



Class-Size Ratios

Report to the Legislature

As required by Minnesota Statutes 2023, section 126C.12, subdivision 7

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As requested by Minnesota Statutes, section 3.197: This report cost approximately \$8,703.43 to prepare, including staff time, printing and mailing expenses.

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Legislative Charge

The legislative charge is to report on district class-size ratios as outlined in [Minnesota Statutes 2023, section 126C.12, subdivision 7](#):

A school district must annually report the district's class-size ratios by each grade to the commissioner of education in the form and manner specified by the commissioner. The department must annually submit a report beginning December 1, 2024, to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over kindergarten through grade 12 education detailing the statewide ratios by grade starting with the 2023-24 school year.

Executive Summary

Class-size ratios are of public interest because research has shown there to be a relationship with student academic achievement. Class-size ratios are also indicative of workload on teachers and other educators. This legislative report requires reporting on class-size ratios by grade level. However, calculating and reporting on how many students are in a classroom with a teacher (or teachers) at a time is not simple, especially when reporting by grade level. Many classes and teacher assignments include multiple grade levels.

This report provides data using two methods: student-to-teacher ratios using the October 1 student enrollment counts and teacher full time equivalents (FTEs) and course enrollment reported to the Minnesota Common Course Catalogue (MCCC) by academic area and instructional method. The student-to-teacher ratio data indicates that the average class-size ratio is higher for higher grade levels. When looking at the MCCC data, there are no clear patterns to average class sizes across all schools and reporting districts. Overall, there is variability in class-size ratios across districts in Minnesota.

Introduction

The importance of student-to-teacher ratios in classrooms and its impact on student achievement has been of interest for decades (Glass & Smith, 1979; Cooper, 1989; Finn & Achilles, 1999; Filges, Sonne-Schmidt, & Nielson, 2018). Researchers have indicated that the number of students served by a teacher may also impact teacher retention (Schnorr, 1995; Price & Ernest Jr., 2008). Although there is public interest in the average class size, Minnesota has never had a systematic annual collection and reporting of the information prior to this legislative report, which began with the 2023-24 school year.

This report provides several methods to look at class-size ratios by grade level or grade level groupings. Determining the actual number of students served at a time by a teacher based on grade level is complicated. Many classes, especially in the middle and high school years, are not taught to students in only one grade level. Some students also do not stay in the same grade level throughout their entire enrollment in a course. Additionally, many teachers may have an assignment that covers multiple grade levels, and it is not possible to

be sure what percentage of their time is spent with each grade level. Finally, some academic areas tend to have larger course enrollments than others and a single average class size may hide important differences.

Overall, the student-to-teacher ratios method finds that the average class size gets larger as grade level increases. Data provided about average course sizes by school, academic area and course instructional method from the Minnesota Common Course Catalogue (MCCC) show a high variability across schools and districts.

Analysis

This legislative report must report on class-size ratios by grade level. However, because many schools have multi-grade classrooms these ratios may not represent how many students are actually in a class with a teacher at a time. Therefore, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) collected and prepared data for this report using multiple methods to increase the utility of this report. The first method was to use the student enrollment data reported to the Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS) in combination with the staffing assignment data reported to the Professional Educator Standards and Licensing Board (PELSB) through the Staff Automated Reporting System (STAR) to create student-to-teacher ratios by grade level. The second method was using data districts report on course enrollments to the Minnesota Common Course Catalogue (MCCC) to determine average class size. Because many schools have multi-grade classrooms and there are different enrollment practices by subject area, the data from MCCC are not reported by grade level, but instead by subject area and grade groupings.

Student-to-Teacher Ratios

The student counts used for this method were the official October 1, 2024, student counts based on the fall submission of MARSS. By using the October 1 data, MDE ensures that each student is only counted at one district and consistent logic is used for determining grade level for the student for the year. These data are subject to all validations used for MARSS reporting and specifically the October 1 counts. For some schools or districts, the October 1 counts may not represent the overall number of students served during the year. This is especially true for schools and districts who focus on support services (e.g., special education) or specific types of programming (e.g., alternate learning centers).

