

**New York City Department of Education
Assessment of 2014-15 Contracts for Excellence Public Comment**

Public Comment Timeline

June 9, 2014	A press release was issued announcing Borough-Wide hearings taking place from June 17 th through June 25 th . The preliminary 2014-15 plan was released and hearing dates were posted on the DOE's website, initiating the public hearing and public comment period. According to State Education Department (SED) regulations, the public comment period must be at least 30 days in length.
June 17 – June 25, 2014	Five borough-wide public hearings were held. The full schedule of C4E hearings can be found here: <u>2014-2015 Public Comment and Borough Meetings</u> .
September 22 – November 26 2014	33 public hearings were held. The full schedule of C4E hearings can be found here: <u>2014-2015 Public Hearing Calendar</u> . Public hearing transcripts are available here: <u>Public Comment Assessment</u> (Note that some of the CEC meetings do not have a transcript, due to technical problems with recordings and instances in which there were no public comments to record.)
November 26, 2014	Public comment period concluded
December 30, 2014	Assessment of public comments released on DOE website

Overview of Public Comment Period

From June 17th through June 25th 2014, the New York City Department of Education held hearings in each of the City's five Boroughs to discuss the City's preliminary 2014-2015 Contracts for Excellence proposal. Additionally, hearings were held in each of the 32 community school districts and one hearing for the CCHS during September 22nd through November 26th, 2014. During this time period, the public was given the opportunity to submit written comments on that initial plan in several ways, including a specially designated email address: contractsforexcellence@schools.nyc.gov.

The public comment period associated with the updated plan yielded nearly 100 emails to the contractsforexcellence@schools.nyc.gov address as well as written comments submitted in conjunction with oral testimony given at the five borough wide hearings and 33 CEC hearings. A summary of the substance of comments received is provided below, along with the DOE's responses.

The NYC Department of Education thanks all parents, students, community members, superintendents, school employees and CEC members who took time to participate in the 2014-2015 Contracts for Excellence public engagement process.

Summary of Questions, Comments and Concerns

Category: Allocations

Topic:	School Allocations
Substance of Comments:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is there a list showing how much C4E funds each school received? 2. The court did not say that funds for class size reduction were discretionary or could be allocated for other matters at the discretion of Albany, New York City, or the schools. It said that monies were mandated expressly for class size reduction in order to provide for a sound education. 3. How was the amount for each school for C4E dollars originally determined? 4. Do charter schools get C4E money? 5. Can the DOE provide a breakdown by District of the information/data in the C4E Proposed Plan PowerPoint slides? 6. Is there a C4E allocation for enrichment or gifted/talented programs?
DOE Response:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please refer to the following link for school level detail: FY15 C4E Plan - School Level Detail 2. Schools are required to allocate their C4E dollars within the eligible program areas allowed under the C4E regulations: reducing class size; increasing student time on task; improving teacher and principal quality; restructuring middle and high schools; expanding access to full-day pre-kindergarten; or supporting model programs for English language learners (ELLs). 3. C4E discretionary funds have always been distributed to schools based on NYSED methodology for needs targeting, which takes into account, among other things, each school's total enrollment, the number of special education students, the number of students for whom English is a second language, and the number of students performing below State learning standards or who are at risk of not graduating. C4E regulations mandate that 75% of the city's total C4E funding goes to the top 50% of needy schools, as identified through this methodology. In keeping with this mandate, funds were first distributed on a per capita basis and in the following years, because there were no new C4E funds after FY09, schools received the same amounts minus any cuts to C4E. 4. No. Charter schools are not eligible to receive C4E money. 5. School-level information was aggregated into district-specific presentations presented at the CEC meetings. Copies of the district-specific presentations may be requested from your CEC. 6. The law requires that "Districts must target funds to students with the greatest educational needs, including but not limited to students with disabilities, students with limited English proficiency or who are English language learners, students living in poverty, and students with low academic achievement and give priority to schools serving concentrations of such students"

