

Blanca Rosalez - BTU Class Size Bill Template.pdf

Uploaded by: Blanca Rosalez

Position: FAV

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

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

Official Testimony

Position: **FAVORABLE**

To the **House Ways & Means Committee**,

My name is **Blanca Rosalez**, and I'm a **Baltimore** resident and a member of SOMOS - Students Organizing a Multicultural and Open Society. I support **HB0085**.

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 and improve students safety, I believe that one of the lack of student safety is the amount of people in not classroom, it it's incredibly hard to be sitting in a room full of students **who are strangers because we are not willing to know eeach othe**.

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

Sincerely,

Blanca Rosalez

SOMOS

blanca.rosalez2023@baltimorecitycollege.us

443-922-0662

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>

HB85_MSEA_Bost_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Cheryl Bost

Position: FAV

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 85
Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size**

**House Ways & Means
February 1, 2023**

**Cheryl Bost
President**

The Maryland State Education Association stands in strong support of House Bill 85, 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 vote on HB 85.

HB 85 Education.pdf

Uploaded by: Cheryl Owens

Position: FAV

HB 85 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.

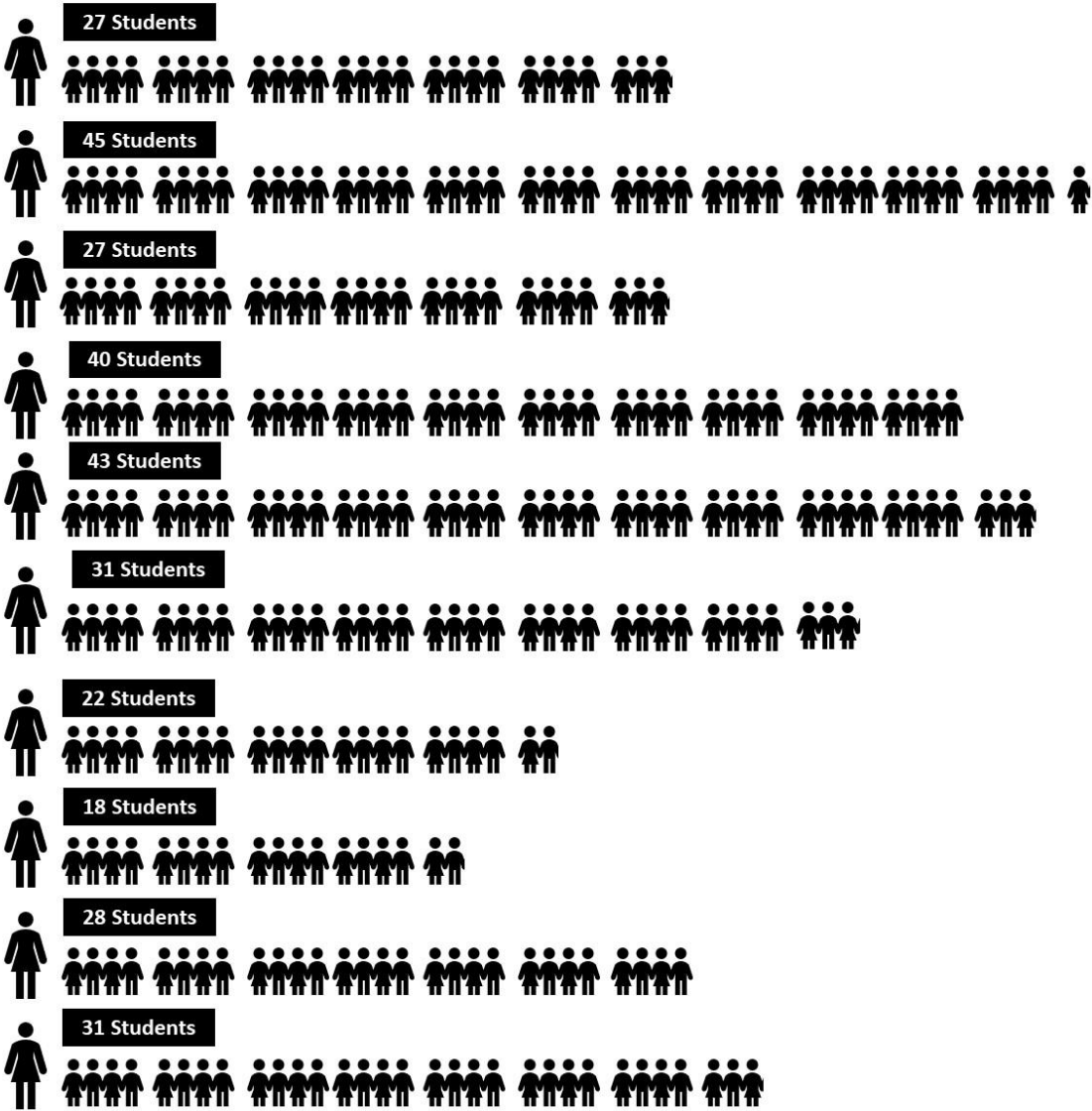
Here are my reasons as to why class sizes matter:

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 0890, our students deserve better!

Appendix – View of student classroom sizes



HB85--Oral Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Delegate Jazz Lewis

Position: FAV

JAZZ LEWIS
Legislative District 24
Prince George's County

MAJORITY WHIP

Appropriations Committee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Oral Testimony of Delegate Jazz Lewis
HB085 Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size
Before the Ways and Means Committee

Chair Atterbeary and Vice-Chair Washington and members of the Committee,

I submit this testimony in strong support of HB85, a reintroduction from last year to no longer prohibit the maximum number of students assigned to a class to be discussed during collective bargaining negotiations. Currently, statute restricts the subject from even being brought up. Despite the importance of the topic, and the importance that this would have on the work of our educators, they can't even have the conversation.

Through the pandemic, teachers have taken on a tremendous burden trying to continue to provide our children with a quality education. Often, with fewer resources and more students in their classrooms. Teachers report widespread burnout throughout our state and country while having greater difficulty providing that education they want students to receive. This has led to a rise in turnover and shortages of education professionals across our state and its school systems.

Every student added to a class adds a higher workload on that teacher. Which means less time available for that teacher to give the individualized attention to students they often need and more time managing what could be an unmanageable number of students. Providing just a little bit of agency for our educators on this matter can reduce burnout and mitigate the worst of the levels of turnover that we are seeing across our state.

The emphasis that the Blueprint for Maryland's Future places on hiring thousands of additional educators can have a transformative impact on student achievement, and will make strides to alleviate the burden borne by teachers in large classrooms. But giving educators the ability to discuss class sizes at the table and to have the conversations about the best path forward is a crucial step towards a long-term solution.

The fact that class sizes cannot even be brought up during collective bargaining limits our educator's ability to manage their classrooms and ultimately affects their ability to give our children the individualized attention they deserve. Escalating workloads and rising class sizes are becoming unmanageable for our educators and at a bare minimum, should be included as an option for negotiation.

This bill does not include any mandates or appropriations, 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. Because it is a conversation worth having and to prohibit it from even taking place silences our educators and has a negative impact on the education our children receive.

For these reasons I urge a favorable report.

HB 85 Class Size.pdf

Uploaded by: Denise Riley

Position: FAV

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland House Ways and Means Committee
HB 85 – Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size
February 1, 2023**

SUPPORT

Chair Atterbeary and members of the committee, on behalf of the American Federation of Teachers - Maryland (AFT-Maryland), which represents more than 20,000 educators, government, and healthcare workers across Maryland, including the Baltimore Teachers' Union, we urge you to support HB 85.

Educators need to have the tools and a voice on the job to help students in need. One tool is the right to negotiate class size. Maryland is one of only nine states that make class size an illegal subject in collective bargaining. In these states teachers do not have a voice on this important policy that directly affects students.

Evidence demonstrates that reduced class size, particularly for early grades, has a positive effect on student achievement, especially for disadvantaged children. More teacher-student interaction allows educators to recognize the needs of individuals and customize instruction and assignments. Teachers in smaller classes have the ability to know the students and recognize problems and their special needs early.

In reduced size classes students are more likely to be on task and less likely to cause disruptions during instruction, this allows educators increase time to teach. It is especially important now while students are still recovering from the pandemic. Not all students' families had access to reliable internet and may now need more individual attention to help reach parity in academic performance to their classmates.

