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## TESTIMONY

**Testimony To:** House Committee on Education

**Respectfully Submitted by:** Josh Souliere, Education Quality Division Director  
Anne Bordonaro, Interim Deputy Secretary

**Subject:** **Class Size**

**Date:** February 28, 2024

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### EQS - 2121.2 Staff

Classes in grades K-3, when taken together, shall average fewer than 20 students per teacher. In grades 4-12, when taken together, classes shall average fewer than 25 students per teacher. The total class roll of a teacher shall not exceed 100 students, 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.

The State Board of Education (SBE) is responsible for creating these rules. We are not sure where the numbers came from or who from the AOE participated in these discussions with the SBE prior to the standards going into effect on April 5, 2014. We do not have knowledge of any discussions at SBE level to change class size requirements, but they created these rules and would need to be a part of any discussion to change them.

### General Background:

- Adult-student staffing ratios (which include many educator roles beyond classroom teachers including counselors, nurses, other support staff, etc.) are different than teacher-student ratios. Important to distinguish between these different metrics.
- Vermont's adult-student staffing ratios have been increasing since 2016-2017 because while overall staffing numbers have only increased about 5% during this period despite COVID, student numbers have fallen about 5% during this same time period.
- EQS rules discuss maximums but not minimums. Vermont has many very small classes that are well below the EQS maximums.

### Research:

- Limited research on impact of class size reductions on student outcomes.



- Research outcomes have been inconsistent and produced mixed effects on student achievement. Many conclude there are too many variables impacting the relationship between class size and student achievement (examples are teacher quality, behavior disorders, number of historically marginalized students) to definitively state optimal levels. Teacher quality has consistently been shown to be more important than class size, particularly in regard to improving the achievement of historically marginalized students.
- The most promising research is that very large class-size reductions, on the order of magnitude of 7-10 fewer students per class, can have significant long-term effects on student achievement and other meaningful outcomes. These effects seem to be largest when introduced in the earliest grades, and for students from less advantaged family backgrounds.

We would be happy to work with you to review any draft bill language they come up with. We also can provide input based on research to inform specific questions you might have such as pros/cons of different proposed changes.