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The State Legislature should hold hearings on the city's refusal to reduce class size as part of the Contract for Excellence law

In the Campaign for Fiscal Equity case, NY State's highest court concluded that NYC students were deprived of their constitutional right to an adequate education in part because of their large class sizes. The Contracts for Excellence (C4E) law passed in 2007 required NYC to submit a plan to reduce class size in all grades in return for receiving billions of dollars in additional state aid. Yet every year since the law was passed, class sizes have increased and are now the largest in eleven years in the early grades.

Proposal: The State Legislature should hold hearings in NYC on the city's refusal to comply with the state law on class size.

Rationale: Smaller classes have been the top priority of parents on the DOE Learning Environment survey every year for the past four, and 86% of NYC principals say they are unable to provide a quality education because of excessive class sizes. In 2007, the DOE submitted a class size reduction plan calling for average class sizes of no more than 20 students per class in grades K-3; 23 students per class in 4-8th grades, and 25 students per class in high school. DOE has received more than two billion dollars in total C4E funds since 2007; but class sizes have risen sharply in all grades since then.

This school year, 2011-2012, was supposed to be the final year of the city's 5-yr mandated reduction plan. Yet class sizes are now the largest in eleven years in the early grades. The city has received more than \$2 billion in cumulative C4E funds since 2007; and nearly \$531M this year alone. Meanwhile, the DOE estimated that it would only cost \$358 million to achieve the goals in its class size reduction plan.

There were also grave problems with the public process this year: The state and the city scheduled C4E presentations after the funds had already been allocated, contrary to the intent of the law, and there was a pre-approval process, in which DOE submitted its plan to the state education department before any public input had occurred, also contrary to the intent of the law. The DOE refused to hold borough hearings, as required by law. We are calling on the NY State Legislature to hold hearings on the city's failure to use available C4E funds to reduce class size despite its legal and moral obligations to do so.

Endorsed by Class Size Matters and the Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council, 3/8/12.