



Memo of Support

S.6296

A.7447

To require NYC to update and renew its class size reduction plan

The Alliance for Quality Education urges the Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign S.6296/ A. 7447, to ensure that New York City develops and implements a five-year class size reduction plan.

AQE is dedicated towards making sure that all New York students receive a high-quality and equitable public education, regardless of zip code, race, or economic status.

In 2003, in the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) lawsuit, the Court of Appeals determined that NYC public school students were denied their constitutional right to a sound basic education, in part because their class sizes were too large. In that case, the Court wrote:

“[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.”

And yet class sizes are now larger than when the Court delivered that decision. Due to the efforts of the State legislature, NYC is finally due to receive full Foundation funding as promised by the CFE decision. Now it is time that NYC also delivered smaller classes to its students.

These bills would achieve this goal, by amending and updating the class size requirements in the Contracts for Excellence law, first passed in 2007.

Now more than ever parent, student and educator input is needed to ensure districts make transformative investments in education. In AQE's most recent survey to determine where parents think districts should spend the state and federal dollars for education, the results showed that parents overwhelmingly think districts need to invest in smaller class sizes.

Lowering class size has been proven through research to be one of the best ways to improve student learning, especially for disadvantaged students and students of color. Smaller classes are also the top priority of NYC public school parents with children in grades K through 12, according to surveys given by the NYC Department of Education.

It is time to fulfill the full promise of CFE, which cannot happen until NYC students are provided with the smaller classes that will improve their opportunity to succeed in school and in life, and for that reason we urge you to pass these bills as soon as possible.

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