



## State Fiscal Note for Bill Number: 2023-H-5085

**Date of State Budget Office Approval:** Friday, May 5, 2023

**Date Requested:** Monday, February 20, 2023

**Date Due:** Thursday, March 2, 2023

<i>Impact on Expenditures</i>		<i>Impact on Revenues</i>
FY 2023	N/A	FY 2023
FY 2024	N/A	FY 2024
FY 2025	N/A	FY 2025

*Explanation by State  
Budget Office:*

This bill would instate a maximum classroom size of 20 students for all public-school classrooms for kindergarten through second grade. This requirement would apply to students enrolled in kindergarten through second grade classrooms on or before October 1 of every school year and could be excepted in cases where a student is enrolled after October 1 and must be placed in a classroom which is otherwise at maximum size. This bill also requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE) to publish a directory of core-curricula courses for the purpose of satisfying the maximum class size requirement of this bill.

*Comments on  
Sources of Funds:*

The bill does not specify whether the state is responsible for any of the costs associated with this bill. State education funding formula aid is financed through general revenue.

*Summary of Facts  
and Assumptions:*

H-5085 would institute a maximum class size limit of 20 students for all public-school classrooms for kindergarten through second grade. The bill does not specify whether the state is responsible for providing additional education aid to LEAs for any costs associated with restructuring needed to meet this requirement. It is therefore assumed that this bill would have no impact on state funds. However, the Budget Office provides estimates of the potential costs associated with this bill for additional context and discussion.

The Budget Office used data obtained from RIDE to produce the following estimates. RIDE data indicates that there are currently 3,968 kindergarten through second grade classrooms statewide, in traditional and charter LEAs, for Language Arts, Mathematics, Reading and Writing. Of these, the Budget Office determined that 9,738 students were placed in a classroom with a limit above 20 students.

In order to provide a range of potential costs of this bill, the Budget Office provides two separate estimates below. As discussed above, the Budget Office assumes that the bill does not require an any additional state funds, and therefore assumes that impacted LEAs would bear the costs discussed below.

The Budget Office Assumed that it is typical for most kindergarten through second grade courses to be taught by a single teacher. Using data obtained from RIDE, the Budget Office determined the average class size for each kindergarten through second grade course, by LEA, as well as the number of teachers that would be necessary for that class size under the conditions imposed by H-5085. If a new classroom was created for every instance where the number of current students exceeded the 20-student maximum imposed by H-5085, a total of 508 estimated

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classrooms would be created as a result of this bill. However, the number of students in each Language Arts/Mathematics/Reading/Writing classrooms was the same for each subject, indicating that the same cohort of students for a single grade was enrolled in each of the above courses.

In most cases, it was assumed that one teacher would be sufficient to accommodate for the need of a new classrooms for all courses taught in a single grade. This was especially true for cases where average class size for each course was the same. For instances where the average class size in one course (e.g. Mathematics) was substantially higher than other courses (e.g. Reading), the Budget Office used the higher number to estimate the number of new classrooms that would be needed. This was done partially due to courses being split up in various ways across LEAs: in some instances, reading was not a single course but split between classrooms for Reading, Guided Reading, SLA Reading and Contributing Educator Classrooms. The Budget Office did not have access to information about the meaning of these divisions within courses.

According to RIDE materials, 'English Language Arts Contributing Educator' or 'Mathematics Contributing Educator' designated courses signal that an educator in that classroom provides English Language Arts or Mathematics development through that course. This would be obvious for English or Mathematics classes but may also be the case in Social Studies and Science classes where ELA and/or Mathematics skills are worked on. The Budget Office could not obtain data showing whether Contributing Educator Classrooms were double counting the number of students in other classrooms and would therefore indicate a higher need for additional teachers than strictly necessary. The number of additional teachers needed for classrooms designated as 'Contributing Educator' is 14.

Assuming one teacher for most kindergarten through second grade curriculum courses reduced the total estimated number of classrooms needed from 508 to 225. The Budget Office assumes that start-up costs for a new classroom would primarily be composed of salary and benefit costs for a new teacher. It is assumed that other start-up operating costs would be accommodated using existing finances.

The average salary for a Step 1 Teacher position across five public school districts (Cranston, East-Greenwich, Providence, Smithfield, Woonsocket) was \$45,290 in FY 2023. Accounting for benefits based on those provided to state employees, the Budget Office assumes that estimated total salary and benefits cost of this position would be \$62,265. This estimate does not take into account that some teachers may be hired at higher steps and/or may receive additional compensation due to bonuses available for higher education degrees and additional certifications.

Total Cost = New Classrooms \* Cost Per Teacher  
Total Cost = 225 classrooms \* \$62,265 = \$14,009,625

The above estimate reflects the potential total statewide cost to LEAs that would need to hire new teachers as a result of this legislation. Because H-5085 does not specify that appropriations must be made in support of compliance, actual cost is determined as not applicable in this case. However, the Budget Office notes that



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costs could fluctuate depending on several factors. First, LEAs may need to open more classrooms that estimated if they cannot, as assumed above, accommodate moving at least 5 students between classrooms to meet the maximum requirements. If such restructuring is not possible, potential estimated cost would increase.

It is also possible that LEAs might restructure workload among existing teachers without needing to hire additional staff, in which case the potential cost of this bill would decrease. Finally, though LEAs would be able to restructure as necessary in order to meet the demands of H-5085, doing so may otherwise strain resources previously used for other operating expenses, and could require additional appropriations to support compliance in future years.

### Summary of Fiscal Impact:

Due to the anticipated date of passage, this bill will not affect FY 2023.

FY 2023: N/A

FY 2024: N/A

FY 2025: N/A

Budget Office Signature:

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Fiscal Advisor Signature:

