The 2016 recipient of the Bernard E. Hughes Award is the New York City Council. The New York City Council is an equal partner with the Mayor in the governing of New York City. They monitor the operation and performance of New York City agencies, legislate on a wide range of subjects, and have sole responsibility for approving the city's budget. Through the budget, the Council establishes priorities, allocates resources and sets the policy agenda for the year. In October 2015, the New York City Council unanimously passed legislation to ensure public school students are receiving the state-mandated physical education they are entitled to. This legislation requires the New York City Department of Education to report the number of minutes and frequency of physical education at each grade level, the number of full-time and part-time certified teachers at each school and report information on the on-site and off-site spaces used for instruction. This data is reported to the City Council Speaker and posted on its website, allowing parents and others to monitor how much physical education is taught at their children’s school. The New York City Council is funding a new three-year Physical Education Works initiative that is implemented by the Office of School Wellness Programs, within the New York City Department of Education. This initiative is a part of a City Hall directed effort to improve the provision of quality physical education Citywide. This initiative provides funding for 50 elementary schools in targeted districts to bolster physical education programs. Council Member Elizabeth Crowley said, “Comprehensive, quality physical education, during the school day has been shown to improve children’s health, focus and academic performance. This bill is about fairness; by knowing which schools are falling short, we can provide resources to help them meet the State’s standards.”

President Rose, It is my honor to present to you the recipient of the 2016 Bernard E. Hughes Award the New York City Council.