

Talking points for C4E borough hearings

July 29, 2021

The DOE is holding borough hearings on their proposed Contracts for Excellence plan from Aug. 2-Aug. 5 at 6:30 PM. The location of these hearings and the proposed plan [are posted here](#). Please try to attend, and if you're able to, let us know by emailing info@classsizematters.org You can also send your comments on the plan by emailing ContractsForExcellence@schools.nyc.gov Below are some questions you can ask and points to make.

Why aren't there more funds overall in the DOE's Contracts for Excellence plan?

NYC schools are due to receive \$530 million in additional state foundation aid from the state, which will increase to about \$1.3 billion annually over next three years, to fulfill of the goals of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity lawsuit. The C4E program was created to settle the CFE lawsuit, and yet the proposed [DOE plan](#) only allocates \$531 million to this program, the same amount as last year. The DOE claims that this is because *"For FY 2022, the State has not allocated to NYCDOE any additional C4E funding above the amount it provided in SY 2009-2010."* How can that be?

Why hasn't DOE allocated any of these funds specifically to lower class size?

In 2003, the State's highest court in the CFE case concluded that the overly large classes in our schools were a systemic problem that robbed NYC students of their constitutional right to a sound, basic education, and yet class sizes in our schools have increased since then, especially in the early grades. Of the \$530 million in the proposed plan, \$104 million would be spent by DOE on specific "targeted" programs, none of which would reduce class size. Instead, most of these funds are to be used to put extra teachers in inclusion classes, which many teachers and parents tell us are too large to provide students with the focused climate and personal feedback they need.

Why does DOE say that principals can use these funds to maintain or limit class size increases?

\$214 million of these funds are to be given to principals to use in any of the six priority areas outlined in the C4E law, including (i) class size reduction, (ii) increased student time on task (iii) teacher and principal quality (iv) middle school and high school re-structuring, (v) model programs for students with limited English proficiency, and/or (vi) full-day kindergarten or prekindergarten. And yet the DOE also says that principals can use these funds to maintain or minimize class size increases, which is not the same as lowering class size. Maintaining or minimizing increases in class size would not provide any progress towards the smaller classes that NYC students deserve, according to the state's highest court.

Why are smaller classes important, now more than ever?

If NYC children ever needed smaller classes for more academic and social-emotional support, they will need them next year to make up for the myriad losses they have suffered over the course of the last year due to the pandemic. Smaller classes would also help provide the social distancing that many health experts say should be required.

What does research show?

Smaller classes lead to better outcomes for all kids – especially those who need help the most, and thus class size reduction is one of only a handful of reforms proven to narrow the achievement/opportunity gap between racial and economic groups. Smaller classes have also been shown to result in higher test scores, better grades, more engaged students, fewer disciplinary referrals, and less teacher turnover.

Children assigned to smaller classes are more likely to graduate from high school, attend college and get a STEM degree.

Why does DOE insist on ignoring the input of parents and teachers on this issue?

Every year the DOE's school surveys have been administered, smaller classes have been the top priority of K12 parents when asked what changes they would like to see in their children's education. According to a UFT teacher survey, 99% NYC teachers responded that class size reduction would be an effective reform to improve NYC schools, far outstripping any other proposal. About 90% said that this would be a "highly effective" reform.

For more information

Additional legal concerns with the DOE's C4E proposed plan are in a memo to the State Commissioner posted here: <https://classsizematters.org/serious-concerns-with-the-does-proposed-c4e-plan-make-your-voices-heard-at-the-borough-hearings-this-week/>

We also provide research studies on class size at <https://www.classsizematters.org/research-and-links> and fact sheets here: <https://www.classsizematters.org/fact-sheets-on-the-benefits-of-class-size/>

Prepared by Class Size Matters, 7.29.21 Any questions, please email: info@classsizematters.org