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Community Board 12 - Manhattan Washington Heights & Inwood

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May 27, 2021

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Re: Resolution supporting the official reduction of Class Size in NYC Schools starting in fall of 2021.

Dear Governor Cuomo:

Please be advised that Community Board 12, Manhattan, passed a resolution with 32 votes in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, 1 not voting, at its Tuesday, May 25th, 2021, General Meeting, acknowledging the need for small class size in NYC public schools and urging the New York State Governor and all Legislatures to sign and pass the bill S.6296 and A07447, so that the NYC Department of Education may develop and implement a five-year citywide class size reduction plan starting in the fall of 2021; and urges the New York City Mayor and the Chancellor to support the NYC Council's proposal to designate at least \$250 million to be used as the first step in this five-year reduction plan.

Whereas: Large classes have been a consistent problem in NYC Public Schools and a serious threat to the advancement of students. It is difficult for students, especially for students with special needs to concentrate and improve their learning performance; and

Whereas: Reducing class size has been the top priority of NYC public school parents with children in grades Kindergarten through 12th when asked what change they would most like to see in their children's school since the Department of Education began to administer parent surveys in 2007; and

Whereas: In 2003, in the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) lawsuit, NY's highest court determined that NYC public school class sizes were too large to provide students with their constitutional right to a sound basic education ; and Class sizes in our public schools have increased since that decision was made, particularly in the early grades; and

Whereas: As of last school year, about one third or over 300,000 NYC students were crammed into classes of 30 or more. According to research reducing class size has proven to be one of the best ways to improve student learning. In fact, smaller classes have been also shown to lead to better grades and test scores, stronger student engagement, and higher graduation; and

Whereas: NYC public schools are finally due to receive more than \$530 million in additional state Foundation Aid next year, rising to \$1.3 billion annually over the next three years, as a direct result of the decision in the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) case; NYC schools are also due to receive approximately \$7 billion in federal funds to be spent over the next two to three years, to help the school system reopen safely, and with additional supports so students can begin to recover from all the disruptions caused by the pandemic; and

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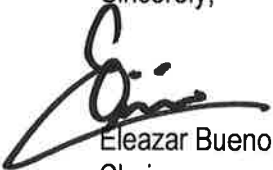
Whereas: After more than a year of remote and blended learning, with the approval of the \$530 million and other potential funds, it would make it easier the implementation of small class size and preventive measure to keep social distancing in NYC public schools culminating in a safety measure next year and beyond; according to the latest NYC Council's budget report for FY 2021, they're proposing to allocate \$110 million to ensure that every public school has at least one full-time a social worker and one full-time guidance counselor." This is another wave of assistance that our students urgently need; and

Whereas: Senator Robert Jackson, the original plaintiff in the CFE case, has introduced a bill in the State Senate, S.6296, that would update the Contracts for Excellence law originally passed in 2007 to settle the CFE lawsuit by renewing NYC's obligation to develop and submit a five-year plan to lower class size; Assembly member Jo Anne Simon has introduced the same bill in the Assembly, A07447; and

Resolved: Community Board 12, Manhattan acknowledges the need for small class size in NYC public schools and urges all Legislatures and the New York State Governor to pass and sign the bill S.6296 and A07447, so that the NYC Department of Education may develop and implement a five-year citywide class size reduction plan starting in the fall of 2021; and

Resolved: Community Board 12, Manhattan urges the New York City Mayor and the Chancellor to support the NYC Council's proposal to designate at least \$250 million to be used as the first step in this five-year reduction plan.

Sincerely,



Eleazar Bueno
Chairperson

cc: Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Jumaane Williams, Public Advocate
Hon. Scott M. Stringer, Comptroller
Hon. Adriano Espaillat, Congressman
Hon. Adriano Espaillat, Congressman
Hon. Jessica Ramos, State Senator
Hon. Carl Heastie, State Assembly Speaker

Hon. Robert Jackson, State Senator
Hon. Brian Benjamin, State Senator
Hon. Carmen De La Rosa, Assembly Member
Hon. Al Taylor, Assembly Member
Hon. Ydanis Rodriguez, Council Member
Hon. Mark Levine, Council Member
Hon. Keith Powers, Council Member