about what their states had done for education. All of a sudden there was a lot of commitment to

improving and strengthening education at the gubernatorial level, but still not that much at the legislative level. We got really excited by this, and we went back to Oklahoma and tried to bring into being some of what Governor Jim Hunt, for one, had talked about, that they were actually doing in North Carolina.¹⁰ We copied them, and we started trying to make a better commitment to higher

education, to early childhood and to education more generally. It was a very tough fight. Fortunately we had a governor who had been a governor before—his name is Henry Bellmon¹¹—and then he went to the U.S. Senate and voted for school busing and the Panama Canal and a number of things that made him unpopular in his own party. He was a Republican. He came back to Oklahoma and had the reputation of not being an education governor, and he wanted to come back, and be one of those education governors. When he was governor he made a commitment to teachers that he was going to raise their salaries. They said, well, we need about \$5,000 apiece more. That wouldn’t have even gotten us up to the average in my part of the country. He said, that sounds good, let’s do it. Now where do we get the money? We said, well, a tax increase. Okay, how do we do it? We went through these steps of piecing together the money. We copied South Carolina in the ‘one penny for education’¹² which, in those days, gave us about \$250 million. Then we did some income tax increases and a little corporate tax—not very much—and from a few places we raised the money.

Many Republicans were saying, “Oh, it’s too coercive.” We said we’ll make it more permissive. We’ll just say, “If schools offer [preschool], we will fund it. Give the money, they will come.” And I’ll be darned if it didn’t turn out to be true.

—Oklahoma State Senator Penny Williams

It’s a partnership that turned out to be the answer, the coming together of private and public interest, and of the state, local, and federal governments using every little scrap of money we could scare up, and leveraging it and making it count for kids.

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All of these forces converged and brought us to the point where we broke out of the legislative session in 1989 with no new commitment to education and everyone howling. The governor created a special session for education, and the result of that was the landmark bill, 1017,

the Education Reform Bill of 1989,¹³ and that’s the bill that had the language that committed us to early childhood. After that, two years later, they tried to repeal it. We had a campaign, and for the first time in this state we asked the public to vote no. It was so much fun to be ‘no;’ no sounds so strong. ‘Vote No’ was our campaign. We actually were successful. Through a vote of the people of Oklahoma we voted to keep this commitment to early childhood.

Many Republicans were saying, “Oh, it’s too coercive.” We said we’ll make it more permissive. We’ll just say, “If schools offer this, we will fund it. Give the money, they will come.” And I’ll be darned if it didn’t turn out to be true. It was all voluntary. I think that was the secret. Mandates didn’t work. The state micro-managing the local areas does not work as well as money incentives. Where we are now is enviable, because we are now going for the quality.

And George Kaiser and the Kaiser Family Foundation¹⁴ challenged the state to put in state money, two for one, and we got five million dollars this year for Educare programs that are the best of the best.¹⁵ This is a model that started in Chicago, and it’s now being adopted in a number of cities. But George put up this money and challenged the state and said, ‘You do it. I’ll raise the money privately.’ So that was ten million dollars he agreed to raise this year, work in progress, for expanding Head Start and early childhood programs. It’s a partnership that turned out to be the answer, the coming together of private and public interest, and of the state, local, federal governments using every little scrap of money we could scare up, and leveraging it and making it count for kids. And that’s it.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: Thank you everybody for coming. We have a fantastic panel to talk about universal preschool and to reflect on what Oklahoma’s done, and to talk about what New York has done and is doing. Christine Quinn, Speaker of the City Council, who has been a city councilperson since 1999, was appointed Speaker in 2006. We have Regent Adelaide Sanford, who is vice-chancellor of the New York State Board of Regents, the state’s education policymaking board. Nancy Kolben, who’s the Executive Director of Childcare Inc.,¹⁶ the leading childcare

8 “A Nation at Risk”-1983 report on American education from the National Commission on Excellence in Education. <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/index.html>

9 James Hunt Jr., Governor of North Carolina (1977-1985; 1993-2001). See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jim_Hunt

10 For a look at one of Governor Hunt’s education achievements in North Carolina, see Smart Start <http://www.ncsmartstart.org/about/whatisstart.htm>

11 See <http://www.odl.state.ok.us/oar/governors/Bellmon.htm>

12 The “Penny for Education” initiative, started in 1984 by South Carolina Governor Richard W. Riley, was a one-cent increase in sales taxes which raised \$240 million to finance improvements in the state’s public schools.

13 See: Chance, Edward. “The Impact of Oklahoma House Bill 1017 on Rural Education: A Study on Selected Schools.” <http://cssrs.ou.edu/files/hb1017.pdf> (Bill text not available online)

14 <http://www.kff.org/>

15 For more on Educare, see: http://www.captc.org/news/TWEducare_092805.pdf

16 <http://www.childcareinc.org/>

policy and advocacy organization in New York City is here. And, of course, Senator Williams is here. I wanted to start by asking Speaker Quinn: Senator Williams said Tulsa was the innovator in Oklahoma, in part because people have to work together because the resources weren't there. Do you view, when it comes to early childhood education, New York City as the innovator in New York State? Lord knows we all have to work together because the resources aren't abundant when it comes to education. I think I see the Executive Director of Campaign for Fiscal Equity¹⁷ in the audience to attest.

Senator Williams said Tulsa was the innovator in Oklahoma, in part because people have to work together because the resources weren't there. Do you view, when it comes to early childhood education, New York City as the innovator in New York State? Lord knows we all have to work together because the resources aren't abundant when it comes to education. I think I see the Executive Director of Campaign for Fiscal Equity in the audience to attest.

—Andrea Batista Schlesinger
Drum Major Institute for Public Policy

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL SPEAKER CHRISTINE QUINN: It was interesting listening to the Senator describe the experience in Oklahoma. I think it's not going to come as a shock to you, Senator, but in New York we don't typically think we're that much like Oklahoma. But you were talking of very striking similarities to what happened to us this year. This year the City Council, with the support of Childcare Inc. and the United Federation of Teachers and so many of the other folks in this room, put a goal on the table, that in our four-year term we were going to do everything we could to make all of the half-day preschool and kindergarten in the city full-day. We said this because we thought it was the best thing for kids, and it

was what advocate after advocate, leader after leader told us was the best thing for kids. But we didn't exactly have a clue how we were going to do it, or all that much of a deep understanding of the funding streams, et cetera. This year we were able to get 2,172 new full-day spots in the city—and we're still trying to squeeze a few more out on Staten Island. The process became somewhat cobbled together, not unlike what you said about Oklahoma—where you found the

This year the City Council put a goal on the table, that in our four-year term we were going to do everything we could to make all of the half-day preschool and kindergarten in the city full-day. The need for these programs becomes clear when you learn, as we did in New York City, that there are half-day programs out there where spots are empty not because parents didn't want their kids to be in preschool, but because the parents have to go to work. Instead the parents will pay, in many cases, to put their children put in daycare.

