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Weathersfield School Policy Statement	**First Reading: December 13, 2010** **Second Reading: January 10, 2011** **Adopted: January 10, 2011**

Weathersfield Class Size Guidelines Policy

In order to provide quality instruction and consistency across all grade levels, the following Standards will be considered in developing class size guidelines.

Technical Education Class Size Differential
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 of guidelines specific to the course and equipment under consideration.

Grade-Specific Considerations
Research indicates that best practices regarding minimum and optimal class sizes vary to some degree by grade level. See the attached chart for guidelines. Various factors can legitimately cause these guidelines to fluctuate without negatively impacting the efficacy of instruction. Dependent on instructional delivery method, size may fluctuate in either direction and still provide optimal educational opportunity. Additionally, geographical location and town boundaries impact class sizes.

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

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. Research indicates that 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. Research indicates that 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. Research again indicates that a minimum of 50 square feet per student is desirable.

Multi-Grade Classrooms
Multi-grade classes are covered by these policies 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 is 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 the 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 2010 legislative session expanded the availability of distance learning for Vermont students, and it is expected that this trend will continue in legislative sessions to come. Distance learning affords 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 by considered in the calculation.

Existing State Board Rules Regarding Maximum Class Sizes
Relevant to the issue of *minimum* and *optimal* class sizes is the manner in which the State Board of Education constrains *maximum* class sizes. Portions of SBE Rule 2120.8.2 are as follows:

> **2120.8.2 Staff**
> (b) At the elementary level, classes in grades K-3, when taken together, shall average fewer than 20 students per teacher. In grades 4-8, when taken together, classes shall average fewer than 25 students per teacher.
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> (c) At the secondary level, the total class rolls of an English language arts teacher shall not exceed 100 students. In other disciplines, class rolls shall not average more than 150 students per teacher, except where the specific nature of the teacher's assignment, such as in certain art, music, or physical education programs, is plainly adaptable to the teaching of greater numbers of students while meeting the educational goals of the program.
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> (d) Each school shall employ sufficient and qualified special education staff as are needed to identify students eligible for special education services and to implement each eligible

student's Individual Education Plan and Section 504 Plan.

Chart Illustrating Supervisory Union-Wide Class Size Guidelines

This chart is adapted from an existing set of policies in place in a particular Vermont supervisory union.

Supervisory Union-Wide Model Class Size Chart (Minimum and Optimal)

Grade Cluster	Instructional Area	Minimum Average per Grade Cluster	Optimal Average Range per Grade Cluster
K-2	All	15	15-18
3-4	All	15	15-20
5-6	All	15	15-20
7-8	All	15	15-22
7-8	All (except PE)	15	15-22
Grade Cluster	Instructional Area	Minimum Average per Course/Content Area	Optimal Average per Course/Content Area
9-12	PE	20	20-25
9-12	Music	18	18-22
9-12	General/Other	18	18-22
9-12	“Singleton” Courses	15	15-22