

A. Nesbitt Class Size Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: ayanna Nesbitt

Position: FAV

Sample Testimony on Class Size

Testimony from Ayanna Nesbitt, Educator, Parent, District 41 resident
SB206 - Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size

Before the Senate Finance Committee
February 9, 2023
Position: FAVORABLE

Hello members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Ayanna Nesbitt and I'm a District 41 resident. I want to express my full support of SB206. I am an educator, a parent and a contributing member of my community. I live these three roles daily and witness the effects of overcrowding daily. My son is in school and when he tells me how his day is, it often sounds like the teachers are being overrun by the students. I also teach during the day as well as after care and notice daily how the students are the majority and are able to change the course of a day even with a well trained instructor in front of them. If student safety is our top priority then class sizes must be managed properly. Smaller class sizes and loads would benefit our scores because the teachers would be able to teach to the individual students and the students would retain more information. Smaller class sizes would mean that students could be free to be wrong, ask questions, dig deeper into the curriculum and gain the understanding needed to be able to transfer the knowledge to everyday living. Teachers and students would both benefit from navigating class size and loads. Besides a better understanding of the curriculum our students would also be safer and incidents would be solved faster because proper staff to student ratio would provide extra eyes and ears.

Maryland is one of only **nine states in the country** that does not allow teachers to have a say in class size and caseload. In other states where unions can negotiate class size, the result is not just smaller classes, but more support staff in large classes. Our schools need more staff to support our students academically and emotionally. Removing the ban on negotiating this is an important step in addressing varied student needs.

Research shows smaller classes lead to better outcomes for all kids – especially those who need help the most. Class size reduction has been shown to result in higher test scores, better grades, more engaged students, fewer disciplinary referrals, and less teacher turnover. The quality of the classroom matters. We know the Blueprint funding will pay teachers more and give them more planning time but this is not enough. For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB206. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Ayanna Nesbitt

Educator and Parent, District 41

Blanca Rosalez - BTU Class Size Bill Template (4)

Uploaded by: Blanca Rosalez

Position: FAV

Testimony from **Blanca Rosalez**, Baltimore City College Student, SOMOS Student Organizer, Writing Center tutor and a Baltimore resident Resident

SB206: Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size

Official Testimony

Position: **FAVORABLE**

Good afternoon members of the **Senate Finance Committee**

My name is **Blanca Rosalez**, and I'm a **Baltimore** resident and a member of SOMOS - Students Organizing a Multicultural and Open Society as well as a writing Center Tutor at Baltimore City College. I give all my support to SB206 because this bill will repeal the prohibition on a public school employer negotiating the maximum number of students assigned to a class.

Passing this bill is extremely important to build a stronger community within our schools as well as to improve students' safety, as a student, I've encountered a lack of communication with my teachers due to the amount students there are in a classroom by not allowing students to have more individual interaction within their teachers, which creates a non-commutative and less safe environment. Having less amount of students in a classroom will provide a better learning environment, as there will be stronger communication with our teachers, which allow us as students to feel more comfortable asking the teacher questions without feeling judged by a greater group of students as well as to build confidence within ourselves to participate more in class discussions, As a writing center tutor I've worked with different students one on one as well as in a group of no more the five students and I can say that they have been wheeling to participate, interact as well as to do their work with not a great amount of help and after a tutor session they have stated they feel more comfortable to work on assignments of their own including students who are not completely fluent in English. This is why I believe this bill is so important. As a student, I want to be able to talk to my teacher freely about any issue that I might be having without having to remind them what my name is even though I have been in their class for the past two years. It is also very important to remember that school safety has been jeopardized due to gun control issues and it will be safer to have a classroom with less amount of kids which will allow teachers to have more control over an emergent situation and make it less chaotic for students in the classroom.

I respectfully urge this committee to issue a favorable report on SB206 Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size.

Sincerely,

Blanca Rosalez

Baltimore City College

SOMOS

blanca.rosalez2023@baltimorecitycollege.us

443-922-0662

Copy of BTU Class Size Bill Template (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Brissia Lopez-Castro

Position: FAV

Testimony from Brissia Lopez- CAstro, Baltimore City Public School Student, Baltimore Resident

SB206: Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size

Official Testimony

Position: **FAVORABLE**

To the Senate Finance Committee

My name is Brissia Lopez Castro, and I'm a Baltimore City resident and a member of Somos (students organizing a multicultural and open society). I support [SB206].

This bill will repeal the prohibition on a public school employer negotiating the maximum number of students assigned to a class.

Passing this bill is essential because... It would help students to be able to engage freely and communicate better with both peers and teachers. As a student I know It's easier to develop connections with others in smaller class sizes because you no longer have the pressure of what strangers are thinking of you, when students are in smaller groups there's more opportunities for participation and less social anxiety. Which can sometimes lead to limiting their learning because it's scarier to participate when classes are larger. It's also easier to approach teachers and students who you know and have a connection/relationship with, it's a lot easier to ask questions and address concerns when In smaller groups.

In my own classroom I often don't feel comfortable enough to ask questions because I don't feel like I know my teachers well enough and don't view them as approachable. I also feel like I don't get the attention necessary and lots of times my teachers don't even know how to pronounce my name by the end of the year showing just how hard it is for students to develop proper relationships with teachers if they aren't naturally outgoing.

I respectfully urge this committee to issue a favorable report on [SB0206] Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size.

Sincerely,

Brissia Lopez-Castro
Organizer, Somos

Baltimore City resident
brissia.lopez-castro2025@baltimorecitycollege.us
443-622-9487

Research:

- Brookings Institute 2011: "Class Size: What Research Says and What it Means for State Policy"
 - Average class size is 15.3 (based on data compiled here from National Center for Education Statistics)
 - Largest impact for class size reduction from STAR was "the positive effects of class size were largest for black students, economically disadvantaged students, and boys."
 - "It appears that very large class-size reductions, on the order of magnitude of 7-10 fewer students per class, can have meaningful long-term effects on student achievement and perhaps on non-cognitive outcomes."
- NCTQ 2019: "<https://www.nctq.org/blog/A-sizable-opportunity:-thinking-strategically-about-class-size>"
 - "Of our sample of 124 large districts (which includes the 100 largest districts in the country and the largest district in each state), we find that almost all (82 percent) put strict limits on class sizes in at least some grades."
 - See table below for top nine districts from 2019 for average sizes by grade
 - Anne Arundel County Schools: goal for lower class size limits or goals for schools with more vulnerable student populations
- STAR, Tennessee 1980s
 - Compared classes of 15 to classes of 22, randomized groups (32% reduction)
 - Elementary students outperformed by .22 over four years, or equivalent of 3 months instruction
- SSRN, NY State: Effect of class size on teacher attrition
 - A decrease in class size from 23 to 20 students, under a district-wide policy, decreases the probability that a teacher leaves a school by 4.2 percentage points.
- 2009: NY Times: Class Size Around the World:
<https://archive.nytimes.com/economix.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/09/11/class-size-around-the-world/>

STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO SUBMITTING YOUR TESTIMONY:

Step 1: Finish Writing Your Testimony

SB00031/HB0153 - School Board Bill Toolkit:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1W4KGXFcigPgVYZwtndqLY_RAGCa7hEKL9MeJriGzqdY/edit?usp=sharing

HB0085/SB0206 - Class Size Bill Toolkit:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1aR9-ottSDoL18oEpObC4BhAvizrroiQLRLRqbEpLtCc/edit>

Step 2: Sign-In or Make MyMGA Account

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/MyMGATracking/WitnessSignup>

Step 3: Go to "Witness Sign Up" & look for your bill

Decide if you want to submit written, virtual oral, live oral, or "both" which is written and virtual or live oral. Select that option and then hit SAVE.

Step 4: Wait for your testimony ZOOM link the morning of the hearing (if giving spoken testimony)
It will come from this email: no-reply@mlis.state.md.us

Step 5: Watch MGA youtube channel

Watch your hearing & jump on when your bill is called

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Information/YouTubeChannelInfo>

Copy of BTU Class Size Bill Template.pdf

Uploaded by: camila calero

Position: FAV

Testimony from **Camila**, Baltimore City Public Schools **STUDENT**, District **45** Resident

HB0085: Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size

Official Testimony

Position: **FAVORABLE**

To the **Senate Finance Committee**,

My name is **Camila Calero**, and I'm a **Baltimore public high school** student and resident. I support **SB0206**.

This bill will repeal the prohibition on a public school employer negotiating the maximum number of students assigned to a class.

Passing this bill is essential because... as a student in Maryland public schools I have always struggled with finding my voice and getting the courage to speak to my teachers, it is not that they are mean or scary.

It is because I am a first generation student. My parents never got a formal education. They never had the opportunity to even go to school. My sister and I are the first to go to public school and have a formal education. And we will be first generation college graduates as well.

As of recently I joined a program called Adelante Latina, it made me realize how effective having smaller size classes is. I have made the most friends there than I have made in all my years of being in Maryland's school system. I am able to ask my teachers questions without fearing that I am taking up too much time or that my classmates will judge me. Not being able to speak up makes me afraid for my future since it makes me think about how other schools, like private ones, have 12:1 class ratios. It scares me that I will have to eventually compete with these students during college applications. I often go home wishing my school class sizes were as small and intimate. We are not asking to reduce class sizes, we are just asking for the opportunity to speak about the issue.

