

Resolution # 25-26.032

School Board: Informed Decision Making

- **March 10, 2025:** Executive Session
 - The Board establishes bargaining parameters, with an assumption that the parameters will necessitate staffing reductions. The Board considered multiple scenarios and reached consensus on the parameters provided to the District's bargaining team.
- **April 14, 2025:** Executive Session
 - The Board reaffirms the previously established parameters, again acknowledging that the parameters will result in staffing reductions.
- **May 8, 2025:**
 - The proposed 2025-26 budget is presented to the budget committee with a 0% COLA and a 3.75% increase in pay for eligible employees. An opportunity for the Budget Committee and public to ask questions or seek clarification was provided and no questions were raised. The budget was moved for approval by Director Nicole DeGraff, seconded by Director Ken Kohl. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

School Board: Informed Decision Making

- **June 9, 2025:**
 - The 2025-26 budget is formally adopted by the School Board, including a 0% COLA and a 3.75% increase in pay for eligible employees. An opportunity for the Budget Committee and public to ask questions or seek clarification was provided and no questions were raised. The adoption was moved by Director Ken Kohl and seconded by Director Jonathan Light and was adopted unanimously.
- **August 11, 2025 - September 8, 2025 - November 10, 2025:** Executive Sessions
 - Across these executive sessions, the Board makes no changes to the established parameters and continues to operate with the understanding that the parameters will require staffing reductions.

Shared Information:

- April 8, 2025: Springfield Education Association (SEA) and the District begin bargaining.
- April 24, 2025: The District shares its concerns about the potential need to reduce staffing levels in connection with any financial agreement and requests information about SEA's priorities.
- July 16, 2025: The District and Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) reach tentative agreement that includes a 4.15% COLA. In order to support this agreement, commensurate staffing reductions occur through attrition prior to the start of the school year.

Shared Information (continued):

- August 27, 2025: The SEA bargaining chair expressed concerns that the District appears to be linking staffing reductions to proposed increases in COLA and categorized the District's position as threatening.
- August 28, 2025: District and Springfield Administrators and Confidential Council (SAAC) reached an agreement that includes a 2.70% COLA. As with OSEA, commensurate staffing reductions occurred through attrition prior to beginning of school year.
- December 19, 2025: The District administration notified SEA leadership that the reduction in force process would be presented to the School Board for implementation and approval.

Shared Information (continued):

- January 9, 2025: Local media outlet reaches out to district for reaction to claim about this budget adjustment being a “manufactured crisis.”
- *“Budget cuts do not account for any cost of living adjustments that the district might make during teacher contract negotiations, which are continuing. If the contract increases teacher salaries, these expenses must be added to the budget and will likely lead to more staffing cuts, according to Yancey.”* **June 10, 2025** (Local media outlet)

BUDGET COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT

RELEVANT DATA:

Oregon Budget Law requires that each local government establish a budget committee. Appointive members of the budget committee are appointed for three-year terms (unless filling a mid-term vacant position) and selected by the governing Board of Directors on an at-large basis.

Springfield Public Schools has four (4) members currently serving on the budget committee whose terms expire either on December 31, 2026 (3 members) or December 31, 2028 (1 members). Additionally, there is one (1) vacant member position due to a requirement of membership on the Educational Equity Advisory Committee.

District administration worked with the Educational Equity Advisory Committee to solicit interested members for the position, and one interested candidate volunteered, Patty Gutierrez

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Directors appoint Patty Gutierrez, representing the District's Educational Equity Advisory Committee, to serve as a member of the Springfield Public Schools Budget Committee in position 3, effective January 12, 2026 through December 31, 2028.

SUBMITTED BY:

Brett M. Yancey
Chief Operations Officer

RECOMMENDED BY:

Todd Hamilton
Superintendent



In Person/Virtual Oral Public Comment January 12, 2026

The following in person oral public comments will be shared at the meeting:

Sarah B – Community Engagement

Laura Farrelly – Proposed Budget Cuts

Pauline Pham – Proposed Reduction in Staffing

Miche Dreiling – Proposed Personnel Cuts

Violett Lloyd – Transparency around Budget Cuts

Matthew Brandt – Budget Cuts, Reduction in Force

Savanna Griffin – Proposal to Reduce Teacher Staff - no show

Ky Fireside – Reduction in Teachers, walk in

Joe Y – Reduction in Teachers, walk in

Martie Steigleder

From: Angela Gonzalez <ms.angelag@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 11, 2026 9:43 AM
To: public comment
Subject: Proposed Reduction in Staff Recommendation

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Members of Springfield School District Board of Directors,

My name is Angela Gonzalez, and I am the special education case manager for students who attend Springfield School District's alternative education programs, Gateways High School, SPS Online, Intensive Tutoring Programs and GED.