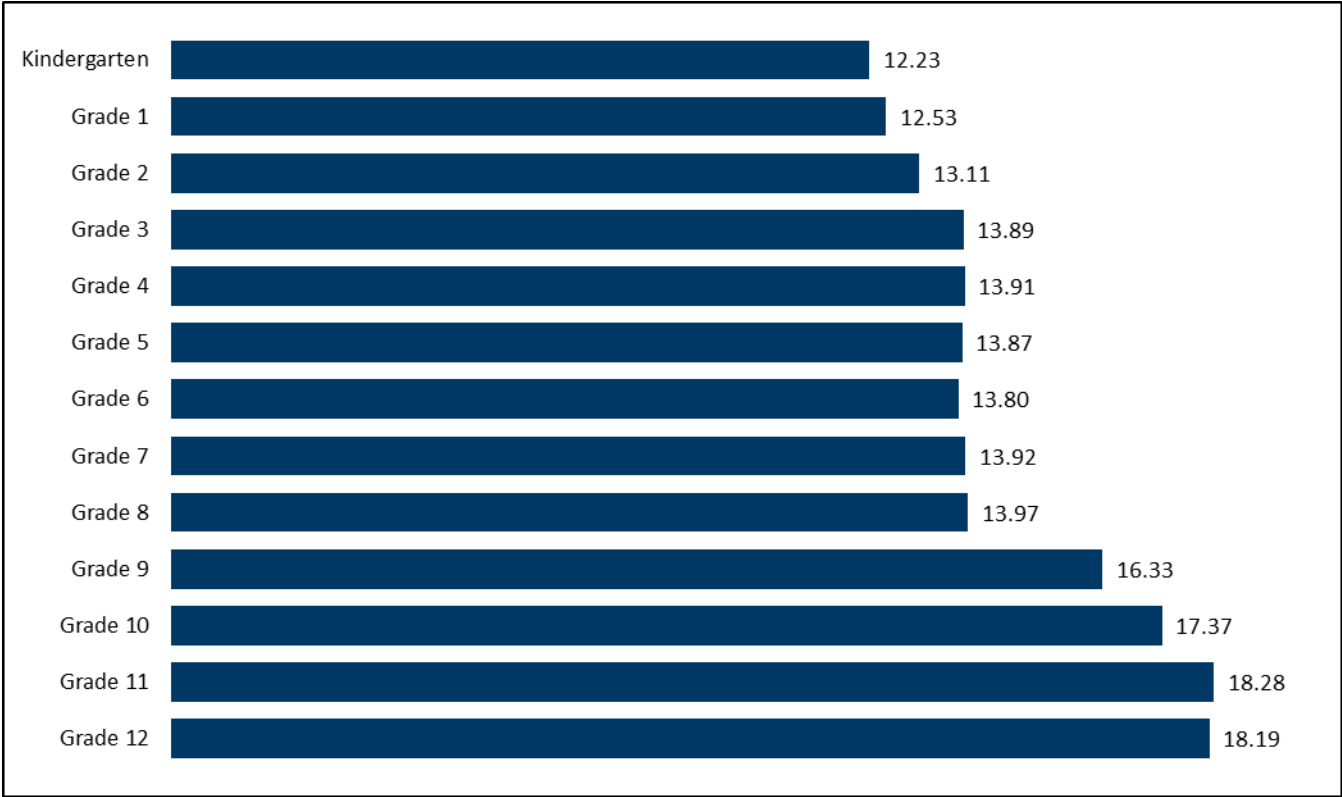
The staff full time equivalent (FTE) data are pulled from the fall submission of the STAR staff assignment data reported to PELSB that represent staffing on October 1, 2024. These data are subject to all validations used for STAR reporting. Because the staff assignments are for all licensed professionals, MDE only used assignment codes which PELSB has identified as representing a teaching assignment and only included those that represented teaching assignments in grades K-12. The assignment codes used were those between 745 and 792, between 10000 and 899999, or 690, 1050 and 9095.

For the staff assignments that only represent one grade level, the FTE of those assignments was put into the total FTE for that grade level. For assignments that represent multiple grade levels, multiple methods were used to determine what fraction of the assignment FTE would be assigned to each grade level. First, MDE merged the staff data and enrollment data at the school level. Then, the FTE for the assignment across the grades that

contained students with October 1 enrollment were evenly split. If there was no enrollment data at the schools for the grades the assignment represented, the FTE were split equally across all grades the assignment could represent at the district level.

For some districts, charter schools, or other LEAs, the data may not make sense in conjunction with the student enrollment data. The most common reasons PELSB has identified are that districts and charter schools forgot to report staff assignments, they did not update their staffing data from the previous year’s submission, they reported data to the incorrect school number, and that on October 1 they were using a short call substitute teacher because they were still trying to fill the position.

The average student-to-teacher ratio by grade level at the statewide level is presented in the graph below. Generally, the average ratios increased by grade level.



The data are available by district, charter school or other LEA in [Appendix A](#).

