

K-3 Class Size Mandate Webinar

Presented by: Lynn Edmonds, *Public Schools First NC*
Julie von Haefen, *North Carolina PTA*



Webinar Agenda

- ▶ **Lynn Edmonds from PSFNC**
 - ▶ How We Got Here
- ▶ **Julie von Haefen from NCPTA**
 - ▶ What Do We Do Now

- ▶ If you have questions throughout the presentation, please type them in the questions area on the side of the screen. We will answer questions at the end of the presentation.





Class Size Chaos:
we need a fix NOW!

Class Size Timeline

- ▶ Lawmakers reduced K-3 class sizes that go into affect at the start of the 2018-19 school year.
- ▶ HB13: offered a fix early in 2017 but Senate did not pass
- ▶ Lawmakers failed to fix #ClassSizeChaos in October special session
- ▶ A fix for #ClassSizeChaos can be passed at any time by NCGA: special sessions

K-3 Class Size: What's changing?

Now: Consistent across K-3

- ▶ District average:
20 students or less in K-3 classrooms
- ▶ Individual classrooms:
no more than 23 students in a K-3 class

New: Inconsistent across K-3

- ▶ Grade K: district avg 18 or less; single class no more than 21 students
- ▶ Grade 1: district avg 16 or less; single class no more than 19 students
- ▶ Grades 2-3: district avg 17 or less; single class no more than 20 students

Why does this impact specialist teachers?

Lawmakers wrongly accuse school systems of misusing funds!
They claim LEAs have the money to meet the mandate.

- ▶ School systems have had flexibility in teacher funding for 30+ years
- ▶ Principals have used teacher allotment funds to hire K-5 teachers and specialist teachers
- ▶ Funding flexibility has been taken away
- ▶ No additional funds were provided to meet K-3 mandate; no additional funds to hire more K-3 teachers or to keep specialist teachers



Photo: N&O,
HB13 Rally
4/19/17

“The Truth About Public School Funding”

Philip Price,
former CFO for NC
Department of Public
Instruction (DPI)

April, 2017



Class Size Mandate: Other Impacts

- ▶ **Combining classrooms:** 2 whole classes with 2 teachers in one room
- ▶ **Classes in the library or an office space**
- ▶ **Art & Music on a cart**
- ▶ **4th & 5th graders could pay the price:** No class size limits for grades 4-12
- ▶ **Middle & HS impacted** because of overall funding needs

A Problem for ALL:

- ▶ **Charlotte-Mecklenburg** Schools will need 353 additional positions at a cost of over \$23 million due to the changes.
- ▶ **Craven County** Schools leaders anticipate a total implementation cost of \$4.2 million for teachers and capital.
- ▶ **Durham County** Schools estimate needing to hire an additional 100 teachers.
- ▶ **Elizabeth City-Pasquotank** Public Schools estimates costs of \$1 million to fund 20 additional elementary school teachers, but has not estimated capital costs.
- ▶ **Greene County** Schools Superintendent Patrick Miller estimates additional classrooms will cost somewhere between \$800,000 and \$1 million.
- ▶ **Johnston County** Schools would need to add approximately 85 teaching positions and a number of mobile units.

SAVE THESE DATES!

January 9th: Tweet Storm

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1460881780660278/>

January 10th: Advocacy Day at NCGA

<https://www.facebook.com/events/367356053689306/>

Sign our Petition!

<https://www.publicschoolsfirstnc.org/current-petitions/>

From our homepage, select “ENGAGE” and find “Sign Our Petition” in the drop down menu.

Sign it & share it!

Thank you! Stay in Touch!

Facebook	Public Schools First NC
Twitter	@ps1nc
Website	Publicschoolsfirstnc.org
Email	info@publicschoolsfirstnc.org

So....now what?



How to Advocate as a PTA Unit and as a PTA Member

#ClassSizeChaos Edition

Julie von Haefen

NCPTA Advocacy Committee Chair & Federal Legislative Chair

North Carolina PTA Board of Directors

President, Wake County PTA Council

"I always wondered
why somebody doesn't
do something about
that. Then I realized
I was somebody."
~ Lily Tomlin

PTA Mission

PTA's mission is to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.



