

Research on School Compositional Effects

By

Educational Policies Committee

Purpose of Research

- To provide the School Organization Ad Hoc with a review of the literature on the subject and give our recommendation based on this review

Focus of Research

- Review of the studies on the Impact of School size from the 1970's until today conducted in North America and Europe

Factors affected by School Size

- Students' academic achievement and engagement
- Teachers' Work Related Attitudes
- Economic Aspect

Research findings on optimal School Size

Elementary Schools

- Should be limited in size to about 500 students

Secondary Schools

- Should be limited in size to about 1000 students

Impact of Optimal School Size on Student Achievement and Engagement

- Academic gains in Math and reading
- Greater sense of belonging leading to higher motivation and involvement
- Better interpersonal relationships with staff and students and a stronger self esteem

Impact of Optimal School Size on Student Achievement and Engagement

- Better attendance
- Greater feeling of safety and security
- Positive perception of their school environment
- Fewer behavior problems, less bullying
- Lower drop-out rate

Impact of Optimal School Size on Student Achievement and Engagement

Research shows better student performance where there are fewer special programs but where a strong core curriculum is offered

Impact of Optimal School Size on Teachers' Work Related Attitudes

- Positive perception of their school's environment
- More collaboration, team teaching and more input from teachers in school decisions
- Better social interactions between students and teachers, and a feeling that teachers are interested in them

Economic Aspect

- Research found that decreases in cost per student were minimal once enrolments passed 1000 students. To the contrary, the per pupil cost tends to increase beyond a certain level
- Research does not support school consolidation of schools that already have 500 or more students

Summary and Recommendations

By dividing the mega high schools into Junior and Senior schools buildings, SWLSB was able to create four medium-sized schools

Summary and Recommendations

- If no other solution is possible, the school within school model may be another good solution to offset the impact of large schools
- However, this option comes with its own set of challenges. . .

Summary and Recommendations

- According to research, the challenge of such an approach is in

“obtaining sufficient separateness and autonomy to permit staff members to generate a distinctive environment and to carry out their own vision of schooling”

Summary and Recommendations

- Literature also suggests that the most effective schools do not offer a multitude of programs and electives. They offer a strong core curriculum using fewer electives, because too many elective courses and programs tend to stream and dilute the curriculum

Summary and Recommendations

- We recommend that in re-structuring the schools we take a close look at the program offerings and pathways offered
- It will also be essential to consolidate, streamline, strengthen and support the existing programs in order to change the present negative perception of one building versus the other