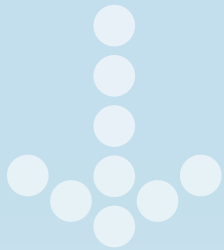


CLASS SIZE MATTERS

F.A.Q.s about C4E law

www.classsizematters.org



After years of debate, in 2006 the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE), a non-profit advocacy group, won a landmark case against the State of New York.

The state's highest court concluded that NYC children were denied their constitutional right to an adequate education, in large part because of excessive class sizes.¹

This led directly to the passage of a state law in 2007 called the [Contracts for Excellence \(C4E\)](#).²

“What’s happened to NYC class sizes in the last 5 years?”

CONTRACTS FOR EXCELLENCE (C4E)

The Contracts for Excellence (C4E) law, passed in 2007, required NYC's Department of Education (DOE) to reduce its class sizes in all grades over a 5-year period.

The 5-year plan, submitted by the DOE and approved by the state, mandated that NYC DOE reduce the size of general education and inclusion classes to the following citywide averages by the fall of 2011.³

Grades	C4E Class Size Goals by 2011
K-3rd	19.9
4th-8th	22.9
9th-12th (core classes only)	24.5

In return, the DOE has received over \$2 billion in cumulative state aid since the plan's inception. Yet class size averages have risen sharply for four years in a row at all grade levels.

In the [early grades](#), class sizes are now the largest they have been in 13 years.⁴

- 85% of all students in grades K-3 exceeded the 2011 C4E goal of 20.
- 81% of all students in 4th-8th grade exceed the goal of 23.
- 71% of all students in high school exceeded the goal of 25, according to [DOE data](#).⁵

continued on the next page

Class Size Matters



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¹ Campaign for Fiscal Equity, Inc., et al. v. State of New York, et al., 100 N.Y.2d 893, 911-12 (2003).

² NYS Education law § 211-D Contract for Excellence; posted at http://law.onecle.com/new-york/education/EDN0211-D_211-D.html

³ http://eservices.nysed.gov/c4e-public/reports/2007/NYC/Other/NYCDOE%20CSRP%205YR_11%208%2007_FINAL.doc

⁴ <http://www.classsizematters.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/C4E-for-citywide-final.ppt>

⁵ We used the Jan. 30 figures for 2011-12 school year in grades K-8, but the Oct. 31 figures for high school; thousands of high school students drop out between October and January every year. For MS and HS we used English classes. See Citywide distribution class size files at <http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/data/classsize/classize.htm>

“Why have class sizes increased?”

BUDGET CUTS

DOE has repeatedly cut NYC school budgets, amounting to nearly 14% since 2007. These cuts violate the C4E law that additional funding must be “used to supplement, and not supplant funds” already allocated by the district.¹

SPECIAL EDUCATION INITIATIVE

As part of their new inclusion initiative, DOE told principals that they must accommodate special needs students in regular classrooms, up to the contractual maximum class size. Read more here: <http://goo.gl/F2dSC>

ELIMINATION OF EARLY GRADE CLASS SIZE REDUCTION PROGRAM

The 2010 elimination of the Early Grade Class Size Reduction Program, which had existed since 1999, occurred despite DOE's promise to retain it as part of its approved C4E plan.²

CHANGES IN UNION LIMITS

The DOE's decision to no longer abide by a long-standing side agreement with the teacher's union to [cap class sizes](#) at 28 in grades 1st-3rd has resulted in unprecedented class size increases in these grades at many schools.³

OVERCROWDING

Worsening school overcrowding, caused by rampant co-locations, rising enrollment, and the DOE's failure to align its school construction plan with its class size reduction plan, have also driven up class sizes. This is despite specific language in the C4E law which requires that the city's C4E plan and its school construction plan be [aligned](#).⁴

DISINVESTMENT IN THE CLASSROOM

Though thousands of out-of-classroom positions have been added since 2007, there has been a sharp decline in the number of general education teachers.⁵

CAN WE AFFORD TO REDUCE CLASS SIZE?

According to NY State Education Department, NYC received more than [\\$500 million](#) in C4E funds last year.⁷ DOE has estimated it would cost only [\\$358 million](#) to achieve the average class size goals put forth in their C4E plan.⁸ With a total education budget of more than \$21 billion, achieving these goals would cost less than 2% of their overall budget. Yet class sizes continue to increase across all grades.

LACK OF OVERSIGHT

Without proper oversight and support, there's no way to ensure schools that are receiving C4E funds use these funds appropriately. Principals tell us that when they try to reduce class sizes, the DOE often just sends more students to the school.

“What can I do about my child's class size?”

Get involved in the fight!

File a complaint.

- If your child's class size is larger than the C4E goals, supposed to be achieved by the fall of 2011 (see reverse side), then let us file a complaint for you by filling your child's information here (<http://goo.gl/JHwOD>). Or email us at info@classsizematters.org.

Complete our 2 minute survey!

- We are surveying parents, teachers, students and administrators about their schools' class sizes here (<http://goo.gl/UuZKI>).

¹ Fernanda Santos, “Lessons in Austerity: How City Principals Make Budgets Work,” NY Times, August 17, 2011.

² http://eservices.nysed.gov/c4e-public/reports/2007/NYC/Other/NYCDOE%20CSRP%205YR_11%208%2007_FINAL.doc

³ “Number of Elementary School Students in Very Large Classes Has Skyrocketed Since 2008,” March 2012, at <http://bradlander.com/largeclasses>

⁴ <http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2008Meetings/July2008/0708emsca10.htm>

⁵ Jennifer Medina, “With More Money, City Schools Added Jobs,” NY Times, June 30, 2009.

⁷ http://www.p12.nysed.gov/mgtserv/C4E/11-12_C4E/doc/C4E_2011-12-MOE_Post.XLS

⁸ http://www.p12.nysed.gov/mgtserv/C4E/doc/nyc_class_size_reduction_plan/2009_2010/SED_Response_11232009.pdf