Category: Class Size Reduction

Topic:	Class Size
Substance of Comments:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please work to reduce class sizes, restoring the early grade class size reduction program that the DOE eliminated in 2010, and doing whatever else you can to make classes smaller (or, at the very least, make sure they don't get even one child larger. 28 kids per one teacher in 1-3 grade is clearly not optimal.) 2. Invest a substantial share of the C4E funds as part of a targeted initiative towards lowering class size and make sure that these dollars are spent accordingly. 3. In the plan, you describe the city's current status as "maintenance of effort," but clearly the effort has not been maintained, as class sizes have continued to grow and are now at pupil:student ratios that exceed what they were at the time the suit was filed in much of the system. The State's failure to pull its weight does not relieve the City of its obligation to try to reduce class sizes. The City's near silence on the State's shortcomings is completely unacceptable 4. Could the funds to reduce class size go towards adding additional teachers to each class room since we can't increase the physical space? 5. Put a moratorium on co-location of any schools (including without limitation any charter schools) in existing or new public school buildings until the overcrowding situation is resolved 6. What is the maximum number of students in a class for title I and non-title I schools? 7. Why are some schools with children in annexes behind the schools and how long are we planning to keep them there? 8. Please provide the list of 75 schools with class size reduction.
DOE Response:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grant funding under the New York State Early Grade Class Size Reduction (EGCSR) Program was discontinued after the 2006-2007 school year. System-wide, DOE used State EGCSR funds, plus significant additional funding from federal grants and local tax levy, to produce a meaningful and steady decline in average class sizes in grades K-3. 2. The largest percentage of C4E funds go towards Class Size Reduction. Citywide in FY15, over \$160 million, or 46%, out of \$348 million in discrete C4E funds have been allocated toward Class Size Reduction. 3. For the past several years, the level of C4E funding has decreased while at the same time there have been automatic salary increases due to longevity and educational attainment of teachers. This means that more funds are needed to maintain the same number of teachers as the prior year. If not for C4E funds, NYCDOE would experience even greater difficulties in maintaining the current number of teachers. 4. Yes, one strategy for class size reduction is Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) (formerly known as collaborative team teaching - CTT). ICT classes reduce the pupil teacher ratio for general education students, and are an important and valued instructional intervention for students with disabilities. Under the C4E regulations, "assignment of additional teacher(s) to a classroom to facilitate student attainment of State learning standards" is an eligible expense in the program area of Class Size Reduction. A second strategy is "push-in" supports, where a second teacher supports students in the classroom environment (even in the absence of an ICT mandate). Both methodologies are used in efforts to reduce class size by adding additional teachers.

	<p>5. Co-locations allow us to use our limited facilities efficiently while simultaneously creating additional educational options for New York City families. The DOE seeks to fully utilize all its building capacity to serve students. Building council committees also meet regularly to discuss space sharing and other operational issues. If there is insufficient space to accommodate a school's changing space needs within a building, the DOE will investigate strategies for managing enrollment and work to investigate alternative space solutions.</p> <p>6. The following are class size limits under the union contract:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Pre-kindergarten: 18 b. Kindergarten: 25 c. Grade 1-6 Elementary Schools: 32 d. Junior High and Middle Schools: 30 in Title I junior high and middle schools; 33 in other JHS and MS. e. High School academic classes: 34 <p>Class size limits are the same for Title I-eligible and non-Title I schools.</p> <p>7. The DOE continues its commitment to remove all the Transportable Classroom Units (TCUs) across the City. The Proposed Amendment supports this effort by allocating funding for the removal of all units. The schedule of removal of each unit is contingent upon capacity constraints within the area and the desires of local school communities. For more information please refer to the 2014 Five-Year Capital Plan, proposed November 2014: 2014 Five-Year Capital Plan</p> <p>8. To better align with the Chancellor's priorities, C4E's class size reduction plan will now focus on the 94 schools in the School Renewal Program. More information about the schools may be found here: School Renewal Program</p>
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Category: Program Evaluation

Topic:	Effectiveness
Substance of Comments:	1. Is there a summary after four school years of this C4E program as to its effectiveness?
DOE Response:	1. The impact of C4E funds cannot be disaggregated from the impact of other funding sources and other changes in instructional and operational policies. While we cannot show a direct correlation to achievement, schools identified by SED as in the "Top 50% of Need" for the purposes of C4E allocations have experienced gains in student achievement.

Category: Programming

Topic:	CTT/ICT classrooms
Substance of Comments:	1. Which schools eliminated the ICT/CTT programs for the special education students?
DOE Response:	1. Schools that received ICT/CTT funding continue to receive such funds provided they retain the population necessary to maintain such effort. Please consult with your school's School Leadership Team (SLT) for further information.

Category: Public Process

Topic:	Public Hearings
Substance of Comments:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Venues for hearings are not more centrally located2. It is difficult to respond to a budget plan without a narrative. A series of numbers and percentages do not tell us what the DOE will deliver. Please make available the breakdown and a short description of the intended goals of each program. In addition, how the DOE arrived at these numbers would be very helpful.
DOE Response:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. NYCDOE strives to accommodate the community during the public hearings. Venues chosen for the borough-wide meetings were selected based on ease of access to public transportation, capacity to hold a large public audience, and being ADA compliant. Hearings are open to the public at large and residents may attend any hearing which is convenient for them.2. All historical information, including program descriptions and funding methodology, pertaining to C4E may be found here: NYCDOE Contracts for Excellence