

# Research Bulletin

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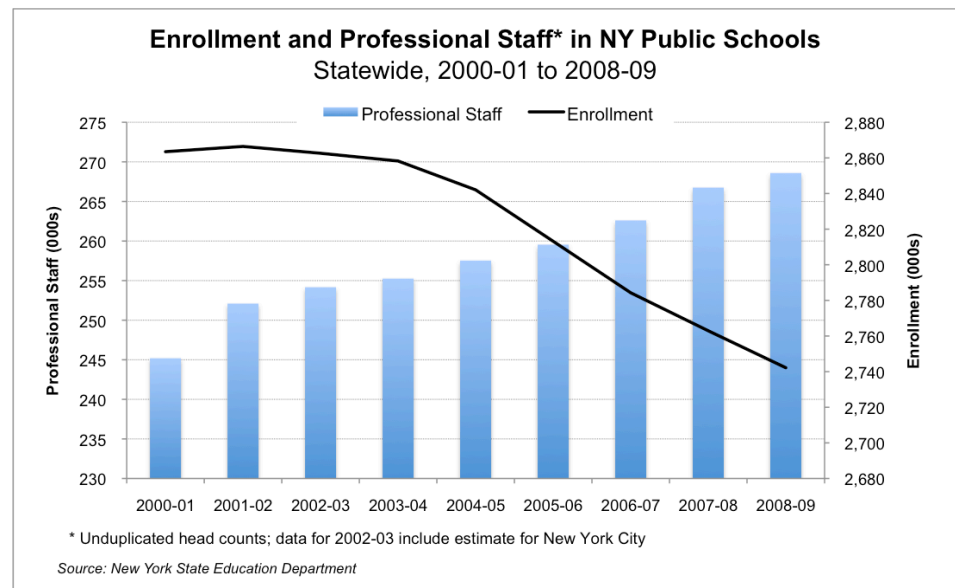
FOR NEW YORK STATE POLICY

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## School Staffs Grew in New York Despite Falling Enrollment

New York State educators are warning that proposed cuts in state aid to public schools next year could force more than 14,000 teacher layoffs.<sup>1</sup> Officials of the state's largest teachers' union claim aid cuts will "devastate" education, leading to a "drastic" reduction of programs and "much larger class sizes."<sup>2</sup>

But these dire forecasts need to be weighed against a recent growth trend in school staffing. In fact, relative to enrollment, most school districts in New York employed more professional staff last year than they did at the start of the decade. Between 2000-01 and 2008-09, New York schools added 14,746 teachers and 8,655 non-teaching professionals such as administrators, guidance counselors, nurses, psychologists and social workers, according to State Education Department (SED) data. During the same period, statewide enrollment dropped by 121,280 pupils. The trend is illustrated below.



The data indicate that nearly half the new staff members were hired in New York City, where Mayor Michael Bloomberg made a reduction in class sizes one of his top priorities after taking office in 2002. The city added 7,072 teachers and 4,042 non-teaching professionals even as its enrollment was decreasing by 62,670 pupils, or 5.9 percent, according to state data.

Upstate schools experienced an even greater enrollment drop of 72,000 pupils, or 7.4 percent, but added 939 teachers and 2,408 other professionals. Public school enrollments in Long Island and the Mid-Hudson<sup>3</sup> increased by 1.7 and 1.8 percent, respectively, but school districts in both of those regions increased their teaching staffs by more than 10 percent and their non-teaching professional staffs by more than 20 percent. A regional breakdown of enrollment and staffing data for the period is in the table on the back page.

