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Date: Tue, Feb 3, 2026 at 12:45 PM
Subject: Follow Up To Email on Budget Process, Equity, and Transparency
To: Framingham SEPAC <framinghamsepac@gmail.com>
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Dear Framingham SEPAC,

Thank you for your email to the district and School Committee on January 29th and for your ongoing advocacy and partnership on behalf of students with disabilities and their families. We share your focus on continuity of services, especially in a year where budget reductions are creating understandable concern. We have included in our reply all parties included in the original email, as well as Dr. Tremblay and the Superintendent's cabinet, in the event they may be interested in the information shared.

We want to be responsive to your request for transparency around how special education staffing is allocated, reviewed, and adjusted each year. Below is an overview of the process, and we are very open to continuing the conversation and addressing specific questions or concerns and would be happy to discuss further at an upcoming SEPAC meeting as well.

Special education staffing allocations are determined annually through a districtwide review that looks closely at both compliance and student need. This review occurs alongside and intersects with the budget process, but is also an independent process in and of itself. Each year, positions may be added, reduced, or repurposed based on a combination of:

- caseload ratios,
- total IEP service minutes across all three grids (by provider type),
- programmatic needs, and
- scheduling requirements to deliver services as written.

Because special education enrollment and service delivery are fluid, staffing is adjusted as students enter and exit special education, as students move in/out of the district, and as IEP team decisions change service levels over time.

As part of the annual staffing review, we analyze within each school the number of students with IEPs, their service minutes, scheduling needs, programmatic structure needs, and the staffing required to implement these services. This includes a close look at special educators, special education assistant teachers, instructional aides, and related service providers. Any recommended reductions only occur after school and special education leadership review needs, service delivery requirements, and educator caseloads.

Importantly, no position reductions in the current budget will result in the removal or limitation of a student's required services or supports, nor will that be the case should there be increases in needs or additional students identified as eligible for special education. Our primary responsibility, consistent with the requirement to provide FAPE, is to ensure that every student receives the services and supports determined necessary by their IEP team.

Staffing is not "set and forget". Student needs can emerge or shift mid year. When that happens, we reallocate staff and, when necessary, add capacity to ensure IEP services are delivered as written and the district remains compliant.

Since last school year, the overall number of in-district students on IEPs has decreased by 114 students (as of the most recent 2025-2026 state reporting quarter). Declining enrollment can be one factor in determining staffing needs, but it is not the sole factor.

Our specialized programs (substantially separate and partial inclusion) maintain baseline staffing ratios to ensure programs remain consistently and appropriately staffed. At the same time, additional staffing, most often assistant teachers and aides, may be added or removed based on the needs of the current student cohort and individual IEP requirements. For example, each elementary Autism (ASD) program classroom has a baseline of 1 special educator, 1 special education assistant teacher, and 3 special education aides. In some cases, additional support is added when an individual student's IEP requires it (such as a 1:1 aide, or an additional inclusion aide).

When we determine that additional staffing previously added is no longer required for the current cohort (for example when a student with additional aide support leaves the district) those positions may either be reduced or repurposed elsewhere in the district for other emerging needs. This, and the enrollment decline of 114 special education students is the general context for staffing reductions proposed in the FY27 budget.

We also want to acknowledge the nuance within special education staffing decision making. Ratios are not one size fits all, and they may vary slightly across schools based on service minute load of special educators (two IEPs are not identical) and support needs can shift. Considerations in staffing decisions include but are not limited to:

- Scheduling and class size;
- Inclusion balance (no more than 50% of students in an inclusion classroom can have IEPs);
- Substantially separate classroom staffing requirements specific to each program and school level;
- High school and middle school scheduling and course structures (applied/co-taught/inclusion);
- Middle school content assignments;
- State regulations for classroom size ratios based on program;
- Pull out service minutes;
- Push in service minutes; and
- Consideration of IEP counts that are “therapy only”, which may not always require special educator service time the same way other IEPs do (for example a student in the IEP count for a school, but for whom receives speech only but no additional special education service from a special educator).

Team evaluation coordinators (TECs) at each school, and building administrators, supervise Special Education staff in each school. District Special Education leadership meets at least monthly, sometimes more frequently, to review cases, caseloads, and student needs. We respond in real time when needs are identified through the team process.

We have included a table showing the number of IEPs (current) by school, the number of additional IEPs or reductions in IEPs by school in SY 2025-2026 as compared to SY 2024-2025, and school wide staffing ratios for special education teachers and assistant teachers who are responsible for service delivery. Specialized programs affect staffing needs, and while school wide ratios do not capture the full nuance of staffing in each school, they provide a baseline for assessing staffing and workload levels and needs.

We would be happy to join a future SEPAC meeting to walk through the staffing review process, caseloads, ratios, and how adjustments happen, or answer any specific questions members of the Framingham SEPAC would like to dig into. We know these conversations matter, and we want families to feel confident that services will remain in place and that we will be responsive if needs change.

Thank you again for your partnership as we navigate a challenging budget landscape, while staying anchored in what matters most: delivering the services and supports our students need.

Warmly,
Courtney & Lori

School	Special Education Enrollment SY25-26	Total Special Ed Enrollment Change from SY24-25	Total Current Special Educators	Total Current Special Ed Assistants	Total Current Special Ed Aides	Total Special Ed Teaching Staff	Special Ed. Teacher to Student Ratio	Special Ed Teacher & Assistant Teacher Ratio	Total Proposed Reduction	Teacher Ratio with Reduction	Total Teaching Ratio (Teach & Asst Teach) with Reduction
FHS	457	-74	41	17	12	70	1:11	1:7.9	3 (Special Educators)	1:12	1:9
Walsh	154	-33	16	7	3	26	1:9.6	1:6.7	0		
Fuller	131	-16	11	9	3	23	1:11.9	1:7.3	0		
Cameron	144	+6	13	7	5	25	1:11.1	1:7.2	0		
Barbieri	99	-12	6	7	8	21	1:16.5	1:7.6	0		
Brophy	118	+17	9	6	8	23	1:13.1	1:7.9	0		
Dunning	127	+7	10	5	23	38	1:12.7	1:8.5	1 (Special Ed Aide)	1:12.7*	1:8.5*
Harmony Grove	45	-8	4	2	1	7	1:11.3	1:7.5	1 (Special Educator)	1:15	1:9
Hemenway	132	+20	9	8	8	25	1:14.7	1:7.8	0		
King	111	+6	8	6	18	32	1:13.9	1:7.9	0		
McCarthy	152	-2	10	10	12	32	1:15.2	1:7.6	0		
Stapleton	93	-7	9	12	7	28	1:10.3	1:4.3	2 (Special Education Assistants)	1:10.3	1:4.9
Potter	80	-18	5	2	2	9	1:16	1:11.4	1 (Special Education Assistant)	1:16	1:13.3

