

# **Madison Teachers' Inc. Action Committee, Madison SCAPE, the East Attendance Area PTO Coalition and the Westside PTO: Community rallies to demand smaller class sizes, accountability in MMSD Budget**

Posted on Tuesday, Jun 27, 2017

**>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Press Contact: Luke Gangler, [lukegangler@gmail.com](mailto:lukegangler@gmail.com) [608-445-4547](tel:608-445-4547)

Community leaders, staff, and parents gathered today in a show of unity outside the Doyle Administration Building to demand the district take action to reduce class sizes. The rally took place directly before the Madison School Board finalized the preliminary budget for the 2017-18 school year.

The rally was organized by a coalition including the Madison Teachers' Inc. Action Committee, Madison SCAPE, the East Attendance Area PTO Coalition and the Westside PTO.

"Over the past few years, MMSD has spent millions of dollars on new initiatives and administrative positions, while cutting over 100 teaching positions. It's time to reinvest in the foundational learning conditions our students depend on," said MMSD parent and SCAPE member Cris Carusi.

In response to community demands, MMSD administration added six new teaching positions to address large class sizes. While organizers welcomed more teaching

positions, they argued that this move was largely symbolic.

“The class size problem in Madison is widespread, affecting schools and grade levels across the district. Adding a few more positions does not get to the heart of the problem,” said MMSD special education teacher Martha Netzloff.

Organizers remarked that numerous classes in the Madison district are too large. They estimate that 44 new positions would be needed just to address class size at the elementary level.

According to speakers at the rally, small class sizes are one of a few evidence-based approaches to improving student achievement. They make for a positive learning environment and encourage the development of strong student-teacher relationships, help staff instill positive behavior, and make the curriculum accessible and engaging for every student.

Because of the evidence supporting small class sizes as a way to improve student outcomes, organizers want to see the district reinstitute hard caps on class sizes, ensuring that every classroom can be a productive and nurturing environment. In particular, organizers want to see hard caps of 18 restored in K-3 classrooms at high-poverty schools.

Organizers demanded that the district be accountable and transparent, providing public reports of how funding for new teaching positions is spent.

“Parents, staff and students are united in their support for smaller class sizes as a way to promote better working and learning conditions for all staff and students in our district,” said Dawn Cunningham, East Side parent. “While this important work is just beginning, we are hopeful that the school board will stand with us and move toward reasonable class sizes.”

###