

# **GUIDANCE FOR IOWA SCHOOL DISTRICTS 2001-2002 FEDERAL CLASS SIZE REDUCTION PROGRAM**

These guidelines contain information for local educational agencies (LEAs) on how Federal Class Size Reduction Program funds can be used to improve student achievement by recruiting, hiring, and training certified classroom teachers to reduce class size in the early grades.

(Authority for this program is contained in section 310 of the Department of Education Appropriations Act, 2000, as enacted by section 1000(a) (4) of Division B of P.L. 106-113.)

The complete Federal Class Size Reduction Program guidance can be found at the following Internet site: <http://www.ed.gov./offices/OESE/ClassSize/guidance.html>

## **Introduction**

The goal of the Federal Class Size Reduction initiative is to help schools improve student achievement by adding additional, highly-qualified teachers to the workforce to ensure that class size -- particularly in the early grades -- is reduced to no more than 18 children per class. States will allocate 100 percent of the funds they receive to school districts to pay for salaries and provide other benefits for additional teachers to reduce class size in the early grades. Of these funds, school districts may use 100 percent for recruiting, hiring, and training new teachers and/or to pay the costs of professional development. No more than 3 percent may be used for local administration.

## **Integration with Other Programs**

In order to be most effective, the Class Size Reduction Program should work hand-in-hand with other federal, state, and local programs that have related purposes. Iowa instituted a Class Size/Early Intervention Program in 1999. School districts must use the Federal Class Size Reduction Program funds to supplement (and not replace) funds they receive from the Iowa initiative.

## **Iowa Early Intervention Program and Federal Class Size Reduction Program Similarities**

The goals of the Federal Class Size Reduction Program and the Iowa Early Intervention Program have many similarities. Therefore, school districts should consider how these funding sources could be combined and still meet regulations guiding the respective pieces of legislation. Similarities between the federal and state efforts include:

- Reducing class size in the regular classroom
- Focus on the lower grades
- Provide classroom teachers with quality professional development opportunities
- Report student progress to parents
- Require that LEAs use funds received to supplement, not supplant, funds currently received and used by the LEA.

## **Definitions**

Among the terms used in the authorizing statute, the following may need clarification. For the purposes of this program, the United States Department of Education will use the definitions below:

Early elementary grades - - For the purposes of this program, “early elementary grades” means grades kindergarten through three.

Teacher -- For the purposes of this program, "teacher":

- Includes teachers of regular classrooms, special education teachers, and teachers of children with special needs, such as those with disabilities or limited English proficiency.
- Does not include administrative or support personnel or teacher aides or paraprofessionals.
- Does not include guidance counselors, librarians, or other school professionals who do not provide direct classroom instruction in the core curriculum.

***Fully qualified teacher*** - - For the purposes of this program, “fully qualified teacher” means a classroom teacher who:

- Is certified within the State to teach the grade level and/or subject to which she or he is assigned;
- Has a baccalaureate degree; and
- Demonstrates the general knowledge, teaching skills, and subject matter knowledge required to teach in his or her content areas.

***Class size*** - - The Department of Education will apply the principles below in interpreting the term “class size.”

- The class size in a school may be determined by either the *average number* of students per regular class during the regular school day in each grade level in the school or the *maximum number* of children per regular class during the regular school day in each grade, whichever is consistent with State or local policy or practice.
- Only classroom teachers responsible for a child’s primary classroom instruction (i.e., where the core curriculum is taught) should be counted in determining class size.
- Pupil/teacher ratios, which typically include teacher aides, art, music or physical education teachers, support personnel, or specialists such as counselors or librarians cannot be used in determining class size.
- If an LEA is calculating an average class size, it should include any special education students who are integrated into regular classrooms. It should not count special education students who are not integrated into the regular classroom in calculations of regular class-size averages.

- States and school districts should follow state or local specifications of when and how to count the number of children per class.

## **Questions and Answers**

### **Q-1 What is the primary goal for an LEA receiving Class Size Reduction funds?**

For most LEAs, the first order of business will be to develop an approach to improving educational achievement for both regular and special needs children that includes hiring highly-qualified teachers and reducing the size of regular classrooms in the early grades to 18.

### **Q-2 For what purposes can a district spend federal dollars?**

First, the LEA may reserve no more than 3 percent of the funds for administrative costs.

Then: If schools in a LEA have a class size in grades kindergarten through three that is higher than 18 children:

- The LEA may use up to 100 percent of the funds it receives to recruit, hire (including payment of salaries and benefits), and train certified classroom teachers in order to reduce the class size for those grades.
- The LEA may use up to 100 percent of the funds for:
  - Providing professional development to teachers, consistent with Title II of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (See Q-3 below for further information on Title II.)
- If the LEA has already reduced class size in grades one through three to 18 or fewer children with highly-qualified teachers, it may use the funds to:
  - Make further class size reductions in grades kindergarten through three (or in other grades or subjects for LEAs that do not serve grades kindergarten through three);
  - Reduce class size in other grades; or
  - Carry out activities to improve teacher quality, including professional development.

