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STATE OF NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Katherine Dockweiler.

Nevada State Board of Education

FROM: Megan Peterson, Deputy Superintendent for Student Investment Division

DATE: February 3, 2025

SUBJECT: Report to the State Board of Education: Programs for Class Size Reduction in Fiscal Year 2025

Introduction

Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 388.700 outlines requirements intended for the reduction of student to teacher ratios for kindergarten through third grade through the development of annual Class Size Reduction (CSR) plans developed at the district level, and various quarterly, annual, and biennial reporting requirements; charter schools are excluded from these requirements. NRS 388.720 requires that school districts, together with the recognized associations representing licensed educational personnel, to develop a plan to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio within the limits of available financial support and submit that plan to the State Board. The Nevada Department of Education provided the template for this report on July 19, 2024, with a submission deadline of October 1, 2024.

The fiscal year 2025 (FY25) Report to the State Board: Programs for Class Size Reduction (Annual CSR Report) was completed by school districts to include identification of their class size reduction plan, their projected district-level class size ratios by grade, their anticipated number of variances by grade, narrative related to the district plan to reduce class size ratios, and certification of the plan by both the superintendent of the district and the relevant education association. The district plan included four prompts: the first to describe the district's strategies to meet class size ratios; the second to describe strategies to mitigate the impact of class sizes; third, to describe the anticipated use of funds; and last to identify goals for the 2024-25 school year.

On a quarterly basis, school districts are required to report the Average Daily Enrollment (ADE) of pupils and the number of licensed teachers designated to teach on a full-time basis in classes where core curriculum is taught, broken down by school, grade level, and classroom configuration. Per NRS 388.700, only licensed personnel teaching core curriculum classes may be counted for the class size ratio calculation; teachers of art, music, physical education, special education, librarians, and specialists may not be included for calculation purposes.

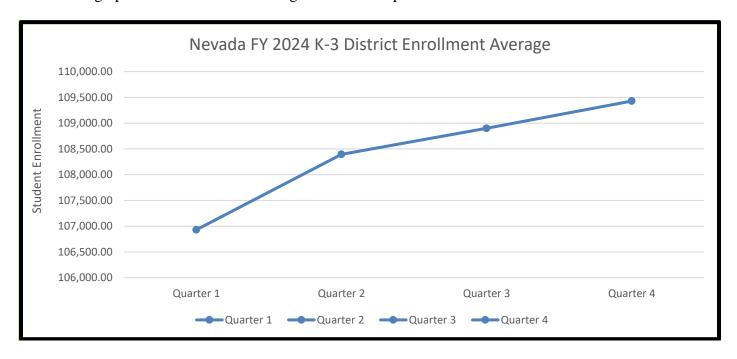
Each school that exceeds their target pupil-teacher ratio must request a variance for the next quarter of the school year, which the Nevada State Board of Education may approve for good cause. Good cause may include, but is not limited to, facility limitations, difficulty hiring, or funding limitations. Each variance must include the justification for the variance and a plan of action specific to that school to reduce the class size ratio.

Class Size ratios under the regular and alternative plan are as follows:

Regular Plan				
As prescribed in NRS 388.700(1)				
Kindergarten	First Grade	Second Grade	Third Grade	
16:1	16:1	16:1	18:1	
Alternative Plan				
As prescribed in NRS 388.720(2); Available for counties with populations less than 100,000				
Fifth-Sixth Grades within elementary schools only				
Kindergarten	First-Third Grades	Fourth Grade	Fifth-Sixth Grades	
16:1	22:1	25:1	25:1	

Enrollment

According to the FY24 ADE reports, enrollment across all grades statewide increased from 466,011 students in Q1 to 468,214 students in Q4. Approximately 28% of this enrollment is for grades kindergarten through third. Of the K-3 enrollment across the state, 83% of that enrollment is in district schools, with 17% in charter schools. The graph shown below charts the growth in each quarter for K-3 district enrollment statewide.



Districts on alternative plans also submit enrollment and educator counts for grades 4-6, however, only if those grades are within an elementary school. Because this data is not statewide, nor inclusive of all grades 4-6 within a given district, the averages are not meaningful reflections of ratios or the barriers to target ratios across the state. For context, 23% of statewide enrollment is for grades 4-6, approximately 107,573 students. Of the 4-6 enrollment across the state, 17% of enrollment is in charter schools. Of the 89,579 students enrolled in district schools in Q4, only 7,259 were reported for class size reduction purposes, 8% of district 4-6 enrollment.

Classrooms and Ratios

It is important to note that reporting a single grade ratio of 21:1 in a school does not contextualize the circumstance for the grade, school, or district. A ratio of 21:1 indicates five students over the ratio; however, it matters whether there are two kindergarten classrooms in the school (a total of ten students exceeding the ratio) or ten classrooms, leaving 50 students over the recommended ratio.

To provide additional context regarding the status of educators in relation to class size reduction, the Department developed a formula to assess the total number of students that would be without a classroom if Nevada were to limit each of its existing district classrooms to the regular plan target ratios:

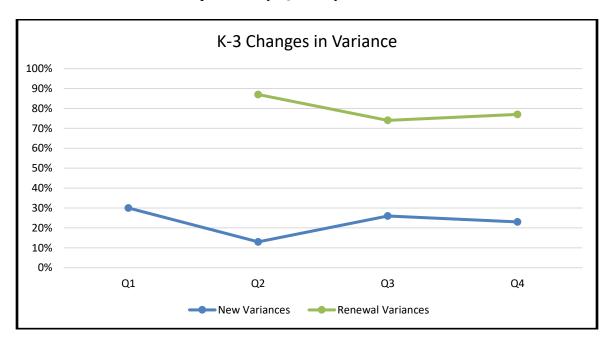
(School-Level Grade Enrollment / Target Ratio = Educator Equivalent) (Educator Equivalent – Count of all Teachers = Quotient of Educators Needed) (Quotient of Educators Needed x Target Ratio = Students without a Classroom)

The final number is calculated after removing classrooms with capacity to accept further students, as including these numbers assume that a student in one school over the target ratio could be moved to another school with greater capacity; however, this would mean potentially moving students into districts across the state which is impractical.

