

## Implementation of the Class Size Reduction Amendment in Charter Schools

### Background

Section 1 of Article IX of the Florida Constitution was amended in November 2002 to reduce the maximum class size in Florida's public schools. By the beginning of the 2010-2011 school year, the maximum number of students in core-curricula courses assigned to a teacher in each of the following three grade ranges shall be:

- 18 students in Prekindergarten through Grade 3
- 22 students in Grades 4 through 8
- 25 students in Grades 9 through 12

Core curricula courses for class size reduction are those belonging to the following areas: Mathematics, Language Arts/Reading, Science, Social Studies, Foreign Language, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Exceptional Student Education (ESE), and courses taught in traditional self-contained elementary school classrooms. Specific legal descriptions of these courses may be found in Section 1003.01(14), Florida Statutes. Courses outside the core curriculum (such as physical education classes or fine arts classes, for example) are not included.

The 2003 Florida Legislature enacted Senate Bill 30-A to implement provisions of the class size amendment, define the progress that must be made, and provide funding to implement the reduction of the average number of students in each classroom. The legislation specifies a two student per year reduction beginning with district averages during the 2003-2004 through 2005-2006 school years; a two student reduction in school averages during the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 school years; and a two student reduction in individual classrooms in 2008-2009 until class size goals are reached in 2010-2011. To assist in implementation of the amendment and determining whether or not districts and schools are in compliance with the legislation, data are collected through the Department of Education's Student Data Base to provide benchmark class size data, track changes over time, and be used for measuring progress toward the Constitutional requirements.

### Compliance with Class Size Reduction Requirements

#### 2003-2004 to 2005-2006

Progress toward class size reduction will be measured using average class size for grade groupings K-3, 4-8, and 9-12 at the district level during the 2003-2004, 2004-2005, and 2005-2006 school years. Charter schools are not included in the district averages for these school years since they are independently governed public schools.

#### 2006-2007 to 2007-2008

Beginning with the 2006-2007 school year, progress toward class size reduction will be measured at the school level for traditional public schools and for charter schools. Each school with average class sizes exceeding the constitutional maximums must reduce their average class size for each applicable grade grouping by two students per year or until their class size averages no longer exceed the constitutional maximums. To be in compliance, the school level average of a charter school must meet the class size caps by grade groups, i.e., 18 students in grades K-3; 22 students in grades 4-8; and 25 students in grades 9-12; or be reduced by two students at the

**school level** from the previous year. The October 2005 Survey 2 data will be used as the baseline for the charter school 2006-2007 school-level compliance measure.

Beginning in 2006-2007, charter schools that have not complied with the school-level average by **reducing the size of their classes by two students per year** (as determined by the school average obtained in the October 2006 Survey 2 data) or by **reaching the constitutional class size caps** will not be in compliance and will be subject to the transfer calculation specified in Section 1003.03(4), Florida Statutes. The Department will provide notification to charter schools that are not in compliance with the school level average following the October 2005 Survey 2 and the February 2006 Survey 3.

#### 2008-2009 to 2009-2010

During the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 school years, progress toward class size reduction will be measured at the **classroom level**. Class size counts will document classrooms in which the number of students exceeds the constitutional maximums and will include the number of students in excess of the constitutional maximums for each of these classes. Required progress for each charter school will be based on these counts.

### **Charter School Implementation of Class Size Reduction**

In August 2004, the Department released a Technical Assistance Paper (TAP) outlining class size reduction accountability planning requirements for charter schools. Every operating charter school is required to submit an annual Class Size Reduction Plan that describes in detail how the school will reach the constitutional maximum class size requirement by school year 2010-2011. The plan must provide information describing how the class size reduction funds will be used to move the school toward meeting the school-level class size reduction requirement. If the charter school is at the school-level cap and therefore in compliance, the plan should describe how the school will use the class size reduction dollars to maintain the school-level cap.

The Department has developed a Charter School Class Size Reduction Plan template for charter schools to use in developing plans to move toward meeting class size requirements and reporting essential class size information. The template is included as part of this technical assistance paper and available electronically at [http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/Information/Charter\\_Schools/](http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/Information/Charter_Schools/). Plans for the 2005–2006 school year must be submitted electronically to Karen Hines-Henry at [karen.hines@fldoe.org](mailto:karen.hines@fldoe.org) no later than **January 31, 2006**.

### **Uses of Class Size Reduction Funds**

The Class Size Reduction allocation was first established in 2003-2004 as an operating categorical that is calculated based on weighted FTE. Charter schools receive their proportionate share of class size reduction funding.