I respectfully urge this committee to issue a favorable report on **[SB0206]** Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size.

Sincerely,

Camila Calero
Student Organizer SOMOS,
45 legislative district
Camila Calero
443-839-5799

SB206_MSEA_Bost_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Cheryl Bost

Position: FAV

**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 206
Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size**

**Senate Finance Committee
February 9, 2023**

**Cheryl Bost
President**

The Maryland State Education Association stands in strong support of Senate Bill 206, a bill that would no longer make class size an illegal subject of collective bargaining, but rather a permissive subject.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3 million-member National Education Association (NEA).

Currently, Maryland is one of only nine states – including Alaska, Indiana, Kansas, Maine, Nebraska, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Wisconsin - where class size is an illegal subject of bargaining. As an illegal subject, educators cannot bring up class size when negotiating contracts with the local board of education, even though class sizes have been a top concern for educators and parents, especially as it impacts the individualized attention educators can provide to students. School systems and educators need specific solutions to their specific problems. By making class a permissible subject of bargaining, the union and the board of education would have to agree that this would be a subject they would negotiate on—both sides would have to agree. Educators and boards of education could come up with solutions for the specific issues going on in their schools. This could include additional paraeducators in excessively large classrooms in lower grades where classroom management is a challenge. Educators and school systems should have the flexibility to discuss these issues together.



As we recover from impacts of the pandemic, class size is an even larger issue of concern. Even before the pandemic, educator retention and recruitment were at crisis levels. With the spiking of workloads and stress levels over the last two years, educator burnout and turnover are escalating, and shortages are impacting every school system in Maryland. Class size is a working condition issue that should be allowed to be brought up at the negotiation table to find solutions.

A recent MSEA survey found that 92% of Maryland educators support legislation to make class size a legal subject of bargaining. 61% of Maryland educators said they would be somewhat or much more likely to stay in the profession if class sizes could be lowered. The survey found that educators felt that if class sizes were reduced they would be able to give students more individualized attention and would be able to build stronger relationships with students.

Enrollment in teacher education programs in Maryland—and in surrounding states—has dropped significantly over the last several years, and that trend has accelerated during the pandemic. We need to take steps to reduce the burnout and turnover that are negatively impacting the profession—and driving great educators out of our schools—before the shortage crisis worsens.

In order to better serve our students and to retain educators, we must allow our educators to have a tool that allows them to have a stronger voice for themselves and our students. Removing class size as an illegal subject of bargaining will allow educators and district leaders the ability to engage in discussions and hopefully come to agreement on creative solution that best serve students.

MSEA strongly urges a Favorable Report on Senate Bill 206

HB 85 SB 206 Education.pdf

Uploaded by: Cheryl Owens

Position: FAV

HB 85/SB 206 Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size
Employees - Class Size Cheryl Lynn Owens -
Franklin Square Elementary Middle School - #095
Baltimore City Public Schools

Greetings!

I am a teacher in Baltimore City Public Schools. I have taught 1st grade, 4th grade and 5th grade. I am now a fifth-grade teacher.

2013 - 2014 - 27 Students - First Grade

2014 - 2015 - 45 Students - First Grade

2015 - 2016 - 27 Students - First Grade

2016 - 2017 - 40 Students - Fourth Grade

2017 - 2018 - 43 Students - Fifth Grade

2018 - 2019 - 31 Students - Fifth Grade

2019 - 2020 - 22 Students - Fifth Grade

2020 - 2021 - 18 Students - Fifth Grade

2021 - 2022 - 28 Students - Fifth Grade

2022 - 2023 - 31 Students - Fifth Grade

I am a tenured teacher in the Baltimore City Public Schools system. In the aforementioned listing, I am able to illustrate the range of class sizes that I have had during this tenure in City Schools. I was never afforded a paraprofessional to assist me with student learning.

When we do our diagnostic tests with our students, in our learning diagnostic environments we group our students by skill level in the following ranges:

- RED being students in the danger zone,
- YELLOW being the students that are in needs improvement,

- GREEN students being on grade level and
- BLUE students being above level.

As you can see in the past ten years of me teaching in City Schools there has only been one year, where I considered the amount of students in my classroom to be ABOVE CLASS SIZE LEVEL. The optimal classroom size is anything up to 20 students, with this being the BLUE LEVEL. The classroom size of 21 - 30 students is a needs improvement, 31 and above is the DANGER LEVEL.

It is overwhelming to have a large amount of students in one classroom for a myriad of reasons. I will tell you a story of why class sizes matter:

During my second year of teaching. I had 25 students on my initial roster; on the first day of school, I had four more students. I had my teacher's desk all set up in my classroom. We were going over rules and procedures. By day two that number had ballooned to five more students. I still had my classroom all nicely intact. We were now up to 34 students. By the end of the week, I had to remove my teacher's desk and add several student desks into the classroom environment. We were now up to 45 students. When I got the students in August they were essentially kindergarteners. It was a horrible situation. We were in non-air-conditioned classroom. It was sweltering, sticky and sweaty. It was traumatic for these little first graders.

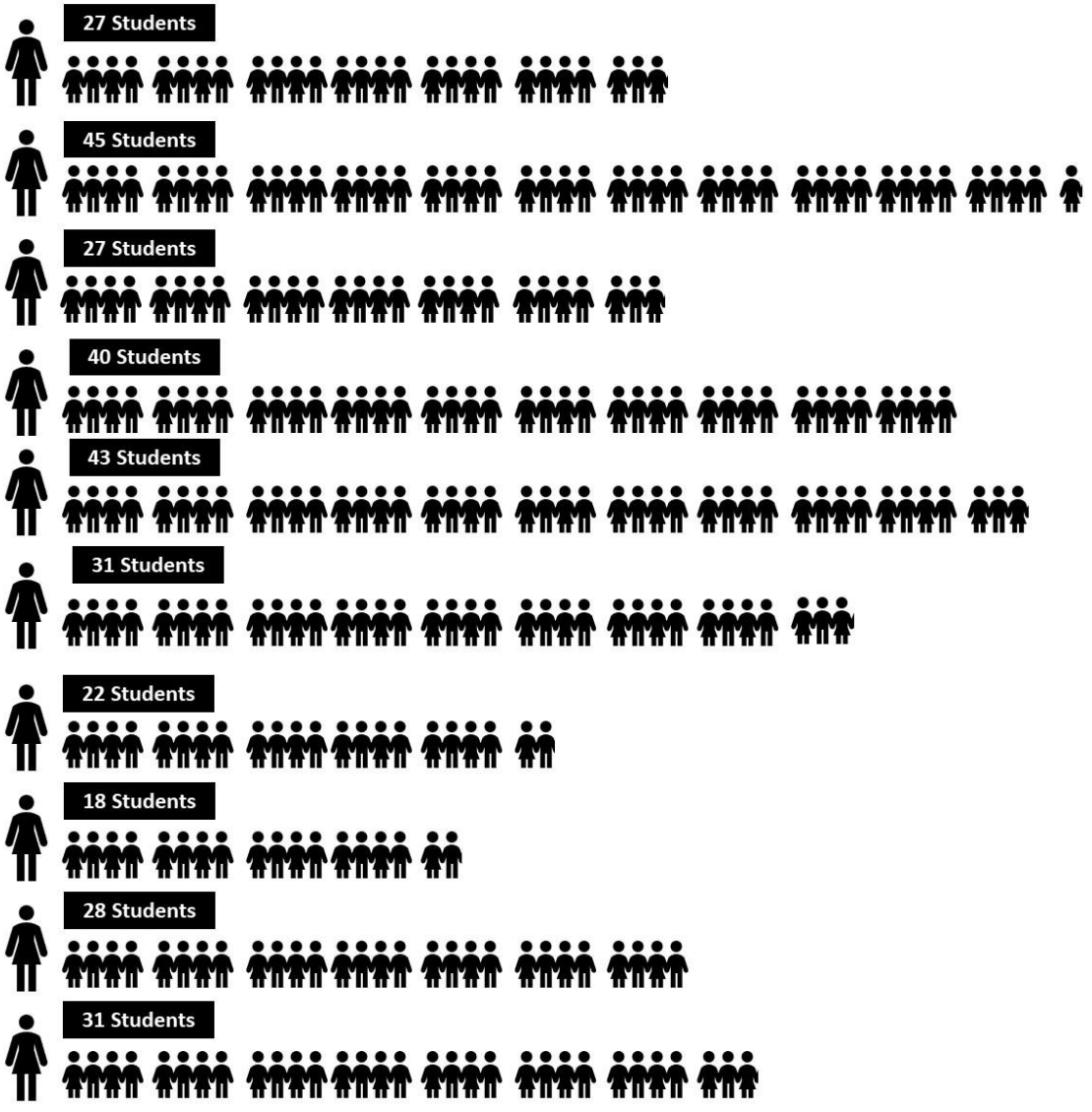
Here are my reasons as to why class sizes matter:

1. Students receive individualized attention
2. Small grouping is able to work
3. Students are able to be noticed, seen and heard
4. Better results in testing
5. Teachers can teach to the multiple modalities
6. Students get better feedback
7. Teachers get to know their students.

