

**TESTIMONY OF LOCAL 372 PRESIDENT SANTOS CRESPO, JR.,
BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION**

**HONORABLE ROBERT JACKSON
CHAIRMAN**

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2013

Good Morning.

My name is Santos Crespo, Jr. I am president of Local 372, District Council 37. I want to first thank Chairman Jackson and the members of the Education Committee for your time and concern in ensuring the needs and concerns of New Yorkers concerning privacy are addressed in Resolution 1768-2013.

Our union represents more than more than 20,000 non-teaching employees within the New York City public school system. Our members are the Parent Coordinators, School Aides, Crossing Guards, and Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention Specialists (SAPIS) counselors.

Our members are the men and women who are the bridge that leads our children safely from their homes to the school door; provide the healthy, nutritious meals; ensure the hallways and school yards are safe; provide the intervention services to those students who fall to the temptations of drugs and alcohol; and provide the vital link between the school and the local community. As the people that are entrusted to protect our children we could not stand idly by and permit New York State Education Department to partner with an outside vendor to create a student data and third-party application that compromises privacy.

We applaud the NYSED's goal of seeking to provide educators, students and families with, allow me to use their words: "high quality data tools and educational content to support our schools in delivering excellent instruction while transitioning to common core." Unfortunately this is the wrong approach.

In a world where computer hackers are able to steal personal information at-will it seems counter-intuitive for the NYSED to agree to share confidential student information with corporate entities. This shared information would include: names, addresses, test scores, disciplinary and attendance records, race, ethnicity, disabilities and other highly sensitive information.

This should be disconcerting to all parents especially considering that the NYSED will be making this information available to commercial vendors to be used in the development marketing learning products. It is deplorable to compromise our student's privacy so that corporations can utilize in the creation of products to be sold right back to us.

It is yet another example of corporate welfare!

What is more frightening still, is the that a proposal like this would even be considered in light of the recent failures of the private contractors who approved the hiring of Edward Snowden and the man who launched the murderous rampage at the Washington Navy Yard.

And, frankly our state and local governments do not have the best track record concerning its contracts with third-party vendors. From the City Time fiasco to Sodexo siphoning cash from kids and soldiers our tax payers continue to be victim to unscrupulous private contractors. We simply can't take a chance and believe that this time is different and that the outside vendors that the NYSED is seeking to share this information with will not exploit and safeguard it from hackers and other unscrupulous people. The information that NYSED is seeking to provide to third-parties is much too sensitive to take any chances.

Local 372 fully supports this resolution and urges the Legislature and Governor to enact A.6059/S4284 into law and create safeguards on the release of sensitive and personal information about students, and that parental or student consent should be part of any process releasing personally identifiable student information to third parties.