

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Class size changes what is taught

Imagine the president of a university stating, as Ray Ferrero Jr. did in the article on the proposed Amendment 9, that “changing class size without changing what is taught, how it’s taught or by whom it’s taught will have no appreciable result.”

As a former high school teacher, I think that kind of logic is faulty and insulting. Class size itself changes what is taught and how it is taught. My class sizes varied from 18 to 43. While the basic curriculum remains, individual help, supplementary information and activities, and teaching time in general suffer.

Does anyone honestly believe that quality of learning and teaching is no different in classes of 20, 30 or 40 students? Today’s classes demand more disciplinary action and constant crowd control, whether the students are 5 years

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old or 17 years old, thanks to the students’ increasing lack of respect for authority.

Bigger classes mean more problems. This is true for new teachers and veteran teachers. Both groups are leaving the profession in unprecedented numbers, as they are, as was stated, “set up to fail” by factors such as these.

Other letter writers have suggested that the school systems or principals determine the class sizes. But, they, too, are slaves to the budget, and class sizes are sacrificed long before the school

doors ever open in the fall.

Teachers can be surplus weeks into the school year if the school doesn’t meet its projected enrollment, and class sizes balloon to accommodate the loss. The only way reasonable class sizes can be ensured is by law.

It is insulting to teachers, principals and the public’s intelligence to suggest that an increase in teachers leads to an increase in incompetence, and a decrease in class sizes will have little to no effect.

The only decrease the politicians who make such assertions are worried about is the decrease in their budget, which has been long wasted at the expense of their future constituency — the students themselves.

SARAH L. DUNCAN,
medical journal editor,
Jacksonville