If the LEA has already reduced class size in grades kindergarten through three to 18 or fewer children, but some of its teachers for those grades are not certified to teach in the classrooms to which they are assigned, the LEA must first develop and implement a plan with specific activities or programs that will ensure that all teachers in those grades will become fully certified within the shortest possible time period. After determining the amount of Class Size Reduction funds it will need to support these efforts, the LEA may use any remaining funds to:

- Make further class size reductions in grades kindergarten through three (or in other grades or subjects for LEAs that do not serve grades kindergarten through three);
- Reduce class size in other grades; or
- Carry out activities to improve teacher quality, including professional development.

**NOTE: the Federal Class Size Reduction application requires that school districts provide goals for the program. These goals may be the same as the Iowa Early Intervention program goals and must include one academic goal.**

**Q-3 How does an LEA determine if its professional development offerings are consistent with Title II of the Higher Education Act (HEA)?**

LEAs can coordinate with these Title II activities in numerous ways — by, for example, combining funds or conducting joint activities under the Class Size Reduction Program and HEA Title II to:

- Help teachers learn new skills that will help them take advantage of new options for instructional techniques that become available when class size is reduced.
- Prepare teachers to work with diverse student populations, including students with disabilities and limited English proficiency.
- Prepare teachers to work with parents in determining how best to help their children learn to high standards.
- Develop programs that can be used as recruitment incentives to attract highly-qualified teachers to high-poverty schools.
- In a coordinated effort with the Reading Excellence Act (REA) program, help teachers acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for effective reading instruction in the early grades.
- Provide high-quality pre-service clinical experience for student teachers who agree to teach in the LEA's schools after they earn their teaching credentials.
- Provide a mentoring program involving new and veteran teachers that involves interaction with faculty at nearby institutions of higher education.

More information regarding Title II of HEA can be found at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/heatqp/>.

**Q-4 In determining whether a LEA has "already reduced class size in the early grades to 18," is 18 students the absolute limit for each class or the average for schools in the LEA?**

Generally, each LEA may make this determination, consistent with its definition or interpretation of "class size." Class size may be determined for each school in the LEA by the average number of students per regular class for each grade level in the school or by the maximum number of children per regular class in each grade. It should not be determined by the average for the LEA as a whole.

**Q-5 Should a LEA spread its Class Size Reduction funds to as many schools as possible?**

No, a LEA is not required to spread these funds to all its schools. Instead, LEAs might find that the best results come from targeting the funds to the poorest schools, the lowest performing schools, or to the schools with the largest classes.

**Q-6 May a LEA use Class Size Reduction funds to reduce the size of classes for special education or special needs children?**

If the size of special education classes in the early elementary grades is higher than the target level of 18, the LEA may, of course, use these funds to reduce the size of those classes. If the LEA wishes to reduce special education classes to fewer than 18 children, it may do so once its regular classes in grades kindergarten through three have reached that goal.

Many children with special needs now receive their schooling primarily in regular classrooms. LEAs may also use these funds to pay professional development costs for regular classroom teachers to help them better serve children with disabilities and other special needs. LEAs may also use these funds to hire special education teachers to team teach with regular teachers in classrooms that contain both special education and regular students.

**Q-7 May LEAs use funds for administrative expenses?**

Yes, LEAs may use not more than 3 percent of their funds for local administrative costs. These costs may include expenses associated with the annual report that LEAs must issue under this program.

**Q-8 May LEAs use funds to pay any part of the salaries or benefits for teachers who are already employed?**

These funds are intended to bring additional teachers into a school district. No funds may be used to increase the salaries or provide benefits (other than participation in professional development and enrichment) for teachers who are, or have been, employed by the LEA. However, in the second or subsequent years of the program, after the LEA hires a teacher with Class Size Reduction funds, it may continue to use funds under this program each year to pay that teacher, so long as funds are appropriated by the Congress.

Teachers hired with the FY 1999 funds for the 2000-2001 school year may continue to be paid with the FY 2001 funds, provided that those teachers are certified by the beginning of the 2001-2002 school year. In addition, after the LEA hires a teacher with the Class Size Reduction funds, it may continue to use funds under this program each year to pay that teacher, so long as funds are appropriated by Congress.