PTA: A History of Advocacy

- ▶ As the largest volunteer child advocacy organization in the nation, National PTA is the conscience of the country for children and youth issues. Through advocacy, as well as family and community education, National PTA has established programs and called for legislation that improves our children's lives, such as:

Creation of Kindergarten classes

Child labor laws

Public health service

Hot and healthy lunch programs

Juvenile justice system

Mandatory immunization

Arts in Education

School Safety



Start With Resources

National PTA Resources

- ▶ www.pta.org/advocacy
- ▶ www.ptakit.org - check out the Advocacy Tab

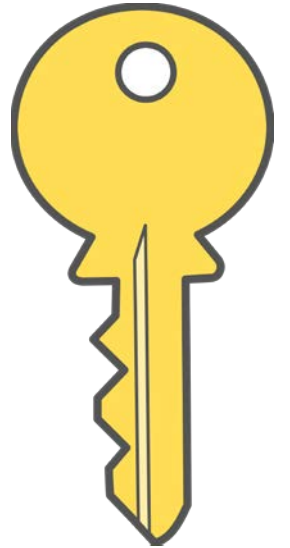
North Carolina PTA Resources

- ▶ <http://ncpta.org/index.php/advocacy/>



How can we engage our community?

- ▶ **Key to engagement:** show existing and potential members why their local PTA is relevant
 - ▶ If families see that the PTA in their community is actively working to bring about positive change in their school district- change that will impact their child- they will be more inclined to get involved
- ▶ **Key to engagement:** take the fear out of advocacy
 - ▶ Advocacy simply means to support a cause
 - ▶ Strive to highlight how you have supported every child and brought about change
- ▶ **Key to engagement:** be prepared to answer questions about current issues
 - ▶ Know your facts and figures and present them to others in an understandable and easily “digestible” way



What *can't* we do as PTA advocates?

- ▶ Endorse candidates
- ▶ Make a campaign contribution to, or an expenditure for, a candidate
- ▶ Rate candidates on who is most favorable to your issue(s)
- ▶ Let candidates use our facilities or resources, unless resources are made equally available to all candidates at fair market value



Speaking On Behalf of Your PTA

- ▶ Only the president may officially speak on behalf of your PTA unit.
- ▶ The PTA president may only speak on behalf of the unit if the unit has taken specific action on something (may not represent the ideas of a few members as the ideas of the entire PTA unit)
- ▶ You're welcome to speak as an individual and state that you're a PTA member
- ▶ Pass resolution statements or position statements on topics (after approval from your board) and send them to lawmakers, newspapers
- ▶ ALWAYS say thank you – Positive Advocacy is Strong Advocacy

NCPTA Survey on Class Size Mandate

- ▶ Survey sent to 55,000 PTA members in North Carolina
 - ▶ 80% live in urban counties: (Wake, Mecklenburg, Durham, Guilford, Forsyth and New Hanover)
 - ▶ 20% live in “rural” areas
- ▶ Results showed effects are similar across NC- slight differences between rural and urban: [SURVEY RESULTS](#)



#ClassSizeChaos Advocacy

- ▶ Contact your representatives in the North Carolina Legislature (House and Senate)
 - ✓ To find your representatives:
<http://www.ncleg.net/representation/WhoRepresentsMe.aspx>
 - ✓ Call, write, email or visit your representatives
 - ✓ Share with them how the K-3 unfunded mandate will affect you, your family and your school (**personal stories are impactful and important!**)
 - ✓ Schedule a meeting with them in their district office or arrange a group meeting with other parents from your area: make a personal connection in your hometown!



#ClassSizeChaos Advocacy

- ▶ Urge them to help solve this “class size crisis” for your school and schools across North Carolina
- ▶ Urge your representatives to solve this “class size crisis” before they return for the short legislative session on May 16, the day **after** school boards are required under state law to approve their budget request to their county commissioners
- ▶ January 10 special session: ideal time to address issue-hearing mixed reports on whether they will address mandate



#ClassSizeChaos Advocacy

▶ Invite your Representatives to Your School

- ▶ Check out a detailed plan of action at <http://ncpta.org/index.php/programs/elected-officials-go-to-school/>
- ▶ Activities:
 - ▶ Tour of school, including K-3 classrooms and 4-5 classrooms if elementary school
 - ▶ Round table discussion/Q&A with parents
 - ▶ Round table discussion/Q&A with teachers
 - ▶ Observation of art, music, PE classes- discussion of importance of specials (can involve students with parent permission)
 - ▶ Principal involvement: obtain permission from administration



#ClassSizeChaos Advocacy

Create fliers or websites to educate parents in your school

- ▶ [Wake County PTA Council flier](#)
 - ▶ [Combs Elementary flier](#)
 - ▶ [Apex Elementary website](#)
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- ▶ Write letters to the editor to your local newspaper to make others aware of this issue
 - ▶ Join your school's PTA, and encourage others to join. We need your membership for our collective voice to be LOUD and STRONG!



