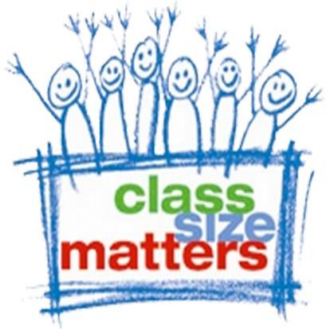


Bill de Blasio's education legacy



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When he ran for Mayor, Bill de Blasio portrayed himself as a leader who would make a whole host of progressive changes in our schools.

- *Yet his record in education is decidedly mixed.*



He promised to give parents and communities more voice

- Pledged to give his appointees on the Panel for Educational Policy (NYC school board) two-year terms and not fire them at will.
- Said he would allow parent-led Community Education Councils to cast advisory votes on school closures & co-locations, and that their advice would be addressed by the Panel on Education Policy before votes on these proposals.
- Neither of these have happened, and parents & communities remain relatively powerless.
- The PEP remains largely a rubber-stamp body, with a super-majority of Mayoral appointees who almost never reject a school closing, co-location, spending allocation, or contract.

Diversity and integration

- NYC schools are among the most segregated in nation, in part because of housing segregation but also because they rely on high-stakes exams to screen and sort students.
- When he ran for mayor, de Blasio said “increasing diversity needs to be a strategic initiative by the DoE. ...I will make sure that all children, regardless of SES (Socioeconomic status) & race/ethnicity have access to our city’s selective and specialized high schools”, whose students are primarily white and Asian, while Black and Latino students make up 63% of the overall student population.
- State law controls admissions at 3 of 8 specialized HS; but de Blasio has not changed admissions in 5 other specialized HS under his control to make it more equitable and/or less reliant on a single high-stakes exam.
- He also rejected most of the proposals of his own School Diversity Advisory Group, which proposed eliminating gifted classes, which are overwhelmingly white and Asian and based on a high-stakes exam given at age of four.
- De Blasio also rejected their advice to eliminate middle school admissions screens and to ensure that HS enrollments are more reflective of the city’s diversity as whole.

De Blasio promised to expand preK and lower class size when he ran for Mayor

- He has provided publicly-funded preK for all four-year-old children and is expanding 3K programs
- While he also pledged to lower class size significantly and and if necessary, raise funding to do so, and that "*Nothing will help our schools more than reducing class sizes,*" this has not occurred.
- Neither has he worked to alleviate school overcrowding as promised, nor to align NYC school capacity formula to smaller classes so that there is enough space .
- In fact, the way he rapidly expanded preK and 3K in schools rather than maximize the use of neighborhood-based CBOs has led to worse overcrowding in 352 elementary schools that enroll about 236,000 students.

Why is class size reduction so important, especially for disadvantaged children?

