

## Definition of Indicator

The average number of students by grade level, which is computed by dividing the number of students by the number of classes in each grade level. Special education and vocational classes are excluded.

## Findings

The average class size for Orange County schools varies depending on grade level. Due to the Class Size Reduction (CSR) legislation (SB 1777) to reduce class sizes in K-3, the majority of K-2 grades have a class size of fewer than 20 students per class. However, taking into consideration all grade levels, the average class size was 27.4 in 2008/09. This was higher than the state average of 25.4 for the same year.

**Average Class Size for all Grade Levels  
in Orange County and California, 1999/00 to 2008/09**

	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09
County Average	28.2	27.9	28.1	27.4	29.2	29.3	28.9	28.8	26.1	27.4
State Average	26.7	26.5	26.3	26.2	27.4	27.3	27.3	26.8	25.2	25.4

## Why is this Important?

In July 1996, California passed the CSR initiative to improve student achievement by reducing class size in the primary grades to below 20 students per class. In 1998, the national CSR Initiative set its goal at reducing class size to an average of 18 students in first through third grades.

Smaller classes offer the benefit of increased student-teacher interaction, greater individual attention, more "hands-on" activities, more time devoted to instructional activities, and the ability for teachers to identify learning difficulties early. For 2002, the CSR program was incorporated into the new Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Title II Teacher Quality block grant. This allows states and local education agencies to use any portion of the nearly \$3 billion in Title II funds to hire qualified teachers to reduce class size as reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.<sup>1</sup>

## What's Happening in Orange County?

The Class Size Reduction (CSR) initiative strives to improve student achievement by reducing the number of students in primary grade classes to 20 students or fewer.

In Orange County:

- The Class Size Reduction initiative is not fully funded by the State of California, therefore schools and districts must provide additional funds each year to sustain the program.
- With the many financial challenges that face districts, fewer and fewer districts will be able to keep Kindergarten through third grade classes at 20 students to 1 teacher.

### What's working:

- Districts choose how to participate in the CSR program based on local financial capabilities.
- Some districts have implemented class size reduction in the two required grade levels (first and second) and other districts have chosen to implement in K-3.
- Some districts have implemented "Option 2" in Kindergarten, which provides a second certificated teacher in the classroom for 100 minutes a day to reduce the student/teacher ratio.

 See page 164 in Supplemental Tables for additional data

### STATEWIDE:

The statewide average class size for the 2007/08 academic year was 25.2. The range of class sizes for K-6 was 19.3 to 29.1. For 7th-8th grades, the range of class sizes was 26.1-25.9. In high school the average class size 25.3 in English courses, 26.9 in Math, 28.9 in Social Science, and 28.9 in Science.<sup>2</sup>

### RELATED INDICATORS:

- Average Dollar Expenditure per Pupil
- 4th Grade Reading Scores
- SAT I Higher Education
- Special Education
- English Learners

### DATA SOURCE:

California Department of Education, DataQuest

### NOTES:

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Department of Education, Class-Size Reduction Program, [class\\_size@ed.gov](mailto:class_size@ed.gov)

<sup>2</sup>California Department of Education, Educational Demographics Office, 2009