

## Mid-Valley Liaison Meeting January 30, 2026

**In attendance:** Lisa Palese, Melissa Mills, Tressa Matuszewski, Mike Ackerman, Jamie Consentino, Sarah Nolan, Tanner Seal, Melissa Groot, Anne Scalia, Kari Ruh, Laurel O'Brien

### **Enrollment & Classroom Capacity:**

Since August, we have welcomed **29 new students**, with **three additional students pending placement** and **six new referrals** as of today. During the same period, eight students exited the program, either returning to their home schools or relocating, including **onewho transitioned to a private day school**.

At this time, **six classrooms are at full capacity**, and **four classrooms each have one opening**. This has impacted districts, with placements occurring primarily at **MJS**, particularly within our **elementary classrooms**. Tanner is working closely with his team to support as many students as possible in elementary classrooms through **staff restructuring** and the **successful transition of students back to their home schools** when appropriate.

### **Projections:**

Current estimates indicate we will begin the 2026–27 school year with approximately 47 more students than at the start of August 2025. Based on these early projections, we anticipate **only minor adjustments** to our overall classroom count. At this time, we **do not anticipate opening any new classrooms** and will likely **reduce the number of Case Managers in our SEA program by one**. *It is important to note that these decisions are based on current projections and referral trends, which may change*

### **Transition Program:**

We dedicated time today to provide the Liaisons with updates on the **Transition Center** and had a valuable opportunity to answer questions regarding what the **Cedar Avenue location** could offer our **100+ transition students** in the future. We discussed potential **funding options** and clarified that, in most scenarios, the project cost would **not impact D303**, as the district currently has only **two to three students** enrolled in the program.

We also clarified that we **would not pay for leases at both the Shelby and Cedar locations** if the project is approved but not ready for occupancy at the start of the **2026–27 school year**. While there is broad agreement that a different location is necessary for our students, we recognize that a final decision cannot be made without additional information on the **overall cost** and its **impact on tuition**

### **2026–27 Staffing Discussion:**

The Mid-Valley Leadership Team is carefully reviewing current staffing levels and projections for next year to ensure we are meeting student needs while remaining aligned with **student-to-staff ratios**. This approach supports **fiscal responsibility** and reduces reliance on **contract staff** in classrooms.

We are also evaluating Cooperative-wide needs related to **Instructional/Behavioral Coaching** for the coming year. As our teams continue to strengthen and we anticipate fewer new staff hires, we plan to **reduce Instructional/Behavioral Coaches from 5.0 FTE to 3.0 FTE**, while maintaining a budget to bring in **external experts as needed**, particularly **BCBA support**, to ensure continued student success.