

Summary of Second Year Update to the NYCDOE Class Size Reduction plan

Though there were the significant challenges in the timing and execution of the first year Contract for Excellence, class sizes in New York City reduced significantly, particularly in Middle School and High School. The reductions reflected substantial progress toward the aggressive first year goals, more than satisfying the “measurable progress” standard established by the law and the legislation. In addition, the groups of low performing and high class size schools targeted by the City and State showed particularly significant reductions. Working with the State Education Department and other stakeholders, the NYCDOE expects second year implementation of Class Size reduction to reflect an improved program. The timing of C4E approval, the alignment of class size planning with the CEP planning process, and the lessons of first year implementation will all enable the City to improve and strengthen the second year of the program.

Challenges of First Year Implementation

Lack of alignment between C4E and school level planning: Reduction in class size at both the school and the system level requires a complex interplay between enrollment, class room space, and teaching staff, all reflected in the revised academic programming of schools throughout the City. In planning for the 2007-2008 school year, enrollment targets were set in January of the year; budgets were released in early May, and peak school hiring season is in May and June. Over the spring and summer, schools program their academic calendar and sections, dictating class size as the core assignment of students to teachers. In the first year of implementation, the City began working on class size reduction efforts as soon as the C4E law was passed, forming an advisory committee of advocacy groups and beginning to formulate our guidance and coaching programs. However, the C4E law and the regulation lagged operational planning for the year – the law was passed in March, the regulations issued in June, and the C4E contract was approved in November. The approval of C4E legislation, subsequent issuance of regulations, and ultimate approval of the City’s Contract for Excellence plan and Five Year Class Size Reduction Plan all occurred *after* the timeline for concrete operational planning to fully impact the 2007 and 2008 school year. Schools could not budget appropriately, the school support organizations could not provide timely support, and guidance/coaching activities lagged the period when schools were making the concrete operational decisions which dictate class size.

Class size reporting improved, but further improvements are necessary. Upon approval of the C4E legislation in March, among the first tasks that the NYCDOE set to was improvement of class reporting, to provide greater transparency and a clearer baseline. This work was done in conjunction with the UFT and the Independent Budget Office. By all accounts, class size reporting in New York City has improved substantially, both at the school and system level. However, first year implementation demonstrated important areas of problematic or incomplete data, which compromised the effectiveness of the first year program. First, adjusting to a more transparent and clear definition of high school class size required pulling Special Education and CTT classes from system flags – flags that seem to be used inconsistently by schools. Though the DOE offered guidance and instruction to schools multiple times to fix the underlying coding inaccuracy, DOE could not unilaterally change the actual coding system midyear without massive disruption to all high school class data, and so data reporting problems in SC and CTT persisted through the year. Second, to date the DOE has only had the ability to identify middle school class size by official class – or homeroom – and not by academic subject. We know, however, that many middle schools reduce the size of all academic subjects, or at least core academic subjects, as compared to homeroom groupings. Because of the data limitation, first year implementation does not reflect the full scope of class size reduction activity in middle school. Other, smaller reporting issues persisted through the year, including the inability to distinguish large groupings of independent study students and an inability to report bridge classes. Collectively, these reporting issues compromised the effectiveness of the first year program, particularly in the difficulty of establishing clear baselines and reporting on full progress schools made in making class size reductions.

Summary of results of first year implementation

Despite the implementation and data issues of the first year implementation, New York City schools achieved substantial progress toward the goals established in the first year. At the high school level (grades 9-12), the NYCDOE projected an average 0.6 student reduction; using the best available apples-to-apples comparison from mid-year, high school classes reduced 0.5 students per class. At grades 4-8, the NYCDOE projected an average 0.8 student reduction; the actual reduction achieved was 0.6 students, and this does not reflect the common

practice of reducing academic classes as opposed to homerooms in middle school. At grades K-3, both the projected and the achieved reductions were the most modest: NYCDOE projected a 0.3 student reduction, and achieved a 0.1 student reduction. It is important to note that the substantially lower starting class size of 21 students per class in grades K-3 reflects the City and the States longstanding efforts at Early Grade class size reduction. This program remained in place, preserving existing gains and investment despite the new discretion to redirect the state resources.

The standard for CSR progress in the 2007-2008 school year was as follows: “the city school district of the city of New York shall establish class size reduction goals for each grade level targeted and...shall report...measurable progress toward meeting such goals.” Though the reductions are not so great as originally targeted, they reflect more than measurable progress – the progress is substantial and important. Each year, the size of any individual class at an individual school varies slightly according to arriving cohort of students: an extra student in the 3rd grade means that class sizes will be marginally larger. Some annual variation up and down is to be expected each year, as students attend different schools and schools adjust their program, and some schools will see slight increases in class size in any given year. But reduction in average class size, like those achieved in New York, signify that the annual variation in individual schools has momentum to it, with more schools reducing than are increasing, and with reductions in class size overwhelming any increases. This pattern reflects the deliberate and conscientious management of the range of factors that drive class size, including enrollment, facilities usage, school funding, teacher hiring, and school scheduling.

The reductions in the first year had a disproportionate impact on the schools that are the natural priority of class size reduction efforts. System-wide, reductions were most substantial and prevalent in those schools that had the highest starting class size. At grade K-3, those schools that started with top-quartile class size saw an average reduction of 0.6 students per class; at grades 4-8, those schools with top quartile class size saw an average reduction of 1.2 students per class; at high schools, those schools with top quartile class size saw an average reduction of only .24 students, though it is important to note that this includes many high performing schools like Stuyvesant, Beacon, and Bronx Science.

