

**SAMPLE CLASS SIZE LETTER TO BOARD OF EDUCATION
– FROM TEACHERS @ FEINSTEIN ES**

To the Commissioners of the San Francisco Board of Education,

We are concerned about the school board resolution supported by Superintendent Garcia stating that the maximum class size for kindergarten should be increased from 20 to 22 students beginning in the 2009-2010 school year. This action, if taken, will adversely affect the quality of education that San Francisco students receive. We strongly disagree with this decision and urge you to reconsider your positions.

Higher student-teacher ratios not only negatively impact our ability to instruct effectively and offer individualized attention and support to our students, they also create additional challenges to adequately supervise students and keep them safe, without providing additional staff. We have already lost most general education paraprofessionals who play a vital role in working with our students.

Increased class size will further challenge educators in their attempts to provide an equitable education for all. We are also concerned about the persistent achievement gap that exists between traditionally underrepresented ethnic groups, English language learners and their peers. This decision does not honor the district's strategic plan to "create the adequate conditions for every student to reach his or her potential in each school and district-wide". By increasing class size to 22, the Board is choosing to make it 10% more difficult to close this gap.

We applaud the well deserved and much needed extra funds that Proposition A provided for teachers. However the discussion around that proposition also highlighted the challenge of retaining quality teachers in our district. We are already seeing skilled veteran teachers seeking employment in other districts because of higher pay or even leaving the profession altogether. Increased class may cause even greater numbers of teachers to leave because of this additional burden.

We are making great strides in our district and clearly we welcome greater enrollment in our schools. In light of the current economic strain, many families from private schools are taking a long look at our public schools. Wouldn't it make sense to continue putting our best foot forward to demonstrate our successes rather than presenting an overcrowded classroom filled with new challenges?

We are willing to work with the Board to develop a different course that puts students first without asking teachers to do "more with less." If budget cuts are ever necessary, they should occur as far from the classroom as possible. Please consider all other cost-saving measures before taking this approach, and please contact us for feedback and collaboration. Together we can get through this without sacrificing our students' education!

Sincerely,