

Executive Director of Student Services
Board Update
October 2025

Collaboration: Working together to achieve more collectively.

- Intermediate School District 917 Resource Center: The Social/Emotional Learning & Support and Teaching and Learning Departments recently collaborated on the best way to share resources with our staff. For many years, we have utilized our Instructional Resource Center (IRC) website as a “one-stop shop” for things employees may need, from curriculum to technology tips to our Data Hub and Due Process Site. We have renamed this to the ISD 917 Resource Center and are building in additional resources for Safety and Social/Emotional Learning & Support.
- CEC Core Value of the Month:



Empathy: Considering and respecting the perspective and needs of member districts, students, families and staff.

- Intakes: From September 2nd, 2025, through September 30th, 2025 (21 school days), ISD 917 offered intakes to seven students, or 8% of the students on the combined setting IV programs' waitlist.

Seven students from five of the nine-member districts were offered intakes. (Randolph currently has zero students on the waitlist.) Districts 191 (2) and 197 (2) were offered multiple intakes.

Of the seven intakes that have been offered from 9/2/2025 through 9/30/2025:

- 2 intakes offered between 9/2-9/30 are currently scheduled
- 3 intakes offered between 9/2-9/30 have been completed
- 2 intakes offered were declined due to enrollment change (1), and “other” (1).
- On average, once an intake is offered, it takes 2.7 calendar days to schedule the intake.

From 9/2/2025 to 9/30/2025, there were 19 new Setting IV referrals. Four of these referrals have been placed on a waitlist, one has started, and one has been moved to inactive prior to being able to determine an appropriate program. Of the 13 remaining referrals, we are awaiting additional referral information pertinent to the determination of program placement (i.e., Diagnostic Assessments review (4) and observation (2), and time to review the student's paperwork to determine placement (7)).

Finally, **36** new students physically began attending programming in ISD 917, setting IV programs since 9/2/2025 (the start of the 25-26 school year), and **four** more students are expected to start soon.

At TESA (BTC & DCTC), there have been 55 new students who started the 25-26 SY. An additional 4 intakes have been completed, with two students starting after the start of the year. There have been six total referrals for TESA programming since the start of the 2025-2026 school year.

In the DASH program, 4 new students started the 2025-2026 school year: two at Lincoln Center, one at Lakeville North, and one at Hastings High School.

There have been 24 referrals for Itinerant services since 9/2/2025. There are 33 individual services requested.

Month	Referrals Received	Intakes Offered	Intakes Held	Students Started	Declined (Inactive) (ISO*)
July	1	14	0	NA	3(1)
August	7	19	16	NA	7 (2)
September	19	7	12	36	3
October					
November					
December					
January					

February					
March					
April					
May					
June					
Totals	27	40	28	36	16 (3)

*ISO: Inactive Since Offered
Updated 9/29/2025

Setting IV Waitlist Overview

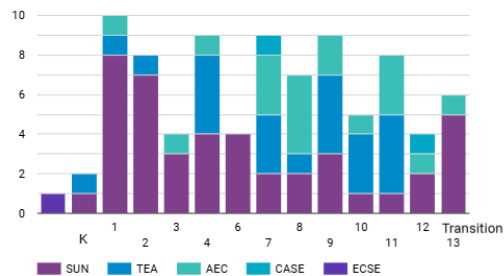
NOTE:

Waitlist is updated weekly. Students are not added until paperwork is reviewed and an observation has been conducted.

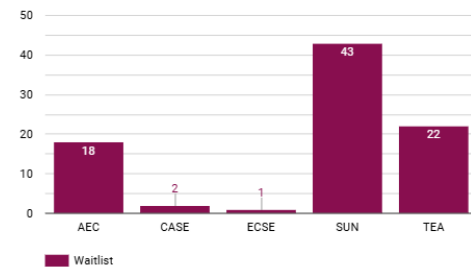
Total Students on Waitlist

86

Students on waitlist by grade



Students on waitlist by program



Innovation: Ongoing improvement of programs and services.

- Expansion: We are considering what steps we would need to follow in order to expand programming in Intermediate School District 917, specifically in the SUN program. As we began our discussion, it became evident that the history of expansion rests with one person. To address this, [a timeline and steps](#) for the process has been assembled. We are excited to be in a position to consider addressing the next steps in meeting the needs of our member districts.

Stewardship: Managing financial and human resources carefully and responsibly.

