

How Did the City’s Public Schools Use Their Nearly \$13 Million in Parent-Teacher Association Grants in School Year 2017-2018?

This month, the city’s public school parent-teacher organizations reported their income and total expenditures pursuant to last year’s enactment of Local Law 171. While the law aims to create greater transparency around parent-teacher association spending, the groups only have to report the total amount spent—not the purpose of the expenditures.

To provide a better understanding of how schools use funds raised and contributed to their budgets by their parent-teacher groups, IBO examined school budgets for the 2017-2018 school year. In a prior [NYC by the Numbers](#), we looked at 132 schools that received a total of \$12.8 million in parent association grants in 2017-2018 and discussed why parent groups may opt to provide grants to their schools rather than fund staff or purchases of goods and services from their own accounts. And as we also noted, parent-teacher associations may offer nonmonetary support to their schools, volunteering time as well as goods or services.

- The city budget broadly classifies spending under the rubric of personal services and other than personal services, although the latter can also include services that have been contracted out. For example, the single largest category of grants totaled \$4.5 million for management consultants as well as temporary secretarial and clerical help. IBO calls this category “professional and temp services, administrative and DOE consultants,” and it is classified as other than personal services spending in the budget.
- Under the broad classification of personal services, school staff paid on an hourly or daily basis is the largest category, and second overall. Grants totaled \$2.2 million in school year 2017-2018. School staff whose salaries are partially paid with these grants can include teachers, supervisors, secretaries, principals, guidance counselors, and social workers.
- Additional grants totaling \$1.8 million were for teachers, including substitutes and those covering prep periods. Grants to support retired school staff to continue to work in schools totaled more than \$900,000. Both of these categories are classified as personal services.
- While the Department of Education prohibits parent-teacher associations from hiring teachers for core subjects such as English and math, the associations can raise funds to hire supplementary teachers, such as for art and music classes.

