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--Students, Parents, and Class Size Counts Testify at May 12th Fairfax County Public School Board Meeting about Excessive Class Sizes--;

--Gut Wrenching Testimony Given by Children Brings Audience to Tears--

Fairfax County, VA – Wednesday, May 13, 2015 – Nico Stover, age 6, quietly told the Fairfax County Public School Board last night that “I want to be a better reader...” but he can’t get enough reading time with his teacher in a class with 29 other students at Flint Hill Elementary School



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3hKTyGdaprc&feature=youtu.be>

Arahat Chikkatur, age 9 from Wolftrap Elementary School, also addressed the School Board by saying that “a class of 31 students using a room designed with 24 backpack hangers means disaster is on its way.” Arahat

explained that 7 kids must volunteer each week to throw their backpacks in a pile on the floor because there is no place in his classroom to store backpacks. He says that the pile is not safe because kids are constantly tripping over them.

It was a tearful site – but some, such as Pat Hynes, the School Board member *representing* these children, is still not certain she would support class minimums to reduce the wide class size disparity in FCPS.

In a recent email to CSC leader Jo Neuber, Hynes wrote, “Just to be clear, I did not say I would not support a conversation about class size minimums. I want the current plan to work. If it does not, we may have to look at raising the minimum.”;

“The class size issue was raised to Ms. Hynes’ attention by the Wolftrap Elementary School PTA President, another concerned parent, and I back in 2012,” said Dana Jackins. “When does she plan to do something about class sizes in her district?”

At last night’s School Board hearing, Class Size Counts co-Chair Jo Neuber raised the issue again, asking the School Board to support a work session on class minimums to reduce FCPS class size disparities of 12-36 in a class. “Let’s have an honest discussion. The \$3.1M for extra staffing reserve positions will help reduce the number of large *elementary* school classes. Yet *it alone* will not address our huge disparity of class sizes in K-12.”

Many of last night’s speakers echoed Ms. Neuber’s sentiments by thanking the Fairfax County Public Schools Superintendent, Dr. Karen Garza, and the School Board, for including the \$3.1M as a placeholder in the 2016 Proposed Budget.

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Fairfax County Class Size Counts is a community group advocating for class sizes that allow every child to thrive throughout their years in Fairfax County public schools.

We **believe** that overly-large classes diminish children's educational experiences and that every student deserves to be in a learning environment that is engaging, challenging and safe.

We **are committed** to ensuring that Fairfax County teachers are allowed to spend more time teaching and less time having to manage problems that arise as a result of overcrowded classrooms.

We **advocate** for smaller class sizes in schools throughout the county by sharing information and lobbying at both the local and state level.

Contact CSC via email: classsizecounts@gmail.com. Request to be added to the CSC Newsletter to stay up-to-date on the latest developments on class size matters.