

BCTF Research Report

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Estimated funding required to restore the loss of specialist teachers since 2001–02, and to meet Bill 33 provisions for class size and composition

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This research report examines the loss of specialist teaching positions in the public education system in BC since 2001–02, and the extent to which students are in classes that exceed the legislated limits for class size and composition.

Government policy directions over the last six years have eroded the overall learning and working conditions of students and teachers and put vulnerable students at risk of not completing their education. This report estimates the funding required to restore specialist teacher positions to 2001–02 levels and fully implement Bill 33, ensuring both that all Grades 4 to 12 classes have 30 or fewer students, and that no class has more than three students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Based on the estimates presented in this report, up to \$183,194,751 in additional funding is required to meet the legislated class size and composition limits of Bill 33 and to restore specialty teaching positions to 2001–02 levels.

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1. Estimated funding required to restore lost specialist teaching positions

In 2002, protection for specialist teaching positions was removed from the provincial collective agreement. This compounded the loss of specialist teachers resulting from government cutbacks in education funding, starting in 2002–03. Specialist teaching categories have not been restored to 2001–02 levels.

Table 1 shows that between 2001–02 and 2006–07, the public education system in BC experienced a net loss of 1,052.81 FTE specialist teacher positions in Special Education (-608.62), English as a Second Language (-186.63), Library Services (-175.23), and Counselling (-82.33) programs. After adjusting for a 6% decline in FTE school-age student enrolment between 2001–02 and 2006–07, there remains a net loss of 989.64 FTE specialist teaching jobs.

To restore these positions would require hiring 572.10 FTE Special Education teachers, 164.72 FTE Teacher-Librarians, 175.43 FTE English as a Second Language teachers, and 77.39 FTE Counsellors, at an estimated annual salary cost of **\$63,217,214**, based on 2007–08 average salary rates for teachers, excluding benefits.

Table 1: Loss of FTE specialist teaching positions: 2001-02 and 2006-07

Program	Net loss FTE teachers¹ <i>(01-02 to 06-07)</i>	% Loss FTE teachers <i>(01-02 to 06-07)</i>	# FTE teachers to restore to 2001-02 levels² <i>(Adjusted for enrolment decline)</i>	Estimated cost to restore positions³
Special Education ⁴	-608.62	15%	572.10	\$ 36,545,176
Library Services	-175.23	19%	164.72	\$ 10,522,149
English as a 2 nd Language	-186.63	18%	175.43	\$ 11,206,293
Counselling	-82.33	8%	77.39	\$ 4,943,596
Total	-1,052.81		989.64	\$ 63,217,214

¹ Calculated from Ministry of Education, Form 1530 Staffing Data, 2001–02 to 2006–07 (equivalent data for 2007–08 not available at time of writing). Note: 2001–02 staffing levels include PCA Trust positions.

² Loss of FTE teachers adjusted to reflect a 6% decline in enrolment of FTE school-age students from 2001–02 to 2006–07. Source: BC Ministry of Education. Student Statistics: 2001–02 to 2005–06, p.4 and 2003–04 to 2007–08, p.2.

³ Adjusted loss of FTE teaching positions x 2007–08 average teacher's salary (includes all allowances but excludes benefits) for 2007–08 = \$63,879. Source: BC Ministry of Education. Teacher Statistics: 2003–04 to 2007-08: Full Year Summary Report, Province-Public Schools Only, January 2008, p.3.

⁴ 2001–02 Special Needs staffing levels included 1.04-Learning Assistance, 1.13-Special Health Services, 1.16-Severe Behaviour, 1.17-High Incidence-Low Cost, 1.18-Low Incidence-High Cost, 1.19-Dependent Handicapped, 1.32-Gifted, 1.33-Hospital/Homebound, and 1.45-Identification/Planning.

2. Estimated funding required to meet class size and composition requirements under Bill 33

Bill 33, passed by the provincial legislature in May 2006, amended the School Act to limit class-size for Grades 4 to 12 to 30 students, and limit class-composition to a maximum of 3 students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) per class. New funding was not provided to implement the legislated limits. As a result, thousands of students are still in classes which exceed the legislated requirements. This section of the report estimates, based on the limited data available, the number of students affected and the funding that would be required to fulfill the class size and composition limits.

a. Bill 33 requirement for a maximum class size of 30 students

In 2007–08, 3,179 Grades 4 to 12 classes in British Columbia schools exceeded the legislated requirement of 30 students per class. Most of these (3,015 classes) affect high school students.

