



State of Delaware
Office of Auditor of Accounts
Kathleen K. McGuinness, RPh, CFE

Working Hard to Protect YOUR Tax Dollars

Inspection

School Year 2018-2019 Maximum Student/Teacher Ratio

October 1, 2019

The Auditor of Accounts (AOA) performed an inspection, in accordance with Title 14 of the Delaware Code, to ensure adherence to the maximum student/teacher ratio during School Year 2018-2019 by reviewing the Department of Education (DOE) Annual Class Size Report, school district or charter school Board meeting minutes, and classroom rosters.

Table of Contents

Report Details 1

Abbreviations:

AOA	Auditor of Accounts
DOE	Department of Education
K-3	Kindergarten through third grade
The Ratio	Maximum student/teacher ratio

The mission of the Delaware Office of Auditor of Accounts

The Delaware Auditor of Accounts serves Delawareans by ensuring accountability in the use of taxpayer dollars through independent assessments of financial operations, performance management and statutory compliance of state government.

For further information on this release please contact:

Kathleen K. McGuinness, RPh, CFE

kathleen.mcguinness@delaware.gov
(302) 739-5055

Report Details

Background

In accordance with 14 Del. C. §1705A, “The ratio of students to instructors in any class in kindergarten or grade 1-3 in a Delaware public school shall not exceed 22 students as of the last school day of October. In calculating such ratio, a classroom instructional aide shall count as equal to half a teacher. This ratio shall only apply to a class within which students are instructed in the core academic subjects of English/Language Arts, mathematics, science and social studies.¹ The local school board may vote to waive the maximum student-instructor ratio at a public meeting noticed for that purpose. Any local school board vote on such a waiver shall occur on or before December 1 of each year, and the notice for such shall be placed in the local newspaper for two (2) consecutive weeks before the meeting. This notice shall be posted on the door of any school affected for the same two (2) consecutive weeks before the meeting. The notice shall be posted on the door of any school affected for the same period, a copy shall be sent to the principal, teacher association building representative and Parent Teacher Organization/Parent Teacher Association parent leader of any affected school.² The State Auditor shall, in cooperation with the Department of Education, monitor compliance with this section in the audits of the boards of education of the schools district conducted.³”

Essentially, no kindergarten through third grade (K-3) classroom should exceed the one teacher per 22 student ratio. If a classroom does exceed the maximum student/teacher ratio (the ratio), there should be at least one additional teacher or paraprofessional present or a waiver of this requirement must be approved by the School Board on or before December 1st.

What We Found

There are 15 school districts and 14 charter schools that service grades K-3. For the classrooms that exceeded the ratio and did not have adequate staff support, we obtained and reviewed Board meeting minutes to confirm the Board approved to waive this requirement on or before December 1st (see Table 1 below).

Table 1: Board Approved Waiver Obtained			
Districts/Charter Schools	# of K-3 Classrooms	# of K-3 Classrooms Exceeding 22 Students	Did the District/Charter School have an approved Waiver
Academia Antonia Alonso	21	10	Yes
Appoquinimink	147	51	Yes

¹ 14 Del. C. §1705(A)(a)

² 14 Del. C. §1705(A)(c)

³ 14 Del. C. §1705(A)(d)

Charter School of New Castle	16	7	Yes
Colonial	174	37	Yes
Indian River	182	38	Yes
Lake Forest	67	8	Yes
Laurel	40	23	Yes
Milford	78	8	Yes
Newark Charter School	33	32	Yes
Odyssey Charter School	32	26	Yes
Providence Creek Academy	14	6	Yes
Smyrna	83	25	Yes
Woodbridge	37	24	Yes

AOA found that thirteen districts/charter schools exceeded the ratio and were required to obtain a Board approved waiver. Two of the districts that were selected (Appoquinimink and Indian River) obtained a Board approved waiver; however, the waiver did not include all schools within the district. AOA selected classrooms for additional review (see table 2 below) that were not included in the waiver. All districts/charter schools did obtain the required Board approved waiver and no concerns were noted.

Additionally, we performed a review for the districts/charter schools that had classrooms that exceeded the ratio but indicated having adequate staff. If a district/charter school did not obtain a Board approved waiver to exceed the ratio, one classroom within that district/charter school was randomly selected and the classroom roster, teacher name, and name of any additional teacher(s) or paraprofessional(s), was requested, to ensure adequate staff support was present (see Table 2 below).

Table 2: Maximum Student/Teacher Ratio Testing				
Districts/Charter Schools	# of K-3 Classrooms	# of K-3 Classrooms Exceeding 22 Students	# of Students in Selected Classroom	Did the selected Classroom have appropriate support
Academy of Dover	9	2	24	Yes
Appoquinimink	147	51	29	Yes
Brandywine	164	20	23	Yes
Caesar Rodney	132	37	23	Yes
Campus Community School	8	1	23	Yes
Cape Henlopen	97	25	24	Yes
Capital	114	18	23	Yes
Christina	305	47	25	Yes
Indian River	182	38	24	Yes
Kuumba Academy Charter School	15	9	24	Yes
Las Americas Aspira Academy	16	16	24	Yes

MOT Charter School	12	12	25	Yes
Red Clay	262	25	23	Yes
Seaford	53	29	23	Yes
Thomas Edison Charter School	16	13	23	Yes

During our review, we determined there were fifteen districts/charter schools exceeded the ratio. Further review found the classrooms had adequate staff support to meet the ratio.

Recommendations

During this engagement there were some issues related to the timing of requesting classroom rosters and the system roll-over to the new school year. It is our recommendation that districts/charter schools consider retaining a copy of classroom rosters, as of October 31st, when the information is collected for annual reporting to DOE.

Next Steps

We are taking the timing of this review into consideration for future maximum student/teacher ratio inspections. For example, the timing of the review may occur closer to December 1st, when waivers, should they be necessary, are required to be approved by the Board.