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<b>Enrollment and Professional Staff* in New York State Public Schools</b>					
	<i>New York City</i>	<i>Long Island</i>	<i>Mid-Hudson**</i>	<i>Upstate</i>	<i>State Total</i>
<b>Enrollment</b>					
2000-01	1,068,337	456,212	348,872	990,058	2,863,479
2008-09	1,005,667	464,143	355,226	917,162	2,742,198
Change	(62,670)	7,931	6,354	(72,896)	(121,281)
Percent Change	-5.9%	1.7%	1.8%	-7.4%	-4.2%
<b>Teachers</b>					
2000-01	66,353	36,260	27,428	81,976	212,017
2008-09	73,425	40,235	30,189	82,915	226,764
Change	7,072	3,975	2,761	939	14,747
Percent Change	10.7%	11.0%	10.1%	1.1%	7.0%
<b>Non-Teaching Professionals</b>					
2000-01	10,353	5,741	4,401	12,673	33,168
2008-09	14,395	6,922	5,425	15,081	41,823
Change	4,042	1,181	1,024	2,408	8,655
Percent Change	39.0%	20.6%	23.3%	19.0%	26.1%
* Unduplicated counts of full- and part-time professional personnel					
** Westchester, Rockland, Putnam, Orange, Dutchess, Sullivan and Ulster counties					
Source: New York State Education Department, Information and Reporting Services. Personnel Master File data. <a href="http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/irts/pmf/">http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/irts/pmf/</a>					

What accounts for the staff growth? Data from the SED Personnel Master File indicate that roughly half the additional teachers hired statewide between 2000-01 and 2008-09 were in the field of special education, with most others divided among pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and the subject areas of English, science, math and social studies. But the fastest staff growth was in the category of non-teaching professionals, including an added 1,927 principals and assistant principals, 1,149 guidance counselors, 1,107 social workers, 996 psychologists and 992 nurses. New York City, despite falling enrollment, added non-teaching professionals at nearly twice the rate for other regions.

The data do not reflect school staff reductions implemented through layoffs or attrition since 2008-09. However, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that total elementary and secondary school payrolls in New York – including both professionals and non-professionals – have continued increasing on a statewide basis in the past year.<sup>4</sup>

### **Smaller Class Size: A Costly Objective**

While class size reduction is a perennial priority of teacher unions, education research indicates that class sizes have little if any impact on pupil performance.<sup>5</sup> Even small reductions in class size are extremely costly; for example, at current enrollment levels, reducing the statewide pupil-teacher ratio by a single pupil would require the hiring of more than 17,500 additional teachers at a cost of roughly \$1 billion.<sup>6</sup>

By national standards, class sizes in New York schools were small even before the further staff expansion of the past nine years. As of 2007-08, the most recent year for which comparable statistics are available, New York’s pupil-teacher ratio was 13.1 (down from 13.9 in 2000-01), compared to a national average of 15.5 pupils per teacher (down from 16 in 2000-01).<sup>7</sup> New York’s pupil-teacher ratio was the eighth lowest among 50 states; as of 2007, New York was number-one in public school spending, at \$15,981 per pupil.<sup>8</sup>

– E.J. McMahon

<sup>1</sup> New York State School Boards Association and New York State Council of School Superintendents, “Schools: 14,800 teaching jobs in jeopardy,” news release issued March 22, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> New York State United Teachers, “NYSUT outraged by Senate embrace of harmful education,” news release issued March 22, 2010, [http://www.nysut.org/cps/rde/xchg/nysut/hs.xml/mediareleases\\_14686.htm](http://www.nysut.org/cps/rde/xchg/nysut/hs.xml/mediareleases_14686.htm)

<sup>3</sup> Westchester, Rockland, Putnam, Orange, Dutchess, Sullivan and Ulster counties.

<sup>4</sup> Based on preliminary estimates of payroll employment by local government elementary and secondary schools in the month of February, not seasonally adjusted, at [www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov).

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Hanushek, Erik, “Some Findings from an Independent Investigation of the Tennessee STAR Experiment and from Other Investigations of Class Size Effects,” *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 21(2), Summer 1999.

<sup>6</sup> This assumes an average salary of \$50,000 and a benefit load of 33 percent.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), “State Nonfiscal Survey of Public Elementary/Secondary Education,” 2007-08, Version 1a, Table 4.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2007 Public Elementary-Secondary Education Finance Data, at [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).