



Oral Testimony  
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New York City Council Education Committee Hearing on  
Oversight - Health & Wellness Instruction in NYC Schools  
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Good afternoon Chairman Treyger and Council Members. My name is Claire Raffel. On behalf of the Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education & Policy, Program in Nutrition, Teachers College Columbia University, I want to thank you for this opportunity to share our views on Int 1283. I also want to thank Councilmember Treyger and Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer for introducing this important legislation.

I want to start with one of my favorite quotes from Teachers College Emeritus Professor Dr. Joan Dye Gussow: "Teaching food and nutrition might be viewed as the single most important educational activity of a society; if persons do not learn to obtain and consume food so as to sustain themselves and their dependents, all other learnings are irrelevant."

Too many New York City students, especially those at the intersection of race and poverty, struggle with health and educational disparities that we can prevent. Great food and nutrition education is a critical ingredient in the recipe for a healthy school community. Through engaging activities, students become motivated and empowered to make food choices that promote health, ecological sustainability, and social justice. They gain confidence to navigate our challenging food supply and advocate for better food.

ALL New York City students deserve healthy, equitable, sustainable, and culturally responsive food access and education. Yet currently, this is not the case. Research we published shows that nearly half the city's schools lack access to external food and nutrition education programs.

That is why we are behind Int 1283. The Department of Education needs to shine a light on the gaps in food and nutrition education so that parents, students, educators, advocates, and policy makers can craft policies that direct resources to the schools and students that need them most.

Thank you again for allowing us to express our support for this bill. We look forward to working with Council Members to pass this critical legislation.