The first year implementation of the New York City class size program prioritized a group of 72 coaching schools, which were low performing, with relatively large class size, and with apparent space to reduce classes. The results of that program were encouraging: the 65 K-8 schools in the coaching program saw an average reduction of 1.3 students per class, or 4.6%. The seven schools with high school grades saw a weighted reduction of 1.7 students per class, or 5.5%, 11 schools in the program registered an increase in class size in official reporting: but of those, 9 were middle schools that reduced the size of academic classes, one targeted reductions to L1 and L2 students, and one had an approved alternate plan for improving student performance. In the fall of 2007 SED also prioritized 75 schools that were low performing with large class size – the “SED 75”. Because of this timing, budgets and schools were already programmed. However, class size efforts had already begun to prioritize many of the schools, in advance of the prioritization by the SED. For example, 28 of the schools which were also previously designated as part of the DOE’s first year coaching program. And the SED75 did achieve significant class size reductions – among the 75 schools, 61 saw class sizes decrease, 12 saw increases, and 2 remained static. Overall, class sizes fell by a weighted average of 1.3 students, or 4%.

Key Changes to Class Size Reduction Program

NYCDOE is improving on its plan and expanding the key elements of program successes in the first year of implementation. The attached plan shows the adjustments made to each plank of the 5 year plan, based on the experience and results of the first year.

Alignment and emphasis of school planning for class size reduction: First, the timing of funding designations and C4E allocation in this planning cycle has allowed class size planning to occur in a time frame more likely to impact system and school level planning. C4E resources were in school budgets in the spring of 2008, at the time that schools were making planning decisions, and allocation of those resources were strictly tied to C4E program areas including class size reduction. In addition, the schools added to the coaching program, and the schools on the SED 75 list, have all been able to conduct their planning for next school year with the knowledge that class size reduction should be a short and long term priority. Second, the DOE has expanded the number of schools included in the

coaching effort, adding 116 new schools to the program. Originally the DOE had planned to add only 50 schools, per the original five year plan, but this supplemental expansion was explicitly at the request of class size advocacy groups given the success of the program in the first year. Third, the DOE has also worked to align other school-level planning efforts, chiefly including the CEP process and SSO support systems, with class reduction planning efforts, making it more likely and easier for schools to achieve reductions. Schools using C4E resources for class size reduction needed to explain their use of these resources in advance, and schools in the coaching program have completed a comprehensive survey about their class size reduction plans.

Further improvements in reporting: The NYCDOE has been working since last year to identify issues and further improve data reporting. To improve high school CTT reporting in HSST, the NYCDOE is both communicating to schools through their data specialists, as well as building algorithms to test whether indicated courses meet at the same time and place in the schedule, implying that they either are or are not in fact a single section. In addition, the NYCDOE has required all middle schools to enter course scheduling information into one of two systems, which will enable reporting of middle school class sizes by academic subject. Also of note, the DOE has created a distinct allocation category for C4E funding makes the funding more identifiable to schools, and makes it more possible to track funding.

Adjustments to Class Size reduction targets

Given the experience of the first year of implementation, and despite the uncertainty of the economic situation, in the spring the DOE made the decision to maintain the rates of reduction approved by the Commissioner. The target reductions are laid out in the attached chart 5, under the summary projections tab. Several issues of note. First, the Commissioner has not yet issued guidance on appropriate class size targets. Second, because first year reductions were not as great as originally forecast, the same rate of reduction leads to lower targets in this, the second year of the plan. However, we are expecting increased gains in the later years of the plan, resulting in stable long-term targets. Third, the original high school class size targets embedded in the original plan were based on classes *including all electives*, as recorded late in the 2nd semester. Based on input from various constituents, NYCDOE has instead begun to report high school class size for core classes only, and to report based on cleaned HSSST registers (i.e. January). In order to derive an assumed baseline, we have applied the level of known reductions between FY07 and FY08 using the old high school methodology (i.e. 0.5 student reduction) to the actual reported high school class size under the official reporting regime (i.e. 26.1 average core high school class size as of January, 2008). This yields an assumed FY07 baseline of 26.6, and subsequent year reductions are calculated from the 26.1 core high school class size.

Individual school targets were generated based on school level reporting of their planned class size reductions, based on the C4E appendix and Coaching Survey completed in the summer of 2008. Based on school reporting, the NYCDOE projected the number of teachers to be hired under both C4E and Coaching school programs – those estimates, and the declared use of the teachers to reduce class size or co-teach, were used to determine the projected FY2009 Average Class Size and PTR.

Please note that these targets are based on school and district planning, as reported in the spring and summer of 2008. Significant economic uncertainty has prevailed since the late summer, and it remains to be seen how both the prospect and the fact of school cuts will impact class size planning. The NYCDOE's class size targets have always been, and remain, based on the levels of increased funding projected in FY2007, from both the City and the State. It should also be noted that school costs have increased significantly since FY2007, chiefly tied to increases in teacher salary under the collective bargaining agreement.

DOE Five Year Class Size Reduction Plan¹

Executive Summary:

The goal of the DOE's Five Year Class Size Reduction plan is to build upon and further historical class size reduction in New York City by supporting and enabling efforts across the system and in targeted schools, as well as assuring that all schools make strategic choices about class sizes consistent with the academic needs of the students most at risk of failure. The New York City Department of Education (DOE) Five Year Class Size Reduction Plan enables principals to make strategic investments in class size reduction and includes five major planks that will accomplish significant reductions in both the first year and over the full five year scope.

The major components of the plan, as laid out in the DOE's initial submission from July 16, 2007, include a variety of multi-year strategies: increased school resources, system-wide guidance and targeted coaching, policy adjustments, new school construction, collaborative team teaching and class size data tracking and accountability. These components were active in this first year of the plan, and they are specifically designed both for their sustainability over a five year period and for their adaptability in response to both external factors and longer-term targets and guidance established by the State Commissioner. The key components of our plan are as follows:

