

Remarks of Vivian Higueta
As Prepared for Delivery to the Joint Fiscal
Committees of the Legislature
Education Hearing
January 27, 2016

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Thank you, Dr. Kappen.

And thank you members of the Legislature.

My name is Vivian Higueta. I go to the New York Institute for Special Education. I have been a student at the Institute since 2003. And I live in College Point Queens with my family – and we cheer for the Mets and the Yankees.

My favorite subjects are math, as well practical instruction that readies me for the real world.

I am visually impaired – my vision is 20/250 and while not blind, my vision is severely limited, and without the benefits of numerous surgeries, technologies and specialized instruction I would not be able to read, write or conduct the everyday activities you may take for granted.

With my right eye, I get to see, and with the help of several specialized devices I can write and read.

These include:

My hand-held magnifier:

A visio-book to provide mobil magnification of written material;

A victorstream to provide downloaded audio content;

A telescope for assistance with long-distance vision such as in an auditorium or theatre; and

My ipad.

These are essential devices for those who are visually impaired or with low-vision, such as my classmates.

Many of my class mates reside on our campus five days a week, while others such as myself, get up each morning, board a school bus.

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For each of us to succeed and to accomplish our future goals we need a school such as the Institute to accommodate our needs. And, the individualize instruction we receive from our teachers also helps us understand challenging material.

When I graduate from the Institute it is my goal to enroll at Queens College where I would like to study vocational education in the hope of providing the type of support to others that I have received.

I am here today because I want to be a participant in the process. Today is my 18th birthday, and I am committed to lending my voice to advocate for my classmates and friends who are blind, deaf or severely disabled.

Thank you.