



Fisher Building • 3011 West Grand Blvd, 9th Floor Suite 900•
Detroit, MI 48202
O (313) 873-7740
detroitk12.org

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to the 2025-26 academic year!

Detroit Public Schools Community District's (DPSCD) Office of Exceptional Student Education (ESE) remains committed to providing the highest quality of education and support services to all students. The National Critical Shortage in ancillary staff continues to impact options for services for some of our students.

This issue is not unique to DPSCD, as school districts nationwide are also reporting challenges in recruiting, hiring, and retaining ancillary staff in schools. This includes school psychologists, speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, and physical therapists. While we are directly impacted by the national staffing deficit, we continue to seek solutions to address this issue. The following actions have been taken to address our staffing needs:

- Increased salary offerings for ancillary staff which makes our district's offering more competitive with surrounding districts
- The district's redesign to streamline resources
- Monthly review and leveling of caseloads to maximize the use of our special education service providers
- Increased number of contract agencies to fill vacancies with providers from across the United States to evaluate and service our students
- Use of virtual ancillary service providers, as appropriate
- Providing compensatory services to students who have not received services per their IEP
- Participation in multiple hiring fairs to continually seek qualified candidates

We ask that you continue to communicate with state representatives to advocate for increased funding and support for special education services, which is essential in addressing this nationwide shortage. Collaborative efforts are needed to attract more professionals to the career path of speech pathology, school psychology, occupational therapy, and physical therapy. Your child's education and well-being continue to be our top priorities as we remain committed to providing exceptional student education and services even in the face of this critical shortage. If your child has not yet been receiving ancillary services as outlined in their Individualized Education Plan (IEP), please contact the department of Ancillary Services at 313-748-6438.

To engage with our Exceptional Student Education (ESE) leadership join our ESE parent engagement sessions held on second Wednesday from 5:30 PM until 6:30 PM via Microsoft Teams or call our ESE hotline at 873-7744 from 9 am until 2 pm Monday through Friday for support with your child's unique situation.

Thank you for your understanding, cooperation and ongoing support of your students and the Detroit Public Schools Community District.

Sincerely,
Lohren Carter-Nzoma
Assistant Superintendent

Students Rise. We all Rise

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