- **Increased School Resources:** DOE is committed to ensuring that at least 25% of any future Contracts for Excellence funding towards class size reduction efforts.
- **Guidance/Coaching:** Over the course of the plan, the DOE will provide system-wide guidance and promote knowledge sharing on the benefits of class size reduction and how to overcome challenges to achieving it. Targeted coaching and prioritization began in the first year for 72 low performing schools with relatively high class size and the immediate potential to add classes. The DOE will add 50 schools a year to its targeted coaching program, for a total of more than 250 schools served by 2012. In addition to the coaching program, the SED has identified 75 New York City Schools for high priority class size reduction, based on a combination of high absolute class size and low performance – The DOE will achieve this goal through intensive application of the components of the overall Five Year Class Size Reduction Plan, including the coaching program.
- **Policy Adjustments:** We are committed to ensuring that student admissions are targeted to projected registers in order to allow principals to plan for reduced class sizes, and to confirming that the placement of new programs in underutilized facilities will accommodate reduced class size planning. In addition, the DOE intends to adjust specific enrollment plans and propose alternate zoning when appropriate to facilitate reduced registers, better use of school facilities, and reduced class size.
- **New School Construction:** The City has scheduled construction of 105 new school buildings citywide under the 2005-2009 Capital Plan, which is projected to result in new classroom capacity in the immediate vicinity of 90% of currently over-utilized buildings. The construction identified in the current Capital Plan will result in an increase in new classrooms sufficient to serve 63,000 students (or new "seats") in approximately 105 new buildings citywide, targeted specifically to those communities that have high levels of over-crowding and/or growth. In addition, while the current capital plan has explicitly included K-3 class size reduction as a target; together with the School Construction Authority, the DOE intends to incorporate class size reduction in all grades among the priorities underlying the next capital plan.
- **CTT (Pupil Teacher Ratio):** DOE has expanded Collaborative Team Teaching (CTT) in all districts and at all school levels in order to extend the integrated learning models where students with disabilities have access to the general education curriculum and rigorous instruction, and both student populations benefit from a lower student-teacher ratio. (Note that this component of the plan impacts Pupil Teacher Ratio.)

¹ The NYCDOE's 5 year plan, including the executive summary and plan components were approved by the Commissioner of SED in the first year of implementation, in November 2007. The text of this section reflects minor stylistic changes (i.e. changing from future to present or past tense), as well as targeted substantive refinements reflected in italics.

- **Reporting and Tracking:** The DOE believes that class size reporting must be clear, understandable, and scheduled, in order to allow schools and school communities to be accountable for their decisions and relative investment in class size reduction. In partnership with advocacy groups, we have already created a consistent and focused structure for class size reporting, with the goal of improving class size management, targeting, and parental choice. We are committed to continuing to improve that reporting as appropriate

Increased School Resources

The most basic resource to enable reduced class size is operational funding, which pays for the additional teachers necessary to implement reduced class size / reduced pupil-teacher ratio. This administration is building from a multi-year tradition of investing in schools and in class size reduction in particular. Between 2002 and 2007, the DOE shifted \$350 million from the bureaucracy into school budgets, benefiting every school in the system. As a component of this strategy, in the 2006-2007 school year, 332 schools in the Empowerment initiative were given additional resources and autonomy in exchange for greater accountability for student achievement. More than 70% of those resources were used to purchase school staff, and 57% went directly to new teachers, enabling reduced class sizes and increased attention to students. This case study shows that when principals and School Leadership Teams (SLTs) are provided with additional resources and the ability to use those resources to meet accountability standards for student performance and progress, the strategy of choice is very often reducing class-size or lowering the pupil teacher ratio.

In addition, the Department continues to be committed to reducing class size in the early grades (i.e., grades K-3) via the Early Grade Class Size Reduction program. This is highlighted by the maintenance of the \$88 million State funded program aid despite the funding being collapsed into general Foundation Aid. Moreover, the DOE has continued to contribute City tax levy funding (\$80 million in 2007) and federal funding (\$110 million in 2007) to maintain the resources received through the State and Federal class size reduction programs. .

As a result of these efforts, class sizes have fallen in every grade across the City since 2002, as school communities have used newly available resources to make the appropriate choices for their students, be it class size reduction across the board or targeted reductions for an identified population of students (see Chart 1: Class Size Historical Data). Most importantly, student achievement has risen across the system since 2002 by each key metric of performance (see Charts 2a and 2b: Student Achievement). Given these results, the DOE proposes to make continued investment of funding in schools - both in the first year and in subsequent years of the plan - a central piece of the Five Year Class Size Reduction Plan.

In the 2007-2008 academic year, there are two categories of additional funds in schools. The first is the Fair Student Funding allocation (FSF), which provides funding to schools that historically have not received resources commensurate with the number of students they have who are at risk of academic failure, including students that are behind ELA and Math Standards and students in need of Special Education and/or English-Language Learner (ELL) services. In particular, middle schools have been historically under-funded in the system and will receive additional resources according to the new FSF formulas. In the 2007-2008 school year, \$133M of additional funds (including fringe costs) will be in the budgets of under-funded schools. All of this money must be spent consistent with the Contracts for Excellence. Of the full \$133M, \$61M is currently targeted for class size reduction, representing deliberate class size reduction using Contracts for Excellence funding in 390 of the 693 schools funded with Fair Student Funding (see Contracts for Excellence submission by school and program area).

The second category of increased funding to schools is the Children First (CF) Supplemental allocation, which is the direct product of the devolution of DOE regional and central resources. This funding is going to all schools and represents funding that can be used to reduce class size. The CF Supplemental allocation totals \$230M of new funding to schools in FY08. While only \$55M of that total is explicitly subject to the Contracts for Excellence - with \$41M specifically earmarked for class size reduction efforts - the DOE believes, based on experience in the first year of the Empowerment initiative, that many schools will focus discretionary resources to increase personalized

instruction. Therefore, the DOE expects that additional class size reduction will come from the use of CF Supplemental resources regardless of whether or not allocations are counted as part of the Contracts for Excellence.

In the subsequent years of the DOE Five Year Class Size Reduction Plan, the DOE expects to continue to invest resources directly into schools in order to support reductions in class size. Specifically, in the 2008-2009 school year, the DOE hopes to bring all schools to parity under Fair Student Funding if funding is available. This will continue the systemic investment in schools serving higher percentages of needy students— and greatly increase the capacity for class size reduction. Investing additional resources in schools will depend on the receipt of sufficient additional funding under the Contracts for Excellence, but the DOE commits that for the duration of the five-year plan, at least 25% of any additional Contracts for Excellence funds will be targeted to class size reduction on an annual basis. The methods of dispersing this funding will be determined based on the money received, and will reflect the Department’s prioritization of student and school need.

