

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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Commissioner of Education

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 5, 2011

TO: District School Superintendents
Charter School Directors

FROM: Gerard Robinson 

SUBJECT: Revisions to Class Size Accountability for the 2011-12 School Year

Several revisions to class size accountability requirements are effective for 2011-12. The revisions include a change in the definition of core-curricula courses, flexibility for students enrolling after the October student membership survey, an increase in the maximum number of students in a voluntary prekindergarten (VPK) class, and an increase in the funding adjustment resulting from noncompliance with class size maximums.

Core-curricula Courses

Core-curricula courses, as defined by Section 14, Chapter 2011-55, Laws of Florida (L.O.F.), include:

- Courses in language arts/reading, mathematics, social studies, and science in prekindergarten through grade 3, excluding any extracurricular courses;
- Courses in grades 4 through 8 in subjects that are measured by state assessment at any grade level and courses required for middle school promotion, excluding any extracurricular courses;

- Courses in grades 9 through 12 in subjects that are measured by state assessment at any grade level and courses that are specifically identified by name in statute as required for high school graduation and that are not measured by state assessment, excluding any extracurricular courses;
- Exceptional student education courses; and
- English for Speakers of Other Languages courses.

The term “extracurricular courses” refers to all courses that are not defined as “core-curricula courses,” which may include, but are not limited to, physical education, fine arts, performing fine arts, career education, and courses that may result in college credit.

The list of core-curricula courses is available at:
http://www.fldoe.org/eias/dataweb/database_1112/appends.pdf

Flexibility with Class Size Maximums

As in 2010-11, the maximum number of students assigned to each teacher who is teaching core-curricula courses may not exceed 18 students for prekindergarten through grade 3, 22 students for grades 4 through 8, and 25 students for grades 9 through 12, as determined from the October student membership survey. Beginning in 2011-12, the maximum number of students in grades 4 through 8 who are assigned to a core-curricula high school course is 25.

Starting with the 2011-12 school year, Section 15 of Chapter 2011-55, L.O.F., authorizes flexibility for students enrolling after the October membership survey. A student who enrolls in a school after the October membership survey may be assigned to an existing class that temporarily exceeds the maximum number of students, if the district school board determines it to be impractical, educationally unsound, or disruptive to student learning not to assign the student to the class. If the district school board makes this determination, up to three students above the maximum may be assigned to a teacher in kindergarten through grade 3, and up to five students above the maximum may be assigned to a teacher in grades 4 through 12. The district school board must develop a plan that provides that the school will be in full compliance with class size maximums by the next October student membership survey.

Class Size Requirements for Voluntary Prekindergarten Programs

Beginning in 2011-12, the maximum number of students in each public school prekindergarten school-year class is increased from 18 students to 20 students, pursuant to Section 1002.63(7), F.S. The teaching credential requirements of instructors were not revised. Each school-year prekindergarten class in a public school composed of 4-11 students must have at least one prekindergarten instructor who meets each requirement in Section 1002.55(3)(c), F.S. Each school-year prekindergarten class composed of 12 or more students, must have, in addition to a prekindergarten instructor who meets the requirements of Section 1002.55(3)(c), F.S., at least one adult prekindergarten instructor who is not required to meet those requirements but who must meet each requirement of Section 1002.63(5), F.S.

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Funding Adjustment to the Class Size Categorical for Noncompliance in 2011-12

The reduction to the class size categorical for noncompliance with class size maximums in the 2011-12 school year includes the student's class size categorical funding amount and 100 percent of the Base Student Allocation (an increase from 50 percent in 2010-11) adjusted by the District Cost Differential, pursuant to Section 1003.03(4)(a), F.S. The class size reduction categorical funding factors provided in Specific Appropriation 69, Chapter 2011-69, L.O.F., are \$1,322.25 for kindergarten through grade 3, \$901.91 for grades 4 through 8, and \$904.09 for grades 9-12. The Base Student Allocation in the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) is \$3,479.22. Although the funding adjustment methodology for noncompliance includes the Base Student Allocation from the FEFP, the funding adjustment applies exclusively to the class size categorical allocation.

As in 2010-11, up to 25 percent of the reduction is reallocated to districts and charter schools that are in compliance. The remaining balance is restored to districts and charter schools that are not in compliance, but have submitted a plan to the Commissioner by February 15, 2012, explaining the actions the district or charter school will take to ensure compliance by October 2012. As in 2010-11, compliance is calculated using October membership survey data at the classroom level for traditional public schools as required by Section 1003.03(1), F.S., and at the school level for charter schools as required by Section 1002.33(16)(b)3., F.S.

Additional information about the class size reduction calculation is available at <http://www.fl DOE.org/classsize/>. If you have questions regarding this communication, please call Linda Champion at (850) 245-0406.

GR/cs

cc: District Finance Officers