

Class Size Policy Administrative Procedure

G14 –R

School District-Specific Class Size Policy Guidelines

In order to provide quality instruction and consistency across all grade levels, the following Standards will be considered in developing class size guidelines. (September 8, 2010)

Technical Education Class Size Differentials

Career and Technical Education (CTE) class size is primarily driven by factors related to course expectations, safety considerations, and space constraints. These factors, which drive maximum class size, may also impact minimum class size decisions, and must be evaluated in the context of guidelines specific to the course and equipment under consideration.

Grade-Specific Considerations

Research indicates that best practices regarding minimum and optimal class sizes vary to some degree by grade level. See the attached chart for recommendations.

Course-Specific Considerations

The following are space-related factors that should be considered when fashioning class size policies:

1. Laboratory space requires adequate room for both group work and individual work, and must support the prescribed program of studies;
2. Kindergarten classrooms usually include discrete areas for gross-motor physical activity and for activity with learning materials. Research indicates that a minimum of 50 square feet per student is desirable;
3. Art classrooms also require somewhat greater than normal per-student space, and also have to accommodate adequate ventilation. Research indicates that a minimum of 50 square feet per student is desirable; and
4. Science laboratories require learning stations outfitted with gas, water and electricity, and must afford students significant space for movement, and for proper safety precautions, during laboratory investigations. Research again indicates that a minimum of 50 square feet per student is desirable.

Multi-Grade Classrooms

Multi-grade classes are covered by these policies in the same manner as single grade classrooms.

Special Education

Federal law requires that each special education student receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). For this reason, *self-contained* special education classes should be excluded from the average minimum and optimal class size calculations.

Physical Education

Physical education class sizes must be designed with the unique pedagogical, equipment-related and space-related needs of that discipline in mind. This approach is indispensable to the effective

delivery of the learning standards of this content area, and to the effective assessment of the degree of success of their delivery. Adaptive physical education classes are excluded from the average minimum and optimal class size calculations.

English Language Learners (ELL)

Incorporation of ELL students into minimum and optimal average class sizes is inherently difficult. As with students on IEPs and 504 Plans, this is partly because of the small numbers of such students, and the inherently individualized nature of their educational programs.

Strategies

designed to immerse ELL students with their English-speaking peers, and the emerging emphasis

on co-teaching practices, lend themselves to achieving desirable minimum and optimal average class sizes. Because of the unique characteristics of English language learners, they should generally be excluded from the average minimum and optimal class size calculations if they are

in a self-contained classroom.

Distance Learning Classes

The 2010 legislative session expanded the availability of distance learning for Vermont students,

and it is expected that this trend will continue in legislative sessions to come. Distance learning affords students access to courses that would otherwise be unavailable, either due to the lack of locally qualified teachers, or due to the cost of teaching. It is recommended that for purposes of calculating minimum and optimal average class sizes, the total number of students and teachers at all sites be considered in the calculation.

Existing State Board Rules Regarding Maximum Class Sizes

Relevant to the issue of *minimum* and *optimal* class sizes is the manner in which the State Board

of Education constrains *maximum* class sizes. Portions of SBE Rule 2120.8.2 are as follows:

2120.8.2 Staff

(b) At the elementary level, classes in grades K-3, when taken together, shall average fewer than 20 students per teacher. In grades 4-8, when taken together, classes shall average fewer than 25 students per teacher.

(c) At the secondary level, the total class rolls of an English language arts teacher shall not exceed 100 students. In other disciplines, class rolls shall not average more than 150 students per teacher, except where the specific nature of the teacher's assignment, such as in certain art, music, or physical education programs, is plainly adaptable to the teaching of greater numbers of students while meeting the educational goals of the program.

(e) Each school shall employ sufficient and qualified special education staff as are needed to identify students eligible for special education services and to implement each eligible student's Individual Education Plan and Section 504 plan.

The following chart provides numerical guidelines for minimum and optimal average range per grade cluster.

Grade Cluster	Instructional Area	Minimum Average per Grade Cluster	Optimal Average Range per Grade Cluster	State Board Maximum Ave. per Grade Cluster per SBE Rule 2120.8.2
K-2	All	14	14 -18	20
3-4	All	14	14 -18	20
5-6	All	14	14 -20	25
7-8	All (except PE)	14	14 -22	25
7-8	PE	14	14 -22	30
Grade Cluster	Instructional Area	Minimum Average per Course/ Content Area	Optimal Average per Course/ Content Area	Maximum Average per Course/Content Area per SBE Rule 2120.8.2
9-12	PE	20	20-25	30
9-12	Music	18	18-22	30
9-12	General/Other	18 ²	18-22	25 ¹
9-12	“Singleton” Courses	14 ²	14-22	25 ¹

Note: Above numbers may be altered due to irreconcilable space limitations and/or equipment needs.

¹ Not to exceed 150 total students per teacher (composition only).

² Remedial courses and AP courses may be exempt from this minimum average.