

Get Advocacy!

Class size crisis

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UFT parent conference

November 6, 2010

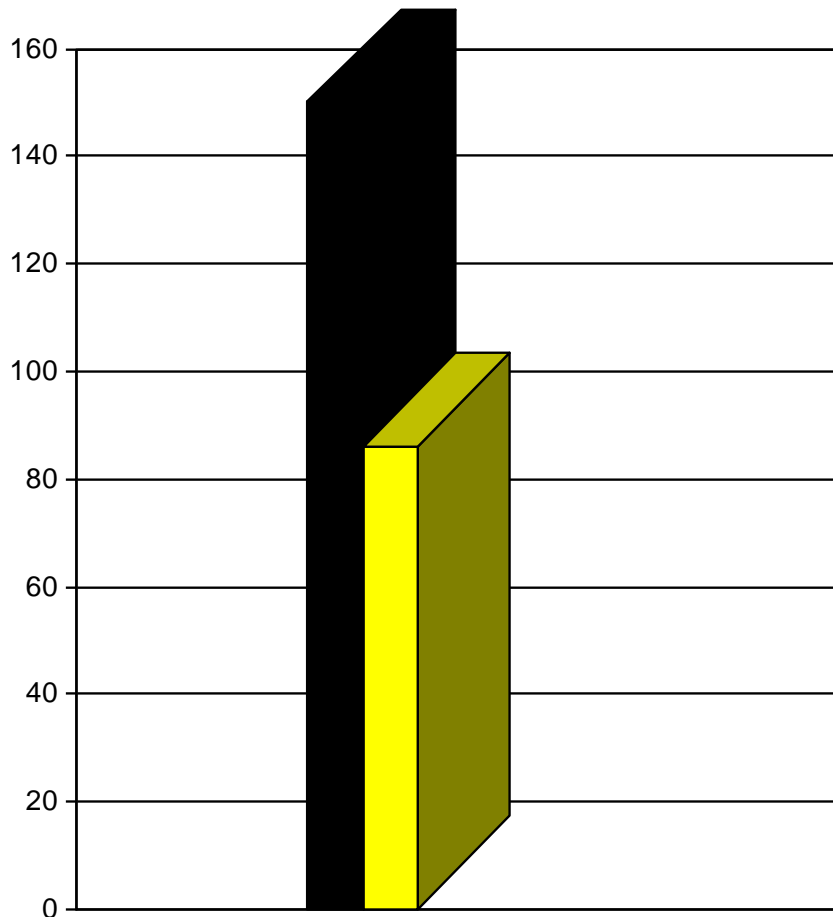
What do NYC parents and principals think about class size?

- Every year, smaller classes are the top priority of parents on the DOE parent surveys.
- Elsewhere in the state, class sizes average 20 students per class in all grades; here in NYC class sizes can be more than 30 students in many schools.
- In a recent survey, 86% of NYC principals said they were unable to provide a quality education to their students because of excessive class sizes.

Benefits of smaller classes

- **Students in smaller classes have higher test scores, better grades, better attendance, fewer students held back, and much less disciplinary problems.**
- **Class size reduction in early grades narrows the achievement gap by about 40%.**
- **In high school, they have higher graduation rates, better grades, and higher scores on their college entrance exams**
- **For those who attended a smaller class, difference in rates between black and white students headed towards college is cut in half.**
- **As adults, more likely to have higher salary and a 401K retirement.**
- **According to US Dept. of Education, class size reduction one of only four education reforms proven to work through rigorous experimental evidence.**
- *(Others are one-on-one tutoring by qualified tutors for at-risk readers in grades 1-3, Life-Skills training for junior high students, and instruction for early readers in phonemic awareness and phonics.*

Average HS teaching load, NYC vs. US



- In NYC, most HS teachers have about 150 students each.
- Nationally, HS teachers have an average teaching load of 89.
- In NYC, correcting weekly written assignments and conferring with each student 5 min. per week would take an average of **37 extra hours a week.**

What did the state's highest court say about class size?