—New York City Council Speaker Christine Quinn

money, where the money was. We began piling state aid on top of state aid, and we took this half day over here, and put this money on top of it, and we made it work I think, some way. Like the story you told about Oklahoma, we made it work because the need for it is so clear. The need for these programs becomes clear when you

learn, as we did in New York City, that there are half-day programs out there where spots are empty not because parents didn't want their kids to be in preschool, but because the parents have to go to work. Instead the parents will pay, in many cases, to put their children put in daycare. Our daycare providers do a tremendous service to the city, but if the option was to be in a daycare or a preschool setting, we'd rather that child be in a preschool setting. When you see that, and other facts, you just decide as a legislature to make it happen. It was a little bit cobbled together in the end, but it did the job for the first year, and it gave us enough understanding and information to be much more able to move forward over the next three years.

One of the challenges this year was that the administration felt like we finished the budget at the end of June and the two months between then and the start of school wasn't enough time for them to put online the new slots that were to be located in community-based organizations. That has been a frustration for all of us. One of our big priorities next year is to have slots that are in school settings, which all of the 2,172 current slots are, and then more seats in community-based settings, which will hopefully allow us to have greater geographic flexibility.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: Essentially what the Speaker accomplished is going from no full-day seats to getting 2,000 full-day seats and, in the process, putting this issue, as it was written about in op-ed pages, in newspapers, at the forefront of people's consciousness. Piggybacking on that, I wanted to ask: Nancy, why isn't early childhood education at the forefront of people's consciousness? It's such an obvious example of how we get to educational success.

NANCY KOLBEN: I actually think that it's moved very much to the forefront. I think we have to step back for a minute to be sure that we have the total history here. In 1997, the Speaker of the State Assembly put forth an education reform, a major piece of legislation that included early childhood.¹⁸ In 2006, we're in a very different place in terms of thinking about these issues, and it was quite revolutionary at that point. In fact, it had a very interesting component to it. This legislation recognized that early childhood services already existed in the community. Not enough. Not with enough resources. Not open to all children. The legislation also recognized that we had an opportunity to build new bridges between the public education system and the early childhood community. I would say that, both statewide and particularly in New York City, we have become the poster children, in effect, for how to do this. We have made things happen in early childhood settings and in public schools that, if you asked us in 1997, folks weren't sure it could really be

I would say that, both statewide and particularly in New York City, we have become the poster children, in effect, for how to do this. We have made things happen in early childhood settings and in public schools that if you asked us in 1997, folks weren't sure it could really be done.

—Nancy Kolben
Child Care Inc.

17 <http://www.cfequity.org/>

18 http://www.winningbeginningny.org/documents/upk_chronology.pdf

done. There wasn't any blueprint, we didn't know how to do it. We had strong allies and partners. Many of them are in this room. Folks from the Administration for Children's Services.¹⁹ Randi Weingarten and the UFT. We needed all those folks coming together to say, we have to figure out how to really do this right. I think that, as Speaker Quinn has become more involved in this issue, we're almost at the

next stage of moving from part-day to full-day,²⁰ realizing the pieces that we really need. A number of people in this room have been involved in this effort. It's really quite complex when you think about it.

At one point the Governor wanted to eliminate all funding for preschool, and it was the best gift that we could have had because it mobilized everyone. We realized how strong the support was.

—Nancy Kolben
Child Care Inc.

It is very interesting that in both states—in Oklahoma and in New York—we moved in very incremental ways. We started out with a small program. People sort of said okay, so how do we do this? And we had our own battles. At one point the Governor wanted to eliminate all funding for preschool,²¹ and it was the best gift that we could have had because it mobilized everyone. We realized how strong the support was. We think we have now, with a new administration coming in, the opportunity to take the next bold step forward. I think that the will is there, the understanding is there that it's important. Now we just have to really make it happen.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: Is there a dilemma of asking for universal preschool when there are certainly children and populations who are much more at risk and who need those services more? But if you were to focus your efforts on the populations most in need, you kind of lose broad public support for preschool. Is that a dilemma that the Board of Regents faces? Is that a dilemma the City Council faced when you were trying to create these slots?

VICE CHANCELLOR ADELAIDE SANFORD: Theoretically, it is an enigma. But not for the Board of Regents, because we don't have money.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: DMI understands that situation.

VICE CHANCELLOR ADELAIDE SANFORD: It is clear to the members of the Board of Regents that early childhood education is profoundly important. However, because the testing cycle doesn't begin until later, there is a de-emphasis on early childhood programs in some circles, because the results of the progress that children gain in preschool don't show themselves in the testing cycle until a little bit later. I think that keeps some of the public attention away from the importance of preschool. The universality of it is the fact that there are many, many people who have exposure

to all of the benefits of the universe. But at the same time, there is this very large group of children who are school-dependent. If they don't get it in the school setting, it's not likely they will get that kind of academic stimulation anywhere else. There are many people who are able to provide that kind of stimulation outside of the school setting, and so their concern may not be quite as focused as the children and the families that are school-dependent.

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—Vice Chancellor Adelaide Sanford
New York State Board of Regents

From the point of view of the policymaker who has an overall concern for all of the children, we have to depend upon the legislature that holds the budget. As you can see in Oklahoma, it was a state initiative—and they have the budget. We have to try and convince the members of the legislature, the majority of whom do not have an issue with the academic performance of their children. What happens is, you have two groups of people—one group of people who are very wise but not powerful, and then you have the second group of people who are very powerful but not wise. It is strategic to have an opportunity to come before a group like this, of both wise and powerful, hoping this will accelerate our understanding of our interdependency, that we cannot continue to have two separate worlds: those who do not have to be concerned about

whether or not their children will have adequate vocabulary and mathematic skills, and those who are dependent upon having their children be provided with a setting that enables them to do well in school.

We cannot continue to have two separate worlds: those who do not have to be concerned about whether or not their children will have adequate vocabulary and mathematic skills, and those who are dependent upon having their children be provided with a setting that enables them to do well in school.

—Vice Chancellor Adelaide Sanford
New York State Board of Regents

This society depends upon academic achievement. It isn't

like you're going to fish or swim or hunt for a living. You've got to earn a living. You can't build your house, you can't grow your vegetables, you can't raise your pigs and cows. You become dependent in an urban setting on being able to make a living. That means that the families who look to the formal education system to provide what their children need have to have a greater ability to articulate how good education positively affects all people.

COUNCIL SPEAKER CHRISTINE QUINN: It's interesting in the New York City Council. The Council is made up of 51 people, and each one has a tremendous obligation to fight for their district. They're correct when they say, I want X in my district. Even if their district has a little less need, it's their job to get in there and fight for their district. Now, I say over and over to people once they come into the room as members of what we call the leadership—the whip, the majority leader,

19 <http://www.nyc.gov/html/acs/html/home/home.shtml>

20 New York's full-time programs are at least 5 hours a day, while half-time programs are 2.5 hours a day. See: <http://www.clasp.org/ChildCareAndEarlyEducation/NewYork.pdf>

21 For more on Governor George Pataki's (1994 – 2006) attempt to eliminate funding for universal preschool see: <http://www.gothamgazette.com/article/20030317/6/314>

Families who look to the formal education system to provide what their children need have to have a greater ability to articulate how good education positively affects all people.

