

Now is the Time to Monitor Grade Span Adjustment Classes

Most local educational agencies (LEAs) have concluded the third or fourth attendance accounting month (these usually do not align with calendar months). As a result, LEAs now have at least three and perhaps four measurements of average class sizes. Now is the time for an LEA's staffing team (typically the leaders of the business, human resources and instructional divisions) to collaboratively review these averages by school. Grade Span Adjustment (GSA) funding for transitional kindergarten (TK) through grade 3 is based on monthly averages up to P-2. If an LEA has schools that are out of compliance after the second or third month, it will need to develop and implement a plan to decrease those averages during the remaining months up to P-2.

LEAs have two options regarding TK-3 GSA. The first option is to maintain an average class enrollment of not more than 24 across the aggregate of TK-3 classrooms per school. The second option is for those schools not at the annual average of 24 students to make adequate annual progress toward that schoolwide aggregate average.

The TK-3 GSA calculation is not about staffing ratios; it is about actual enrollment on each month's measurement day, computed by school. The calculation is simple and straightforward. See the CDE's instructions at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/lc/lcffffaq.asp#K3GSA>.

Now is the time for LEAs to carefully monitor the data by school and discuss plans for the upcoming months. LEAs should not wait until the sixth or seventh attendance accounting months to make changes because by then it may be too late to reasonably influence the average and ensure that the LEA's GSA funding is not jeopardized.

LEAs that are fortunate enough to have locally-bargained alternative language regarding GSA and TK-3 class size may have less cause for concern. However, although the alternative language may in some cases save an LEA from state-imposed funding penalties, some alternative language is still enrollment-based and thus requires monitoring to ensure ongoing compliance with the bargaining agreement.

Charter schools automatically receive the GSA funding regardless of compliance with or progress toward the 24-student average.

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In addition, the following information should be kept in mind:

- Adequate annual progress (the target) for TK-3 GSA is based on the LCFF gap funding percentage. For 2015-16, the May revision to the governor's budget proposed an LCFF gap funding percentage of 53.08%; the enacted state budget LCFF gap funding percentage is 51.52%. LEAs may use either gap funding percentage to compute TK-3 GSA targets.
- Unlike the previous K-3 class size reduction program, there is no separate reporting requirement to the state to generate funding or monitor compliance for the TK-3 GSA. During the annual audit, an LEA's external auditors will review the calculations and test for compliance. Pursuant to the 2015-16 K-12 audit guide (<http://eaap.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/2015-16-Audit-Guide-.pdf-version.pdf>), the auditors will review the LEA's calculation of progress and sample school enrollment data to determine whether the target was reached, or whether the average TK-3 class size was 24. The auditors will report compliance conditions by school. If just one school site is out of compliance, all of the GSA funding (approximately \$380 per TK-3 student) will be disallowed for the entire LEA.
- TK classes and grades 3-4 combination classes are included in the calculation. However, only K-3 students are funded through GSA.

FCMAT encourages LEAs to begin and/or continue monitoring TK-3 GSA compliance now and make adjustments as needed to ensure adequate funding for these students.

Sources: California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Sections 15498 through 15498.3; Education Code sections 42238.02, et.seq.