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**To:** SpecialEducationSvcs Teachers <[specialeducationsvcs-teachers@wcpss.net](mailto:specialeducationsvcs-teachers@wcpss.net)>

**Cc:** WCPSS Principals <[wcpss-principals@wcpss.net](mailto:wcpss-principals@wcpss.net)>; Area Superintendents <[areasuperintendents@wcpss.net](mailto:areasuperintendents@wcpss.net)>; Sara Clark \_ Staff - Communications <[sclark10@wcpss.net](mailto:sclark10@wcpss.net)>; SupLT <[SupLT@wcpss.net](mailto:SupLT@wcpss.net)>

**Subject:** Important: Special Education staffing update for 2026–27

Dear Special Education Teachers,

During tonight’s Board of Education meeting, staff will provide a high-level overview of the Superintendent’s Proposed Budget ahead of the formal presentation scheduled for April 7. You can review the presentation [on the Board’s website](#) and watch the meeting on our [YouTube channel](#). As a part of this presentation, staff will share an update about the \$18 million reduction the district must make within the Special Education budget for the 2026–27 school year.

In an effort to make this reduction, special education staffing ratios will be adjusted for 2026-27. All ratios will remain within or below state-recommended guidelines and will result in the reduction of approximately 130 special education teacher positions districtwide.

We understand this news may cause stress and uncertainty, and we want to acknowledge that directly. As we move through the budget process, we are committed to being as transparent as possible, sharing updates as information becomes available, and communicating clearly about next steps and available supports.

### **Why These Changes Are Necessary**

Special Education is one of the areas where we are seeing the most significant budget challenges. Student needs and service costs continue to grow faster than the funding available to support them.

Contributing factors include growth in preschool services, increasing high-cost placements and specialized supports, rising staffing and service costs, and limited flexibility within IDEA and grant funding.

The district has already reduced non-required contracts, cut internal operating budgets, redesigned Extended School Year services, reduced central positions, and increased grant utilization. Even with these steps, an \$18 million reduction will be necessary for 2026–27 to align expenditures with available funding while continuing to meet federal and state requirements.

### **Staffing Adjustments**

To address this gap, Special Education teacher ratios will be adjusted, but they will remain within or below state-recommended ranges. This will result in a reduction of approximately 130 Special Education teacher positions districtwide for 2026-27.

These changes will not impact regional programs. Any changes to regional programs are related to the opening and closing of programs in schools.

We also made adjustments to support elementary schools with behavioral needs and provide flexibility for scheduling at the secondary level.

### **What Happens Next**

In the next few days, principals will receive updated Special Education teacher allotments reflecting the adjusted ratios. Schools will review their staffing based on student needs, vacancies, and program structure, so the impact will vary by school.

Principals will work with Human Resources to identify any positions that may be affected. Employees in these positions will be notified starting March 25.

### **Support for Employees**

Employees with continuing contracts in impacted positions will enter the district's displacement process, where Human Resources works with them to identify other available positions within the district that match their certification and experience. Employees on terminating contracts will also have the opportunity to apply for other positions in the district.

Based on current projections, we anticipate employees with continuing contracts in impacted positions will be placed in other positions within the district. Human Resources will also host an internal job fair to connect impacted employees with schools that have vacancies.

We recognize that changes like this can create uncertainty, and we are committed to supporting our educators throughout this process while continuing to ensure students receive the services they need.

### **Questions?**

We know you may have questions. Please submit them [via this Google form](#) so we can develop and share an FAQ as we move forward in this process.

Thank you for the important work you do each day to support students across our district.

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