



PALOS HEIGHTS SCHOOL DISTRICT 128

Staffing Recommendations 2026-2027

This overview is intended to provide the board with a high-level view of our staffing and enrollment. It reflects the district's current state and our vision for continuing to provide high-quality programming in a fiscally responsible manner. To assess the district's needs, it is important to consider our mission and vision, our strategic plan (Portrait of a Learner), and the program parameters that guide our decision-making.

Program Considerations

- **Early Intervention:** We are committed to supporting literacy and mathematical concept development in the early grades to intervene and fill gaps for struggling learners, better preparing them to access instruction in later intermediate and middle school years.
- **Class Size Guidelines:** We are committed to following best practices as outlined by the Evidence-Based Funding (EBF) model. We use EBF as a guide for appropriate class sizes to maximize instruction. Guidelines are just that. We always consider context when making a formal recommendation that may be above or below the guidelines.
- **Recommended Class Size Guidelines - Adjusted for Current Enrollment Trends**
 - Kindergarten = Recommended maximum is 22 students per section.
 - Due to space constraints, we may consider a higher cap with additional support or consider special subject areas delivered in the classroom setting
 - Grades 1 and 2 = Recommended maximum of 22 students per class
 - Grades 3 = Recommended maximum of 25 students per classroom
 - Grades 4 and 5 = Recommended maximum of 26 students per classroom
 - Grades 6-8 = Recommended maximum for core classes is 25 students per classroom
 - Honors-level classrooms may have slightly higher enrollments
- **Co-Teaching:** We are committed to inclusive education for all students. To support this commitment, we have implemented a co-taught instructional model. This model requires a special educator to be assigned to core content classes in literacy and mathematics to ensure that students' Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals are supported and achieved.
 - Note: Individual IEP needs may require individual direct instruction programming.
- **Middle School Programming:** We are committed to the middle school model to support our students.



**PALOS HEIGHTS
SCHOOL DISTRICT 128**

2025-2026 Current Year Enrollment

Grade	Projected Enrollment 25 - 26	Enrollment as of 1/16/2026	Sections	Average Class Size
Pre-K 3	60	49	4	12 - 13
Pre-K 4	60	49	4	
Kindergarten	80	103	5	20 - 21
1	82	79	4	19 - 20
2	82	81	4	20 - 21
3	75	73	3	24 - 25
4	84	83	4	20 - 21
5	96	93	4	23 - 24
Core 6	80	80	4	20
Core 7	86	82	4	20 - 21
Core 8	74	79	4	19 - 20
TOTALS	859	851		

NOTE: Students from early intervention screenings are still being added to Pre-K (10 seats remaining)



PALOS HEIGHTS SCHOOL DISTRICT 128

Projected Enrollment 2026 - 2027

Grade	Current Enrollment 25-26	Projected Estimate 26-27	Sections	Average Class Size	Notes
Pre-K 3	NA	60	4	15	
Pre-K 4	Grade PK 3 = 49	60	4	15	
Kindergarten	Grade PK 4 = 49	80	4	20	Transfer of one kindergarten teacher to first grade
1	Grade K = 103	105	5	21	
2	Grade 1 = 79	82	4	20 - 21	
3	Grade 2 = 81	82	4	20 - 21	Transfer of one teacher from Navajo to third grade.
4	Grade 3 = 73	75	3	25	
5	Grade 4 = 83	84	4	21	
Core 6	Grade 5 = 93	96	4	24	
Core 7	Grade 6 = 80	80	4	20	
Core 8	Grade 7 = 82	82	4	20 - 21	
TOTALS		886			

Staffing Implications for FY 2026

Class Size Core - NET 0

Based on current enrollment projections for the 2026-2027 school year, we recommend transferring one classroom teacher from Navajo and one kindergarten teacher from Indian Hill to Chippewa. This is necessary because Chippewa is projected to have an increase in sections for the following grades: first grade will increase from three to four sections, and third grade will increase from three to four sections. Additionally, fourth grade is projected to decrease from 4 to 3 sections.

- Kindergarten: Reduced one enrollment section, from 5 to 4.
- Grade 1: Added one enrollment section, from 4 to 5.
- Grade 3: Added one enrollment section, from 3 to 4.
- Grade 4: Reduced one enrollment section, from 4 to 3.
 - The staffing level is projected to decrease by one section if current enrollment remains stable. However, with the current enrollment of 73 students, an increase of four students would trigger the need for another section. This final decision will be contingent upon actual, confirmed enrollment figures.



PALOS HEIGHTS
SCHOOL DISTRICT 128

Special Education Needs

This year, the special education program continuum was expanded to include self-contained classrooms at Grades 1-8 that serve students with significant academic needs that require more instructional minutes than the co-taught/resource program model can provide. The district has also experienced a large influx of students with more significant social-emotional needs at Grades PK-1, which will affect staffing considerations for K-2 in 2026-2027. Some of these students are currently being evaluated to determine program and placement needs. Given this, we are not able to provide the projected special education staffing needs at this time. We anticipate providing recommendations for special education at the March 2026 Board of Education Meeting. There is the possibility that we may need to increase certified and support staff FTEs in response to increasing student needs at the K-2 levels for 2026-2027, but we want to confirm placement recommendations and current staff assignments before discussing those potential needs.