**Q-9 May funds be used to train teachers who are already employed?**

Class size reduction can help improve student learning the most when teachers are well prepared with techniques for teaching in smaller classes. LEAs that have already reduced class size to 18 for grades kindergarten through three (or in other grades or subjects for LEAs that do not serve grades kindergarten through three) with highly-qualified teachers may choose to use all their program funds to train both new and experienced teachers. With respect to participation in professional development and enrichment programs, Class-Size Reduction funds may be used to pay stipends to teachers who are attending professional development programs during non-duty hours. Although no stipends may be provided for attending professional development during regular duty hours, Class-Size Reduction funds may be used to pay for a substitute teacher during such times. Also, LEAs must not violate the non-supplanting provision in section 310(c) (3) by using funds to pay stipends. Thus, if an LEA would not otherwise have

paid a stipend but for the availability of the Class-Size Reduction funds, it may use the Class-Size Reduction funds for this purpose.

#### **Q-10 What kinds of recruiting activities are allowable?**

LEAs will incur a variety of costs depending on their approach to recruiting and hiring, and the Department encourages them to be creative in designing recruitment activities in order to attract the highest-qualified teachers — particularly for high-poverty schools. Among the recruiting costs that would be allowable are:

- Advertising.
- Travel to schools of education to interview prospective teachers.
- Payment of hiring bonuses.
- Designing packages that will help attract teachers to high-poverty schools and providing the services included in the packages — including, for example:
  - Payment of college tuition for a prospective teacher who contracts to teach in the LEA's schools.
  - Paying moving expenses for a new teacher and his or her family to come to the school district.
  - Paying for new teachers to go through the certification process of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, after they have taught for the required period of time.
  - Paying for a mentoring program for new teachers that involve veteran teachers and faculty from nearby colleges and universities.
  - Assisting new teachers to obtain a higher-level degree.

#### **Q-11 What private school participation requirements apply to this program?**

LEAs must ensure equitable participation of teachers from private, nonprofit elementary and secondary schools in any professional development activities paid for with Class Size Reduction funds. In carrying out professional development activities, the LEA should follow section 6402 of the ESEA, which contains private school participation requirements applying to Title VI. Under these provisions, an LEA must engage in meaningful consultation with private school officials to determine the needs of a particular private school's teachers and the professional development activities that will meet those needs. The LEA then must provide those activities on an equitable basis to the private school teachers, regardless of whether the activities are the same as those that the LEA provides to the public school teachers. However, the equitable participation requirement does not apply to the activities of recruiting, hiring, and training teachers or testing new teachers and the funds may, therefore, not be used for these activities for private schools.

#### **Q-12 Are there requirements pertaining to "supplanting?"**

Yes, LEAs must use these federal funds only to supplement, and not to supplant, state and local funds that, in the absence of the federal funds, would otherwise be spent for activities authorized by the Class

Size Reduction Program. Thus, if the state or LEA has already instituted and is funding a class size reduction initiative, these federal funds must be used to supplement and not replace those state or local funds. More specifically, if state or local funds are made available for the purpose of recruiting, hiring, and training teachers in order to reduce class size, or providing professional development to teachers, the Federal Class Size Reduction Program funds may not be used to replace those state or local funds. An LEA that added State or local funds to its FY 2000 allocation, thus enabling it to pay the salary of a full-time teacher to reduce class size, may receive a higher allocation in FY 2001. Such an LEA may not decrease the amount of locally contributed funds for class-size reduction purposes in light of the increased allocation. Also, see Q-9.

**Q-13 Are there requirements pertaining to "maintenance of effort?"**

Yes, the maintenance of effort provisions in Title VI of the ESEA also applies to this program.

**Q-14 How does a small LEA reduce class size if it receives a relatively small allocation?**

The LEA may form a consortium with one or more other LEAs for the purpose of reducing class size. In addition, the consortium doesn't necessarily have to be with other small districts. If the LEA enters a consortium with a larger district, the arrangement could involve the sharing of funds for recruitment, training new teachers, or hiring a reading or math teacher who would be shared. Some of these same approaches might also work with other small LEAs.

If the small LEA already has a class size of 18 or fewer in grades kindergarten through three with highly-qualified teachers, it may use its funds, in consortia with the other LEAs, to:

- Make further class size reductions in grades kindergarten through three;
- Reduce class size in kindergarten or other grades; or
- Carry out activities to improve teacher quality, including professional development.

**Q-15 How does a state determine a new Teacher's starting salary?**

The average starting pay for a new Teacher in Iowa for 2001-2002 will be \$ 24,500 for those districts participating in the Teacher Quality initiative, not including employee benefits. (Please refer to Teacher Compensation on the Iowa Department of Education web site for more information on teacher salaries.) For those districts not participating in this initiative the minimum salary is \$23,000.