Charter schools that are not in compliance with the constitutional maximums may use the funds to defray expenses necessary “to reduce class size in any lawful manner.” Any lawful manner may include, for those charter schools that own, are building to own, or are purchasing facilities, expenditures for such mortgage payments, remodeling or construction as are necessary to expand its facilities to allow it to meet the class size requirements. For those charter schools that achieve, and then maintain, the maximum allowable class sizes prior to the 2010 deadline, the funds may be used for any lawful operational expenses, with priority given to utilization of the funds to increase teacher salaries.

### **Consequences for Charter Schools Not Meeting Class Size Requirements**

Consequences for charter schools that do not meet class size reduction requirements will begin in the 2006-2007 school year.

## Class Size Reduction Accountability and Compliance Requirements by School Year

SCHOOL YEAR	ACCOUNTABILITY LEVEL	CHARTER SCHOOL COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS
2003-2004	DISTRICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Charter school Class Size Data collected in October 2003 Survey 2</li> <li>● Charter school data <b>not included</b> in district average</li> <li>● Charter schools plan to meet compliance requirements</li> </ul>
2004-2005	DISTRICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Charter school class size data collected in October 2004 Survey 2</li> <li>● Charter school data <b>not included</b> in district average</li> <li>● Every charter school submits a Class Size Reduction Plan to DOE in November 2004</li> </ul>
2005-2006	DISTRICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Charter school Class Size Data collected in October 2005 Survey 2</li> <li>● Charter school data <b>not included</b> in district average</li> <li>● October 2005 Survey 2 data used as <b>baseline</b> for charter school 2006-2007 school-level compliance measure</li> <li>● DOE provides compliance data in December 2005 to charter schools and districts</li> <li>● Every operating charter school submits a Class Size Reduction Plan to DOE by January 31, 2006</li> <li>● DOE analyzes plans and provides assistance during February 2006 to charter schools not in compliance</li> <li>● Charter schools have opportunity to come into compliance in February 2006 Survey 3</li> <li>● DOE continues to monitor plans and provide assistance to enable schools to come into compliance in the 2006-2007 school year</li> </ul>
2006-2007	SCHOOL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Charter school Class Size Data collected in October 2006 Survey 2</li> <li>● Charter school data <b>not included</b> in district's school-level average</li> <li>● DOE provides compliance data in November 2006 to charter schools and districts</li> <li>● Every operating charter school submits a Class Size Reduction Plan to DOE by December 29, 2006</li> <li>● DOE analyzes plans and provides assistance during January 2007 to charter schools not in compliance</li> <li>● Charter schools have opportunity to come into compliance in February 2007 Survey 3</li> <li>● DOE continues to monitor plans and provide assistance to schools not in compliance</li> <li>● Consequences for districts and charter schools not in compliance</li> </ul>
2007-2008	SCHOOL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Charter school Class Size Data Collected in October 2007 Survey 2</li> <li>● Charter school data <b>not included</b> in district's school-level average</li> <li>● DOE provides compliance data in November 2007 to charter schools and districts</li> <li>● Every operating charter school submits a Class Size Reduction Plan to DOE by December 28, 2007</li> <li>● DOE analyzes plans and provides assistance during January 2008 to charter schools not in compliance</li> <li>● Charter schools have opportunity to come into compliance in February 2008 Survey 3</li> <li>● DOE continues to monitor plans and provide assistance to schools not in compliance</li> <li>● Consequences for districts and charter schools not in compliance</li> </ul>
2008-2009	CLASSROOM	<i>Requirements and Information will be Forthcoming</i>
2009-2010	CLASSROOM	<i>Requirements and Information will be Forthcoming</i>
2010-2011	FULL COMPLIANCE	<i>Requirements and Information will be Forthcoming</i>

## **Use of Co-Teaching**

On June 21, 2005, the State Board of Education established policy regarding the use of co-teaching to meet the requirements of the class size reduction amendment. Co-teaching is an instructional strategy whereby two or more teachers in a classroom share responsibility for planning, delivering, and evaluating instruction for all students in a class for the entire class period. While co-teaching may be a valuable strategy for delivering instruction, it is **not** an acceptable approach to meet the requirements of the Class Size Amendment for traditional public or for charter schools.

In the 2005-06 school year, co-teaching will be included in the calculation of **district** average class sizes; however, the percentage of classes taught using the co-teaching strategy in each district for each of the grade groupings may not increase over that calculated for 2004-2005. Beginning in 2006-2007, co-teaching in traditional public schools and charter schools **will not** be used in calculating compliance with the **school-level** averages.

Charter schools should continue to deliver instruction in a manner that best serves the educational needs of students. Charter schools using co-teaching as an instructional strategy to meet the unique learning needs of students, such as Montessori charter schools, will need to plan for the 2006-2007 school year to make certain that co-teaching is being used and reported within the confines of the class size requirements. Charter schools that are currently using co-teaching as a strategy for class size reduction should review other scheduling options and develop a plan that can be put in place beginning with the start of the 2006–2007 school year.

