Testimony of the NYU Metropolitan Center
before
The New York State Assembly Standing Committee on Education

May 10, 2019

Good Morning Chairperson Benedetto and all Assembly Members present. My name is Dr. David E. Kirkland, and I am the Executive Director of The New York University Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and The Transformation of Schools. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and share my expertise on issues related to educational justice and school integration.

Despite its extraordinary overall diversity, New York City has one of the most segregated school systems in the country, and its segregation has actually worsened over the past forty years. In more than half of the city's 1,600 public schools, Black and Latinx students comprise at least 90 percent of the student population, and in more than half of the city's thirty-two community school districts, schools are similarly hyper-segregated. Meanwhile, half of the city's white students are concentrated in just 7 percent of the city's schools, and half of the city's Asian students are concentrated in just 6 percent of schools. The typical Black and Latinx student attends school where nearly 70 percent of the students are low-income, whereas only 29 percent of the typical white student's classmates are low-income. What results is consistent and stark educational inequity.

Over the past three years, advocates, educators, and legislators have begun to address this systemic and gross inequity. While NYU Metro Center has always remained committed to promoting educational equity and school integration, we recently began working as a crucial organizational base and resource center for four organizations who also seek to advance this cause: NYC Alliance for School Integration (ASID), New York Appleseed, IntegrateNYC4Me, and the National Coalition for School Diversity (NCSD). Through our collaboration with these partners, we seek to raise awareness about issues of school integration and desegregation through advocacy and organized action, conducting research, and facilitating dialogue by convening experts, educators, parents and students in our learning spaces.

For over forty years, NYU Metro Center has promoted equity and opportunity in education through engaged science work: applied research, program evaluation, policy analysis, community engagement, and professional assistance to educational, governmental, and community agencies serving vulnerable populations. Our mission is to engage educational equity issues by providing leadership and support to students, parents, teachers, administrators, and policy makers. As leading national scholars and advocates for educational justice, we hope to partner with the State Assembly to address some of the many complex questions at the center of equity and social justice in the New York City education system.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. We welcome any additional questions the Committee may have. (Please contact Konstantine Tettonis, NYU Government Affairs, kt1249@nyu.edu)