

CLASS SIZES

32. What is the policy and how will it be implemented in FY06?

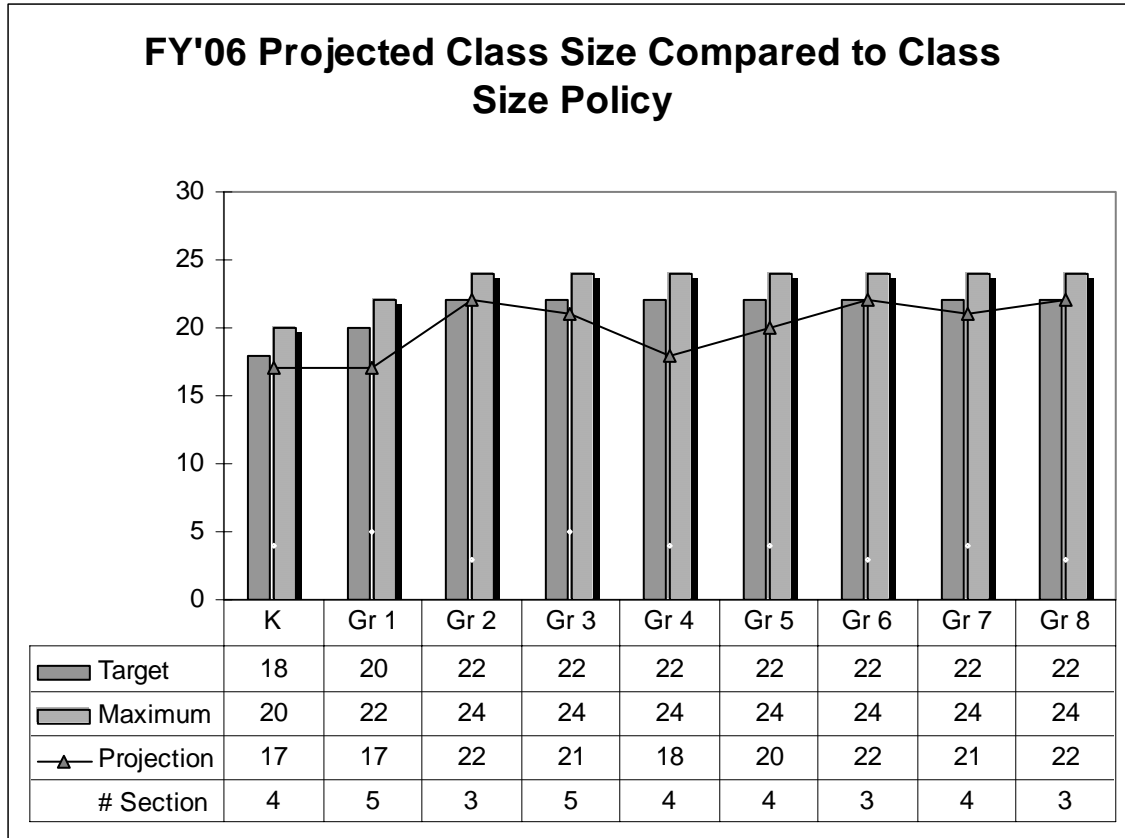
The class size policy gives a target number of students per section in each grade as well as a maximum number of students per section in each grade. These numbers are:

Grade	Target size	Maximum size
K	18	20
1	20	22
2 to 8	22	24

The School Committee implements this policy by attempting to manage the number of sections in each grade so as to be as close to target size as possible. We are pleased that next year's base budget allows us to continue to follow this practice. There is no guarantee that all sections will be at target or below, but a high priority is placed on achieving this. In determining the number of sections at each grade, the School Committee acknowledges that small classes are beneficial and are highly valued by the community, but cannot be viewed as an isolated factor. The specific needs of the mix of individuals in a given grade's cohort, the skills of the various teachers, and the additional support resources available to a section (such as classroom assistants) are taken into account in an effort to provide a high quality educational setting that will serve all students. In addition, the School Committee acknowledges that in a small school like Lincoln, there will be some unavoidable fluctuations year to year that do not warrant a response of adding or dropping a section. Taken to the extreme, such an attempt to "hit the numbers as closely as possible all the time" would lead to a hire/fire syndrome with our professional teaching staff which would not serve the district well.

33. How many sections will there be and what are the projected class sizes?

The plan for the number of sections and class sizes that is supported by the FY06 base budget proposal is:



34. What happens if enrollment changes after the budget is adopted?

The number of sections proposed for the Budget is determined in October, nearly a full year before the next school year begins. These recommendations are based on projected enrollment, analysis of historical enrollment trends, the specific needs of a particular student cohort and the experience level of the faculty at a particular grade level.

Throughout the course of the year the Superintendent monitors the enrollment data and periodically updates the School Committee. Toward the end of the school year, the most current enrollment data is reviewed with the School Committee to see if there are any shifts that would adversely affect class sizes in any grade. If there are such changes, a range of options can be pursued. In the event that enrollment in a particular grade shifts slightly, we will consider shifting existing resources, such as classroom assistants, to that grade to provide additional support. We will also review the impact that this shift may have and if necessary we will hire additional support, at the expense of other budgeted discretionary expenditures. If the enrollment shifts more significantly and we need to open an additional classroom at a particular grade, the Superintendent will make this recommendation to the School Committee. The Finance Committee holds a reserve fund

to handle unbudgeted contingencies that any town operating unit might encounter. The Finance Committee has informed the School Committee that they would consider a request for additional funds from these reserves to be appropriate if it was for the purpose of adding a section, to maintain our class size policy.