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or even as budget negotiator—they have to try and leave their district outside sometimes and look at things from a citywide perspective. I think the Council and the budget negotiators actually did that in a lot of very impressive ways. This year one of our largest allocations

in the budget was an additional \$20 million to the Housing Authority²² on top of the \$100 million Mayor Bloomberg had put in, because of the fact that they were basically going bankrupt. That was a unanimous priority budget negotiation point. Unanimous support for this funding happened even though there are some members who have many, many, many public housing facilities in their district, and some budget negotiators who have none. There was clear vision there that we had to support and protect public housing. So you see the Council sometimes says, I'm not going to give something to my district because there's a greater citywide good.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: Are you going to name names?

COUNCIL SPEAKER CHRISTINE QUINN: If I remembered I would. We recently did a debrief on what members thought went well and didn't go well with budget negotiations, and what sticks in my mind is Councilmember Lew Fidler requested better food. That's the only name that's sticking in my head at the moment. But when kids and education come up, people get really parochial. And that's not necessarily a bad thing. It's a good thing that every member wants the best schools in their district, and it's a good thing that everybody wanted all 2,000 of those preschool slots in their district. Now, part of the entire battle that everyone in this room, and the Campaign for Fiscal Equity and others, have been waging for so long now is to say that every child should be given the same start, and that every child should be given the same educational opportunity, and that we shouldn't allow parts of the state to get more funding than other parts of the state. Our goal in the Council would be to say that every school should have the amount of full-day preschool that that school, and that neighborhood, and those kids and those parents need, whatever borough that's in and whatever neighborhood that's in.

The Vice Chair is right—at a point in the budget process, my great statement that no one could disagree with—that every child deserves the same start—might hit a place where the rubber meets the road and there's just isn't money to give that start to every single child. In that situation I believe you fall back onto important questions, like what neighborhoods need it more? What neighborhoods have been shortchanged? What is the ratio of four-year-olds in this neighborhood to that neighborhood who don't have other resources or places that they can go? At this point in this effort we are, as Nancy and others have said, doing extraordinarily well.

There should be slots where there are four-year-olds, and if there is a four-year-old they should have a full day slot. I want to just thank Nancy and the other folks in the UFT, and the other folks in the advocacy community. We, being the Council, went to one of our first meetings with the Department of Education and the Administration for Children's Services, because they oversee the community-based organization spots. We asked them to give us a list of where all the four-year-olds are. They said they couldn't. We figured they lacked somebody to get it. Well, there was no list. There was no complete census of where all the four-year-olds are and where all the slots were collectively. This makes it a big challenge to plan.

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—New York City Council Speaker Christine Quinn

If you don't know where they are, you don't know where you need more slots. Luckily, that kind of census is now starting to be put in place. I think that will give us a lot more information to make these types of choices.

SENATOR PENNY WILLIAMS: What Speaker Quinn personifies is leadership making a difference. If you have someone with the overarching view in charge of your state or council or your legislature, you'll find ways. I think that is such a challenge to rise to that level of possibility. It takes not just discussing the issue—and I thank the Drum Major Institute so much for bringing us together because the discourse is important—but if you don't have leaders like these panelists, who can then take it to another level, you will be bogged down in the debate over universality versus the small programs. It took us twenty years, because we had the pilot project, and then we had the low-income funding. Until we made that large commitment to the next generation, we didn't get the money. And until we made a few mistakes that gave us a problem...the truth is you always want a problem. If you have the right problem—

Our First Lady and our Governor are totally committed. We will have fully funded all-day kindergarten by 2011. It's mostly funded now, not to mention voluntarily subscribed to, which stretches the money through the funding formula. It's not just where the four-year-olds are but what the conditions are for each child that pulls out more money from your funding formula.

—Oklahoma State Senator Penny Williams

COUNCIL SPEAKER CHRISTINE QUINN: In New York, we do.

SENATOR PENNY WILLIAMS: Right. I couldn't agree more that leadership makes a difference. Fortunately in Oklahoma we have it now. Our First Lady and our Governor are totally committed. We will have fully funded all-day

kindergarten by 2011. It's mostly funded now, not to mention voluntarily subscribed to, which stretches the money through the funding formula. It's not just where the four-year-olds are but what the conditions are for each child that pulls out more money from your funding formula.

²² <http://www.nyc.gov/html/nycha/html/home/home.shtml>

NANCY KOLBEN: I think it's very important to think about where we are in New York State right now. Our preschool legislation, as many of you in the room know, was a grant funded program. It was not part of the state aid formula. At the beginning, that seemed like the right thing because we needed to create momentum behind the notion that preschool is important. And actually, like in Oklahoma, we started way back in the '60s with something that's now called targeted preschool,

which up until two years ago was called experimental preschool. We were really clear that this was no longer an experiment. With the extraordinary work that the Regents did to set forth a policy, and really set forth a clear policy of New York State's commitment to early education, we're seeing a discussion that is really talking

I think it's now up to our state legislature and our new Governor to take on the change in the way that we fund preschool, so that we do not keep it frozen as a grants funded program...It needs to become more like the state aid structure, where school districts that want to offer preschool can and will have the resources to do it.

—Nancy Kolben
Child Care Inc.

about a preschool through 12th grade public education system. The question is: how do you build on the capacity that already exists in the early childhood community and in the schools? That's the journey that we're on right now. I think it's now up to our state legislature and our new Governor to take on the change in the way that we fund preschool, so that we do not keep it frozen as a grant-funded program that only certain districts are eligible for, and so we no longer restrict the number of children who are eligible for the program. It needs to become more a part of the state aid structure, where school districts that want to offer preschool can and will have the resources to do it. In terms of funding, I think that's our critical policy issue at the state level right now.

VICE CHANCELLOR ADELAIDE SANFORD: We know that the young people who are in our prison system are upstate, and they are from downstate. But the interdependency of that population is never discussed. So the same legislators who are hesitant to think of our schoolchildren needing universal preschool have no difficulty in lobbying for those prisons in their district, where the prison population is counted in the census. Very rarely do we have a discussion about the fact that most of the young people in the prison system in this state come from New York City, and moreover that these young people did not have preschool. I visit prisons across the state. Most of the inmates haven't had kindergarten. Almost universally, they have not had preschool. They have not been successful

I visit prisons across the state. Most of the inmates haven't had kindergarten. Almost universally, they have not had preschool. They have not been successful throughout their school experience. Yet there is no lobbying, no discussion, and no protest against money to build more prisons. There is only discussion and lobbying about money for something as clearly beneficial as early childhood education. It's so clear that money could be saved in prison funding if we did the right thing in education policy. But we don't talk about it. We don't relate the two issues.

