

**January 28, 2000
REPORT FROM THE
SCHOOL-BASED RESEARCH SURVEY**



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) retained ComQUEST Research, a subsidiary company of BBM Bureau of Measurement, to conduct the School-Based Research Survey. The objective of the study was to generate basic information about the state of the public elementary school system across the province.

The main areas of questioning included:

- Staffing;
- Programs;
- Class size,
- Combined-grades,
- Support (including special education, resource and capital support); and,
- Corporate sponsorship.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

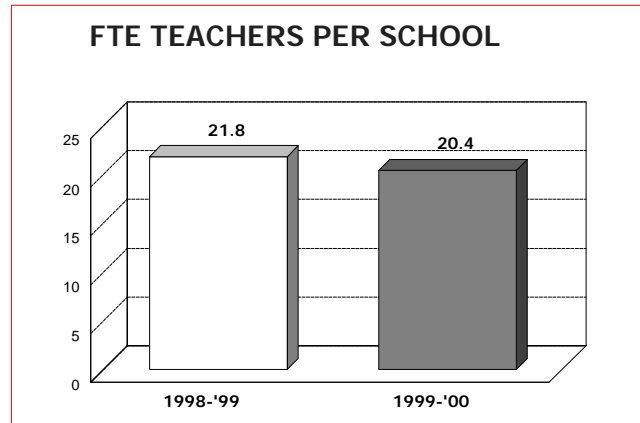
ETFO mailed a self-administered questionnaire together with a cover letter and a business reply envelope to 2,866 sites where ETFO members are employed of which 2,575 are public elementary schools. The questionnaire package was mailed in November of 1999. One thousand two hundred seventy (1,270) schools completed and returned their survey to ComQUEST Research before the deadline in January of 2000. The response rate for the study was 49 percent.

ComQUEST Research was responsible for verifying and keypunching the completed questionnaires. At the conclusion of the data entry, the entire dataset was weighted to the actual number of schools comprising each school board. The weighted data subsequently were used to produce the tabulations.

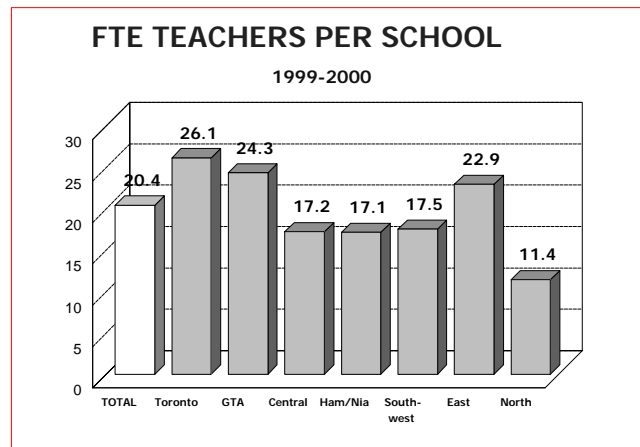
3.0 STAFFING

3.1 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Teachers

Between the 1998-'99 and the 1999-'00 school years, the average number of full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers per school declined from 21.8 to 20.4 teachers.

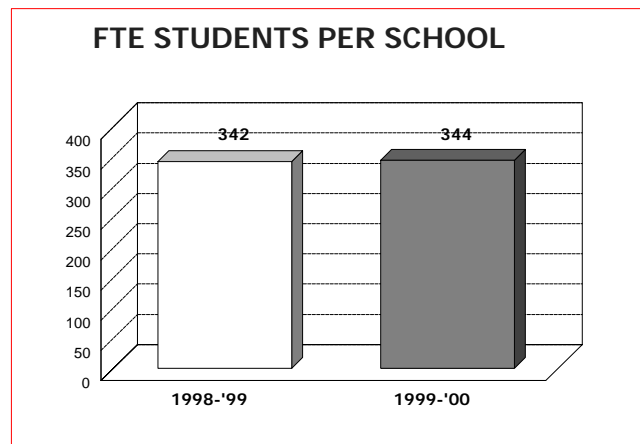


Currently, the Toronto School Board has the highest number of teachers per school (26.1 teachers), followed by the GTA boards outside Toronto (24.3) and the Eastern Ontario boards (22.9). Northern Ontario boards have the smallest number of teachers per school (11.4).

