

Class Size DOES Matter – Research Fact Sheet

March 11, 2008

Facts & Figures on Class Size in California

- **California has the largest student population in the nation (6.3 million in 2006-07), and employs more teachers than any other state in the nation (308,790 in 2006-07).**
-- California Department of Education, DataQuest (CBEDS data).
- **California ranks 49th nationally in teachers-per-pupil, with 47.6 teachers for every 1,000 students.**
-- NEA Rankings & Estimates, 2006-07 (2005-06 data).
- **Nearly all of California's public school districts (99%) participated in the K-3 Class Size Reduction Program in 2006-07, benefiting nearly 1.72 million students in over 90,000 classrooms, and reflecting the popular support of the program by families in local schools.**
-- California Department of Education website, CSR Program Fingertip Facts Page, URL: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/cs/k3/facts.asp>.
- **In 2005-06, 259 districts also participated in the Morgan-Hart Class Size Reduction program for 9th-graders, benefiting almost 450,000 students.**
-- California Department of Education, *Class Size Reduction in California High Schools: An Analysis of Survey Results for the 2006-07 Morgan Hart Program*, p.7 [URL: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/cs/mh/documents/csr06report.pdf>]

Research Shows that Class Size Reduction Improves Student Achievement

- **There is clear evidence that smaller class sizes raise student achievement, and the positive effect is even more prominent in schools serving predominantly low-income students.**
-- Jepsen, Christopher, Rivkin, Steven, *ClassSize Reduction, Teacher Quality and Academic Achievement in California Public Elementary Schools*, PPIC, 2002.
- **California's K-3 Class Size Reduction Program has lead to significantly better scores by students on National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) exams.**
-- Unlu, Faith, *California Class Size Reduction Reform: New Findings from the NAEP*, Princeton University Department of Economics, November, 2005.

- The Class Size Reduction Research Consortium concluded that California may have better served at-risk students by **focusing full funding for the program on the districts with the most challenging schools, thus providing an incentive to draw the best-qualified teachers to those schools.** The Quality Education Investment Act of 2006 has targeted its class size reduction efforts at California's schools of greatest need for this very reason.

-- *What We Have Learned About Class Size Reduction in California*, CSR Research Consortium Capstone Report, September, 2002.

- **Smaller classes benefit all students, but also help close the achievement gap – improving scores for African-American students by nearly 40% in one study.**

-- Krueger, Alan B., *Would Smaller Classes Help Close the Black-White Achievement Gap?*, Princeton University, Industrial Relations Section, Working Paper #451, March 2001

- **“Class size reduction is widely popular with parents and school staff, many of whom report marked improvements in classroom learning environments and working conditions for teachers.”**

-- *What We Have Learned About Class Size Reduction in California*, CSR Research Consortium Capstone Report, September, 2002.

- Smaller class sizes have also **improved future job earnings** for millions of students.

-- Krueger, Alan B., Princeton University Department of Economics, *The Class Size Debate*, Economic Policy Institute, 2002.

- A study of the long-term effects of Tennessee's K-3 class size program, Project STAR, found that **smaller classes increased high school graduation rates, especially among students eligible for free lunch.”**

-- “Small Classes in the Early Grades, Academic Achievement, and Graduating from High School,” *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 2005, Vol. 97, No. 2, 214-223.

- The official evaluation of Wisconsin's SAGE CSR program found that **smaller classes increased student achievement, upheld the gains through 3rd grade, and narrowed the achievement gap between African-American students and white students.**

-- Smith, Philip, Molinar, A., and Zahorik, John A., *Class Size Reduction in Wisconsin: A Fresh Look at the Data*, Education Policy Studies Laboratory (EPSL-0309-110-EPRU), September, 2003.