

Board Meeting 3/28/2024

This survey will be turned off at 3:00pm 3/28/2024, no late entries will be accepted.

Name:

Rachel Estrada

Address/Affiliation:

Spruce Elementary School

Is this for Open Session or Closed Session?

Open Session

Closed Session

What is the agenda item(s) you would like to discuss?(To comment during the meeting, you must first register to gain access to the meeting.)

Class and Caseload Size CAPS

Do you want to provide your comment when the agenda item comes up or during the public comment section?(To comment during the meeting please provide your Name above)

- When agenda item comes up
- During the public comment section

Comments:

I have spoken twice now at our board meetings regarding class sizes at Spruce Elementary. I want to also mention caseload sizes.

At Spruce, and your other title 1 schools, we serve a different population of students than your other schools. We have lower academic ratings as well as higher numbers of special education students, and students with IEP's in the general education classroom. This means our teachers are stretched even more thin than normal in terms of modifying instruction for learning and behavioral needs. Modifying instruction and meeting students' needs are impossible to do with large class sizes.

At Spruce especially, we also have school specialists (resource teachers, speech teachers, psychologist) who are at maximum capacity in terms of their caseloads, meaning that despite their best efforts, our students are not getting assessed in a timely manner nor are students getting the maximum amount of support both academically and behaviorally speaking. Many of these students are then expected to thrive in the general education classrooms, which are packed. There is no win here. Every single one of our general education teachers and specialists are barely hanging on. We need your support.

Our academic scores such as reading scores may never improve to the numbers you and us want to see and feel if you don't lessen the burden for our staff. It is impossible to teach our various curricula with fidelity if we have overcrowding classrooms and ones with students who need extra support. We are looking to the board to work with our bargaining team to PLEASE put classroom caps on classrooms AND caseload caps for our specialists.

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Name:

Mabel Yu

Address/Affiliation:

Child in Ponderosa Elementary and Alta Loma Middle school

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Open Session

Closed Session

What is the agenda item(s) you would like to discuss?(To comment during the meeting, you must first register to gain access to the meeting.)

Elimination of 7th grade advance math

Do you want to provide your comment when the agenda item comes up or during the public comment section?(To comment during the meeting please provide your Name above)

- When agenda item comes up
- During the public comment section

Comments:

The proposal to eliminate 7th-grade advanced math education is a decision fraught with repercussions that extend far beyond the immediate classroom setting. Such a move threatens to exacerbate existing educational disparities and undermine the very foundation upon which future technological advancements and economic prosperity rest. Here, we present a compelling argument against the elimination of 7th-grade advanced math education, focusing on four key points:

Exacerbating Knowledge Gaps:

Eliminating 7th-grade advanced math education would inevitably widen the already alarming knowledge gap prevalent in US society. Education should serve as the great equalizer, providing every student with the opportunity to excel regardless of socioeconomic background.

Raising the Bar, Not Lowering It:

In an era characterized by rapid technological advancement and fierce global competition, the imperative to raise educational standards has never been more urgent. By eliminating 7th-grade advanced math education, we send a dangerous message that mediocrity is acceptable, and excellence is expendable. Instead of lowering the bar to accommodate underperformance, we must aspire to elevate the academic standards and expectations placed upon our students.

Ensuring Equity in Education:

Access to quality education should not be a privilege reserved for the affluent few but a fundamental right guaranteed to all. While private schools may offer advanced math programs as standard, the public education system must strive to provide equitable opportunities for academic enrichment.

Meeting the Demands of the Future:

In an increasingly technology-driven world, proficiency in mathematics and science is no longer merely advantageous but essential for success in virtually every field. By eliminating 7th-grade advanced math education, we jeopardize our ability to cultivate the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) skills vital for future innovation and economic growth.

In conclusion, the proposal to eliminate 7th-grade advanced math education represents a short-sighted approach that undermines the principles of equity, excellence, and preparedness upon which a robust education system should be built.

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Name:

Dennis He

Address/Affiliation:

Camaritas Ave., South San Francisco

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Open Session

Closed Session

What is the agenda item(s) you would like to discuss?(To comment during the meeting, you must first register to gain access to the meeting.)

Issue regarding "SSFUSD Eliminating All Advanced Courses In 7th Grade"

Do you want to provide your comment when the agenda item comes up or during the public comment section?(To comment during the meeting please provide your Name above)

- When agenda item comes up
- During the public comment section

Comments:

As parents of two young girls that are currently attending Alta Loma Middle School (6th and 8th grade), we were EXTREMELY disappointed to learn about SSFUSD's plan to eliminate all advanced courses in 7th grade!

SSFUSD should either seek opportunities to support ALL students to increase the math score average, or, if that's not possible at this time, allow students who are ready to unlock their potential, do so by accelerating their learning.

STOP holding our kids back from having access to accelerated courses, especially when there are dedicated teachers who want to support these students.

STOP adopting a one-size-fits-all approach. This is not preparing our kids for the future and not recognizing individuals who can adapt to higher learning.

Fight for our kids and allow those who are ready to be a beacon of hope for their peers and for those who look up to them.

I would imagine that it's in the district and school's best interest to be viewed as an entity that lifts our children up, not one that settles for sub-par or below average teaching standards.

In summary, I completely support:

- Allowing those who are ready in 7th grade to accelerate
- Keep the accelerated courses in 7th grade

If our kids haven't had time to learn 8th grade standards in 7th grade, they will not be ready for Algebra.

Please, let's utilize every opportunity, especially when there is support from teachers, to set our kids up for success.

Best,

Dennis He & Cindy Kong

Board Meeting 3/28/2024

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Name:

Linda Ortiz

Address/Affiliation:

Alta Loma parent and staff member

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What is the agenda item(s) you would like to discuss?(To comment during the meeting, you must first register to gain access to the meeting.)

Advanced Math option

Do you want to provide your comment when the agenda item comes up or during the public comment section?(To comment during the meeting please provide your Name above)

- When agenda item comes up
- During the public comment section

Comments:

My son is currently a 7th grader who had the opportunity to take Advanced Math this year. He completed the Advanced Math summer school but decided to stay in the core 7th grade math course. He now regrets not moving forward with the advanced math pathway due to not being challenged enough and feels like this year could have been of more use since he was ready to accelerate.

Please do not take the advanced math classes away from the students who have that option. This is not equitable for students who are ready to be challenged and want to be in advanced math. Thank you for your consideration.

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Name:

LL

Address/Affiliation:

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What is the agenda item(s) you would like to discuss?(To comment during the meeting, you must first register to gain access to the meeting.)

7th Grade Advanced Math

Do you want to provide your comment when the agenda item comes up or during the public comment section?(To comment during the meeting please provide your Name above)

- When agenda item comes up
- During the public comment section

Comments:

As a parent of a 7th grade student currently in advanced math and another student still in elementary, I am extremely upset to learn SSF United School District is considering removing 7th grade advanced math. Since SSFUSD Math scores are already below average, you will now be intentional holding students that show strength in math back from their full potential. This has been a huge problem for SFUSD and families since they removed 8 years ago and will be for SSFUSD. Here is a SF article, specifically on the SFUSD removal of advanced math and the negative impact - https://www.sfexaminer.com/our_sections/forum/sfusd-must-reckon-with-its-math-education-failures/article_61b8b366-a654-11ed-a5be-53e51f20b536.html

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Name:

Helen Harmon

Address/Affiliation:

SSFUSD Parent

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Public Comment - Written Comment

Do you want to provide your comment when the agenda item comes up or during the public comment section?(To comment during the meeting please provide your Name above)

- When agenda item comes up
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Comments:

I am a resident of SSF and a parent of an elementary school student currently attending Buri Buri Elementary School in the SSFUSD. We strongly urge the board to reconsider the decision to eliminate advanced 7th-grade math courses and to continue offering accelerated courses in 7th grade at Alta Loma Middle School.

