

CLASS SIZE IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DEFINITION: Number and percentage of public school classes with fewer than 21 children, with 21-26 children, with 27-33 children, and more than 33 children. Average class size reflects the total number of students in each class divided by the total number of classes.

SIGNIFICANCE

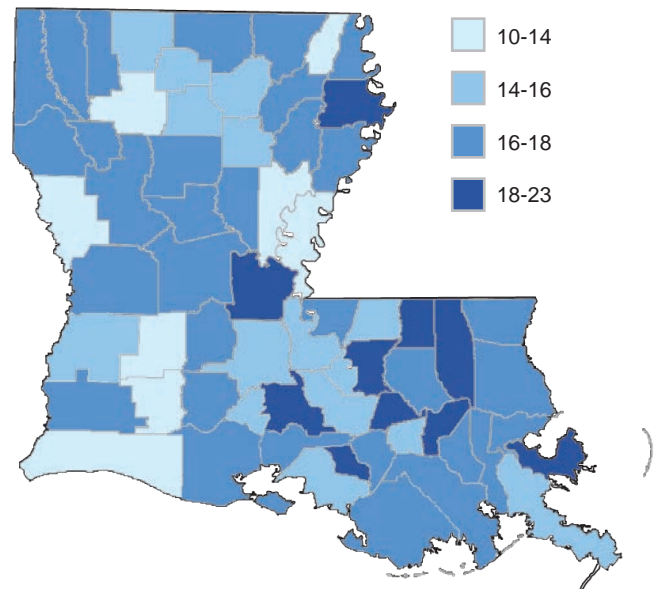
Smaller classes have been linked to a number of positive outcomes, including higher student achievement, earlier identification of learning disabilities, and reductions in the number of disciplinary actions. One of the largest studies of the effects of class size, Tennessee’s STAR experiment, found that students who were in small classes for kindergarten through third grade saw significant improvements in mathematics and reading. The STAR experiment also showed that children in small classes were less likely to be retained.¹

Subsequent research has shown that the positive impact of smaller classes is even greater for non-white and inner-city students, making class size reduction a promising strategy for reducing the achievement gap.² While researchers have not identified an ideal class size, the existing literature indicates that reductions in class size must get below 20 students in order to achieve a significant benefit. Thus, reducing class size from 29 to 24 does not produce measurable gains in student achievement, though reducing class size from 20 to 15 will likely result in measurable gains. While it is not clear exactly how small class size impacts student performance, many researchers believe that small class size allows teachers more time to provide students with individualized attention, use multiple teaching strategies, and develop stronger relationships with students and their parents.³

Acknowledging the impact of class size, BESE limits class size to 26 students for kindergarten through third grade and 33 students for grades 4 through 12. In the 2006 school year, the only parish in which the average class size exceeded 20 was St. Bernard. A majority of classes in 56 parishes had 20 or fewer students. Statewide, 59% of classes had 20 or fewer students in the 2006 school year, a dramatic improvement from the 1994 school year, when that figure was just 31%.⁴ In keeping with BESE policy, classes with more than 33 students were relatively uncommon, constituting just 2% of classes statewide.

DATA NOTE

Data for East Baton Rouge Parish includes the districts of East Baton Rouge, City of Baker, and City of Zachary. Data for Orleans Parish includes the district of Orleans Parish and RSD-UNO New Beginnings. Data



AVERAGE CLASS SIZE
(PUBLIC SCHOOLS) (NUMBER) — SY 2006

for Ouachita Parish includes the districts of Ouachita and City of Monroe. Data for Washington Parish includes the districts of Washington and City of Bogalusa. Data for Lab Schools and all other charters are not included in the parish-level data, but are included in the statewide data.

RATE CALCULATION

$100 * (\text{number of public school classes with fewer than 21 Children} \div \text{total number of public school classes})$

$100 * (\text{number of public school classes with 21-26 children} \div \text{total number of public school classes})$

$100 * (\text{number of public school classes with 27-33 children} \div \text{total number of public school classes})$

$100 * (\text{number of public school classes with more than 33 children} \div \text{total number of public school classes})$

$100 * (\text{total number of students in each class} \div \text{total number of classes})$

DATA SOURCE: Department of Education, Division of Planning, Analysis, and Information Resources, by special request

¹ Ivor Pritchard, "Reducing Class Size, What Do We Know?," U.S. Department of Education, 1999, retrieved from www.ed.gov/ on 6/1/2009.

² *ibid.*

³ *ibid.*

⁴ Louisiana Department of Education 2006-2007 Louisiana State Education Progress Report, (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana Department of Education, 2009), 10, retrieved from www.doe.state.la.us/ on 6/1/2009.

CLASS SIZE IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SY 2006	PERCENTAGE OF CLASSES BY CLASS SIZE				AVERAGE CLASS SIZE
	<21 %	21-26 %	27-33 %	>33 %	#
LOUISIANA	59	30	10	2	17
Acadia	63	29	7	1	17
Allen	78	18	4	0	14
Ascension	44	36	16	3	20
Assumption	60	33	7	0	17
Avoyelles	43	34	21	2	20
Beauregard	63	30	6	1	15
Bienville	79	17	1	3	14
Bossier	51	34	14	1	18
Caddo	59	28	11	2	17
Calcasieu	56	35	8	1	18
Caldwell	76	19	3	2	16
Cameron	89	9	1	1	10
Catahoula	81	17	2	1	14
Claiborne	79	18	1	2	15
Concordia	72	23	4	1	14
De Soto	56	31	11	2	17
East Baton Rouge	47	34	16	3	19
East Carroll	81	16	2	0	17
East Feliciana	68	26	4	2	16
Evangeline	65	30	4	1	17
Franklin	63	29	6	2	17
Grant	50	41	7	1	18
Iberia	63	30	7	0	17
Iberville	73	22	5	0	15
Jackson	69	26	4	1	16
Jefferson	53	24	18	4	18
Jefferson Davis	73	19	7	1	14
Lafayette	69	22	8	1	15
Lafourche	54	37	9	0	18
La Salle	66	30	2	1	17
Lincoln	69	26	5	1	16
Livingston	50	34	15	1	17
Madison	46	38	14	2	19
Morehouse	55	38	8	0	18
Natchitoches	58	29	10	2	17
Orleans	66	24	8	3	17
Ouachita	59	36	5	0	16
Plaquemines	75	21	4	1	15
Pointe Coupee	64	29	6	1	16
Rapides	61	27	12	1	17
Red River	55	41	4	0	17
Richland	55	34	9	1	18
Sabine	86	10	2	1	13
St. Bernard	29	28	33	10	23
St. Charles	71	23	5	1	17
St. Helena	42	49	8	2	19
St. James	75	20	4	0	16
St. John the Baptist	45	41	13	1	19
St. Landry	62	31	7	0	16
St. Martin	45	41	13	1	19
St. Mary	69	24	6	1	16
St. Tammany	59	27	13	1	17
Tangipahoa	48	35	16	1	19
Tensas	66	29	5	1	17
Terrebonne	58	28	12	2	18
Union	62	28	9	0	17
Vermilion	62	31	7	0	18
Vernon	55	35	8	2	17
Washington	60	32	7	1	17
Webster	58	32	9	1	17
West Baton Rouge	71	22	7	0	15
West Carroll	76	16	6	1	13
West Feliciana	55	42	3	0	18
Winn	60	33	5	1	17