

FY 2008 QUESTION NUMBER: 40

QUESTION:

Provide information on why MCPS does not include special education students in the head count for determining maximum class size.

BUDGET PAGE REFERENCE: NA

ANSWER:

Elementary class sizes are determined by each school's organization plan. Because staffing is allocated by separate budgets – K-12 for general education and special education for students with coded disabilities – class size for elementary schools is based on its general education population. Past budget initiatives, including smaller class size and the elimination of combination classes, have enabled most schools to remain within class size guidelines with the inclusion of special education students. Included special education students often are accompanied by a special education teacher or instructional assistant. So, even when mainstreaming causes the class to be oversized for some portion of the school day, there are often several staff in that classroom. In those cases where inclusion creates an imbalance, the supervisor of special education and the Office of School Performance work with the principal and the school to meet the needs of all students. Where such an arrangement cannot be worked out, the Office of School Performance has provided the school with additional staffing.