Increased School Resources

2008-2009 Update: In a challenging budget year, the DOE and its principals have maintained their commitment to channel more than 25% of additional Contract for Excellence funds into Class Size Reduction. In the budgeting season for the 2008-2009 school year, funding sources from the City and the State did not keep pace with higher costs, including higher teacher salaries and benefits. An infusion of additional resources from the City Budget and City Council ensured that school budgets were maintained year to year, but the trajectory of increasing school budgets flattened in the 2008-2009 school year as the New York State and City economy slowed.

Despite this financial reality, the DOE and its principals continued to prioritize spending on class size reduction efforts in the Contract for Excellence. Contract for Excellence resources are allocated through three methods: discretionary school allocations, targeted school allocations, and city wide initiatives. Of the \$242M of discretionary C4E allocation, school principals and School Leadership Teams have opted to channel 35%, or \$84M, into approved class size reduction strategies, including opening a new class and co-teaching.² Including the citywide targeted allocation of new CTT classes, 39% or \$147M was used for Class Size Reduction of the overall \$379M of contract funds including all allocation methods.

The DOE also maintained the Early Grade Class Size program, allocating \$179M to schools serving grades K-3 in order to maintain class sizes below 20 students per class.

Children First Reform: Input of School Community in the Use of Increased School Funding

By state law and Chancellor’s Regulation, every school principal must consult with the School Leadership Team (SLT), which is comprised of parent and staff representatives, to develop the school’s Comprehensive Education Plan and align it with the school’s budget. Through this mechanism, the DOE’s investment in school budgets under the Children First reform not only empowers principals; it also empowers local school communities, who have the opportunity to provide input about the strategies most likely to be successful within their school, including class size reduction.

In order to ensure that all school communities are taking advantage of this opportunity and taking responsibility in all budget areas, the DOE’s Office of Family Engagement and Advocacy (OFEA) will support SLTs by offering training, as well as providing technical assistance to the school PA/PTA to ensure

² Note that push-in teaching is not an acceptable expense under Contract for Excellence rules, and schools were limited to full co-teaching models in the use of C4E funds.

parent members are appropriately elected. Starting this year, OFEA will receive monthly attendance sheets and minutes in order to monitor effective SLT practices.

Changes for 2008-2009 School Year: For the 2008-2009 school year, the DOE has adjusted the Comprehensive Education Plan process to ensure that it is more aligned to other school planning efforts, and to include targeted materials on Class Size Reduction for those schools using Contract for Excellence Funding. Starting in Fiscal 2009, schools spending Contract for Excellence resources for class size reduction were required to include in their CEP their class size reduction plan, indicating the grades targeted, and whether new classes or co-teaching is planned. As part of the CEP, this plan must be approved by the School Leadership team, which includes the head of the Parents Association and the UFT chapter chair.

System-wide Guidance and Targeted Class Size Reduction Coaching

The primary goal of the DOE Five Year Class Size Reduction Plan is to prioritize smart and effective class size reduction implemented in ways that ensure gains in student achievement. As a result, the DOE proposes to create guidance and coaching programs, both across the system and in targeted low performing schools.

First, to encourage class size reduction across the system, on June 19th, the DOE provided guidance to all school leaders on the trade-offs and decisions implicit in class size reduction, with suggestions on ways to loosen actual and perceived constraints on financial resources, space, and time. (See Class Size Guidance Memo, Principals Weekly 6/19/2007.) Furthermore, throughout the school year, the DOE's new Children First Intensive (CFI) training program and the assignment of a Senior Achievement Facilitator (SAF) to every school will provide powerful assistance to schools in the strategic use of their new resources and the staffing, budgeting, student assignment, and scheduling powers schools can use to enhance student performance and progress. This process will also be tied to the DOE's Principal Performance Review (PPR) and each school's Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP). By focusing on training and guidance across the system, the DOE will create the mechanism for ongoing guidance on how strategic resource use – including reduced class size – can further student achievement.

2008-2009 Update: The Department refined and improved the Class Size guidance memo, including materials on school scheduling and a planning template for schools interested in class size reduction. Significantly, the memo was released in May, at a time when schools were still planning and hiring for the 2008-2009 school year, and when the materials could be more useful in guiding school planning. The guidance memo is available from the DOE website.

Second, to provide intensive focus on class size reduction in low performing schools, the DOE has created a targeted Class Size Reduction (CSR) Coaching Program. With additional resources directed to schools and heightened accountability for student achievement gains, low performing schools with high class size must be particularly conscientious about ensuring that their use of resources leads to improved student outcomes and considering class size reduction as a priority within their school. The CSR Coaching Program is designed for two purposes: to provide practical and direct support to low performing schools with large class sizes and to identify systemic opportunities to support class size reduction through additional policy changes or technical support.

For schools included in the CSR Coaching Program, each School Support Organization (SSO), supported by the Senior Achievement Facilitators (SAFs) and working with Community and High School Superintendents, will serve as "coach" to principals of the target schools as they determine whether and how to reduce class size. The goal of that coaching will be to identify opportunities to decrease class size or lower student-teacher ratios as appropriate, as a means to improving student achievement. Schools will be encouraged to be thoughtful and deliberate about class size reductions consistent with the guidance in the DOE's Class Size Guidance Memo. Beginning this summer, principals in the target cohort began working with their Network Leaders to refine and improve their plans

and priorities for the upcoming school year. Coaching will extend through the year, to allow for both mid-year adjustments and for longer-range planning for September 2008. Superintendents will incorporate class size issues into the Principal Performance Review (PPR) goal setting process, and the DOE will track execution against the student achievement and class size goals identified at the beginning of the process. Furthermore, schools in the CSR Coaching Program will be prioritized for Human Resources support to ensure that if additional staff is desired to reduce class size or student-teacher ratio through co-teaching, there is focused support to identify and train the best possible staff for those positions.

