

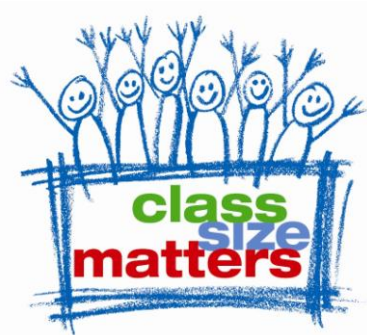
Get Advocacy!

Toolkit

For Parents, Teachers, and Communities

Educate * Organize * Mobilize

Class Size Matters



www.classsizematters.org,
classsizematters@gmail.com

GEM: Grassroots Education Movement



www.grassrootseducationmovement.blogspot.com,
gemnyc@gmail.com

How to organize around your issue

- Network with your PTA, your School Leadership Team, your district Community Education Council and/or the UFT chapter leader at your school.
- Have a meeting at your house, school, local café or other meeting place.
- Develop a message: 3-5 sentences that communicate your position and your values.
- Decide on your goals or “asks”: a concise list of the outcomes that you want; hopefully, they will be specific and measurable, with a rationale to support them.
- Ask parents (and teachers) to sign petitions in front of school.
- Also use online petition sites such as www.ipetitions.com or www.change.org
- Change.org also automatically sends messages to targeted electeds or individuals
- Petitions, either paper or online, are also great for collecting parent contact info and developing an email list.

Hold an event

- Have a rally, protest or press conference in front of your school or City Hall.
- Plan a forum or town hall meeting, at your school, church or elsewhere.
- Be sure to invite elected officials, DOE, parents and education reporters at least a week ahead.
- Email a brief press advisory by 2 PM the day before apnyc@ap.org and reporters in the BCC line, with the date of the event in the subject line, telling where, when and what. Be sure to provide a contact person w/ email and phone no., for more info.
- Take photos and videotape event and post on YouTube and Flickr or other online site.
- Distribute a press release at the event, one or two page document, briefly discussing the issue, with quotes and soundbites from the participants. Send it out shortly after the event has taken place to reporters and others who could not attend..
- Sample press release at www.classsizematters.org/final_press_release_Education_Nation_9.28.10.pdf

Advocacy

- Send letters and/or petitions with a cover letter to elected officials and key decision-makers, including at the state level. (Always keep a copy of your letter and the original petitions!)
- Do not forget to copy and/or contact your state legislators and city council members.
- Schedule meetings with key elected officials who represent you, including other parents in their district.
- Prepare succinct “talking points” to make sure of a coordinated message, and have a pre-meeting with other parents to coordinate roles.
- Demand a written response and bug them until you get one.
- Do not forget to copy and/or contact other electeds.
- Always send a follow-up thank you letter after meeting w/ them; reiterating your points and your asks.
- Follow up with emails to parents and reporters with regular updates about your issue.

How to find NY electeds and other key education officials:

For all your elected reps, go to http://www.lwvnyc.org/TRY_find.html

Mayor Bloomberg: mbloomberg@cityhall.nyc.gov

Chancellor Walcott: dwalcott@cityhall.nyc.gov (may change to dwalcott@schools.nyc.gov)

City Council Speaker Christine Quinn: <http://www.nyccouncil.info/rightnow/contactspkr.cfm>

The Governor: <http://161.11.121.121/govemail>

Speaker of the Assembly Sheldon Silver: speaker@assembly.state.ny.us

NY State Education Commissioner David Steiner: david.steiner@mail.nysed.gov

Board of Regents: email Tony LoFrumento, Regents secretary at tlofrume@mail.nysed.gov

Regents Chancellor Merrill Tisch: mhtisch@mhtisch.com

Other Regents members: <http://www.regents.nysed.gov/members/Membersterms0409.html>

