Frequently Asked Questions

Background Information

In fall 2011, the provincial government made a commitment to reduce class sizes in Kindergarten to Grade 3 classrooms in school divisions across Manitoba. To facilitate implementation of this initiative this government enlisted the assistance of the provincial Oversight Committee, struck earlier that year to support the development of the new provincial report cards. The Oversight Committee is made up of representatives from stakeholder groups in education including representatives from Manitoba Teachers’ Society (MTS), Manitoba Association of Parent Councils (MAPC), Manitoba School Boards Association (MSBA), Manitoba Association of School Superintendents (MASS), Manitoba Association of School Business Officials (MASBO), and Manitoba Education.

In June 2012, the government accepted the following class size guidelines as recommended by the Oversight Committee:

- 90% of the K to 3 classrooms within a school division will be required to be cap compliant by having 20 or fewer students.
- 10% of K to 3 classrooms within a school division will be permitted to exceed the 20 pupil cap; however, no K to 3 classrooms will be permitted to exceed a class size of 23 pupils.
- Where Grade 3 students are combined with students in higher grades, those classrooms will be subject to a 23 student class size cap. These classrooms will not be counted in a school division’s 90-10 cap compliance count; however, divisions will be required to report publicly on the number of students in classrooms where Grade 3 students have been combined with students in higher grades.

The Class Tracker was implemented to help parents follow progress of class size reductions. On an annual basis, school divisions are required to report class sizes publicly, via their class size tracker, in early October. Beyond this point, if classes grow past the 90/10 ratio according to the class size guidelines, the class will not be adjusted during the school year, except for in exceptional situations. The following year, the classes will be readjusted to reflect the class size guidelines.

School divisions have five years to fully implement the initiative. This will mean that by September 2017, all K-3 classes will need to be in compliance with the guidelines.

1. What is the Class Tracker and where can I find it?

The Class Tracker is a data management tool which is located on your school or school division’s website. Every school will have its class sizes listed individually on the Tracker by early October each year.
2. Will funding be provided to school divisions for the additional teachers and classrooms that might be needed?

The government has committed up to $20 million dollars to make it possible for divisions to meet their staffing needs in K-3 classrooms and up to $85 million for additional classroom spaces.

3. Will the smaller class sizes in the K-3 result in large classes in grades 4 -8?

Additional funding is being provided to support the class size initiative for K-3 classes. It will be up to each division to determine how it will allocate the funding to support reduced class sizes in those grades. Principals have always done their best to make sure that all classes at each grade level are of a size and composition to optimize learning opportunities for all students. This will not change as a result of the initiative to cap K-3 classes.

4. What can I do if I think the number of students in my child’s class is too high?

Students move and change schools throughout the school year, so class sizes can fluctuate from month-to-month. As well, it’s important to remember this initiative will be implemented over the next five years, so each division will progress at a pace that is appropriate for the local situation. Once fully implemented in 2017, 10% of K to 3 classes in a school division may have classes with up to 23 students, as of early October that year. Beyond this point, if classes grow past the 90/10 ratio according to the class size guidelines, the class will not be adjusted during the school year, except for in exceptional situations. The following year, the classes will be readjusted to reflect the class size guidelines. Your school administrator will be able to help you with your question.

5. What progress was made on reducing class sizes in year one?

In the first year of the class size initiative, 79 teachers were hired in 31 school divisions, resulting in:

- a 20 per cent reduction in kindergarten to Grade 3 classes with 24 or more students,
- 11 per cent more kindergarten to Grade 3 classes that have 23 students or less, and
- 13.7 per cent more kindergarten to Grade 3 that have 20 students or less.

6. Will class composition be taken into account when K-3 classes are formed?

Class composition is taken into consideration when teachers and administrators develop class placements. Class composition will continue to be a factor in determining class configurations and class placements.
7. How will my child’s class size cap be determined if there are grade 3 students in higher grades such as grade 4, or grades 4 and 5, in a combined class?

The class size guidelines ensure that grade 3 students who are in a class configuration that includes higher grades (for example, a combined grades 3 / 4 class) have the same opportunities for learning as students in K-3 classes. These classes will have a cap of 23 students. It’s important to remember that these classes are not to be counted in a school division’s 90%-10% cap compliance count. However, divisions will be required to report publicly on the number of students in classrooms where Grade 3 students have been combined with students in higher grades.

8. If we have more classes, some schools will need new classroom spaces, will daycares or community rooms be used to create space for the extra classrooms?

The government and school divisions value the community and its use of the designated daycare spaces and community rooms. Pre-school age daycares spaces currently located in schools must not be displaced to accommodate the class size initiative. Plans for additional classroom spaces will be sensitive to the needs of the school community to ensure that community rooms are maintained to the greatest extent possible.