



Halton District School Board

Wayne Joudrie, *Director of Education*

Bruce Jones, *Chair of the Board*

May 3, 2010

Dear Parents:

Over the past few years the Ministry of Education has increased funding to Boards of Education to reduce class sizes in Junior Kindergarten – Grade 3 classrooms. This is a very positive initiative as it supports ongoing and quality assessment of student learning and progress, allows for increased individual and small group instruction in the classroom and more frequent communication between teachers and home.

All schools in the Halton District School Board have been working to ensure compliance with this Primary Class Size initiative as required by the Ministry of Education. For the school year 2010 - 2011 the Ministry expects that 90 percent of JK to Grade 3 classes across the Halton District School Board will have a student teacher ratio of 20:1. The remaining 10 percent of classes will have class sizes no greater than 23:1.

Beginning in Fall 2010, the full-day Kindergarten program (Early Learning Program) will be offered in 11 Halton public schools. The Primary Class Size initiative does not apply to these classes. The ratio for this newly funded program will be 26:2, with two educators -- a teacher and an Early Childhood Educator -- working with students.

For our Board to be fully compliant with this Ministry expectation, many schools may need to reorganize their **JK – Grade 8 classes** after the start of school in September and may have a change in staffing. This reorganization is required to ensure full implementation of the Primary Class Size initiative. Principals do not have the option of **not** reorganizing in these situations.

Due to the increasing need to reorganize classes across many of our schools, parents should be aware that:

- It will not be practical for schools to communicate the specific name of your child's teacher for September.
- There is a possibility your child will be involved in a class reorganization and may have a change of class or teacher in September.
- It is possible that individual students may move classes to achieve the 20:1 ratio
- To accurately assess our enrolments and class sizes once school begins, reorganizations may take until the last week of September to finalize.
- To adhere to the Ministry expectation of 20:1 class size there will be an increase in the number of blended classes in our schools. i.e. combining two grades in one classroom.

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When schools reorganize and assign students to different classes, the Principal and staff consider many issues including:

- ensuring that compliance to 20:1 class size is met in our new classes
- instructional groupings
- gender balance (boy/girl)
- social relationships

One of the most significant challenges in a reorganization involves our JK /SK classes. We recognize parents have made decisions about day care on the alternate days. Parents must realize that a student attending Monday/Wednesday program may be changed to a Tuesday/Thursday program. Principals will attempt to provide parents with sufficient time to make alternate daycare arrangements should this situation arise.

Although reorganization at this time of year creates some challenges, the benefits of ensuring smaller class sizes in all our schools improves the quality of the learning experience for our students.

We hope this information helps families better understand the potential and the reasons for September reorganizations in our schools.

Sincerely,



Wayne Joudrie
Director of Education
Halton District School Board