



Palos Heights School District 128

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Merryl B. Brownlow, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Memo

To: Merryl Brownlow

From: Dee Potempa

Date: 1/24/2025

Re: Special Education Programming

Below you will find a 4-year trend of special education caseloads by building. Recognize that some of these students are now requiring more intensive cross-categorical programming than in previous years. As we have grown in enrollment as a district, so have our special education needs. We have already added one special education position at Independence to account for the additional caseload that includes intensive needs being serviced there. Chippewa has been able to maintain staffing and still service needs, as that caseload has remained stable from previous years. After reviewing the special education projections for the FY26 school year, there is a need to increase the FTE at Navajo to accommodate what amounts to an additional full caseload with a combination of cross categorical students matriculating from Chippewa and increased caseload of students requiring co-taught services.

In addition to classroom support, we require 1 additional FTE for Occupational Therapy to service students across the district. At this time, we have 71 students with approximately 2100 service minutes required to meet the student's occupational therapy needs. The occupational therapist is also required to perform job duties such as evaluations, play-based assessments, IEP meetings, preschool screenings, and provide in-class support for the Preschool for All program. With best practice being a ratio of 40:1 for Occupational Therapy, there is a need to increase our staffing to provide the appropriate levels of service to students.

Building	<u>2022-23</u>	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>
Indian Hill (K)	5	9	13	18
Chippewa (1-3)	36	34	29	39
Navajo (4-5)	20	27	30	39
Independence (6-8)	29	29	38	40
Total Students	90	99	110	136

Sincerely,

Dee Potempa
Director of Student Services
Preschool Principal

INDIAN HILL
12800 S. Austin Ave
(708) 597-1285

CHIPPEWA
12425 S. Austin Ave
(708) 388-7260

NAVAJO HEIGHTS
12401 S. Oak Park Ave
(708) 385-3269

INDEPENDENCE JR. HIGH
6610 W. Highland Dr
(708) 448-0737