

Testimony of

Stacy Pleau-Guckian

LEARN Educator

Before the

Education Committee

March 1, 2023

Good afternoon, Senator McCrory, Representative Currey, Senator Berthel, Representative McCarty, and members of the Education Committee.

I testify today in support of the caps on class sizes proposed in Senate Bill 1093, which would take an important step in ensuring that classrooms are places where students can learn, and educators can teach.

I have taught in my district for the last 22 years and when I started teaching 4th grade I had 16 students. There was an understanding that the small class size would allow me to meet the needs of all of those children. By the time they left me, many of them were on grade level and continued to flourish. Then our class size began to creep up.....due to the lack of funding to magnet schools. This caused classes to get bigger and bigger. Classrooms that were built for 16 are now housing 22-23 students in grades k-5. Our admin makes an effort to try to have Kindergarten have less students but due to a lack of funding, another 2 or 3 kids are nevertheless added to the class to help out the budget. Students, post Covid, are not the same students we had 10 years ago. They are coming with many more behavioral concerns, learning gaps, and honestly a lack of home support. I think it is a great idea to have caps on the number of students in a class. Teachers would be able to give some kids more individualized time, work on closing those gaps, and be able to build more meaningful relationships. I feel like your proposal is better than nothing. K-2 having 20 students is still rough with the behaviors and distractions that are being demonstrated. It would have been great if teachers were actually asked about these caps because you have lumped grades 3-5 in with middle school children. Middle school children tend to be more independent. Comparing 3rd, 4th and 5th graders needs with that of a middle school child is not counter productive to what teachers at that grade level are trying to accomplish. Many of the 4th graders I have taught over the last 10 years came in with below grade level and struggling with their academics. We are still teaching kids to read. They are not yet reading to learn in 4th and 5th grade, as they should be. It is my hope that maybe you all would consider capping K-2 at 18 students. Grades 3-5 at 20 students

and then middle and high school at the numbers your chose. I feel that the numbers above would allow teachers to meet the needs of their students, closing the reading and math gaps. But, like I have pointed out earlier, this goes back to a larger problem, class sizes are rising because of the lack of money in school budgets. The magnet school lack of equal funding has been an issue for years, when is CT really going to invest more in its future. The time is now. CT is losing good teachers to other professions due to the lack of respect, fair wages, and burnout. I leave you with this though, your child is coming into 3rd grade: he/she is reading way below grade level, math is below grade level. What class size would you want for them? Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.

Stacy Pleau-Guckian