- In the Campaign for Fiscal Equity case, the state's highest court said that NYC class sizes were too large in all grades to provide students their constitutional right to an adequate education.
- *“Plaintiffs presented measurable proof, credited by the trial court, that NYC schools have excessive class sizes, and that class size affects learning.”*
- *“[The] evidence of the advantages of smaller class sizes show a meaningful correlation between the large classes in City schools and the outputs...of poor academic achievement and high dropout rates.”*
- *“[T]ens of thousands of students are placed in overcrowded classrooms...and provided with inadequate facilities and equipment. The number of children in these straits is large enough to represent a systemic failure.”*

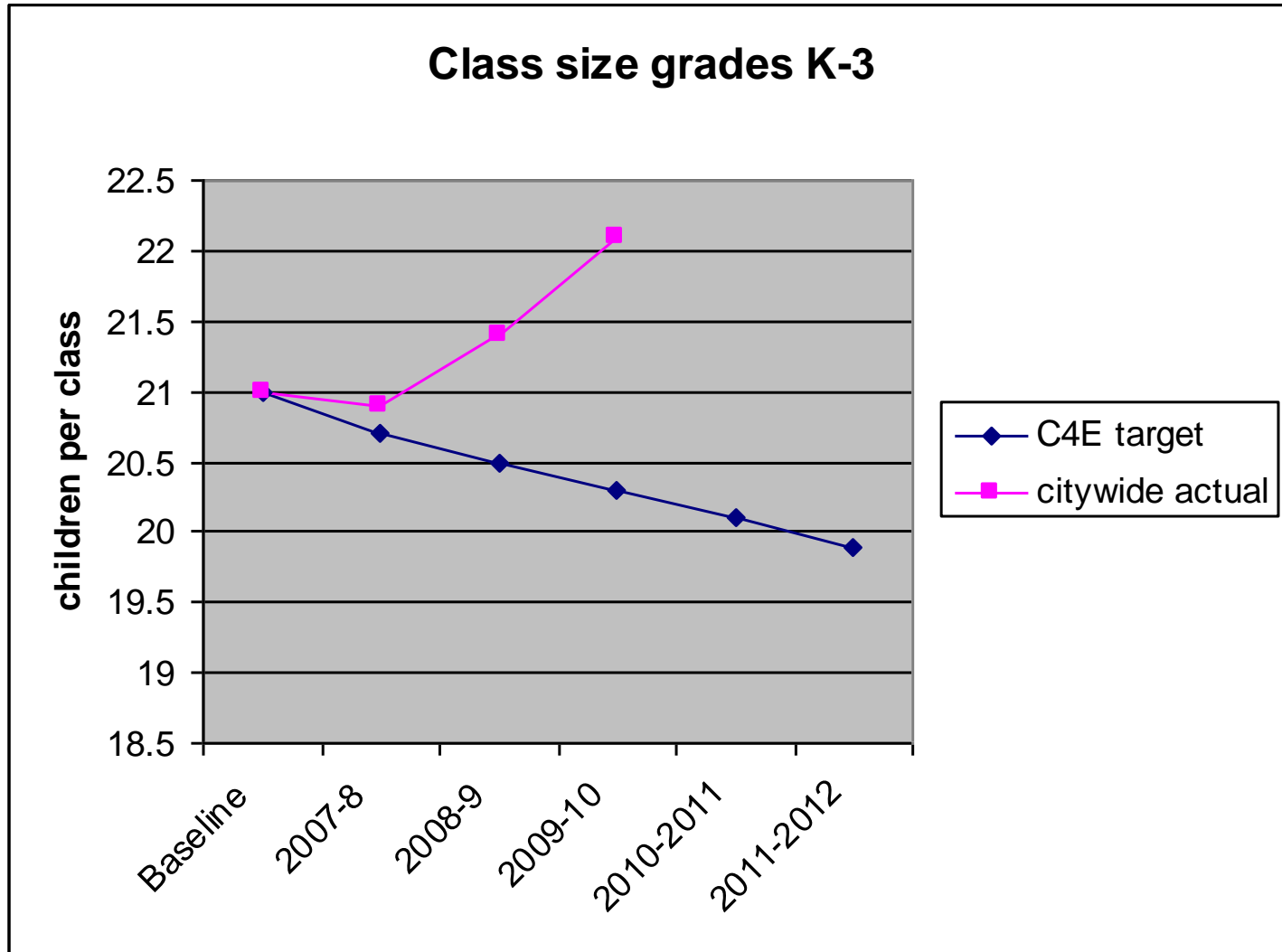
In April 2007, the “Contracts for Excellence” law was passed by the NY state legislature

- Settlement of the CFE case.
- Since 2007, NYC has been provided with \$2.1 billion dollars in additional state funding per year, with nearly \$1 billion of that supposedly allocated towards class size reduction
- ***In exchange, NYC required to submit a five year plan to reduce class size in all grades***