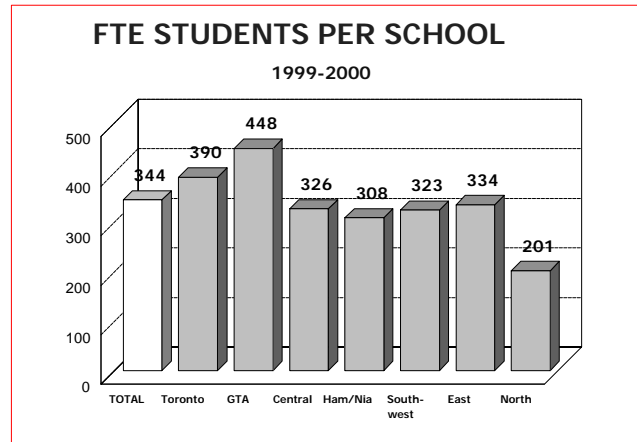


3.2 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Students

The average number of FTE students per school increased from 342 to 344 over the past year.

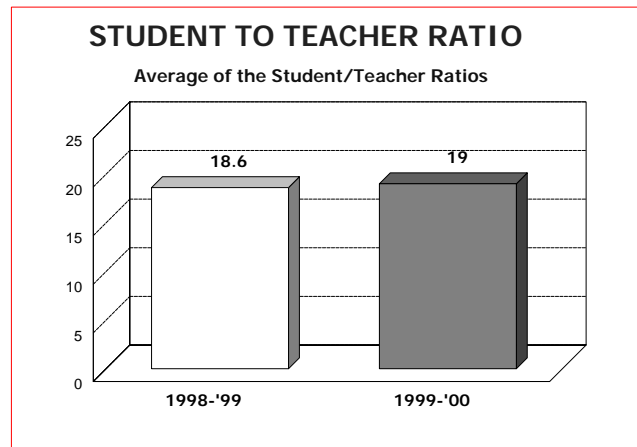


The school boards within the GTA but outside Toronto represent the highest average number of students per school (448 students). The Toronto School Board has the next highest number of students per school (390). Except for Northern Ontario (201), schools in the remaining regions average about 300 to 335 students.

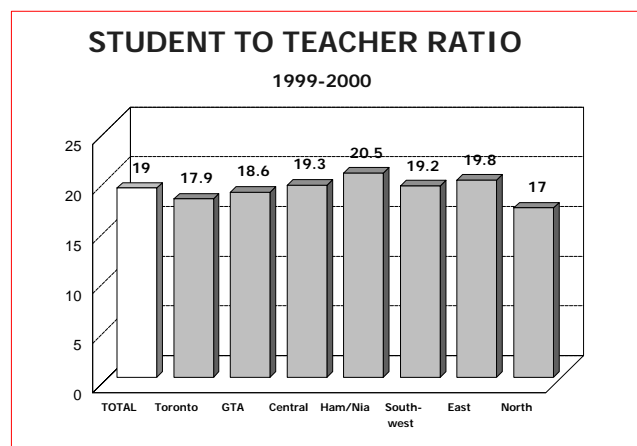


3.3 FTE Students to FTE Teachers

While the number of students per school increased between 1998-'99 and 1999-'00, the number of teachers per school declined. This produced an increase in the student-to-teacher ratio—from 18.6 to 19.0 students per teacher.

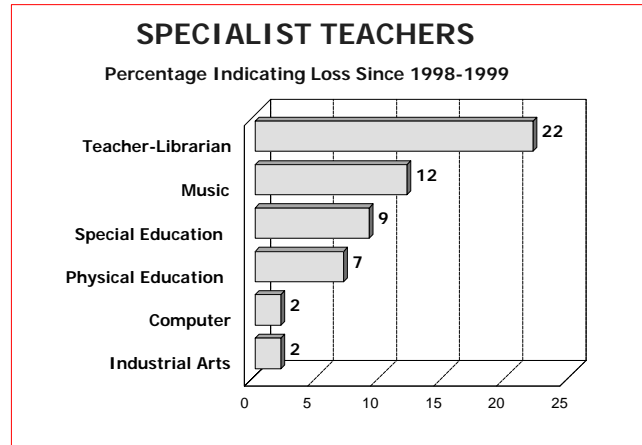


Although there is not a great deal of variation in student-to-teacher ratios across the province, the highest ratio occurs among Hamilton-Niagara boards (20.5) and the lowest in Northern Ontario (17.0).



