Good morning. Thank you Chairman Miller and Congressman McKeon for inviting me to testify today. Also thank you to Congresswoman Yvette Clarke for all her help in representing New York City.

This morning, I will discuss some of the innovative ways we're promoting teacher excellence in New York City. But first, I'd like to reiterate a point I made when I testified before this committee last summer.

The law that we're discussing today, No Child Left Behind, might not be perfect, but it is very valuable. It forces us to focus on student performance and recognizes that the achievement gap—the gap that separates our African-American and Latino students from their white peers—is the chief problem in American schooling. This law puts muscle behind the attempt to close that gap. It requires us to report student performance in grades three through eight by race and poverty status. We can no longer mask the deficiencies of some students with outsized gains by others.

Now, NCLB can be improved and I have proposed ways to do that. But to criticize the heart of No Child Left Behind is to refuse to take responsibility for student performance and especially for the achievement gap—the most serious civil rights, social, and economic crisis facing America today. We should learn from our experiences and make a good thing better, but we should not consider diluting or destroying a law that forces us to confront our problems head on. We must not yield to the critics of NCLB because, I believe, their complaints are missing the law's broader significance.

Now, to the topic at hand.

We know how important good teachers are. Research shows that an average student lucky enough to have three teachers in a row in the top 25 percent of all our teachers will improve, rising from the 50th to the 60th percentile. But a student with three teachers in a row in the bottom 25 percent will fall from the 50th to the 40th percentile. The difference between those two outcomes is enormous, especially when you consider 13 years of education.

It's clear that one of the best ways to raise student performance is to increase the number of effective teachers and reduce the number of ineffective teachers. Thankfully, the large majority of teachers are hard-working, competent, and committed. Our challenge is to make sure that all students are taught by successful teachers.

One way we're meeting that challenge under Mayor Bloomberg's leadership in New York City is by recruiting and retaining more excellent teachers, especially in hard-to-staff subjects and high-needs schools.

We used to lose great teachers simply because we couldn't pay them competitively. So we've raised starting teacher salaries by 43% since 2002, bringing teacher salaries much closer to salaries in nearby high-income districts.

We've created two new programs specifically to address our shortage of math and science teachers—a problem facing cities nationwide. The Housing Incentive Program gives bonuses of up to $15,000 to experienced shortage-area teachers who commit to spending three years in one of our high-needs schools. This incentive has already brought about 100 teachers to New York City.

The second program, the Partnership for Teacher Excellence, is a new approach to teacher preparation that trains math and science teachers by giving them on-the-ground experience in our schools. These students receive tuition assistance at the City University of New York or New York University in exchange for a commitment to teach in a high-needs school. The first graduates of this program will start teaching in our classrooms this fall.

We also created the Lead Teacher program last year to reward excellent teachers and encourage them to remain in our schools to help their peers. Lead Teachers earn an additional $10,000 a year to mentor and coach other teachers while also teaching students. They work in the schools that need their experience the most—those that are struggling to meet their academic goals. About 200 Lead Teachers are working in our highest-need schools this year.

I'd like to commend Chairman Miller for proposing the TEACH ACT, which would provide incentive pay to teachers in high need areas. This would complement existing New York City efforts to attract top-quality teachers to our high-needs schools.

I would urge Congress go further and provide pay for performance—especially for teachers in struggling schools—based on state or city value-added accountability systems approved by the Secretary of Education. We must reward teachers who make great progress with our struggling students. Not every challenge is the same in life; that's also true in education and Congress should recognize it as such.

We recently created this type of incentive for our principals, through negotiations with the Council for School Supervisors and Administrators. The new contract permits the Chancellor to create "Executive Principal" positions, allowing the Department of Education to raise by $25,000 the salaries of high-performing principals who voluntarily agree to lead high-needs schools for at least three years. It also allows the Chancellor to pay principals performance-based bonuses of up to $25,000. Similar incentives for our teachers would go a long way toward attracting and retaining top-quality teachers in our highest needs schools.

We're already seeing impressive results from these initiatives and our other recruitment efforts. We are receiving about five applications for every teacher we hire, meaning that our schools are more selective than ever before.

I've spoken so far about how we've improved the quality of the new teachers we hire. We're also taking an important step to improve the quality of the teachers we've already hired. We intend to make tenure a well-deserved honor, not a routine right. Today tenure is nearly automatic. About 99% of teachers who serve for three years in our system receive tenure as a matter of course. This is the default position. We want as many teachers as possible to become tenured, but we want them to earn it on the merits. This is so important because once a teacher has tenure, he or she basically enjoys lifetime job security.

Under our new tenure proposal, principals will receive a new set of supports and tools to ensure that this incredibly important decision is made in a rigorous, thoughtful, and fact-based manner. For example, this spring, we launched something called the "Tenure Notification System," which notifies principals when their teachers' probationary periods are nearing a close.

Not everyone is going to be a good teacher, and it's up to principals to carefully assess each candidate and determine whether he or she deserves the substantial job protection afforded by tenure. We want to ensure that all of our children have great teachers; we cannot afford to let ineffective teachers remain in our system. This new Tenure Notification System will help principals consider whether teachers who are eligible for tenure deserve it.

Under our new tenure review system, we also intend to take teacher impact on student performance into account. Using student outcomes as a measure of teacher quality is controversial in some quarters, but if we are really going to change things, we need to acknowledge candidly that results matter: research shows that past teaching success is the single best predictor of future success. It's not right to hold students accountable for high achievement without also holding adults accountable for their own performance.

We are working with the United Federation of Teachers to create a new peer intervention program for struggling teachers. Where this remediation fails, we will help principals remove the lowest performers.

And we are giving our educators new tools to help them improve the work they do every day by measuring and analyzing how well students are learning.

We are providing all schools with periodic assessments, which are diagnostic tools aligned with curriculum that teachers will use over the course of the year to learn about their students' strengths and weaknesses. This will help educators adjust instruction to each student's individual needs in time to make an immediate difference. To help make all of this new information available in a timely way, we are launching a powerful new

data and knowledge management system called the Achievement Reporting and Innovation System (ARIS). ARIS will put critical information—about results on periodic assessments, end of year standardized exams, and other results—at the fingertips of principals, teachers, and parents.

Unfortunately, by focusing exclusively on credentials in defining a "highly qualified" teacher, NCLB abandons teacher quality at the classroom door. We need to ensure that we hire qualified teachers, but we also need to ask whether those teachers are actually helping students learn.

When I testified before this committee last year, I told you that in an age of technology, educators no longer have to guess what a student's problem is and experiment until they find the right solution. Well, schools no longer have to guess about teacher quality, either. It is something we can and should measure. I hope the next version of NCLB will motivate schools to do this, just as we're doing it in New York City.

Thank you. I welcome your questions.