

By the Committee on Education and Senator Laurent

304-2174-99

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A bill to be entitled  
An act relating to school size; creating s.  
235.2157, F.S.; providing legislative findings;  
defining "small school"; requiring that school  
districts plan construction of only small  
schools after a certain date; requiring small  
schools to comply with racial balance  
requirements; providing exceptions; providing  
an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 235.2157, Florida Statutes, is  
created to read:

235.2157 Small school requirement.--

(1) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS.--The Legislature finds that:

(a) Florida's schools are among the largest in the  
nation;

(b) Smaller schools provide benefits of reduced  
discipline problems and crime, reduced truancy and gang  
participation, reduced dropout rates, improved teacher and  
student attitudes, improved student self-perception, student  
academic achievement equal to or superior to that of students  
at larger schools, and increased parental involvement; and

(c) Smaller schools can provide these benefits while  
not increasing administrative and construction costs.

(2) DEFINITION.--As used in this section, "small  
school" means:

(a) An elementary school with a student population of  
not more than 500 students.

1           (b) A middle school with a student population of not  
2 more than 900 students.

3           (c) A high school with a student population of not  
4 more than 1,200 students.

5           (d) A school serving kindergarten through grade 8 with  
6 a student population of not more than 700 students.

7           (e) A school serving kindergarten through grade 12  
8 with a student population of not more than 900 students.

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10 A school on a single campus which operates on a school within  
11 a school concept shall be considered a small school if each  
12 subunit physically located on the single campus meets the  
13 requirements of this subsection.

14           (3) REQUIREMENTS.--

15           (a) Beginning July 1, 2000, all plans for new  
16 educational facilities to be constructed within a school  
17 district and reflected in the 5-year school district  
18 facilities work plan shall be plans for small schools in order  
19 to promote increased learning and more effective use of school  
20 facilities.

21           (b) Small schools shall comply with all laws, rules,  
22 and court orders relating to racial balance.

23           (4) EXCEPTIONS.--This section does not apply to plans  
24 for new educational facilities already under architectural  
25 contract on July 1, 2000.

26           Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2000.

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STATEMENT OF SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES CONTAINED IN  
COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR  
SB 1116

The committee substitute replaces provisions related to school district improvement with a provision (s. 235.2157, F.S.) related to small school requirements. The committee substitute creates definitions for small schools, requires certain plans for educational facilities to be plans for small schools, and provides an exception for specified plans for new educational facilities already under architectural contract. The committee substitute requires small schools to comply with laws, rules, and court orders related to racial balance.