



COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCIL DISTRICT 15

Office: 131 Livingston Street, Room 301, Brooklyn, New York 11201

CEC15@schools.nyc.gov | tel. 718-935-4267 | facebook.com/CECD15 | CECD15.org

Resolution to urge the PEP and the City Council to restore school budget cuts made last year, and expand the capital plan to be able to meet the benchmarks in the new class size law

The Community and Citywide Education Councils (CCECs) are composed of parents who have been elected or appointed to serve as stakeholders of NYC School Community Districts, and specific cohorts of students, representing NYC public school students and their families.

Resolution Approved on March 21, 2023

WHEREAS, this year, most school budgets were slashed by large amounts; with the City Comptroller estimating that 77% of schools had their Fair Student Funding (FSF) allocation reduced by a total of \$469 million;

WHEREAS, as of Jan. 13, 2023, 86% of schools experienced even larger cuts to their entire Galaxy budgets totaling \$893 million compared to last year, averaging about \$655,000 each;

WHEREAS, many City Council members said they were caught unaware with the severity of the budget cuts after voting to approve the budget in June;

WHEREAS, after they learned of the extent of these cuts, many Council Members said they regretted having voted for the budget, and asked the Mayor that they be allowed to take a revote – though the Mayor refused to allow this to occur;

WHEREAS, these budget cuts led to class size increases this year in most schools, as well as the loss of many critical programs;

WHEREAS, the Mayor's preliminary budget for next year would cut another \$800 million from the DOE budget, in addition to a \$176 million mid-year cut;

WHEREAS, the Chancellor and other DOE officials admitted during the Council budget hearings on March 15, 2023 that they are planning additional cuts to school budgets, although they refused to say how much they would be;

WHEREAS, the DOE did not explain what cuts would be made elsewhere in the DOE budget to come up with the additional \$90 million in FSF planned for schools with a large number of homeless and disadvantaged students;

WHEREAS, NYC public schools have already lost more than 4,000 full-time K-12 teachers since FY 2019, according to DOE headcount data posted on the NYC Council website;

WHEREAS, DOE is slated to receive an additional \$568 million in state Foundation Aid for next year, the final payment in three-year phase-in of about \$1.3 billion resulting from the Contracts for Excellence (CFE) lawsuit, intended to provide NYC students with their right to a sound, basic education, including smaller classes;

WHEREAS, the Independent Budget Office estimates that the city 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;

WHEREAS, starting next fall, the DOE is supposed to start lowering class size according to a new state law, [S9460/ A10498](#) ; with far smaller class size caps to be required of all schools over the next five years;

WHEREAS, this phase-in process will require significantly more funding for space and staffing if all schools are going to be able to reach these smaller caps, especially in the out-years;

WHEREAS, according to the latest available data from the Blue Book for the 2021-2022 school year, about 347,000 (38%) of students citywide were in schools over 100% of their capacity last year;

WHEREAS, the need to create additional classroom space in overcrowded districts is especially urgent, since it can take up to five years or more to build and/or expand schools;

WHEREAS, at City Council hearings on March 15, Deputy Chancellor testified that would cost the DOE an estimated \$30 billion to \$35 billion to build enough additional school seats to comply with the class size law, an amount that would create 200,000 seats or more;

WHEREAS, despite this claim, the the DOE and the School Construction Authority are currently planning to build only about 35,000 seats and are proposing to cut funding for new school construction by \$2.3 billion and over 21,000 seats (38%) in the proposed Feb. 2023 amendment to the five-year capital plan, compared to the plan adopted in June 2021;

WHEREAS, to this day, the School Construction Authority has not fully complied with two laws passed in 2018 meant to improve the transparency, accuracy, and efficiency of school planning and siting, [Local Law 167](#) and [Local Law 168](#);

WHEREAS, DOE has only posted a brief, one-page summary of the [FY2024 Estimated Budget](#) in preparation for a vote by the Panel on Educational Policy on March 22, 2023; and

WHEREAS, [§ 2590-q \(5\)](#) of the NY state education law requires that “*All estimates submitted by the chancellor shall be prepared in the manner prescribed by the New York city charter for submission of departmental estimates ...* “ and the level of detail in this one-page summary does not comply with this prescription.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the DOE inform the PEP, the City Council and members of the public how much it intends to cut each school's FSF and Galaxy budget before any votes occur;

BE IT RESOLVED that the DOE should clarify what other programs or staffing will be eliminated in the DOE budget to allow for the additional \$90 million in FSF funds planned for schools with high numbers of homeless and disadvantaged students;

BE IT RESOLVED that from now on the City Council should insist on two new Units of Appropriation (U of A) in the DOE budget that reflects on school-level funding, subsets of the current U of As for general education and special education instruction;

BE IT RESOLVED that instead of allowing any further cuts to school budgets, the Panel for Educational Policy and the City Council should insist on an education budget for FY 2024 that fully restores the cuts made to schools this year;

BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council should reject any capital plan that does not expand the number of new school seats rather than reduces them, to ensure there is sufficient space to meet the law's class size benchmarks in the out years;

AND BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council should insist that the SCA fully comply with two laws passed in 2018 designed to improve the transparency, accuracy, and efficiency of school planning and siting, [Local Law 167](#) and [Local Law 168](#).

This Resolution was unanimously approved at a CEC15 Special Session Meeting held on March 21, 2023 by a vote of members present including: Camille Casaretti, Antonia Ferraro, Nancy Randall, Vanessa Ueoka Gonzalez, Joe Alexander, Nana-Poku Agyekum, Alfred DeIngeniis, Nakia Muhasa Brown, Vincent Lu and Ivan Banda.