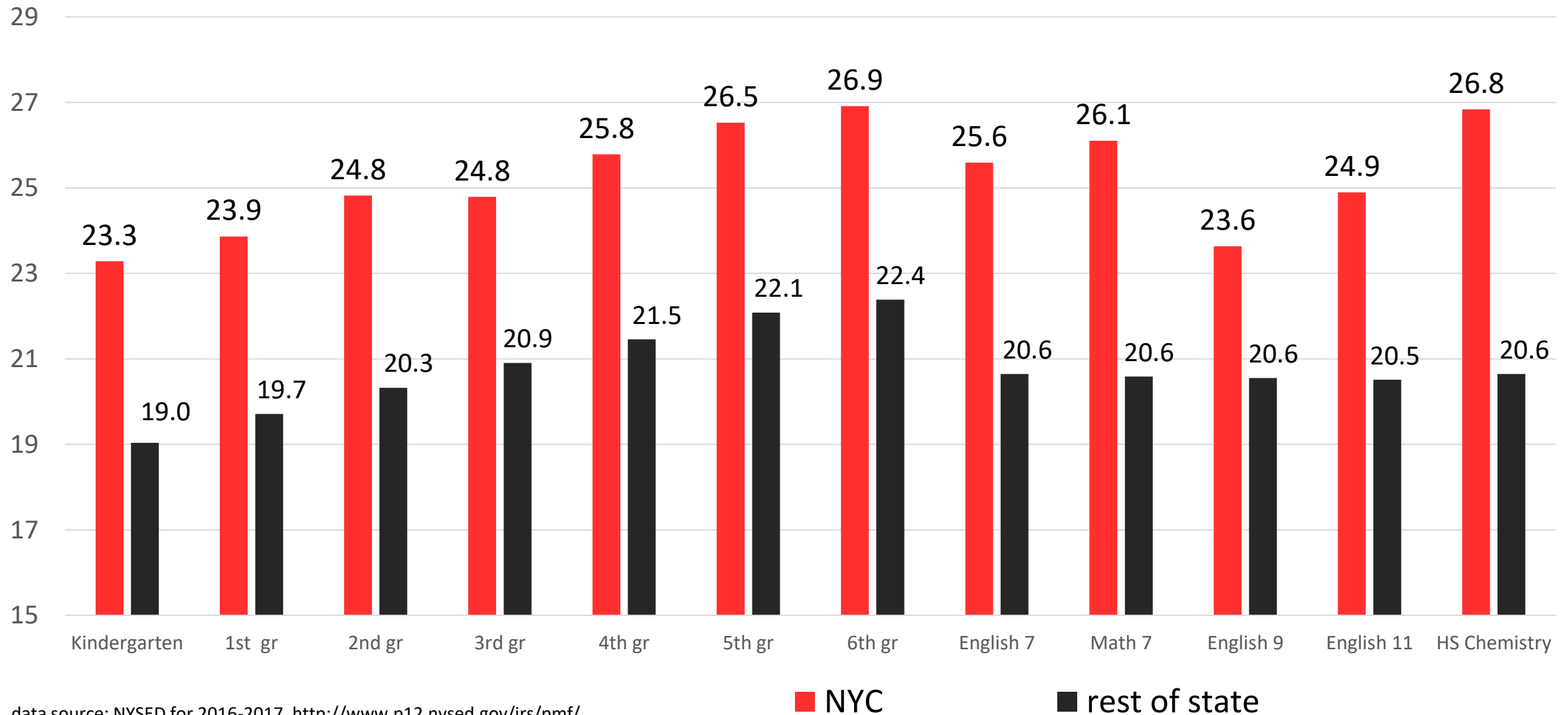
- Smaller classes lead to better grades and test scores, stronger student engagement, fewer disciplinary referrals, less teacher attrition and higher graduation rates, especially for students who need help the most.
- Class size reduction is one of only a handful of reforms shown through rigorous research to narrow the achievement gap between economic and racial groups & thus is a key driver for improving equity.
- Some economists estimate that smaller classes yields economic benefits twice the costs; the benefits are especially large for low-income students and children of color.

In Campaign for Fiscal Equity lawsuit, NY's highest court said class sizes were too large to provide NYC children with their constitutional right to a sound, basic education

- *“[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.”*

(Campaign for Fiscal Equity, Inc., et al. v. State of New York, et al., 100 N.Y.2d 893, 911-12 (2003) (“CFE II”).

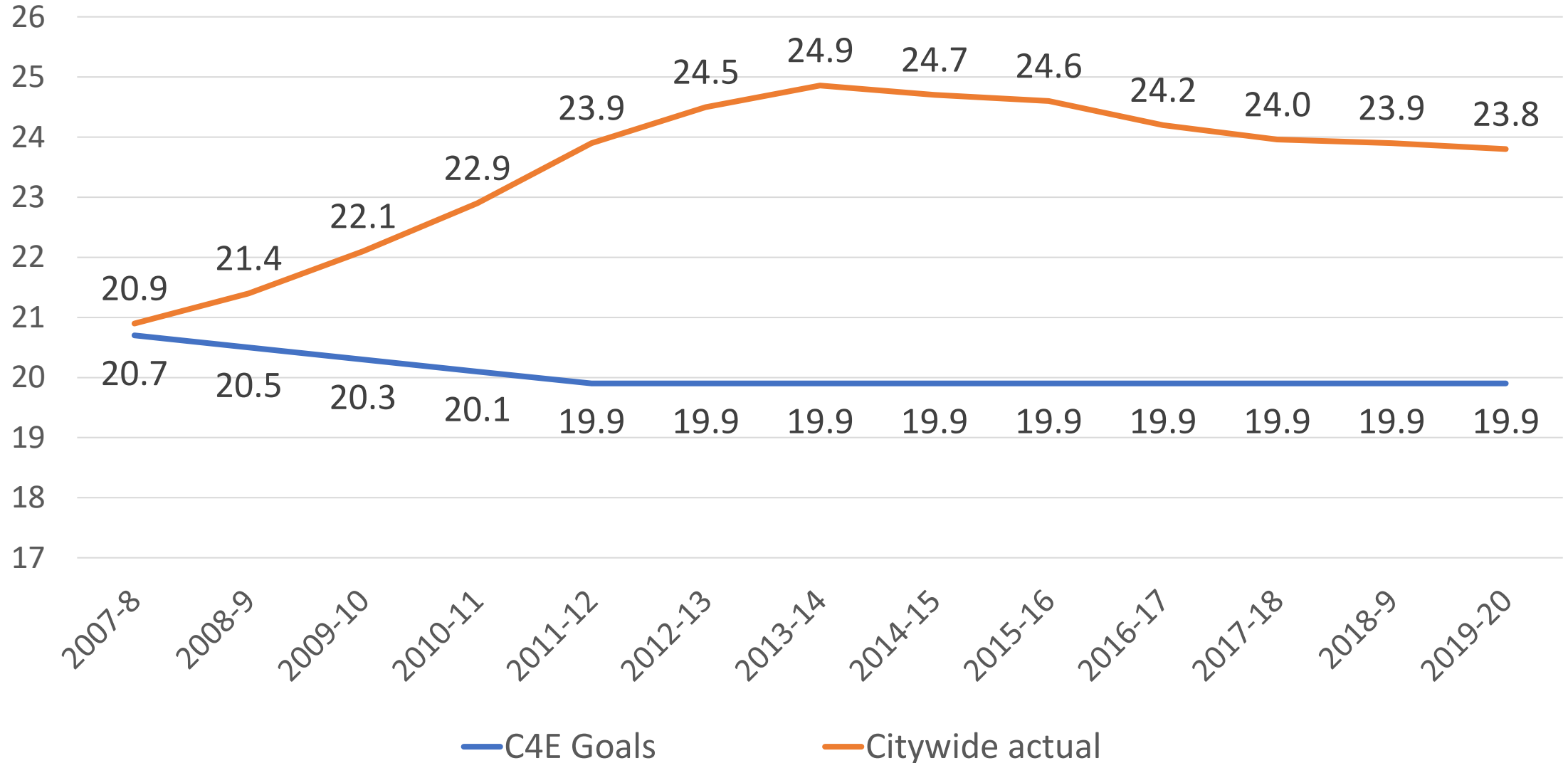
Yet NYC class sizes remain 15-30% higher on average than rest of the state



data source: NYSED for 2016-2017 <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/pmf/>