Confidence in math class is crucial for a student's success, and this confidence is greatly influenced by both the placement and the level of content provided. While acknowledging that accelerated courses may not be suitable for every student, they should remain an option for those who are prepared and willing to take on the challenge.

Lowering standards does not benefit anyone. Throughout K-8, it's essential to provide extension and enrichment opportunities for students who are ready for more advanced challenges. Slowing down our highly capable students only hinders their potential.

Furthermore, removing academic options does not address the disparities between demographic groups. The students most adversely affected by the elimination of advanced courses are often economically disadvantaged yet academically gifted children. While students from affluent families may access additional support through private lessons or tutors, those without such resources are left in schools that limit their academic growth.

Retaining the option for accelerated math courses in 7th grade not only prepares students for Algebra in 8th grade but also equips them for future advanced math courses in high school. We respectfully urge the board to reconsider their decision and prioritize the educational needs of all students in the SSFUSD.

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Name:

Jacqueline

Address/Affiliation:

727 West Orange Avenue

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7th grade Advanced Math

Do you want to provide your comment when the agenda item comes up or during the public comment section?(To comment during the meeting please provide your Name above)

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Comments:

My child(s) are not in advanced math, BUT I believe that the school district should provide access to benefit the child(s) in need of curriculum that fits their needs. Please do not hinder their access to higher education when the child(s) needs it. Please help south San Francisco progress to become better. We need to become a city of progression. Progression is key to a growing community/city. We, the community, need it.

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Name:

Leticia

Address/Affiliation:

Miller ave

Is this for Open Session or Closed Session?

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What is the agenda item(s) you would like to discuss?(To comment during the meeting, you must first register to gain access to the meeting.)

Post on Nextdoor neighbor

Do you want to provide your comment when the agenda item comes up or during the public comment section?(To comment during the meeting please provide your Name above)

- When agenda item comes up
- During the public comment section

Comments:

Hello. I would like to discuss the post I found on Nextdoor app. It shared information which prompted to be here with you all this evening. The post mentioned inappropriate conduct in the part of a teacher at one of our local schools. I am a grandparent of special needs children. I am unable to phathom that any adult would act cruelly to any child in their care; especially those who are incapable of communicating their needs. It is incumbent on the school district, and city to ensure safety to all our children. Although FAPE ignores the right to safety for our students with differences, it should be an exclusive trait as human beings to provide compassion and support to the vulnerable. How is the school board responding to these allegations? Have the parents of the children in question been made aware? How are the victims? Where there is smoke there is fire. I would hope that the district and the city would have sense to investigate and make sure there are consequences towards those who have harmed our children. I will continue to attend these meetings until there is full transparency regarding this issue and that those who failed are held responsible.

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Name:

Leticia

Address/Affiliation:

Grandparent

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Post on Nextdoor

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Comments:

Hello. I would like to discuss the post I found on Nextdoor app. It shared information which prompted to be here with you all this evening. The post mentioned inappropriate conduct in the part of a teacher at one of our local schools. I am a grandparent of special needs children. I am unable to phathom that any adult would act cruelly to any child in their care; especially those who are incapable of communicating their needs. It is incumbent on the school district, and city to ensure safety to all our children. Although FAPE ignores the right to safety for our students with differences, it should be an exclusive trait as human beings to provide compassion and support to the vulnerable. How is the school board responding to these allegations? Have the parents of the children in question been made aware? How are the victims? Where there is smoke there is fire. I would hope that the district and the city would have sense to investigate and make sure there are consequences towards those who have harmed our children. I will continue to attend these meetings until there is full transparency regarding this issue and that those who failed are held responsible.

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Address/Affiliation:

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What is the agenda item(s) you would like to discuss?(To comment during the meeting, you must first register to gain access to the meeting.)

