



Class Size Census 2014 Summary



February 25, 2015

Background

The 14th annual Edmonton Public Teachers Local No. 37 Class Size Census was conducted on Wednesday, December 3, 2014. Teachers were asked to report on the numbers of students in each class that day to get a “snapshot” of the maximum class size and make up of their classrooms. We do not report average class size because the real story is the number of overly large classes over thresholds that exceed the levels set out by the Alberta Commission on Learning (ACOL) and those classes over 30 students. It also provides unique data to allow comparisons between “straight” or “weighted” counts of students in classes. *Weighted counts* refer to classes with integrated special needs students that add to the teacher workload. The annual census continues to closely track the emerging trends. The data reinforces the anecdotal feedback from our members.

Historical Perspective, Results and Trends

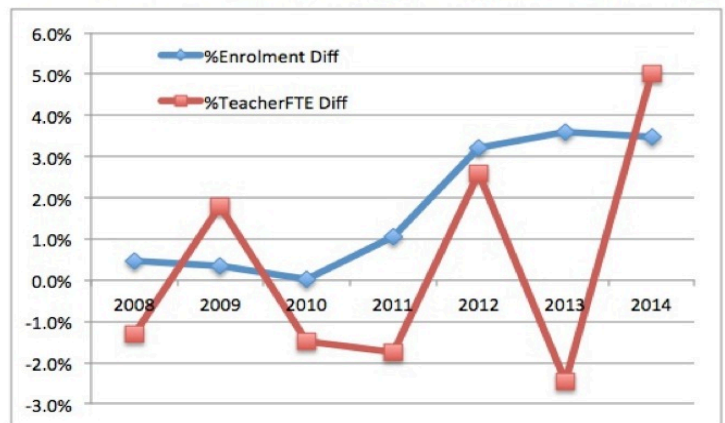
2001-2009 - Despite having the benefit of specific provincial funding aimed at keeping Div. I & Div. II elementary classes smaller, K-6 classes still had moderate growth in size over this period. The Div. III & Div. IV (junior and senior high school) classes had significant growth. A greater number of multi-grade classes appeared due to attempts to “even” out class sizes and more inclusion of integrated special needs students.

2010-2013 - Classes over 30 students increased for Div. III & Div. IV. Provincial funding intended for junior/senior high was diverted by the government to the lower grades. Yet, increased numbers of the K-3 classes (67%, 74%, 76%, 81% respectively) were over the ACOL recommended level of 17 students, even for the “straight count”. Increased teacher load because of “weighted load” tended to be about 8% higher for K-3 and there was total overload in the Gr. 4-9 classes with a 25% extra load on teachers of those classes.

2014 – Quick Facts

- **Census participation rose slightly this year** with responses for 8,194 classes taught that day, contributed by 2,811 different classroom teachers. Statistically, we continue to have a very strong representative sample size and can infer that teachers still consider class size to be a critical issue.
- **Continued “Class Size Creep” appears to be entrenched but 2014 shows that the enrolment increases are at least leveling off.** (We should not be overjoyed at this fact.) After last year’s overall jump of 7.3% in reported class size, the trend of yearly increases has leveled this year. The largest decrease is in Gr. 5 & 10 and the greatest increase is in Gr. 6 & 7.
- **The graph on the right shows a “Current Reality” perspective** that compares the actual percentage increase in enrolment (from EPSB revised Budget in September) compared to our estimated Local’s classroom-based teacher FTEs (December). The percent increase in enrolment (diamond points) exceeded the % increase in classroom-based teacher FTEs (square points) for 5 of the last 7 years.
- **Over the last two years there were 6,218 more students enrolled with EPSB and only 86 extra teachers (72 students per teacher!).**

