

Program-Related Benefits of 400 to 600 Pupil Place Elementary Schools

There is general agreement and consensus among senior academic staff that elementary schools in the range of 400 to 600 pupil spaces provide the required 'critical mass' associated with program-related benefits for students. A number of program-related benefits have been identified with schools of this size. Fully utilized elementary schools of this size lead to increased Ministry per pupil funding which in turn has the potential to generate the following benefits.

School Organization and Program Implications

An increase in the number of staffing allocations has the potential to enhance:

1. Number of choices for student placement (e.g. accommodating sibling needs)
2. Access to more programs and services (e.g. Special Education Needs, French Immersion, Extended French Immersion, ESL, etc.)
3. Number of opportunities for block timetabling (for Literacy and Numeracy)
4. Number of opportunities for co-curricular and extra-curricular activities
5. More opportunities to staff the various school committees and select subject representatives (e.g. Safe Schools Committee, Health Action Team, Eco School Rep, Religious Ed. Rep, Literacy Rep, Numeracy Rep, CSAC Staff Rep, etc.)
6. More fulsome celebrations of and participation in pivotal, significant school events, such as graduation, sacraments, overnight grade excursions, etc.

School Staffing and Program Implications

An increase in the number of staff allocations has the potential to enhance:

1. The Professional Learning Community (PLC) strategy (e.g. School Improvement Team, Collaborative Inquiry process, etc.)
2. Number of opportunities for team teaching
3. Matching individual subject areas with specialist qualifications
4. Mentoring

Material Resources and Equipment

1. Increased enrolment generates increased funding for the school and in turn has the potential to generate increased material resources and equipment (e.g. sports equipment, library materials, computer equipment, etc.).

2. Cost-savings from fewer school administration and support positions associated with smaller schools would support greater investment in resources and equipment.

Facilities and Program Implications

1. Increased enrolment generates increased funding for the school and has the potential to generate additional classroom space for specialty programs such as FSL, Music, Art, etc.
2. An increase in the facility area has the potential to generate additional programs and services such as Nutritional Programs, Before and After School Programs, Daycare, International Language Programs, etc.

CSAC Involvement

Increased enrolment provides a wider parental base and potential for increased parental involvement, the sharing of their talents and expertise and the development of community partnerships—a critical focus of the Ministry of Education.

Further to the advantages identified above, measureable criteria showing the benefits of larger schools could be developed to support or demonstrate this relationship. Examples of potential criteria are identified below.

Combined Grades

While a lower percentage of combined grades is indicative of a larger school, primary class size caps and Collective Agreement caps will determine the necessity of a combined grade.

Support Staff

Schools with higher enrolment will likely be eligible for a greater number of specialty support staff; for example, clerk typists and custodial support. More support from Education Assistants and Child Youth Workers is directly tied to the weighted exceptionalities of students with IEPs.

Librarians/Other Specialty Teachers

Larger schools will likely lead to increased Teacher Librarians and fewer Library Technicians. There will be an overall net savings in the aggregate for Library staffing.