

One High School

Academic Achievement

Possible Benefits

Possible Concerns

Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional offerings (Advanced Placement)* • One Vision • CTE programs stronger • Greater flexibility for scheduling • Improved collaboration • Improved technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased competition for academic recognition and class rank
Special Populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESL and bilingual program will increase and may reduce academic isolation • Gifted students provided more opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to form cohorts/small learning communities • Ability to push in / co-teach ESL/bilingual • Success for underserved students** • All subgroups will be reported for accountability

*Research indicates that doubling enrollment produces only a 17% increase in the variety of offerings and only 5-12% of the students in larger schools will avail themselves of these extra courses.

**An interesting interaction effect which has been found in replications across seven very different states is that as school size increases, the "achievement test score costs" associated with the proportion of economically disadvantaged students enrolled in a school also increases. In short, as schools get larger, average achievement among schools enrolling larger proportions of low socioeconomic-status students suffers. As school size increases, the mean measured achievement of schools with disadvantaged students' declines. (Bickel, 2001)

Climate for Students

Possible Benefits

Possible Concerns

Attendance		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to get lost • Increased dropout rate and graduation rate
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Extra-curricular Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More competitive teams (powerhouse) • Increase offerings, more variety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit number of students • Transportation/loss of class time • Possibly out of Big 12 Conference
Supervision of campus		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to supervise larger area
Belongingness/Alienation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More prone to form gangs • Loss of tradition for both schools • More difficult to form faculty/student relationships • Difficult to wrap around students • Continued and/or increased alternative education

Climate for Parents

Possible Benefits

Possible Concerns

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No boundaries • Spanish speaking staff more readily available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of tradition • Decrease in parent involvement/student involvement
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Climate for Faculty/Staff

Possible Benefits

Possible Concerns

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronger curriculum alignment and specialization in areas • Fewer preps • Stronger departments • More collaboration for ESL/regular education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to form teacher/administrator relationships • CAC's would need to be administrators • Lack of community
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Cost Effectiveness

Possible Benefits

Possible Concerns

Operational/staffing/transportation	Possible Benefits	Possible Concerns
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easier transportation but uncertain of cost effectiveness • Utility savings • Save on staffing through tighter scheduling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More support services • More administrators (CAC's) • More ESL/bilingual • Higher athletic transportation costs
Capital Construction		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 160 million referendum needed • vacant buildings

The Myth of Economies of Scale

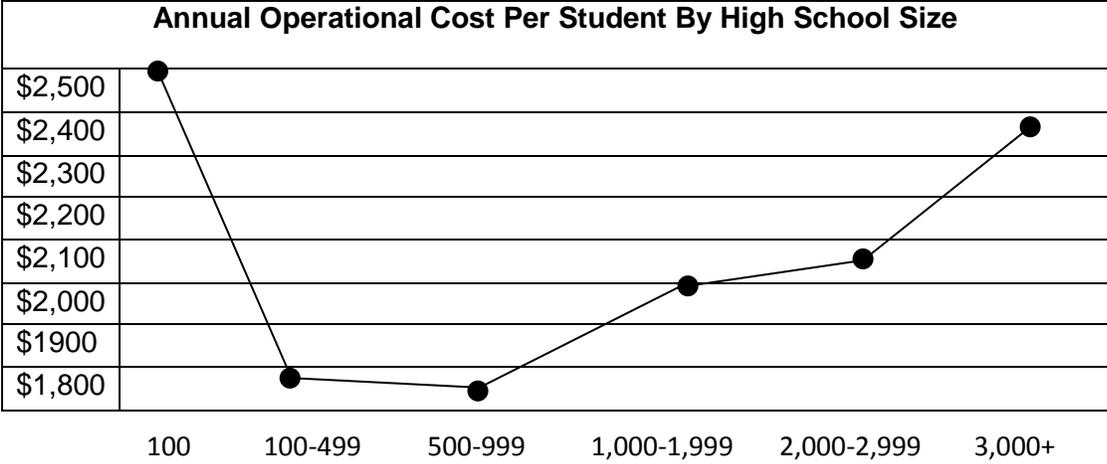
Although the original driving force behind super-sized public schools was to achieve economies of scale, this theoretical advantage is not supported by the research. Instead, studies have consistently found that large schools exhibit diseconomies of scale: inefficiencies and increased costs that result from increases in administrative bureaucracy, security costs and transportation costs.

Operational Costs

In 1992, the Public Education Association of New York produced a report in which it examined all the existing research on school size and operational costs and concluded that, "The premise that small schools are more expensive to operate has always been false." Instead, the research – consisting of more than 30 studies in urban, rural and suburban schools in every region of the country showed a U-shaped curve. The most efficient high schools are those with enrollments of between 300-900 students.

The reason that large schools are more expensive is that, as the Public Education Association put it, they are "difficult to manage efficiently and safely." Management costs increase dramatically because of the need for additional administrators (assistant principals, department heads, program supervisors), support staff (secretaries and clerical workers), and security personnel (officers, dispatchers, and supervisors).

For this reason, a 2005 study funded by the Gates Foundation, which examined 25 high-performing small schools across the nation, found that they not only achieved better student outcomes but also spent an average of 17% less per student than the per pupil expenditures for their districts.



Source: Public Education Association of New York, "Small Schools Operating costs: Reversing Assumptions About Economies of Scale," December 1992