



1275 First Ave Suite 225, New York NY 10065

www.NYCKidsPac.org * info@NYCKidsPac.org

MEMO IN SUPPORT

S.6296

A.7447

NYC Kids PAC urges the Legislature to vote in favor of S.6296/ A. 7447, requiring an updated class size reduction plan for NYC schools.

May 11, 2021

NYC Kids PAC is a parent-led Political Action Committee, with members in all five boroughs, focused on advocating for improvements in our public schools.

In 2003, in the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) lawsuit, the NY Court of Appeals concluded that the class sizes in NYC public schools were too large to provide their students with their right to a sound basic education.

The Contracts for Excellence Law, originally passed in 2007 to settle the suit, contained a provision obligating NYC schools to lower class size, yet class sizes increased rather than decreased due to budget cuts, and the years mentioned in the law have now lapsed. This bill would update the years cited in the law in which class sizes should be lowered and add accountability mechanisms to ensure that this actually occurs.

According to NYC Department of Education surveys, class size reduction has been the top priority of the parents and guardians of NYC public school students in grades K through 12 when asked what changes they would like to see in their children's schools, ever since these surveys have been given starting in 2007.

This is not surprising, since smaller classes have been shown through research and experience to have a huge impact on student learning, school climate, test scores, graduation rates, and the opportunity to succeed, especially for students of color and those who are disadvantaged by their economic or disability status.

The benefits for these students have been shown to be twice as large as for all students on average, which is why class size reduction is one of only a very few reforms proven to significantly narrow the achievement/opportunity gap.

And yet our class sizes are 15 to 30 percent large than those in the rest of state, according to NY State Education data. This is a highly inequitable situation which unfairly disadvantages New York City students and cannot stand, especially given the fact that our schools are now due to receive their full Foundation funding from the state.

Now that our schools are receiving the full additional aid sought by the CFE lawsuit, it is only right that the Department of Education should renew its commitment to lower class size and provide an action plan to achieve this critical goal.

For more information, please contact Naila Rosario, NYC Kids PAC president, at info@nyckidspac.org.