



## Board of Education

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**TO:** Board of Education  
**FROM:** Sherri Massa, Director of Student Services  
**DATE:** May 22, 2025  
**RE:** Expanding Self-Contained Programming

**This memo is:**

- ☒ Information only.  
☐ Information with a recommendation, and a request for Board approval by vote.

Previous memos on this topic can be found:

- ☐ in previous Board packet(s) dated. \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ or attached to this memo

<p><b>Basic information:</b></p> <p>District Administration is recommending adding a seventh self-contained classroom at the elementary level for the 2025-2026 school year to be housed at Gary School. The addition of this classroom requires adding 1.0 FTE self-contained teacher and .5 FTE social worker to support the new classroom, while these are new positions, they are within our current staffing allocation, so they will not cost the district more money.</p> <p>Due to high numbers of incoming kinders projected for self-contained, and only two 5th graders moving to the middle school, our enrollment numbers necessitate an additional section of self-contained at the elementary level. We currently do not offer a self-contained classroom within our 2-Way dual programming, and we have had requests for this in the past. As we look to expand our offerings to support students, we feel it is in the best interest of students to open a self-contained classroom at Gary School for the 25-26 school year.</p>
<p><b>Background or historical information:</b></p> <p>Self-contained classrooms have a cap size identified in school code as 8 students or 13 if additional paras are assigned to the classroom. In addition to the maximum enrollment being 13 school code also identifies that the classroom can not have students with an age span of more than 4 chronological years at any point within the year. This means that not only do we monitor the number of students within the classroom, but we also monitor the age of students. It has been our practice to keep our self-contained classrooms closer to the recommended size of 8 students.</p> <p>We currently have 6 self-contained classrooms at the elementary level. Next year we will have 48 students in K-5th grade, which is an average of 8 per classroom. Every year, we have 2-3 students move in with an IEP that requires self-contained programming. Additionally, each of the past 2 years, we have had kindergarten students start with us in general education and by December move to self-contained. If we keep our current 6 classrooms, we would be starting with all our classrooms at the target of 8 and would likely be up to 10 in many classrooms by December. We would be forced to decide mid-year about having larger-than-desired class sizes or trying to hire and open a classroom mid-year.</p> <p>In addition to a concern over the class sizes to start the year, we have also had an increase in requests for students who require self-contained programming to be able to enroll in 2-way dual language programming. Our elementary buildings all offer 1-way dual language support for students, including Spanish speakers in self-contained classrooms. Our English-dominant students in self-contained classrooms currently do not have an opportunity for dual language. We would like to start by offering all incoming kindergarten students who</p>

are currently recommended for self-contained classrooms the chance to sign up for Gary. Depending on the enrollment, we might have space to offer this classroom to current kindergarten students who are in self-contained classrooms at Carrier, Turner, or Indian Knoll. Following best practice for enrollment in Dual language, we would not offer this classroom to students who would be starting 2nd grade or above.

**Previous decisions, actions, or parameters that relate to this topic or issue:**

Our cross-categorical classrooms increased to 6 classrooms (from 5) for the 2024-2025 school year. Our needs for self-contained classrooms continue to grow.

**Recommendations:**

District Administration is recommending adding a seventh self-contained classroom at the elementary level for the 2025-2026 school year to be housed at Gary School, as well as adding 1.0 FTE self-contained teacher and .5 FTE social worker to support the new classroom at Gary School.

After carefully reviewing the needs of our current students and considering opportunities to expand dual language within our community, we are planning to add a 7th self-contained classroom at the elementary level for the 2025-2026 school year at Gary School. We will open this up on a lottery system for incoming kindergarten students to a class size of 8. By adding a self-contained classroom, we will need to add 1.0 FTE to the Gary staff for a self-contained teacher and .5 FTE for a social worker. The current allocation for Speech Language Pathologists is adequate to support the new classroom. Although we are adding new staff, we are within the approved staffing allocation.

**Other questions? What else does the Board wish to know?:**

Estimated Staffing Costs:  
1.0 FTE Self-Contained Teacher: \$80,000  
.5 FTE Social Worker: \$35,000