



Envision SPPS: Explanation of how the number of classrooms per grade and class size caps affect student placement at schools

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At SPPS, the placement of students in schools is determined by family choice, SPPS' school [placement criteria](#), and school capacity, specifically, whether there is a seat available at the grade of the chosen school. **The following outlines the factors that affect why there are instances when students cannot be enrolled at a school, even a school that is under-enrolled.**

Schools have a predetermined number of classrooms for each grade (a section), for example three classrooms of second grade (three sections of second grade). The number of classes for each grade is determined by the [student enrollment projections](#) conducted the previous year. This enrollment projection is what allows schools to determine their budgets and plan their programs for the upcoming year. Schools need to know as precisely as possible how many students to expect so they can retain or hire the right amount of teachers and other support staff for those students. Once a school has finalized their budget, and subsequently how many classrooms per grade level they will have, **additional classrooms are not added once the new school year begins.**

The availability of a seat is determined by capacity: how many classrooms there are for the grade and the [class size caps](#) allotted to each grade level as defined by the [2019 - 2021 SPPS contract with the Saint Paul Federation of Educators](#) (see pages 111-113). For example, the class size cap for fourth grade is 30 students, so a two-section school can take a maximum of 60 fourth graders.

Per the SPPS-SPFE contract, exceeding a class size by even one student sets in motion a school Class Size Committee review process to assess the school's receptivity to accept the additional student. If the Class Size Committee is amenable to the additional student, they may also seek additional support such as hiring an Educational Assistant for that class. If the Class Size Committee is not receptive to the additional student, then the process may move forward to a grievance of the decision. Depending on the outcome, the student may or may not end up being placed at the school. As such, **the number of classrooms a school has for each grade and class size caps determine how many students can be placed at a school, regardless of that school being under-enrolled as a school overall.**

SPPS' school choice process sets a deadline (usually in February of each year) for families to submit their school requests for the following school year. To increase the likelihood of getting their requested school, families are encouraged to select two school options with their community school as one of the options. **School choice applications that are submitted after the priority deadline are**

not as likely to receive the requested school as the majority of students have already been placed at the school and class size caps may have already been reached. Families who want to place their student at school during the current school year may have even fewer options depending on the school and grade they are looking to enroll in; families do have the option to have their student placed on a school wait list.

Class Size Caps by Grade	HIGH POVERTY SCHOOLS	LOW POVERTY SCHOOLS
PreK	20	20
K	25	27
1-3	26	28
4-5	30	31
(Note: This chart reflects elementary grades only; class size caps are also provided for grades 6-12-- please see the SPPS-SPFE contract for details.)		

How SPPS determines enrollment projections

To inform this budget process, each year, SPPS’ [Department of Research, Evaluation and Assessment \(REA\)](#) projects how many students the district will have at each grade for the upcoming year. Grade-level student enrollment projections are based on birth rates, retention rates, and students moving up into the next grade (e.g., pre-kindergartener moving into kindergarten; fifth grader moving into sixth grade).