Consistent with the New York City Department of Education's commitment to reduce class sizes in the targeted schools (and to achieve such class size targets as may be established by the Commissioner), schools in the CSR program *may* choose educational strategies other than lowering class size; however, if schools in the CSR Coaching Program do not reduce class size or add teachers in classrooms, the school principal and School Leadership Team (SLT) will need to justify that decision, explaining either why they cannot lower classes with their budget and space, or why they have prioritized an alternate use of their resources and why their alternative strategy is likely to lead to improvements in student results. In the DOE's accountability system, if principals do not make effective use of their resources to improve student achievement, they are held accountable through the Principal Performance Review (PPR) and Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) processes, both of which require principals to demonstrate how they have used resources to improve student achievement. Schools in the CSR Coaching Program will need to explain why they have not reduced class size as part of that accountability process.

In the first year of the program, 2007-2008, the DOE has targeted schools identified as low performing, that have comparatively high class sizes, and who operate in buildings where there is space to reduce class size. The target cohort of schools for class size reduction coaching will be defined for 2007-2008 school year according to the following definitions and include all of the 72 schools that fit the following criteria. (See: Chart 3a: CSR Coaching - Targeting Matrix; Chart 3b: Schools included in the 2007-2008 targeted coaching program.)

- **Low performing schools:** Will be defined as schools identified with a federal or state DOE accountability rating, or schools projected for a low performance rating under DOE's accountability scoring system.
- **Schools with comparably high class-size:** Will be those with top quartile class size, relative to all other DOE schools within their grade span.
- **Schools with space:** Will be those who have a utilization rate of less than 100%, as defined by the annual Enrollment, Capacity, and Utilization Report (aka "the Blue Book").

In subsequent years, based on evaluation of the Coaching Program, refinement of the DOE Five Year Class Size Reduction Plan, and the need in other schools, the target cohort for CSR coaching will be adjusted to address additional groups of schools, including those in buildings above their physical capacity. Schools will stay in the Coaching Program for two years with an option to extend. In years two through five of the Plan, the DOE plans to add approximately 50 schools per year to the Coaching Program, amounting to a total of 270 or more schools participating over five years. Particular attention will be paid to transitional grades and content areas where impact on achievement will have the greatest result. Schools added to the program may be added based on additional eligibility criteria, depending on the implementation in the first year and the most effective strategies developed to help schools. For the targeted coaching pilot schools, we expect class size reduction to go beyond even additional budgetary targets, resulting in end of the year average class size reduction of 5%.

2008-2009 Update: Schools from the first year coaching cohort that still had top quartile class size remained in the coaching program for the second year, and the DOE will continue to track data on all the first year cohort coaching schools. Although the DOE had originally planned to add 50 new schools to the program in the second year of implementation, in fact 116 additional schools were added to the coaching program for the 2008-2009 academic year. Schools were prioritized based on similar factors as in the first year, focusing on schools that are low

performing, with relatively larger class size, and that appear to have space in their building. The list of schools included in the second cohort of the coaching program is included as an exhibit.

In addition, through our coaching program we anticipate developing effective class-size reduction strategies in the following areas:

- Scheduling for reduced class size
- Using space more effectively for reduced class size
- Budgeting for reduced class size

When we identify and quantify successful strategies, we will capture and codify them through the DOE's new Achievement Reporting and Innovation System (ARIS), giving us the capacity to disseminate these best practices throughout the system, including to schools in which students are achieving at high levels. DOE expects the first publication of best practices for the fall of 2008, with supplemental publications each following year.

Children First Reform – Middle Schools

The Contracts for Excellence and the wider Children First Reform represent a substantial investment in middle schools and in the middle grades (6, 7, and 8) where many parents and communities feel most under-served.

Historical Reforms The DOE has already invested in significant reform at the middle school level, including the creation of the core Math and ELA curriculums and the closing of 67 middle schools since 2003. In the place of failing middle schools, the DOE has created not only smaller middle schools, but also K-8 and 6-12 schools, which provide greater continuity and personalization for students.

Middle School Task Force This past school year, City Council Speaker Christine Quinn established a City Council Middle School Task Force, comprised of advocates and parent groups from around the city, to make recommendations that would inform the Department's middle school reform strategy. Through these recommendations, the DOE has committed to providing middle schools with access and opportunities to recruit and retain high quality school leaders and teachers, utilize research based professional development, enhance guidance support and services, develop rigorous instructional programs, and enhance effective family partnerships. Further, the DOE will establish the position of Director of Middle School Initiatives to focus middle school professional development and improvement strategies, design innovative supports for schools, and facilitate inter-departmental collaboration in the implementation of targeted recommendations from the task force.

Other Initiatives This year, the Fair Student Funding (FSF) initiative invests significant resources in middle grades. Students in grades 6, 7, and 8 are given a weight of 1.08, compared to 1.00 for ES and 1.03 for HS grades, reflecting the difficult challenges of educating young adolescents. This translates into a net investment in middle schools of \$29.2 million under fair student funding (including fringe costs); 55% of middle schools are receiving funding under FSF. In addition, the majority of the schools that are in the targeted coaching program are middle schools: of the 72 schools, 61 serve middle schools grades.

DOE Policy Adjustments

DOE policies on enrollment and use of physical space can influence the ability of schools to implement reduced class sizes. In order to better align school level decisions to reduce and maintain class size with central DOE

planning and operations, the DOE has made the following policy determinations, which were made public to school leaders via the guidance memo referenced in the above section.

First, decisions regarding the co-location of a new school or program in an existing building will explicitly take into account the decisions and plans principals have made regarding reduced class size. It is important to be clear that the DOE will *not* place a new school or program in a building at the expense of those schools and programs already operating within the building and that these decisions will be made in consultation with school principals.

Second, in the assignment of students to a particular school, the Office of Student Enrollment Planning and Operations (OSEPO) will honor (i.e. not exceed) overall grade-level enrollment projections to the extent possible.³ That is, rather than enrolling students based on the number of students in a class, as has been done in the past, enrollment will happen based on the projected register, so that schools can plan their program based on those projections. The caveat, which is significant, is that OSEPO must also ensure that all eligible students are enrolled in an appropriate program in school, no matter the projected register.

