

Community Raising Funds in Response to Increasing Class Sizes

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Increasing Class Sizes Impacts Community - Photo by: manure

With teacher layoffs hitting many school districts hard, one community is fighting back with a fund raising effort designed to lower class sizes.

Officials of the Santa Monica-Malibu Education Foundation stated on Monday, July 12 that \$565,649 has been raised so far for the Save Our Schools Campaign. This is enough money to pay for six school positions: a librarian, a music instructor, a counselor and three elementary school teachers. The goal is to provide full funding for first grade class size reduction, restore music, counseling and counseling programs as well as lower secondary school class sizes.

The Impact of Raising Class Sizes in Public Schools

The school board in Santa Monica-Malibu school district in California laid off 58 teachers in recent budget cuts for the 2010-2011 school year. The Save Our Schools Campaign is in response to this and hopes to restore many of these teacher positions.

Looking more broadly at the impact of increased class size brings Physical Education into focus. According to Paula Kun with the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE), the increased class sizes add safety and liability problems for PE teachers. The raising class sizes can also be seen in the increase in after-school programs like [STAR Education](#) in California. STAR Education works with over a million children on their math and reading skills.

Do Larger Class Sizes Impact Student Learning?

The focus of the Save Our Schools Campaign is to lower class sizes. This leads to the assumption that the increase in class size impacts the student's learning. Class size is a highly debated topic and the research actually points to class size having little impact on student improvement.

Tatia Prieto, a pre-k-12 counselor with Prismatic Services states that "a great teacher will be a great teacher no matter how many kids there are in the classroom." That said, many believe that the smaller the class size, the more personal attention individual students will receive. Alexis Avila, founder of [Prepped & Polished](#): Tutoring, College Counseling, Test Prep, compares smaller class sizes with the benefit of a private tutor by saying that "all students can keep up with the curriculum and overall get their individual needs addressed" when the classes are kept small.

Additionally, many parents find themselves in the same situation as Karen Mishra, mother of two who chose to put her children in the smaller classes of Lansing Christian School because her well-behaved children received less attention than those who acted up or needed extra help. Corinne Gregory, President and Founder of SocialSmarts, emphasizes the fact that "too many teachers do not receive training in effective classroom management", arguing that class size is not as important as the training that teachers receive to handle the students.

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While the research indicates that class size does not impact student achievement in a way that should cause increased concern over these recent layoffs in the Santa Monica-Malibu School District, the efforts of the Save Our School Campaign tell a different story. Good teachers and educational programs such as music have a huge impact on students, and the community is pushing hard to raise funds to reverse many of the teacher layoffs.

The deadline for donating to the [Save Our School Campaign](#) is August 15, 2010. More donations are expected, according to the officials in charge of the fund raising. In the meantime, schools across the nation looking at reducing teaching staff and subsequently increasing class

sizes, should look at increasing the effectiveness of those teachers on staff in order for the increase in class sizes to have the smallest possible impact on the students.

Related Information:

[Massive Teacher Layoffs Nationwide](#) – Find out how school budgets are impacting teacher staffing.

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