Using Social Media to Advocate

- ▶ Use social media to contact your representatives and to educate others in your network about this issue
- ▶ Interactions with Elected Officials or Administration
 - ▶ Permissible and encouraged!
 - ▶ Excellent way to make your voice heard
 - ▶ Refrain from interacting with campaigns of elected officials
 - ▶ Refrain from posting or reposting a message from anyone that has a campaign message for any candidate



Using Social Media to Advocate

- ▶ Facebook
 - ▶ Consider your post frequency
- ▶ Twitter
 - ▶ Choose who you follow
 - ▶ Build a relationship with users
 - ▶ Join the conversation
 - ▶ **JANUARY 9 TWEET STORM**
 - ▶ **Use hashtag: #ClassSizeChaos**



Resolutions and Position Statements

- ▶ Can adopt a resolution or position statement as a PTA unit or as a PTA Executive Board supporting your position on “class size chaos”
- ▶ Example: Combs Elementary School PTA in Raleigh passed a resolution
 - ▶ Letter to legislators sent with resolution

If passed by board: need quorum of board of directors to vote, majority passes the resolution or position statement

If passed by general membership: need at least 20 members to vote, majority passes the resolution or position statement



Frequently Asked Questions

What are the possible “solutions” to the problem of the unfunded mandate?

- ▶ North Carolina School Boards Association Resolution: requests the NCGA “slow the implementation of the K-3 class size reductions through a multi-year phase-in that allows time for the legislature and school districts to address the challenges” listed in their resolution
- ▶ Allow school districts flexibility in creating class sizes (return to original HB13 that allowed allows LEAs flexibility to change the K-3 student ratio up to 6 additional students in an individual class or average ratio increase by 3 additional students per school)
- ▶ Provide funding for the mandate
- ▶ Provide a separate funding allotment for specialist teachers
- ▶ Provide additional waiver mechanisms for the districts that can not comply

Frequently Asked Questions

- ▶ What are the ramifications for a school who is unable to meet these requirements due to lack of funding to pay teachers and no space?
- ▶ GS 115C-301. Allocation of teachers; class size.
 - ▶ https://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter_115C/GS_115C-301.pdf
- ▶ Session Law 2017-9/ House Bill 13 (amended GS 115C-301)
 - ▶ <https://www.ncga.state.nc.us/Sessions/2017/Bills/House/PDF/H13v5.pdf>
- ▶ (j) Penalty for Noncompliance. – If the State Board of Education determines that a local superintendent has willfully failed to comply with the requirements of this section, **no State funds shall be allocated to pay the superintendent's salary for the period of time the superintendent is in noncompliance.** The local board of education shall continue to be responsible for complying with the terms of the superintendent's employment contract."

Frequently Asked Questions

- ▶ **Exactly who came up with these classroom guidelines, and what is his/her educational background?**
- ▶ We don't know as no real debate was had and no public comment was allowed. We do know the NCGA has used a study out of TN from some years ago that made the claim smaller class sizes were better and more effective than having TAs in a classroom. However, the TN experiment that study was based on was well funded, and the scale of the districts was different.
- ▶ **How are schools to meet these requirements with no extra funding to pay the extra teachers needed to teach the additional classrooms of children? When schools are already crowded as it is, where are the additional classrooms that would be needed to accommodate the extra classes coming from?**
- ▶ The \$1,000,000 questions. We don't know and, therein, lies the problem.

Questions, Comments or Need Help?

- ▶ Contact Julie von Haefen at julievonhaefen@yahoo.com or president@wakepta.org
- ▶ Contact NCPTA at office@ncpta.org
- ▶ Website: www.ncpta.org
- ▶ National PTA resources: www.pta.org/advocacy



**THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING AND THANK YOU FOR
YOUR SERVICE AND COMMITMENT TO PTA!**