This year Mayor Bill de Blasio rolled out his greatly anticipated universal pre-K program opening 1,100 private, free, full-day preschools across the city’s 59 districts. While 53,000 kids can now get a jumpstart into their education, the program is sapping the education of children in grades K through three and onward.

Over the course of nine months, de Blasio successfully allotted $9.5 million to fund his initiative, a fraction of the amount that the class size reduction effort has received. While universal pre-K might seem like a win-win situation, it’s much needed space, money and attention has directly undermined class size reduction. The ratio of students to teachers among New York City’s public schools, which is a growing concern among parents and educators alike – and one which just last year warranted legal attention – has been increasingly steadily for years.

While both universal pre-K and class size reduction is part of a six-pronged citywide budget administered by the state, pre-K has received significantly more attention and tangible results. On the other hand, class size reduction, has received $160.3 million, 46 percent of total state funding, but has seen only hindrances and setbacks as ratios between students and teachers consistently increase annually. Community stakeholders including parents of students, school teachers and lobbyists have grown skeptical of the implementation of the sizeable class size reduction budget.

ALT lead:

~~Everyday, six-year old Sydney McGowan walks into a classroom that overflows with 43 other children who share the same~~ **~~TK~~**~~-square-feet of classroom space -- a space that is typically allotted for half the number of students. Surprisingly, Sydney’s case is not uncommon among public school elementary students across New York City: Like 48 percent of her peers in Manhattan, the first grader~~~~is taught in overcrowded conditions. What’s worse, her class shares the room with another class in the same section at P.S. 11 in Chelsea.~~

~~P.S. 11 is one of the most overcrowded schools in District 9 with an overcapacity rate of 103 percent according to the 2013-2014 Enrollment, Capacity and Utilization Report released by the New York City Department of Education and New York City School Construction Authority.~~

~~“Right now, they don’t even have room to play outside”, said Deborah McGowan, Sydney’s mother, in reference to the children in her daughter’s class. “They don’t get to eat in the cafeteria and pick where they want to sit and socialize with who they want and those things are very good to learn at this age.” Instead, McGowan’s daughter has to eat lunch at her desk in the classroom, since there is no space in the cafeteria during lunchtime. Despite the limited space it already has, P.S. 11 implemented a pre-K program this past September like many other schools across the city. The school’s inclusion of the pre-K program was mandated  in order to comply with Mayor Bill de Blasio’s Universal pre-K expansion.~~

At the start of the school year, de Blasio’s greatly anticipated expansion of the city’s existing universal pre-K program successfully welcomed more than 51,500 preschoolers across the city’s 32 districts -- a number just shy of his administration’s original enrollment goal of 53,000. Now, 1,693 free, full-day preschool programs are open to three- and four-year-olds across the city’s 32 districts. While 70,000 kids next year will get a jumpstart into their education if de Blasio fulfills his first year goal, some argue the program is directly undermining the already tenuous citywide overcrowding crisis among public schools.

“As wonderful as the idea of universal pre-K is, based on the desperate situation that we are in, the whole city is already in need of space – and then the city is going to add 40,000 new seats to the system that cannot contain the kids that they already have?” said Deborah  Alexander, a parent who recently enrolled her three year-old at Kid Crazy, a community-based pre-K in Astoria.

~~At the start of the school year, de Blasio’s greatly anticipated expansion of the city’s existing universal pre-K program publicly boasted an enrollment number of more than 51,500 preschoolers across the city’s 32 districts -- a number just shy of his administration’s original enrollment goal of 53,000.~~

~~Even though ultimately, 70,000 children will get a jumpstart into their education if de Blasio fulfills his goal, parents, lobbyists and advocates among public schools who work closely with the city’s Department of Education argue the program’s expansion is directly undermining the already tenuous citywide overcrowding crisis among public schools.~~

~~“These proposals, though laudable, will put even more pressure on existing school capacity,” Leonie Haimson, Executive Director of Class Size Matters, a nonprofit organization dedicated to advocating for smaller classes in New York City schools wrote in her report, “~~[~~Space Crunch~~](http://www.classsizematters.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/SPACE-CRUNCH-Report-Final-OL.pdf)~~.” “Without a specific plan to lease or build more facilities, [they are] likely to cause even more overcrowding and lead to yet larger class sizes.”~~