—Vice Chancellor Adelaide Sanford
New York State Board of Regents

throughout their school experience. Yet there is no lobbying, no discussion, and no protest against money to build more prisons. There is only discussion and lobbying about money for something as clearly beneficial to the school experience as early childhood education. We need a different way of connecting what happens when we do not provide the preventive modality, rather than warehousing people in a prison when we know they have not had the opportunity to get out of poverty because of poor educational opportunities and because so few options are open to them to earn a living in our society, where you are dependent upon work. I lament the fact that very rarely do we have a conversation about the interdependency of this state's economy; it's so clear that money could be saved in prison funding if we did the right thing in education policy. But we don't talk about it. We don't relate the two issues. I do feel that the notion that it is only the youngsters who are underprivileged and underserved, only the youngsters who need a good education is not quite right. We have also educated the people who are corrupting the waterways and the savings and loans. They may have tremendous skills in vocabulary and reading and mathematics, but there's something else that's very important that we have not been able to ingrain. I think that happens when there is the perpetuation of this separateness.

What Chris Quinn did, in terms of the City Council, was to marry together what is best for working New Yorkers and what is best for children by saying that people who work need full-day preschool.

— Randi Weingarten
United Federation of Teachers

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: Let's mix it up with some audience questions, and ask Randi Weingarten from the UFT for the first question.

RANDI WEINGARTEN: Now I get to be an advocate. There's an opportunity and a challenge right now. With all due respect to everybody in the room, Chris Quinn actually created a huge opportunity in New York City this year. Shelly Silver²³ and the advocacy community said, okay, let's do preschool half-day, let's find places. What Chris Quinn did, in terms of the City Council, was to marry together what is best for working New Yorkers and what is best for children by saying that people who work need full-day preschool. And by having the power of the budget—not huge power over the budget, but having power over the budget—the Speaker said 'we're going to put some slots in.' I don't want to diminish what she did this year because it would have been very easy to say, 'let's wait.' But she said, 'no, I'm not going to wait, we're going to start it now.' I don't want that to go without having said that, as an advocate who watched the process. Thank you.

COUNCIL SPEAKER CHRISTINE QUINN: Thank you, Randi. Truth be told, I asked Randi to come in and meet with me after I got elected speaker, and I said, 'I'm really worried about middle schools. What the best thing I can do to help middle schools?'

23 Sheldon Silver, Speaker of the New York State Assembly. See: <http://assembly.state.ny.us/mem/?ad=064&sh=bio>

And Randi said, ‘You can make preschool full-day.’ I said, ‘Really?’ Basically, thank you, Randi, for the thanks but, really, they go to Randi. Well, they probably go to Randi and me, having been a good student and knowing that when the teacher says you should do X, you should go out and do X.

The real challenge now is what Regent Sanford articulated. If we want to compete with the global economy, it’s a race. Ultimately, with the change in Albany and whatnot, the real question becomes, how will we spend a limited amount of resources? There is an opportunity, both in the city as well as in the rest of the state, because universal preschool—full-day universal preschool—actually does not cost all that much money given the amount of money available in New York State. It actually only costs \$300 million dollars to have full day universal preschool for all four-year-olds. So the real question becomes—and I assume that’s why DMI is having this event today—if preschool is really important, how do we actually, on the cusp of finishing the Campaign for Fiscal Equity, ensconce preschool so that you can never turn back, so that there’s not incrementality, but universality right now.

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—New York City Council Speaker Christine Quinn

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: Obviously the resolution to the Campaign for Fiscal Equity is the elephant in the room. Nancy? Do you have the perfect plan?

NANCY KOLBEN: As I said, I think we know what we need to do. I think that one of the things that is very clear now is that when—we hope the ‘when’ is very soon—there is a CFE settlement, the early childhood component will be part of it. It’s not an add-on. It’s not a ‘maybe we can do it if we can afford it’. I think the data is very clear. It’s the best return on education dollar investment that we can make. I think that one of the first steps is to move towards a state aid funding formula that gets us out of a grant program, which has been very limited to only certain school districts.

I think that one of the things that is very clear now is that when—we hope the ‘when’ is very soon—there is a CFE settlement, the early childhood component will be part of it. It’s not an add-on. It’s not a ‘maybe we can do it if we can afford it’. I think the data is very clear. It’s the best return on education dollar investment that we can make.

—Nancy Kolben
Child Care Inc.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: That’s the Oklahoma model, right, moving away from grant funding toward funding the program in any district?

NANCY KOLBEN: Right. I think the second challenge, and one of the things we’ve been calling upon the

next governor²⁴ to do, is to put together an Early Learning Commission that is very seriously taking a look at much more than where the children are. We need to know where the resources are, how are we spending them, what the strategy is that we need if we are going to really invest in creating an early care education system that works for families who are working, that works for families across the board, that has high quality standards, and has the resources and infrastructure support to make this really work. One of our critical issues is, quite frankly, the work force. Where are we going to get enough qualified teachers and how are we going to pay them appropriately? Right now we have a huge disparity between what we pay fully certified early childhood teachers who work in community centers and what we pay early childhood teachers who work in the public schools. We fully support that those in the public schools that are really pushing for more compensation. This is an important piece of the picture as well. All of these teachers need compensation increases, and so we need a work force strategy.

The third thing is that we’re not just talking about four-year-olds. In the conversation about preschool, we are talking about three- and four-year-olds. Quite frankly, we’re talking about children from birth, and we should expand our strategy conversation accordingly. We know from early brain development research that those earliest years are the most critical. We’re hoping that this Early Learning Commission could begin to take on these issues, and could provide us with a roadmap and a commitment to the resources that will really allow us to make huge steps forward. Right now we have a growing program in New York City for early childhood services. If you look at rural upstate New York, it’s very complicated. Those children are in as great a need as children in New York City. We have to create a statewide strategy that works for all children.

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COUNCIL SPEAKER CHRISTINE QUINN: I agree with everything Nancy just said, and it was interesting, her point about everything needing to be younger and younger. I was visiting a public preschool in Queens, and as I was walking back through the school building to leave, I stopped in another classroom that just happened to be kindergarten. I was talking to the kindergarten teacher, and she said with tremendous pride, ‘You know, kindergarten is the new first grade.’

SENATOR PENNY WILLIAMS: When you put together a commission, be sure you get people—I know you do this—from the business sector, because if we had not had this leadership from a series of mayors, one of whom is a gentleman in his

24 New York State Governor Eliot Spitzer took office on January 1, 2007. See: <http://www.ny.gov/governor/firstfamily/spitzerbio.html>

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—New York City Council Speaker Christine Quinn

late eighties now who made this commitment to early childhood thirty years ago in Tulsa, and another of whom called a summit conference on early childhood in the 1980s. We had this

incredible brain development conference in Tulsa, co-sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce.²⁵ We always had the business sector hand-in-hand with the pro-children sector, for lack of a better word. They've led the way, and they really influenced successive governors, so that when we changed from a Republican to a Democrat there was no way not to go with what their supporters had created. It left us with the right tension and conflict. They couldn't say no.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: So, Speaker Quinn, has the business community in New York City been there when it came to your efforts to get the administration to go from half-day to full-day?