This policy change is significant because as long as schools serve their overall projected enrollment, and admit students by established procedures, schools can and should reduce class size and pupil teacher ratio to the extent possible given their budget, space, and schedule. The DOE will honor and protect class size decisions made by schools based on their projected registers as long as other instructional programs are not disadvantaged and schools follow all enrollment guidelines. From a school perspective, principals can be confident that in lowering class sizes consistent with their budgeted register, they will not appear to OSEPO as having additional slots to enroll students. Note that in many cases around the City, school enrollment is a function of zoning; where appropriate, the Department will propose zone line changes to Community Education Councils (CECs) to facilitate enrollment planning and better use of school facilities. This effort will lead directly to increased opportunities for reduced class size.

2008-2009 Update: OSEPO and the Office of New Schools continue to abide by policy established in creating the 5 year class size reduction plan. OSEPO and the DOE are providing greater transparency to schools on the number of out-of-zone admissions in their schools, which is a primary area of concern impacting class size and admissions. The instructional footprint continues to be used by facilities staff to determine the appropriate distribution of classrooms within buildings, and ensuring that all schools have an appropriate number of cluster and specialized rooms.

New School Construction

Through the current 5-year Capital Plan (covering 2004-2009), the DOE will continue to make significant capital investments in those communities with the most over-crowded schools and those with high projected student population growth and limited capacity. The current Capital Plan has allocated \$4.5B for the creation of new seats to alleviate the pressure on existing classrooms and buildings. The priorities of the current Capital Plan, which expires at the end of Fiscal Year 2009, include: the creation of new seats in over-crowded communities, the creation of seats in communities with projected enrollment growth and limited capacity, significant reduction in high school split sessions, elimination of the need for transportable classroom units (TCUs) through the completion of new seat construction, and class size reduction in grades K-3.

³ In assigning students, OSEPO takes into account the student attrition that will occur between the start of school and October 31. The attrition rate projected by OSEPO is based on a school's historical data. Therefore, it is expected and normal that the number of students on register during the period before October 31 will exceed the projected register until that projected attrition occurs.

The construction identified in the Capital Plan alignment chart (Chart 4 – 2004-2009 Capital Plan Alignment) are projected to result in an increase in new classrooms sufficient to serve 63,000 students (or new “seats”) in approximately 105 new buildings citywide, targeted specifically to those communities that have high levels of overcrowding and/or growth.⁴ This construction pattern makes clear that the DOE capacity program is targeted to the districts and the schools that have the highest utilization. Our Capital Plan seeks to create classroom seats in close proximity to nearly 90% of the 455 schools with utilization rates exceeding 100%. Furthermore, of the 102 school buildings with the highest utilization in the city, all but two will see new seats created in close geographic proximity.

As part of its new school creation initiative, the DOE is committed to opening excellent schools to occupy these buildings, ensuring that quality instruction goes hand-in-hand with the new buildings. In order to ensure that the new construction results in targeted reductions at overcrowded schools, admissions patterns for schools in new buildings will draw students from overcrowded schools. The DOE commits to including utilization and class size in its assessment of admissions patterns for these new schools to ensure the maximum possible benefit of new buildings to surrounding communities. In addition, the DOE will reconsider zoning patterns (in consultation with affected Community Education Councils) for schools that have high utilization but are located in under-utilized districts.

It is worth noting that across the City there is a projected decrease in student population through 2015, with modest decrease in elementary and middle school populations and a more significant decrease in the high school population. Reduced utilization does not always directly translate into reduced class size because in some instances schools reclaim specialty rooms, such as music and art classrooms, before they reduce class size. However, reduced building utilization creates the immediate potential for schools and school communities to reduce class size where physical space has been the impediment. The existing 5-year Capital Plan will enable class size reductions in the target districts as each new school is created (as reflected in the Capital Plan Alignment chart).

During the course of the DOE Five Year Class Size Reduction Plan, the DOE will draft and begin implementation of a new Capital Plan, which will be active from Fiscal Years 2010-2014. In the design and execution of this Capital Plan, the DOE will continue to view class size reduction as a priority alongside other related priorities, to ensure that every child receives a sound basic education. These underlying priorities include: the enhancement of physical education (the addition of gymnasiums in buildings that lack or have insufficient gymnasium space), the addition of specialized instructional rooms (music rooms, science laboratories, etc.), the enhancement of outdoor playgrounds (particularly those that had previously housed TCUs), extensive building maintenance to ensure that existing buildings can remain open (for example, new roofs, window replacements, new HVAC systems, and electrical upgrades), and the replacement of classrooms lost in buildings that must be closed (for example, lost leases). These underlying priorities and specific projects consistent with these priorities will be discussed and approved through the capital planning process, which involves the input of local communities and CECs, and the ultimate approval of the City Council. The DOE will take appropriate steps to align the Capital Plan with the five-year class size targets established by the Commissioner.

Update 2008-2009: Capital construction to relieve overcrowding continues: 11,471 seats came on-line in 18 new buildings in September 2008, with enrollment patterns designed to optimize reductions to enrolment in surrounding overcrowded schools. An additional 32,000 seats are scheduled to be completed between 2009 and 2011. In planning for the opening of new buildings in 2008-2009, the DOE launched a community consultation process centered at the District Leadership Team in order to take input on determining appropriate admissions, as well as the programmatic design of the new school organization..

⁴ For an explanation of how seats translate to classroom capacity in each type of DOE building (i.e., Primary School, Middle School, K-8, High School, 6-12, etc.), please refer to pages P1-T2 of the 2005-06 *Enrollment, Capacity and Utilization Report* (aka, “The Blue Book”).