~~According to the New York City Construction Authority’s Capital Plan, the Administration acknowledges that de Blasio’s pre-K initiative will contribute to capacity concerns by “[adding] significantly to new capacity to be constructed.” However, this belief is contingent upon the success of class size reduction -- an effort which has seen no success over the past seven years, as class sizes have consistently increased according to DOE class size reports. As for the Administration’s plan of action, they report that “analyses are currently underway for these new categories.”~~

~~“The Mayor and Chancellor have said repeatedly that overcrowding is a serious issue to them and have already taken steps to combat it,” said Harry Hartfield, the Deputy Press Secretary at the New York City Department of Education.~~

~~While he argues that the alarming trade off between classroom functionality and space is being addressed by city officials, in reality, New York City Schools Chancellor Farina turned a blind eye this past fall when Lower Manhattan’s P.S. 323, The Peck Slip School, pleaded with her for more space during their incubation period while waiting for their new school to be built.~~

~~Joy Martini, President of the school’s PTO, said that seven Kindergarten, first- and second-grade classes were crammed into five classrooms temporarily sectioned off by flimsy dividers. Ironically, these temporary rooms share the same building with Chancellor Farina’s office -- and are across the hall from her two large, unused meeting rooms. Parents said the environment was so distracting to their children that they complained about being able to hear lectures through the dividers. “There are two rooms that the Chancellor keeps for her own conference use (not often used) that could easily be turned into classrooms,” said Martini as she noted that their effort was “squarely focused on getting the Chancellor to share these rooms.”~~

~~While both universal pre-K and class size reduction is part of a six-pronged citywide budget administered by the state, pre-K has received significantly more attention and tangible results. On the other hand, class size reduction has received $160.3 million, but has seen only hindrances and setbacks as ratios between students and teachers consistently increase annually, according to Haimson.~~

~~Over the course of nine months, under the Contract for Excellence plan which designates citywide funding for pre-K and class size reduction, de Blasio~~~~allotted $9.5 million to fund his initiative -- a fraction of the amount that the class size reduction effort has received. According to leases signed by the New York City School Construction Authority, for every new preschooler enrolled in universal pre-K, at least $494 is needed to fund 20 more square feet of classroom space -- a minimum spatial requirement designated by the New York City Department of Building’s building code. While universal pre-K might seem like a win-win situation, it’s much needed space, money and attention has put New York City’s historic class size reduction initiative on the backburner, according to multiple community education council leaders, public school lower-elementary school teachers, lobbyists and parents.~~

~~“The city made a commitment in 2007 to reduce class sizes in all grades as part of the Contract 4 Excellence law and instead class sizes have gone up significantly every year since then and now they’re the largest in 15 years in grades K-3,” said Haimson. “Many of the gains that would be expected from preschool will be undermined once kids get to kindergarten,” Haimson pointed out in reference to the shortage of classrooms caused by the introduction of new preschool programs.~~

~~When de Blasio mandated that all of the city’s existing 747 universal pre-K programs be extended from~~ [~~2.5 hours~~](http://www.p12.nysed.gov/upk/faq.html) ~~to 6.5 hours beginning this past September, 38 new pre-K programs were added to public schools and 18~~~~new~~~~community-based organizations were created according to various reports, yielding a total of 1,693 programs available to all three- and four-year-olds in New York City.~~

~~Hartfield, acknowledged the overcrowding crisis pointing out the creation of a new Capital Plan which will build 33,000 new seats.“School overcrowding is a longstanding historical issue in the city, and we are using all the tools available to us, such as rezoning, new construction and leasing space, to address it,” he said.~~

Press release on class sizes skyrocketing: <http://www.classsizematters.org/press-release-class-size-averages-drop-slightly-this-fall-in-grades-k-3-and-4th-8th-but-grow-in-hs-at-least-367794-students-remain-in-classes-of-30-or-more/>

~~Psych study that shows that class sizes are just as important to students’ future success as pre-K:~~ [**~~Research has shown~~**](http://www.classsizematters.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Chetty-et-al-2011.pdf) **~~that smaller classes in early education are linked with an increased likelihood of attending college, owning a home and earning a larger salary. Overcrowded classrooms, on the other hand, threatens the quality of students’ education and~~** [**~~can cause~~**](http://www.classsizematters.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Class-Size-and-Class-Heterogeneity-Giacomo-De-Giorgi-Michele-Pellizzari-William-Gui-Woolston.pdf) **~~students’ to earn 6 percent less than their peers in smaller classes, later in life.~~**

