

## CLASS SIZE

### FLORIDA PTA POSITION

Florida PTA urges the Legislature to phase in maximum class size standards lower than those mandated by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and establish class size standards for Exceptional Student Education classes. The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to fully fund the capital, personnel and operation costs necessary to decrease to or maintain class sizes under these levels.

### Background

While Florida's population and home building industry have seen phenomenal growth, funding for education programs and school construction, have not kept pace with this growth. The last few years have seen a steady increase in class sizes and overcrowded schools. Florida currently ranks 44th in student-teacher ratios. The people of Florida have sent a clear message to the Legislature that smaller class sizes are a priority for the children of this state. The Miami Herald (October 2002) states, "Fewer students mean fewer disruptions, more time for each child, less stress on teachers. That's why private schools use class size as a major pitch."

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## Talking Points

- Smaller classes are more manageable and provide for an enhanced learning environment.
- Smaller classes allow for quality individual interaction between teacher and pupil.
- Smaller classes will allow teachers to address differences in individual learning styles.
- Students in smaller classes showed greater statistical and educational gains than those in experimental conditions. Kindergarten gains were maintained through the third grade. (Tennessee Study: Student Teacher Achievement Ration (STAR) Project - A four year study on the effects of class size on primary grade student achievement)

According to the Florida Legislature's nonpartisan Office of Economic and Demographic Research, lowering class sizes will cost \$8 - \$12 billion over seven years to implement.

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