In this era of ESSA, Every Student Succeeds, no student can succeed and get what they need in an environment that is overcrowded and underfunded. Students deserve equity and it can only be equitable when students are seen, heard and understood. The environment must be conducive to students being comfortable in their surroundings. The environment without air conditioning is challenging at best. Students must not be on top of one another because of lack of space. In this current climate and environment, we must ensure that there is equity for our students to have a fighting chance. How can

they succeed when there aren't enough materials? How can they succeed when there aren't enough teachers? How can they succeed with so many distractions within one room? No human being can be asked to make this situation work. When I would walk my students to the lunchroom the students had to spiral around like an amusement park ride line in order to get in line for lunch. We must do better by students in marginalized populations. We must look to do better by students who are already dealing with living in food desert and swamp. The least that we can provide them with is one teacher per 20 students. This ratio allows for teachers to address the issues of RED and YELLOW students while attending to the excellent needs of GREEN and BLUE students. Give us the help that we need to put forth a generation that deserve to be treated better by the adults that have the ability to put forth legislation to ensure a healthy future for all future scholars of the world. Please support HB 85/SB 206, our students deserve better!

Appendix – View of student classroom sizes



BTU Testimony in Support of SB 206.pdf

Uploaded by: Cristina E Duncan Evans

Position: FAV



AFT 340 AFL-CIO
Seton Business Park
5800 Metro Drive, 2nd Floor
Baltimore, MD 21215-3209

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 206
Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size

Finance Committee

February 9, 2023

1:00pm

The Baltimore Teachers Union supports Senate Bill 206, which would remove class size from the list of topics that are prohibited from collective bargaining between school districts and employee organizations representing certificated staff.

The Baltimore Teachers Union represents 8,280 teachers, paraprofessionals, counselors, clinicians, librarians, secretaries, community school site specialists, bus transportation aides, and many more school-based and central office support staff. We are 4 out of 5 workers in Baltimore City Public Schools, serving 75,595 students and their families. Our national union, the American Federation of Teachers, has over 1.7 million members in the United States and its territories.

Senate Bill 206 seeks to remove class size from the list of prohibited topics in collective bargaining between a public school employer and the organization representing its certificated staff. This bill would not require districts to negotiate on class size. Rather, it would allow teachers' unions to bring proposals on class size to the negotiations table. Under current law, school districts are required to negotiate on salaries, wages, hours, working conditions, and procedures for employee transfers and assignments. SB 206 does not add class size to the list of mandatory topics of bargaining. Class size would become a permissible topic of bargaining.

House Bill 85 rights an important wrong for teachers and other school staff that work with students. Class size is one of the most important factors that determine what a teacher is able to accomplish with their students. As teachers are increasingly facing burnout and considering leaving the profession, allowing unions to negotiate class size provides an important opportunity

for teachers to improve their working conditions and ensure that students get more time, attention and instruction from their educators. Educators are held accountable through their evaluations for student outcomes, but they currently have no meaningful way to ensure that their classrooms have a manageable number of students.

With nationwide teacher shortages, Maryland school districts need creative staffing strategies to retain teachers and combat burnout. This enabling legislation allows educators to help shape the solutions to problems that impact every student in Maryland. This legislation would not put class size caps in place, nor would it require districts to enforce class size limits. It would simply allow teachers, who are deeply invested in the success of their classrooms, a platform to make proposals that could limit class sizes and determine additional compensation for teachers whose classes swell due to vacant positions. Across the country, agreements to address class size vary. Class sizes that exceed caps do not always mean building more schools or funding more positions. Large class sizes in other states can trigger more student support staff within the classroom, or additional compensation for teachers of large classes. A variety of options can be brought to the table for school districts and unions to agree on - but only if unions are allowed to bring the issue to the bargaining table in the first place.

The challenges of Baltimore City Public Schools can only be overcome when they are addressed democratically, collectively and collaboratively. Our school district has not prioritized lowering class size, despite student, teacher, and family concerns. Class size has effects on student achievement, student participation, and the overall student experience in school. For this reason, we believe that additional measures are needed to resolve this urgent concern, and that class size should be a permissible topic of collective bargaining. **BTU urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 206.**

SB 206 - Education - Collective Bargaining - Certi

Uploaded by: Donna Edwards

Position: FAV



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

AFFILIATED WITH NATIONAL AFL-CIO

7 School Street • Annapolis, Maryland 21401-2096

Balto. (410) 269-1940 • Fax (410) 280-2956

President

Donna S. Edwards

Secretary-Treasurer

Gerald W. Jackson

**SB 206 - Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size
Senate Finance Committee
February 9, 2023**

SUPPORT

**Donna S. Edwards
President**

Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO

Madame Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 206 - Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of Maryland's 300,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

SB 206 repeals the outdated ban on allowing educator unions to negotiate with their employers over the number of students that can be assigned to a particular class. The current law restricts the freedom of workers to bargain over the terms and conditions of their employment. Collective bargaining is the ideal process for resolving disagreements over class size and allows educators to fully address one of the issues that matters most to them.

Every year, even more expectations are placed on Maryland's teachers, while providing them with the same or fewer resources. Average class sizes have steadily increased, increasing the amount of work educators are responsible for without additional compensation or support. Class sizes are one of the key factors in determining the working conditions that an educator will face during a school year. Banning educators from negotiating over these core issues threatens to turn even more workers away from careers in education.

Just last year, Maryland had the dishonor of being included as one of only nine states that prohibited bargaining over class sizes. Concern over class sizes is not limited to educators and their unions. Parents also wish that they had some mechanism to encourage local school boards to maintain responsible staffing levels.

We encourage a favorable report for SB 206.

ESmith_HB85:SB206_Testimony1.pdf

Uploaded by: Essence Nelson

Position: FAV

Testimony from Essence Smith, Baltimore City Public Schools Community Schools
Site Specialist

HB85/SB206: Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size

Official Testimony
Position: **FAVORABLE**

To the [House Ways & Means Committee / Senate Finance Committee],

My name is Essence Smith, and I'm a Baltimore resident and a member of the Baltimore Teachers Union. I support [HB0085/SB0206].

This bill will repeal the prohibition on a public school employer negotiating the maximum number of students assigned to a class.

Passing this bill is essential because research shows smaller classes lead to better outcomes for all kids – especially those who need help the most. Class size reduction has been shown to result in higher test scores, better grades, more engaged students, fewer disciplinary referrals, and less teacher turnover.

I respectfully urge this committee to issue a favorable report on [HB0085/SB0206] Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size.

Sincerely,

Essence Smith
Community Schools Site Specialist
District 7
Essence.smith27@gmail.com
443-839-4001

Franca Muller Paz SB 206 Official Testimony Positi

Uploaded by: Franca Muller

Position: FAV

Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size

SB206

Official Testimony

Position: **FAVORABLE**

To the Ways and Means Committee,

My name is Franca Muller Paz, and I'm a Baltimore City resident and a teacher in Baltimore City Public Schools. I support the Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size Act SB85

Our students deserve high quality instruction, with greater academic and emotional support from educators. I have been teaching for over 13 years, and this year, with classes of over 35 students and 6 classes, I can firmly say that large class sizes are tremendously detrimental to the academic and emotional well being of our students.

We are living through a nation-wide crisis of school shootings and violence. Last month in Baltimore alone we suffered multiple shootings and tragic deaths of our young people. In these dark times, we ask ourselves what we can do to protect our kids and make our schools safer?

When I asked a group of students this, they said the answer is simple: build relationships. People who REALLY know each other are much more likely to let each other in, be helped through their dark moments, navigate away from harmful decisions, and talk out issues, instead of choosing physical harm.

When we have class sizes that let us get to know our students, that let our STUDENTS get to know one another, we can do so much to prevent violence.

It is much harder to notice bruises and cuts that shouldn't be there, how a cheerful young man has become sullen and withdrawn, to ask "are you okay" and "how are you" in classrooms rooms packed wall to wall with students. Kids can easily hide signs of abuse and depression, when they are just a face among a sea of their peers.

It is critical for the academic success and safety of our children to have the tools to bargain to reduce class size.

I respectfully urge this committee to issue a favorable report on HB85, the Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size Act

We can continue, as a state, to spend millions of dollars on putting metal detectors in our babies schools, on expanding prison beds, and on repairing the social cost of our suffering. Or - we can make meaningful decisions early in our kids' and teens' lives that can be a balm against a violent future.

In honor of Black history month & Maryland's own, Frederick Douglass, It is easier to build strong children, than to repair broken men.

Sincerely,

Franca Muller Paz
Spanish Teacher, Baltimore City Schools
District 45 Resident

franca.muller@gmail.com

(201)888-5618

1001 St. Paul Street

Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Belin's Class Size Testimony Sample (Written and O

Uploaded by: Gerimi Belin

Position: FAV

Sample Testimony on Class Size

Testimony from [Gerimi Belin - "Baltimore City parent" & Baltimore City Educator]
SB206 - Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size

Before the Senate Finance Committee
February 9, 2023
Position: FAVORABLE

Good morning/afternoon members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Gerimi Belin and I'm a Baltimore City resident. I want to express my full support of SB206.