Other key contact info: <http://classsizematters.org/howyoucanhelp.html>

How to piggyback on the news

- Jumping on a news story with your viewpoint is the best way to get your issue out there, but you have to be fast!
- How to stay current? Subscribe to NYC education list serv by emailing nyceducationnews-subscribe@yahoogroups.com, subscribe to DOE press releases at <http://schools.nyc.gov/Subscribe/default.htm>
- Also check out Gotham Schools at least once per day at <http://gothamschools.org/>
- When you see news breaking that relates in any way to your issue, email or call reporters immediately. Reporters are always looking for relevant quotes from parents!
- Pick out a good sound bite first and repeat it frequently.
- Do not overuse your press email list or reporters will start treating your messages as spam.
- Also, write letters to the editor; do not forget the community papers. For the tabloids, keep them as short as possible! Or ask if they want an oped, especially community papers.
- Letters to the three main papers at: voicers@edit.nydailynews.com; letters@nypost.com; letters@nytimes.com

Use social media

- Form a Facebook group or “cause”
- Sign up for Twitter at twitter.com; you will get followers fast!
- Develop your own “hashtag”
- Post your own website and/or blog. It’s free and only takes a few minutes!
- Free blog sites: www.blogger.com, www.blogspot.com/; <http://wordpress.com/>

Media Contacts

NY Daily News: Meredith Kolodner: mkolodner@nydailynews.com; , Rachel Monahan rmonahan@nydailynews.com; Rob Sgobbo (Bronx): rsdobbo@gmail.com; Clare Trapasso (Queens): claretrap@gmail.com ; Juan Gonzalez: jgonzalez@nydailynews.com

El Diario: editor@eldiariony.com

New York Post: Yoav Gonen: yoav.gonen@nypost.com

New York Times: Sharon Otterman: sharon.otterman@nytimes.com

TV: Lindsey Christ, NY1: Lindsey.Christ@ny1news.com; Art McFarland, Channel 7: art.mcfarland@abc.com

Free Weekly Papers: Visit www.yournabe.com, this website has links for free weeklies for all neighborhoods in Brooklyn, Queens and The Bronx. Check out the one for your neighborhood, or look for your neighborhood weekly.

Reporters may change over time; for a full list of media contacts, email leonie@att.net

Advocacy Groups

Class Size Matters: <http://www.classsizematters.org/> is a non-profit, non-partisan clearinghouse for information to parents nationwide on class size and the proven benefits of smaller classes. We also advocate for class size reduction in NYC, where our students continue to suffer from being crammed into the largest classes in the state.

GEM, Grassroots Education Movement: www.grassrootseducationmovement.blogspot.com a coalition of NYC groups that educates and mobilizes educators, parents, students and communities against the corporate and government policies that underfund, undermine and privatize our public school system.

Advocates for Children: <http://www.advocatesforchildren.org/> promotes better education for all students, especially those with disabilities and from low-income backgrounds.

AQE, Alliance for Quality Education: <http://www.ageny.org/> a statewide coalition of organizations working for fair funding and smarter spending to support better schools and give every child a quality education.

Coalition for Educational Justice: <http://www.nyccej.org/> a collaborative of community-based organizations and unions whose members include parents, community members, students and educators.

Coalition for Public Education: <http://forpubliced.blogspot.com/> an independent organization working to ensure that NYC public schools are places of learning in which all stakeholders are engaged in a democratic process to provide a free and quality education to all students from Pre-school to College.

NY Charter Parents Association: <http://nycharterparents.org> the first and only independent charter parent organization for EQUAL access to a quality education for ALL children.

Time Out From Testing: <http://timeoutfromtesting.org/> a statewide coalition of parent, educator, business, community, and civil rights organizations committed to a "time-out" from excessive and high stakes exams.

Education blogs:

<http://nycpublicschoolparents.blogspot.com/>

<http://gothamschools.org/>

<http://edvox.org/>

<http://grassrootseducationmovement.blogspot.com/>

<http://capeducation.blogspot.com>

<http://ednotesonline.blogspot.com/>

<http://nyceducator.com/>

<http://www.edwise.org/>

<http://forpubliced.blogspot.com/>

<http://insideschools.org>

<http://gothamgazette.com/>

<http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/Bridging-Differences/>