

SCHOOL BOARD OF POLK COUNTY

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July 6, 2010

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GAIL F. MCKINZIE, PH.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Dear Polk County Parents, Teachers, Educational Support Personnel, Administrators and Community Members-

Prior to the 2010-2011 school year, class size was measured initially as a district average and most recently on a per school average. The final phase of the Class Size Amendment will take effect during the 2010-11 school year. Article IX, Section 1(a) of the Florida Constitution requires that action must be taken once a class exceeds the cap by just one student. Classes in the areas of language arts, reading, math, science, social studies, and foreign languages cannot exceed 18 students in grades PreK-3, 22 students in grades 4-8 and 25 students in grades 9-12.

Polk County Public Schools must meet these caps at the individual class level or risk paying fines for every student enrolled over the caps set by the amendment.

How does this impact elementary school students?

- New classes may have to be formed and student placements will be adjusted across the grade level.
- Classes with more than 18 students (PreK-3) or 22 students (grades 4,5) may become classes with co-teachers and thus will be larger in size.
- Students may be placed in a classroom with multiple grades so that class size numbers are better controlled. For example, 4th and 5th grade students may be placed in the same classroom with one teacher.
- Substitute teachers may be employed to bring down class size numbers.
- Transfers of students will be restricted due to class size considerations.

How does this impact middle/high school students?

- Schedule changes will be made to stay within the class size caps.
- Class sections may be closed and not available.
- Multiple schedule changes could occur with fluctuations in enrollment at a school.
- Scheduling changes may occur throughout the school year.
- Use of flexible scheduling may be used to create additional class times.
- Use of Virtual School options will be encouraged.
- The delayed release of FCAT scores may have an impact on a student's schedule, prior to the opening of school.
- Substitute teachers may be employed to bring down class size numbers.
- Transfers of students will be restricted due to class size considerations.

*Polk County Schools-
an equal opportunity
institution for education
and employment*

The mission of Polk County Public Schools is to ensure rigorous, relevant learning experiences for our students that result in high achievement.

How does this impact teachers?

- Class/course assignments may be changed due to the enrollment needs.
- Classroom assignments may involve teachers floating to various classroom locations throughout the school day.
- Student schedules may be changed in order to balance the academic classes capped by the Class Size Amendment.
- Enrollment may be restricted in grade levels and/or academic classes/electives where there is no room.
- Teachers may volunteer to teach an additional period for a pay supplement (middle/high school).

How does this impact the schools in particular and the school district in general?

- Selected certified personnel such as media specialists, guidance counselors, assistant deans, and instructional coaches may be assigned teaching assignments to assist with class size reduction.
- Based on the latest student enrollment projections for 2010-2011, these additional teaching positions may not be sufficient to fully implement the class size amendment.
- The increased amount of class sections being scheduled per period may require the use of more portables on school campuses.
- Failure to comply with the constitutionally mandated class sizes will result in financial penalties to the school district.

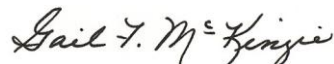
***PUBLIC HEARING** re: Class Size

July 27, 2010 – 5:00 PM Polk County School Board Office, 1915 S. Floral Ave., Bartow, Fla.

*Information will be provided on the school district's strategies to meet the class-by-class requirement.

It has never been more important than now for new students coming into the public school system for the 2010-2011 school year: **DON'T DELAY – ENROLL TODAY!** If you are new to Polk County Public Schools or you have relocated within Polk County, students need to be enrolled as soon as possible, so that the district's schools will be able to ascertain their staffing needs and be best prepared to handle the class requirements of our students. The School Board and I want to do everything possible to accommodate our student enrollment needs and meet the mandate of the Constitutional Class Size Amendment.

Sincerely,


Gail F. McKinzie, Ph.D.
Superintendent

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