



CITY OF NEW YORK
**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD
FOUR**

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JESSICA CHAIT
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District Manager

May 9, 2024

Hon. Eric Adams
Mayor
City of New York
City Hall, New York 10007

David Banks
Chancellor
Department of Education
52 Chambers Street
New York NY, 10007

Re: Recommendation to Reduce Class Sizes in Compliance with Education Law 211-D

Dear Mayor Adams and Chancellor Banks,

At Manhattan Community Board 4's (MCB4) regularly scheduled meeting on May 1, 2024, the Board voted 39 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible to vote in support of urging the Mayor and Chancellor to implement an effective plan to lower class sizes in accordance with New York State's [Education Law 211-D](#). We appreciate the presentation given by Leonie Haimson of Class Size Matters at the Arts, Culture, Education & Schools (ACES) Committee meeting on Monday, April 8, 2024.

In 2003, the New York Court of Appeals in the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) case determined that smaller class size is essential in ensuring public school children their constitutional right to a "sound basic education." Research has shown that smaller class sizes enable teachers to better meet the needs of their students both academically and socially, and that class size reduction improves student outcomes in terms of their grades, test scores, behavioral issues, graduation rates and college enrollment. Additionally, smaller class sizes remain the top priority for parents in Schools District 2 (where CB4 is located) according to the DOE parent survey conducted every year.

In 2022, the New York State Legislature passed Education Law 211-D requiring that New York City implement a five-year phase in plan to reduce class sizes beginning in the fall of 2022. Governor Kathy Hochul signed the bill into law with an amendment that the five-year phase in begin in September 2023.

Education Law 211-D requires that class sizes be limited to no more than 20 students per 3K class, no more than 23 students per class in Pre-K - 8th grade, and no more than 25 students per class in high schools by the 2027-28 school year. Since the law was passed, class sizes in District 2 schools have *increased* in elementary and middle schools. The average class size for the 2023-24 school year was approximately 23 students per 3K class, 27 students per class in Pre-K - 8th grade, and 26 students per class in high schools.

Substantial funding and careful planning will be needed to meet the mandate class sizes for 3K-8th grade. While the DOE has received \$1.3 billion in additional annual state aid over the last three years as a result of the CFE settlement, the mayor has repeatedly cut school budgets. This includes a \$2 billion cut from school construction and expansion that would make it highly unlikely to reduce class sizes in schools that are at or over capacity. Additionally, the proposed five-year capital plan for 2025-2029 cuts more than twenty thousand school seats compared to the current five-year plan.

MCB4 urges the Mayor and Chancellor to refrain from cutting school budgets and/or the capital plan and insists that school funding is increased to meet the reduced class size mandate. We call on the Mayor and Chancellor to comply with the law and submit an “annual capital plan for school construction and leasing to show how many classrooms will be added in each year and in which schools and districts to achieve the class size targets.”¹ The Class Size Working Group under the DOE’s Contracts for Excellence has proposed a number of actionable and effective policies to lower class sizes which includes changes in enrollment, budgeting and the capital plan.² We call on the Mayor and Chancellor to adopt these proposals so that students have stronger educational outcomes.

We believe all New York City children have a right to a sound and basic education. We are committed to continuing to work with the Mayor and Chancellor to make this a reality.

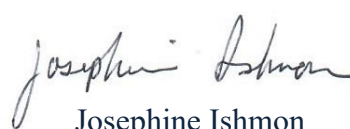
Sincerely,



Jessica Chait
Chair
Community Board 4



Matt Green
Co-Chair
ACES Committee



Josephine Ishmon
Co-Chair
ACES Committee

CC: Hon. Kathy Hochul, NYS Governor
Hon. Brad Hoylman-Sigal, NYS Senator
Hon. Tony Simone, NYS Assembly Member
Hon. Jumaane Williams, NYC Public Advocate
Hon. Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Erik Bottcher, City Council
Hon. Gale A. Brewer, City Council
Hon. Rita Joseph, NYC Council Member
Kelly McGuire, Superintendent, NYC Department of Education, Schools District 2
Dr. Angela Green, Chairperson, PEP

¹ <https://www.counsel.nysed.gov/rules/indices-fulltext/2023/11>

² https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gSiFUcuLOjJ49PLCMptkroFjXBHow2b_/view