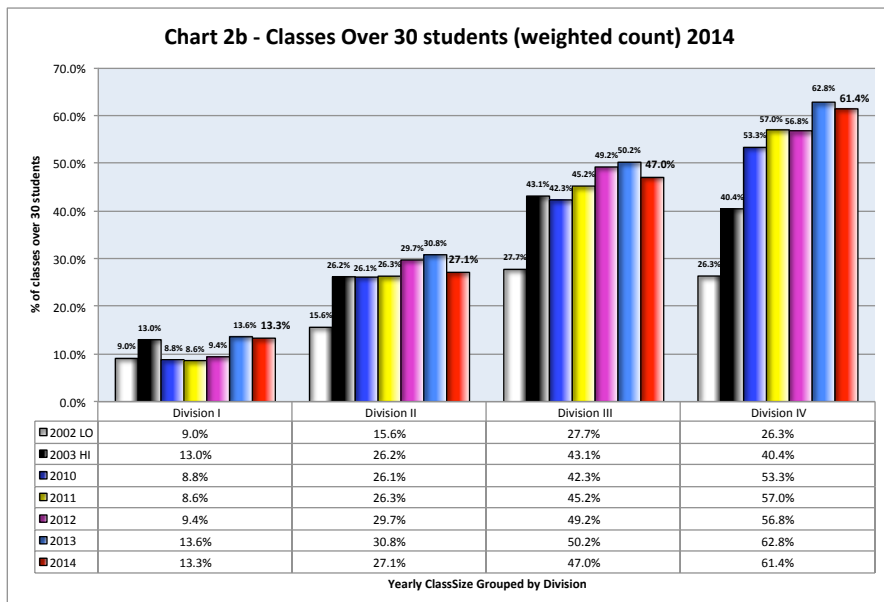
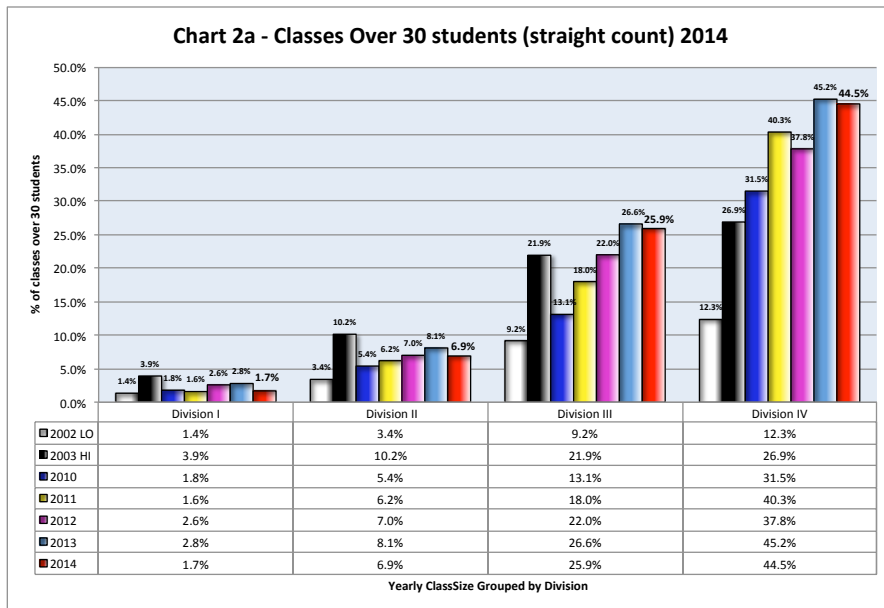
EPSB Student Enrolment (%Change) vs. Teacher FTEs (%Change)



	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
%Enrolment I	0.5%	0.4%	0.0%	1.1%	3.2%	3.6%	3.5%
%TeacherFTE	-1.3%	1.8%	-1.5%	-1.7%	2.6%	-2.5%	5.0%
Gain/Loss	-1.8%	1.4%	-1.5%	-2.8%	-0.6%	-6.1%	1.5%

Graphs 2a and 2b contain summarized data broken down by Division over the last five-year period. Note that the 2002 LO (white) and 2003 HI (black) will be maintained as a benchmark of typical class sizes before and after the loss of 457 Edmonton Public Teacher positions in 2003.

- This year 18.9% of all classes that were reported (n=8,194) were over 30 students. Although that's only an increase of 1.5% for this year, it's a 7.0% increase over the last 4 years.
- There were 153 elementary classes surveyed that had over 30 students (straight count) and 750 integrated elementary classes for the weighted count.
- There are 37 (straight count) K-3 classes out of the 2,203 surveyed that are over 30 students; and 1,763 classes (80%) are over the ACOL recommended class size of 17 students maximum.
- The large spikes in classes over 30 students were in Gr. 6 & 7 with reductions in Gr. 5, 9 & 10.
- It is significant for 2014 that this is the first year that all divisions are over the "HI" benchmark for the weighted count. (See Graphs 3a & 3b in the online detailed report.)



Classes With Integrated Special Needs - For special needs students, diversity of needs coupled with large class sizes represents more challenges to their learning. In 2014 it remains that three out of every four (77.3%) of the classes in the overall District have some students who are funded at a higher rate because of their special needs. The greatest increase in "weighted count" compared to "straight count" occurred in Gr. 4-6 and Gr. 7-9 that averaged 25% extra load with those weighted classes going over the thresholds. Clearly there is not enough reduction in class size to accommodate the needs of these students.