

Testimony for the Rockefeller Institute of Government's Hearing on the Foundation Aid Formula

July 16, 2024

Hello.

My name is Troy McGhie. I am a special education teacher and a dean at Curtis HS on Staten Island.

As we all know, parents and educators fought for decades to get lower class sizes for New York City students, something they already enjoy in other parts of the state.

Because of that work, we now have the law requiring smaller class size — but we don't have the funding needed to hire the staff.

Smaller classes give us more one-on-one time with our students, something our students desperately need.

At Curtis, we have over 2,400 students served by one social worker and two school psychologists. We are lucky to have a health center in our school, which gives us another social worker.

But it's not enough!

As a dean, I get pulled into every crisis and emergency. Too many times, I have seen students leave our school in an ambulance, heading to the psych ER, because of suicidal ideations.

Our school also received many migrant students. We lack the bilingual teachers needed to give them instruction in their native language during the course of the day. We had to resort to Google Translate and pairing newcomers with current students who speak their language.

We are teaching in a post-COVID world, but we are getting funded with a pre-COVID formula.

I can do better for our students.

You can do better for our students.

We can do better for our students.