This formula found that in FY24, there would be approximately 20,120 students in grades K-3 – 18.5% of all district students – would be without a classroom. This does not account for K-3 students enrolled in charter schools with unknown ratios that make up an additional 17% of the Nevadan K-3 population.

Variance Requests

In Q1 of FY24, there were 1,034 variance requests; in Q4, there were 1,060. When reviewing variances, it is important to note that the majority of variances qualified as renewals. The following chart illustrates the general stability of variance requests; Q1 numbers were set to baseline for FY24, with the majority of fluctuation aligning with enrollment trends across quarters. By Q4 nearly all documented variances were stabilized.



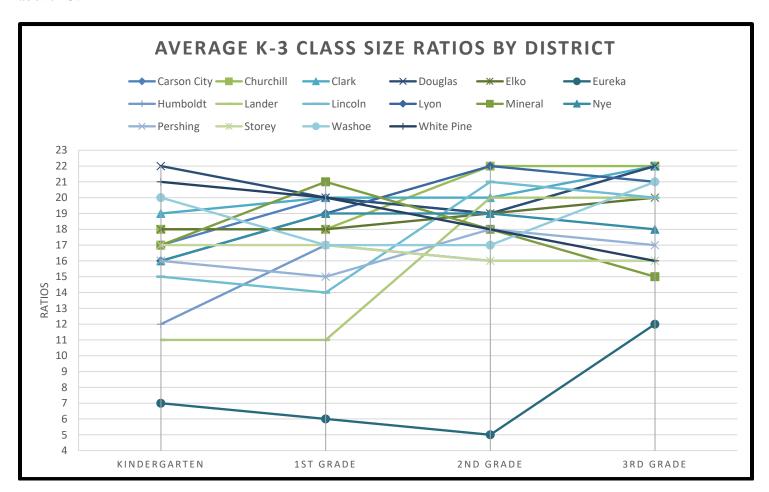
Districts may report one or more reasons for their variance request including: facility limitations, difficulty hiring, funding limitations, or other. On average, 93% of all variance requests throughout the year cited difficulty hiring, reflective of the increase in teacher shortages due to retirement, attrition, and decreases in recruitment and retention. 91% cited funding limitations, most often describing insufficient funds to build classrooms, hire competitively, and/or generally expand programs, linking closely with cited issues of difficulty hiring and facility limitations. 80% of variance requests cited facility limitations, which typically reflect a lack of space to provide physical classrooms. Each variance may select multiple causes for the variance, and for many all three are selected.

Class Size Ratios

The statewide calculations for average class size ratios are difficult to assess, as differing target ratios, population densities, and reporting schools within the data set create distinct contexts that may not be encapsulated in a single number. Since districts are required to report for all K-3 classrooms, average statewide class size ratios were calculated for grades kindergarten through third using a weighted average based on the representative district's population per quarterly average daily enrollment report. This number has been averaged again across each quarter to determine the 2023-24 school year average class size ratio, rounded to whole numbers.

Weighted Statewide Average Class Ratios				
K	1	2	3	
19	19	20	22	

The chart below illustrates the average FY24 class size ratios for each grade within each district, for all ratios above 15:



Carson City School District

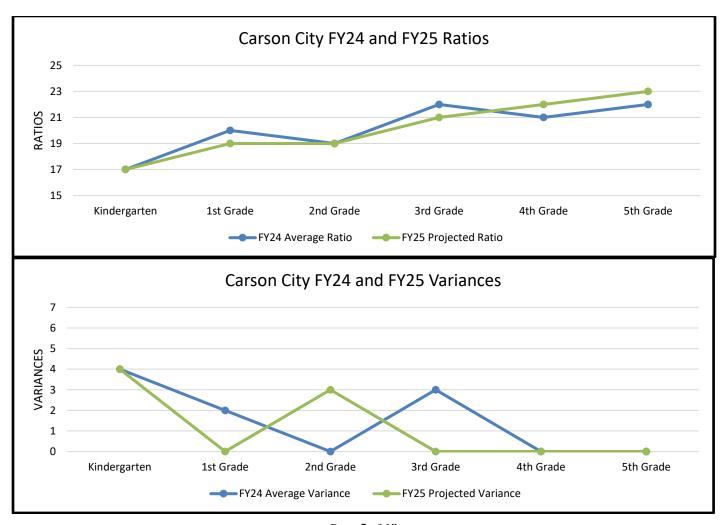
For the 2024-25 school year, Carson City School District (Carson City SD) applied for an alternative calendar beginning August 19, 2024, and ending June 5, 2025. Throughout FY24, Carson City SD had an average student enrollment of 7,030, making them eligible to apply for an alternative class size reduction program for FY25.

In their 2024-25 CSR Plan, Carson City SD reported a focus on teacher recruitment and retention, to include implementing competitive salary and benefit packages to attract and retain high-quality teachers. This will include financial incentives, including a new program offering reimbursement for alternative route to licensure (ARL) ARL educators. Carson City SD reported that their ARL program has resulted in the hiring of 15

teachers. They further reported a focus on professional development opportunities for teaching staff, and a mentoring program for new teachers to support them during their first two years in the classroom, enabling them to enhance their skills and advance within the district. Another strategy cited was reducing zone variances by being proactive in regularly reviewing zone areas to ensure students are assigned to the correct schools based on geographical location, allowing the school to adapt to evolving needs and maintain manageable class sizes. Carson City SD plans to prioritize lower class sizes for first through third grade by allocating resources and funding and keeping a dedicated pool of quality substitute teachers to ensure that when regular teachers are absent, students continue to receive high-quality instruction without being merged into larger classes.