Like many other members of the Springfield community, I am concerned about the possibility of reducing staff across the district. In previous years, the district has used alternative approaches to staffing reductions. I respectfully offer historical examples to the board to consider as alternatives to reducing staff.

One year, district administrators and building administrators agreed to reduce their salaries to prevent a reduction of teaching staff. Another year, two things occurred. The district implemented furlough days and ended the school year early as cost reduction measures to avoid cutting staff. I respectfully request that the Board ask the Superintendent to reconsider and fully explore all available alternatives before proceeding with staff reductions.

I am also concerned about the timing of the superintendent's public message regarding a \$2.34 million shortfall, which was released the day before the district and the teachers' union entered mediation. Regardless of intent, the timing created unnecessary anxiety among staff and the community at a critical moment in the bargaining process.

Thank you for your continued commitment to Springfield students and the supporting community.

Respectfully,
Angela Gonzalez

Martie Steigleder

From: Amanda K <thenameismandy@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 11, 2026 11:26 AM
To: public comment
Subject: Written Public Comment – Reduction in Force & COLA

Name: Mandy K.

District Residency: Springfield Public Schools

Email: NA

Agenda Topic: Reduction in Force / Cost-of-Living Adjustment

Please include the following statement in the public record for the upcoming Board meeting.

I am a licensed educator in Springfield Public Schools, and I am speaking today because the district's recent reduction-in-force notice represents a serious failure of judgment in timing, process, and priorities.

This situation is not inevitable. It is the result of choices.

Springfield chose to budget for a **0% cost-of-living adjustment** during a period of sustained inflation, knowing educators were already stretched by increased workload, safety concerns, and staffing shortages. Issuing a reduction-in-force notice tied to that decision **while we are actively in mediation** undermines trust, destabilizes schools, and damages the integrity of the bargaining process.

Springfield says it values stability, student achievement, and educator professionalism. But issuing a RIF notice during mediation over a 0% COLA directly contradicts those values. A district cannot claim to prioritize improvement while introducing fear and instability into its schools mid-year.

Across Oregon, districts facing similar financial pressures have pursued alternatives to layoffs — including negotiated adjustments, temporary measures, and prioritizing licensed staff retention. These approaches demonstrate that other choices exist. Springfield has simply chosen not to pursue them.

This choice matters because Springfield is already working to address serious challenges with student outcomes. Improvement requires stability. Students learn best when they experience consistent relationships, experienced educators, and schools governed by trust rather than uncertainty. Mid-year reductions in force do the opposite: they increase turnover, disrupt instruction, and undermine the very progress the district claims to seek.

Educators did not create inflation. Educators did not set budget assumptions. Educators should not be scapegoated for advocating for a modest, reasonable cost-of-living adjustment that allows us to keep pace with rising costs.

I ask the Board to consider this plainly: **how does issuing a reduction-in-force notice during active mediation support trust, retention, or student success?**

The choices made in this moment will shape whether Springfield is seen as a district that leads with collaboration — or one that governs through fear. I urge the Board to pause reductions in force and direct the district toward negotiated solutions that prioritize educator retention, good-faith bargaining, and student stability.

I offer these comments in good faith as a public school educator and community member, with the intent of supporting transparent governance, lawful collective bargaining, and the best interests of Springfield's students and schools.

Martie Steigleder

From: Cliff Schutte
Sent: Sunday, January 11, 2026 12:09 PM
To: public comment
Subject: Comment for board for 1/12/26 meeting

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Jan 11, 2026

Board Members,

I am writing to you as a concerned employee, resident, and parent of a former SPS student. I am not writing to discuss bargaining issues or decisions as a member of the SEA Bargaining Team. This statement is an effort to be transparent and allow me to convey my thoughts without being censured due to SPS policies or HR "rules" forbidding said correspondence.

Current budgetary issues and shortfalls are exactly what I was speaking to during the May 8, 2025 budget committee meeting, where I was the SOLE commenter from the general public during the 2025 Budgetary process.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ayTL32iJtuMna0tlJoZBJEwgWnbagpU1/view?usp=sharing>

It is disappointing to me that there was so little effort to encourage further discussion and input from the general public. I understand that public responses can be lackluster at best, but it is important that as a committee you encourage and solicit input- more than "posting it on my facebook page." The limited discussion around the final moments of approval was disappointing and minimal at best. You passed the budget with a motion 1 hour and 20 minutes into a possible 3 night/meeting approval window. You did nothing but rubber-stamp the budget that was presented to you... and here we are, with a mess. We have to do better.

