



A Union of Professionals

Class Size Resolutions

Federal Funds for Class-Size Reductions

WHEREAS, all the latest validated research confirms what all public school teachers have known "forever": small class sizes equals more individual attention and better education; and
WHEREAS, the now-famous Tennessee study and the latest California experiences have given empirical proof that significant reductions in class sizes result in major student gains in all grades, and in the primary grades in particular; and
WHEREAS, reducing class size costs money; and
WHEREAS, many districts do not have the local resources to fund reductions in class size; and
WHEREAS, the federal government has, under pressure from AFT lobbyists, increased its support for Title I and special education; and
WHEREAS, the level of federal support for mandated special education continues to fall dramatically short of the 50/50 formula needed to successfully implement Public Law 94-142:

**RESOLVED, that the AFT continue its efforts to gain additional funding for class-size reductions; and
RESOLVED, that the AFT renew and continue its efforts to get a 50/50 funding formula for the federal congressional special education mandate (94-142) so that more state and local revenues could be released to fund meaningful reductions in class size.** (Passed in 2002)

The Problem of Large Class Size

WHEREAS, many proposals on achieving excellence in education completely ignore the very important issue of class size; and
WHEREAS, mainstreamed children are often "lost" in large classes; and
WHEREAS, class size continues at unacceptably high levels in many districts throughout the nation; and
WHEREAS, many parents turn to private schools to find smaller classes; and
WHEREAS, smaller classes have been shown to encourage more creative and more successful teaching methods; and
WHEREAS, smaller classes allow for the kinds of activities that promote motivation as well as achievement; and
WHEREAS, smaller classes encourage the enforcement of positive self-discipline habits and promote student self-confidence; and
WHEREAS, the management of large classes often leads to early teacher burnout and discourages younger teachers from staying in the profession; and
WHEREAS, the prospect of dealing with large classes makes it difficult to recruit new teachers:

**RESOLVED, that AFT promotes federal aid formulae that reward districts which lower class sizes; and
RESOLVED, that the AFT Executive Council be urged to expend funds in the promotion of public information campaigns on behalf of the merits of smaller classes; and
RESOLVED, that the *American Teacher* continues to emphasize the class size issue and give intense publicity, whenever feasible, to successful small class size experiments and campaigns.** (Passed in 1984)

Class Size/Case Load

WHEREAS, a broad spectrum of public attention recently has been focused upon the compounding crises in public education after decades of insufficient funding; and
WHEREAS, several state and national legislative proposals have begun to address the adult issues of the insufficient funding and necessary educational reforms of the American public school system; and
WHEREAS, increased opportunity in providing quality instruction is contingent upon significant reductions in the currently excessive class sizes faced by the American public school teachers:

RESOLVED, that the American Federation of Teachers and its local affiliates work through legislative lobbying, official publications, and various educational programs to heighten public awareness of the necessity and educational benefits of smaller class size/case load; and
RESOLVED, that the American Federation of Teachers and its local affiliates work actively to incorporate into legislative proposals educational provisions designed to mandate significant reductions in class size/case load. (Passed in 1983)

Class Size

WHEREAS, recent research published by the Far West Regional Laboratory for Educational Research and Development concerning class size states that there is a "clear and strong relationship" between class size and pupil achievement; and
 WHEREAS, teachers know that classroom management problems decrease proportionately with class size; and
 WHEREAS, teachers can plan more effectively with smaller classes, and can give more individualized instruction:

RESOLVED, that the American Federation of Teachers lobby to obtain federal monies to decrease class size; and
RESOLVED, that the American Federation of Teachers encourage local unions to lobby their state legislatures for monies to decrease class size; and
RESOLVED, that the American Federation of Teachers urge local unions to bargain for class size limitations including penalties for violations) in their contracts with Boards of Education; and
RESOLVED, that the American Federation of Teachers publicize the special need for decreases in class sizes in the low socioeconomic areas. (Passed in 1979)

Class Size for Special Education

WHEREAS, class size is of paramount importance in the education of pupils; and
 WHEREAS, class size is extremely critical in the area of Special Education since handicapped children are especially in need of maximum individual attention:

RESOLVED, that for all special education programs, maximum class sizes should be negotiated by the collective bargaining representative of the teachers; and
RESOLVED, that where mainstreaming with regular pupils is involved that class size should not exceed the limits established for special education classes. (Passed in 1976)

Teacher/Student Ratio in Special Education Classes

WHEREAS, special education is an individualized instructional system; and
 WHEREAS, the special education instructor must evaluate all of the pupils assigned to his/her class on an individual basis; and
 WHEREAS, the special education instructor must provide the teaching and non-teaching personnel with the appropriate information and materials necessary for proper instruction; and
 WHEREAS, the decrease of one or more pupils does not diminish the total instructional operation involved:

RESOLVED, that the AFT strive to have the special education teacher/student ratio remain the same when a teaching assistant and/or other personnel is assigned to the classroom or to an individual students/students within the instructional framework of special education. (Passed in 1973)

Class Size

WHEREAS, in many school systems the term "average class size" is used; and
 WHEREAS, this average is arrived at by dividing the total enrollment by a number of "teachers" which may include some or all of the following: principals, assistant principals, counselors, nurses, audio-visual directors, librarians, supervisors, and other persons, some or all of whose time is assigned to duties other than classroom teaching; and
 WHEREAS, the widespread practice of publicizing these ratios misleads the public as to actual class size:

RESOLVED, that the American Federation of Teachers urge that the figures on class size used by school officials or given to the general public be realistic measures of the actual size of classes taught. (Passed in 1959)