Carson City SD will mitigate the impact of class sizes by allocating one paraprofessional per two kindergarten classes to provide extra support to classroom teachers and work with individual students or small groups, helping them develop foundational skills and receive a more personalized learning experience. All elementary schools have a reading interventionist to help improve students' literacy skills by working with those who struggle with reading. Each site will also have a Title 1 funded instructional coach who will play a valuable role in helping teachers enhance their instructional practices, providing professional development, offering guidance on effective teaching strategies, and collaborating with teachers to improve classroom management.

Finally, Carson City will continue to monitor their fluctuating enrollment numbers and potentially adjust staffing patterns as necessary. They have set their goal to reduce average class sizes in elementary schools by allocating additional teaching staff to schools with the highest-class sizes, implementing a targeted hiring plan to recruit more qualified educators, exploring innovative scheduling options, regularly collecting and analyzing elementary school class size data, and reviewing standardized test scores and academic performance. They emphasized the importance of open dialogue with teachers, parents, and the community to ensure that class size reduction efforts align with the needs and expectations of students and educators.



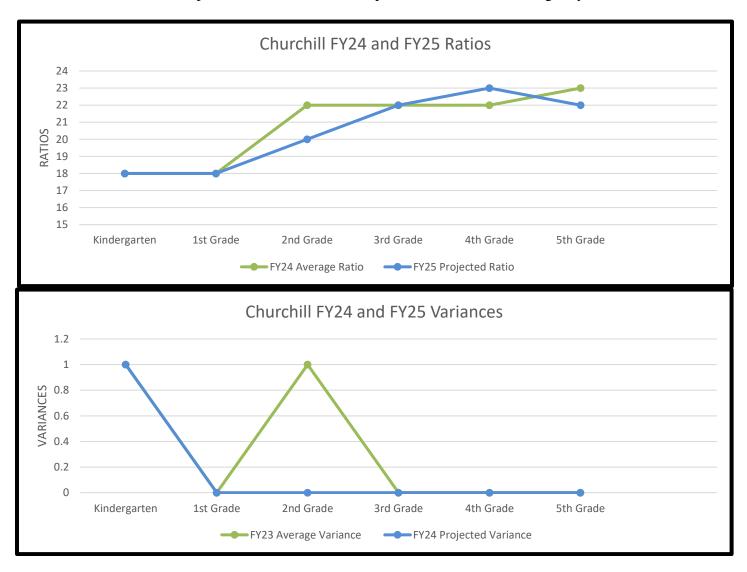
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Churchill County School District

For the 2024-25 school year, Churchill County School District (Churchill CSD) applied for an alternative calendar beginning August 12, 2024, and ending May 23, 2025. Throughout FY24, Churchill CSD had an average student enrollment of 3,163, making them eligible to apply for an alternative class size reduction program for FY25.

In their CSR Plan, Churchill CSD reported their strategies to reduce class sizes included focusing efforts on recruitment by hosting regional and local recruiting fairs, working with local hiring agencies, and recruiting local retirees to fill vacant positions. They will also utilize classroom instructional strategies such as team teaching in all three elementary schools and have teachers use their special/elective time to assist and support instruction. Agreements have been reached with bargaining units to support temporary, direct transfers, as needed to assist and support critical needs.

Churchill CSD has implemented various strategies to mitigate the impact of class sizes including enhancing recruitment, team teaching, instructional support, adjusting negotiated agreements to allow improved compensation, and re-evaluating the facility design of the district. In addition, schools have adjusted their master schedules to maximize teacher availability to cover and assist in classrooms. Churchill is utilizing federal and state funds to improve teacher salaries to help with recruitment and longevity.

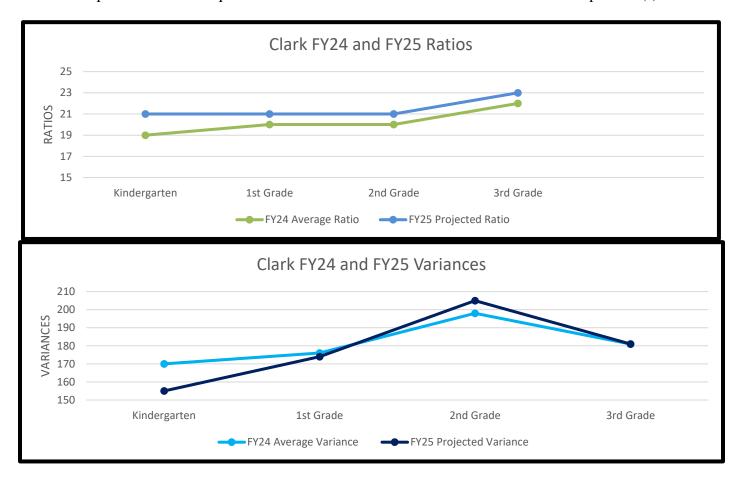


Clark County School District

For the 2024-25 school year, Clark County School District (CCSD) applied for a traditional calendar beginning August 12, 2024, and ending May 23, 2025. Throughout FY24, CCSD had an average student enrollment of 290,343, requiring them to apply for a regular class size reduction program for FY25.

In FY24, CCSD reclassified the previously state provided class size reduction funds to CCSD's General Fund via the Pupil -Centered Funding Plan (PCFP) implementation and at the same time continued a similar level of CSR funding support to each elementary program. During CCSD's school budgeting period, funding is normally sufficient to purchase enough CSR positions to achieve the identified CSE rations per CCSD

CCSD maintains CSR funding equivalent to categorical allocations received prior to the implementation of the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan. During CCSD's school budgeting period, they have reported their strategies to reduce class sizes be designating funding allocations with particular CSR rations factored in. They have schools submit a final plan with staffing and budget plans to the Region Superintendent's office, the Budget Office, and Human Resources for review. Schools will have to complete a final analysis of each school's projected staffing plan with particular focus on first though third grades. Schools that requiring additional steps would take additional steps to submit the request form and work with Humar Resources to hire a new position(s).



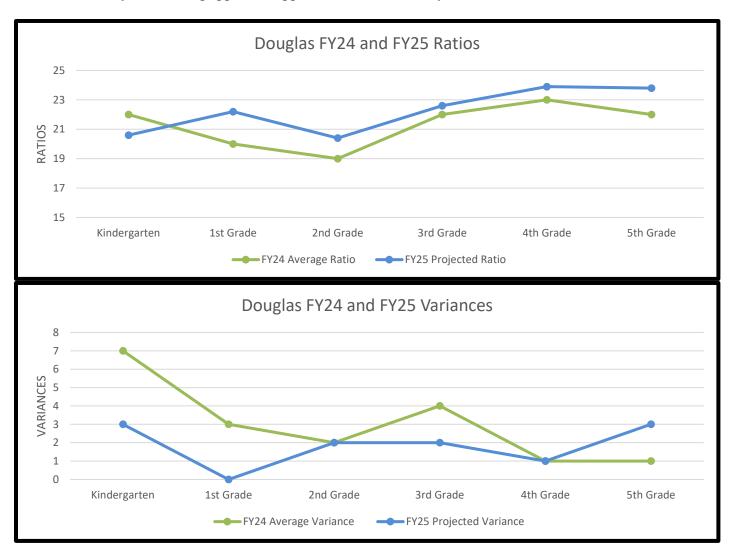
Douglas County School District

For the 2024-25 school year, Douglas County School District (Douglas CSD) applied for an alternative calendar beginning August 19, 2024, and ending June 12, 2025. Throughout FY24, Douglas CSD had an average student enrollment of 4,961, making them eligible to apply for an alternative class size reduction program for FY25.

In their CSR Plan, Douglas CSD reported their strategies to reduce class sizes by prioritizing staffing with targeted recruitment efforts and teacher assignments. Their focus is on recruiting high quality educators and strategically assigning them to schools and grades that have the greatest need for class size reduction. They will also evaluate current facilities and identify opportunities for expansion and reconfiguration to optimize facility

arrangements and utilization. This may involve combining classrooms and/or flexible learning spaces to enhance the use of available resources. Douglas CSD will encourage team teaching and implement creative class configurations that allow for more efficient use of resources by pairing teachers with complementary skills and expertise to enhance student learning experiences while reducing the student-to-teacher ratio.

To address class size ratios that exceed the target ratios, Douglas CSD will also implement several strategies to leverage the expertise of support personnel and specialized educators, to include utilizing small group instruction and station rotations to provide targeted support for students to ensure that they receive personalized attention. The district also employs reading specialists to provide focused interventions for students struggling with literacy skills, as well as special education teachers or English Language Learner specialists to provide comprehensive support in the classroom. Douglas CSD also provides paraprofessionals to work alongside teachers to offer additional instructional support, particularly for students who require more intensive assistance. Lastly, the district will invest in professional development opportunities for all educators and support staff to ensure they are well-equipped to support students effectively.



Elko County School District

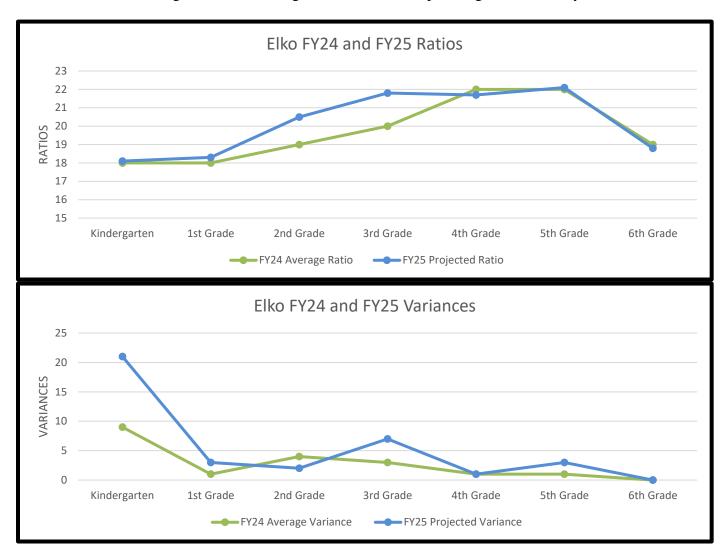
For the 2024-25 school year, Elko County School District (Elko CSD) applied for an alternative calendar beginning August 26, 2024, and ending June 5, 2025. Throughout FY24, Elko CSD had an average student enrollment of 9,538, making them eligible to apply for an alternative class size reduction program for FY25.

Elko CSD cited their strategies to reduce class sizes as focused on teacher recruitment. They have designated all elementary licensed positions as critical needs in an effort to recruit and employ licensed professionals that are

currently retired into elementary school classrooms. The district sent representatives to career fairs in Utah, Idaho, Nevada, and Montana during the spring of 2024, as well as online recruiting platforms to fill staffing needs. Elko CSD reviews and allows student variance applications to different schools to balance teacher to student ratios within the entire school district.

Elko CSD reported their strategies to mitigate the impact of class sizes to hire additional support personnel which includes Special Education Paraprofessionals, English Language Learner Paraprofessionals, Literacy Specialists, Dyslexia Strategists, and Reading Interventionist that support the classroom directly by assisting in the classroom and/or assisting individual students with specific needs.

Elko CSD continues to develop the implementation of their recently adopted class size reduction strategic plan. Their previous goal was to reduce the number of variances at each grade level by 10%. The district goal was realized in both the kindergarten and second grade levels for the upcoming FY25 school year.