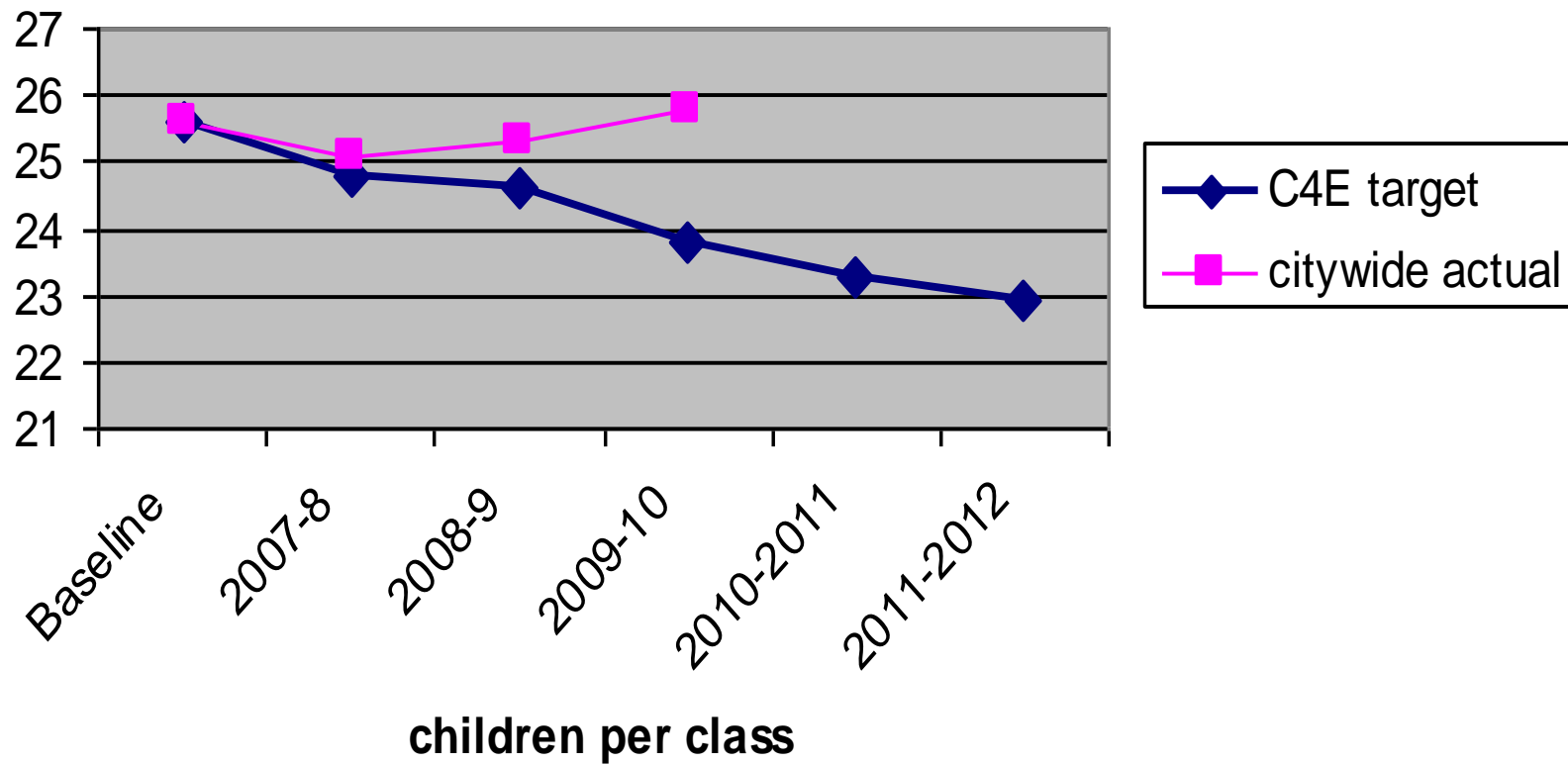
NYC's five year class size reduction plan

- After much resistance and delay, DOE finally submitted a class size reduction plan in fall of 2007.
- Called for average class sizes of no more than 20 in grades K-3, 23 in all other grades by 2011-2012 school year, with annual reduction targets.
- Plan later amended to achieve class size average of 25 in core subjects in HS.

