

# Addison Northwest Supervisory Union Policy

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**SECTION: INSTRUCTION**

**CODE: G14<sup>1</sup>**

**TITLE: CLASS SIZE**

It is the intent of the school boards of the Addison Northwest Supervisory Union 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<sup>2</sup> 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, when possible, 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.<sup>3</sup>

*Date(s) Warned: December, 2010; April, 2011*

*Date Adopted:*

*Date(s) Revised:*

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<sup>1</sup> Section 15 Act 153 of 2010 requires superintendents to "work with the school boards of the member districts to develop and implement policies regarding minimum and optimal average class sizes for regular and technical education classes. The policies may be supervisory union-wide, may be course or grade specific, and may reflect differences among school districts due to geography and other factors." 16 V.S.A. § 242(5).

<sup>2</sup> Act 153 does not require the inclusion of maximum average class sizes in this policy.

<sup>3</sup> Section 16 of Act 153 of 2010 requires that, by January 15, 2011, each supervisory union and member district board; 1) adopt minimum and optimal average class size policies, 2) post the policy on the supervisory union website, and 3) forward the policy to the Commissioner of Education.

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## CLASS SIZE PROCEDURES

ANWSU Class Size Chart (Minimum and Optimal)			
Grade Cluster	Instructional Area	Minimum Average per Grade Cluster	Optimal Average Range per Grade Cluster
K-2	All	15	15-18
3-4	All	15	15-20
5-6	All	15	15-20
7-8	All (except PE)	15	15-22
7-8	PE	15	15-22
Grade Cluster	Instructional Area	Minimum Average per Course/ Content Area	Optimal Average per Course/ Content Area
9-12	English Composition	18	18-22
9-12	Advanced Courses	12	12-18
9-12	Terminal Courses	12	12-18
9-12	PE	20	20-25
9-12	Personal Fitness	10	12-15
9-12	Music	18	18-22
9-12	CORE/Elective Courses	18	18-22
9-12	“Singleton” Courses	15	15-18

### K-8 Governing Rules:

1. The minimum and optimal enrollment numbers specified above is the average of all classes within the particular grade cluster
  - (a) **Example:** If there is one K class with 15 students, one K class with 17 students, one Grade 1 class with 19 students, one Grade 1 class with 18 students, one Grade 2 class with 20 students, and one Grade 2 class with 19 students, the average for this grade cluster would be 18, which is within the optimal average range for this grade cluster. ( $108/6 = 18$ )
  
2. Adding a class within a grade cluster or grade level will not be considered unless the maximum optimal average is exceeded for the corresponding grade cluster.
  
3. For purposes of considering class reductions in K-8 classrooms, the maximum number of empty seats per grade level shall be equal to the maximum optimal average for the corresponding grade cluster. The maximum number of empty seats is the sum of the difference between the maximum optimal average class-size for the grade cluster and the actual number of students for each class within each grade level. If the maximum number of seats is met or exceeded, the number of sections/classes shall be reduced.

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- (a) **Example:** If there are 85 grade 7 students and 5 grade 7 teachers, there would be approximately 25 empty seats (5 teachers x 22 student maximum = 110 total maximum; 110 total maximum - 85 actual students = 25), which would present consideration of a reduction in the number of grade 7 sections by one class resulting in a class-size average of 21 (vs 17).

