



Class Size as a Mandatory Subject of Collective Bargaining

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What does it mean to make something a mandatory subject of collective bargaining?

A: There are three categories of bargaining in public contracts- mandatory, permissive, and prohibited. Prohibited terms are not allowed to be discussed in contract negotiations at all; permissive terms of a contract *may* be discussed, if both negotiating parties agree; mandatory terms *must* be discussed.

In Oregon, class size is permissive, meaning that even if educators ask to make class size a topic of discussion, a district simply has to say no and the entire conversation is off the table. By making class size a mandatory subject of collective bargaining, it will be a required topic for discussion in every district in the state.

Q: Will making class size and caseload a mandatory subject of collective bargaining require schools or school districts meet specific benchmarks or set classes at a certain state-mandated size?

A: No. There is no predetermined outcome. This change would only require that school districts and educators *discuss* class size and caseload when laying out other terms of their contracts.

Q: Will making class size a mandatory subject of collective bargaining require districts to spend more money?

A: No. Districts will still have the same amount of money to spend. What this does is require that negotiations involve conversations about how to balance class size among other priorities in the contract, and will allow trade-offs in other aspects of the contract.

Q: Do any other states make class size a mandatory subject of bargaining?

A: Yes. At least six other states have statutory requirements that educators and districts discuss class size at the bargaining table.

Q: Will this affect teacher compensation?

A: Maybe. Educators and school districts could jointly decide to trade increases in compensation for smaller class sizes and caseloads.

Q: Is this complicated to change in the law?

A: No, it is very simple. The statute would add the phrase “ ‘Employment relations’ includes class size and caseload” and delete the words “class size” from the terms currently exempted from employment relations negotiations.



Class Size and Caseload as a Mandatory Subject of Collective Bargaining “Wills and Won’ts”

Confused about what impact making class size a mandatory subject of collective bargaining will have on aspects of public education? This chart shows what making class size a mandatory subject of bargaining will do and won’t do!

Outcomes of class size and caseload as mandatory subject	Will	Won’t
Require school districts sit down during collective bargaining with teachers and other educators to discuss appropriate class sizes	X	
Require districts and educators arrive at any pre-set outcome or reach specific class size or caseload benchmarks		X
Affect local control and local decision-making at the district level		X
Change funding levels or formulas		X
Require small rural districts to set or maintain specific class sizes		X
Change protocols or procedures for employee strikes		X
Make students and class size a top priority during contract negotiations	X	