



CLASS SIZE MATTERS

CLASS SIZE INCREASES IN GRADES 4-8

Ontario's previous investments in smaller classes has had a positive impact. However, grades 4-8 have the highest class sizes in the Kindergarten to grade 12 system. There is no pedagogical rationale for this. In the 2017 Annual Report, the Ontario Auditor General noted the difference in class sizes saying, "It means that not all students will be benefitting from smaller class sizes."

In 2017, ETFO negotiated improvements to funding for grades 4-8 class size. As part of that agreement the parties recognized that due to geographic challenges and to better meet the needs of a diverse population some boards needed to maintain class size averages for grades 4-8 below 24.5.

However, in March of 2019, the Ontario government announced its plan to increase the funded class-size average in grades 4-8 from 23.84 students to 24.5. This change applied to all boards as of September 2019, regardless of whether or not they had been exempted in the past.

The effects of these changes are felt differently from board to board, leading to the loss of almost 1,000 teaching positions in Ontario's elementary schools.

Larger classes mean less one-on-one support for each student. This change will disproportionately impact students with special needs.

If there's one thing that kids need to be successful, it's one-on-one time with their teacher. This has been supported by research and parents get it too. Smaller classes mean better outcomes for students.

Frontline educators identify small classes as the most important factor in their ability to work individually with students and meet their diverse needs. Smaller classes improve student behaviour, peer relationships and increase student engagement and achievement in the early grades. Smaller classes will help to aggressive behaviour that contributes to violence in our schools.

The Importance of Class Structure

Ontario has a policy of integrating students with unique learning needs into regular classrooms. The policy recognizes that our public schools have the responsibility to support the education and growth of all children. The inclusion model is based on the notion that children with special learning needs do better in general settings with their peers. All children can learn and reach their full potential, given the opportunity and effective support and resources.

To effectively support this policy and enable classroom educators to meet the individual needs of their diverse students, class sizes should be adjusted to reflect the number of students with special needs in each class.



Why Are Class Size Caps Needed?

Class size averages allow schools to have some classes with 35 students and other classes with 20 students. This imbalance creates learning environments that are not supportive of students' individual learning needs and it's difficult for all teachers to provide the same professional, high-quality learning opportunities.

With large classes, or even a range of class sizes, as a result of averaging, students cannot receive the

individualized instruction that they need and deserve. While a few select classes and a group of students may benefit, overall larger classes disadvantage learning in our schools.

Equally important is that with a large group of students there are increased risks to the health and safety of students and educators. In the end, the learning and working environment in our schools is negatively impacted.



What you can do:

Contact your MPP and ask them to oppose class size increases and advocate for smaller classes and class size caps. BuildingBetterSchools.ca/class

Show your support for a positive learning environment by wearing ETFO's Class Size Matters button.

Speak to your friends and family members about the need to reduce class sizes, set caps on class size for grades 4-8 and for the government to invest in public education.