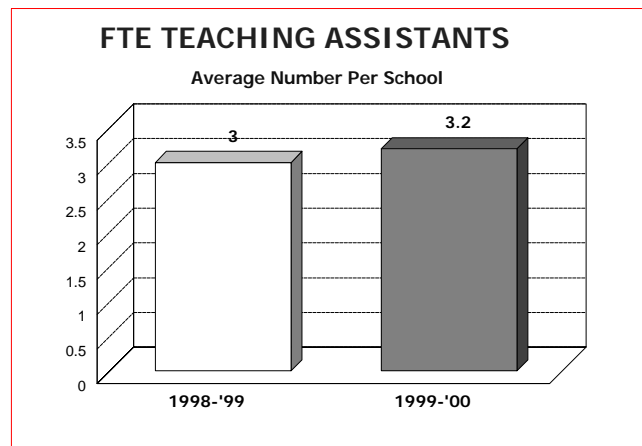
3.4 Loss of Specialist Teachers

Since 1998-'99, more schools report losing teacher-librarians (22%) than any other specialist teachers. The loss of these specialists is followed by the loss of music teachers (12%), special education teachers (9%) and physical education teachers (7%). The loss of teacher-librarians is most acute in Southwestern Ontario (29%), Hamilton-Niagara (28%) and Central Ontario (27%). Sixteen percent of Northern Ontario schools indicate the loss of a music teacher. Sixteen percent of GTA schools outside Toronto report the loss of a special education teacher.



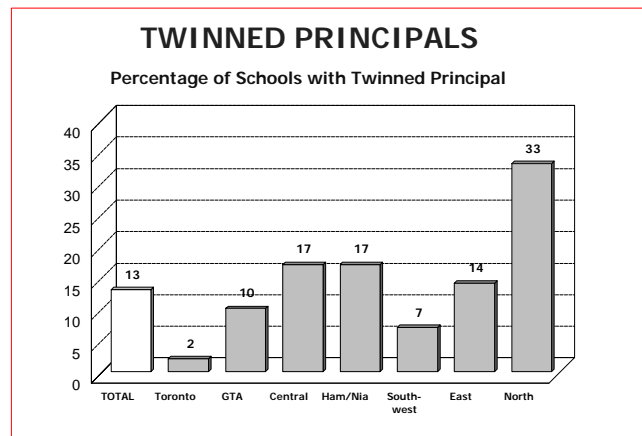
3.5 FTE Teaching Assistants

The average number of FTE teaching assistants per school rose from 3.0 to 3.2 over the past year. The smallest schools (fewer than 200 students) have 2.1 teaching assistants and this figure rises to 2.9 among schools with 200 to 350 students, 3.5 among schools with 351 to 500 students and 5.1 among schools with more than 500 students.



3.6 Principals

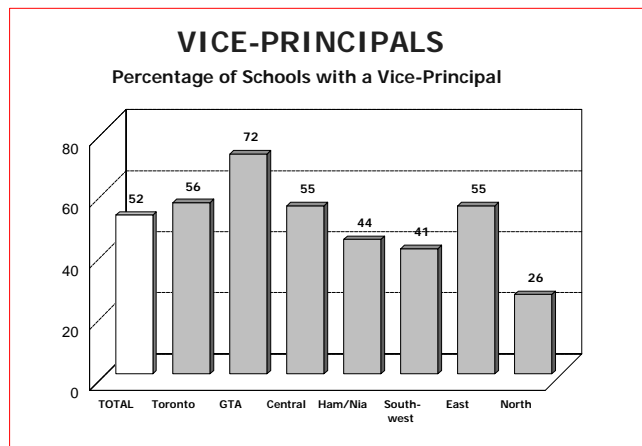
Thirteen percent of schools across Ontario indicate that they have a principal who is twinned with another school. Schools in Northern Ontario (33%) are most likely to have twinned principals, while schools in Toronto are the least likely to have twinned principals (2%). On average, schools have had twinned principals for just over six years.



Twelve percent of schools have a principal who has a part-time teaching assignment. One in five schools in Southwestern, Eastern and Northern Ontario reports that they have principals who spend part of their time teaching. Thirty percent of schools with fewer than 200 students have principals who also teach. Eighty percent of schools with a principal who also has classroom responsibilities indicate that the program is provided regularly.

3.7 Vice-Principals

Just over one-half of Ontario's public elementary school have a vice-principal. Of these, 44 percent are full-time and 52 percent are part-time. Over seven of ten schools in the GTA outside Toronto have vice principals. Alternatively, only 26 percent of schools in Northern Ontario have vice-principals.

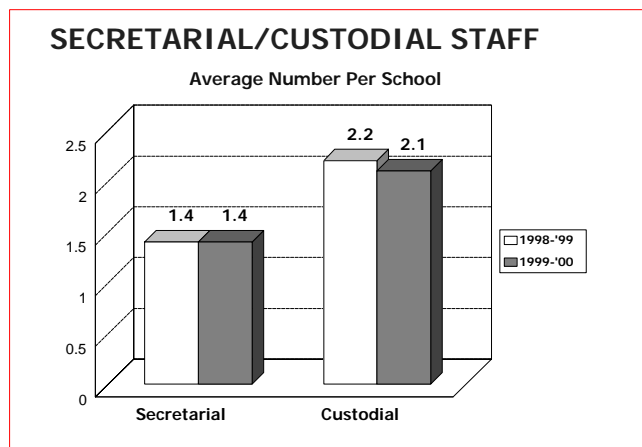


Among schools with a vice-principal, approximately equal numbers report that this person has classroom responsibilities as those who report that their vice principal is a full-time administrator. Eighty percent of schools with a vice-principal who teaches part-time report that the program is provided regularly.

3.8 Secretarial and Custodial Staff

The average number of FTE custodial staff per school has decreased from 2.2 to 2.1 people over the past year. Eighteen percent of schools with fewer than 200 students have no full-time custodial staff. By way of contrast, almost 70 percent of schools with more than 500 students have three or more FTE custodial staff.

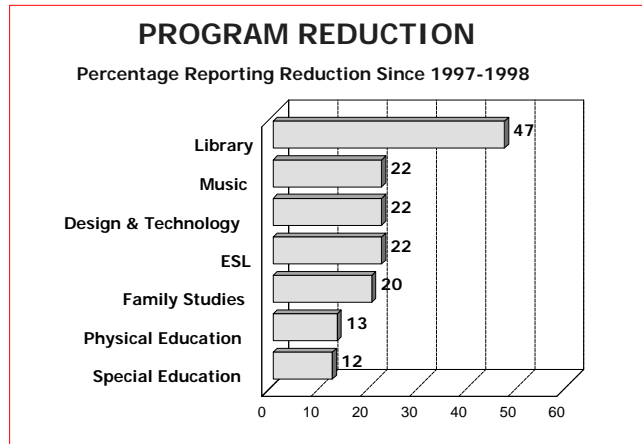
The average number of secretarial staff has remained the same (1.4 people per school) over the comparable period. Nevertheless, one out every five schools in Northern Ontario and schools with fewer than 200 students report having no secretarial staff.



4.0 PROGRAMS

4.1 Reduction in Programs

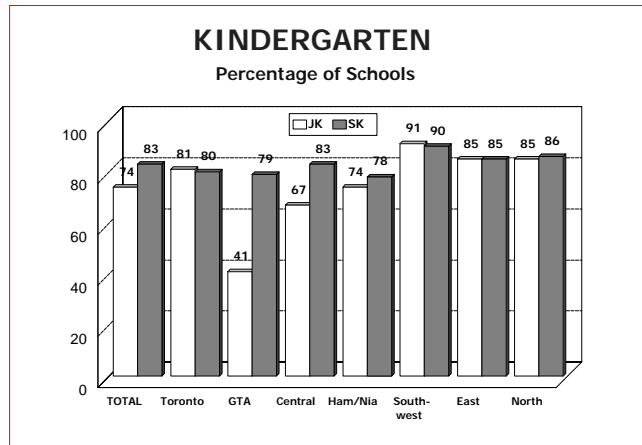
Almost one-half of elementary schools (47%) across Ontario indicate that they have had a reduction in their library program since the 1997-'98 school year. The reduction in the library program is most likely to have occurred in the Central region (60% of schools) and Southwestern Ontario (55%). A relatively small percentage of schools in Toronto reduced their library program (26%).



One in five schools have reduced each of their music (22%), design and technology (22%), ESL (22%) and family studies (20%) programs over the past two years. While schools in Southwestern Ontario (29%) are most likely to have cutback on their music programs, GTA schools outside Toronto led the way in reducing design and technology (39%), ESL (34%), and family studies (35%) programs.

4.2 Kindergarten

Three-quarters of public elementary schools (74%) offer junior kindergarten. Of the schools with junior kindergarten, somewhat more schools have half-day programs than all-day programs.



Over eight in ten schools (83%) provide senior kindergarten. Fifty-five percent of these schools offer half-day classes, with 39 percent providing all-day, every other day programs. Very few schools offer full-day senior kindergarten programs.

Two-thirds or more of the schools in all regions of Ontario except the GTA outside Toronto offer junior kindergarten. Only 41 percent of schools in the GTA outside Toronto provide junior kindergarten.

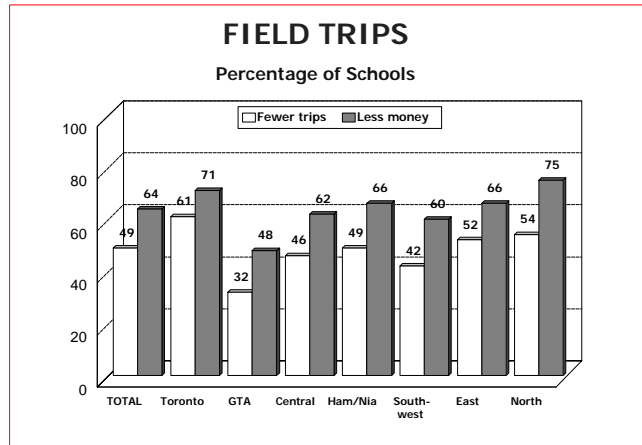
Schools in all regions of the province provide senior kindergarten. Toronto, GTA and Hamilton-Niagara schools prefer half-day programs, while the schools in Central, Southwestern and Eastern

Ontario offer all-day programs. Northern Ontario schools are the only ones that offer a full-day program.

4.3 Field Trips

Two-thirds of schools report having less money to spend on field trips than in previous years. One-half of schools report that they have cutback on field trips.

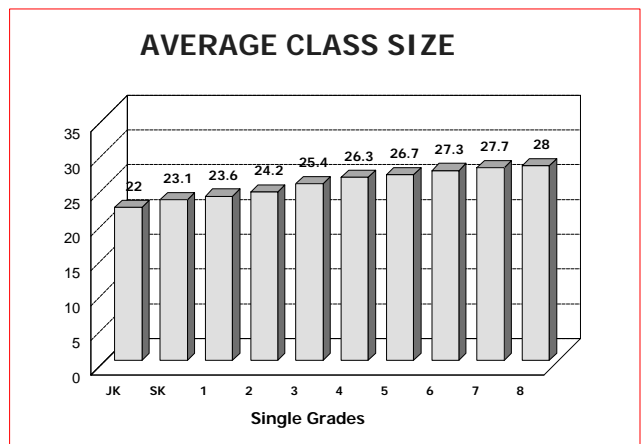
Toronto (71%) and Northern Ontario (75%) schools are most likely to indicate that they now have less money to spend on field trips. These two regions are also the most likely to have cutback in the number of field trips (61% of Toronto schools, 54% of Northern Ontario schools). Only 32 percent of schools in the GTA outside Toronto report that they reduced field trips.



5.0 CLASS SIZE

5.1 Average Single Grade Class Size by Grade

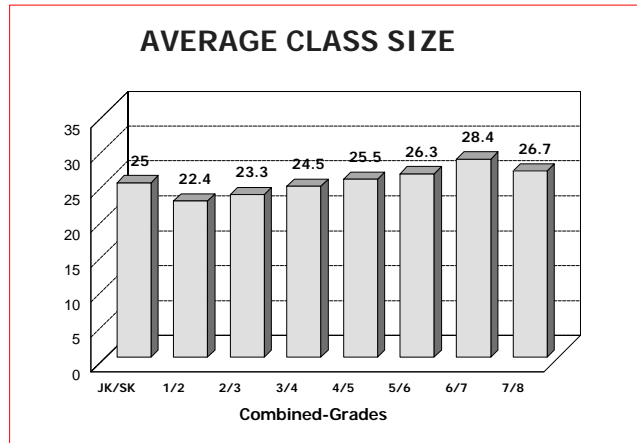
Junior (22 students per class) and senior (23.1 students) kindergarten represent the two smallest average class sizes across the province. Between grade 1 (23.6 students) and grade 8 (28 students), the average class size increases in a small but regular manner. That is, each higher grade has a slightly larger average class size than the previous grade.



5.2 Average Combined-Grade Class Size by Grade

The JK/SK combined-grade classes across the province average 25 students. The combined-grade kindergarten class is somewhat larger than the comparable single grade kindergarten class.

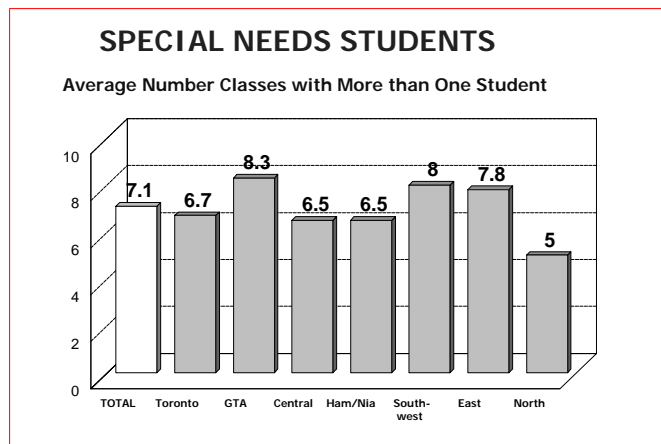
Between the grades 1 and 2 and grades 6 and 7 combined-grade classes, the average class size increases in a regular manner. Grades 6 and 7 combined-grade classes, on average, have the largest number of students (28.4). The combined-grade 7 and 8 classes then drop to 26.7 students.



5.3 Special Needs Students

Over eight in ten schools indicate that they have classes at their school with more than one special needs student. Special needs students include those students who have gone through the Identification and Placement Review Committee (IPRC) process and those who receive an individual program following a staff assessment.

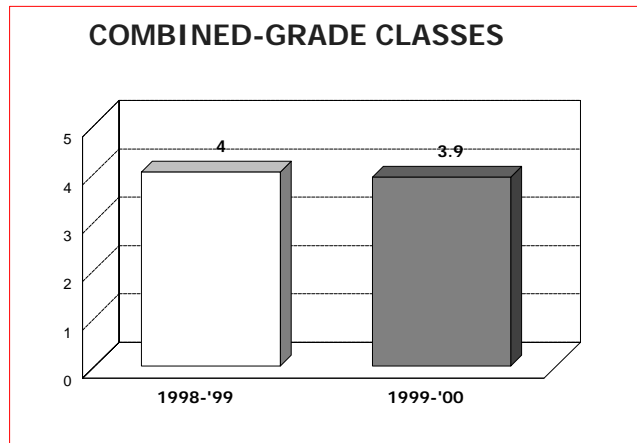
In fact, schools report, on average, 7.1 classes per school with more than one special needs student. Schools in the GTA outside Toronto (8.3 classes with more than one special needs student) and in Southwestern Ontario (8.0 classes) have the highest number of classes with more than one special needs student.



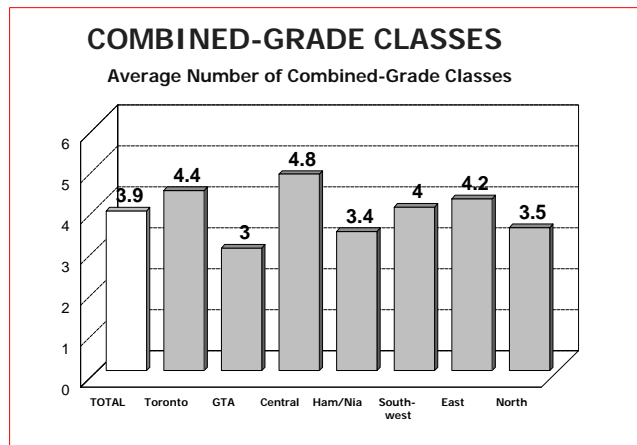
When schools are asked to report on the highest number of special needs students in any one class, the average across the province is 6.2 special needs students. Toronto and Eastern Ontario schools have the highest number of special needs students in one class (7.1 students in each region).

5.4 Total Number of Combined-Grade Classes

Between the 1998-'99 and 1999-'00 school years, the average number of combined-grade classes per school has dropped from 4.0 to 3.9 classes. In 1998-'99, 30 percent of schools had five or more combined-grade classes. In 1999-'00, 29 percent of schools report having five or more combined-grade classes. Across the province, about one-quarter of all classes are combined-grade classes.



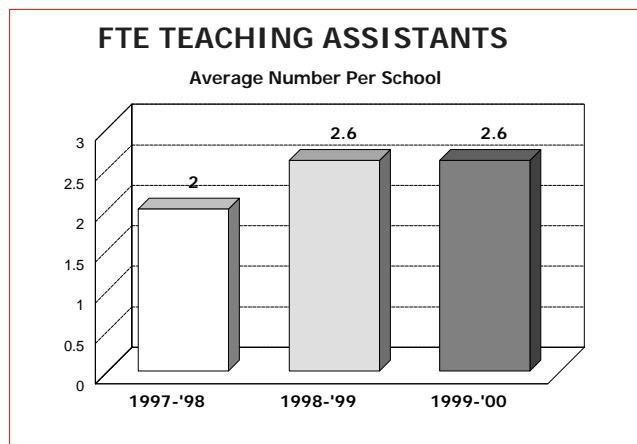
The average number of combined-grade classes per school varies across the province. The highest number of combined-grade classes per school is found in Central Ontario (4.8 classes) and Toronto (4.4 classes). Schools in the GTA outside Toronto (3.0 classes) and Hamilton-Niagara region (3.4 classes) are less likely to have combined-grade classes.



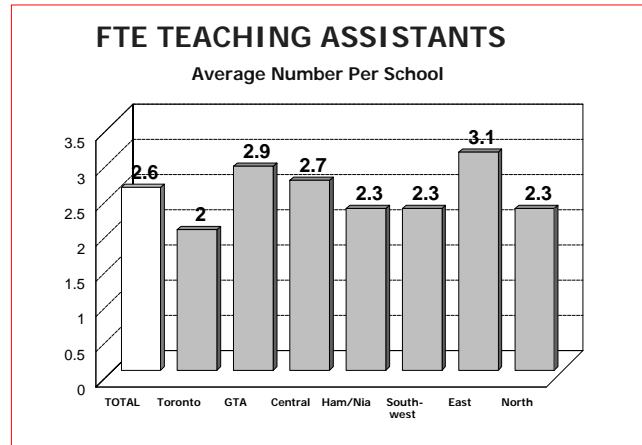
6.0 SUPPORT

6.1 Special Education Support

For the 1997-'98 school years, schools indicate that there were, on average, 2.0 FTE teaching assistants per school. This number rose to 2.6 FTE teaching assistants in 1998-'99, remaining at that figure for the current school year.



The average number of FTE teaching assistants per school varies considerably by region of the province. There are 3.1 FTE teaching assistants per school in Eastern Ontario and 2.9 in the GTA outside Toronto. In Toronto, the average number of FTE teaching assistants drops to 2.0 per school.

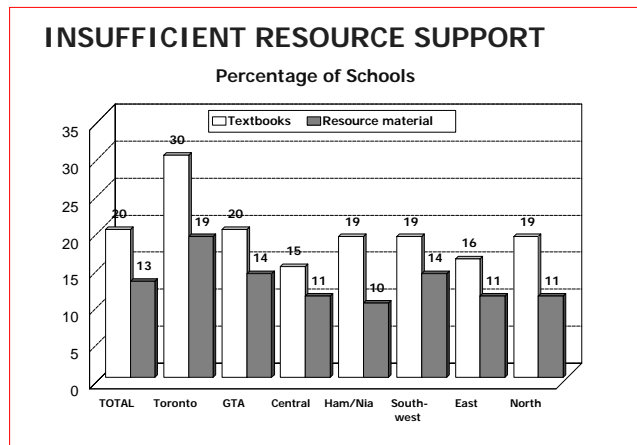


Despite the fact that the average number of FTE teaching assistants per schools has remained the same over the past year, 56 percent of schools report that there has been a change in the amount of resource withdrawal available for special needs students. Of these schools, 70 percent indicate less time and 13 percent say there is more time. Schools in Eastern Ontario (72%), Central Ontario (65%) and the GTA outside Toronto (64%) are most likely to report a change in the amount of resource withdrawal.

6.2 Resource Support—Textbooks and Resource Material

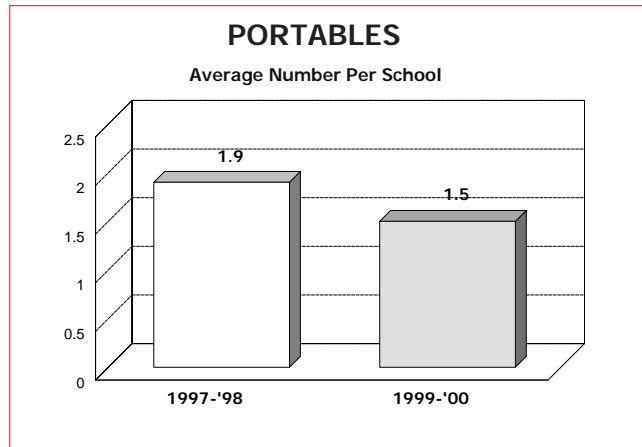
Twenty percent of schools report that they do not have sufficient access to textbooks supporting the new curriculum. The need for textbooks is especially acute in Toronto where 30 percent of schools report insufficient textbooks.

Thirteen percent of schools indicate that teachers have insufficient resource material in support of the new curriculum. Similar to the need for textbooks, schools in Toronto report the greatest need for resource material (19%).

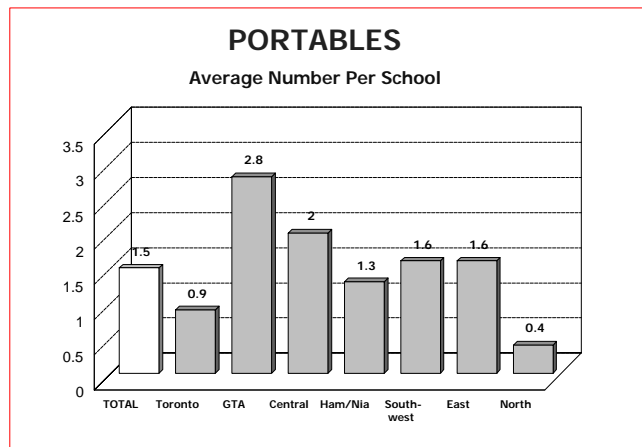


6.3 Capital Support

Over the past two years, the average number of portables has decreased from 1.9 to 1.5 portables per school. The number of portables per school varies considerably across the province.



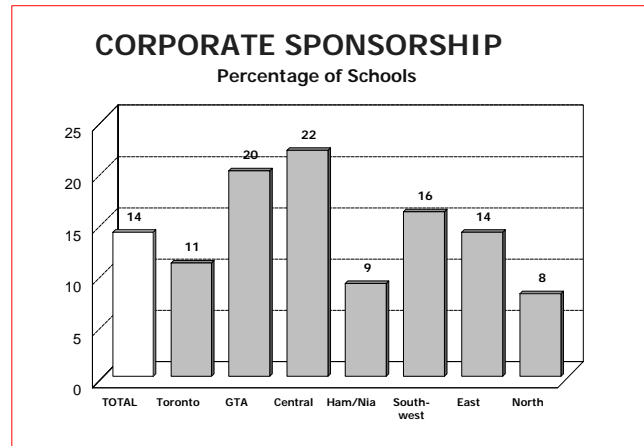
Whereas there are 2.8 portables per school in the GTA outside Toronto, there are only 0.9 portables per school in Toronto and 0.4 in Northern Ontario.



Forty-one percent of schools across the province report that there are schoolrooms now being used for classrooms that two years ago had been used for other purposes. Of these schools, 21 percent indicate resource withdrawal, 14 percent storage rooms, 11 percent music rooms, 10 percent computer rooms, 9 percent library, 6 percent daycare and 4 percent lunch room. The conversion to classrooms is most likely to have occurred in Toronto (54% of schools) and the GTA outside of Toronto (54% of schools).

7.0 CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP

Fourteen percent of schools indicate that they are involved in corporate sponsorships this year. The highest levels of participation in corporate sponsorships occur in the Central region (22% of schools) and in the GTA outside Toronto (20%). Fewer than 10 percent of schools in Northern Ontario (8%) and Hamilton-Niagara (9%) participate in some form of corporate sponsorship.



As the number of students increases, so does the participation in corporate sponsorship. While 11 percent of schools with fewer than 200 students have corporate sponsorship, this number increases to 14 percent of schools with 200 to 350 students, 15 percent of schools with up to 500 students and 18 percent of schools with more than 500 students.

The most frequent type of corporate sponsorship involves money (59% of schools with sponsorship) followed by materials, supplies and services (44%).