

Mid-Valley Special Education Cooperative

Lisa Palese, Executive Director
1304 Ronzheimer Avenue
St. Charles, IL 60174
Phone: 331-228-4873
Fax: 331-228-4874

**MEMO**

TO: Executive Board
FROM: Matt McDonald, Director of Human Resources & Business/CSBO
DATE: February 4, 2026
RE: Transition Program Facility Needs

This memo provides an updated analysis of the Cedar Avenue facility option for housing Mid-Valley's Transition programs. Specifically, it addresses how a single consolidated space could serve three programs; how the proposed space compares to current facilities; cost implications and mitigation strategies; funding considerations; and key reservations that must be resolved before moving forward.

Mid-Valley administration recently met with BEI ownership, a WOLD architect, and representatives from the ROE. The architect and ROE believe the project is feasible and an acceptable fit for our program, provided the necessary improvements are made.

One Space Serving Three Programs

The Cedar Avenue location would consolidate SAIL, SEA, and Hearing Itinerant services (office space for our Hearing Itinerants, which are currently housed at Shelby) into a single facility. This represents a significant shift from the current model, which relies on multiple undersized and functionally limited spaces.

What This Space Would Provide

- ADA-accessible throughout, eliminating reliance on lifts
 - We anticipate having 4 students and 1 staff member in our Transition programs next year who will use a wheelchair on a daily basis
- Improved safety and security, including secured entrances
- Safer and more efficient parking and bus access
- Dedicated classrooms sized appropriately for instructional and behavioral needs
 - Also allowing for maximizing student-to-teacher ratios
- Therapy and related service spaces (speech, OT, PT)
- Administrative and itinerant staff offices
- Secure, designated nursing space
- Full-program meeting space
- Space designed to support both current enrollment and projected growth
- Ability to expand within the building footprint if future needs arise

This model allows programs to function more cohesively while maintaining appropriate separation and security.

Current Facilities and Programming

- Programs are spread across multiple sites with limited flexibility
- Classrooms are undersized, limiting enrollment and instructional options
- No dedicated spaces for:
 - Sensory regulation
 - Related services
 - Program-wide activities
- Accessibility relies on lifts and workarounds
- Safety concerns exist related to shared occupancy and building design
- Storage, nursing, and restroom facilities are insufficient or non-compliant
- Shared staff must travel, decreasing their student contact time

Key Questions and Next Steps

- Final build-out and start-up costs
- Long-term lease terms and escalation clauses
- Clear division of financial responsibility between BEI and the Cooperative
- Construction timeline and readiness for the next school year

We anticipate providing a more accurate cost estimate by the March board meeting.

Strategies to Minimize Cost Increase to Programs

- Consolidation of three programs into one lease footprint
- Reduction in duplicate spaces and staffing
- Phased build-out approach to prioritize essential needs (potential)
- Pay the cost of the build-out up front to keep lease increases minimal
- Ability to maximize student-to-teacher ratio

We would anticipate being able to have one less teacher while retaining approximately the same student capacity. We would shift a classroom paraprofessional to an administrative assistant role.

	Cedar - Combined Programming	Shelby & FVCC	Additional Information
Classrooms	9	10	
Student Capacity	106	108	We have room to grow at Cedar, and we have groups of students who rotate in and out from other locations, so classroom space can be shared.
Teaching Staff	12	13	Based on current projections and the ability to have larger class sizes.
Classroom Paraprofessionals	20	21	More opportunities to share staff between classrooms and programs.
Administrative Asst/Receptionist	1	0	Receptionist, building safety, transportation, enrollment, community trips, IEP meeting set-up, maintenance, floater sub for TAs, and more