Maryland is one of only **nine states in the country** that does not allow teachers to have a say in class size and caseload. In other states where unions can negotiate class size, the result is not just smaller classes, but more support staff in large classes. Our schools need more staff to support our students academically and emotionally. Removing the ban on negotiating this is an important step in addressing varied student needs.

Research shows smaller classes lead to better outcomes for all kids – especially those who need help the most. Class size reduction has been shown to result in higher test scores, better grades, more engaged students, fewer disciplinary referrals, and less teacher turnover.

The quality of the classroom matters. We know the Blueprint funding will pay teachers more and give them more planning time but this is not enough.

This bill matters to me for 3 reasons. One, it allows for teachers to be able to do their jobs effectively by focusing on a realistic number of scholars in which the teacher can be effective. If scholars were to be taken on a field trip then a certain number of chaperones would be required so it's not too many students to "look after" at one time but the classroom does not demand the same grace. Another reason why this bill matters is we have to come to the realization that teachers are people and not robots. Meaning that we can not pull from an empty vessel and we can only be spread so thin before we become ineffective. Finally, teaching with 30 plus scholars in a room at times is not only challenging but the idea of scholars with accommodations does not always get the level of small group interactions and one-on-one settings as needed.

This bill matters to me not only as an educator but most importantly as a parent. I say this because as a parent of a child that has extra needs in the classroom settings, I often worry about the level of education that he receives. I know that the job is solely not on the teacher but parents as well and we try our best to work every night with him at home. But for so many of the scholars in this district, parents may not always have the resources nor the time to be able to provide their children with what they need.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB206.
Thank you.

Sincerely,

Gerimi Belin
Teacher, Parent and Baltimore City Resident
gbelin00@gmail.com

BTU Class Size Bill - I. Crisostomo.pdf

Uploaded by: Inez Louisa Crisostomo

Position: FAV

Testimony from Inez Louisa C. Crisostomo, Baltimore City Public Schools TEACHER,
District 480 Resident

HB0085: Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size

Official Testimony

Position: **FAVORABLE**

To the House Ways & Means Committee,

My name is Inez Crisostomo, and I'm a Baltimore City resident and a member of the Baltimore Teachers Union. I support SB0206.

This bill will repeal the prohibition on a public school employer negotiating the maximum number of students assigned to a class.

Passing this bill is essential because research has also shown that a smaller class size is essential to the learning of a student. If this bill is passed, we teachers will be able to negotiate the class size that we handle, for the good of the students.

I have experienced having a class size larger than 30, and I have experienced having a class size of 10. It is very much evident that the students in the class of ten have an advantage. This can be seen in their test scores, and even in their interaction in class.

I respectfully urge this committee to issue a favorable report on SB0206 Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size.

Sincerely,

Inez Louisa C. Crisostomo
Teacher, Baltimore City Public Schools
inez.celestino@gmail.com
667-276-1797

SB206 FavorableTestimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Jessi Ahart

Position: FAV

SB206 - Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size

Senate Finance Committee
February 9, 2023
Position: FAVORABLE

Greetings members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Jess Ahart, and I am a Baltimore City resident in District 40. I am in full support of SB206.

Maryland is the one of only **NINE STATES in the country** that doesn't allow teachers to have a say in class size and caseload. In other states where unions can negotiate class size, the result is not just smaller classes, but more support staff in large classes. Our schools need more staff to support our students academically and emotionally. Schools in my neighborhood especially do.

It should be obvious that smaller classes lead to better outcomes for all kids. The more caring and connected adults in a student's life, the more resources they will have access to navigate whatever challenges and decisions life throws at them. Class size reduction leads to higher test scores, better grades, more engaged students, fewer disciplinary referrals, and less teacher turnover.

The quality of the classroom matters. We know the Blueprint funding will pay teachers more and give them more planning time but this is not enough.

I've lived in this neighborhood for over 20 years. I KNOW the kids who attend our local schools. Their teachers deserve the right to speak frankly about the needs their students face, and to be able to take steps to ensure that they get what they need to not merely survive, but to thrive.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB206. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jess Ahart
2306 Mount Royal Terrace #1A
Baltimore, MD 21217
District 40 Resident

Copy of Class Size Testimony Sample (Written and O

Uploaded by: LaToya Nettles

Position: FAV

Sample Testimony on Class Size

Testimony from LaToya Nettles, AROS Parent Organizer, TDP, Communities United, VOTES
SB206 - Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size

Before the Senate Finance Committee
February 9, 2023
Position: FAVORABLE

Hello members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is LaToya Nettles and I'm a District 41 resident. I want to express my full support of SB206. I am an educator, a minister and an active community member. I have witnessed how having an overload of students in a classroom can affect both the students and teachers overall morale, concentration and their ability to retain information given. Safety cannot be guaranteed when we leave our houses, at least we should do our best to ensure safety in our school buildings. Teachers have difficulty gaining the attention of their students due to the current student to teacher ratios. Teachers cannot possibly learn each student's weaknesses and strengths, which is important for a successful educator to be able to provide an equitable education. Students are less likely to ask for or accept help in an over packed classroom. Students are less likely to answer questions which leads to them not understanding, retaining or being able to synthesize the new information. Teachers are teaching "to the bell" so they can get through the day and not for our students' understanding. We are also losing our staff because they are underpaid, misinformed, and mistreated on a regular basis. Teachers are treated like "the help" and like babysitters, when they should be appreciated and honored for the service they provide to their communities.

The level of safety is compromised in classrooms with a lot of students and not enough staff. When I worked as a paraeducator in Baltimore City, I often substituted for absent staff. A staff member was injured and out for the week and while providing aid to the classroom I was punched in the face by a 17 year old young man. We were involved in circle time and singing songs when the incident occurred. At the time I was a staff member in a school for children with special needs and this was a regular occurrence for them. No one was shocked or concerned. This cannot be our culture moving forward. It should not be normal for staff to be injured on the job and replaced by another staff who could be injured in the same manner.

It is also easier for our students to miss classes and school when the classrooms are overcrowded. It is hard to establish a working environment when you can't remember your students' names. Education must be personal because we all do not learn the same way. Teachers are forced to teach for the test instead of teaching to retain the knowledge.

Maryland is one of only **nine states in the country** that does not allow teachers to have a say in class size and caseload. In other states where unions can negotiate class size, the result is not just smaller classes, but more support staff in large classes. Our schools need more staff to

support our students academically and emotionally. Removing the ban on negotiating this is an important step in addressing varied student needs.

Research shows smaller classes lead to better outcomes for all kids – especially those who need help the most. Class size reduction has been shown to result in higher test scores, better grades, more engaged students, fewer disciplinary referrals, and less teacher turnover.

The quality of the classroom matters. We know the Blueprint funding will pay teachers more and give them more planning time but this is not enough.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB206.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Minister L.J. Nettles
AROS Parent Organizer, District 41

latoyanettles@communitiesunite.org

BTU Class Size Bill Template.docx (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Liernelis Diaz Casado

Position: FAV

Testimony from Liernelis Diaz-Casado, Baltimore City Public Schools Student, SOMOS
Organizer and a Writing Center tutor District Baltimore City Resident

SB206: Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size

Official Testimony

Position: **FAVORABLE**

To the Senate Finance Committee

My name is Liernelis Diaz-Casado, and I'm a Baltimore City resident and a member of the SOMOS (Students Organizing a Multicultural and Open Society). I support [SB0206].

This bill will repeal the prohibition on a public school employer negotiating the maximum number of students assigned to a class.

Passing this bill is essential. As a student from Puerto Rico I'm used to having small class sizes, the average of students being 23. Decreasing class sizes facilitates both learning and teaching environments. Students and teachers are comfortable with each other, therefore they develop deeper relationships that encourage students to trust and participate in class. Increasing how much students understand topics in class will help to close the achievement gap and graduation rates to go up which would eventually get the attention of outsiders that might be considering coming to the state of Maryland looking for "an equal opportunity to succeed" as our governor Wes Moore says. Making people feel included in a classroom as immigrants or just people from other states would encourage student enrollment and will bring more teachers looking for the opportunity to be part of a world class public school system. It would also bring more families that would potentially be encouraged to invest money in our schools, houses and jobs. This would eventually lead to higher quality jobs which would bring in more tax dollars for the system to be able to invest in the individualized necessities of both students, teachers and all citizens.

I respectfully urge this committee to issue a favorable report on SB0206 Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size.

Sincerely,

Liernelis Diaz-Casado
Organizer, SOMOS
Baltimore City College

liernelis.diazcasado@baltimorecitycollege.us
787-477-2390

Research:

- Brookings Institute 2011: "[Class Size: What Research Says and What it Means for State Policy](#)"
 - Average class size is 15.3 (based on data compiled [here](#) from National Center for Education Statistics)
 - Largest impact for class size reduction from STAR was "the positive effects of class size were largest for black students, economically disadvantaged students, and boys."
 - "It appears that very large class-size reductions, on the order of magnitude of 7-10 fewer students per class, can have meaningful long-term effects on student achievement and perhaps on non-cognitive outcomes."
- NCTQ 2019: "<https://www.nctq.org/blog/A-sizable-opportunity:-thinking-strategically-about-class-size>"
 - "Of our sample of 124 large districts (which includes the 100 largest districts in the country and the largest district in each state), we find that almost all (82 percent) put strict limits on class sizes in at least some grades."
 - See table below for top nine districts from 2019 for average sizes by grade
 - Anne Arundel County Schools: goal for lower class size limits or goals for schools with more vulnerable student populations
- STAR, Tennessee 1980s
 - Compared classes of 15 to classes of 22, randomized groups (32% reduction)
 - Elementary students outperformed by .22 over four years, or equivalent of 3 months instruction
- SSRN, NY State: [Effect of class size on teacher attrition](#)
 - A decrease in class size from 23 to 20 students, under a district-wide policy, decreases the probability that a teacher leaves a school by 4.2 percentage points.
- 2009: NY Times: Class Size Around the World:
<https://archive.nytimes.com/economix.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/09/11/class-size-around-the-world/>

STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO SUBMITTING YOUR TESTIMONY:

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SB00031/HB0153 - School Board Bill Toolkit:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1W4KGXFcigPgVYZwtndqLY_RAGCa7hEKL9MeJriGzqdY/edit?usp=sharing

HB0085/SB0206 - Class Size Bill Toolkit:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1aR9-ottSDoL18oEpObC4BhAvizrroiQLRLRqbEpLtCc/edit>

Step 2: Sign-In or Make MyMGA Account

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/MyMGATracking/WitnessSignup>

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Decide if you want to submit written, virtual oral, live oral, or "both" which is written and virtual or live oral. Select that option and then hit SAVE.

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Watch your hearing & jump on when your bill is called

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Information/YouTubeChannelInfo>

Maggie Doughty- Class Size Bill Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Margaret Doughty

Position: FAV

Testimony from Margaret Doughty, Baltimore City Public Schools Student, District 45
Resident

SB0206: Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size

Official Testimony

Position: **FAVORABLE**

To the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Margaret Doughty, and I'm a Baltimore City resident, a High School Student and an organizer in SOMOS. I support SB0206.

This bill will repeal the prohibition on a public school employer negotiating the maximum number of students assigned to a class.

Passing this bill is essential because as students we don't want to be just another number on a roster full of students. Big classes affect all students but particularly students who find it harder to participate and feel comfortable within their classes. A large group of students who struggle within these big classes are ESOL students. It is more cost effective for these students to be receiving more individualized help in their classrooms with smaller class sizes. As of the school year 2018-19 there was only 41% of English Learners who graduated. 44% of English Learners in the same school year dropped out. As of 2022 less than 5% of English Learners were identified as Gifted and Advanced students which is 3% less than the equity index minimum.

Although these statistics don't apply to my particular school, this is a problem as we still have a large and growing population of ESOL students. As an English Speaker who knows another language I have found myself helping other students because of the constant disregard for English as a second language learners within large classrooms. Why should their needs be disregarded just because they are outnumbered?

We cannot talk about class size because it is illegal. We should simply have the basic freedom to talk about this.

I respectfully urge this committee to issue a favorable report on SB0206 Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size.

Sincerely,

Margaret Doughty
SOMOS Organizer
Baltimore City College
margaret.doughty2023@baltimorecitycollege.us
443-895-2580

Research:

- Brookings Institute 2011: "[Class Size: What Research Says and What it Means for State Policy](#)"
 - Average class size is 15.3 (based on data compiled [here](#) from National Center for Education Statistics)
 - Largest impact for class size reduction from STAR was "the positive effects of class size were largest for black students, economically disadvantaged students, and boys."
 - "It appears that very large class-size reductions, on the order of magnitude of 7-10 fewer students per class, can have meaningful long-term effects on student achievement and perhaps on non-cognitive outcomes."
- NCTQ 2019: "<https://www.nctq.org/blog/A-sizable-opportunity:-thinking-strategically-about-class-size>"
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Testimony 02_09_2023.pdf

Uploaded by: Maria Monterrosa

Position: FAV

Testimony from Maria Monterrosa, Baltimore City Public Schools Student, District [#]
Resident

SB206: Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size

Official Testimony
Position: FAVORABLE

To the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Maria Monterrosa, and I'm a Baltimore city resident. I'm a student from Baltimore City College and a member of SOMOS. I support SB0206.

This bill will repeal the prohibition on a public school employer negotiating the maximum number of students assigned to a class.

I stand by the reduction of class sizes because I've had too many instances in which my doubts in class were never adressed due to the 6 other people that had raised their hand before me. In the U.S the average number of students in a classroom is around 24 which can be problematic for both teachers and students. But my classes all have over 30 students.

Many students are at a disadvantage in terms of the quality of their classes since teacher feedback and student to teacher relationships play a large role in student education, but are cut short due to the mass of students that the teacher has to assist.

It's very easy to disguise depression or domestic violence when being overshadowed by over 30 other people in a class. There are also many instances in which students are too afraid to be wrong when participating in class which limits their abilities of learning as we all know that we learn from our mistakes. This behavior is a product of social anxiety and lack of relationship with the teacher and peers.

Smaller class sizes will increase the chance of students to involve themselves more often in class which will make their opinions, feelings and questions be heard ,or even noticed. Smaller class sizes will create the oppportunity to build bonds which ultimately benefit the student's ability to learn in a class. Thank you.

I respectfully urge this committee to issue a favorable report on SB0206, Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size.

Sincerely,

Maria Monterrosa

SOMOS

45

maria.monterrosa-granados2025@baltimorecitycollege.us

443-580-9242

MD AROS Class Size Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Moira Kaleida

Position: FAV

Testimony from:
Maira B. Kaleida
Executive Director, National Coalition
Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools (AROS)
SB206 - Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size

Before the Senate Finance Committee
February 9, 2023
Position: FAVORABLE

Greetings, members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Moira Kaleida and I am the Executive Director for the national coalition Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools. Today, I wish to express my full support of SB206, a bill that will drastically improve the teaching and learning environment in Maryland.

Our coalition, made up of union members and community organizations, deeply believes in creating schools where all children can learn and thrive. Numerous studies have shown not only the benefits of smaller class sizes for student outcomes, but also the detrimental effects that overcrowding can have on a school and its community.

Currently, we have a nationwide teacher shortage. Our members at AROS span all 50 states, including our strong members in Maryland, all vying to attract the best teachers. Manageable class sizes prevent teacher turnover and entice graduates to seek a contract in those districts. Maryland students deserve to have qualified, caring, and respected teachers.

While I have discussed the importance of manageable class sizes above, Maryland refuses to acknowledge these facts as it is one of only nine states in the country that doesn't allow teachers to have a say in class size and caseload. Our schools need teachers and support staff who are not overburdened and stretched too thin in order to support students academically, socially, and emotionally.

Removing the ban on negotiating this is an important step in addressing the needs of our diverse student population, and creating more equitable outcomes for all kids. I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB206. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Moira B. Kaleida
Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools
Executive Director, National Coalition
moira@reclaimourschools.org

Ferrell SB206 Testimony - Class Size.pdf

Uploaded by: Nathan Ferrell

Position: FAV

Testimony from Timothy Nathan Ferrell, Baltimore City Public Schools Teacher

District 44A

SB206 - Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size

Before the Senate Finance Committee

2/9/23

Position: FAVORABLE

Good afternoon members of the committee.

My name is Nathan Ferrell and I'm a Baltimore city public school Teacher and district 44A resident. I'm writing to give my full support of SB206 for the purpose of repealing the prohibition on a public school employer negotiating the maximum number of students assigned to a class; and generally relating to collective bargaining for public school employees.

I taught for 8 years in Howard County Public schools where my class sizes were almost always over 30 students. As an AP Spanish Language teacher I would spend hours after the school day grading, revising and offering individual feedback to my AP students. The same for my introductory and intermediate Spanish classes. My student class load averaged over 150 students a year in HCPSS. Transitioning to Baltimore City Public Schools, my class sizes fluctuated wildly. One summer I had 67 students assigned to one section of a Spanish summer credit recovery course. Another summer I had over 40 students per class on my rosters for original credit Spanish courses that are a graduation requirement.

This bill removes the illegality of discussions around class size between teacher unions and school districts. Currently, it cannot be discussed as part of negotiations. Teachers unions need the ability to bring the demands from the community to the bargaining table in order to address the issues our students and families face.

Class sizes impact whether students have meaningful connections with educators and receive quality personalized instruction. Being able to discuss class sizes during negotiations could also allow for smaller caseloads for our special educators which would improve retention. It affects school counselors, social workers, nurses and psychologists by improving our retention and recruitment of those key positions and addressing the mental health crisis facing our schools.

Members of this committee may be wondering why can't these common sense issues about staffing and instruction and even components of the blueprint be discussed during negotiations. As a member of a bargaining team for the Baltimore Teachers Union I have to emphasize that district bargaining teams shut down any aspect of a conversation if it involves class size. Even the most basic common sense conversations that support common goals between LEA's and

Teacher Unions are shut down by district negotiations teams simply because they can. Because it is illegal to bring up anything related to class size at the bargaining table.

I understand the concerns that this bill will lead to hard class size caps and increased school construction requests. I want to emphasize that **this bill is a working conditions issue** and a way to give workers more of a voice.

After talking with affiliates in other states who can negotiate class size, they say many times it leads to additional support staff in a classroom if a class hits a certain number, or additional pay for the teacher, like a special educator with a huge caseload who will leave the district if the working conditions do not improve or unless the pay improves commensurate with the workload.

