

February 10, 2002

The educators, researchers and advocates listed below, from districts and states throughout the nation, strongly urge the Office of Civil Rights to collect and publish accurate and accessible data on class size, a key driver of educational equity. Students in smaller classes have improved outcomes in nearly every way that can be measured – including but not limited to better test scores and grades, fewer disciplinary referrals, and higher graduation rates, as rigorous research shows.

Moreover, students who receive the greatest benefit from smaller classes are those from disadvantaged groups, including low-income families, students of color, English language learners, and students with disabilities. Yet currently, the availability of accurate and timely data on class size is sparse at best, and often non-existent.

Thus, districts should be required to report this data in the following manner:

- The average sizes of actual general education, inclusion, and self-contained special education class sizes, rather than pupil-teacher ratios. These class sizes should be reported separately by grade and disaggregated by the categories listed above.
- The distribution of class sizes by category and grade, including the 25th percentile; the median class size; and the 75th percentile, to be able to analyze disparities across the district.
- Finally, the data above disaggregated by the following subgroups: race/ethnicity, gender, free-lunch, disability, and English Learner status.

Only if class size data are reported in this way can we begin to analyze whether school districts throughout have provided this critical educational resource in an equitable manner.

Yours sincerely,

(listed in alphabetical order by organization)

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Children are more than test scores
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