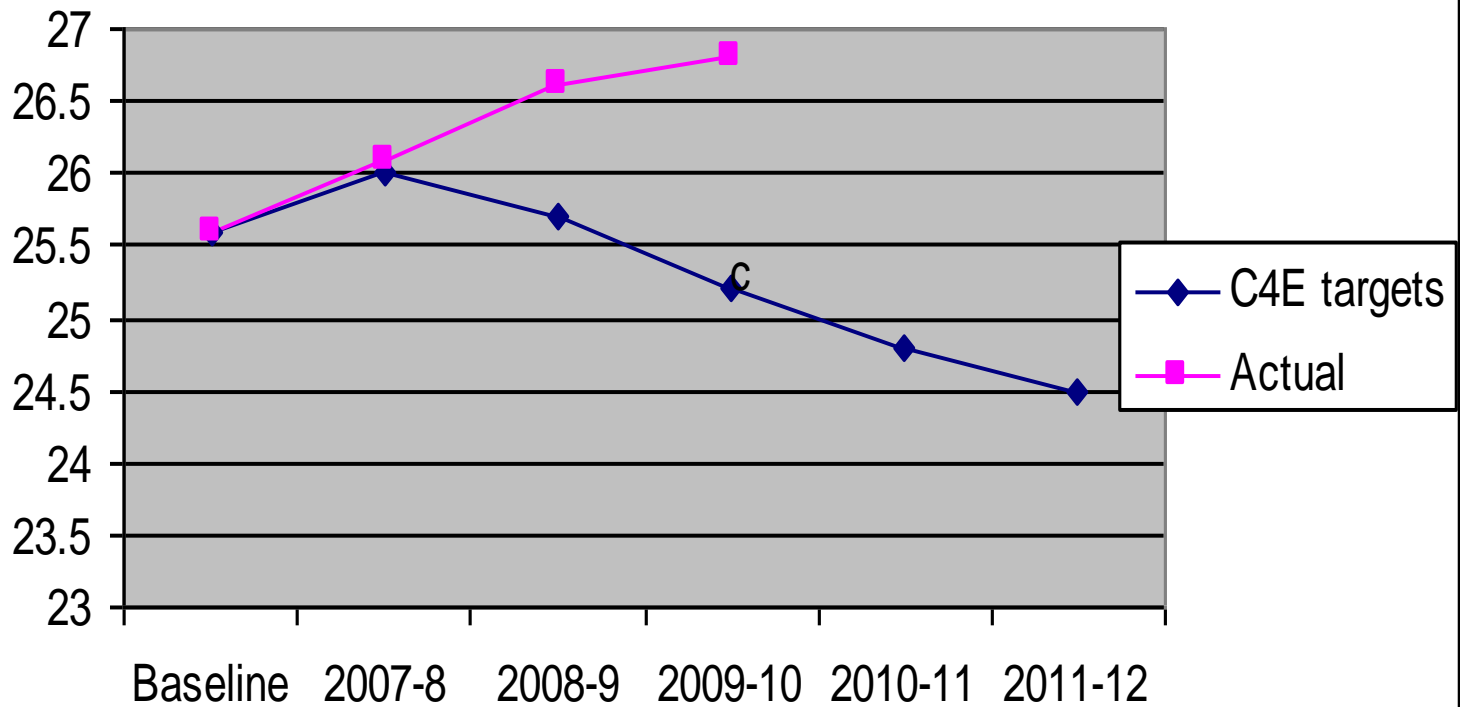
So what happened?



