



December 4, 2017

North Carolina General Assembly
16 W Jones Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

Re: Unfunded Class Size Mandate for Kindergarten to Third Grade

Dear North Carolina Leaders,

Today I am writing on behalf of the A.B. Combs Elementary PTA to formally request that you take action on the unfunded class size mandate for the 2018-2019 school year.

Since last spring we have watched our school and district leadership prepare for the mandate. This year Combs has multiple classrooms with two classes and three teachers in one space and its enrollment is capped.

That means that Combs has had to turn away neighbors who have purchased homes less than a half a mile away from the school, that neighbors whose children are reaching school age no longer have a secure spot, and that we have had to turn away families of several NC State visiting professors who took their positions because of our school. Additionally, we will accept fewer magnet students than ever before next year.

What's more, in looking toward next year, our school is considering losing the library, gym, and/or lunchroom to make additional classrooms; and losing our specials teachers and their subjects to pay for the additional required classroom teachers. Even our internationally recognized leadership magnet theme is at risk as the loss of the aforementioned spaces would prevent us from holding leadership days and hosting other standard parts of the curriculum theme.

The loss our school faces supersedes the benefit of the mandate. We know our magnet theme and specials classes build well rounded students and leaders who achieve great academic success. What you are requiring will drastically alter the quality of education the school can provide.

A.B. Combs Elementary PTA
A.B. Combs Leadership Magnet Elementary School
2001 Lorimer Road
Raleigh, NC 27606



We simply need more time, both as a school and a district. Our county is already working on building more schools. We hope that you will listen to us, the true stakeholders that are a part of this community, as we ask the following:

- (1) That you restore the original HB13, giving local schools the flexibility of up to six children per class with an average of three additional children for all classes; **OR** that you create the long term solution of a waiver process that allows schools with demonstrated need more time to comply with the law. These needs include capital funding for schools or mobile classrooms, time to build additional schools, and funding and hiring time for additional classroom teachers.
- (2) That you restore caps on fourth and fifth grades. In many schools, the current mandate has the inevitable consequence of overcrowding the fourth and fifth grades as resources are directed to meeting the requirements for the lower grades. This is unfair both to our students and our teachers, especially as these are critical years for academic testing and assessments.
- (3) That you provide dedicated, full funding for enrichment teachers for our specials. The mandate and current funding put their jobs, space, and resources for their classes at risk. Losing these teachers and subjects will be detrimental to the quality of education provided across the state of North Carolina.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to hearing back from you with viable, long term solutions to the current legislation.

Sincerely,

Sarah London
President, A.B. Combs Elementary PTA

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