-more benefits: http://www.classsizematters.org/fact-sheets-on-the-benefits-of-class-size/class-size-reduction-national-fact-sheet/

[COMPARED TO OTHER STATES](http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/81/95/8195.pdf): ~~“Twenty-three states currently have policies addressing class-size reductions to a level below 20 students per classroom. The majority of these policies target students in the elementary grades, with the K-3rd grade range being especially popular. “~~

More overcrowding specific info:

DOE refuses to allocate any funds specifically towards class size reduction.

•Allows principals to use C4E funds to *Minimize growth of class size*

~~•~~*~~As a result, m~~*~~ore than~~ [~~330,000 students~~](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/02/nyregion/new-york-citys-public-schools-are-poorer-and-more-crowded-report-says.html?_r=0) ~~attended classes of 30 or larger last year.~~

•Blue Book’s school utilization formula aligned with large class sizes ( 28 students per class in 4th -8th grade, and 30 in high school) and thus will push class sizes even higher in these grades.

~~•Schools have become more overcrowded over last six years. More than 480,000 students citywide are in extremely overcrowded buildings.~~

POLICIES:

<http://www.classsizematters.org/research-and-links/state-and-local-class-size-policies-and-limits/>

[UFT limits](http://www.uft.org/files/contract_pdfs/teachers-contract-2007-2009.pdf): Elementary school, 32.

[~~NY policy max class size~~](http://www.edweek.org/ew/section/infographics/13class_size_map.html)~~: (2008) “For classes up to 18 students, there must be one teacher and one paraprofessional assigned to each class; for classes of 19-20 students, there must be one teacher and two paraprofessionals assigned to each class.”~~

Publicly available [data](http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/schools/data/classsize/classsize.htm) released by the city reveals that

The results of the English Language Arts results, one of **xx** portions of the Common Core, a standardized assessment administered by the New York State Department of Education

* Superlatives:

**SCORES:**

* + **Top three scores out of all boroughs**:
  + **Top three scores in the Bronx:**
    - P.S. 051 Bronx New School, grade five performed the best on the ELA test (155.86). Their grade five average class size is 26 this fall.
    - P.S. 304 Early Childhood School grade five performed the second best on the ELA test (154.76). Their grade five average class size is 25 this fall.
    - P.S. 304 Early Childhood School also performed the third best, only this time this was their fourth grade class (154.76). While their performance only differed by a fraction as compared to their fifth grade class, their class average was higher than both the top two performing schools for early education, at 28 this fall. (As a note, P.S. 304’s third grade class ranked 33rd in the Bronx by performance, but had a class size of 25 – only
  + **Top three scores in Brooklyn:**
  + **Top three scores in Manhattan:**
  + **Top three scores in Staten Island:**
  + **Top three scores in Queens:**
  + **Random:**
    - An astonishing 93 percent of all third, fourth and fifth grades in New York City public schools report more than 20 students in their largest classes – a number exceeding
    - Roughly 29% of third, fourth and fifth grades in New York City public schools report more than 30 students in their largest classes. (useless in terms of regulations, 30 means nothing)

**Class Sizes:**

* + **Average class size in the Bronx**
  + **Average class size in Brooklyn:**
  + **Average class size in Manhattan:**
  + **Average class size in Staten Island:**
  + **Average class size in Queens:**
* Bronx:
  + Data revealed that the fifth grade class at P.S. 051 Bronx New School performed the best on the ELA test last year according to the weighted averages of all Level 1, 2, 3 and 4 scores. The class size of fifth graders at the Bronx New School averaged 26.
  + The top three highest scores on
  + This, though, tells us little more than