**Q-16 In a consortium arrangement, may one LEA hire a teacher while another uses funds for professional development?**

A consortium must follow the same rules for uses of funds as a single LEA. That is, up to 3 percent may be reserved for administrative costs; up to 100 percent may be used to recruit, hire, and train additional classroom teachers; or up to 100 percent may be used for testing new teachers and providing professional development. Within these parameters, the consortium may decide how its members will use the funds. If a member of the consortium has already reduced class size in grades kindergarten through three to 18 with highly-qualified teachers, it may use funds to: make further class size reductions in grades kindergarten through three; reduce class size in other grades; or carry out activities to improve teacher quality, including professional development.

**Q-17 What kind of accountability will there be for participating schools?**

Any school or school district receiving Federal Class Size Reduction funds must provide information to parents, taxpayers, and the state on how student achievement has been affected by hiring additional highly-qualified teachers and reducing class size. This information must be included in the annual progress report to the DE and to the community.

The following are some of the items that LEAs may wish to include in their reports:

- How class sizes were reduced with funds from this program—numbers of teachers hired, grades to which new teachers were assigned, and class sizes before and after the hiring of additional teachers;
- A description of the professional development that was provided through funds from this program, including programs to bring teachers to full certification, and information about the participants in the training, including staff from private, nonprofit schools within the LEA's boundaries, with numbers of teachers and grades taught;
- Comparison of student performance, and how this was measured, before and after class sizes were reduced.

**Q-18 Will the U.S. Department of Education conduct a national evaluation of the Class Size Reduction program?**

Yes, there will be a national evaluation. The U.S. Department will notify states and LEAs about their participation. The Department intends to include the basic information that States provide on sub-grantees to compile data on early implementation of the program, and will focus on a careful measurement of class size changes together with such issues as methods used by schools to reduce class size, the quality of the teachers hired, recruitment methods, and professional development provided.

**Q-19 How will federal funds be distributed to public school districts?**

States will allocate 100 percent of the funds they receive to eligible LEAs. The state of Iowa will receive \$12,781,129. Funds will be distributed to school districts based on poverty (80 percent) and school enrollment (20 percent).

**Q-20 When are the funds available?**

Funds will be distributed to Iowa school districts on or about October 16, 2000. School districts must apply to the Iowa Department of Education by September 25, 2001, in order to be eligible for payment of funds.

**Q-21 What funds will be available from the Federal Class Size Reduction Act for the 2002-2003 school year?**

At this time, no allocation has been made at the federal level to continue the program past the upcoming school year. The U.S. Department of Education will continue to advocate for continued and increased funding for this program.

**Q-22 Is an LEA that does not serve kindergarten through grade three eligible for funding under this program?**

LEAs that do not serve kindergarten through grade three are eligible to apply for funding under this program. In their applications for funding, these LEAs will need to specify the grade(s) and/or subject(s) for which they propose to use these funds to reduce class size. When they have achieved the class size

reduction goals specified in their applications, they may use class size reduction funds to further reduce class size in those same grades, reduce class size in other grades, or conduct activities to improve teacher quality.

**Q-23 May an LEA use funds to purchase classroom materials?**

An LEA may not use funds for classroom facilities or to provide classroom equipment such as chairs and computers.

**Q-24 How does a small LEA reduce class size if it receives a relatively small allocation?**

LEAs that receive an allocation smaller than that of the starting salary of a new, fully qualified teacher in the district have two options. They may use their allocation either to:

\*Help pay the salary of a full- or part-time certified teacher hired to reduce class size, which may be in combination with other Federal, State, or local funds; or

\*Carry out activities to improve teacher quality, including professional development.

**Q-25 May an LEA use funds for materials needed for professional development and new teacher training?**

Yes, materials for professional development and teacher training may be purchased with these funds, provided that the cost of these items is reasonable and necessary to the training program.

**Q-26 May funds be carried over in to the next year?**

Yes, funds received in Year 2 (2000-2001) may be carried over in to Year 3 or 2001-2002. It will be up to Congress to appropriate funds for Year 4.

**Q-27 Are there any new provisions to be met by the applicant in order to receive funds for 2001-2002?**

Yes. A new provision, section 427, requires that applicants include in their application a description of the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally-funded Class Size Reduction program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs.

This provision allows applicants discretion in developing the required description. The statute highlights six types of barriers that can impede equitable access or participation: gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. Based on local circumstances, you should determine whether these or other barriers may prevent your students, teachers, etc. from such access or participation in, the Federally-funded project or activity. The description in your application of steps to be taken to overcome these barriers need not be lengthy; you may provide a clear and succinct description of how you plan to address those barriers that are applicable to your circumstances. In addition, the information may be provided in a single narrative, or, if appropriate, may be discussed in connection with related topics in the application.

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