



Class Size Working Group Report

Presentation to School Committee
February 5, 2019



Class Size Working Group

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Data Review

- 2017-18 Enrollment and Class Size presentation to School Committee, October 10, 2017
- 2018-19 Enrollment and Class Size presentation to School Committee, December 4, 2018
- Spreadsheet of number of elementary classes, 2015-16 → 2018-19
- BPS Class Size/Enrollment Report for October 1, 2018
- BPS Class Size/Enrollment Report for December 1, 2018

Class Size Improvements

- In 2018-19 there are 82 classrooms in kindergarten through fourth grade, up from 76 in 2015-16.
- In 2018-19, only 7% of elementary classes exceed the class size guidelines.
 - In 2017-18, 35% of elementary classes exceeded the class size guidelines.
 - In 2016-17, 42% of elementary classes exceeded the class size guidelines.
- As a result of adding two grade 5 teachers in 2018-19, the average class size dropped from 26 students to 23 students.
- The average class size at the middle school and the high school has decreased in the last few years.

Challenges and Recommendations

- Overall Caseload
- Increasing Complexity of Student Needs
- Scheduling

Overall Caseload: Challenges

Caseload: total number of students served by an individual educator

- For middle school educators, total caseload is high (120+ students per team)
- Middle school core teachers (art, music, PE, health, tech engineering) have very high caseloads because they teach many sections
- For high school educators
 - 2012-13: Three HS teachers' caseloads exceeded 125
 - 2017-18: Twenty HS teachers' caseloads exceeded 125
 - 2018-19: Fourteen HS teachers' caseloads exceeded 125
- More challenging for effective social, emotional, and academic learning

Overall Caseload: Recommendations

- Continue to monitor class size and caseload and add FTE as budget allows so that teachers have fewer students overall, can know them better, and can give feedback more quickly.
- Add a fourth team to grades 6, 7, 8 by the time the middle school moves to the new building.

Increasing Complexity of Student Needs: Challenges

- At all grade levels, there are students with increasingly complex social, emotional, and learning needs
- Classroom teachers need more resources to support students
 - Such as aide so teacher can assist student when he returns from receiving services outside of classroom
- Increasing caseload and responsibilities for district's special educators, school psychologists, and guidance counselors
 - These professionals often fulfill roles that would be done by a team chair or social worker

Increasing Complexity of Student Needs: Recommendations

- Create a “class size feel” index based on complexity of student needs to balance individual classes and an educator’s caseload when possible.
- Hire classroom aides at the elementary so that the teacher can assist students who missed instruction while they are out of the classroom to receive services.
- Hire special education team chairs to oversee IEPs and better coordinate learning plans in support of classroom teachers and students.
- Hire more clinical staff (social workers, school adjustment counselors) to support students and consult with teachers to create the best learning experience for students.

Middle and High School Scheduling: Challenges

- Having teachers who work in multiple schools restricts when a class can be scheduled, sometimes resulting in class sizes that are too big or too small
- Current schedules have limited flexibility for advisory, interventions (RtI), support, or directed study type programming
- At the high school some intervention classes result in a de facto cohort of students with special learning needs in other classes

Middle and High School Scheduling: Recommendations

- Reconfiguration schedule committees should think creatively about ways the schedule can be designed to reduce class size and/or overall caseload per teacher.
- Consolidate traveling teachers to one building, when possible, to make it possible to schedule a class during any period of the day,
- Hire additional FTE so that a teacher does not have to be shared by more than one building.
- Look at creation of a more flexible scheduling model for interventions, advisory, support, directed study type programming.

Questions?