

Title: Class Size Policy

CODE G16
Mandatory

It is the intent of the Windham Southeast Supervisory Union Board to comply with Sections 15 and 16 of Act 153 of 2010 requiring superintendents to work with school boards to develop policy guidelines for minimum and optimal average class sizes in regular and technical education classes. Class size guidelines will be used to inform annual decisions related to staffing and program offerings.

Implementation.

1. The Superintendent or his or her designee shall, in consultation with building principals, develop supervisory union wide class minimum, maximum and optimum average class size guidelines that take into account the instructional needs of specific elementary grade intervals and required and elective courses at the secondary level.
2. Class size guidelines in the supervisory union may vary as necessary to reflect differences among school districts due to geography and other factors, such as school size and programmatic needs.
3. The guidelines shall also ensure compliance with state or federal requirements related to matters such as student-teacher ratios, special education, technical education and English Language Learners.
4. The Superintendent shall report to the Board at least annually on the implementation of this policy, and shall include in his or her report information related to the use of the guidelines in determining actual class sizes and program offerings in the schools within the supervisory union.
5. This policy shall be posted on the supervisory union's website and forwarded to the Commissioner of Education by January 15, 2011.

Date Warned: May 23, 2012
Date Adopted August 20, 2012
Legal Reference(s):
Cross Reference:

BRATTLEBORO UNION HIGH SCHOOL
DISTRICT #6
Brattleboro, Windham County, Vermont

Supervisory Union-Wide 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.

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 to the course and equipment 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 receives a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). For this reason, *self-contained* special education classes should be excluded from the average minimum of 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.

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.

**WSESU SUPERVISORY UNION-WIDE MODEL CLASS-SIZE CHART
(MINIMUM AND OPTIMAL)
2011-2012**

Grade Cluster	Instructional Area	Minimum Average Per Grade Cluster	Optimal Average Range Per Grade Cluster	State Board Maximum Average Per Grade Cluster per SBE Rule 2120.8.2
K-2	All	16.4	11-26	20
3-4	All	17.1	12-21	20
5-6	All	16.7	9-24	25
7-8	All (except PE)	16.3	14-22	25
7-8	PE	16.3	14-22	30
Grade Cluster	Instructional Area	Minimum Average Per Grade Cluster	Optimal Average Range Per Grade Cluster	State Board Maximum Average Per Grade Cluster per SBE Rule 2120.8.2
9-12	Core Content	17.9	15-25	25
9-12	Non-Core Content	16.6	15-25	25
9-12	PE	17.0	15-30	30