

# Tweacher

The Series

Book Five

Mrs. Ronan, Where Do I Sit?



By Perez Shillito Lazarus Macy

## Hey Ms. Ronan, Where Can I Sit?

By Perez Shillito Lazarus Macy

Ever since I had a “little work” done, I can pass for someone much younger. Not that I need to. But this helped me have some eye-opening adventures over the last few weeks.

You see, my assistant, Brittany has been passing me off as one of her two children and trying to enroll me in a few CPS elementary schools – as a 2<sup>nd</sup> grader! (Email me and I’ll let you in on who did that “little bit” of work on me.) As long as I remember to watch my mouth and not talk like Brittany no one questions whether I belong or not.

I enrolled at four different schools in the past two weeks. Brit & I went through all the application stuff, faked our addresses. But we withdrew from all four schools. Why? Because we couldn’t find a class with less than 19 students in it. Unless it’s an Oscars after-party, I don’t like being anywhere with that many young people.

According to my sources inside the Education Center, there are around 100 second grade classes in the district. Less than 30% of these have 18 or fewer students in them. So, Perez thought, maybe I should have become a first grader. But wait - of the 100 first grade classes in the district less than 30% of those have 18 or fewer in them as well.

My teachers out there – I mean my colleagues – are supposed to get paraprofessionals if the class size tops 18. The problem is that the district sees this as justification for letting class size grow to the max of 25. They figure it’s cheaper. But it’s not what the citizens of Cincinnati thought they were getting when they passed the levy. It’s like getting one of those gift bags from the Oscars and finding that it’s got a Timex instead of a Rolex. And then being told they are both five-letter words that end in “X.”

*I read it in the Inquisitor!* According to the administration, there is no class size problem. The district has remained true to the spirit of the levy passed many years ago. That levy was passed because the community was told that the district would use much of the proceeds to fund lower class size limits in the primary grades. These class sizes were incorporated in the contract. The class size limit was 18. I remember because that was my age and waist size at the time.

This is the language from the 2000 Contract:

### Class Size Reduction

Reduce class size in academic classes in grades K-3 to 15-18 students, contingent on passage of the school levies the Board has placed on the ballot March 7, 2000.

These limits shall be phased in beginning with the 2000-2001 school year and completed no later than the beginning of the 2002-2003 school year, by allocating the proceeds of two mills of the 6.5 mill increase, along with any state or federal funds provided specifically for class size reduction. Priority for class size reduction shall be determined by the school’s status in the School Assistance and Redesign

Plan, with the necessary funds being allocated first to schools which have been redesigned and to those in Intervention status.

This is also a reminder to Cincinnati. Besides making the city famous because I, Perez, live here, I am also part of a union (even though the big bosses are wary of any unconventional unions) that cares about the quality of education our children receive. We fought for smaller class sizes because research demonstrates that it helps. Everyone involved expected that class sizes would really be between 15-18. But for an overwhelming number of students and parents, they didn't get what they – or we – bargained for.

Oh, by the way, I really developed quite a crush on that cute Ms. Bullock at that one school. But there was always this very big kid by her side. Oh well.