Minnesota Common Course Catalogue (MCCC)

The Minnesota Common Course Catalogue (MCCC) is a course classification and data collection system intended to provide uniform information about courses that are taught by Minnesota teachers and completed by Minnesota students. It is a mandatory data submission, though not all districts, charter schools, and other local education agencies (LEAs) comply. To increase MCCC participation and reduce the reporting burden for schools and districts, MDE has worked to simplify reporting MCCC. Beginning with the 2023-24 school year, MCCC data

was collected through [Ed-Fi](#). To be able to use MCCC data for this report, MDE communicated consistently throughout the year that all course data must be submitted by October 1, 2025. In its second year of implementation, Ed-Fi reporting of MCCC data was more stable and functioning as expected for districts, charter schools, and other LEAs. This helped to streamline the data collection process and removed the need for additional surveys to collect class-size data.

This report uses the K-12 course information that was reported in the areas specific to academic standards: arts, English language arts, mathematics, physical education and health, science, and social studies. To determine average class size, MDE used the number of students reported in each course, section and term reported to MCCC. Because many courses are taught across grade levels, MDE reports data at the school level and report which grade ranges are served by each school.

Courses taught online and courses in specific types of arts categories tend to have higher counts of students enrolled. Therefore, the arts data is split into the arts categories for reporting and pulled out online courses to report separately in [Appendix B](#). All tables in [Appendix B](#) report the minimum and maximum number of students taking a class in the academic area or arts category as well as the mean and median.

School data is only reported for LEAs who had course enrollment data for at least 80% of the students reported as enrolled through the Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS) during the 2024-25 school year. Using this criterion means that not all schools in an LEA had course data provided. The schools which are not included in [Appendix B](#), but are part of LEAs which are included in [Appendix B](#) are listed in [Appendix C](#).

When examining the data provided, some of the course enrollments seemed unlikely. This is often the result of scheduling choices implemented by an organization for expediency rather than true course enrollment. For example, sometimes districts created one class for all students in a grade level to indicate student participation in the course content. However, how the students are actually grouped by teachers and course periods is not captured in the software and reported to MDE. All data included in the report is based on MCCC information submitted by October 26, 2025. Districts, charter schools, and other LEAs who did not submit complete data do not appear in the [Appendix B](#) data.

Conclusion

Class-size ratios are an important indicator of teacher workload and student experience. However, there is not one standard way used to report this information. Overall, the average class-size ratio increases as grade levels increase. However, there is a lot of variability between schools and districts and within academic areas in schools and district.

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Appendix A: Student to Teacher Ratios

This appendix contains tables which present each district and the state’s total number of students enrolled by each grade on October 1, 2024, the full time equivalent (FTE) of teachers serving that grade on October 1, 2024, and the student-to-teacher ratio of those two data points. If a grade level had no students served or any teachers whose assignments indicated they were teaching that grade, the student count, FTE and ratio columns are all reported as not applicable (N/A). If there were teachers whose assignments indicated they were teaching that grade level, the FTE is reported. All data is reported on the Table 1 tab in the [Class Size Ratios Legislative Report Data spreadsheet](#). Five districts and charter schools did not report any data in STAR for the 2024-25 school year: Academia La Paz, Central Lakes Adventure School, Gateway STEM Academy, Le Sueur-Henderson School District, and Rochester Public School District.

Appendix B: Average Class Size by Subject Area

The tables in this appendix show the course data reported to MDE by October 26, 2025, for the 2024-25 school year. The data are provided at the school level because many schools report mixed grade classes. The minimum and maximum grade levels served in K-12 at each school are listed for contextual information. The data presented are for courses addressing current academic standards: Arts, English Language Arts, Mathematics, Physical Education and Health, Science, and Social Studies. The data in Tables 2 and 3 represent course enrollment that were not reported as being provided online. Table 2 has all academic areas other than arts, which is presented in Table 3. Arts are provided in their own table because of the large variability in class sizes by which type of art course it is. Table 4 provides the average class sizes for courses with online listed as their mode of instruction. All tables in this appendix provide the minimum, maximum, mean and median number of students enrolled in course sections. All data is reported on the corresponding tab, labeled by table name, in the [Class-Size Ratios Legislative Report Data spreadsheet](#). Districts, charter schools, and other LEAs who did not submit complete data do not appear in the [Appendix B](#) data.

Appendix C: Schools Not Reporting MCCC in Reported Districts

The table in this appendix provides all schools and programs that have students reported in the Minnesota Automated Student Reporting System (MARSS) in fiscal year 2025, but did not have any course data reported for districts who had sufficiently complete MCCC data for reporting in [Appendix B](#). The type of school or program is also listed for contextual information in Table 5 in the [Class-Size Ratios Legislative Report Data spreadsheet](#).