The pandemic also made educator retention and recruitment a crisis. Stress, burnout, and overwork are forcing teachers to leave the profession. A voice in class size could help with recruitment and retention.

Class size reduction may not be feasible across all of Maryland's schools, but in target populations it is a tool to help students who have fallen behind. In addition, to allow class size to be a subject of bargaining would give educators the ability to discuss and come to agreements on what is best for students and teachers. We ask for a favorable report on HB 85. Thank you.

HB085 Class Size Bill .pdf

Uploaded by: Diana Desierto

Position: FAV

Testimony from Diana Desierto, Baltimore City Public Schools Teacher, District 40
Resident

HB0085/SB0206: Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size

Official Testimony
Position: **FAVORABLE**

To the House Ways & Means Committee,

My name is Diana Desierto, and I'm a Baltimore City resident and a member of the Baltimore Teachers Union. I support HB0085.

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 class size matters. Fewer class sizes means better quality education and has better long term effects on students' achievement. Having a voice at the negotiations table also encourages educators to stay as well! We deserve better working conditions!

As a 16 year City school speech language pathologist, I work with students with various communication disorders. My students, especially those with Autism, work on self advocating skills and being able to communicate their wants and needs inside the classroom. So many of my amazing and bright students are placed in classrooms where teachers are unable to handle their needs due to class size! There are classes with over 30+ students in my school. Special educators have caseloads over 30! How can a teacher implement communication strategies for children with Autism when their class size is already difficult to handle. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE!! We have never had a voice in negotiating or our class size or special education caseload! Children with or without special needs deserve better. We need more support in our classrooms and ways to implement better instruction for those with special needs. Please support this bill so we can support our educators' working conditions!!

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

Sincerely,

Diana Desierto
Speech Language Pathologist, BTU #340
District 40
ddesierto@gmail.com
410-989-1131

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
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- 2009: NY Times: Class Size Around the World:
<https://archive.nytimes.com/economix.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/09/11/class-size-around-the-world/>

HB 85 - Education - Collective Bargaining - Certif

Uploaded by: Donna Edwards

Position: FAV



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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President

Donna S. Edwards

Secretary-Treasurer

Gerald W. Jackson

HB 85 - Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size House Ways and Means Committee February 1, 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 HB 85 - 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.

HB 85 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 HB 85.

Franca Muller Paz HB 85 Official Testimony Positio

Uploaded by: Franca Muller

Position: FAV

Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size

HB85

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 HB85

The passing of this bill is essential because our students deserve high quality instruction, with greater academic and emotional support from educators.

I have been teaching for over 12 years, and this year, with classes of over 35 students, and a student load of over 200, I can firmly say that large class sizes are tremendously detrimental to the academic and emotional well being of our students.

Despite the importance of quick and detailed feedback, at the rate of 10 minutes per essay, it takes me nearly 6 hours just to grade or do writing conferences with one class and ~35 hours when I have assignments due for all of my six classes. Though I routinely put in all nighters to grade students (at least once or twice a quarter) my huge teaching load means students don't get the critical feedback they need, when they most need it to support their learning.

These enormous numbers impact every aspect of working with young people. It presents enormous challenges to keeping up meaningful communication with all families. Dangerously, our role as mandatory reporters of abuse also takes a hit. It is much harder to spot red flags of a student crisis, in rooms packed wall to wall with students. It is much easier for kids to hide signs of abuse, when they can hide 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

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

J. Providence HB085 Testimony - Class Size.pdf

Uploaded by: Jocelyn Providence

Position: FAV

Testimony from Jocelyn Providence, Baltimore City Public Schools Teacher

District 45 Resident

HB085 - Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size

Before the House Ways and Means Committee

2/1/23

Position: FAVORABLE

Good afternoon members of the committee.

My name is Jocelyn Providence and I'm a Baltimore city public school Teacher and district 45 resident. I'm writing to give my full support of HB085 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.

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.

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. I understand the importance of this working condition issue being addressed as someone who has taught multiple years of classroom sizes above 30 and for two years classes that were larger than 35 students. As previously stated, these working and learning conditions decrease the efficacy of high quality differentiated instruction. If you ask any of my students they will always express that they wish they had more individualized time and in classrooms that are consistently over 25 that is nearly impossible.

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.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on HB085.

