

**Testimony by Kathy Park Price, Brooklyn Parent Leader and Community Advocate**  
**City Council Hearing, Education Committee**  
**Issue: Fund Class Size Reduction in NYC Public Schools**  
**Friday, February 28, 2020**

Thank you Chairman Treyger for the opportunity to share my strong support of smaller class sizes in New York City public schools.

My name is Kathy Park Price. I'm here as the parent of two elementary school students in Brooklyn and the founder of Citizen Squirrel, a Brooklyn-based initiative that encourages families with young children to be civically engaged. My perspective about the benefits of reduced class sizes has also been shaped by my role as a member of CEC15 and the chair of Human Services for Brooklyn Community Board 6's Youth, Human Services and Education Committee.

I'm here because I want all New York City children to get the attention they need to thrive today and become contributing members of society tomorrow. As we heard from many other testimonials, educators, parents and students say that this starts with smaller class sizes. We all know the data that backs this up because Class Size Matters has been sharing the facts for 15 years (only Bernie Sanders has been consistently sharing his values longer!), but common sense tells us smaller class sizes leads to more teacher attention as well as student attention.

I didn't realize it, but my 6-year old daughter wasn't reading at grade level at the beginning of the school year. My 8-year old son had been a voracious reader at a very early age, but I didn't want to compare and was told by educators that students develop reading at various levels. It's true, but then there are delays that can become significant if not addressed. Because my daughter is lucky enough to be in a smaller class, her teachers noticed a delay and created an action plan. They let me and my husband know and we were fortunate enough to support our daughter with a reading specialist. The teachers were also able to give her more support in class. In a larger classroom, even the most qualified teacher could have easily missed the delay or not had the bandwidth to provide any extra attention. In that scenario, a minor delay would have snowballed into a major delay and, in the long run, unnecessarily taxed the student and the school system.

Based on research, we know that class size is the most important in Kindergarten through 3rd grade, when the foundation for learning is built. I'm so grateful that my child's teachers were able to stay attuned to my daughter and her classmates. It's been only four months and my daughter is just about on grade level because her teachers were able to see that reading wasn't clicking easily with her. She's really bright, but she just needed that extra bit of support that is absolutely not available in a large classroom. All of our kids deserve that attention that comes with smaller class sizes.

District 15 has seen a 8.9% increase in K-3rd class size since 2006, and a 17.8% increase in 4th-8th class size since 2006. K-3rd class sizes were smaller than the NY State Legislature's Contracts for Excellence (C4E) goal in 2006 by 0.9 students per class, but are now larger than the C4E goal in 2019 by 4.0 students per class. 4th-8th class sizes were smaller than C4E goal in 2006 by 2.0 students per class, but are now larger than the C4E goal in 2019 by 4.9 students per class.

I can't help but connect the fight for smaller class sizes to the big conversations we are having nationally. We are in a moment when people are realizing the solutions that once felt radical are, in fact, widely supported and must be achieved. Some say that smaller class sizes are too ambitious because we don't have the resources or the real estate, but it's just not true. New York City's class sizes should be smaller as class size reduction is one thing we know for sure boosts educational achievement and supports social-emotional development for all of our children.