COUNCIL SPEAKER CHRISTINE QUINN: Kathy Wylde²⁶ and the folks at the Partnership for New York City²⁷ have been very, very supportive. During last year's effort, we all took office in January and then the budget deadline was in June, so we didn't have a full twelve months of ramping up and organizing. But we went to Kathy and really asked her to convey to both the state legislature, because there was some formula stuff we needed done by them, and then also to the administration how important this preschool push was. She and the Partnership were enormously helpful. Now that we have a longer lead time into the budget this year there's certainly more work we want to do with the business community as well. It's interesting, when I speak to business leaders about the preschool initiative, they are very excited and want to become more involved.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: Were they excited enough to make it a deal breaker issue for them, when it comes to their support for people in power?

COUNCIL SPEAKER CHRISTINE QUINN: Well, I wouldn't say I framed the conversation quite that way. It's more like, will you make this call? I would say the business community is extraordinarily committed. I think one of the

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—Oklahoma State Senator Penny Williams

things we forget, so it's good that the Senator reminded us, is that the business community is part of the City and that, in fact, issues like education matter to them tremendously. If there is an educated New York, then the business community has the choices they want and need when they are looking to hire people. Education issues are ones that the business community is very open to, and really wants to be asked to get more involved in. I think you have to remember to make the pitches that are relevant to them and easy for them. They are running their companies and are busy all day. If you can fit it in in a way that is relevant to them, I think there is tremendous interest and a tremendous desire to be supportive.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: I want to turn to a question from Emily McKhann, who's the lead mom for Moms Rising,²⁸ New York, which was founded by Joan Blades, the co-founder of MoveOn.²⁹

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EMILY MCKHANN: I just wanted to preface this by saying Moms Rising is a relatively new organization. In the last bit of time they've been working very hard for an initiative in Pennsylvania to make maternal profiling illegal.³⁰ One of the ways that this campaign has gotten a lot of momentum is online. Where there hasn't been much coverage in the major media, there's been a lot of interest among the blogs. This issue is so important and certainly families get behind it so easily. I understand these are very, very nuanced issues in terms of all-day versus part-time, and how do we pay for it. Are we ready to ask the online world to get behind it? And, if so, what can an organization like Moms Rising do?

NANCY KOLBEN: Absolutely we're ready. And actually, we've begun. One of the things I would want to be sure to ask is that everyone here goes to a website called winningbeginningny.org³¹ and signs up to be part of our E-advocacy effort. There are messages going out on a regular basis that are focused on promoting the agenda that I've set forth here. We are building a constituency across New York State, and it's growing daily. I will say as one of the organizations that helped put this together, I was a little anxious at the beginning about whether this would work. In fact, we are continuing to really build the number of people, and to build beyond our natural constituency, which is people who are professionals working in the field. We now have field captains across the state who are working to not only promote this issue, but to continue to build this E-advocacy base so we can be a really strong voice. We would love to talk to folks from Moms Rising and figure out how we

25 For more on this conference, as well as a history of the Metro Tulsa Chamber of Commerce, see JumpStart Tulsa, <http://www.jumpstarttulsa.com/history.htm>

26 <http://www.pfnyc.org/staff.html>

27 <http://www.pfnyc.org/>

28 <http://www.momsrising.org/aboutmomsrising>

29 <http://www.moveon.org/about.html>

30 Maternal profiling is discrimination based on whether a woman has children. For more, see: <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/06260/721997-109.stm>

31 The Winning Beginning New York Campaign, co-led by Nancy Kolben <http://winningbeginningny.org/>

Is this a winning political issue, especially as it relates to what Randi Weingarten pointed out about preschool not just being about a program, but about meeting the needs of working people? Is this a way—in Oklahoma—to turn red blue? Is this a way to communicate a broader progressive message?

—Andrea Batista Schlesinger
Drum Major Institute for Public Policy

this question to Senator Williams and Speaker Quinn, because a lot of people here are not necessarily experts in this area, but are interested in issues that will help progressives win. I'm defining "progressives" here as people who believe government can play a positive role in peoples' lives. Is this a winning political issue, especially as it relates to what Randi pointed out about preschool not just being about a program, but about meeting the needs of working people? Is this a way—in Oklahoma—to turn red blue? Is this a way to communicate a broader progressive message?

COUNCIL SPEAKER CHRISTINE QUINN: I think this is an issue that people care tremendously about. It is, first, about their kids and making sure their kids have the foundation they need to do well in school. But then it's also an issue about working people and about the realities of life for average folks. I think too often people have the perception that government and politics are not connected to the everyday lives of people, that government and politics do not really understand the struggle that every day is in the City of New York. This issue is one where you have two very important and powerful things intersect – our kids and their education. The other key issues here are the reality of the struggle of being a New Yorker, and having a place for your child where they will be safe, well taken care of, educated and stimulated. In some ways—and this isn't, I think, why everyone in this room cares about it, but an additional benefit of preschool—it is a very powerful political issue. It really captures all of those things, and captures and recognizes the challenges and struggles people have every day in their lives. I was at the Marine Park Civic Association two weeks ago and at two churches in Harlem yesterday. At both of those events, the thing that got the biggest round of applause was preschool. Very different crowds, but both had the same level of enthusiasm over this issue. It's really a uniting issue.

I think too often people have the perception that government and politics are not connected to the everyday lives of people, that government and politics do not really understand the struggle that every day is in the City of New York. This issue is one where you have two very important and powerful things intersect—our kids and their education. The other key issues here are the reality of the struggle of being a New Yorker, and having a place for your child where they will be safe, well taken care of, educated and stimulated.

—New York City Council Speaker Christine Quinn

could work together more closely. We're delighted to learn and hear more of what you're doing.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: I feel that lends itself to another question that's certainly key. Does anybody in the room care about politics? I especially want to ask

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: So you could see, for example, candidates running for mayor in 2009 making this a top policy?

COUNCIL SPEAKER CHRISTINE QUINN: Hopefully the issue will be done and solved by then, so I hope not. Hopefully we will have moved on to something else.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: Okay. Let me turn it back out to questions.

QUESTIONER: Thank you. Since we're at the Harvard Club I'll make mention that last Thursday Larry Seabrook,³² Chair of the Civil Rights Committee of the New York City Council, and Robert Jackson,³³ Chair of the Education Committee, held a hearing³⁴ where the Civil Rights Project out of Harvard University presented their nationwide findings that really told us what we already know: that those schools that have the most non-white students and whose students come from the poorest homes do the worst academically. Now, it's amazing—and it's tying into this political question—that no one focuses on the 1966 commission that was done by the United States Department of Education, the Coleman Report.³⁵

PENNY WILLIAMS: Ah, yes.