## **Questions and Answers**

### **1. What is meant by “average class size” for districts and schools?**

Average class size means the average number of students per class for a specified group of classes. Average class size is measured by adding the number of students assigned to each class in a specified group of classes and dividing this compiled number of students by the number of classes in the group.

### **2. What does “cap” mean?**

When used in reference to class size reduction, “cap” is the maximum number of students allowed in a core class by fall 2010 for each of the three grade ranges addressed in the Constitutional amendment.

### **3. How is a “class” defined for purposes of calculating class size?**

A class is identified as a core course/section combination with one or more teachers scheduled in a particular room, in a particular school, in a specified term, during a specific period and day of the week.

### **4. What does it mean for a charter school to be in compliance with class size reduction requirements?**

To be in compliance, charter school averages must meet the class size caps by grade grouping, i.e., 18 students in grades K-23; 22 students in grades 4-8; and 25 students in grades 9-12; or be reduced by two students at the school level from the previous year.

### **5. Will the DOE notify charter schools that are in compliance?**

Yes. The DOE will compile Charter School Class Size Reduction Data after October 2005 Survey 2 and after February 2006 Survey 3 and make both reports available to charter schools and districts.

**6. Do I need to submit a Class Size Reduction Plan if my charter school is in compliance?**

Yes. All charter schools must complete and submit the planning template each year according to the timelines outlined on page 2 of this TAP. In addition to requiring charter schools to identify strategies that will be used to meet class size requirements, it also provides a reporting mechanism for the use of class size reduction funds.

**7. May charter schools continue to use co-teachers as an instructional strategy?**

Charter schools should continue to deliver instruction in a manner that best serves the educational needs of students. Charter schools may use co-teaching within the confines of the class size reduction requirements and consistent with the methodology for correctly coding the appropriate delivery of instruction.

**9. Does the information in this TAP differ from the TAP that was released in August 2004? If so, why did it change?**

The current TAP has been expanded to more fully address issues and answer questions that have been asked since the August 2004 TAP was released. The requirement for every charter school to develop an annual class size reduction plan has not changed. However, the Department has developed a reporting template for charter schools to use in the 2005- 2006 school year to facilitate the collection of consistent information and coordination of technical assistance.

**10. When will consequences begin for charter schools that are not in compliance with class size requirements?**

Consequences for individual charter schools not in compliance will begin in the 2006-2007 school year.

**Additional Resources and Information**

Charter schools are encouraged to contact the MIS Department at the school district office for additional information on baseline class size data and the calculation of class size averages using FTE Survey data. For specific questions regarding data that cannot be answered locally, contact Lavan Dukes, Bureau Chief, Education Information and Accountability Services, (850) 245-0400, [lavan.dukes@fldoe.org](mailto:lavan.dukes@fldoe.org).

For additional information on funding, contact Glenda Todd, Office of Funding and Financial Reporting, (850) 245-0405, [glenda.todd@fldoe.org](mailto:glenda.todd@fldoe.org).

For questions and information on charter school class size reduction strategies and techniques, contact Karen Hines-Henry, Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice, (850) 245-0502, [karen.hines@fldoe.org](mailto:karen.hines@fldoe.org).

All Florida Department of Education paperless communications relating to class size are located at [www.firm.edu/doe/arm/class-size.htm](http://www.firm.edu/doe/arm/class-size.htm). Please refer to this site for all previous memoranda and information related to the class size reduction requirements.

Contact Information:  
Karen Hines-Henry  
850-245-0502  
[karen.hines@fldoe.org](mailto:karen.hines@fldoe.org)



Office of Independent  
Education and  
Parental Choice

December 2005

**Charter School Class Size Reduction Plan  
2005-2006**

**School Name:**

**District:**

**School Address:**

**Charter School Director:**

**Telephone Number:**

**Email Address:**

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<b>1. Is the charter school currently in compliance with class size reduction requirements as measured by October 2005 Survey 2 data?</b>

<b>2. If the school is not in compliance, what actions will be taken and adjustments to current classes made that will enable the school to come into compliance for the 2006-2007 school year?</b>

<b>3. How did the school use the CSR funds in School Year 2004-2005 to achieve goals for meeting class size reduction requirements? Were the funds used to assist the school in coming into compliance?</b>

<b>4. How many new teaching positions were added in School Year 2004-2005 with CSR funds for reducing class size? How was the remainder of the CSR funds used?</b>

<b>5. How is the school using CSR funds in the 2005-2006 school year? Are the funds being used to assist the school in coming into compliance?</b>

Charter School Administrator or Board Chairman signature is required. The district signature is to ensure the district is informed of the charter school plan and does not indicate approval.

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**Charter School Administrator**

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**District Superintendent or Designee**

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Please email completed form to [karen.hines@fldoe.org](mailto:karen.hines@fldoe.org) no later than January 31, 2006.