## 9-12 Governing Rules:

1. The minimum, optimal, and maximum enrollment numbers specified above is the average of all classes within the particular content area (or course for singleton, new, advanced, terminal or core courses). This means that some classes or courses may exceed the stated maximum.
  - (a) **Example:** In Social Studies, if there are two US History classes with enrollments of 17 and 21; two World History classes with enrollments of 23 and 18; and three Elective classes with enrollments of 22, 20, and 16, then the average for this content area is 19.6, which is optimal for this content area.
2. If a course meets the minimum enrollment average enrollment stated in the chart, there is no guarantee that the course will continue to be offered. Courses and/or sections may be dropped as a result of program changes or budget restrictions as well as student registration outcomes.
3. Staffing levels during the budgeting process shall typically be done at or around the optimal level for each content area based on anticipated enrollment.
4. For purposes of considering class reductions, the maximum number of empty seats per core, elective or composition course shall not exceed the optimal average for the course. If the optimal number of empty seats is met or exceeded, the number of sections/classes shall be considered for reduction.
  - (a) **Example:** If there are 26 students enrolled in an English Composition course, one class would exceed the optimal range. Two classes would result in an average of 13 with 18 empty seats, which is within the guidelines. However, this does not guarantee that two classes will be offered – only that it is permissible. Other factors such as average class size for the content area and budgetary constraints will also impact the number of classes offered.
5. The Principal or his/her designee has the discretion of how many sections of each course to offer within each content area provided the overall staffing levels are within the budgetary constraints. However, Core Courses shall be given precedence over Elective Courses when it comes to section distribution.
6. The Board shall be informed, in advance, of the elimination of a course.
7. When two teachers co-teach one class (e.g., humanities), the class will be counted as two classes for the purpose of determining class size averages.
8. Proposed new courses must be reviewed by the Director of Curriculum prior to being submitted to the Principal for approval. The Principal's decision to approve or not approve a new course shall be final provided the provisions of this procedure are adhered to. Requests for new courses must be received by November 15<sup>th</sup>, with final approval prior to the development of the *Course of Studies* for the corresponding school year.
9. Increasing the number of classes offered in any course will not be considered unless the optimum average range is exceeded for the corresponding course.
10. In the event a singleton, new, advanced, or terminal course falls below the minimum, the course may be offered every-other year at the principal's discretion.

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11. In the event the enrollment for a singleton course falls below the minimum for two consecutive offerings, the course will be dropped from the offerings in the *Course of Studies*.
12. In general, courses offered for a subsequent school year will be published in the annual *Course of Studies*, with the understanding that some courses may not be offered due to insufficient enrollment, budgetary constraints, staffing changes, or other administrative reasons. Furthermore, it may not be possible to schedule students for all courses sought, nor are there guarantees that schedule changes may accommodate students' changes in course selections or levels once met.

## **Additional Standards:**

In addition to the class-size and course/content area enrollment parameters provided in the charts above, the following standards shall also apply:

1. **Special Education**: Federal law requires that each special education student receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). For this reason, special education services and programming are excluded from the average minimum and optimal class size ranges or course/content area enrollment parameters contained herein.
2. **English Language Learners (ELL)**: Because of the unique characteristics of English language learners, English as a Second Language (ESL) services are excluded from the average minimum and optimal class size calculations.
3. **Distance Learning Classes (such as VT Virtual Learning Collaborative)**: For purposes of calculating minimum and optimal average class sizes for distance learning classes, the total number of students and teachers at all sites shall be considered in the calculation.
4. **Alternative Education (e.g., Walden)**: Due to the specialized programming and nature of alternative education, these programs shall be excluded from the average class size or course/content area enrollment parameters contained herein.
5. **Drivers Education**: In order to comply with the Vermont Department of Education curriculum requirements which calls for a minimum number of classroom hours and driving times, Drivers Education shall be excluded from the average class size or course/content area enrollment parameters contained herein.

## **Definitions:**

For purposes of this procedure and corresponding policy, the following definitions shall apply to 9-12 Courses:

- **Class** – A teaching section (i.e., group of students being taught by a teacher during the same period/block) at the 9-12 level
- **Course** – All classes with the same title as listed within the Program of Studies (e.g., Grade 9 English, Earth Science, Geometry A, U.S. History, etc.)
- **Content Area** – A group of courses within a specific licensing endorsement area (e.g., English, Social Studies, Science, Math, Art, Music, French, Spanish, PE, etc.)

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- Grade Level – The individual grade at the secondary level (e.g., grade 9, 10, 11, 12.)
- Singleton Course – Course in which only one class is offered
- New Course – A course in its first or second year of existence
- Advanced Course – Advanced placement, honors, or other advanced level course
- Core Course – A specific course that is required of all students in which students do not have a choice of options available other than level (e.g., Health, English 9, Integrated Math I, U.S. History, PE, etc.)
- Elective Course – Courses students may take in a variety of content areas in order to meet the credit requirements for graduation.
- Terminal Course – A course that is the most advanced course in a particular sequence of academically oriented courses. For example, in the French language sequence beginning with French 1 and ending with Advanced Placement French, the terminal course would be Advanced Placement French.

The parameters contained herein shall be used in budget development based on projected student enrollment. Actual enrollments and/or budgetary constraints may cause the maximum enrollment parameters to be exceeded.