This bill would not make class size a mandatory subject for bargaining. There are so many other outcomes that could come from being able to bargain class size that aren't hard caps. They include common sense discussions around blueprint implementation, creative ways to handle the pre-k expansion, retention strategies for job titles with high turnover like special educators and it could address our mental health crisis in schools by hiring and staffing related service providers adequately.

Finally I'd like to emphasize as a member of the Baltimore AROS (**Alliance To Reclaim Our Schools**) coalition, this bill is a significant compromise. In 2020, a coalition of students, parents and teachers formed the Baltimore City chapter of the Alliance to Reclaim our Schools (AROS). Our first project was to ensure that decision-makers understand the concerns of those most affected by education policy decisions. We conducted 11 listening sessions with over 300 students, educators and families. People shared their thoughts about what is most needed to improve Baltimore City Schools. The outcomes from those conversations were organized into a draft platform of 14 items. Then 1194 stakeholders voted on these items at our mobile voting station pop ups at schools and community venues. As a result of this voting process class sizes of no more than 20 students and more counselors and mental health providers in school was one of the top 5 priorities of Baltimore city students and families. Although this bill does not accomplish what our community has prioritized, it is a step in the right direction.**

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB206.

Sincerely,

T. Nathan Ferrell
Baltimore AROS Coalition
Baltimore Movement of Rank and File Educators
Baltimore Teachers Union

nferrell@baltu.org
443 799 1714

Nora Shapiro Copy of BTU Class Size Bill Template.

Uploaded by: Nora Shapiro

Position: FAV

Testimony from , Baltimore City Public Schools student, District 45 Resident

SB206: Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size

Official Testimony

Position: **FAVORABLE**

To the Senate Finance Committee, My name is Nora Shapiro, and I'm a Baltimore city resident. I support SB206. This bill will repeal the prohibition on a public school employer negotiating the maximum number of students assigned to a class.

Passing this bill is essential because it will allow for a better learning experience for both students and teachers. Right now, teachers across Baltimore City can not legally bring up wanting a smaller class size. I believe that teachers should be able to at least talk about it with their employers, whether they would actually end up getting them or not. Having discussions about this won't hurt, if anything, it would make more sense to have the floor open to talk about it and see both sides of the story.

I personally went to an elementary/middle school for 9 years with around 20 students in the class. This was a very hands-on, individualized learning experience in which I felt very comfortable in my surroundings. I think that comfort is a big part of schooling and something that a lot of people look for. This bill, SB206, could attract more people towards Maryland schools. The more people that are attracted to the schools, the more people will want to come to Maryland. This would hopefully increase state funds through income and sales tax with potential citizens, workers, customers and so on.

Now that I am in highschool, I had to transition from 20 students to around 30 in each class. This was a pretty big transition and it really came clear that a smaller classroom setting is a better option. Now having to adapt to bigger classrooms, I have to get used to people blatantly disrespecting and neglecting others. With bigger class sizes, it is easy to get looked over by not just other students, but teachers as well. Teachers have to be in charge of looking over so many other students at the same time that they can sometimes miss when a student is really struggling.

Research indicates that when a class size is Reduced by 7-10 people, there are benefits in both the students' achievements and mental health.

School and mental health go hand in hand for me. I think that if teachers were to have had smaller class sizes they could have noticed that I wasn't doing so well. Things would

have been a lot better for me. I know that this is the same for a lot of other students my age and students in general. It's really important that teachers and students can create good relationships, and it's a lot easier to achieve when there's a smaller class size.

I respectfully urge this committee to issue a favorable report on SB0206

Sincerely,

Nora Shapiro

SOMOS

45

Nora.Shapiro.2026@baltimorecitycollege.us

443-562-4090

Research:

- Brookings Institute 2011: “[Class Size: What Research Says and What it Means for State Policy](#)”
 - Average class size is 15.3 (based on data compiled [here](#) from National Center for Education Statistics)
 - Largest impact for class size reduction from STAR was “the positive effects of class size were largest for black students, economically disadvantaged students, and boys.”
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<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Information/YouTubeChannelInfo>

SB206 Class Size.pdf

Uploaded by: Pamela Beidle

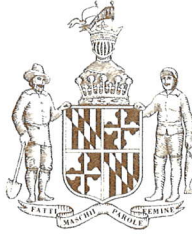
Position: FAV

PAMELA G. BEIDLE
Legislative District 32
Anne Arundel County

Finance Committee

Vice Chair

Executive Nominations Committee



James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 202
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3593 · 301-858-3593
800-492-7122 Ext. 3593
Pamela.Beidle@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 9, 2023

SB206

Education – Collective Bargaining – Certificated Employees – Class Size

Good afternoon Chair Griffith, Vice Chair Klausmeier and Members of the Finance Committee;

Thank you for the opportunity to present SB 206, Collective Bargaining – Certificated Employees – Class Size. Currently, during collective bargaining negotiations the subject of class size is prohibited, SB 206 removes this prohibition and allows the discussion of the maximum number of students assigned to a class to begin.

The fact that class sizes cannot even be brought up during collective bargaining limits our educator's ability to manage their classrooms, ultimately affecting their ability to give our children the individualized attention they deserve.

This bill does not include any mandates or appropriations, and according to its fiscal note it will likely have minimum fiscal impact on the state and local level. The bill does not itself reduce the sizes of our classes, but it simply allows for the conversation to take place.

It is a worthwhile conversation to have, I respectfully request a favorable report on SB 206.

PCAB Letter Supporting SB206.pdf

Uploaded by: Rachel Duncan

Position: FAV

**Testimony from Parent and Community Advisory Board for Baltimore City
Schools**

**SB206 - Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated
Employees - Class Size**

Before the Senate Finance Committee

February 9, 2023

Position: FAVORABLE

Good afternoon members of the Senate Finance Committee

The volunteer members of the Parent and Community Advisory Board, or PCAB, for Baltimore City Schools submits this testimony to give our full support of SB206 for the purpose of repealing the prohibition on a public school employer negotiating the maximum number of students assigned to a class; and generally relating to collective bargaining for public school employees.

We see this bill as a bill about working conditions for educators, which is one of the most important factors affecting our students' learning conditions. We are neither looking for hard class size caps nor making class size a mandatory subject of bargaining. That said, class size is an important factor affecting our children's ability to succeed in school, and it is a priority issue for parents.

Since its formation in 2020, Baltimore City's chapter of the Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools (AROS) coalition conducted 11 listening sessions with over 300 Baltimore City Schools stakeholders, and then ran a campaign through which 1194 stakeholders voted on priority areas for improvement. Amongst parents specifically, class size stood out as the area receiving the highest percentage of parent votes.

It's important to us that our children are able to receive personalized instruction from educators who are not spread too thin by large class sizes, and we want to remove the legal prohibition against our children's educators being able to discuss class size when they are negotiating for their working conditions. Class size is a key part of educator working conditions, and therefore to learning conditions for students. Class size should not be an illegal topic of discussion for collective bargaining.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB206. Thank you.

Sincerely,

PCAB (Board members listed as follows):

Larry Simmons, Chair, Senate District 41

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SB206_MSEA_Zwerling_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Samantha Zwerling

Position: FAV

Understanding Class Size and the Impact on Students and Educators

With the spiking of workloads and stress levels over the last several years, educator burnout and turnover are escalating and shortages are impacting every school system in Maryland.

Increasing Individual Attention for Students

While unmanageable class sizes, caseloads, and staffing ratios were present before the pandemic, they have reached crisis levels in the wake of the pandemic. Class size is at the root of the challenging working conditions that drive educators from the profession and hamper students from receiving the individual and small group instruction and services they need.

The emphasis that the Blueprint for Maryland's Future places on hiring thousands of additional educators can have a transformative impact on student achievement, our professions, and our schools. Giving educators the ability to discuss class sizes at the table and collaboratively develop targeted strategies to mitigate the impact of large class sizes on students and educators will further this enduring commitment to our students.

Why Is This Change Needed?

Currently, class size is an illegal topic of bargaining. That means educators can't even bring up class sizes at the bargaining table, even though it has long been a top concern for educators and parents and impacts the amount of individualized attention students receive. **Maryland is one of only nine states where class size is an illegal subject of bargaining, along with Alaska, Indiana, Kansas, Maine, Nebraska, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Wisconsin.** It is bargainable in the District of Columbia and 12 states (Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, New York, North Dakota, Oregon, and Pennsylvania). In the remainder of states, the law is silent or collective bargaining does not exist.

Strengthening Student Relationships

Smaller class sizes and more staff support mean the opportunity for students and educators to deepen and strengthen relationships—a critical

step in supporting academic and social-emotional growth, particularly in the wake of the stresses, traumas, and inequities stemming from the pandemic and long-term racial and economic injustice. These stronger relationships underpin the life-changing relationships that can develop between educators and students that can set students on a path for success and achievement. While excessive class sizes clearly hamper developing these relationships, they also impact the additional work educators need to do to support students, such as grading papers, writing letters of recommendation, providing after-school help, and making calls and emails to families.

