

Staffing Rationale: Request for Special Education Teacher at Simpson Elementary School School Year: 2025-2026

Background:

With a significant increase in the number of students at Simpson Elementary with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). In the 2023–2024 school year, we served 12 students with autism. That number has grown to 19 students for the 2024–2025 school year—a 58% increase. To provide appropriate services and programming, we have added a dedicated Autism Unit for the 2024–2025 school year.

Current Staffing Challenge:

To staff the new Autism Unit, we reallocated an existing special education teacher from our Learning and Behavior Disorders (LBD) program. While this helped launch the Autism Unit, it has left a vacancy in our LBD program, which continues to serve a significant number of students with diverse needs—including learning disabilities, emotional/behavioral disorders, and other health impairments.

As a result, our current special education staffing is not sufficient to provide the level of support needed at Simpson Elementary.

Rationale for Additional Staffing:

1. Increased Student Needs:

- Our special education population increased throughout the year, and those students continue to need targeted instruction, behavioral interventions, and IEP services that cannot be compromised due to reduced staffing.

2. Service Delivery and Compliance:

- Without an additional special education teacher, we risk falling out of compliance with IEP service minutes, caseload limits, and Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) guidelines under IDEA.
- Maintaining adequate staffing is essential to ensure each student's IEP is implemented with fidelity.

3. Impact on Instructional Quality:

- Pulling staff from one specialized program to cover another weakens both programs and limits the effectiveness of instruction, intervention, and progress monitoring.

4. Staff Capacity and Retention:

- Overburdened staff are at higher risk for burnout and turnover, which further disrupts service continuity for students. Additional support helps balance caseloads and promotes staff well-being.