QUESTIONER: Ah, yes, and I'm glad the progressive Senator from Tulsa would be aware of that because it shifted some of the blame. It said that educational achievement lies within the educational institution, not the child. It shifted the failure of black children to the inequality of education opportunities provided by segregated and powerless schools. I say this to argue that we are always publicizing the school situation with negative indices. There's never a public campaign to talk about positive public, doable situations that can occur. Since we are focusing now on early childhood education, and admittedly in New York City we're talking about CFE in the matter of money, we are asking how much of that money is going to go into early childhood education. This money is going to be supposedly forthcoming on an operational plan. Yet, we aren't even aware that the Department of Education has mandates from that same judicial committee that they have to respond to, one of which must provide information in the form of a sound basic educational report that may be used to measure the performance of the Department of Education, the city schools and its students. It is we, the people, who allow misleading and misrepresentative information to go out regarding the education system, as opposed to coming up with a comprehensive plan to communicate what needs to be done for the betterment of this city and for our children in this city.

VICE CHANCELLOR ADELAIDE SANFORD: Speaking of dollars, do you know the research also shows that those children who receive preschool help progress much

32 http://www.nycouncil.info/constituent/member_details.cfm?con_id=14

33 http://www.nycouncil.info/constituent/member_details.cfm?con_id=76

34 <http://webdocs.nycouncil.info/attachments/75100.htm?CFID=708923&CFTOKEN=75371509>

35 http://www.wier.ca/~%20daniel_schugurensky/assignment1/1966coleman.html

more than other children.³⁶ This is specifically true for those who are low-income. The research now shows that. I don't know if the Harvard Report talked about that, but it's pretty clear. It shows that the low-income children's gains are the big gains. That should be publicized so that the money invested, if policymakers have to choose, will go where the money is going to have the greatest impact and do the most good. Of course we want universality, but I'm just saying, to turn the thing around you've got to have that commitment.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: Geri Palast,³⁷ Executive Director of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity.

GERI PALAST: First of all, thank you, Andrea and DMI and all the panelists for giving CFE such a major plug. And to Moms Rising, we have a major campaign that we are all in the process of gearing up for, which preschool is one of the leading and most important elements of the broader campaign to get CFE litigation completed. Let's move from the litigation to actual law so we can get into implementation. Nancy and Speaker Quinn have done such an extraordinary job. I don't think there's any question in anyone's mind that when CFE gets addressed, preschool will be a leading element of that. I think that particular policy battle, in some sense, is won. But I do think the gentleman who just spoke raises a very critical question as we develop the legislation that will implement the dollars. First, we still have to fight about the dollars, ladies and gentlemen. We're not settled with the dollars. For any of you who are following the litigation, there's an argument over it – two billion dollars or six billion dollars. Six billion is better than two. Let's not forget that we still have that fight. Secondly, though, what we really need to think about when we write this legislation and we integrate preschool into a preschool through 12th grade system, is that we not only think about the inputs, but we really have to think about the accountability component. What we need to set forth on the front end is how we're going to know that the money that goes in comes out, that we can measure those results and that we come back and get more money. I know everybody up there has thought a lot about it, and I thought maybe you could address some of the accountability issues.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: I'm going to ask Speaker Quinn to take that, if you don't mind.

COUNCIL SPEAKER CHRISTINE QUINN: The accountability issue is critical, because it would be the worst thing if we battled to get the money for so long, and then we didn't know where it went or it didn't go where it should've gone. Obviously education is critical in that to make the Council's role in the budget stronger and more hands on, we need to step out of an area where we allowed our roles and our powers to be much more limited than they actually are. One of the areas this year we want to focus on much more aggressively than we ever have before—not just

in education, but I think education will be the place where it is easiest to make the quickest impact—is around the capital budget and really understanding where the dollars are. For us in the Council, the answer to that question is about both aggressive oversight and regular, consistent oversight. It'll be a challenge for the Education Committee, because there's still a lot of other work they're going to need

to do, but I think it's the kind of thing that once the dollars piece is done we're going to have to have monthly or bi-monthly CFE implementation oversight hearings. Whatever it is, we're going to have to be annoyingly verging on micro-managing to get the information we want.

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—New York City Council Speaker Christine Quinn

That is not necessarily because I believe the Department of Education will do a bad job, or even that they will be off target. I don't want to start with that assumption. But our oversight will be that frequent because the battle was so hard and so long, and it's an opportunity that we will have created that we can't possibly let slip through the cracks.

In terms of immediate priorities, we are doing follow up on the 2,100 preschool slots that were created this year. To accomplish this, we have talked about working with an inter-agency task force with both the Department of Education and the Administration for Children's Services on things like the census and on goals, such as making sure next year when we get more slots, they are ones that are put into community-based organizations. It is also a goal to make sure that the roll out next year is somewhat more thoughtful than this year's. I don't mean to be overly critical of the Department of Education, because there were only eight weeks to accomplish this year's roll out. Next year we have twelve months to lead up into the budget battle to make sure we get more.

Our overall effort will be measured when we leave office—not that anyone's counting—in three years and three months. We want to be able to look back and say we lived up to our goal of making all preschool in the city full-day. The other goal for us will be to take the dialogue beyond the end of the school day, and see how we can bring more resources to institute wrap-around programs where families will be able to have their children in programs until five or six o'clock.

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SENATOR PENNY WILLIAMS: Just to add one quick thing: we did two things in Oklahoma. One was that we called for the passage of the Education Reform Bill

³⁶ For a summary of this research, see <http://web.mit.edu/workplacecenter/docs/Full%20Report.pdf>

³⁷ <http://www.cfequity.org/GPbio.htm>

in 1990,³⁸ we created an Office of Accountability and we called for reporting back every year to the people of Oklahoma on what the dollars did, how effective they were, whether education improved, and where the gaps still were. But then, in 2003, we created a partnership for school readiness, which has the inter-agency aspect as well as private sector advocates, business people and other advocates. We have a commission now at the state level that is helping with community capacity so that communities themselves are really able to receive the grants and make the money count. We're such a small state that this process has been easy compared to what you all struggle with.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: Luis Reyes³⁹—we served together on the Board of Education when there was a Board of Education—do you have a question?

LUIS REYES: I wanted to first take note of the fact that more than 50% of three- and four- year-olds in New York City are either immigrant or language minority children. These are children coming from different parts of the world: the Caribbean, Mexico, Asia, Africa as well as Europe. The discussion of early childhood education needs to be put in the context of the cultural and linguistic diversity of the student population. Already in kindergarten through 12th grade, Latinos comprise 39% of students and African Americans comprise 32% of students. We've seen that shift. What we have not seen in the

We have a lack of minority—Latino, African American and Asian—teachers, especially preschool teachers. We have a lack of preschool programs preparing children, especially in terms of bilingual or ESL approaches. My concern is, as we look forward to CFE, are we planning and building a system based on the needs of children when those needs are not only cognitive but they're cultural and linguistic?