In planning for the next capital plan, the DOE is including class size reduction among the priorities to be considered with available resources. Significantly, analysis for the next capital plan includes examination of pockets of overcrowding that exist within districts, to prioritize those which will require new construction in order to ameliorate local overcrowding situations that are not apparent at the district level. In addition, for purposes of facility capacity calculations, the DOE has lowered the maximum targeted class size in middle and high schools, to 28 and 30 respectively – as explained in the capital plan, when underutilization and programming are taken into account, these maximum targeted class sizes could enable reductions far below the NYCDOE’s targeted reductions. The construction of the new facilities will enable the NYCDOE to spread enrollment more broadly between school districts, reducing utilization and enabling school scheduling and programming to reduce class size across the City.

Collaborative Team Teaching (Pupil Teacher Ratio)

Special Education students are among the students most at risk of academic failure. Collaborative Team Teaching (CTT) is an integrated service through which special education students are educated alongside age-appropriate peers in a general education classroom. CTT classes consist of one general education teacher and one special education teacher, providing a reduced student-teacher ratio for both the general education and the special education students. CTT classes generally contain no more than 10 special education students and 15 general education students. Co-teachers provide individual attention to students and co-plan and prepare lessons, activities, and projects that take into account the learning differences among all students in the class. The strategy, in itself, does not reduce the number of students in the room, but it does place an additional educator in the room, improving the student-teacher ratio for all students. With two teachers in the room to benefit both general education and special education students, CTT leads to demonstrably higher performance for the special education population and affords the general education population the benefits of a lower ratio of students to teachers in the classroom.

The number of special education students placed in CTT classes has more than doubled since June 2003 and will continue to grow. In September 2007, with the use of Contracts for Excellence and other funds, there were projected to be an additional 288 elementary and middle school and 142 high school CTT classrooms. \$24M of Contracts for Excellence funds are designated for the opening of new CTT classrooms in 196 of the City’s neediest schools in FY08.

Update 2008-2009: Expansion of Collaborative Team Teaching, and the resulting reduction in pupil-teacher ratio enabled for both Special and General education students, continues to be a priority for the Department, For the 2008-2009 school year, \$57M of new contract for excellence resources are being directed to new CTT classes.

Tracking & Accountability

The DOE has invested significant resources and energy in strengthening our accountability systems. In terms of the DOE Five Year Class Size Reduction Plan, these systems enable not only tracking of student performance gains in every school- the most important expression of both the Department and individual schools’ responsibility- but also reinforce financial and programmatic accountability.

In order to provide programmatic accountability, the DOE Five Year Class Size Reduction Plan will provide clear and public tracking of class size information at the system, district, and school level. The DOE intends to publish annual information on class size, based on 10/31 school registers, which will provide not only tracking of performance against Contracts for Excellence goals, but will also ensure that school communities and parents considering enrolling students in schools can have access to and use class size data to inform their decision-making.

To ensure the greatest possible transparency, consistency and focus over the five years, the DOE commits, and has already begun efforts, to accomplish the following:

- Working with stakeholders to establish a common definition of class size built on the Department’s system of record
- Creating a consistent and focused structure for data reporting over the life of the plan
- Building reports from the systems of record to allow for the greatest accuracy and likelihood of quality entry

Based on the success of these efforts, the DOE intends to publish information on class size twice per year, to ensure clear public tracking of class size data against Contracts for Excellence goals and to give parents and school communities access to family-friendly, relevant and up-to-date class size information. Initially, we will report class size in grades K-8 by official class and grades 9-12 data by grade and core (English, math, science and social studies) course section. As we move our middle schools into a more robust programming system (expected to be in place in Fall 2008), we will begin to also report class size data by grade and core courses in grades 6 through 8.

As stated above, the DOE commits to the annual reporting of the above metrics based on the October 31st student registers. Note that in order to inform parental, school, and system planning, the report will be run in advance of the full register audit process on the basis of October 31st registers as they appear on that day. The New York City Department of Education is also committed to reporting class size information in such formats as may be prescribed by the Commissioner in conjunction with the establishment of class size targets.

Both the overall DOE budget from the City and State and the DOE's school budgeting policy is built on the premise that dollars follow the students, that is, each school receives a per capita amount of funding based on the number of students in a school and the educational needs of those students. In order to project an initial school level budget allocation, the DOE works with individual schools to establish a register projection for the upcoming year. This initial register projection results in year-over-year changes to school budgets and is the basis for school level staffing and planning. This policy means that schools that have enrollment totals that are less than the previous year will be subject to budget reductions. These changes impact a school's ability to staff teachers and drive staffing changes within individual schools. Accordingly, a school that loses funding may not be able to maintain staffing at prior year levels or rehire for positions that have been vacated in order to stay within the constraints of the reduced funding level. The DOE Five Year Class Size Reduction Plan assumes that individual school average class sizes from the previous year will be maintained and improved upon across the system.

Update 2008-2009: Working with a sub-committee of advocates and interested parties, in the 2007-2008 school year the NYCDOE published clearer and more transparent reports on class size. Both greater school level detail and more summary reports enable both parents and policy makers to assess relevant information on class size, and the definition of high school class size was improved to focus on core classes, as opposed to electives. Those reports, including summary materials, are available on the NYCDOE’s website.

For the 2008-2009 school year, the DOE will extend the improvements in class size reporting. Reports will be provided at least at the same level of detail as in the first year of implementation. In addition, the DOE will work to improve data reporting systems in order to allow more accurate reporting by schools, including two important issues: the reporting of high school Collaborative Team Teaching (“CTT”) classes (i.e., adjusting reporting requirements to ensure that high school CTT classes are consistently reported as a single class and not as separate classes) and the reporting of middle school academic classes (i.e., using middle school scheduling systems to report not only homeroom size but also academic subject class size).

In addition, the 2008-2009 school budget allocations include a distinct allocation category for Contract for Excellence funding that will allow reporting on the titles hired for class size reduction using Contract for Excellence funds. The DOE intends to provide a mid-year report no later than January 31, 2009 on the Contract for Excellence class size allocation, listing in the aggregate and by school the titles hired, linked to a mid-year class-size and pupil-to-teacher ratio report.

