

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



JIM HORNE
Commissioner of Education



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MEMORANDUM

TO: District School Superintendents and Educational Facilities Planners

FROM: Jerry R. Martin

SUBJECT: Class Size Caps, FISH, Educational Plant Surveys

The 2003-A Special Session of the Florida Legislature passed legislation to enact the class size amendment pursuant to Article IX of the State Constitution. The amendment and the recent legislation impact the facilities inventory used for facilities planning in the educational plant survey process, the design of new schools or additions to schools, and the construction of new schools.

Florida Inventory of School Houses (FISH)

Classrooms affected by constitutional caps, along with their associated design codes, are listed below:

Standard Classrooms

- 00001 K-3 (§236.687, F.S., 1998 Florida Maximum Class Size Study Act, General Appropriation 19A)
- 00002 Kindergarten
- 00003 Primary
- 00004 Intermediate
- 00020 Middle
- 00035 Senior High

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Open Plan Classrooms (incremented in standard class size units)

- 00015 Elementary
- 00031 Middle
- 00050 Senior High

Skills Labs

- 00006 Elementary computer (only affects those above the maximum allowed in SREF)
- 00007 Elementary foreign language (only affects those above the maximum allowed in SREF)
- 00008 Elementary mathematics (only affects those above the maximum allowed in SREF)
- 00009 Elementary social studies (only affects those above the maximum allowed in SREF)
- 00010 Elementary language arts (only affects those above the maximum allowed in SREF)
- 00022 Middle computer
- 00023 Middle foreign language
- 00024 Middle mathematics
- 00025 Middle social studies
- 00026 Middle language arts
- 00037 Senior High computer
- 00038 Senior High foreign language
- 00039 Senior High mathematics
- 00040 Senior High social studies
- 00041 Senior High language arts

Science

- 00027 Middle demonstration
- 00028 Middle general
- 00042 Senior High demonstration
- 00043 Senior High general
- 00044 Senior High biology
- 00045 Senior High physics
- 00046 Senior High chemistry

Exceptional Student Education (ESE)

Existing FISH caps for all exceptional student classrooms are consistent with maximum class size mandates in §1003.03, F.S.

State Requirements for Educational Facilities (SREF) is being modified to address the standards mandated for recommended student stations in all core-curricula classrooms. Because all FISH spaces are validated for compliance with SREF, some minor adjustments, other than class size caps, may have occurred as a result of standard relational and package edits in the electronic data base. We recommend that you verify all spaces and make any necessary corrections to FISH as soon as possible.

Facilities Planning/Surveys and Design

The changes to FISH resulted in a significant adjustment in student stations at schools throughout the state. Because student stations were significantly reduced in most schools, existing educational plant surveys are no longer valid instruments for determining construction and remodeling needs.

We recommend that district directors of facilities immediately update educational plant surveys. The on-line educational plant survey can easily be completed by district staff. Office of Educational Facilities (OEF) staff are available to provide technical assistance to districts in completing the automated educational plant survey update.

Prior to updating the educational plant survey, we recommend that districts carefully review FISH data for accuracy. All educational plant survey recommendations are based on FISH data; therefore, an accurate facilities inventory is an essential baseline for developing a practicable educational plant survey.

Also, educational plant surveys are subject to specifications described in approved facilities lists; therefore, districts will need to adopt new facilities lists that are consistent with the class size mandates. We have composed new facilities lists based on the class size requirements; they are available online at <http://www.firn.edu/doe/edfacil/fish/faclist.htm>.

Projects funded from CO&DS require a survey recommendation and inclusion on an approved project priority list (PPL) for expenditure. We recommend that districts carefully consider which projects are included on a PPL. These projects must meet the most stringent requirements; so careful attention must be paid to details for use of these funds.

Facilities Construction

The educational plant survey process will, in some cases, result in constructing, leasing, or purchasing of relocatable classrooms to meet instructional needs. While acquiring relocatable classrooms is one option to meet class size reduction mandates, each school board must decide what options, as alternatives to acquiring additional facilities, are practical choices to employ for achieving class size limits required by law.

For planning, design, and construction purposes, single classroom size should be determined using the current design standards (the maximum number of students allowed by the constitutional amendment and the current space allowance per student based on SREF standards). Size of space allowance flexibility exists with the option of the school district to include additional space within the classroom for teacher planning and storage. This design standard shall be effective as of the date of this memorandum.

The effective date for designing classrooms to meet the class size reduction standards is August 15, 2003. All architectural contracts executed after August 15, 2003, must meet requirements established by the amendment and statutes.

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The small school requirement in §1013.43 Florida Statutes, has been repealed by SB-30-A. In order to reduce the anonymity of students in large schools, we encourage schools to function as smaller entities by using the school-within-a-school model or any other innovative approach to functionally operate large schools as smaller units.

The maximum cost per student station, although adjusted to create a new base year, was not increased.

If you have questions regarding the educational plant survey please contact Dr. Charles L. Wooten at (850) 245-9299 or SUNCOM 205-9299.

RM/cwi

cc: Sandra Keen
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