Reducing Educator Burnout and Turnover

Even before the pandemic, educator retention and recruitment were at crisis levels. **With the spiking of workloads and stress levels over the last several years, educator burnout and turnover are escalating and shortages are impacting every school system in Maryland.** Maryland has always been a teacher-import state, meaning that we do not graduate enough teachers from our higher education institutions to fill the number of positions that open up annually. However, enrollment in teacher education programs in Maryland—and in surrounding states—has dropped precipitously over the last several years, and that trend has accelerated during the pandemic. We need to take steps to reduce the burnout and turnover that are negatively impacting the profession—and driving great educators out of our schools—before the shortage crisis worsens.

MSEA supports HB 85/SB 206 to give educators a voice in their class sizes to help make sure students have the individualized attention they need, keep class sizes small, and reduce educator shortages.

The Impact of Class Size in Their Words

Maryland Teachers Tell Their Stories



Teacher workloads are always impossible to complete during our regular workday, but this year has added even more onto teacher's overflowing plates. Planning, preparations, and grading for the six subjects I teach as an elementary educator already takes my paltry 45-minute planning (less transition and bathroom break time), but I also plan before school four days a week for an additional 45 minutes and one day after school with my colleagues. I also regularly stay after school another one to two hours several days out of the week on my own.

Most days I'm at school from 7:40 a.m. until after 6 p.m. and spend additional time on the weekends, yet this still isn't enough time to complete my regular workload. Added to that, I am now being asked to regularly make quarantine work packets for students that will be out for almost two weeks. Each time I have done this it has taken me two to three hours to gather all the materials and write out directions for the families. This takes away from the precious time I need for my regular workload.

Student mental health is also impacting my time. So many of my 5th graders are struggling this year, much more than in previous years. My instruction time is regularly disrupted when I need to help my students talk through their emotional issues. On several occasions I have given up my lunch, or sacrificed lesson time, to help a student manage a crisis. There are certainly counselors in the building, but they too are overwhelmed and so sometimes they are unavailable.

Most days I feel like I am drowning, unable to keep up with everything I need to do, and constantly feeling like I either drop the ball with my students or sacrifice all of my personal life and time. Neither is a good, healthy, or reasonable expectation. Our workload should be such that I can complete it within a reasonable time frame and still have my evenings and weekends available for personal home-life balance."

TEACHER | **HARFORD COUNTY**



Large class sizes have always impacted my ability to serve students. Everyone knows that the number one factor that contributes the most to student success is small class sizes. We need to be able to develop good relationships with our students, spend one on one time with them, and have time to provide meaningful feedback, as well as communicate with parents. Large class sizes make all of that harder to do and result in less time to do all that because we are dealing with so many students.

TEACHER | **BALTIMORE COUNTY**



Over my three classes, I have 93 high school students this semester. If I were to spend only five minutes per student grading an assignment, it would still take more than seven hours to grade each assignment. We have 80 minute mods—if I want to check in with each student individually, I only have 2.5 minutes with each student.

TEACHER | **CARROLL COUNTY**



The excessive class size is making it harder to provide individual help that is desperately needed by low performing students. Covering for absent staff leaves little to no time to prepare quality lessons. Exhaustion is a regular feeling. I would quit if I could, this is not what I agreed to when I got into teaching. The students are tired, overwhelmed, and anxious. Their grades are depressed by the atmosphere and stress.

TEACHER | **PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY**

For more information, contact MSEA Government Relations at mseagr@mseane.org

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Testimony for HB85_SB206.pdf

Uploaded by: Stephanie Ullmann

Position: FAV

Testimony from Stephanie Ullmann Baltimore City Public Schools Teacher, District
43A Resident

SB206: Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size

Official Testimony

Position: **FAVORABLE**

My name is Stephanie Ullmann, and I'm a Baltimore resident and a member of the Baltimore Teachers Union. I support HB85/SB0206.

This bill will repeal the prohibition on a public school employer negotiating the maximum number of students assigned to a class.

Passing this bill is essential because small class sizes have a positive impact on student achievement. This year, my largest class has 25 students compared to last year, when my largest class had 33 students, and all but 1 of my classes had over 30 students. The difference is palpable. On their most recent essay, 99% of my freshmen students submitted an essay that received a passing grade, compared to 88% last year. While I know there are many variables, I believe one of them was small class size, which allowed me to target the students most in need of support. I was able to reach all students for 1-on-1 conferencing; this was not always possible last year.

I respectfully urge this committee to issue a favorable report on SB0206.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Ullmann
English Teacher at Baltimore City College
Resident of Baltimore City, District 43A
stephanie.ullmann@gmail.com
617-429-4262

SB 206 HB 85 (final) 2-9-23.pdf

Uploaded by: Jamie Brown

Position: UNF



BILL: Senate Bill 206 / House Bill 85
TITLE: Education – Collective Bargaining – Certificated Employees – Class Size
HEARING DATE: February 9, 2023 / February 1, 2023
POSITION: OPPOSE
COMMITTEE: Senate Finance Committee / House Ways and Means Committee
CONTACT: Ms. Patricia Ursprung, Deputy Legal Counsel (301-766-2946)

The Washington County Board of Education opposes Senate Bill 206, which would remove class size as an illegal topic of bargaining between employee organizations representing certificated employees and school boards.

Currently, Education Article Section 6-408 requires that employee organizations and school boards negotiate 1) salaries, wages, hours, and other working conditions, including procedures regarding employee transfers and assignments; 2) the manner in which the employee organization has access to new employees; and 3) the career ladder contained in the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future (i.e. required topics of bargaining). The two groups cannot negotiate topics related to the school calendar, the maximum number of students assigned to a class, or any matter that is precluded by applicable statutory law (i.e. illegal topics of bargaining). Any other topics can be negotiated upon mutual agreement between the parties (i.e. permissive topics of bargaining). This bill seeks to remove “class size” as an illegal topic of bargaining and make it permissive.

If the proposed amendment passes, it will create two major concerns for school systems: insufficient staffing and insufficient space. While you may hear proponents of the bill say that the bill does not require a class size cap or require a specific student to teacher ratio, that is a possible, maybe even likely, outcome if this legislation passes. If maximum class sizes are restricted in some manner, school systems will need more staff, when there is already a shortage of quality staff, and more space to comply with the requirements of the negotiated agreement.

Many school systems are not in a position to absorb the costs associated with additional staff salaries into an already tight budget at a time when the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future is requiring increased staff compensation. If it is possible, it could only be achieved by diverting funds currently being utilized to provide other important services, such as mental health services and other classroom interventions provided by non-classroom teachers, to students. This change would not be in the best interest of students. The inability to hire qualified staff might also result in the need to place strict enrollment caps on certain specialty courses, such as electives, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Career and Technical Education, and other gifted and talented courses. Doing so would be a disservice to students and is inconsistent with the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future, which seeks to provide the opportunity for all students to advance in their education.

Complying with an arbitrary, but negotiated, class size cap may also require additional physical space that school systems do not currently possess. For example, if a school that currently has two fifth grade classes now has to split that group of students into three classes, it will become necessary to also increase the usable space in the school facility. This will most often be achieved by using portable classrooms, which are less secure than school buildings, lead to a feeling of isolation because they are separate from the school building, and are costly to purchase and install. It is also possible that mid-year fluctuations in enrollment might require students in established classrooms to be redistributed.

Some students would then have to be reassigned to a new teacher with new classmates to avoid exceeding the negotiated cap on a given classroom. This kind of mid-year shuffling would present a major challenge in terms of finding space in our facilities, which are already maxed out, and can be harmful to students, especially our youngest learners who thrive on consistency.

Both of these issues, staff shortage and lack of physical space, are ultimately, to some extent, outside of the control of the school system because they are tied to funding, which the school board cannot control. Budgetary constraints will make it nearly impossible for the school board to agree to any measure that will require the school system to hire additional staff or expand the usable space in a school facility. Because the school board may be, for all intents and purposes, unable to negotiate class size, having it be a permissive topic of bargaining (i.e. both sides have to agree to discuss it) could result in more contentious contract negotiations and, ultimately, an impasse, which also diverts funds away from important student services. The school board always tries to be a good partner during contract negotiations, but adding a permissive topic that the school system cannot reasonably negotiate may deteriorate the relationship between the two sides.

The school system is most effective when the school board and teachers work together with a shared goal of creating an environment where all students can succeed. Anything that harms the harmonious relationship between the two sides should be scrutinized to determine if it is truly in the best interest of the children attending public schools across the state. The Washington County Board of Education hopes that, after careful examination and consideration, this committee determines that the amendment will not benefit school children in this state and rejects it.

Washington County Board of Education respectfully requests an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 206.

Thank you.

cc: Washington County Board of Education Members
Washington County Delegation to the Maryland General Assembly
Dr. David T. Sovine, Superintendent
Dr. Jennifer Webster, Associate Superintendent for Administration and Leadership
Dr. Gary Willow, Associate Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Mr. Jeffrey Proulx, Chief Operating Officer
Ms. Ilissa Ramm, Chief Legal Counsel
Mr. John Woolums, Director of Governmental Relations, Maryland Association of Boards of Education
Ms. Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland

SB 206.Class Size as Collective Bargaining Topic.p

Uploaded by: John Woolums

Position: UNF

BILL: Senate Bill 206
TITLE: Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size
DATE: February 9, 2023
POSITION: OPPOSE
COMMITTEE: Finance
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) strongly opposes Senate Bill 206 to add the complex and costly topic of class size to the topics that may be included in collective bargaining negotiations and binding agreements.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future is requiring wholesale revisions to each of Maryland's 24 collective bargaining agreements. The agreements are negotiated annually through a highly regulated process and with an established dispute resolution process. Adding class size to the topics which may be negotiated and included in bargaining agreements would introduce an unanticipated complicating factor into the entire transition to implementing the Blueprint. Again, neither the Blueprint nor the current process for resolving teachers' contract disputes are aligned with adding class size to the types of matters which may be negotiated.

