

## PERSONNEL STAFFING HISTORY

### Pupil-Teacher Ratios

As education receives more and more national attention, pupil-teacher ratios also receive increasing scrutiny. The Legislature has made efforts in recent years to improve Washington State's pupil-teacher ratios. Pupil-teacher ratios are expressed "20 pupils per teacher" or simply 20:1. School finance in this state, however, works with what is called the teacher-pupil ratio. The teacher-pupil ratio, which is equivalent to the example above, is written "50 teachers per 1000 pupils" or simply 50:1000. The rest of this section will show, for clarity, both methods of expressing the same ratio. Prior to the 1986–87 school year, the basic education funding formula provided for 50 certificated staff per 1000 full-time equivalent (FTE) pupils. This included certificated instructional staff and certificated administrative staff, although these groups were not yet defined in law. **Between 1987 and 1990, ratios were established for certificated administrative, certificated instructional and classified staff, and the K–3 funding formula was enriched.** The 1991 legislature further increased the K–3 formula staff ratio by 2 to a maximum of 54.3:1000 (18.42:1). Districts with actual K–3 staffing ratios less than 54.3:1000 and greater than 49:1000 were funded at their actual K–3 ratio. Districts with actual K–3 ratios of less than 49:1000 were funded at the statutory minimum of 49:1000. Under certain circumstances, up to 1.3 of the 54.3 funding ratio could be used to increase classified instructional assistants. See Chapter 5 Section A.a. for a more complete discussion. **The 1999 Legislature revised the funding ratio for K–3 into a funding ratio for K–4. Beginning in the 1999–2000 school year, school districts were allocated up to 53.2 certificated instructional staff per 1000 FTE K–4 students. The 2000 Legislature funded a new Better Schools program for the 2000–01 school year. This provided for an additional 2.2 certificated instructional staff units per 1000 K–4 students to supplement the basic education certificated staffing allocations.** This additional staffing could also be provided under a supplemental contract for additional classroom contact hours beyond the normal school day. **The 2001 Legislature rolled funding for Better Schools into the funding for basic education. In the 2001–02 school year, school districts were allocated up to 55.4 certificated instructional staff per 1000 K–4 students.** As state funding for Student Achievement increased (see next paragraph), Better Schools funding for additional certificated staff units decreased. In the 2002–03 school year, school districts were allocated up to 54.0 certificated instructional staff per 1000 K–4 students. In 2004–05, the K–4 funding ratio was reduced to 53.2, the original funding level when K–4 funding was implemented beginning in the 1999–2000 school year. Initiative 728, K–12 2000 Student Achievement Act, was approved by Washington State voters in November 2000 and took effect in the 2001–02 school year. Initiative 728 provides additional funding for improving student learning. The initiative identifies six allowable uses of the money including reducing class size by hiring additional teachers and providing extended learning opportunities for struggling students. Each school district determines how Initiative 728 funding can best be used to improve student learning. In the 2003–04 school year, approximately half of Initiative 728 funding was reported as used to reduce class size.