—Luis Reyes
Visiting Fellow at the Bronx Institute
Lehman College, City University of New York

early childhood discussion is the research nationally—some of it in New York but in places like California, as well—that shows that early childhood experiences that build on a child's first language and home culture are not only successful, but they are successful in developing the cognitive as well as the family relationship between the school and the community. The question is how do we incorporate this research and this local reality in New York City into early childhood education? Latinos and other immigrant parents, in fact, depend on more and participate more in childcare arrangements in early childhood, as opposed to preschool environments. When you look at the childcare programs in the communities, the staffing and the program approaches are much more reflective of the children, their language and their culture. The question is, as we build a preschool system, how do we build a bridge between a preschool education system that reflects this attention to culture? We have a lack of minority—Latino, African American and Asian—teachers, especially preschool

teachers. We have a lack of preschool programs preparing children, especially in terms of bilingual or ESL approaches. My concern is, as we look forward to CFE, are we planning and building a system based on the needs of children when those needs are not only cognitive but they're cultural and linguistic?

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: Regent Sanford, is Mr. Reyes's question on the agenda of the New York State Board of Regents?

VICE CHANCELLOR ADELAIDE SANFORD: English language learners are very much on the agenda of the Board of Regents. However, the ability to provide the kind of sensitive, linguistically-varied staff to supply the educational programs that are necessary is at a dearth. Those programs are not there. There are not sufficient incentives within the educational community to fund what we would need. For example, we would need to forgive college loans and develop meaningful programs for paraprofessionals to get into the teaching system. The monies are not there for those kinds of incentives. But what I would like to say in response to the question is, unless the issue of this very, very ingrained idea that there is only one language and culture that is of high standard is addressed specifically, there will be devious ways of not dealing with it.

The truth of the matter is, we do not want to bring English language learners into a preschool program that does not respect their language and their home language and their home culture. But that's what we do. In the effort to get them to read English and to do mathematics we forget the affective dimension. I think that has to do with the way we prepare teachers and the kinds of human beings that we are. In reference to a prior question about the Harvard Report on segregation in the schools, you'll note there is universal acceptance of defining the problem in racial terms, whether it's poverty, homelessness, disease, dropping out, or the prison population. No hesitancy in that. But when you begin to look for a solution, they will not allow the solution to be based on the problem. They will begin to talk about universality and everybody. And I think we have to confront that. If you consistently define the problem in these terms then, intelligently, you must develop a solution that has those same constraints. We don't do that. For example, if you look at the issue now with CFE.

There have been several public hearings sponsored by colleges and universities where the topic is, 'Is the Robin Hood Way Right?' Now, how in the world could you assume that you are robbing the rich to give to the poor when for years the wealthier communities got an inordinate share of the resources? If you term it that way, then people will say, 'oh, yes, that's a terrible thing, you can't take

There have been several public hearings sponsored by colleges and universities where the topic is, 'Is the Robin Hood Way Right?' Now, how in the world could you assume that you are robbing the rich to give to the poor when for years the wealthier communities got an inordinate share of the resources? If you term it that way, then people will say, 'oh, yes, that's a terrible thing, you can't take away from the rich.' The truth of the matter is, you rob the hood.

—Vice Chancellor Adelaide Sanford
New York State Board of Regents

³⁸ <http://www.preknow.org/resource/profiles/oklahoma.cfm>

³⁹ Dr. Reyes is currently a visiting fellow at the Bronx Institute, Lehman College, City University of New York. He previously served as a member of the New York City Board of Education and as the director of the Office of Research and Advocacy for Aspira of New York, Inc.

away from the rich.' The truth of the matter is, you rob the hood. But they're not going to say it that way, because it is the phraseology and the concept that we haven't examined. Until we as Americans respect diversity—not just embrace it, people talk about embracing it but we don't respect it, really—we are not going to see the value of many languages. What we should be doing in universal preschool is having dual language programs. That way children who are dominant in English learn other languages and to respect what those other languages and cultures bring to the classroom. But we don't do that. We see English language learners as deficient, as something we have to fix, and that's a wrong perception.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: Do you think if that proposal were made to the Mayor, who I know takes Spanish lessons every day and is committed to the importance of speaking many languages, that the proposal would be accepted and we would be talking about it?

VICE CHANCELLOR ADELAIDE SANFORD: I would like to think that. But you see, the people about whom we are expressing this concern now, they don't reward and they don't punish; they finance. So they are in the role of only being able to appeal to the moral strength of the person. And these financiers have an added dilemma in the form of the political push coming from people who will say, 'not only did I vote for you but I gave you \$10,000.' I would like to think that it would resound with the Mayor, but I am afraid of all of the other financial pressures that he will have to respond to.

NANCY KOLBEN: I want to say several things. One is that, in terms of the immigrant community and the English language learners, I totally agree that having the appropriately trained work force, and the investment in that, is really an essential step that we have to take. I also want to say that children speak close to 60 languages in preschool across the city. One of the things that we heard is that families are seeking to enroll their children in preschool where they might have been afraid

to enroll their children in childcare, for example. With education, people get an opportunity. We have an opportunity to reach out to many families that otherwise would not get this preschool experience. We need to figure out how to really do it right, and to use it as a starting point for creating a base of cultural understanding and language diversity.

Accountability in how money is spent is only one piece of the picture. We need to really know that we're doing the best for our children by using these kinds of assessment strategies appropriately. They are not to judge children as good or bad. They are really to help in children's learning. I think we need to just keep reminding ourselves of that.

—Nancy Kolben
Child Care Inc.

On the whole assessment piece, one of the things we have to really look at is what I would call the inputs. Where are we investing in the workforce and supporting those who are working with children and coming up with appropriate strategies for assessing young children's learning? Are we able to use those assessments

to support young children as they go from preschool to the more traditional K through 12 education experience?

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ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: A question from the audience?

MEREDITH WILEY: I'm Meredith Wiley, the state director for Fight Crime: Invest in Kids,⁴⁰ and everybody in the room needs to know that law enforcement leaders across New York State are all joining together and they're speaking out on behalf of quality early investments in kids, because the research shows us that's one way to prevent crime. And we know, Regent Sanford, to lock up a juvenile delinquent in New York City now is going to cost \$172,000 for one year. That's what four years of Harvard costs, for that one year. In terms of our law enforcement leaders – we have over 300 members now statewide – 90% of the district attorneys are members, nearly 85% of the sheriffs are members, as well as crime victims and chiefs of police from all over the state. Four out of five of New York City's district attorneys are now members of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids. I also co-authored a book on the roots of violence, called *Ghosts From the Nursery*,⁴¹ which looks at the earliest period of brain development and the impact of early adverse experiences on later aggression and violence. We know there's a very strong correlation, for instance, between early childhood abuse and neglect and later aggression and violence. I hope that is not getting lost in the preschool discussion.