Reduce class sizes at Spruce Elementary. Children learn better with a lower student to teacher ratio.

.....

Do you want to provide your comment when the agenda item comes up or during the public comment section?(To comment during the meeting please provide your Name above)

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Comments:

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Address/Affiliation:

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math

.....

Do you want to provide your comment when the agenda item comes up or during the public comment section?(To comment during the meeting please provide your Name above)

- When agenda item comes up
- During the public comment section

Comments:

As parents, we are so exhausted at hearing the whispers among the schools and the district. Be transparent. What is going on in math? There should be community meetings before major decisions are made about the education for our children. Who is responsible for communicating information to the parents and schools from the district?

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Name:

Sydney Beam

Address/Affiliation:

5th Grade Teacher, Spruce Elementary

Is this for Open Session or Closed Session?

Open Session

Closed Session

What is the agenda item(s) you would like to discuss?(To comment during the meeting, you must first register to gain access to the meeting.)

Class Cap Sizes

Do you want to provide your comment when the agenda item comes up or during the public comment section?(To comment during the meeting please provide your Name above)

- When agenda item comes up
- During the public comment section

Comments:

28 March, 2024

Superintendent Moore and Members of the SSFUSD Board,

I am writing to express my utmost support for the CTA's request to mandate class cap sizes. I am currently a first year teacher working at Spruce Elementary with a class of 32 (soon to be 33) fifth graders. Right now, I have 22 English language learners (3 of whom are newcomers), 7 academic IEPs, 7 students reading on grade level, and my job feels impossible at times. As a newly graduated teacher, my brain is jam-packed with knowledge on differentiation, restorative practices, universal design for learning, and best practices for teaching but none of that honestly matters because of the environment my students and I are forced to do our learning in.

Not only are we working in a crowded classroom that is wildly overstimulating, but for the most part I am unable to effectively deliver whole group instruction as my students range from preschool to eighth grade academic levels. I have even elected to use my own time to further my education by getting a GLAD certification as well as CRLP training in order to better support myself, but it just isn't enough. There will never be enough tools on my belt that any professional development could equip me with to handle the needs of 33 vastly different students on my own, especially with only 30 minutes of paid prep time each day. Teaching all my students in the way they need is an impossible task and I feel as though I am being set up to fail in this environment, despite how much our district preaches equitable and high-quality instruction.

Without reasonable class cap sizes, my students are going to continue to fall behind because they are trapped within a system that does not work. My students deserve to have a teacher who is able to give them uninterrupted exceptional instruction that meets them where they are. At Spruce, a Title 1 School, our community's needs differ from some of the other schools in the district. It's high time that the Board lives up to our district's Core Values and takes an equitable approach when it comes to class size caps as this is exactly what "addressing the needs of our most marginalized students" means.

I deserve more. My students deserve more.

Sincerely,
Sydney Beam

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Name:

Nurilem Jimenez

Address/Affiliation:

511 Commercial Ave South San Francisco

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OVERCROWDING SCHOOL

Do you want to provide your comment when the agenda item comes up or during the public comment section?(To comment during the meeting please provide your Name above)

- When agenda item comes up
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Comments:

please consider to reduce the students amount in the classroom specially for 4th and 5th grade, Our students and teachers reserve quality time at school where they can have a good learning time, Nobody like to feel in small place. How about if you are in the elevator with a lot people you can feel uncomfortable for less of 5 minutes our kids are in the classroom for more of 5 hours. School district needs to hire more teachers and I know this is part of the state politics but as a community we need to put our words in the table and support our future kids. PD. English is my second lenguaje sorry for any missing spelling. Thank you

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Name:

Brandon Jue

Address/Affiliation:

12 Cymbidium Cir, SSF, CA 94080 / Student

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What is the agenda item(s) you would like to discuss?(To comment during the meeting, you must first register to gain access to the meeting.)