**USING RAW DATA**

**In All of New York City:**

* ~~Total schools: 2202~~
* ~~30.7 percent of all third, fourth and fifth graders in New York City scored a level 3 or higher on the ELA portion of the Common Core last year.~~
* The citywide ~~average class size for early elementary schools was 25 students per classroom – a number higher than the New York School Construction Authority’s target of 18 kids per classroom. Sixty percent of all third, fourth and fifth grades in public school elementary schools in the city have an average class size of 25 or greater.~~ In reality, this would mean that 1,283 classes need at least two extra teaching assistants per classroom over 25 students in order to comply with the state’s class size policy. ~~Considering the~~ [~~base pay~~](http://www.uft.org/our-rights/salary-schedules/paraprofessionals) ~~for New York City paraprofessionals (the official jargon for teaching assistant) is $21,713 per year, the city would have to shell out at least an extra $55 million for those schools to fund just one of their 25-plus-student classrooms.~~ Or, the city could just acquire more space to build schools and generate more room for classes. Although, considering that a [University of Illinois study](http://www.classsizematters.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/lubienski.pdf) linked fourth grade class sizes greater than 25 students with a decrease in student performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress standardized test and that the American Psychological Association found the odds of graduating from high school were [80 percent higher](http://www.classsizematters.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Small-Classes-in-the-Early-Grades-Academic-Achievement-and-Graduating-From-High-School.pdf) after attending four years of small classes, it might be a strategic investment for the city to consider emphasizing class size reduction.
* ~~The largest class size, a tie between fourth grade classes at P.S. 221 Toussaint L’ouverture in Brooklyn and P.S. 96 in Queens, was an astonishing 37-student classroom – more than twice the target classroom capacities set by the New York City School Construction Authority.~~
* The top quartile, highest performing (top 550 schools)
  + The top performing classes out of the entire city were ~~grades four and five in the Special Music School, a public K-9 school in Manhattan. In both cases, classes were significantly small (15) and 100 percent of students scored either a level 3 or 4. Interestingly, the same school’s third grade class, also with one class of 15 students, ranked within the top 18 classes citywide performance wise.~~
* Case in point: Taking everything into account, the class sizes with the highest performing students (calculated by averaging the percentage of students scoring a level 3 or 4 for each class size) turned out to be the smallest, occurring at the Ella Baker School in the Upper East Side. Ironically, InsideSchools, an independent blog specializing in reviewing every school in New York City, [argues](http://insideschools.org/component/schools/school/71) the biggest “downside” of the school is their low test scores. The truth is, as the only school reporting a class size of 9, there was no need to average the high and low scores allowing the Ella Baker School’s raw performance (42 percent of students scored a level 3 or higher) to remain intact. As a comparison, 208 schools reported a class size of 28, meaning that Manhattan’s P.S. 212 Midtown West’s 70 percent of kids scoring a level 3 or higher and none of Harlem’s P.S. 149 Sojourner Truth’s kids scoring a level 3 or higher would have to average, along with 206 other schools, thereby massively skewing the data. The conclusion? Class size and school performance is nearly impossible to compare using raw data uncontrolled for an infinite number of variables.
  + **The characteristics: PIE CHART THESE**
    - 7-16
      * Only about 2.8 percent of 3rd, 4th and 5th grade classes throughout the city reported an average class size smaller than 17.
    - 17-26
      * 54.6 %
    - 27-37
      * 40.4%
    - NA: 2.2%
* **Borough data:**
* **Bronx**:
  + Total schools tested: 451
  + Average class size: 25
  + Largest class size: 36
  + Average level 3/4: On average, 17.3 percent of Bronx early elementary school students scored a level 3 or higher
    - =ROUND(SUM(R:R)/SUM(H:H)\*100, 1)
  + Percent of average class size >25: 51 percent of early elementary schools have an average class size GREATER than 25 students per room.
    - (CODE: =(COUNTIFS(U17:U2226, ">25")/COUNT(W17:W2226))\*100) OR total schools with average class size greater than 25: =COUNTIF(U:U, ">25")