Table 2 shows that, based on estimates derived from Ministry of Education data, 271.5 additional classes are required to place the estimated 8,145 students who are currently in classes exceeding the class limit of 30 students. This would involve hiring 27.7 elementary and 243.8 high school FTE teachers to meet the legislated maximum class size of 30 for all students.

The estimated cost of hiring these teachers at 2007–08 average salary rates, excluding benefits is **\$17,343,148**.

Table 2: Estimated cost of meeting class size limit of 30 students (Grades 4 to 12) in British Columbia public schools

	Estimated # classes with >30 students ⁵	Estimated # students ⁶ in classes >30	# Additional classes & teachers required for all classes ≤30 students	Estimated cost to meet Bill 33 class size limit ⁷
Grades 4 to 7	164	830	27.7	\$ 1,769,448
Grades 8 to 12	3,015	7,315	243.8	\$ 15,573,700
Total	3,179	8,145	271.5	\$ 17,343,148

⁵ Source: BC Ministry of Education. Overview of Class Size and Composition in British Columbia Public Schools: 2007–08, December 2007, p.1–2.

⁶ These numbers are approximations derived from visual charts depicting number of classes exceeding 30 students published by the BC Ministry of Education. Overview of Class Size and Composition in British Columbia Public Schools: 2007–08, December 2007, p.1. The report does not provide raw data.

⁷ Cost estimate is based on average teacher's salary (includes all allowances but excludes benefits) for 2007–08 = \$63,879. Source: BC Ministry of Education. Teacher Statistics: 2003–04 to 2007–08: Full Year Summary Report, Province-Public Schools Only, January 2008, p. 3.

b. Bill 33 requirements that classes not exceed three students with an IEP

In the 2007–08 school year, at least 141 K to 3, and 10,172 Grades 4 to 12 classes, have 4 or more students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP), exceeding the legislated limit of a maximum of 3 IEP students per class.

Table 3 shows that an estimated 4,820 students with IEPs are currently in classes with 4 or more IEP students. This includes 141 K to 3 students, 3,764 Grades 4 to 7 students, and 915 Grades 8 to 12 students (assuming an average of 7 classes per high-school student). This is likely an underestimate, as it assumes only 1 extra student in classes with more than 3 IEP students. In reality, some of these classes may have 5 or more IEP students.

Assuming these students could not be placed in classes that currently have less than 3 IEP students; an additional 1,606.7 FTE teachers would be needed to provide sufficient classes across British Columbia to ensure that students are receiving the legislated teacher-student ratio for students with special needs.

The estimated cost of hiring these required additional teachers at 2007–08 average salary rates, excluding benefits, would be **\$102,634,389** for the year.

Table 3: Estimated cost⁸ of ensuring all students with an IEP are in classes with three or fewer students (as required by Bill 33)

	# classes >=4 IEP students ⁹	Estimated # students ¹⁰ with IEP affected	# Extra classes & teachers required to meet <=3 IEP students	Estimated cost to meet Bill 33 limit of <=3 IEP students ¹¹
Grades K to 3	141	141	47	\$ 3,002,313
Grades 4 to 7	3,764	3,764	1,254.7	\$ 80,148,981
Grades 8 to 12	6,408	915	305	\$ 19,483,095
Total	10,313	4,820	1,606.7	\$ 102,634,389

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⁸ The following assumptions were made to estimate the number of teachers required to ensure all students are in classes with a maximum of three IEP students: (1) that Grades 8–12 IEP students reflect the proportion of Grades 8–12 to Grades 4–12 students with special needs 2007–08 (0.63); (2) that Grades 8 to 12 students take an average of 7 classes; and (3) that it is not possible to place IEP students who are currently in >=4 classes in current classes with <3 IEP students.

⁹ Sources: BC Ministry of Education. Overview of Class Size and Composition in British Columbia Public Schools 2007–08. Dec. 2007, p.3. and BC Ministry of Education. Student Statistics: 2003–04 to 2007–08, p.7 (Special Education Students in Public Schools).

¹⁰ This is an estimate of the minimum number of students affected, based on number of classes, as the Ministry of Education report does not provide the actual number of IEP students in classes with >=4 IEP students. Source: BC Ministry of Education. Overview of Class Size and Composition in British Columbia Public Schools: 2007–08. December 2007, p.3.

¹¹ Cost estimate is based on average teacher’s salary (includes all allowances but excludes benefits) for 2007–08 = \$63,879. Source: BC Ministry of Education. Teacher Statistics: 2003–04 to 2007–08: Full Year Summary Report, Province-Public Schools Only, January 2008, p.3.