Advanced Math

Do you want to provide your comment when the agenda item comes up or during the public comment section?(To comment during the meeting please provide your Name above)

- When agenda item comes up
- During the public comment section

Comments:

Good Evening, My name is Brandon Jue, and I am a 10th grader at El Camino High School. I am a former student at Alta Loma Middle School and had the privilege of being able to go through the advanced math summer program. This summer program prepared my math skills in order to be successful in advanced math in 7th and 8th grade. With the extra math knowledge I have received through the advanced math program, it would be very unfortunate if the board were to take this away. With that being said, please take this into consideration when making your decision.

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Name:

Amy Wu

Address/Affiliation:

224 Dundee Drive, SSF, CA 94080 / Student

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Advanced Math

Do you want to provide your comment when the agenda item comes up or during the public comment section?(To comment during the meeting please provide your Name above)

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Comments:

Hello I'm Amy Wu. I am a former Alta Loma middle school student who was in the advanced math class. I am currently a third year student at UC Santa Cruz majoring in Biology. Advanced math helped me prepare for the rigorous math courses in high school. Even till this day, despite the challenges the advanced math course had, it gave me a strong foundation to thrive in my high school courses.

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Name:

Marsha Contreras

Address/Affiliation:

Spruce SDC Teacher m/m 3-5 grade

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What is the agenda item(s) you would like to discuss?(To comment during the meeting, you must first register to gain access to the meeting.)

Classroom sizes

Do you want to provide your comment when the agenda item comes up or during the public comment section?(To comment during the meeting please provide your Name above)

- When agenda item comes up
- During the public comment section

Comments:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/14e-2oaqHJGXXGhGYnxgTih7_Z2wD4IKQdc95Y13yd4E/edit?usp=sharing

This is the full version of the letter written. Thank you!

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Board Meeting

3/28/2024

Marsha Contreras, M. Ed

Special Education Teacher

Spruce Elementary School

3-5 grade M/M

Concern Regarding: Classroom Sizes in General Education

Dear South San Francisco Unified School District Board Members,

I am writing to express my sincere thoughts about the significant concerns regarding classroom sizes in General Education. Our General Education classrooms at Spruce Elementary have become a highly restrictive environment due to the number of students in each classroom. As a special education teacher in our district, I consider it a privilege to serve our students and their families. It is always our goal to provide our students with the least restrictive environment required by Federal and State Laws for all students in special education.

According to the State and Federal Law, an IEP attorney explains that, “§ 1412(a)(5)(A). This requirement is frequently referred to as the least restrictive environment (LRE). LRE isn't a place; rather, it's a guiding principle that mandates that children with Individualized Education Programs (IEP) must be educated with their non-disabled peers to the maximum extent possible” (Heffery, Jr. Esq., IEP Law Firm PC, 2024).

As stated in the Procedural Safeguards the “Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) is the requirement in federal and state law that students with disabilities receive their education, to the maximum extent appropriate, with nondisabled peers.

Special education students should not be removed from regular classes unless, even with supplemental aids and services, education in regular classes cannot be achieved satisfactorily. The terms “mainstreaming”, “integration”, “full inclusion” and “reverse mainstreaming” do not appear in any law. These terms have been developed by educators to describe various ways of meeting the LRE requirements. As a result, different educational agencies may have somewhat different definitions of these terms.

Federal law provides that each local school district must ensure that: “...to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not disabled, and special classes, separate schooling or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.”

[20 U.S.C. Sec. 1412(a)(5)(A); 34 C.F.R. Sec. 300.114; Cal. Ed. Code Sec. 56342(b).]

(Disability Rights California, 2022)

The General Education classrooms on our campus face challenges with overcrowding, multiple students from diverse cultural backgrounds, newly arrived from other countries, those with special needs (behavioral, academic, social), and students who require extensive support due to non-compliance. With more than 30 students in a class, the ability to tailor lessons to individual students is hindered by the number of students expected to fit in one room.

