

## Middle School Class Sizes: A comparison

The following data shows the school class sizes of the core courses (Math, English, Social Studies, Science and eighth grade World Language) at each of the middle schools.

	<b>RMS Grade 7</b>	<b>RMS Grade 8</b>	<b>NMS Grade 7</b>	<b>NMS Grade 8</b>	<b>HMS Grade 7</b>	<b>HMS Grade 8</b>
<b># of classes</b>						
<b>&lt;20 students</b>	4	23	8	11	30	15
<b>% of classes</b>	8%	47%	10%	14%	48%	22%
<b>20-25 students</b>	16	19	22	15	30	15
<b>% of classes</b>	30%	39%	28%	19%	48%	37%
<b>26-30 students</b>	28	6	29	27	3	18
<b>% of classes</b>	53%	12%	37%	34%	4%	26%
<b>&gt;30 students</b>	5	1	20	26	0	10
<b>% of classes</b>	9%	2%	25%	33%	0%	15%
<b>Total Classes</b>	53	49	79	79	63	68

In reviewing the data above, it is important to understand a significant demographic change that was made this year. Beginning in the fall of 2011, Rolling Hills Elementary students were redistricted from Holland Middle School (HMS) to Richboro Middle School (RMS). This was done to increase the number of students at RMS, which had a very low enrollment. This redistricting brought fewer students to the seventh grade teams at HMS, but additional teachers still had to be maintained for the larger 8<sup>th</sup> grade population, so the staffing was higher in relation to the student enrollment. This situation will be remedied in 2012-2013, when several core area teaching positions will be eliminated, and possibly staff in some of the other non-core areas as well. According to Superintendent Mark Klein, this should result in substantial savings for the school district, but the amount can't be accurately calculated until all staffing needs across the district are addressed.

Evaluating the current sixth and seventh grade populations indicates that next year the enrollments at HMS and RMS should be roughly equivalent, at around 502 at HMS and 557 at RMS. Each school will continue to have four teams in total – two for each grade. It should be noted, however, that the number of classrooms in the two schools is significantly different: HMS has 43 in total with no trailers, and RMS has 28, which includes 3 trailers. Hopefully, the negative aspects of low enrollment which occurred at RMS, such as number of participants available for extra-curricular activities, will not be felt by HMS in the coming years.

The chart above also illustrates the large number of sections with over 30 students at Newtown Middle School (NMS). Historically, NMS has always had a greater number of classes run at this level than the other two schools. According to Mr. Klein, the enrollment numbers for NMS (currently 880 students) will be stable for the next few years and then will see a decrease in student population (when the current fourth grade enters middle school). While Mr. Klein realizes that the school is pushing the limits of ideal team size, to date NMS has been able to successfully schedule all classes and, while not perfect, the larger class sizes have not impacted the quality of the education received.

Citizens For Education will continue to look at the class size levels over the next few years to determine if the anticipated natural population decline addresses the class size issue at NMS.