**PROCEDURE: THE MINIMUM AND OPTIMAL DISTRICT-WIDE AVERAGE CLASS SIZE**

**CODE: D06P**

**IMPLEMENTATION:**

These guidelines for minimum and optimum average class-size were done in consultation with building principals/director. The guidelines consider the instructional needs of specific elementary grade intervals as well as required and elective courses at the secondary level.

Class-size guidelines may vary as necessary to reflect differences among buildings due to geography and other factors, such as school size and programmatic needs.

These guidelines ensure compliance with state and/or federal requirements.

The Superintendent shall report to the Board at least annually on the implementation of the Class Size policy, and shall include in his/her report information related to the use of the guidelines in determining actual class sizes and program offerings in the schools within the District.

**GUIDELINES:**

To provide quality instruction and consistency across all grade levels, the following standards will be considered in developing class-size.

**Technical Education Class-Size Differentials:** Career and Technical Education (CTE) class size is primarily driven by factors related to course expectations, safety considerations, and space constraints. These factors, which drive maximum class size, may also impact minimum class size decisions, and must be evaluated in the context specific to the course and equipment under consideration.

**Grade-Specific Considerations:** Best practices regarding minimum and optimal class sizes vary to some degree by grade level.

**Course-Specific Considerations:** The following are space-related factors that should be considered when fashioning class-size requirements:

1. Laboratory space requires adequate room for both group work and individual work, and must support the prescribed program of studies;
2. Kindergarten classrooms usually include discrete areas for gross motor physical activity and for activity with learning materials. A minimum of 50 square feet per student is desirable;
3. Art classrooms also require somewhat greater than normal per student space, and also have to accommodate adequate ventilation. A minimum of 50 square feet per student is desirable; and
4. Science laboratories require learning stations outfitted with gas, water, and electricity, and must afford students significant space for movement and for proper safety precautions during laboratory investigations. A minimum of 50 square feet per student is desirable.

**Multi-Grade Classrooms:** Multi-grade classrooms are covered by these procedures in the same manner as single-grade classrooms.

**Special Education:** Federal law requires that each special education student receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). For this reason, self-contained special education classes should be excluded from the average minimum and optimal class-size calculations.

**Physical Education:** Physical education class sizes must be designed with the unique pedagogical, equipment-related, and space-related needs of that discipline in mind. This approach is indispensable to the effective delivery of the learning standards of this content area, and to the effective assessment of the degree of success of their delivery. Adaptive physical education classes are excluded from the average minimum and optimal class-size calculations.

**English Language Learners (ELL):** Incorporation of ELL students into minimum and optimal average class sizes are inherently difficult. As with students on IEPs and 504 Plans, this is partly because of the small numbers of such students, and the inherently individualized nature of their educational programs. Strategies designed to immerse ELL students with their English-speaking peers and emerging emphasis on co-teaching practices lend themselves to achieving desirable minimum and optimal average class sizes. Because of the unique characteristics of English language learners, they should generally be excluded from the average minimum and optimal class-size calculations if they are in a self-contained classroom.

**Distance Learning Classes:** The expanded availability of distance learning for Vermont students will afford students access to courses that would otherwise be unavailable, either due to the lack of locally qualified teachers or due to the cost of teaching. It is recommended that for purposes of calculating minimum and optimal average class sizes, the total number of students and teachers at all sites be considered in the calculation.