



State Board of Education

Marva Johnson, *Chair*
John R. Padget, *Vice Chair*
Members
Gary Chartrand
Tom Grady
Rebecca Fishman Lipsey
Michael Olenick
Andy Tuck

Pam Stewart
Commissioner of Education

November 13, 2015

The Honorable John Legg, Chair
Committee on Education Pre-K – 12
The Florida Senate
316 Senate Office Building
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100

Dear Chairman Legg:

I am in receipt of your letter dated October 19, 2015, in which you requested information related to compliance with class size requirements and schools of choice.

As authorized in section 1002.31(5), Florida Statutes, the calculation for compliance with maximum class size is calculated at the school average for a school or program that is a public school of choice. District-operated public schools of choice include district-designated public schools of choice, magnet schools and alternative schools. Attached is a schedule that presents for each district the total number of district-operated schools, the number of district-operated schools of choice and the relative percentages for 2013-14 and 2014-15. This schedule shows that, in 2013-14, 59 districts identified 1,193 district-operated schools of choice. There were 33 districts that identified more than one-third of their schools as a public school of choice. In 2014-15, 1,861 district-operated schools of choice in 58 districts were identified. There were 37 districts that identified more than one-third of their schools as a public school of choice.

On October 4, 2013, the department informed school districts of the legislative changes that measured class size compliance at the school average for schools of choice. This communication is attached. Because no statutory definition of schools of choice currently exists, school districts determine which of their schools are designated as schools of choice. This information is reported during each student membership survey using data elements created for this purpose and is stored on the student staff data base.

Although you requested information regarding the number of classroom teaching positions that have been eliminated due to the calculation of compliance at the school average for public schools of choice, information is not currently available to answer this question. Because staffing decisions at schools are influenced by many factors, including class sizes, the state database does not isolate a single factor as the cause of a staffing change.

The Honorable John Legg, Chair
November 13, 2015
Page Two

Information regarding class size compliance for public schools of choice measured at the class level has not yet been calculated. Programming changes are required to our student and staff databases in order to produce this calculation. Those changes, which are currently being made, will allow us to recalculate class size data to generate the information necessary to calculate the additional compliance funding adjustments that would result. We plan to provide this information by November 30, 2015.

I look forward to working with you on this issue.

Sincerely,



Pam Stewart
Commissioner

PS/me

Attachments

cc: President Andy Gardiner

Senator Don Gaetz, Chair, Education Appropriations Subcommittee

Senator Bill Montford, Vice Chair, Education Appropriations Subcommittee

Marva Johnson, Chair, State Board of Education

John R. Padget, Vice Chair, State Board of Education

Gary Chartrand, State Board of Education

Tom Grady, State Board of Education

Rebecca Fishman Lipsey, State Board of Education

Michael Olenick, State Board of Education

Andy Tuck, State Board of Education