

TO: School Committee

FROM: Emily Parks, Superintendent

DATE: October 30, 2018

RE: Class Size Report

In anticipation of our upcoming budget process, I am providing you with information about current class sizes and anticipated 2019-2010 enrollment.

Elementary Class Sizes:

As you know from prior discussions, our current elementary class sizes are quite good. All elementary classes are within guidelines, with the exception of Downey grade 3 where the sections are one over guideline at 23 and 23. Notably, if these sections remain the same size next year, they will be within guideline for grade 4.

This year's kindergarten enrollment is 206 students. The enrollment projection prepared by NESDEC estimates that next year's kindergarten enrollment will be 207 students. There are 160 children currently living in town who will be age-eligible for kindergarten in the fall.

Middle School Class Sizes:

The enrollment at the middle school decreased by about 50 students between last year and this year's October 1st enrollment report. Next year's enrollment is projected to decrease by approximately another 35 students (and, in fact, is projected to continue to decrease for the next several years). All core academic classes at TMS currently fall within the SC guideline of "18-24 students, ideally not higher than 28." Across the 164 core academic classes, only 15 sections (9%) currently have 25 or more students. No core academic classes exceed 28, though several classes in the arts rotation have high class sizes.

Table 1: TMS Class Sizes

	Fewer than 15 Students		15-19 Students		20-24 Students		25-29 Students		Total Sections	Total Students
	# of Sections	% of Sections	# of Sections	% of Sections	# of Sections	% of Sections	# of Sections	% of Sections		
English			16	44.4%	19	52.7%	1	2.7%	36	716
Foreign Language			5	25%	11	55%	4	20%	20	439
Math	3	8.1%	12	32.4%	19	51.3%	3	8.1%	37	726
Science	2	5.4%	7	18.9%	26	70.2%	2	5.4%	37	744
Social Studies			5	14.7%	24	70.6%	5	14.7%	34	738

High School Class Sizes:

As you know, the enrollment bubble is currently at the high school and this year reached a 10-year high with 1012 students as of the October 1st enrollment report. The high school enrollment is projected to

remain about the same over the next 2 years and then begin to decline. By 2024-2025, the high school enrollment is projected to dip under 900, which has not been the case since 2010-2011.

Managing class sizes at the high school is more complex than at other schools in the district. Class sizes are driven by a number of factors including overall enrollment, course levels, and an elective program that attempts to provide both a breadth of offerings to support diverse student interests as well as opportunities for students to specialize or study a field in depth over time.

The SC guideline for high school is class sizes of “18-24, ideally not larger than 28.” Currently, of the 224 core academic classes at the high school, 52 classes (23%) have 25 or more students, including 18 sections with 28 or more students. Most of these relatively high class sizes are a result of the increased student population, though some reflect challenges during the master scheduling process that resulted in skewed section sizes or large singleton classes.

Table 2: WHS Class Sizes

	Fewer than 15 Students		15-19 Students		20-24 Students		25-29 Students		Total Sections	Total Students
	# of Sections	% of Sections	# of Sections	% of Sections	# of Sections	% of Sections	# of Sections	% of Sections		
English	6	10.7%	17	30.4%	20	35.7%	13	23.2%	56	1152
Foreign Language	15	29.4%	22	43.1%	8	15.7%	6	11.8%	51	876
Math	11	19.3%	23	40.4%	15	26.3%	8	14%	57	1044
Science	7	11.9%	22	37.3%	20	33.9%	10	16.9%	59	1191
Social Studies	6	11.5%	12	23.1%	19	36.5%	15	28.8%	52	1099

Conversely, about 20% of classes at the high school are below 15 students. These small class sizes often occur when running level 3 classes in core academic areas or in response to student elective choices.

Some class size concerns were mitigated during the FY’19 budget by adding teaching staff in science and math. The table below shows the impact on class sizes of adding additional staff members in both the Math and Science Departments this year:

Table 3: Impact of FY’19 Staff Additions

**WHS Math Department
Classes with 25 or More Students**

	# of sections	% of sections
2017-2018	13	25%
2018-2019	8	14%

**WHS Science Department
Classes with 25 or More Students**

	# of sections	% of sections
2017-2018	19	33%
2018-2019	10	17%

In the English and Social Studies Departments, which did not receive additional staffing this year, the number of large sections increased:

Table 4: Impact of Unchanged Staffing Level

**WHS English Department
Classes with 25 or More Students**

	# of sections	% of sections
2017-2018	12	21%
2018-2019	13	23%

**WHS Social Studies Department
Classes with 25 or More Students**

	# of sections	% of sections
2017-2018	11	21%
2018-2019	15	29%

Conclusion:

The above class size data, along with broader program needs, will be considered throughout the budget development process. Though the information above speaks most directly to next year and the FY'20 budget cycle, we will also consider longer-term enrollment trends and staffing needs over the next 3-5 years.