Expected Outcomes and Ongoing Plan Refinement

2007-2008 Class Size Reduction Targets

Coming on the heels of five years of falling class size, the DOE's Five Year Class Size Reduction Plan not only maintains but accelerates the rate of reductions. Specifically, the DOE is projecting first year system-wide average reductions as follows: a 1.4% class size reduction in grades K-3, a 3.1% class size reduction in grades 4-8, and a 2.4% core class size reduction in grades 9-12. These reductions will bring average class size next year to under 21 students per class in grades K-3, and under 25 in grades 4-8 and 9-12. (See: Chart 5a.) It is important to note that these targets are first year targets only. Long-term targets will ultimately be based on the guidance of the Commissioner, as outlined in the Contracts for Excellence regulations.

Update 2007-2008: In the first year of implementation, reductions continued at all grade levels, but accelerated only at the middle and high school levels. The state education department has not yet issued guidance on class size targets. The DOE has adjusted its self-determined 5 year targets to reflect the current fiscal situation of the City the school level planning conducted as part of the CEP process, and the targeting of high school reduction to core courses as opposed to electives.

Priority Schools for Five Year Class-Size Reduction

The SED has identified 75 New York City Schools for high priority class size reduction, based on a combination of high absolute class size and low performance. Assuming that base funding levels are maintained and Contracts for Excellence funding continues to be allocated by schools at current rates, DOE is committed to particularly aggressive class size reduction efforts over 5 years in these 75 target schools. We will ensure that the average class size in these schools achieves at least our first year average targets for the system as a whole; that is, that the average class size in these high class size, low performing schools will be at or below 24.8 in grades 4-8, and 24.3 in grades at 9-12 (including electives) by the 2011-12 school year.

NYC DOE will achieve these goals through intensive application of the components of the overall Five Year Class Size Reduction Plan, including allocation of resources, involvement in the coaching program, policy and enrollment adjustment, and capital investment. Twenty-eight of the 75 are currently in the class size reduction program: the remainder will be priority for addition to the program, particularly as new construction creates more space in existing buildings for class size reduction. It is worth noting that the SED list of priority schools is based on absolute class size. Because Elementary Schools have lower relative class size, there are no Elementary Schools on the list for priority class size reduction. The larger DOE Five Year Class Size Reduction Program will continue to enable and support class size reduction in elementary schools with relatively high class size, even when those class sizes are below those in Middle and High School.

Update 2008-2009: The SED 75 were designated in November of 2007, after planning for the 2007-2008 school year had occurred, both at the central level for issues like enrollment and facilities adjustment, and at the school level for teacher hiring and program re-scheduling. Some schools received C4E funding and chose to use it on class size reduction, but given the timing there was no conscious effort to steer class size reduction in these schools beyond that occurring otherwise through existing issues. Despite this, 61 schools of the SED 75 reduced their class size – across all 75 schools, the weighted change in class size was a reduction of 1.3 students per class, or 4%.

For the 2008-2009 school year, the DOE has been able to account for the SED 75 in both short and long term planning. The SED 75 schools are listed in the exhibit, including current projections of the mechanisms that will enable reduced class size in the various buildings, including reduced enrollment, nearby construction, and inclusion in the targeted coaching program. Many of the SED 75 schools are in over-utilized facilities, with new construction underway, as indicated by the exhibit. The DOE remains committed to achieving the targets established by the SED in the first year of implementation.

As part of data reporting, the DOE will continue to monitor the class sizes of all schools in the coaching program and on the list of SED prioritized schools, in order to ensure continued progress among these priority schools.

Any schools from the SED 75 that have not shown substantial reduction in the first two years of the plan will be the subject of additional efforts in the 3rd, 4th, and 5th years of the plan. In many cases, that additional effort is reflected already in planned new construction which will open in the coming years – where that is not the case, and schools do not see reductions in the 2nd year of the plan, additional programmatic efforts and enrollment reductions will be a priority.

Refinement of the DOE Five Year Class Size Reduction Plan

The DOE Five Year Class Size Reduction Plan will be adjusted to allow for ongoing and real-time adjustments to the plan and its various components. Specifically, the DOE will be tracking and evaluating the following sources of information in order to adjust the plan as needed. Any adjustments must be approved by the State Education Commissioner.

- The State Education Commissioner will issue guidance on class size reduction, to which the New York City Department of Education Five Year Class Size Reduction Plan must and will be responsive
- The CSR Coaching Program will provide a rich set of practical information on class size reduction efforts which will be used to refine not only the Coaching Program, but also DOE policies that impact class size
- Metrics on actual reductions in class size and student-teacher ratio, both overall and in each grade range, in the targeted coaching schools and within various other sub-populations of schools and students, will be developed at least annually, and possibly semi-annually, to support system planning
- Student performance metrics, enabled by the DOE's Achievement Reporting and Innovation System (ARIS), launching initially in September 2007, will provide greater ability to track gains in student achievement to various instructional interventions, including class size reduction and lowering of student-teacher ratios. In addition, the Knowledge Management component of the ARIS system will eventually allow for sharing of best practices between schools on effective ways to accomplish academic priorities like reduced class size.

Together, this information will be used in the 2007-2008 school year and throughout the five years of the Contracts for Excellence, to refine and strengthen each component and the overall approach of the DOE's efforts to empower and support class size reduction.

Update 2008-2009: See introduction, 2008-2009 Refinement of Five Year Class Size Reduction Plan

Exhibits:

The following documents and materials provide data to support the DOE's Five Year Class Size Reduction Plan. Exhibits updated from the original class size plan are noted in *italics*.

- Chart 1: Class Size Historical Data
- Chart 2a: Historical Student Achievement – Math and ELA
- Chart 2b: Historical Student Achievement – Graduation Summary
- Chart 3: CSR Coaching - Targeting Matrix and Schools included – *Updated for 2008-2009*
- Chart 4: Capital Plan Alignment – *See updated Capital Plan documents, <http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/SCA/Reports/CapPlan/default.htm>*
- Chart 5: FY09 C4E Class Size baseline and projections – *Updated for 2008-2009*
- Chart 6b: Class Size Reduction Targets for 75 Low Performing Schools with Largest Class Size