



**SECTION: PROGRAMS**

**POLICY: 126**

**TITLE: CLASS SIZES**

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## **ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES**

District Policy 126 (“Class Size”) provides direction on the topic of class size in general. The following guidelines provide a more detailed description of how class size decisions are actually made, annually, in the Wissahickon School District.

### **Elementary Grades (K-5)**

Every year, the administration shall monitor enrollment data throughout the spring and summer to construct general education homeroom classes for the upcoming school year at each of the district’s elementary schools that have the highest number of students possible in each class, up to the following upper limit guidelines:

<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>Upper Limit</b>
Kindergarten	22
Grade 1	22
Grade 2	26
Grade 3	26
Grade 4	27
Grade 5	27

The above figures are very similar to those in nearby, like districts (sometimes slightly higher, sometimes slightly lower). There is a substantial body of research regarding class size. The District’s approach to class size is created with this research in mind attempting to find the right balance between competing research-based conclusions (e.g., class size does matter but incremental changes by one or two in either direction may or may not make a big difference). Other key aspects of the application of this policy are as follows:

1. The above figures are treated as “upper limit guidelines” for class sizes subject to the caveats that follow here. In all cases, a degree of flexibility is necessary to account for all possible relevant variables (e.g. the number of available classrooms large enough to be homerooms in a given school). Unless extenuating circumstances exist, class sizes are equalized as much as possible within a school’s given grade level.

2. These figures are applied to homeroom class sizes (new as of 2019-20 school year). The district shall no longer “subtract” students from the official class size count if the student is removed from the class for special education instruction. Rather, now, every student who is assigned to the homeroom counts for the official class size calculation of that homeroom.
3. If, after class lists are distributed (in late August—normally, five business days before the first day of school for students), there is a net increase in the enrollment in a given grade that puts one or more classes in that grade over the above upper limit guidelines, then a number of possible remedies are available. Options include the hiring of an additional teacher (creating another homeroom in that grade), an itinerant teacher (to be shared between classes in the grade), or a classroom assistant (again, to be shared within that grade). Many factors are considered before district leadership decides on a course of action in these cases, but it is rare that the first option (an additional class) is chosen after the school year starts. Re-mixing students once routines are established and relationships are formed requires an extraordinary amount of time and care and usually has more drawbacks than positives. The most common response involves hiring a classroom assistant to float between classrooms but extenuating circumstances such as time of year, available space, and the ELL/Special Education mix all contribute to the eventual decision.
4. There is often much movement, both ways, in the official registration numbers between the first day of school and the state’s official enrollment count point (the tenth day of school). Students register, unexpectedly, and students who are on district rolls do not show up (again, unexpectedly). As a result, no decisions on remedies shall be made until the tenth day “official” count is available (or after, should the enrollment increase occur later).
5. It is the District’s standard practice to monitor constantly enrollment developments throughout the school year, not just at the beginning, and to be ready to react in whatever way is necessary to ensure a high quality instructional experience for all of our K-5 students.

### **Secondary Grades (6-12)**

Similar to the decision-making process for the elementary grades, the administration shall monitor enrollment data throughout the spring and summer to construct general education building schedules and individual class selections for the upcoming school year at the secondary level. However, secondary class creation is much different, given the distributed nature of middle school and high school schedules, so class size “target ranges” are used rather than upper limit guidelines, as follows:

<b>Middle School</b>	<b>Target Ranges</b>
Core Classes	23-28
Unified Arts Classes	23-28
Band/Strings	25-45
Chorus	25-85

<b>High School</b>	<b>Target Ranges</b>
Core Classes	23-28
Science Labs*	20-24
AP Capstone	8-20
TV Lab*	10-15
Family Consumer Sci.*	10-18
Art*	10-16
Technology Ed.*	10-20
World Language Level, IV and AP	5-28
*Max class size due to lab set up areas and seating.	

Whenever possible, a concerted effort is made to keep all classes, but especially academic level classes toward the lower end of the above target ranges.

It is recognized that student schedules at the secondary level are fluid throughout the course of the summer and school year depending on many variables. Therefore, a great degree of flexibility is required to make a building schedule work within the above class size target ranges. There will be times when the target range is missed. All effort is made to minimize the number of such times, and in any event, every spring, the Board shall review a list of proposed classes for the coming school year that the administration is recommending be run but that are below the applicable class size targets noted above.