Sincerely,

Jocelyn Providence
Baltimore City Public Schools Teacher and District 45 Resident
jprovide.jp@gmail.com

Copy of BTU Class Size Bill Template.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Newhouse

Position: FAV

Testimony from Michael Newhouse], Baltimore City Public Schools Teacher,
**HB0085/SB0206: Education - Collective Bargaining -
Certificated Employees - Class Size**

Official Testimony
Position: **FAVORABLE**

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

My name is Michael Newhouse], and I'm a Baltimore County 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 anyone who has ever taught middle school students will agree that the smaller class size gives teacher's more time to address social, emotional, and academic deficits. This is especially important following the year of virtual school and the socialization opportunities many of our students have missed. Less students gives more opportunities to form and nurture relationships with students. At my school, Armistead Gardens, many of the elementary classes are overcrowded and without aides.

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

Sincerely,

Michael Newhouse
Teacher
Armistead Gardens
443-326-9901
mnewhouse@bcps.k12.md.us

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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- NCTQ 2019: "<https://www.nctq.org/blog/A-sizable-opportunity-thinking-strategically-about-class-size>"
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Ferrell HB085 Testimony - Class Size.pdf

Uploaded by: Nathan Ferrell

Position: FAV

Testimony from Timothy Nathan Ferrell, Baltimore City Public Schools Teacher

District 44A

HB085 - Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size

Before the House Ways and Means Committee

1/30/23

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 HB085 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 HB085.

Sincerely,

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

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W&M on 85.pdf

Uploaded by: Rick Pitts

Position: FAV

To Madam Chair -Atterbeary, Vice Chair Washington, Distinguished member of this committee and all those Gathered. My name is Broderick "Rick" Pitts, of organizing black and the Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools. I am a lifetime West Baltimore resident and voter in District 40. I am writing in support of HB0085

During school year 21-22 The Baltimore Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools better known as, the AROS table ventured out to talk to community members, teachers, and families about their children's education. During the time we spent on the ground we spoke to thousands and had 1200 go the extra step in voting on what we call the People's platform for education. After tallying up all votes, 5 major points stood out, Class size was a nearly unanimous response. Parents are concerned that their student won't receive enough quality instruction Time from the teachers, Teachers are overwhelmed with every aspect of their jobs do to the weight of their work load being multiplied per student and the community has deep concerns about how one individual can not only instruct a large group but also maintain a safe and healthy environment for students to learn. As a former IEP student I can assure you that heavily occupied classrooms make it virtually impossible for teachers to adhere to and implement Independent Education Plans which are legally binding documents, posing even more liability on the schools and educators.

School Safety concerns regarding school safety include but are not limited to:

- Emergency procedures (lockdown, and evacuations)
- Classroom behavior management and mitigation
- Mental and Emotional safety for students with socio-emotional differences.

Many stakeholders including some young teachers, aren't even aware that they too are powerless to effect change in the matter. Teachers look to their unions to fight for their right to a safe and healthy work environment but are stunned to discover the matter is illegal to discuss in Bargaining conversations. This matter should not only be a possibility in bargaining but it should in fact stand as a priority in bargaining. Our young people deserve a safe and healthy learning environment to arrive at daily, that can provide them with all the tools they need to succeed after leaving our campuses and school houses. The current system wont allow for that and today I ask that this prohibition be removed and the Bargaining table be opened to negotiate it. The pressures of class size impacts the entirety of our school system and I'm sure many around the state feel the same. I urge this committee to vote favorably on HB0085 without amendments.

Broderick L. "Rick" Pitts

HB85_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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HB 85.Class Size as Collective Bargaining Topic.pdf

Uploaded by: John Woolums

Position: UNF

BILL: House Bill 85
TITLE: Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size
DATE: February 1, 2023
POSITION: OPPOSE
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) strongly opposes House Bill 85 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 House Bill 85.

HB0085 Howard Co BOE Testimony 020123 for W&M - CI

Uploaded by: Staff Howard County

Position: UNF



**Board of Education of Howard County
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland House of Delegates,
Ways and Means Committee
February 1, 2023**

**Board of Education
of Howard County**

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*Superintendent
Secretary/Treasurer*

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

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) opposes **HB0085 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.

HB0085 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 HB0085 from this Committee.