The quasi-judicial body created by the legislature to resolve collective bargaining disputes would be ill-equipped to resolve disputed on the complex topic of class size. Because none of the current bargaining agreements contain provisions on class size, the body responsible for hearing and deciding on cases in dispute, the Public School Labor Relations Board (PSLRB), would have no experience in this area. Foremost among the challenges would be the timing of decision-making relative to the end of one fiscal year, and contract term, and the impending July 1 day for the beginning of the new year. The annual negotiations cycle is already contentious. Adding class size to the scope of bargaining would only make an already complex and time-sensitive process more likely to bog down in irreconcilable disputes. It is reasonably foreseeable that the PSLRB would be unable to make final decisions in a timely manner on contract disputes on the topic of class size.

Class size disputes will, unavoidably, involve school facilities issues not contemplated when bargaining laws and procedures were adopted. This is because class size is inherently a question of physical space. MABE opposes adding class size as a topic of bargaining because reducing class size is so closely tied to the planning, timing and funding of school construction projects. As desirable as smaller class sizes may be to both the school system and teachers, state and local investments in expanding school facilities to provide more space are completely outside the control of the parties negotiating at the bargaining table.

For these reasons, MABE urges an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 206.

SB 206_ Education - Collective Bargaining - Certif

Uploaded by: Mary Pat Fannon

Position: UNF



PSSAM
Public School Superintendents' Association
OF MARYLAND

Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director
410-935-7281
marypat.fannon@pssam.org

BILL: SB 206
TITLE: Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size
DATE: February 9, 2023
POSITION: Oppose
COMMITTEE: Senate Finance Committee
CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of the twenty-four superintendents, **opposes** Senate Bill 206.

Senate Bill 206 adds class size to permissible collective bargaining topics. These agreements are negotiated annually through a highly regulated process with an established and successful dispute resolution process.

Maryland school systems strive to deliver the most reasonable and equitable class size for every grade and student population. There are some variations including smaller special education classes, and larger classes for gifted and talented courses. Currently, superintendents and their boards have the flexibility to use their best judgement on class size and scheduling both as a time management tool, but also to appropriate funds where they are most needed in any given year. The majority of every LEAs' budgets are dedicated to personnel, 84-94% for most systems. So, creating a rigid system around class sizes removes a hugely important management and budget tool for superintendents and boards.

Below are several items we ask the committee to consider. While the bill makes class size permissive, the reality is that there will be increasing pressure to include this a regular subject of bargaining. Some of the potential and unintended consequences for smaller class sizes include:

- A need for additional teachers and/or stipends for those teaching larger classes (increased salaries, increased fixed charges such as professional development, and training costs);
- A national teacher shortage with no end in sight based on college enrollment in education;
 - This chronic shortage is well documented and was aptly presented by the State Superintendent to the education committees.

- Pending State regulations on increasing professional standards for educator certification and licensure will be another challenge in hiring. We strongly support increasing profession standards generally, but increased standards are also a requirement of the Blueprint.
- Capital costs for new or renovated classrooms and portable classrooms if needed;
- Increased operating costs for additional furniture, instructional materials and supplies for new classrooms. As well as increased utility costs and expenses;
- Complications for students who transfer mid-year into a new district after the year has started could trigger violation of the negotiated agreement;
 - While this is a rather dramatic possibility, a mid-year move could exceed the negotiated class size limit and create the need to immediately post, recruit, and hire a certified teacher in the middle of the school year. This is difficult due to a national teacher shortage, and it falls outside of the July 15 contract deadline. Mid-year, recent graduates are the most available candidates; those who are not seasoned and need conditional certification, or those who have not been hired during the regular hiring season.
 - Lastly, students who transfer mid-year are often our most needy students – students who are English Language Learners, those who qualify under McKinney-Vento for being homeless, those who are placed via the special education process, or even those in the care and custody of DSS. Military families would also be affected since their relocations do not often occur at the start of a school year. None of these are students who should have their education delayed due to a breach of a class size.
- Impact on small schools and small school systems
 - Rigorous and high level courses (including AP, PLTW, CTE) may only be offered in a single section.
 - These systems and schools may question the value of adding additional rigorous or high level course offerings if there is doubt that they can offer a single section due to a class size cap. Therefore, these schools may opt **not** to broaden their offerings, thereby reducing access and options for students.
 - Conversely, this could create gatekeeping, which disproportionately impacts students of color and students with disabilities.
- In any size system, class size requirement could impact course offerings and scheduling options. There are times when it is necessary to add students to a class when enrollment does not necessitate creating an entire new class. As discussed above, if this became a requirement to open a new class, there would be limitations on other courses or class options that could be offered.
 - Adding this to negotiations would mean providing the same for all classes - including those who don't have the need to be smaller.

Below are some practical considerations of artificially limiting class sizes:

- Some schools combine resource classes such as PE, Art, and Music to provide planning time for subject matter teachers; this would prohibit or hamper that practice.
- Small schools that combine grades, or may only have 1 teacher per grade level for elementary or subject matter for high school, could be required to hire additional teachers based on an arbitrary number per class;

- Middle schools often use a successful team approach that would be difficult to continue with this mandate;
- Schools are currently able to hire assistants to work in larger classes to facilitate small group instruction, as opposed to creating more classes.

A practical and real life example is with the burgeoning Frederick County Public School System (FCPS). FCPS is currently at 100% of state rated capacity at elementary schools, 82% at middle schools, and 96% at high schools. They grew over 1,700 students from (Sept 21 to Sept 22) and anticipate this growth to continue. Lower class sizes (along with the Blueprint requirements of expanding pre-k and increasing teacher planning/collaboration time) have already resulted in planning much needed funding for capital costs. Estimated costs to address their status quo and build new facilities are \$44 million for elementary schools, \$53 million for middle school , and \$111 million for high schools. These are direct construction estimates only as there are additional costs for architectural and engineering services as well as outfitting the buildings. Also, FCPS is currently estimating the cost to negotiate salaries for next year at \$35 million.

FCPS, as all of our districts here in Maryland, are also challenged with large inflationary increases for items such as insurance, fuel and materials of instruction. Smaller class sizes make all facility and staff planning even more challenging among all of our systems.

Complications and potential confusion as we implement the Blueprint.

Including class size to the permissible negotiating topics would create **a complicating factor in the implementation of the Blueprint** for several reasons. The Blueprint is based on equity and adequacy; most alarming is that this legislation would result in 24 different agreements that could create **new inequities** among systems based on the strength (or weakness) of either bargaining unit.

Second, the Kirwan Commission considered and rejected mandating smaller class sizes. There was no conclusive research that smaller classes were responsible for student success. Additionally, they found small classes were not a characteristic of successful schools around the world.

Third, the Blueprint calls for increases in teacher salaries and more planning time (60% teaching and 40% planning), which will require additional staff. School systems are already strategizing and contemplating this need in the context of the national teacher shortage.

In conclusion, we ask the committee's consideration of the issues described above, highlighting the need implement the Blueprint with fidelity. Lastly, placing a cap on class sizes or allowing this to be a topic of negotiations would limit a system's ability to allocate resources to high need schools. Local boards and superintendents need to be able to invest in the students and families who need us most.

For these reasons, PSSAM respectfully opposes Senate Bill 206 and urges an unfavorable report.

SB0206 Howard Co BOE Testimony 020923 for FIN - CI

Uploaded by: Staff Howard County

Position: UNF



**Board of Education of Howard County
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland Senate,
Finance Committee
February 9, 2023**

**Board of Education
of Howard County**

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*Superintendent
Secretary/Treasurer*

**SB0206: UNFAVORABLE
Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size**

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) opposes **SB0206 Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size**.

Under current law, a county board and bargaining unit may not negotiate the school calendar, the maximum number of students assigned to a class, or any matter that is precluded by other applicable statutes. On request, parties must meet and negotiate about salaries, wages, hours, and other working conditions, including procedures regarding employee transfers and assignments and the structure, time, and manner of the access of the exclusive representative to a public school employer's new employee processing. Additionally, negotiations may include other matters that are mutually agreed to by the county board and the bargaining unit.

SB0206 would remove "maximum number of students assigned to a class" from existing statute, making it a matter that could be brought forth if mutually agreed to by both parties. While the changes made under this bill would not require school systems to begin to negotiate class size, this should remain an exemption to put this matter squarely in the authority of the local board. School systems need flexibility in class size to meet local personnel and budgetary needs that account for fluctuations in class size averages as well as vacancies. Beyond workforce fluctuations, class sizes also impact physical space needs and support/administrative staffing when additional classrooms are needed. Currently, HCPSS utilizes target student to teacher ratios and monitors these annually.

For these reasons, we urge a UNFAVORABLE report of SB0206 from this Committee.