New York City already has some very strong pieces in place. You've got a big commitment now to the Nurse Family Partnership Program,⁴² which not only alleviates early abuse and neglect, but it also coaches parents on how to break the cycle of poverty, family violence and child abuse. The program also works to optimize early child development, because that's really where it all lands. I hope we understand that before kids can speak their first complete sentence they already have a very strong take on whether or not the world is safe or dangerous, and they wire their brains in relation to that information. If we get kids going to preschool who have posttraumatic stress—which they do, many of them—and it interferes with learning, it interferes with everything. I hope everyone will read this document that Nancy and many of us all worked on, called "The Best in the Nation,"⁴³ calling for an integrated system of early childhood services of which preschool is an absolute cornerstone. But it's only one piece of the equation.

40 <http://www.fightcrime.org/ny/aboutus.php>

41 <http://books.google.com/books?id=7eHyvFS5NwEC&dq=%22ghosts+from+the+nursery%22>

42 <http://www.nursefamilypartnership.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=home>

43 http://www.winningbeginningny.org/documents/best_in_nation_plan_001.pdf

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: One last question in the back.

DAN JACOBY: Hi. My name is Dan Jacoby. I've been maintaining for several years—with enough success that I'm pretty confident in it—that if you had to pick one number as the benchmark for the quality of a school system that number would be the percentage of parents who attend parent-teacher conferences. Parental involvement is the key. It's a key in so many areas of life. When parents get involved with their kids, kids are less likely to commit crime and get into trouble and other things. I've also been coming to the conclusion recently that the benchmark for the deterioration of a school system is the number of standardized tests kids have to take. But the question is about parental involvement. I want to know what's being

done in Oklahoma, and in New York, to involve parents directly in the preschool and preschool education. I'm interested not only in reaching out to parents to help the kids directly in preschool, but also to train parents in the idea of being involved in their kids' education as they go on throughout the educational process.

PENNY WILLIAMS: Well, it's in the law. Parent education is part of the learning, and many of the parents who are illiterate

or English language learners can come in, and there's an awful lot of volunteer training going on with those parents. Those are the models. Right now I'd say there are probably only twenty of those models that exist in Oklahoma that have the wrap-around services and the volunteer teachers and teacher students coming in from colleges helping build this bridge. In Oklahoma, it's the letter of the law.

VICE CHANCELLOR ADELAIDE SANFORD: I think we have to consider the fact that schools have not been very receptive to parents. They have not had good experiences confronting issues in school. In addition to that, with the energy around the verbalization of wanting parental involvement, there's very little funds allocated to prepare the kinds of materials that parents need. For example, as I go to meetings across the city and across the state, very rarely do I see information for parents about the Board of Regents, what the Regents do, who their Regent is, who their city councilperson is, who their assemblyperson is. Because of the way New York City government is structured, nothing is coherent. You have an assembly district, a senatorial district, a congressional district, a sanitation district, a fire department district, a school board district—and you can imagine how bewildering that is to the average parent. Because nothing comes together and says this is the place I go for the issues that are confronting me in addition to food, clothing and shelter.

However, I think the main issue with the lack of parental involvement is their feeling of powerlessness. For example, teaching is not a profession in New York State. If

your child doesn't have a licensed teacher, doesn't have a textbook, doesn't have a lab and has to take a Regents examination in biology, you have no adjudicative process. Yet there are more than fifty professions that are not fundamental to the existence of the child where you do have an adjudicative process.

It's very easy for underserved people to realize that they're being hoodwinked when they are told that they should be involved parents, but there is no where for them to go to discuss the real problems they face. If teaching were a profession, and if there were some leeway in terms of having pre-parent education, not building the ark while the flood is raging, but helping our young people to understand the tremendous emotional, psychological and economic needs it takes to be a parent in New York and in the United States. But there is no preparation. It just happens. All of a sudden here you are with two children and you have no idea what's involved. If we're going to look at what we do have to do to prepare young people to be parents in our society, and to live in the State of New York, we're going to talk about pre-parenting. And if we're serious about wanting parents to become involved we will have to make teaching a profession.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: I'm going to ask each of the panelists to close. We're about to enter an interesting time in this state with a new administration. If you could give your closing thoughts, but also, if the next governor were here—that person yet to be determined—what's the first step, day one some could say, that that next governor should take when it comes to early childhood education?

NANCY KOLBEN: I'll begin by referring to the plan, "The Best in the Nation", a plan for early care and education, that a very broad coalition of advocates across this state have put together for the first hundred days in the next administration. The first step should be that the next governor implement that plan. As I mentioned, the next governor should start as early learning commission. The second step should be to be sure that in the first budget of the new administration there is increased investment in early education, childcare and early intervention in home visiting. We need to design a system of incentives and compensation for the early childhood workforce, for the professionals who work in this field. We also need to begin the implementation of a quality assurance system that would help programs to really begin on this assessment effort, looking at where they are in relationship to a number of different national standards. We are here. We are ready to help any new administration that comes in with lots of knowledge, experience and energy, and we believe that this must be made a priority immediately. It cannot wait.

VICE CHANCELLOR ADELAIDE SANFORD: I would like to ask the new governor if he would read the literature that relates to the benefits of early childhood education, if he knows the data in terms of people who are in prison and how they got there, or people who are in poverty and why they remain in poverty as it relates to opportunities for a sound basic education. I'd like for him to have a staff member whose specific responsibility is to interface with people who are most in need. I would like to ask him to talk about the lack of integration in his conversations

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—Vice Chancellor Adelaide Sanford
New York State Board of Regents

with the business community. In New York it's de facto segregation. And it's the business community and the people who control the real estate market who determine that people stay in specific locations that are bound by poverty, poor transportation, and housing projects.

I think there's a quality of in-depth, analytic, strategic conversation that we're not having. I would ask the next governor to engage in that, and to see if he has any sense of what it means to be poor.

Not all incentives have to be dollar incentives. They can be alternative certification for mid-career people who have a wealth of experience and speak languages and love kids and just want to help. Those people are many times right there in the schools, right now.

—Oklahoma State Senator Penny Williams

PENNY WILLIAMS: It is really fun to get to suggest to your incoming New York governor what is most important. I will say that the answer may be in the question. What is the most important question you can bring to this new governor? Maybe the question is something like, who is it we want in these centers and programs and classrooms with our children? How do we get them? Once we know who we want, we know that there's a dearth of people who can appropriately relate, who are appropriately conversant with realities of everyday life. How do we get them? I would say the answer is somewhere in the neighborhood of everywhere. Not just through the colleges and universities and that pipeline. Because looking at that, there is definitely a dire shortage all across the nation. You also need to look for people considering mid-career change. Not all incentives have to be dollar incentives. They can be alternative certification for mid-career people who have a wealth of experience and speak languages and love kids and just want to help. Those people are many times right there in the schools, right now. The para- professionals, as you say. Incentives, incentives, incentives. Get the people we desperately need to be there for these early programs.

ANDREA BATISTA SCHLESINGER: A round of applause for our panel. I just wanted to tell everyone, because I'm sure there are pieces of this that you wanted to remember and weren't able to write down, that you'll be able to watch this event on CUNY-TV soon on our website, where you can also watch all of the other events in the Marketplace of Ideas. Thank you very much for coming.

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—NEW YORK STATE SENATOR LIZ KRUEGER

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