



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Report

Status of the Primary Class Size Reduction Program

JANUARY 12, 2005

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Preface

Item 146, paragraph C.8. of the 2004 Appropriation Act (Chapter 4, 2004 Acts of Assembly, Special Session I) directs the Superintendent of Public Instruction to provide a report on the status of the Primary Class Size Reduction program to the Governor and the Chairmen of the House Appropriations, House Education, Senate Finance, and Senate Education and Health Committees annually, prior to the commencement of the General Assembly session.

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Executive Summary

Pursuant to the requirements of Item 146, paragraph C.8. of the 2004 Appropriation Act (Chapter 4, 2004 Acts of Assembly, Special Session I), the Department of Education collected information from school divisions on the reduced student-to-teacher ratios and maximum class sizes for grades kindergarten through three for all schools eligible for funding under the program. In order to receive state incentive funding for reduced class sizes, school divisions must meet student-to-teacher ratio and class size requirements in each school eligible to participate in the program, based on free lunch eligibility.

The objective of the Primary Class Size Reduction program is to provide additional funding as an incentive for school divisions to reduce class sizes below the required class sizes established in the Standards of Quality (SOQ) for grades kindergarten through three.

As of the date of this report, 809 of 812 schools met the requirements for state funding based on the lowest student-to-teacher ratio for which they qualified. State payments to school divisions for the Primary Class Size Reduction program in fiscal year 2005 are estimated to be \$65,893,705.

BACKGROUND:***The Primary Class Size Reduction Program Began in the 1994-96 Biennium***

- “Primary” grades that are funded as part of this initiative include kindergarten through grade three (K-3).
- This incentive-based program began in the 1994-1996 biennium; the first appropriation of \$38.7 million was made in fiscal year 1995.
- The objective of the program was to provide additional funding as an “incentive” for school divisions to reduce class sizes in grades kindergarten through three below the required class sizes established in the Standards of Quality (SOQ).
- The program was initiated as a result of the recommendations of the Commission on Educational Opportunities for All Virginians.
- The SOQ for the 1994-1996 biennium required division-wide student-to-teacher ratios of 25 to 1 with no class being larger than 30 students. At the kindergarten level, an aide was required in any class that was larger than 25 students.

BACKGROUND:***Voluntary Participation Success Led to Expansion of the Primary Class Size Reduction Program and Ultimately a Reduction in the SOQ Student-To-Teacher Ratios***

- The 1998 General Assembly made significant changes to the Primary Class Size Reduction program for the 1998-2000 biennium based on widespread participation in the program.
 - First, the program was expanded to make it available to all schools with grades kindergarten through three.
 - Second, the range of student-to-teacher ratios was expanded from three levels to eight levels to soften the transition from one tier to the next and to include a tier for all schools regardless of the free lunch rate.
 - Third, program expansion also further reduced the student-to-teacher ratios and maximum class size caps that were available to schools.
- The 1999 General Assembly recognized that all schools were participating in the program at a reduced class size of at least 24 to 1, and passed legislation to reduce the SOQ required student-to-teacher ratio to 24 to 1 in kindergarten through third grades. This change was effective July 1, 2000.
 - This action eliminated the highest student-to-teacher ratio of 24 to 1 in the incentive program.
 - As a result, schools with free lunch eligibility rates below 16 percent are not eligible for a class size reduction below the SOQ standard of 24 to 1.

CURRENTLY:***Current Program Funding Provides Approximately \$65 Million Annually to Reduce Primary Class Sizes***

- HB 1500/SB 700 as introduced includes \$65.8 million in fiscal year 2005 and \$66.2 million in fiscal year 2006 for the Primary Class Size Reduction program.
- Key components of this incentive-based funding include:
 - The available funds provide the state share of the additional cost to reduce class sizes below the levels required by the SOQ for most schools with grades kindergarten through three.
 - The state share of payment is based on the incremental cost of providing the lower class sizes based on the lower of the division average per pupil cost of all divisions, or the actual division per pupil cost.
 - Localities are required to provide a match for the state share of payment based on the composite index.
 - Funding for the applicable ratio and maximum class size requirements are calculated at the school level based on the percent of students eligible for free lunch at each school. Schools with free lunch eligibility percentages of 16 percent or less are not eligible for funding.
 - For fiscal year 2005, the per pupil incremental cost ranges from \$18 to \$1,304 depending on the applicable ratio and class size level.
- The table in **Appendix A** shows the program's reduced student-to-teacher ratios and maximum class sizes available to each school based on its free lunch eligibility rate.

Implementation, Data Collection, and Compliance for Fiscal Year 2005

- School divisions were required to provide data to the Department of Education demonstrating the reduced ratios and maximum class sizes at participating schools. This information was due to the department by October 15, 2004.
- Consistent with the process for determining compliance with other staffing ratios, school divisions are allowed to count the time spent by resource teachers (e.g., art, music, physical education, etc.) in kindergarten through grade three when calculating the student-to-teacher ratios for this initiative.
- As stipulated in the SOQ statute, special education teachers cannot be counted toward meeting the reduced ratios.
- Information for this report is based on certified fall membership and staffing data for fiscal year 2005.

Implementation, Data Collection, and Compliance for Fiscal Year 2005

- As of the date of this report, 809 schools met the requirements for state funding based on the lowest student-to-teacher ratio for which they qualified. These schools participated at the following ratios for fiscal year 2005:

K-3 Student-to-Teacher Ratio	
<i>Student to Teacher Ratio</i>	<i>Number of Schools</i>
14 to 1 Ratio	32
15 to 1 Ratio	12
16 to 1 Ratio	27
17 to 1 Ratio	89
18 to 1 Ratio	113
19 to 1 Ratio	256
20 to 1 Ratio	280
Total	809

- If local circumstances (e.g., lack of classroom space) do not permit participation at the qualifying ratio for a particular school, divisions may elect to have eligible schools participate at a higher ratio, with a commensurate reduction of state and required local funds.
- One school failed to qualify at the lowest eligible student-teacher ratio. The following school did not meet the requirements for the lowest student-to-teacher ratio for which they qualified, but did accept reduced funding for a higher ratio.

Accepted Reduced Funding	
<i>Division</i>	<i>School</i>
Alexandria City Public Schools	Mount Vernon Elementary

Implementation, Data Collection, and Compliance for Fiscal Year 2005

- If local circumstances do not permit participation at the qualifying ratio for a particular school, divisions may elect to opt-out of program participation for the school year. In fiscal year 2005, two schools opted out of the program.

Opted Out of Program	
<i>Division</i>	<i>School</i>
Prince William County Public Schools	Mary Williams Elementary
Prince William County Public Schools	Suella G. Ellis Elementary

- Ten divisions reported hiring additional classroom teachers or resource teachers in order to comply with the lowest eligible ratio for some of their schools. In addition, divisions likely hired teachers and arranged students in advance of the school year in anticipation of the requirements of this program.

Hired Additional Staff	
<i>Division</i>	<i>School</i>
Buchanan County Public Schools	Twin Valley Elementary
Franklin City Public Schools	S.P. Morton Elementary
Henrico County Public Schools	Laburnum Elementary
Henrico County Public Schools	Johnson Elementary
Manassas City Public Schools	Weems Elementary
Northumberland County Public Schools	Northumberland Elementary
Prince William County Public Schools	River Oaks Elementary
Prince William County Public Schools	Triangle Elementary
Stafford County Public Schools	Falmouth Elementary
Stafford County Public Schools	Rocky Run Elementary

***Implementation, Data Collection, and Compliance for
Fiscal Year 2005***

- Alternatively, if local circumstances do not permit participation at the qualifying ratio for all grade levels for a particular school, divisions may elect to have eligible schools participate only for certain grade levels, with a commensurate reduction of state and required local funds. For fiscal year 2005, the following two schools elected to eliminate certain grade levels to meet eligibility requirements.

Eliminated Grade Levels	
<i>Division</i>	<i>School</i>
Prince William County Public Schools	J.W. Alvey Elementary
Prince William County Public Schools	Pennington School

- As provided in the Appropriation Act, a waiver may be granted to divisions for the maximum class size requirement in a school that has only one class in an affected grade level. For fiscal year 2005, such a waiver has been requested for one school:

Requested Waiver for Maximum Class Size Requirement	
<i>Division</i>	<i>School</i>
Lee County Public Schools	Ewing Elementary

- **Appendix B** shows the estimated state funding entitlements by school division for fiscal year 2005.