  + The largest class size, seen at P.S. 21 Philip H. Sheridan, totaled 36 students and only 9.6 percent of the third, fourth and fifth graders in that school scored a level 3 or higher. The K-5 school actually houses 4 percent more students than the building was designed to hold, according to the city’s [Blue Book](http://www.nycsca.org/Community/CapitalPlanManagementReportsData/Pages/EnrollmentCapacityUtilization.aspx), issued annually by the New York City School Construction Authority. Comparatively, almost a third of early elementary school students in the Bronx had less than 9.6 percent of their students score a level 3 or higher. In other words, 127 schools in the Bronx had less than 9.6 percent of their students score a level 3 or higher. Whether or not this disturbingly high number -- 28 percent of schools who had only a fraction of their students score better than a level 2 – is related to class size is uncertain. The numbers show that for those 127 schools, the average class size was 24 students, which is actually slightly lower than the average class size of the entire borough. When the class size and scores are compared, of those schools with a low percentage of students who scored a level 3 or higher, none had less than 13 kids per room and all tended to have more than 18 students per room.
  + The top 25 percent of schools scoring the highest on the ELA portion of the common core in the Bronx had an average class size *higher* than the borough’s overall average class size, with 27 students. This surprising relationship would suggest that the greater the class size, the better early elementary school students in the Bronx would perform on the Common Core if there were no other factors like teacher or school quality, socioeconomic status and so on, involved. Taking a closer look, the highest performing class, grade five at P.S. 51 Bronx New School, had 57 percent of its students score a level 3 or higher – a number significantly higher than the city as a whole – and reported an average class size of 26 kids. While 26 kids is still significantly higher than the state’s target of 18 kids per room, the school, known for its progressive atmosphere (students call their teachers [by their first names](http://insideschools.org/component/schools/school/420)), is actually 17 percent underutilized. The rare luxury of excess space among public New York City schools would hypothetically allow the school to curtail their future class sizes if they are not forced to coshare a building with another public school in the future, which would up their chances of bolstering their student performance even more. Of the rest of the highest scoring schools in the Bronx, none had an average class size lower than 19 kids. In fact, the largest class size of the top 25 percent highest performing schools exceeded the UFT limit of 32 kids per class. While, on the surface, this correlation may contradict research linking small class size and student performance, the data actually reveals the opposite. A closer look indicates that, even within the top quartile of Bronx elementary schools, performance tapers as class sizes exceed 32. SEE CHART
* **Brooklyn**: USE AS CASE STUDY FOR WHY TREND MAY YIELD NO CONCLUSION
  + Total schools tested: 704
  + Average class size: 25
  + Scores ranged from 92 percent of kids scoring higher than a level 3 or 4, to 0 percent.
  + Percent of average class size >25: 53%
  + Average level 3,4: 31.6%
  + P.S. 748 Brooklyn School for Global Scholars, a school only open to children meeting the city’s “gifted and talented” criteria was the highest performing, reporting more than 92 percent of their fourth graders scoring a level 3 or higher. The highest scoring school which was not exclusive to “gifted and talented” children reported that 88 percent of their third graders scored a level 3 or higher. There are 27 students total in grade three – a number just above the average class size throughout Brooklyn’s early elementary schools.
  + The shape of the curve seems to show top scores increasing as class size increases; that is, performance increases until its peak at a class size of 26, before decreasing thereafter. A closer look at the ten largest classes reveals that as the largest classes grow in size, the performance tends to decrease. However, because the data doesn’t track the swell of class size over time within one school, variables that could alter performance from school to school are not controlled for. Therefore, just because P.S. 221 Toussaint L’ouverture’s grade four reported the highest class size (37) and a low percentage of students scoring a level 3 or higher (15 percent), there were still 186 other schools with class sizes ranging from 12 to 34, who also performed just as poorly. By the same token, just because P.S. 195 Manhattan Beach, with the second largest class size, performed much lower than P.S. 146 or P.S. 172 Beacon School of Excellence with the third largest classes, it still is in the top 7 percent of all public elementary schools in Brooklyn. That is to say, without controlling for factors affecting performance, such as socioeconomic status, teacher quality and school environment, which differ from school to school, this analysis is faulty. The largest class sizes may decrease in performance when compared only to each other; however, compared to the rest of the schools in Brooklyn, they’re still considered high performing.
* **Manhattan**:
  + Total schools tested:
  + Average class size: 24
  + No school scored above
  + Percent of average class size >25: 38%
  + Average level 3,4:
* **Queens**:
  + Total schools tested:
  + Average class size: 27
  + No school scored above
  + Percent of average class size >25: 70%
  + Average level 3,4:
* **Staten Island**:
  + Total schools tested:
  + Average class size: 27
  + No school scored above
  + Percent of average class size >25: 71%
  + Average level 3,4: