

SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

POLICY FAMILY	ORGANIZATION FOR INSTRUCTION	525
<p><u>525.</u></p> <p>Class Size</p> <p>Adopted 6/17/98 Amended 4/15/08 6/4/08</p>	<p>There has been substantial research over time regarding the impact of class size on students. Some research indicates that there is a correlation between class size and student achievement (e.g., the Tennessee Study, 1985). Other studies suggest that “on task” behavior diminishes as class size grows (University of London, Institute of Education, 2008). Still other studies indicate that improving student achievement is more complex than simple adjustments to class size at any given school (Douglas D. Ready, 2008). In Shrewsbury, parents and teachers believe that small class size is an important component of high quality instruction for their children.</p> <p>It is also the view of the Shrewsbury School Committee that smaller class size supports higher student achievement, more productive classroom environments, and the enhanced ability of teachers to meet the needs of all students. In Shrewsbury, where nearly all students are included in regular education classrooms, small class size is important if teachers are to effectively meet the learning requirements represented in the total and diverse student population. Additionally the Shrewsbury Public Schools has high expectations for students and teachers. With small class size, it is more likely that high expectations can be met.</p> <p>The suggested class sizes in this policy do not reflect the ideal. Indeed, some studies indicate that class size in the primary grades should be in the range of 13-17 in order to promote maximum student achievement (Tennessee Study). At the same time, Shrewsbury must temper its support for small class size with the reality of school space and fiscal limitations. The class size guidelines below represent a balanced approach to the issue. The class size recommendations for each level are planning and staffing guidelines. The exact size of classes in any given building will depend upon the availability of physical space, financial resources in a given year, the grade level of the students, as well as a number of other circumstances (e.g., students with special needs, English language learners, etc).</p> <p>When class size substantially exceeds the guidelines in a given grade level or school, the principal shall review the issue with the Superintendent. Strategies such as redeploying instructional aides, and hiring an additional instructional aide shall all be considered (refer to policy 217).</p>	<p>Continued on next page.</p>

Class Size Guidelines

Preschool

Children ages 3-5 in need of special education attend the preschool program along with their typically developing peers (the parents of typically developing students pay tuition). In accordance with Massachusetts special education law and regulations, class size shall not exceed 20 with one teacher and one aide, and with no more than 5 students with disabilities. If the number of students with disabilities is 6 or 7 students, then class size may not exceed 15, with one teacher and one aide. (Massachusetts Department of Education, 603 CMR 28.07)

The recommended class size for preschool is 15, with 8 typically developing students and 7 students with disabilities.

Kindergarten

Children enter kindergarten with a wide variety of home and preschool experiences. There are significant differences in their physiological, social, emotional, and intellectual development. The greater the diversity in the classroom, the greater the need for individualized attention and instruction. The professional literature suggests that the greatest benefit of small class sizes is in the early grades. Additionally, the research indicates that the benefits of small class size in the early years are maintained in later grades.

The recommended class size for kindergarten is 17-19 students.

Elementary Grades

Students in the elementary grades exhibit great variety in their personal experiences, aptitudes, learning styles, and interests. The curriculum is both challenging and multifaceted at this level; the district has set high standards for children's academic growth in reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies. Small class size is particularly critical in the primary grades; younger children require considerable amounts of individual attention. Elementary classrooms in Shrewsbury are "workshops" of student activity. Instructional practices such as inquiry-based science and process writing require a high degree of interaction between students and the teacher. Class size is also a determinant in the teacher's ability to design curriculum and instruction for the full range of student learning styles and abilities in the class.

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The recommended class size for grades one and two is 20-22 students.
The recommended class size for grades three and four is 22-24 students.

Middle School

Early adolescence is a critical period in human development. It is a time characterized by tremendous internal and external change, and marks the beginning of the transition from childhood to adulthood. Supporting youngsters' social, emotional, physiological, and intellectual development in the middle years requires particular instructional strategies and grouping configurations. Middle school students learn best in settings that incorporate cooperative learning, interdisciplinary studies, experiential learning, and student-centered investigations and research. Additionally, students at this level begin to expand their program of study to include a variety of laboratory-oriented courses that require close teacher supervision.

The recommended class size for grades 5 to 8 is 22-24.

High School

Students in high school distribute themselves in a wide variety of course offerings with several levels of expectations and work requirements. General guidelines for certain academic courses may be established. At the same time, enrollment patterns, program requirements, and safety concerns make class size guidelines variable at the high school level. For example, advanced placement courses may have small enrollments because of the limited student population eligible. Specialized programs for students with learning difficulties also require limited student enrollment. In addition, science and other technology courses require small class sizes due to the student safety concerns.

The recommended class size at the high school is 18-20.

*calculating all classes except physical education and music.