- New, highly qualified staff: On Wednesday, September 17th, we welcomed four new, highly qualified staff. Melissa Torres, Jennifer Hetland, and Nicole Flesner welcomed them at the airport and got them settled. Nicole picked them up on Thursday, September 18th to take care of a few things like state identification cards and bank accounts. Of course, she also made sure they experienced Target too. They began on Monday, September 22nd with orientation and will soon be at our sites teaming with teachers to further acclimate to our district.



Our efforts to hire highly qualified staff has yielded positive results for our district. For the 2025-2026 school year we have only two open positions for licensed teachers. We have 13 highly qualified teachers in the district this year. Without them, our vacancies would number 15 and the impact would be 78 students that we would be unable to accommodate in our district programs.

- ESP staffing update: Below is an update on our ESP staffing.

Program/Site	Role	Openings
DASH	ESP	1
DHH	ESP	(to be reported)
	ISP	(to be reported)
IDEA/SUN-AEC	ESP	7
SUN-Cedar	ESP	7
SUN-CEC	ESP	12
TEA	ESP	6.5

TESA-BTC	ESP	0
TESA-DCTC	ESP	1

Communication: Multi-dimensional, transparent conversation focused on sharing information and creating a positive learning and working environment.

- Staff communication: Our administrators send regular communication to their staff often using the Smore platform. A few examples of this are [The Road Report](#) developed by Jeanne D'Aloia, Special Education Coordinator/Assistant Principal for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing and Itinerant programs, sent to Itinerant staff. Also supervising the same programs, Taylor Lovin, Assistant Director/Principal, sends [Peek of the Week](#) to the staff in the Deaf/Hard of Hearing Resource Program.

Integrity: Aligning our actions with our values and beliefs.

- Expanded Core Values Committee for 2025-26: The ISD 917 Core Values Committee is growing! The committee recently accepted nominations for new committee members from across sites and programs throughout ISD 917, increasing in size to sixteen active members for the first time since its founding in January 2023. With more members comes the ability to take on new projects and increased communication and idea sharing between the sites and the committee. The group is looking forward to the first large committee meeting in October.

Personalization: Building on the strengths and addressing the unique needs of individual students.

- Updates to ISD 917's Threat Assessment Procedures: ISD 917's eight trained threat assessment facilitators met in mid-September to make updates to the district's threat assessment forms and processes to align with updated statutory language as well as best practices. MN §121A.06 requires the gathering and reporting of particular student information under specific circumstances, and our procedures now reflect those requirements. Additionally, the group made additional updates to portions of the threat assessment process based on guidance from the MN Fusion Center and from the latest research and updates from the National Association of School Psychologists. We continue to refine and improve our threat assessment process as a means to keep students, staff, and school communities safe while also identifying opportunities for additional support and intervention for students who are struggling.

Equity: Intentionally providing opportunities while removing barriers at all levels of the organization.

- ISD 917 Presentation at MN Legislative Working Group on Seclusion: Adrienne Turzynski, ISD 917 Lead BCBA, and Justin Hoelscher, Central Intake Coordinator, recently presented to the MN Legislative Working Group on Seclusion. They highlighted examples of seclusion being used as one tool in a continuum of services,

supports, and interventions used by staff in the intermediate districts to keep students and staff safe in emergencies. Their presentation was a collaborative effort with NE Metro Intermediate District 916. Kate Hulse, Director of Social/Emotional Learning & Support, an appointed member of the Seclusion Working Group, continues to participate in twice-monthly meetings of the group as they work to draft recommendations about the use of seclusion to be considered in the 2026 legislative session. The work of the group was written about in a recent update from the Association of Metropolitan School Districts (AMSD) (see below).



Seclusion Working Group

The Legislative Coordinating Commission Seclusion Working Group met Wednesday this week to hear an overview from MDE about the history and current use of seclusion and restrictive procedures in schools in Minnesota, as well as presentations from Intermediate District 917 and NE Metro Intermediate District 916, who provided examples and context where seclusion or restrictive procedures had been used, and the impact of those uses on staff and students.

- [ISD 916 & 917 Presentation](#)
- [Department of Education Presentation](#)
- [Districts Reporting Use of Seclusion in 2024-25 School Year](#)
- [Minnesota Local Education Agency Seclusion Rooms](#)
- <https://www.lcc.mn.gov/seclusion/meetings.html>

Diversity: Appreciating and valuing everyone's unique selves.

- Shout Outs: Many of our leaders regularly recognize their staff. Steph Betley, assistant director/principal for the TESA program sends a weekly email to all of her staff (see the heading below) on Fridays sharing recognition submitted from colleagues. Additionally, individual emails are sent from Steph and her leadership team articulating specific, notable efforts of the last week that they want to specifically recognize.

