

Honorable Council Members,

Thank you for giving parents an opportunity to express our frustrations and deep concerns regarding overcrowded classrooms. My name is Paullette Healy and I am a parent in District 20 and District 75 and am also a member of the CCSE. I have compiled testimony from various teachers, former administrators, parents and educators regarding the struggles they are experiencing with their children and students when faced with the constant increasing numbers filling the classrooms. It's been 17 years since the state Court of Appeals has deemed class sizes are too large in NYC schools, yet more than 325,000 students across are city struggle to learn in schools where class sizes are 30 students or more. Students with learning disabilities struggle to have their IEPs supported, are more prone to outbursts and behavior issues or are held back without the attention necessary to help them succeed in school. Academic intervention is being held in noisy hallways, OT/PT are being done in a supply closets and children with undiagnosed learning obstacles are slipping through the cracks.

Teachers have said, "I'm beyond frustrated having to give a test I know my students will fail because I wasn't given a proper pacing schedule to teach so many kids in one classroom."

"My ICT class is bulging at the seams."

"I'm one person trying to teach 32 kindergarten students, including 10 kids with special needs, behavior problems up the wazoo!"

"Kids coming into these overcrowded environments are leaving with heightened sensory sensitivities, attention challenges and increased anxiety that they didn't have in the beginning of the year."

"With so many kids, I know I'm missing something and that breaks my heart."

Research has shown via Project STAR students earn better grades, better test scores, exhibited improved non-cognitive skills and were less likely to have disciplinary problems when placed in smaller classrooms. They were also more likely to graduate on time and head to college. It also allows the students to receive more feedback from teachers which can feel like their teachers care more about them. This personal human connection inspires them to learn.

Our School Chancellor has said in City Hall hearings and parent Town Halls that he will wait until the state provides more Foundation Aid funding and then task his principals to do what they want with the funding. We think the students of NY have had to wait too long as it is! We urge City Council and our mayor to please allocate \$100 million in next year's budget specifically towards reducing class size in our struggling schools.

In closing, I want to share this statistic...the Literacy Project Foundation has found that across the U.S. 85% of juveniles incarcerated are functionally illiterate and 75% of our nation's inmates have difficulties in basic literacy skills. Prisons actually base some of their future planning on 3rd and 4th grade literacy rates. What does it say about us as a society when we rather use the failings of our schools to forecast our prison population?

Thank you for your time.