

## Summary of the Public Hearing on Strategies to Meet the Requirements of the Class Size Amendment to the Florida Constitution - July 20, 2010

- It is the intention of the Walton County School District to comply fully and completely with the requirements of the Class Size Constitutional Amendment.
- The citizens approved the Class Size amendment to the Florida Constitution in 2002. This amendment requires that the maximum number of students in each core class shall be:
  - 18 in Pre-K through grade 3
  - 22 in grades 4 through 8
  - 25 in grades 9 through 12
- Beginning July 1, 2010 the amendment is to be implemented to the classroom level; that is, if one core classroom in any one school is not in compliance with the maximum number requirements, then the entire District is out of compliance with the amendment – and subject to penalty!
- The 2010 Proposed Constitutional Amendment (#8), to be voted on in November, provides greater flexibility in achieving reasonable class sizes. It would ask voters to change the state constitution's current maximum class sizes to "school-wide average class sizes" with maximum class sizes of:
  - 21 in PreK through grade 3
  - 27 in grades 4 through 8
  - 30 in grades 9 through 12
- The Class Size Constitution Amendment has proved very expensive. Over just 8 years the Florida Legislature has appropriated approximately \$18.7 billion to implement the Class Size Amendment.
- By comparison, the k-12 education budget for all of the 67 school districts for fiscal year 2010-'11 is \$18.1 billion! (This figure includes both state and local dollars.)

(Please see next page)

- The Superintendent and the school board are working diligently to facilitate compliance with the Class Size Amendment by:
  - Reducing the budget by \$2,450,000
  - Tasking principals to develop master schedules that consider the use of Associate Teachers, offer an additional teaching period to qualified personnel to avoid employing a full-time position, and consolidate overages, within reason, to limit the number of additional classrooms for which additional personnel must be provided
  - Urging principals to discuss problem areas regularly with the Curriculum, Finance and Personnel Departments
- Unfortunately, complete compliance to this Amendment will result in our making adjustments to students' schedules well into the first semester in order to:
  - Meet the law
  - Stay financially solvent, and
  - Do what is best for our students
- How close to full compliance are we? Early estimates are that we will need approximately 8 to 10 additional teachers to fully comply
- What is the penalty for noncompliance? According to a DOE estimate released in early June, the penalty for us would be \$462,000. However, if we submit a plan and adhere to the plan by February 15, 2011, the penalty would be reduced by \$347,000, to \$115,000
- What is the reward for compliance? \$115,000 (this would not be merely a return of the \$115,000 'penalty' – this would be a bonus of \$115,000)
- Reiterating...It is the intention of the Walton County School District to comply fully and completely with the requirements of the Class Size Constitutional Amendment.