Budget Language Excerpt from HB 1500/SB 700

8. Primary Class Size Payments

- a. An additional payment estimated at **\$65,893,705** the first year and **\$66,232,129** the second year from the general fund shall be disbursed by the Department of Education as an incentive payment for reducing class sizes in the primary grades.
- b. The Department of Education shall calculate the payment based on the incremental cost of providing the lower class sizes based on the lower of the division average per pupil cost of all divisions or the actual division per pupil cost.
- c. Localities are required to provide a match for these funds based on the composite index of local ability-to-pay.
- d. By October 15 of each year school divisions must provide data to the Department of Education that each participating school has a September 30 pupil/teacher ratio in grades K through 3 that meet the following criteria:

Qualifying School Percentage of Students Approved Eligible for Free Lunch	Grades K-3 School Ratio	Maximum Individual Class Size
16% but less than 30%	20 to 1	25
30% but less than 45%	19 to 1	24
45% but less than 55%	18 to 1	23
55% but less than 65%	17 to 1	22
65% but less than 70%	16 to 1	21
70% but less than 75%	15 to 1	20
75% or more	14 to 1	19

- e. School divisions may elect to have eligible schools participate at a higher ratio, or only in a portion of grades kindergarten through three, with a commensurate reduction of state and required local funds, if local conditions do not permit participation at the established ratio and/or maximum individual class size. Special education teachers shall not be counted towards meeting these required pupil/teacher ratios in grades kindergarten through three.
- f. The Superintendent of Public Instruction may grant waivers to school divisions for the class size requirement in schools that have only one class in an affected grade level in a primary school.
- g. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall provide a report on the status of the reduction in primary class sizes to the Governor and the Chairmen of the House Appropriations, House Education, Senate Finance, and Senate Education and Health Committees annually, prior to the commencement of the General Assembly session.

K-3 Primary Class Size Reduction Program Payment

Estimated FY 2005 State Payments Based On HB 1500/SB 700

Division #	Division	Number of Participating Schools	Estimated FY 2005 Payments
001	ACCOMACK	6	\$ 727,066
002	ALBEMARLE	8	\$ 189,684
003	ALLEGHANY	4	\$ 168,416
004	AMELIA	1	\$ 100,619
005	AMHERST	6	\$ 319,689
006	APPOMATTOX	2	\$ 222,034
007	ARLINGTON	16	\$ 431,383
008	AUGUSTA	10	\$ 553,931
009	BATH	2	\$ 13,588
010	BEDFORD	10	\$ 334,632
011	BLAND	2	\$ 39,687
012	BOTETOURT	3	\$ 87,840
013	BRUNSWICK	4	\$ 342,458
014	BUCHANAN	6	\$ 529,082
015	BUCKINGHAM	3	\$ 216,509
016	CAMPBELL	7	\$ 468,830
017	CAROLINE	4	\$ 342,232
018	CARROLL	8	\$ 263,584
019	CHARLES CITY	1	\$ 71,434
020	CHARLOTTE	4	\$ 254,849
021	CHESTERFIELD	13	\$ 1,431,543
022	CLARKE	0	\$ -
023	CRAIG	1	\$ 42,573
024	CULPEPER	4	\$ 324,456
025	CUMBERLAND	1	\$ 161,083
026	DICKENSON	5	\$ 264,870
027	DINWIDDIE	4	\$ 272,432
028	ESSEX	1	\$ 141,847
029	FAIRFAX	46	\$ 1,486,177
030	FAUQUIER	4	\$ 138,399
031	FLOYD	4	\$ 143,241
032	FLUVANNA	2	\$ 61,905
033	FRANKLIN	11	\$ 488,548
034	FREDERICK	4	\$ 240,998
035	GILES	3	\$ 178,188
036	GLOUCESTER	5	\$ 288,380
037	GOOCHLAND	1	\$ 9,346
038	GRAYSON	7	\$ 140,926
039	GREENE	3	\$ 181,512

K-3 Primary Class Size Reduction Program Payment

Estimated FY 2005 State Payments Based On HB 1500/SB 700

Division #	Division	Number of Participating Schools	Estimated FY 2005 Payments
040	GREENSVILLE	1	\$ 217,622
041	HALIFAX	11	\$ 684,621
042	HANOVER	5	\$ 267,676
043	HENRICO	27	\$ 1,597,707
044	HENRY	11	\$ 757,867
045	HIGHLAND	1	\$ -
046	ISLE OF WIGHT	4	\$ 360,830
047	JAMES CITY	7	\$ 326,336
048	KING GEORGE	3	\$ 176,417
049	KING QUEEN	2	\$ 89,447
050	KING WILLIAM	2	\$ 120,261
051	LANCASTER	1	\$ 76,480
052	LEE	9	\$ 484,491
053	LOUDOUN	4	\$ 105,181
054	LOUISA	3	\$ 213,182
055	LUNENBURG	2	\$ 233,751
056	MADISON	2	\$ 75,943
057	MATHEWS	1	\$ 60,626
058	MECKLENBURG	7	\$ 538,269
059	MIDDLESEX	1	\$ 45,565
060	MONTGOMERY	12	\$ 637,747
062	NELSON	2	\$ 125,353
063	NEW KENT	0	\$ -
065	NORTHAMPTON	2	\$ 265,607
066	NORTHUMBERLAND	1	\$ 76,717
067	NOTTOWAY	3	\$ 286,083
068	ORANGE	4	\$ 209,817
069	PAGE	5	\$ 267,764
070	PATRICK	5	\$ 179,603
071	PITTSYLVANIA	10	\$ 802,856
072	POWHATAN	0	\$ -
073	PRINCE EDWARD	1	\$ 377,834
074	PRINCE GEORGE	5	\$ 423,323
075	PRINCE WILLIAM	26	\$ 2,019,123
077	PULASKI	6	\$ 326,255
078	RAPPAHANNOCK	0	\$ -
079	RICHMOND	1	\$ 98,101
080	ROANOKE	5	\$ 196,306
081	ROCKBRIDGE	4	\$ 112,681

K-3 Primary Class Size Reduction Program Payment

Estimated FY 2005 State Payments Based On HB 1500/SB 700

Division #	Division	Number of Participating Schools	Estimated FY 2005 Payments
082	ROCKINGHAM	10	\$ 484,873
083	RUSSELL	8	\$ 388,339
084	SCOTT	7	\$ 419,216
085	SHENANDOAH	2	\$ 254,320
086	SMYTH	7	\$ 484,740
087	SOUTHAMPTON	4	\$ 193,672
088	SPOTSYLVANIA	7	\$ 539,777
089	STAFFORD	5	\$ 575,013
090	SURRY	1	\$ 31,753
091	SUSSEX	3	\$ 168,969
092	TAZEWELL	9	\$ 811,437
093	WARREN	4	\$ 292,297
094	WASHINGTON	7	\$ 543,305
095	WESTMORELAND	2	\$ 187,526
096	WISE	6	\$ 832,612
097	WYTHE	6	\$ 356,671
098	YORK	2	\$ 129,431
101	ALEXANDRIA	13	\$ 386,844
102	BRISTOL	4	\$ 158,721
103	BUENA VISTA	2	\$ 76,884
104	CHARLOTTESVILLE	6	\$ 289,490
106	COLONIAL HEIGHTS	2	\$ 79,042
107	COVINGTON	1	\$ 68,033
108	DANVILLE	10	\$ 1,098,602
109	FALLS CHURCH	0	\$ -
110	FREDERICKSBURG	1	\$ 137,574
111	GALAX	1	\$ 129,998
112	HAMPTON	21	\$ 2,128,272
113	HARRISONBURG	4	\$ 325,795
114	HOPEWELL	3	\$ 638,501
115	LYNCHBURG	11	\$ 928,991
116	MARTINSVILLE	3	\$ 318,175
117	NEWPORT NEWS	28	\$ 4,382,284
118	NORFOLK	35	\$ 5,766,820
119	NORTON	1	\$ 46,875
120	PETERSBURG	7	\$ 1,032,702
121	PORTSMOUTH	14	\$ 2,432,989
122	RADFORD	1	\$ 141,533
123	RICHMOND CITY	32	\$ 3,985,561

K-3 Primary Class Size Reduction Program Payment

Estimated FY 2005 State Payments Based On HB 1500/SB 700

Division #	Division	Number of Participating Schools	Estimated FY 2005 Payments
124	ROANOKE CITY	19	\$ 1,857,010
126	STAUNTON	4	\$ 202,601
127	SUFFOLK	11	\$ 1,127,738
128	VIRGINIA BEACH	33	\$ 3,406,671
130	WAYNESBORO	4	\$ 331,634
131	WILLIAMSBURG	7	\$ 15,091
132	WINCHESTER	4	\$ 198,253
134	FAIRFAX CITY	7	\$ 1,946
135	FRANKLIN CITY	1	\$ 180,514
136	CHESAPEAKE	13	\$ 1,779,450
137	LEXINGTON	0	\$ -
138	EMPORIA	1	\$ 102,645
139	SALEM	2	\$ 95,631
140	BEDFORD CITY	6	\$ 71,529
142	POQUOSON	0	\$ -
143	MANASSAS	5	\$ 392,429
144	MANASSAS PARK	1	\$ 169,212
202	COLONIAL BEACH	1	\$ 2,301
207	WEST POINT	0	\$ -
*TOTAL:		831	\$ 65,693,705

* In the case of jointly-operated school divisions, participating schools are counted in both localities where funding is received by both localities based on each division's per pupil amount, composite index, and number of students attending the affected school. There are **812** unique schools participating for fiscal year 2005.