

CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

*Research & Development*

Development and Educational Improvement

**Information Search: *Class Size Reduction*  
*And*  
*Team Teaching***

for  
Dr. Kay Carl  
Assistant Superintendent  
Elementary Education  
CSR and Team Teaching

## **Information Search:**

### **Request:**

Search the Internet for information about class size reduction and its benefits. Specifically:

1. Is there information about team teaching as an approach to reducing class sizes and if so, what are the results where used?
2. What are the optimum sizes of classes and the thresholds above which reduced class size does not have an impact?

### **Search Activities:**

1. Two staff conducted independent Internet searches to discover information relative to the questions.
2. Telephone interviews were attempted or conducted held with the following persons to collect additional information.
  - a) Chris Pipho - Education Commission of the States. Mr. Pipho conducted a search and concluded that there was little he could add to the work of Glass and to the Tennessee study. He was not aware of any studies examining team teaching as a vehicle for reducing class size.
  - b) Beverly Martin - Texas Education Agency. Ms. Martin confirmed that the Texas mandate was for a ratio not to exceed 22 to 1 in grades K-4.
  - c) Betty, Sternberg - Connecticut Department of Education. Dr. Sternberg confirmed that there was no mandate to reduce class size in Connecticut but that guidelines from the state do suggest small classes in primary grades.
  - d) Nicola Filby - Wested. Dr. Filby is researching the questions and will respond this week.
  - e) Gerald Mikesell - Utah. Provided review of Utah statute.
3. A search for information through ERS was initiated on 2/8/97. A response was estimated by to take two to three weeks. It will be sent to Research and Development and forwarded when received.

### **Findings:**

1. There continues to be some controversy about the effects of reduced class size on student achievement. However, there seems to be a growing acceptance of the research that supports it as indicated by the increasing mandates to implement class size reduction program. California, for instance is in the midst of a new multi-million dollar, state-wide mandate to provide reduced class sizes in primary grades to 20 or less. Texas is mandating class size reductions to 22 or less in grades K-4. Utah is currently initiating a ten year project to reduce k-2 class sizes to a ratio of 18-1.

The work of Glass et al. (1, 2) and the studies of the Tennessee S.T. A. R. project (3) are cited frequently by those who support lowered class sizes.

2. While academic achievement benefits are still debated, there seems to be some agreement about other benefits that accrue from smaller class sizes. Those are:
  - a) More positive classroom atmosphere
  - b) Improved teacher morale
  - c) Classroom management improves
  - d) Students have better attendance and complete more work. (4)
3. The literature that does support reduced class size suggests that effects are most likely when class sizes are 20 and lower per teacher. (5, 6 and 7)

4. There is evidence that achievement effects are most evident in reading and math and that reductions in class size have little effect upon achievement in other academic areas. (8, 9)
5. Minority students appear to benefit more from reduced class sizes. (10).
6. One teacher per classroom of children is the preferred method of organizing for reducing class sizes. While teacher aides, modified schedules, using all adults in a school for reading and math instruction, partial teaming and team teaching occur, they are not the preferred approach. California acknowledges this approach as a legitimate temporary solution to meeting the state mandate but does not view it as a long term solution.
7. Studies of the effects upon achievement of placing two teachers in a classroom for the purpose of reducing the pupil teacher ratio were not found. The closest analogue is the use of aides with teachers. In the Tennessee study, this practice was found to have no effects upon achievement. (10).

### Sources

1. Glass, G. V., & Smith, M. L. (1979). Meta-analysis of Research on Class Size and Achievement. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 1, 2-16. In Geary, S. *Class Size: Issues and Implications for Policymakers In Utah*. 1988. Located on the Internet World Wide Web page: <http://www.gse.utah.edu/EdAdm/Galvin/Geary.HTML>.
2. Glass, G. V., Cahen, L. S., Smith, M. L., & Filby, N. N. (1982). *School Class Size: Research and Policy*. Beverly Hills: Sage. In *Class Size: Issues and Implications for Policymakers In Utah*. 1988. Located on the Internet World Wide Web page: <http://www.gse.utah.edu/EdAdm/Galvin/Geary.HTML>.
3. Word et al. *Project Star: Final Executive Summary Report-Kindergarten Through Third Grade*. (1985-1989). Located on the Internet World Wide Web page: [www.http://riles.alameda-coe.k12.us/acnews/classz/projstar.htm](http://www.riles.alameda-coe.k12.us/acnews/classz/projstar.htm).
4. Filby, N., Cahen, L., McCutcheon, G., & Kyle, D. (1985) In K. Klein (Ed.) *Class Size. Hot Topics Series 1984-85*. (pp. 161-182). Phi Delta Kappa Center on Evaluation, Development and Research. In Geary, S. *Class Size: Issues and Implications for Policymakers In Utah*. 1988. Located on the Internet World Wide Web page: <http://www.gse.utah.edu/EdAdm/Galvin/Geary.HTML>.
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6. Word et al., citation 3.
7. Glass & Smith, citation 1.
8. Word, et al., citation 3.
9. Sabrio, E., Pechman, E., & Rubin, M. (1982) *Reduced Class Size: The Effect on Achievement of High Need First Graders*. In K. Klein (Ed.). *Class Size. Hot Topics Series 1984-85*. (pp. 183-187). Phi Delta Kappa Center on Evaluation, Development and Research. In Geary, S. *Class Size: Issues and Implications for Policymakers In Utah*. 1988. Located on the Internet World Wide Web page: <http://www.gse.utah.edu/EdAdm/Galvin/Geary.HTML>.

10. Bingham, C. Steven. Class Size as an Early Intervention Strategy in White - Minority Achievement Gap Reduction. 1994. Research paper. ERIC no. ED368077.

11. Word et al., citation 3.

### **Telephone Interviews**

1. Chris Pipho. Education Commission of the States. February 7, 1997.

2. Nicola Filby, Wested. February 10, 1997.

3. Betty Sternberg, Connecticut Department of Education, February 10, 1997.

4. Beverly Martin, Texas Education Agency, February 10, 1997.

5. Gerald Mikesell, Utah Department of Education, February 21, 1997.