



**Date:** March 5, 2025

**Name:** Stacey Morris

**Committee:** House Education Committee

**Bill:** HB 3652

**Position:** Support

My name is Stacey Morris, and I'm a kindergarten teacher in the Greater Albany Public Schools. I started this school year with 28 kindergarten students and no aides. This is my 26th year of teaching, and although teaching 28 five year olds has never been easy, it has become unsustainable.

Kindergarten is where kids come to learn how to be students. We teach them how to wash their hands, how to line up, how to make friends, how to sit, how to raise their hand, how to ask questions, how to blow their noses and cough into their sleeves. We even teach many how to use the toilet. We started the school year with 11 kinders who already had IEPs in place at our school and many more who are likely to need to get assessed.

Last year, I had 17 students in my class. It was a night and day difference on the individualization each student was able to receive from me as their teacher. One of the biggest differences I have seen in small vs large class sizes is the confidence levels of each student. Kindergarteners go from either spending all day with their parent or in a small preschool class with ratios of 1 to 10 or less, to being thrown in with 27 other young children who are also brand new to our school environment.

When my union was negotiating for class size, it did not make sense that they could only bargain for class size at Title 1 schools. While my school is not a Title 1 school, I have Title 1 kids with special needs that are specifically sent to my school.

We have a cap in place so that next year I will not have 27 students. It's a reasonable cap set at 24 students for a non Title school, and 21 at a Title 1 school. Our cap means that they will hire more teachers if they have to, at least until our class size fund runs out. Any District in the state could negotiate something similar with their employees, but we need HB 3652 passed to get them to discuss it at the table.

I look forward to next school year, because I know we were finally heard when it comes to kindergarten class size. I hope kindergarten teachers in other Districts who are facing what we



have, will get the chance to bargain and have a voice in making their schools inclusive and safe as well.