

Submitter: Brian Ellis

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

As a teacher who is always looking to data to provide a path to greater student outcomes, the number one way we, as teachers, can elevate our students to give themselves a path to better and brighter lives is to reduce class size. I know this is not new information but, because it continues to not be implemented in a useful way, I feel like we have to continue to bring these numbers up until something is done for our students. Here is the data, going back to the huge STAR study from the 1980s to the 1990s, and all the way up through the present: In 1985, Tennessee launched an experiment, the Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio (STAR) project, in which it assigned 7,000 kindergarten students in 79 schools to classes of varying sizes. After four years, the students who had been placed in small classes were between two and five months ahead of their peers in larger classes, according to a report on the study in the academic journal Teachers College Record. Even once the experiment ended and students returned to full-size classrooms, students who had been in the smaller groups continued to benefit. By eighth grade, they were almost a full school year ahead of their peers. Then in 1996, Wisconsin conducted a similar experiment targeting schools serving low-income students and comparing adolescents in classrooms of 12 to 15 with students in classrooms of 21 to 25 students. Here again, students in smaller classes achieved higher test scores, according to a federal examination of the study. The research is crystal clear that smaller classes lead to better student outcomes in every single way that can be measured," says Leonie Haimson, executive director of Class Size Matters, a nonprofit that advocates for smaller class sizes. Please, please reiterate to our lawmakers that reducing class size is the BEST POSSIBLE way to give our young people a clear path to a successful and empowered life! Thank you for listening! Brian Ellis