



## Class Size Matters/NYC Kids PAC/CPAC/AQE Budget Priorities for FY 2024

Updated May 16, 2023

### **The Mayor and City Council should prevent any further cuts to schools, and instead restore the budget cuts made to schools in this year's budget.**

- The DOE says they plan to cut school budgets again next year, though they refuse to say by how much. This year, school budgets were severely slashed, causing sharp increases in class sizes and the loss of many valuable programs and services. Shortly after approving the budget, the Council said they regretted their vote and unsuccessfully asked the mayor to enable them to revote. This year, they have the opportunity to insist that these cuts be restored and should do so.

### **The funds to do so are available.**

- The DOE will receive an additional \$493 million next year, the final tranche of a three-year phase-in of \$1.3 billion resulting from the CFE lawsuit, meant to ensure that students receive equitable funding so they can receive their right to a sound basic education. In addition, the IBO has estimated that NYC will end fiscal year 2023 with a \$4.9B surplus and as of early February, the city's cash balance was at \$14.6B, including reserves.

### **The need for more school funding is greater than ever.**

- Students are still recovering, both emotionally and academically, from the huge disruptions caused by Covid and school shutdowns. They need the close support of their teachers, counselors, and other support staff as much as ever before. Moreover, schools are supposed to be phasing-in smaller classes starting next fall in accordance with the new state law.

### **The Mayor and Council should expand and accelerate the capital plan for new school capacity.**

- The DOE and SCA have cut more than \$2 billion dollars and the number of new school seats to be built by 22,000 compared to the June 2021 adopted plan.
- Yet over 300,000 students are crammed into overcrowded schools, and it will be impossible to lower class size to the levels in the new state class size law without building many more schools.
- The Council should refuse to approve any capital plan that does not expand the funding for new capacity so that there is sufficient space to lower class size to the goals required by the new state law.

### **Enhanced DOE transparency in budgeting and reporting should be required.**

- Two new Units of Appropriation (U of A) should be required to report on school-level funding, or else it will continue to be impossible for the public and Council to know what cuts are actually going to be imposed on school budgets and their likely impact.
- The class size reporting law, [Local Law 125](#), should be amended to require reporting on the size of all classes at the school level to see how many are compliant with the new caps. Currently DOE only reports on school-specific class sizes by averages and range of sizes by type of class and grade level.
- Local Law 125 also needs to require that the second round of class size reporting in February each year reflects class sizes during the second half of the year, as originally intended, since class sizes often re-organize and change size during that time and the law requires full compliance to by the end of the 2027-8 school year.
- DOE and SCA should also be required to comply with [Local Law 167](#) and [Local Law 168](#), both passed in 2018, that require reporting on the actual data and methodology used in the capital plan, including what the SCA's actual estimates are for the need for more school seats at each grade level, as well as requiring that they thoroughly analyze empty lots for their potential use to site new schools.