



Testimony to be delivered to the New York City Council Committee on Education

Re: Impact of COVID-19 on Student Learning and Academic Achievement

January 20, 2021

Good afternoon. I am Maggie Moroff and I coordinate the ARISE Coalition, a group of several hundred parents, advocates, educators, and academics advocating for systemic changes to the day-to-day experiences and long-term outcomes for students with disabilities in our public schools. This past year, the many obstacles to instruction and achievement typically faced by our students have been magnified to unfathomable degrees.

We call your attention to four areas of particular importance for our students in this context.

- The need to considerably expand the literacy supports offered to students and to provide systematic, evidence-based core instruction and appropriate interventions to ensure all students learn to read – especially in light of the tremendous learning loss that’s taken place as a result of the pandemic.
- The import of developing true partnership with families – seeking on-going input in the development and inevitable modifications to the individual student special education plans the DOE is currently using known as Program and Related Services Adaptations Documents.
- The need to provide parents with real-time information about the supports and services their children receive pursuant to their IEPs. Parents need to know whether or not their children are now and continue to be offered those supports.

- Lastly, when it is safe for all children to return to school, the learning losses will be significant for all, and magnified for those with the greatest needs, including students with disabilities. ARISE members join the other voices here in calling for a well thought out, well-resourced plan to assess the academic and social-emotional damage done during Covid and to develop plans to address those for all students, including the over 200,000 students with disabilities in New York City. Such a plan must include the make-up instruction and services that students with disabilities have the legal right to receive.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have about my testimony.