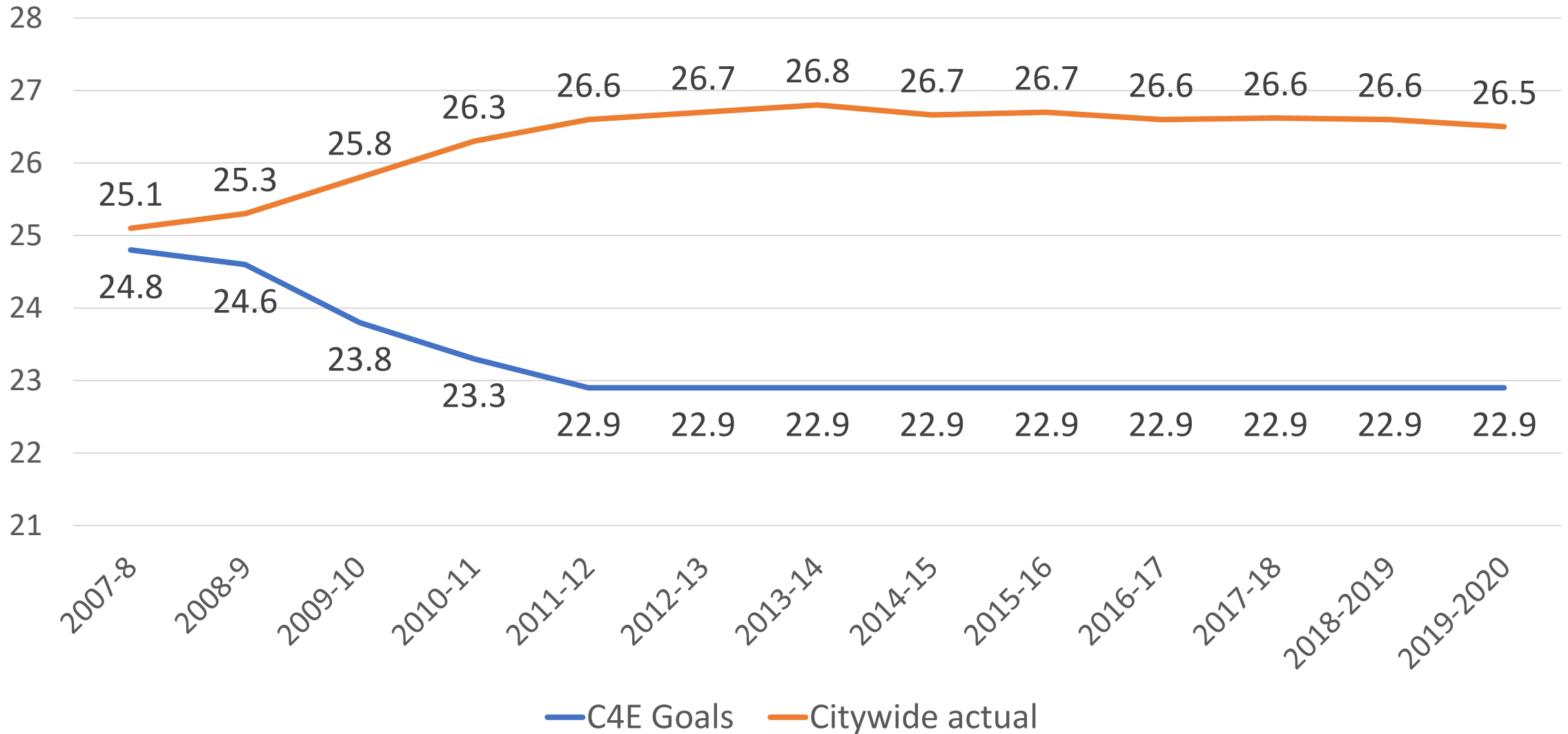
Average Citywide K-3rd Class Sizes

Increased 14% since 2007



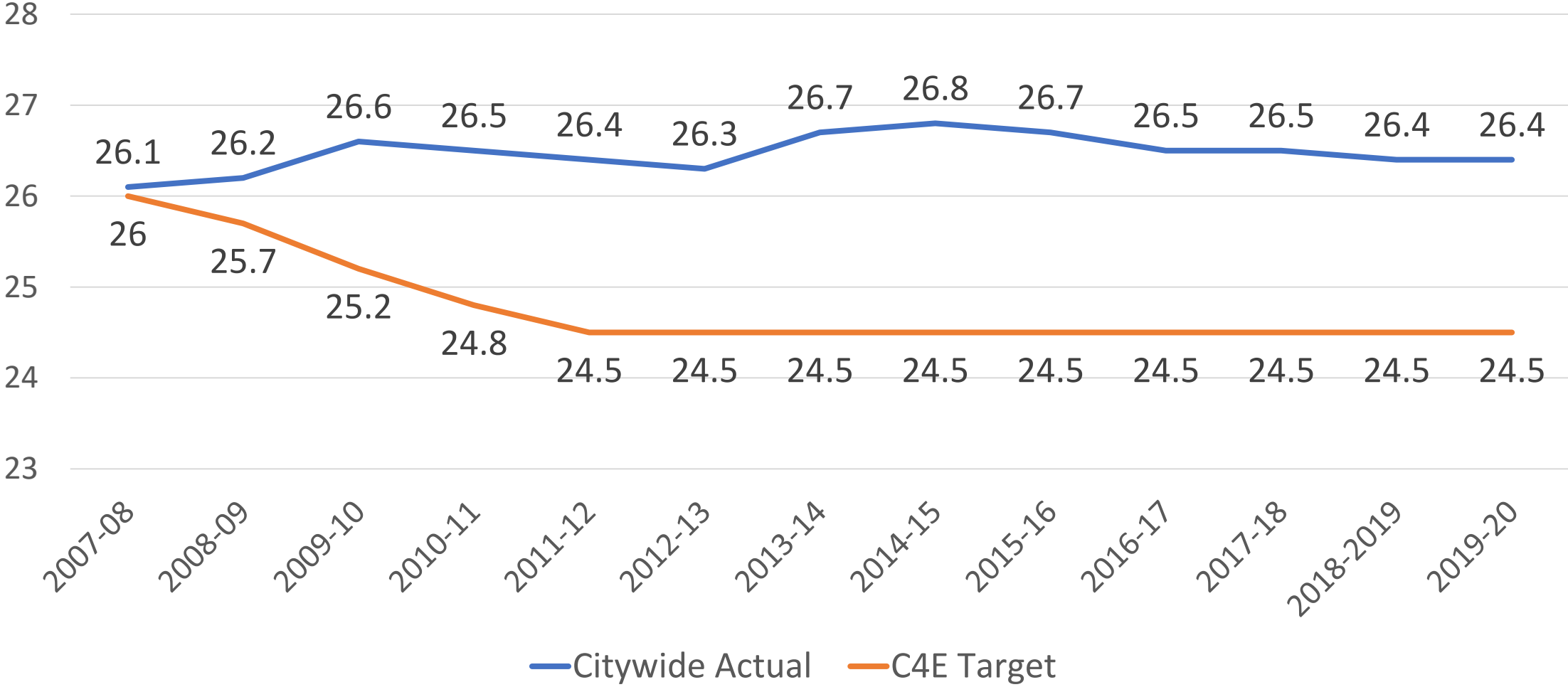
Average Citywide 4th-8th Class Sizes

Increased 6% Since 2007

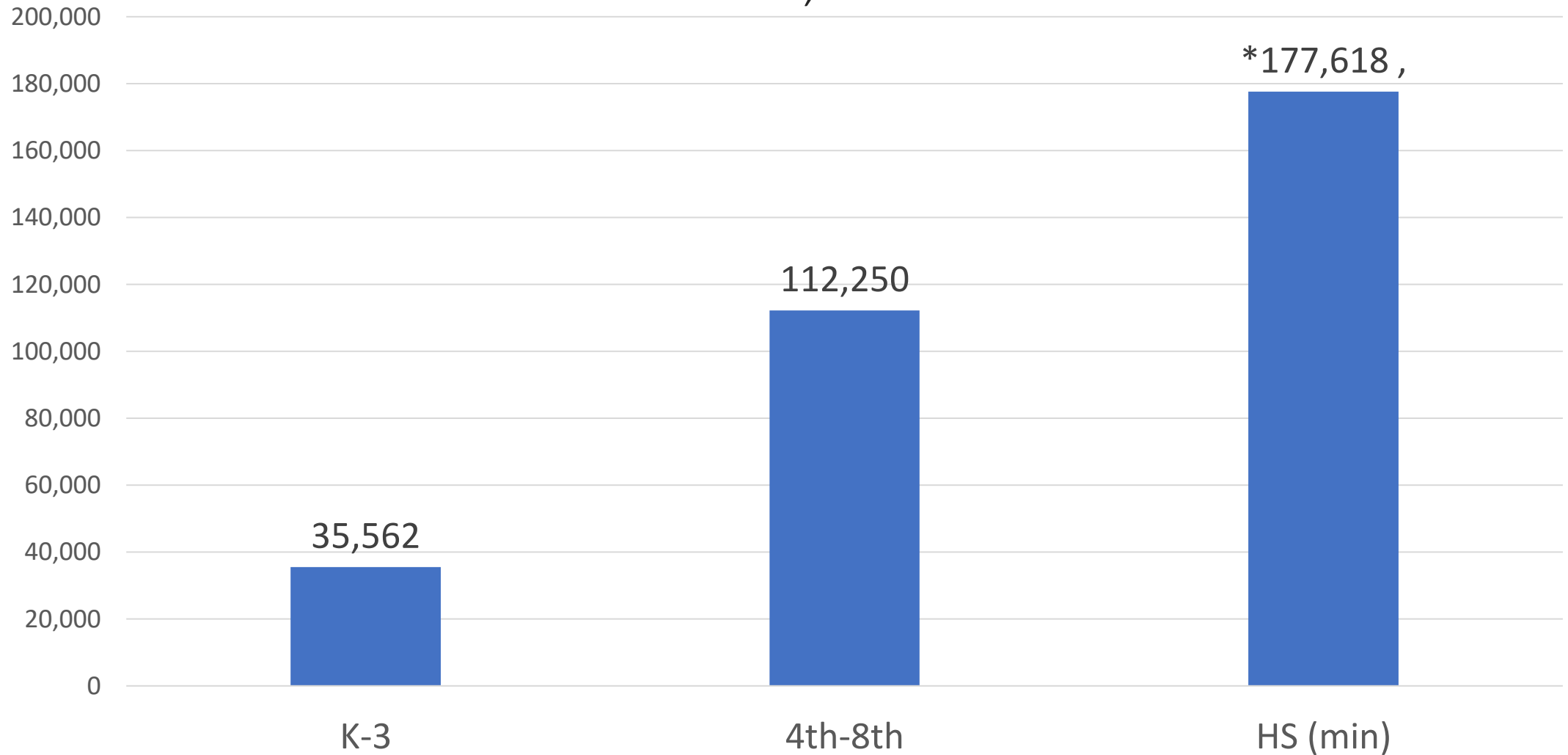


Average Citywide HS Class Sizes

Increased 2% Since 2007



At least ***325,430** NYC students in classes of 30 or more as of Oct. 31, 2019



****Only HS students in social studies classes included to avoid double counting***

The need for smaller classes & the opportunity to do so was unprecedented this year.

- Smaller classes critical to provide the social distancing as well as stronger academic support NYC kids need desperately after 1 ½ years of disrupted learning.
- NYC schools receiving an additional \$8B in state & federal funds over the next three years;
- Federal funds supposed to pay for health, safety & education measures to help students recover from losses suffered during pandemic;
- Schools are also getting additional state funding of \$530M, rising to \$1.3B annually over next three years, to fulfill CFE lawsuit in which class size was central issue.

What happened?

- City Council pushed hard for at least \$250M of these funds to be spent on class size reduction this year to provide safer, more productive and more equitable learning environment
- But Mayor refused -- & instead, DOE spending \$18M for class size “pilot” in which a limited number of elementary schools can hire teachers to lower class size or push-in to existing classes.
- Merely changing teacher-student ratio will NOT provide same health or learning benefits as actual lowering class size.

Standardized testing

- De Blasio promised to minimize the use of high-stakes standardized tests, and to refrain from using test scores to decide which schools to close and which students to be held back.
- Grade-based retention was decreased, but schools continued to be closed during his administration – if not to the same extent as under Bloomberg.
- He also promised not to expand testing into grades preK to 2nd, and not to create new local standardized exams.
- Instead, the administration is now spending \$36M this year on new interim assessments that will be given three times per year in all grades.
- In grades 3-12 these tests are administered via computers, with no evidence of benefits to learning or reliability in terms of diagnostic results.

He promised to improve transparency

- Pledged that NYC DOE would produce itemized, fully detailed breakdowns of education budget comparable to other city agencies.
- Said that DOE would promptly respond to Freedom of Information requests
- Neither of these has happened. Instead, FOIL requests take up to a year or more & often result in official documents thoroughly redacted or with no info at all.
- His administration also barred advocates from attending OMB t oversight meetings.
- DOE closed School Leadership Team meetings to the public, which was overturned only when we along with Public Advocate Tish James won a lawsuit to block this in court.

Charter school growth

- De Blasio campaigned on platform of opposing privately-run charters, yet their growth has increased unabated during his administration
- DOE now spending more than \$2.4 billion per year on charter school operating aid, and more than \$100M per year for charter school rent
- Much of this also controlled by state legislation, yet de Blasio has helped charter schools expand & recruit students by allowing them access to parent mailing lists – & NYC is the only district in the nation that does this voluntarily.
- He has also failed consistently to provide public schools co-located with charters with legally mandated matching funds for facility enhancements.

Mixed record on school policing & discipline

- De Blasio promised to reduce the frequency and length of suspensions and minimize arrests for school-based infractions.
- Pledged to reduce racial disparities in suspension rates and to curtail the use of metal detectors
- Suspensions have dropped nearly 39% percent over the last five years & school-based arrests by 32%, according to the NYCLU.
- But huge racial disparities remain, as Black students and students with disabilities twice as likely to be suspended.
- He has refused to lessen use of metal detectors in schools, or significantly lower number of NYPD-employed School Safety Agents, who outstrip the number of school social workers and counselors combined.

Citywide, nearly half of all students are in overcrowded schools – those at 100% or more

	Total Students	Students in Overutilized Schools	%
Citywide	999,453	488,708	48.9%
Bronx	202,877	77,520	38.2%
Brooklyn	300,290	142,969	47.6%
Manhattan	156,483	59,977	38.3%
Queens	277,754	171,378	61.7%
Staten Island	62,049	36,864	59.4%

Student outcomes

- Graduation rates have increased under de Blasio – from 66% to 77.3%, but far less for some subgroups like English Language Learners, where grad rates have only increased 2.2 points to 40.9%.
- In terms of test score achievement on the only reliable tests known as the NAEPs, given by the US Dept of Ed every 2 years in ELA and math in 4th and 8th grades, there's been no improvement in results or narrowing of racial achievement gaps since 2013.
- In fact, between 2013 -2019 NYC students on average lost 5 pts in 4th grade math (only large districts lost more: Baltimore, Philly & Milwaukee)
- No student subgroup made NAEP gains during this period except for Asians in 8th grade math.
- Groups whose scores fell the most were Black students (lost 9 points in 4th grade math, and 7 points in 4th grade reading) and free lunch students (lost seven points in 4th grade math and six points in 4th grade reading).
- Hispanic students also lost 8 points in 4th grade math.