

Written Testimony
HB 1074 - Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size
House Ways and Means Committee
February 28, 2020

SUPPORT

Good afternoon Chair Kaiser and members of the Committee. On behalf of the 20,000 state, municipal, and public education workers residing in Maryland, AFT-Maryland asks for a favorable report for HB 1074.

This bill would repeal the prohibition on teachers negotiating on class size in their collective bargaining agreements. An issue that directly affects the workload of teachers and paraprofessionals on the job, in addition to student performance.

Teachers will attest that smaller class size makes it possible for more individual instruction, less time consuming paperwork and fewer classroom disruptions. Disruptions that can make it difficult for students to learn. This is backed by research that shows elementary students are better behaved in classes with less students. Smaller classes in combination of good behavior, leads to better academic performance of students in the first three years of school.¹

In fact, the Tennessee Project Student-Teacher Achievement Ratio (STAR) Study,² a comprehensive analysis on class size, showed higher student performance in smaller classes. It used a large sampling of randomly selected students from urban, suburban and rural elementary schools. It found students in smaller classes performed better than those in larger ones.

¹ Finn, J. D., Pannozzo, G. M., & Achilles, C. M. (2003). The "why's" of class size: Student behavior in small classes. *Review of Educational Research*, 73(3), 321-368. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/docview/214116902?accountid=11311>

² Word, E., Achilles, C. M., Bain, H., Folger, J., Johnston, J., & Lintz, N. (1990). Project STAR final executive summary: Kindergarten through third grade results (1985-89). *Contemporary Education*, 62(1), 13. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/docview/1291719198?accountid=11311>

Results from the STAR Study were later replicated by the Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE) program by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM).³ The five-year program included students in high poverty neighborhoods across 21 school districts. After one year, students in smaller classes scored higher in reading, language arts, and mathematics.

Educators negotiate virtually all aspects of their positions – pay, benefits, days off and work hours. The number of students in a class determines an educator’s work load and hours on the job. Therefore, it should be on the table when negotiating a contract and should be used to improve student performance.

For these reasons we ask for a favorable report on HB 1074.

Marietta English
President

³ Dokumaci, E., Sim, G., Steele, C., Suchor, K., & Vadas, J., (2015). SAGE Program Evaluation Final Report 2015. Milwaukee, WI: Value-Added Research Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison.