Class Size Reduction. Amendment 9 to the State Constitution, approved by Florida voters in November 2002, requires that the State Legislature provide funding for sufficient classrooms so that class sizes can be reduced to certain constitutional class size maximums. Amendment 9, Florida Statutes Sections 1003.03 and 1013.735, relate to the implementation of Amendment 9 and are collectively referred to herein as the “Class Size Legislation.”

This legislation established non-Charter school class size limits at 18 students for Grades Pk-3, 22 students for Grades 4-8, and 25 students for Grades 9-12, and was designed to be implemented in three phases. For fiscal years:

- 2003-04 through 2005-06, class size average was set at the District level;
- 2006-07 through 2009-10 (revised as of May 2009), class size average was set at the school level; and
- 2010-11 and thereafter, class size will be calculated at the individual classroom level.

The 2010 Legislature provided that Charter schools shall be in compliance with Florida Statutes Section 1003.03, relates to maximum class size, except that the calculation shall be the average at the school level by grade grouping.

Prior to 2010-11, the District achieved compliance during all years except for 2006-07. In 2007, the Superintendent established the Class Size Reduction Action Committee (CSRAC) which was comprised of staff from the District: Schools, Area Offices, Facilities, Boundaries, Budget, Curriculum, Human Relations, and Instructional Staffing to address compliance and prepare the District for period-by-period implementation.

Continued State budget issues, and a failed attempt in 2009 to provide district scheduling flexibility, inclined the State Legislature during the 2011 Legislative session to redefine the term “core-curricula courses.” Under the revised bill, core courses are courses specified by grade levels, subjects measured by State assessments, high school graduation requirements, subgroups of students, and include:

- Language arts/reading, mathematics, social studies, and science courses in prekindergarten through grade 3;
- Courses in grades 4 through 8 in subjects that are measured by state assessment at any grade level and courses required for middle school promotion;
- Courses in grades 9 through 12 in subjects that are measured by state assessment at any grade level;
- Courses that are specifically identified by name in statute, as required for high school graduation, and that are not measured by State assessments, excluding any extracurricular courses;
- Exceptional student education courses; and
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses.

The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) noted that in 2010-11, there were 849 core courses. Under the legislation approved in May 2011, there were 298 core courses. As of June 2014, a total of 347 courses are considered core. This is down 9 courses from the 2013-14 school year. The courses that were removed include: 3 general Education courses – Middle School Advanced Pre-Algebra, and High school Economics and Economics Honors. Also included in the removed courses were 6 Exceptional Student Education (ESE) courses.
Class Size Reduction Non-Compliance Consequences. The Class Size Legislation continues to require each School Board to consider implementing various policies and methods to meet these constitutional class sizes, including encouraging dual enrollment courses, encouraging the Florida Virtual School, maximizing instructional staff, reducing construction costs, using joint-use facilities, implementing alternative class scheduling, redrawing attendance zones, implementing evening and multiple sessions, and implementing year-round and non-traditional calendars.

During 2012-13, Broward County Public Schools standardized Districtwide a 7-period High school schedule to assist with addressing CSR compliance. Districtwide, classes at non-charter schools went from 52.3% in compliance during 2011-12, to 87.7% in compliance during 2012-13. During 2013-14, Broward continued to apply State implementation options and increased period-by-period compliance to 89.3%. Additionally, during 2013-14, the state legislature provided that District ‘Schools of Choice’ would be held to the same, schoolwide average by grade grouping compliance standards as Charter schools. In 2014, per Florida State Statute, the calculation for the District’s reduction was based on 100% of the base student allocation versus the original 50%. During 2015-16 District non-charter schools at 90.7% period-by-period compliance, showed a .1 percentage point increase over 2104-15’s period-by-period compliance of 90.6%. District 2015-16 Survey 2 results, like 2014-15, once again were such that none of the District’s non-charter Schools of Choice or Traditional non-charter schools were included in the FDOE penalty calculations.
Accountability provisions put into place during the 2011 Legislative session provided the following:

- Compliance determination continues to be based on the October student enrollment survey;
- A reduction calculation to class size funding for non-compliant districts, which can be adjusted for good cause;
- A reallocation bonus of up to five percent of the base student allocation for compliant districts, not to exceed 25 percent of the reduced funds;
- An add-back of the remaining 75 percent of the reduced funds, if districts submit a Compliance plan by February 1st to meet the CSR requirements by October of the subsequent year; and
- Authorization of virtual instruction programs as an option to meet class size requirements.

During the 2011-12 school year, the FDOE implemented a one-time rule in which a District could not be fined for more than half the State’s total fine. Under the 2011 bill and continuing, a timeframe was specified for satisfying and maintaining class size maximums, with specific exceptions of an extreme emergency beyond the district’s control for newly enrolled students after the October survey period. Based on a school district’s determination that not assigning the student would be impractical, educationally unsound, or disruptive to student learning, a student could be assigned to an existing class that temporarily (until the end of the school year) exceeds the class size maximums. The original statute wording provides that in:

- Grades PK-3, up to 3 new students may be assigned to a classroom above the period-by-period compliance of 18, and in
- Grades 4-8 for up to 5 new students may be assigned to a classroom above the period-by-period compliance of 22, and in
- Grades 9-12 for up to 5 new students may be assigned to a classroom above the period-by-period compliance of 25.

Concern was expressed by School Board Members during the October 20, 2015 Regular School Board Meeting that the current statute could conceivably overload secondary teachers with an additional 25-35 additional students. District Administrative & School Staff convened a focus group, developed recommendations, and on November 10, 2015, District School Board Members approved that in:

- Grades 6-8 teachers would not be assigned more than a total of 15 new students, and in
- Grades 9-12 teachers would not be assigned more than a total of 18 new students.