It was in my comment that I implored you all to recognize the big picture impacts at the school level and the idea that large reductions can be absorbed in other areas of the "machine" without causing direct impacts to the classroom. The idea that reducing district-wide building staffing mid-year is the only and best solution to your budgetary debacle is asinine. Mr. Yancey told you "that with a 0% COLA anything greater than that, that comes out of bargaining will result in likely staffing cuts." Your team publicly has offered more than 0%. They had made those public offers prior to this meeting and prior to the approval of the budget by the board. You have approved this tactic and approach. It is not ok.

You are putting these budgetary issues on the backs of children. The "Big Machine" CAN work differently, much to the chagrin of those driving said Machine.

Thank you for reading, watching, and listening to my words. You are the ones that are in charge of the direction of OUR schools.

Cliff Schutte

Proud parent of SHS graduate
Community Member for 28 years

Teacher- 6th Grade Math/Science - Agnes Stewart Middle School - 27th year.
Former THS and SHS Soccer coach - 20 years
541-968-4590

Please consider this email as confidential.

Martie Steigleder

From: Allison Anderson <allieanderson0524@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 11, 2026 1:19 PM
To: public comment
Subject: Written Public Comment

Proposal for Reduction in Force:

I would like to ask that the board not pass the superintendent's proposal to cut licensed staff. I understand we are in a budget deficit, the money needs to be made up and that the licensed staff makes up a large portion of the budget. However, so far this year the district has cut 12.6 FTE from classified staff and now are proposing 27 FTE from licensed staff citing COLA increases that haven't even been settled. All while Admin/District staff has not been cut at all. District staff will say they have cut 2 but those were positions not filled one of which was going to be a new admin position this year. In fact at least 1 new admin position was added this year with a new vice principal being added to TES. No district or admin positions have been laid off and sent home like teachers are about to be.

If we are blaming declining enrollment as the reason to lay off teachers then we can also blame declining enrollment as a reason for not needing the number of district and admin staff that we currently have. It can't just affect one group without affecting the others.

Enrollment numbers will continue to drop if we cut teachers and make classes even larger. You are losing the trust of the community and now is a critical moment you can show everyone where your priorities are.

I know hard decisions have to be made but I ask that you don't take the superintendent's proposal at face value. I ask that you push back and ask for other ways to make up this deficit that wouldn't be at the expense of our students. There are other ways to solve this and it is your responsibility as a board to look at all options and make the best decision for the people that elected you, not the administration that is trying to save their own jobs and raises.

Allie A
Thurston Community
541-337-3730

Martie Steigleder

From: Sarah Ferren <s.ferren92@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 11, 2026 1:33 PM
To: public comment
Subject: Written Public Comment

Re: Reduction in Force

Dear school board,

I am writing to ask you to please take time and consider the options when deciding how to balance the district budget.

There must be other ways to reduce spending besides only cutting staff positions, which directly support the board objectives for students. For example, have we looked at furlough days?

Also, when deciding which positions to cut, I think it is crucial to ask for staff input. I realize these decisions need to be made quickly, but it wouldn't take long to put out a Google form asking for input, perhaps asking us to order areas of importance.

One of the main complaints that our union has had with district leadership is the tendency to make top-down decisions, without asking for input about how it would affect classrooms. I think this would be a great opportunity, especially while we're in the middle of mediation, to show that the district does value our voices.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sarah Ferren
Springfield teacher since 2010
Springfield resident since 2002
564 W. M Street
Springfield, Oregon
(541) 954-9152

Martie Steigleder

From: Jason Ray <misterjayray@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 11, 2026 2:31 PM
To: public comment
Subject: Written Public Comment

Jason Ray
Teacher in SPS and longtime resident of Springfield.
misterjayray@gmail.com
Please do not cut teachers, but explore other options.

My name is Jason Ray and I have been a teacher in Springfield for 23 years now. I am writing to express my concern about the possibility of 27 teaching positions being cut in the middle of the 2025-26 school year. I believe this would be a huge mistake on so many levels.

First, the disruption to our students would be significant. This would affect instructional continuity, increase the already significant work loads of the teachers that remain, and really affect students.. Students in middle and high school would end up getting schedule changes into larger classes, with different teachers and classroom environments. Our already anxious kids will experience more anxiety.

Teachers are the most important part of a student's education. