

AFFIDAVIT OF SARAH BROOKS

STATE OF NEW YORK)
)
COUNTY OF KINGS) ss.:

SARAH BROOKS, being duly sworn, deposes and says:

1. I am a Special Education teacher at P.S. 169.
2. I teach the first grade in an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class. In an ICT classroom, students with and without disabilities are taught by a general education teacher and a special education teacher. Over the course of the day, ICT students are given the opportunity to work in small groups and are given individualized attention from their teachers. This is helpful because it enables teachers to provide more personalized support to a smaller group of students.
3. The DOE budget cuts for the upcoming school year will severely affect the students at P.S. 169. Due to the decreased budget, there is not funding available for essential positions such as guidance counselors, paraprofessionals for newly diagnosed special education students, academic intervention teachers, and afterschool programming (including special education recovery services). The loss of these positions would be particularly difficult for the students I teach, as they are among the most in need of in-school support systems.
4. Currently, there are only two guidance counselors for over 800 students at P.S. 169. The decreased budget means there is a possibility the school will have to excess one of these counselors, leaving just one guidance counselor for the entire school. Both guidance counselors are bilingual, one of them English-Spanish and the other English-Mandarin. The loss of one of these counselors would be devastating not only for the student body as

a whole, but especially for those students with mandated counseling service and those for whom English is not their first language.

5. The paraprofessionals at P.S. 169 assist with the overall management of students and also focus on students who need more individualized assistance. There are classroom paraprofessionals, one-to-one paraprofessionals, and language paraprofessionals.
6. The one-to-one paraprofessionals assist one specific student in the classroom. For example, if a child has behavioral challenges, the one-to-one paraprofessional works alongside that student in their classes to help them better manage their behavior and learn more effectively. The one-to-one paraprofessionals teach students coping mechanisms, keep the students safe when they are having an outburst, and work on individualized behavior plans.
7. The language paraprofessionals help students who do not speak English as a first language. English language learner students make up a large segment of the student body at P.S. 169. According to the school's data for the 2021-2022 school year, the percentage of English language learners at P.S. 169 was 47 percent. Not having language paraprofessionals available can completely impede children from receiving an education on a daily basis.
8. Without a paraprofessional, the time that I spend supporting specific students will certainly increase. It is my job to teach and support the whole ICT class, rather than give undivided attention to one child. When I have to concentrate on helping a singular student during class, this means that the rest of the students will suffer because they are not being provided with the support they also need.

9. Vital out of classroom positions like academic intervention teachers will also likely be discontinued due to the budget cuts. Academic intervention teachers include reading specialists who pull out small groups of students to help them focus on their reading skills. Losing this team would undoubtedly negatively impact students who are at risk of falling behind in their academics.
10. During this past year, P.S. 169 had afterschool programming for students with IEPs. This programming made a huge difference for children with IEPs, who were given the opportunity to practice skills learned in the classroom and catch up to grade level standards. P.S. 169 Principal Emily Hurst has informed me that there will be no funds for afterschool programming next year due to the budget cuts. Vital afterschool IEP programming will therefore be discontinued.
11. As a way to preserve some of the already insufficient funds over the past year, the school hired a previously retired special education administrator part-time to support the special education teachers. However, with the budget being cut even further, P.S. 169 has dispensed with her part-time position. Now the school does not have a special education administrator for the upcoming year. For me, this means having no support in my role as a special education teacher.
12. Further, Principal Emily Hurst has said that with the budget cuts the school will not be able to fund field trips next year. Many of the students at P.S. 169 live at or below the poverty level, and many of them do not have the opportunity to travel outside of their own neighborhood. For these students, a field trip provides them with exposure to new sights, people, perspectives, and art that they would never otherwise get to experience.

These trips open up the students' worlds and are vital opportunities for them to learn outside of the classroom.

13. The loss of extra student support roles will place more responsibility on me to fulfill those roles for the students in my classroom, which will make it more difficult for me to carry out the duties of my own role and provide a high standard of education to all the students.

14. The budget cuts will cause all the students at P.S. 169 to suffer. They lose out on specialized instruction, mental and academic supports, and the vital opportunity to learn outside of the confines of their own neighborhood. But the Special Education program at P.S. 169 will be markedly and significantly impaired. Those who are struggling both academically and emotionally will undoubtedly suffer even more. The students need and deserve more from their schools.

Dated: July 6, 2022
Brooklyn, New York

Sarah Brooks

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Sworn to before me this 6th day
of July 2022

Laura Dawn Barbieri
Notary Public

