

BOARD OF EDUCATION, SCHOOL DISTRICT OF CLAYTON

**Revision of Policy 6290 and Adoption of Regulation 6290: Class Size – First Reading
October 26, 2011**

Executive Summary

In 2010, the Missouri Supreme Court issued its opinion in *Turner v. Clayton* case. As a part of their decision, the Court held that school districts in the same or neighboring counties must accept student transfer requests from unaccredited school districts until those districts regain accreditation. The opinion further stated that accredited school districts could not refuse to accept these students, regardless of their capacity to accommodate the students. The case is now in the lower court. On Tuesday, Sept. 13, Judge David Vincent granted a joint motion for a continuance, postponing the start of the *Turner v. Clayton* trial until Jan. 23, 2012.

The 2010 Legislative session began with the expectation that “Turner fix” legislation would be passed, allowing districts to control the enrollment of nonresident students from unaccredited school districts “in accordance with a policy establishing class size.” Unfortunately, the session ended without a resolution to this issue.

Due to the potential impact from *Turner v. Clayton* on student enrollment, and the start of our Resource Allocation, the School District of Clayton is reviewing its Class Size Policy. In the past, the District has utilized acceptable **Target Numbers** for class size as indicated in the chart below.

<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>Current Target Numbers</u>
K-1	18
2-3	20
4-5	20-23
6-8	20-24
9-12	20-25

To best comply with the building enrollment constraints it is the goal of the District to be more specific in its ability to accommodate increases in future enrollment by establishing **Class Size Standards**.

Instruction**Class Size**

The Board of Education believes that class size is a significant variable in promoting a quality learning environment for children. Therefore, staffing guidelines need to be crafted with care and take into consideration a wide variety of factors. The decisions for class sizes will be based on the following criteria.

- Grade level of the class
- Number of students at the grade level or in the particular subject
- Number of special needs students
- Prior commitment of the students to a particular subject and level of proficiency
- Available classroom space in the building
- Curriculum expectations and instructional practices
- Fiscal consideration

The administrative procedure for staffing schools, including class sizes, will be annually reviewed and approved by the Board of Education during the budget setting process. The building principal and Director of Human Resources will work together prior to the budget setting process to determine the number of teachers and teacher interns needed in each school for the following year for recommendation to the Superintendent. An effort will be made to assign staff and teacher interns to classes in a manner that will minimize differences of instructional staff to pupils.

Instruction

Class Size

The Board of Education believes that ~~class size~~ **the number of students in each educational environment** is a significant variable in promoting a quality learning ~~environment~~ **experience** for ~~each children~~. Therefore, **enrollment and staffing guidelines decisions** need to be crafted with care and take into consideration a wide variety of factors. ~~The decisions for class sizes will be based on the following criteria.~~

- ~~• Grade level of the class~~
- ~~• Number of students at the grade level or in the particular subject~~
- ~~• Number of special needs students~~
- ~~• Prior commitment of the students to a particular subject and level of proficiency~~
- ~~• Available classroom space in the building~~
- ~~• Curriculum expectations and instructional practices~~
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Class size is defined as the number of students assigned to a particular classroom or course section. Class size standards are intended to provide parameters for class enrollments that take into consideration enrollment projections, State and/or Federal guidelines, diverse learning needs of students, number of adults available to assist with instruction, and facilities and spaces available in the schools for classrooms and special use rooms.

The Board has adopted the following standards for class size in general education classes within the District:

K-1	2-3	4-5	6-8	9-12
18	20	20	20	22

The Board acknowledges that circumstances may arise from time-to-time in certain school buildings within the District in which it may be necessary or desirable to exceed the class size standard due to variances that may exist in the number of students in different grade levels, lack of space in schools where student population in the attendance area of such school exceeds building capacity based upon these standards, prior course selection/curriculum commitments, and/or to implement a more flexible instructional delivery model. In such event, the superintendent shall consider the unique circumstance and assess the need for additional staffing on a case-by-case basis.

Under no circumstances, however, shall students be enrolled in a classroom meeting or exceeding the class size standard who are requesting a transfer from another school in the District or who are non-residents of the District.

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Instruction**Class Size****Overview**

The issue of class size and composition is complex. The District strives to provide the best environment to enhance student learning. The District recognizes that in order to provide a valuable education to students of the district, class sizes should be maintained at levels that are conducive to the most effective use of district teaching personnel and the practice of valuable teaching methods for the benefit of the students.

The District class size policy promotes:

- Class size as a significant variable in promoting a quality learning environment for children.
- Decisions based on grade level, number of students in level/subject, number of special needs students, prior commitment of students to a particular subject, available space, curriculum expectations and instructional practices, and fiscal considerations.
- Efforts made to assign staff to classes in a manner that will minimize differences in the ratio of instructional staff to students.

While it is difficult to identify a specific number of students which make for an optimum class size for each classroom, there are a number of factors that impact the learning environment for students and the determination of class size. Factors to be considered include:

Learner Needs

- Student achievement and classroom academic performance
- Nature of the learner
- Special needs, including special education enrollment
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Behavior issues
- Age/grade level of class
- Student interest and enrollment in elective courses

Curriculum Expectations

- Depth, breadth and individualized nature of the District's curriculum
- Differentiation of instruction required to meet learner needs
- Teaching methods and curriculum required by particular grade levels and/or subject matter

Ongoing Professional Development

- Provide professional development to enhance teachers’ knowledge of specific processes related to curriculum and pedagogy to foster student development and achievement.

Enrollment Projections

- Enrollment in sequential grade levels or grade level cohorts may vary in size from year to year

State and/or Federal Guidelines

Number of Adults Available to Assist with Instruction

Facilities and Space

- Spaces available in the schools for classrooms and special use rooms.
- Equipment available for a class

For purpose of this regulation, “class size” is defined as the number of students in the teacher’s classroom for whom the teacher is responsible. Class size standards are intended to provide class enrollments that take into consideration the factors listed above.

Grade Level	Standards
Elementary: K-1	18
Elementary: 2-3	20
Elementary: 4-5	20
Middle: 6-8	20
High School: 9-12	22

The educational needs of students will be the primary consideration in all class size decisions. In planning for a new school year and during the school year, principals will work with the District administration to meet any needs which may arise that impact providing the best possible learning environment. It is recognized that available space and fiscal responsibility could impact options for reducing class sizes.

ACTION STEPS

Planning for New School Year

Based upon enrollment projections and knowledge of students, principals will involve building staff in decisions about class configurations. Specialists will provide information about students’ needs. Parent input will be considered.

At the middle school and high school, student registration for courses may impact class size decisions. Classes under 10 will be brought to the attention of the District administration.

District administration will meet with principals to review anticipated staffing needs. Options will be considered in cases where class enrollments exceed or are below target numbers.

Beginning of School Year and During School Year

Enrollment shifts and/or students needs that impact class size and composition will be brought to the attention of District administration. Options will be considered in cases where class enrollments exceed or are below target numbers.

Annually

The District will compile data related to class size for each building. This annual review will ensure that critical attention is given to providing an optimal learning environment for students.

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