The crowded environment in these classrooms does not offer an optimal setting for students to feel confident or achieve success, particularly when dealing with high levels of

non-compliant behaviors. As per State and Federal Law mandates, students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are supposed to be included in General Education classes, whether for specific subjects or the majority of the day. However, this requirement has transitioned from a cooperative effort among colleagues to support students' academic, social, and behavioral needs, to a burdensome task that heightens stress levels for both General Education Teachers and Case Managers. Parents are also concerned about the lack of individualized attention their children may receive in such environments due to their different learning styles.

School districts are required by State and Federal Laws to offer the least restrictive environment for all students. When classroom space constraints restrict students' movement and hinder their ability to think freely, along with limiting the teacher's mobility during lessons, the learning environment becomes highly restrictive.

With optimism and confidence, despite facing numerous challenges, the District remains dedicated to upholding high standards for both students and teachers. When can we anticipate the next steps towards supporting our school in fostering the least restrictive environments within our classrooms?

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Name:

Lisa Roisen

Address/Affiliation:

4th Grade Teacher, Ponderosa Elementary

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Closed Session

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Conference with Labor Negotiators

Do you want to provide your comment when the agenda item comes up or during the public comment section?(To comment during the meeting please provide your Name above)

- When agenda item comes up
- During the public comment section

Comments:

I started in this district as a first grade teacher with a class of 32 students. When class size reduction was implemented, I got to teach a class of 20 for a few years. I know first-hand the difference that a cap on class size makes with regard to student learning and teacher effectiveness. And I know you know the same, because class size has remained low in grades K through three.

I've spent most of my thirty-year career as a fourth grade teacher. The lowest class size I've had was 28, and that was once. Most years, I have 32-34 students, and I've had as many as 35. Think for a minute about the district's Portrait of a Graduate. Think about all that teachers must accomplish to make that a reality. Now let me tell you about my current class of 32 students: I have 6 English Learners (19%), all levels one or two, including one newcomer who needs everything translated into Mandarin; four of my students participate in reading intervention; six of my students receive academic support; two students receive Speech services; one student has a 504 Plan. In total, eight of my students have an IEP or 504 -- that's 25%. Additionally, two Moderate/Severe SPED students are mainstreamed with me. Five of my students are categorized as Chronically Absent. And a gentle reminder: this is the cohort who were in kindergarten when we shut down, and who spent first-grade attending school virtually, and in whom I see lasting emotional, social, and physical (gross and fine motor) effects, in addition to academic concerns. It is unrealistic to think that everything that we want for our students--all that they need, all that they deserve, all that they are entitled to--is going to happen when these are the numbers confronting our fourth and fifth grade teachers.

Using a district average to monitor class size is not effective. If a colleague at another school had a class size of 20, I could have a class size of 40, but the average class size would be a respectable-sounding 30 students. Since third grade was first capped at 24, my site has had three third-grade classes. If those classes are filled to capacity, that's 72 students, who are then divided into two fourth-grade classes of 36.

Please negotiate in good faith to enact a cap on fourth and fifth grade class size.

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Name:

Jeanette De La Rosa

Address/Affiliation:

Spruce Elementary Parent

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Comments:

I am writing to express my sincere gratitude to the teachers union for their dedication and hard work in negotiating the implementation of classroom cap sizes in our district. This is a crucial step towards ensuring a positive learning environment for our students and supporting the well-being of our teachers.

The large class sizes we have been experiencing at Spruce Elementary have been concerning, particularly in how they impact our children's social and emotional well-being, as well as the well-being of our educators. By addressing this issue, we are not only enhancing the quality of education but also fostering a healthier and more supportive school community.

I am hopeful that the efforts of the teachers union will lead to positive changes that benefit both students and teachers alike. Thank you for considering this important matter and for your continued support in improving the educational experience for all students in our district.

This form was created inside of SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO USD.

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