Esmeralda County School District

For the 2024-25 school year, Esmeralda County School District (Esmeralda CSD) applied for an alternative calendar beginning August 19, 2024, and ending June 5, 2025. Throughout FY24, Esmeralda CSD had an average student enrollment of 83 students, making them eligible to apply for an alternative class size reduction program for FY25. In FY24, Esmeralda CSD had a single variance due to the ratio calculations for combined grade classrooms, but did not have any classrooms directly exceeding class size ratios. They anticipate no variances in FY25.

Eureka County School District

For the 2024-25 school year, Eureka County School District (Eureka CSD) applied for an alternative calendar beginning August 19, 2024, and ending May 30, 2025. Throughout FY24, Eureka CSD had an average student enrollment of 301, making them eligible to apply for an alternative class size reduction program for FY25. Eureka had no variances in FY24 and met all class size ratios. While Eureka CSD projects growth in FY25, they do not anticipate any variances in FY25.

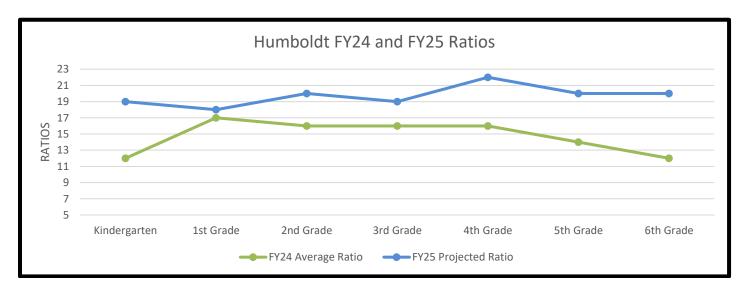
Humboldt County School District

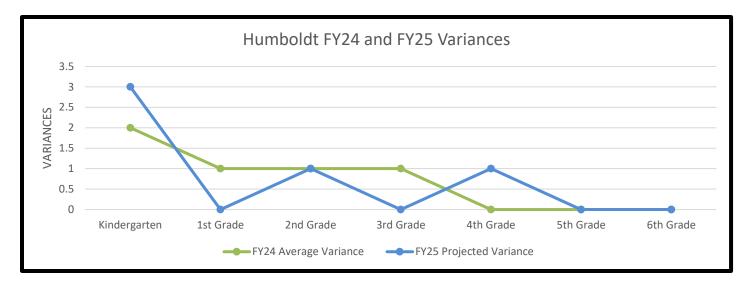
For the 2024-25 school year, Humboldt County School District (Humboldt CSD) applied for an alternative calendar beginning August 19, 2024, and ending June 5, 2025. Throughout FY24, Humboldt CSD had an average student enrollment of 3,205, making them eligible to apply for an alternative class size reduction program for FY25.

Humboldt CSD cited their strategies to reduce class sizes by leveraging class configurations, recruitment efforts, and facility arrangements. The district utilizes team teaching in certain grade levels, providing instruction in different core subjects. They have also made efforts to recruit and retain qualified teachers, including offering competitive salaries and benefits, providing hiring bonuses to new staff members, and providing professional development opportunities through a dedicated coach and literacy specialists.

Humbolt CSD also outlines their strategies to mitigate the impact of class sizes by providing peer mentors in which older students are paired with younger students to provide academic and social support; literacy coaches to work with teachers and improve their literacy instruction; multi-lingual coaches to work with teachers to support multilingual students; and administrative supports to provide support to teachers in a variety of ways including feedback, coaching, and resources. They also provide a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) for students who are struggling academically and put into place Response to Intervention (RTI) teams to develop and implement interventions for students who struggle both academically and behaviorally.

Humboldt CSD reported continued efforts to have all class sizes under the defined CSR thresholds to ensure all classes are filled with high quality and fully licensed personnel with an enhanced focus on the lowest performing school sites. Humbolt CSD cited plans to use funding for new educator salaries, recruitment efforts, coaching and mentoring, and additional support for personnel.





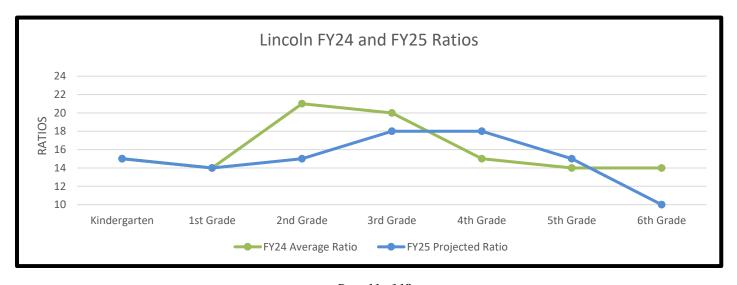
Lander County School District

For the 2024-25 school year, Lander County School District (Lander CSD) applied for an alternative calendar beginning August 14, 2024, and ending May 28, 2025. Throughout FY24, Lander CSD had an average student enrollment of 1,017, making them eligible to apply for an alternative class size reduction program for FY25. Lander had no variances in FY24 and met all class size ratios. While Lander CSD projects growth in FY25, they do not anticipate any variances in FY25.

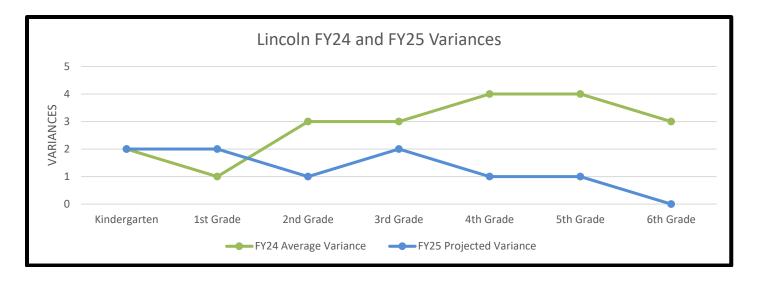
Lincoln County School District

For the 2024-25 school year, Lincoln County School District (Lincoln CSD) applied for alternative calendars beginning August 13, 2024, and ending May 22, 2025. Throughout FY24, Lincoln CSD had an average student enrollment of 871, making them eligible to apply for an alternative class size reduction program for FY25; however, Lincoln CSD elected to report under a regular class size reduction program for K-3 with elective reporting for 4-6 under alternative plan ratios.

Lincoln CSD reported their strategies to reduce and mitigate class sizes include class configurations and paraprofessional support. Their elementary schools do rotations for elective classes, which allows them to make classes smaller and fit core class time into those rotations. Lincoln CSD ensures that all teachers have the support that they need, which larger classrooms assigned paraprofessional support, especially for core curriculum. Because of the extra support, they are able to do small group instruction which is beneficial to students. Additionally, the larger schools have not allowed new zone variances to help alleviate the larger class sizes. Lincoln CSD uses all class size reduction funds for teachers in the classroom; funds will be used to support teachers in the current year.



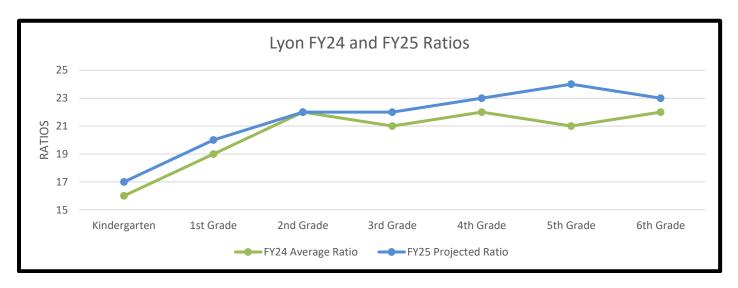
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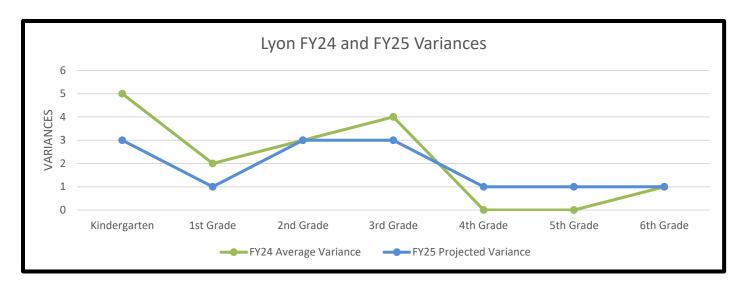


Lyon County School District

For the 2024-25 school year, Lyon County School District (Lyon CSD) applied for an alternative calendar beginning September 3, 2024, and ending June 13, 2025. Throughout FY24, Lyon CSD had an average student enrollment of 9,002, making them eligible to apply for an alternative class size reduction program for FY25.

Lyon CSD cited their strategies to reduce class sizes as reviewing the average daily attendance on a quarterly basis to determine if assignments should be modified, moved to a different grade level, or added to school allocations. If ratios continue to increase, allocation modifications may be implemented which could mean movement within and among schools or an additional allocation. Student enrollment is monitored, and discussions occur regularly with school principals regarding allocations. They also plan to continue allocating funds to reduce class sizes across K-6 grade with general funded positions as well as state and federal grant funded positions to support recruitment and retention of teaching staff.

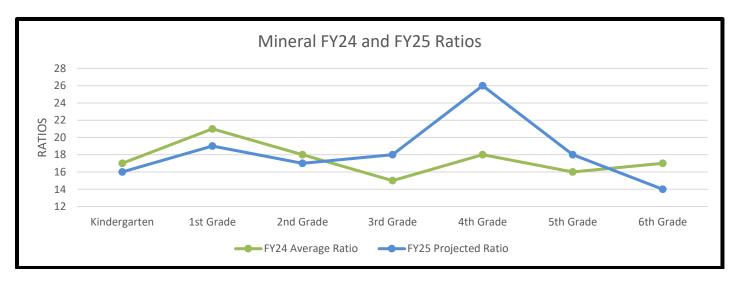


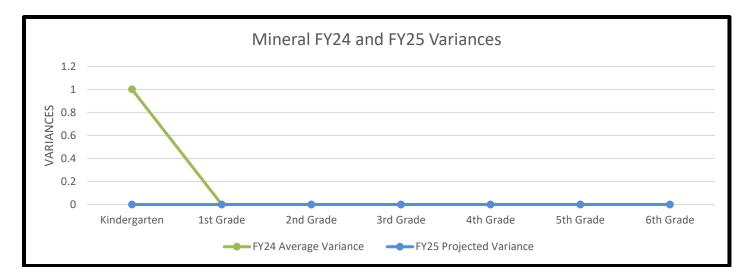


Mineral County School District

For the 2024-25 school year, Mineral County School District (Mineral CSD) applied for alternative calendars for various schools beginning August 19, 2024, and ending June 4, 2025. Throughout FY24, Mineral CSD had an average student enrollment of 546, making them eligible to apply for an alternative class size reduction program for FY25.

Mineral CSD has developed a strategic 18-month action plan, including reducing class sizes by identifying positions that are immediately needed to implement the plan, and to create and implement a comprehensive plan to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers, staff, and administrators that reflect the diversity of the students. The plan will also review and update position descriptions, responsibilities, performance criteria, evaluations, and feedback cycles at all levels to align with the district's values and priorities in collaboration with bargaining units. Finally, the action plan will look to strengthen data systems to determine the root cause of turnover and complete an audit of existing and needed positions for future recruitment and hiring, and ensure hiring processes are transparent and include representative stakeholders such as students, teachers, and parents from the school where candidates plan to work. Mineral CSD has partnered with The New Teacher Project (TNTP) to work with staff, community members, parents, and students to develop a new vision to guide the work of the district and design an advisory team to review data to find the district's strengths and areas to improve. Mineral CSD had a single variance in FY24, and anticipate no variances in FY25.



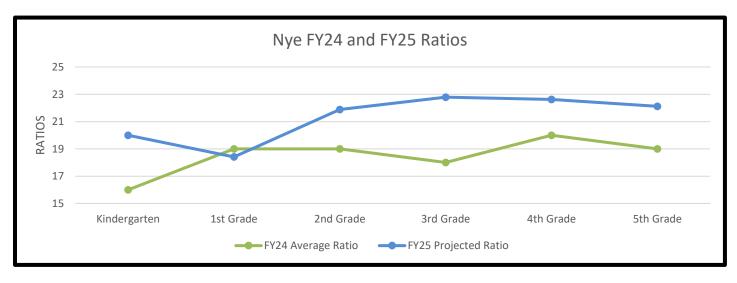


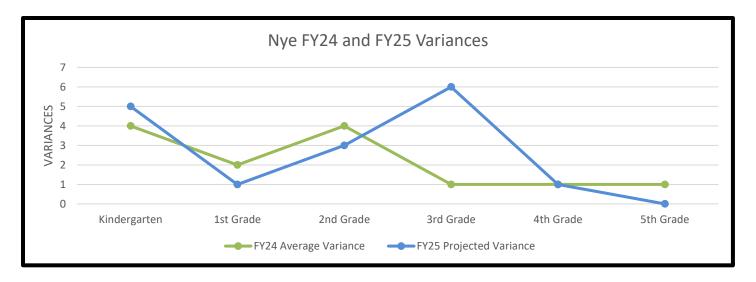
Nye County School District

For the 2024-25 school year, Nye County School District (Nye CSD) applied for both an alternative and traditional calendar for various schools beginning August 5, 2024, and ending May 22, 2025. Throughout FY24, Nye CSD had an average student enrollment of 5,468, making them eligible to apply for an alternative class size reduction program for FY25.

Nye CSD reported adding three additional elementary classroom teaching positions to assist with reducing class size. They have also offered new financial hiring incentives to attract employees to rural areas. Nye has also negotiated significant pay raises for teachers for the 2023-24 and 2024-25 school years. They have offered new hire incentives in an attempt to attract employees in the amounts of \$2000 for the Pahrump area and \$3000 for the remote rural areas. They also have Human Resources working closely with Leadership to improve overall functions by refining recruiting strategies and processes.

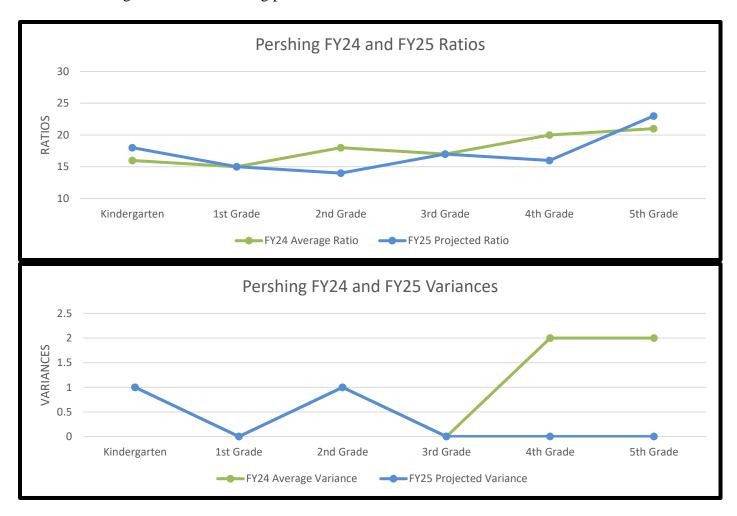
Nye CSD reported their strategies to mitigate the impact of class sizes by having intervention specialists, EL specialists, and GATE/Enrichment specialists assigned to each site throughout the school district to support small group instruction and additional instructional support for students. They have also added paraprofessional positions to all Kindergarten classes to reduce student to teacher ratios.





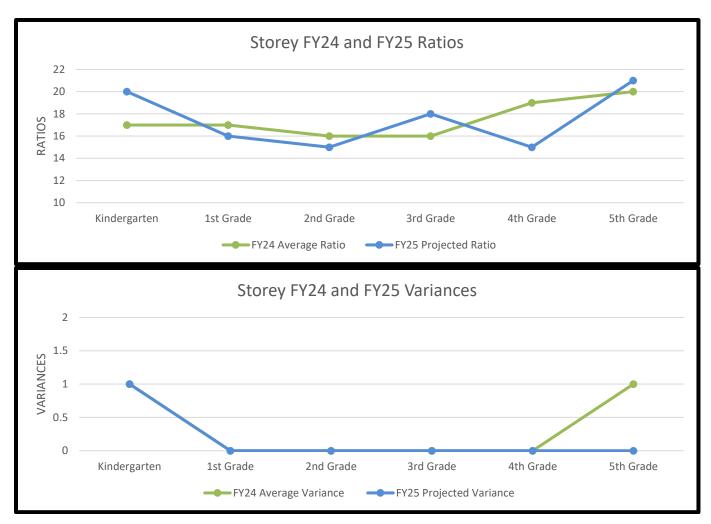
Pershing County School District

For the 2024-25 school year, Pershing County School District (Pershing CSD) applied for an alternative calendar beginning August 26, 2024, and ending June 5, 2025. Throughout FY24, Pershing CSD had an average student enrollment of 636, making them eligible to apply for an alternative class size reduction program for FY25. Pershing CSD reported that the primary factor contributing to high class size ratios are a lack of available and qualified applicants for teaching positions, which they continue to recruit for. Pershing stated that they will monitor and adjust schedules of paraprofessionals as necessary to ensure appropriate support for students and continue recruiting efforts to fill staffing positions.



Storey County School District

For the 2024-25 school year, Storey County School District (Storey CSD) applied for an alternative calendar beginning August 19, 2024, and ending May 30, 2025. Throughout FY24, Storey CSD had an average student enrollment of 394, making them eligible to apply for an alternative class size reduction program for FY25. Storey CSD had a single variance in FY24 and anticipate a single variance in FY25. When class sizes do exceed ratios, Storey CSD employs key strategies to address class size reduction such as focusing on recruiting and retaining qualified teachers, especially in high need aeras like special education and early elementary. They will also focus on enrollment management so that if class size becomes a concern, they will stop accepting out of district variances to maintain appropriate class sizes.



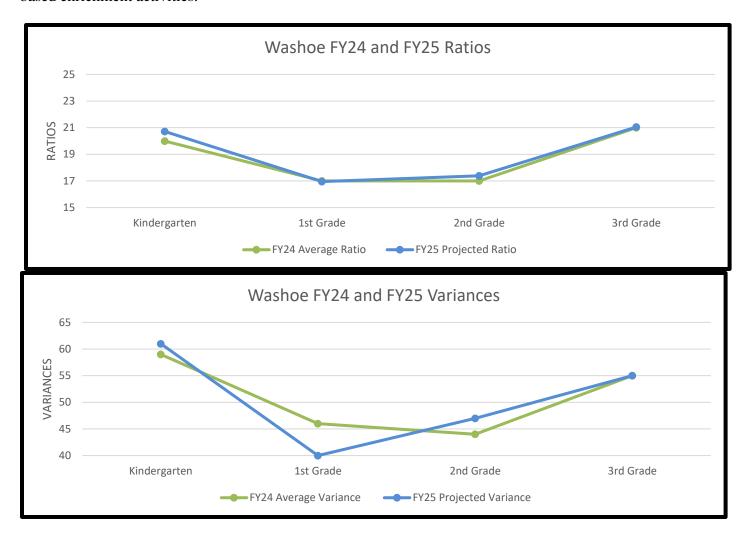
Washoe County School District

For the 2024-25 school year, Washoe County School District (Washoe CSD) applied for alternative calendars for various schools beginning August 12, 2024, and ending June 11, 2025. Throughout FY24, Washoe CSD had an average student enrollment of 59,893, requiring them to apply for a regular class size reduction program for FY25.

Washoe CSD describes three primary strategies to reduce class sizes. First, addressing teacher compensation to help fill positions; they have allocated \$61 million of new revenues to offer meaningful salary increases to attract teachers and assist in recruitment efforts. Second, Washoe CSD will explore using weighted funding to help address class sizes. Finally, Washoe CSD has expanded partnerships with the University of Nevada, Reno and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas to establish a pipeline of candidates that more closely meets the demands of public education.

Washoe CSD also reports their strategies to mitigate the impact of class sizes, by utilizing EL teachers and/or

assistants within a school support class by pulling small groups and co-teaching with the general education teachers. They will also use Special Education resource teachers to pull small groups of students as well as library assistants to support the general education classes by pulling students for book clubs or other literacy-based enrichment activities.

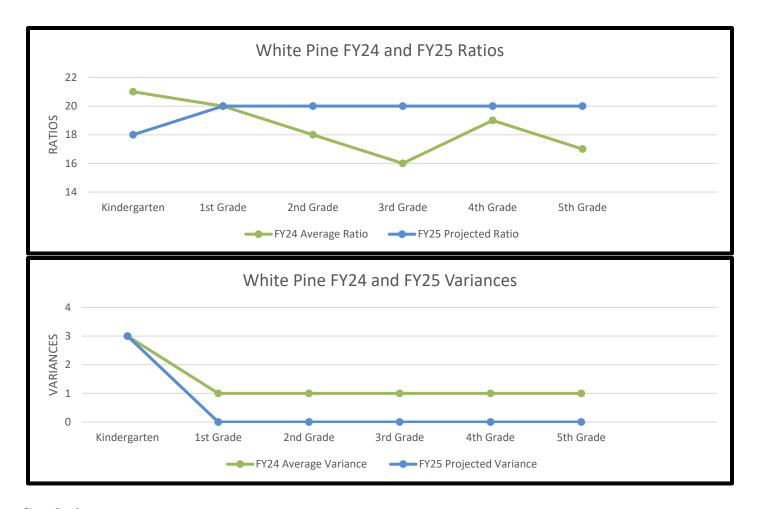


White Pine County School District

For the 2024-25 school year, White Pine County School District (White Pine CSD) applied for both regular and alternative calendars for various schools beginning August 14, 2024, and ending June 5, 2025. Throughout FY24, White Pine CSD had an average student enrollment of 1,258, making them eligible to apply for an alternative class size reduction program for FY25.

White Pine CSD reports that all classrooms comply barring kindergarten. They cite their intention to continue to recruit and retain teachers. The district plans to continue to use funds to support class sizes that are ideal for teaching and learning which includes increasing educators' salaries and providing mentoring and coaching support. White Pine CSD listed their goal to maintain the existing class sizes and will continue to assess and monitor these reports.

White Pine CSD cites that it is anticipated that three kindergarten classes will exceed the 16:1 ratio by one to three students in each class. This is due to there being no physical classrooms available to add as the campus was constructed in 1909 and funding to replace the schools are not available. In addition, there is a shortage of licensed educators in Nevada and specifically for White Pine CSD that limits the possibility of expanding the kindergarten faculty.



Conclusion

NDE is committed to working with the State Board and districts to decrease class size ratios, particularly in high need schools, and to support class size reduction interventions. If you have any questions regarding this report, please contact Student Investment Compliance via email at sidcompliance@doe.nv.gov or by phone at 775-687-2451.