



LAKE BLUFF SCHOOL DISTRICT 65

To: Dr. Lisa Leali, Superintendent of Schools

Members of the Board of Education

From: Tracy Roehrick, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services

Date: 1/20/2026

Subject: Proposal for Expansion of Occupational Therapy Services to Meet Documented Student Need

Background

School-based Occupational Therapy (OT) is a critical related service that supports a student's ability to access and participate in their educational environment. Our district's occupational therapists collaborate with educational teams to address challenges that interfere with learning, enabling students to develop the functional skills necessary for academic success. These services are not merely supportive; they are a core component of our district's academic mission and our legal obligation to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to every eligible student.

As student needs become more complex, key areas of OT intervention that directly support achievement include: Fine Motor Skills, Sensory Processing and Executive Functioning Skills. This proposal outlines the documented and accelerating increase in demand for these vital services and presents a data-informed recommendation to meet our students' growing needs.

The data collected over the past three school years illustrates a significant and accelerating trend in the need for occupational therapy services across the District. This growth in student numbers, required service minutes, and complexity of need necessitates a strategic review of our current resource allocation to ensure we can continue to provide effective, compliant, and timely support.

District 65 OT Caseload and Service Trends

School Year	#of Students receiving OT	IEP Caseload Minutes	504 Students
2022-2023	20	705	5
2023-2024	32	1175	5
2024-2025	36	1210	6
2025-2026*	36	1240	6

Note: 2025-2026 figures represent the baseline caseload projected from the current student population only and do not include new evaluations.

Current Needs

An analysis of these trends reveals a substantial expansion in service demand. Between the 2022-2023 and 2024-2025 school years, the District experienced an increase of 16 students, an 80% rise in the total number of students receiving OT. During the same period, total required service time grew by 505 minutes, representing a 72% increase in caseload minutes. During this time, the Occupational Therapy role increased the role from a .4 to a .8 to address a large increase.

Effective resource planning requires that we not only analyze historical trends but also proactively address near-future demands. Incoming student evaluations serve as the primary leading indicator of future caseload growth, providing clear insight into the needs we must be prepared to meet in the upcoming academic year.

For the 2025-2026 school year, the District currently has 9 open evaluations or anticipated new evaluations for occupational therapy.

These evaluations will invariably result in new students qualifying for direct service minutes, further expanding the total caseload and adding to the complexity of student needs within the District. This projected demand is a critical factor that must be addressed proactively to ensure our district can guarantee service compliance and, most importantly, provide every eligible student with the support they need to succeed.

Recommendation

Based on the comprehensive analysis of historical growth and projected demand, I formally recommend that the Board approve a 0.1 FTE increase, for the remainder of this school year, in the District's Occupational Therapy service capacity at an additional cost of \$6,900. This recommendation is a matter of strategic foresight and risk management, essential for safeguarding student outcomes and ensuring district compliance. Failing to add resources now would expose the District to significant risks, including compliance violations with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), compromised student achievement, and unsustainable staff burnout.

I respectfully request the Board's consideration of this proposal to ensure the District can continue to meet its obligations under federal and state special education law and provide high-quality, effective support to all eligible students.

I am available to provide any additional information or to discuss this proposal further at your convenience.

Respectfully,
/s/ *Tracy Roehrick*
Tracy Roehrick

