

THE NETWORK FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

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MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

S. 6296 (Jackson) / A. 7447 (Simon)

An Act requiring an updated class size reduction plan for NYC schools

The Network for Public Education is a national organization **founded by Diane Ravitch in 2013** to preserve, promote, improve and strengthen public schools for both current and future generations of students. We urge the Legislature to support S. 6296 / A. 7447. New York City students continue to be subjected to class sizes 15-30 percent larger than those in the rest of the state, depriving them of an equitable chance to learn.

The Contracts for Excellence Law, originally passed in 2007 to settle the Campaign for Fiscal Equity lawsuit, contained a provision that obligated New York City schools to decrease class size, yet class sizes increased. This act would amend the law by updating the years cited in the law and add certain accountability provisions to better ensure progress in this area. Now that our schools are receiving the full additional aid sought by the CFE lawsuit, the Department of Education should renew its commitment to lower class size and provide an action plan to achieve this critical goal.

Rigorous research has proven that smaller class sizes positively affect learning, school climate, and student engagement. Class size reduction has also been shown to narrow the achievement/opportunity gap between racial, ethnic, and economic groups.

Smaller classes result in fewer disciplinary and special education referrals, as well as lower teacher attrition rates, especially in schools with larger numbers of high-needs students. It is time that NYC children receive the benefits of smaller classes and that the Department of Education be required to develop a plan for this to occur.

Thank you for your attention.

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