



Grande Prairie and District Catholic Schools

Serving the Regional Communities of Beaverlodge, Grande Prairie, Fairview, Sexsmith, & Spirit River
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Class Size Information Survey 2011-2012 Data for Annual Education Results Report (Dec 2011 update)

Core Subjects: Jurisdiction

	K to 3			4 to 6			7 to 9			10 to 12		
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Ecole St. Gerard Catholic School	17.6	21.2	21.5	21.6	22.3	21.8	21.3	20.8	18.4			
Holy Cross Catholic School	20.1	22.5	21.3	21.1	22.0	23.0	24.4	23.0	23.5			
Kateri Mission Catholic School	17.2	20.0	21.0	18.1	23.7	22.2	19.8	20.5	22.5			
Mother Teresa School	20.0	18.3	21.4	21.8	16.0	16.4	21.3	18.2	18.3			
St. Clement Catholic School	12.3	17.0	16.5	18.7	16.0	19.3	23.0	12.0	17.0			
St. Joseph Catholic High School							24.2	23.6	28.8	26.1	23.1	23.1
St. Mary Catholic School	13.0	20.5	16.3	18.0	16.9	20.4	13.5	19.4	16.5			
St. Mary's Catholic School	16.0	16.7	14.6	17.3	19.3	19.3	14.5	12.0	13.0			11.0
St. Patrick Catholic School	14.1	15.0	15.9	18.3	18.5	21.2	16.7	17.2	14.1			
St. Thomas More Catholic School	18.0	16.3	16.8	19.3	21.0	20.0	19.2	21.3	17.7	17.0	10.2	18.4
Ste. Marie Catholic School	14.4	13.3	13.2	16.3	17.3	15.0	17.0	16.5	15.0			
Total for Jurisdiction 4130	16.5	18.6	18.6	19.5	20.0	20.4	20.6	19.3	19.4	25.2	21.1	22.3

All Subjects: Jurisdiction

	K to 3			4 to 6			7 to 9			10 to 12		
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Ecole St. Gerard Catholic School	17.6	21.1	21.6	21.6	22.3	21.3	21.3	18.8	15.4			
Holy Cross Catholic School	20.0	22.5	21.2	20.4	21.8	22.6	23.7	22.3	22.7			
Kateri Mission Catholic School	17.2	19.9	21.0	18.3	23.7	22.2	18.5	19.1	21.5			
Mother Teresa School	20.2	18.4	21.5	21.8	15.9	17.8	21.6	18.6	21.4			
St. Clement Catholic School	12.4	16.8	16.9	18.3	15.5	19.1	22.9	8.9	17.0			
St. Joseph Catholic High School				19.0	67.5	36.0	24.4	24.2	28.0	24.6	24.5	22.8
St. Mary Catholic School	13.1	20.0	16.3	18.0	17.5	21.8	13.5	21.4	16.5			
St. Mary's Catholic School	15.9	16.0	15.0	17.3	19.3	23.0	14.5	10.3	14.3	0.0		8.1
St. Patrick Catholic School	14.2	14.9	16.1	15.2	15.8	14.5	14.3	12.6	10.8			
St. Thomas More Catholic School	18.1	16.3	16.9	19.3	21.0	20.1	18.8	21.3	17.7	15.9	11.6	17.2
Ste. Marie Catholic School	14.5	13.4	13.2	16.3	17.3	16.7	17.0	14.8	16.4			
Total for Jurisdiction 4130	16.6	18.5	18.7	18.9	19.6	19.9	20.1	17.2	18.5	23.8	22.6	21.4

Note: K to 3 class sizes actually reflect Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 3 class sizes.

Comparison to Other Jurisdictions

	K to 3	4 to 6	7 to 9	10 to 12
GP Catholic	18.7	19.9	18.5	21.4
GP Public	20.8	23.1	23.3	25.6
Peace Wapiti	16.9	20.4	20.0	19.9
Peace River				
Provincial (expectation)	17:1	23:1	25:1	27:1
Provincial (actual)				

General Comments

Grande Prairie & District Catholic Schools continues to reasonably meet Alberta Education's guidelines for the Overall Class Size Initiative. We also recognize that that guideline for high school is not the best environment for students and teachers if an optimal learning environment is the goal. Lower class sizes, coupled with a change in instructional practices will have the greatest impact on students under our care and trust.

Allocation of Staff and Class Composition

In allocating teachers to achieve the Learning Commission's recommendations and doing what is best for students, administration considered class composition when setting class size. Generally a class with special needs students, students whose first language is not English, and at-risk students may be smaller than the average class size. Classes may also be smaller in cases where there are safety considerations such as traditional trades and CTS classes. Schools are required to submit profiles to administration to assist with the allocation of staff. In some CTS classes a certified tradesperson accompanies the teacher.

Research and Recommendations

There is a wealth of research at the K to 3 level that indicates that a reduction in class size and a focus on differentiated instruction will significantly improve student achievement. The Commission found that there were statistically significant differences among the three class types on all achievement measures and in all subject areas in every year of the experiment (K - 3). On average, students in small classes had superior academic performance to students in larger classes.

The Commission examined many practical studies including Project STAR, and the Commission members noted that no significant differences were found between classes with teacher aides and regular classes in any year of the study. The small-class advantage was found for both boys and girls. The benefits were substantially greater for minority students or students attending inner-city schools in each year of the study. Students who had been in small classes exhibited superior engagement behaviours in grade 4 including more effort spent on learning activities, more initiative, and less disruptive or inattentive withdrawn behaviour. The problems teachers encounter in teaching and managing classes were not reduced when a teaching assistant was present. In Grande Prairie and District Catholic Schools, Teaching Assistants are allocated for Students with Severe Needs, English as a Second Language, high Kindergarten class sizes, and for Early Literacy (grades K-2).

Further research needs to be done to determine if achievement is increasing in each grade level in the core subjects, specifically Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies as a result of the Initiative. It may take three to four years for the effects of the Initiative to appear. The Commission could not find any clear research that suggests class size beyond Grades 4-12 has a significant impact. However, an examination of best practices at the Grades 4-12 level may benefit students and staff.

Future Challenges and Summary

Grande Prairie and District Catholic Schools continues to reasonably achieve Alberta Education's Class Size targets from K to 12. One of the bigger challenges is to find qualified teachers to meet the ongoing needs in the upcoming years.

In summary, administration is pleased with the initial positive outcomes that have resulted from the Class Size Initiative and administration looks forward to improved parent/ student/ teacher satisfaction and student achievement as a result of the Initiative.