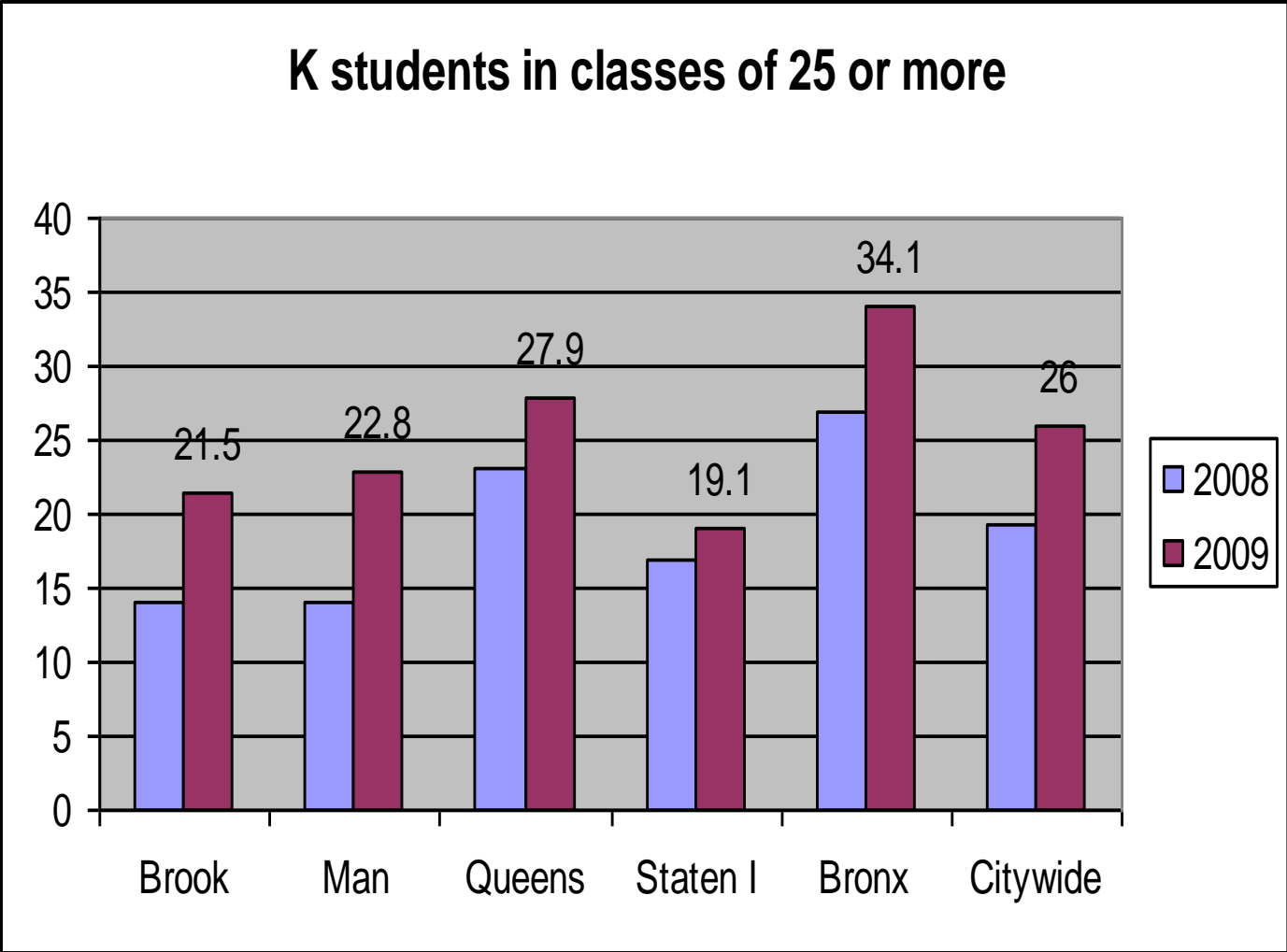
Class size grades 4-8



HS average class size in core academic classes



Esp. big jump in oversized Kindergarten classes



Preliminary decision

- Judge Barone ruled that the court had jurisdiction, and that to appeal to the Commissioner first would cause delay and “irreparable harm” to children.
- DOE is appealing his decision to a higher court.

Lawsuit vs. DOE

- On Jan. 4, 2010, Class Size Matters, along with the UFT, the NAACP, the Hispanic Federation and several parent leaders, filed suit in the Bronx Supreme Court
- We charged the DOE had failed to comply with state law in refusing to reduce class size.
- Among the issues in the case is the city's failure to align its class size goals with its capital plan.
- The DOE argued that the court had no jurisdiction, only the state Commissioner.

After we sued, DOE went to the State Commissioner

- In a secret letter, signed Feb. 23, 2010 by Commissioner Steiner and Klein, Steiner agreed to allow DOE to amend its class size plan.
- In the letter, Steiner said he would disregard the city's legal obligations to reduce class size.
- In a list of 75 high priority schools, class sizes would “increase” by only 50% of citywide increases.
- The letter was only revealed in a Sept.22, 2010 column by Juan Gonzalez
- Whether this agreement is itself legal is uncertain.
- What next? We don't know. The city promised to publicly post its proposed amendment w/in two weeks of budget allocations to schools.
- But as of today, DOE still has not done so.