

Quality statement

Class size audit

Provenance

Institutional environment, mandate, independence and other context

In 2003 the NSW Government undertook to reduce government school class sizes in the early primary years to a state-wide average of:

- 20 for Kindergarten students
- 22 for Year 1 students, and
- 24 for Year 2 students.

A class size audit is conducted for all primary classes each year.

The goals of the class size reduction program were achieved in 2007. Annual monitoring continues following support from principals and regional offices. Class size guidelines are set out in the DoE/NSW TF industrial agreement 2012 to 2016, as well as being embedded in the Staffing Agreement with the NSW Teachers Federation. Class size data is made available to NSW government primary schools for use in reporting to parents and communities.

Relevance

Scope, data items, standards, data users

Data is collected from all NSW Government primary, infant and central (primary grades only) schools. Schools for Specific Purposes (SSP), Distance Education Centres (DEC) and Intensive English Centres (IEC) are not included.

Support students who are enrolled in mainstream classes are counted as mainstream students and therefore contribute to the total class number. Support students enrolled in support classes are counted as support students and are allocated the support code ('SP'). Although support student data is collected, it is not uploaded into our Class Size data cube.

Data items reported are enrolments; class name; class type – regular or composite; scholastic year.

Stakeholders include: members of the department and schools via School Planning and Reporting Online (SPaRO).

Timeliness

Timing, time to release, frequency

The data is collected in March each year.

Data which has been checked and verified is provided to the data owner – Director, Early Learning & Primary Education. Individual school data is also provided to principal networks for individual schools for preparation of their annual school reports. NSW summary data from this collection is also provided to the OECD for publication in Education at a Glance.

Accuracy

Errors, potential errors, validation, revisions

Response rates: All schools within scope must provide returns. School principals sign off on the accuracy of returns.

Validation: Schools within scope use an online data verification and sign-off system to check and correct data downloaded for them from the department's Enrolment Registration Number system (ERN). The completed data is tested against a number of validation checks and schools may be contacted to confirm or correct their data. Checks include:

- Significant variation (>5 or < 5) in enrolments by grade against February enrolments
- Missing schools, invalid out-of-scope schools, invalid grades, mix of support and regular grades in a class, and duplicate grades within a class
- Abnormally small or large classes.

Coherence

Internal consistency, comparability with other resources

The average class size for each grade is calculated by taking the average size of all classes that a child from that grade is in (including composite/multi-stage classes).

NSW data has been collected for over 10 years with the same definition. The process of online collection has been in place since 2007. Ease of online checking, data validation updates and schools' awareness have progressively improved data quality.

Interpretability

Presentation, information about the data

Data is able to be interpreted consistently for primary school classes (unlike secondary classes) as students generally remain with a single class group for learning activities.

Accuracy

Errors, potential errors, validation, revisions

Data is reported at state level through the Class Size fact sheet on the **NSW Education Datahub**, and at school level through annual schools reports.

For more information contact

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Attachment A

Agreement on the staffing of NSW public schools between the NSW Department of Education and the NSW Teachers Federation (2012-2016)

14. Class sizes will be planned generally on the following basis and will have regard to the needs of the school.

Primary schools and primary departments of central schools

K-2: The state wide average class sizes are 20 in Kindergarten, 22 in Year 1, and 24 in Year 2.

Years 3-6: No class need exceed 30 students.

High schools and secondary departments of central schools

Years 7-10: The principal, in consultation with staff, is responsible for determining actual class sizes on the basis of the curriculum needs of the school, student needs, community expectations, and the expertise of the teachers. In the case of vocational education, principals also take account of work health and safety issues when forming classes. No class need exceed 30 students.

Practical classes Years 7-10: When forming classes, principals of secondary schools also take into account the following advice:

- the organisation of industrial technology in Years 7-10, and Year 7 visual arts on the basis of no class need exceed 20 students
- the organisation of food technology and textiles technology in Years 7-10 on the basis of no class need exceed 24 students and
- the organisation of technology (mandatory) classes in Years 7-8 and design and technology (elective) classes in Years 7-10 on the basis of no class need exceed 22 students.

Years 11-12: No class need exceed 24 students.

Other schools

Class sizes not listed above will be determined by the principal in accordance with formulae current as at the commencement of this agreement.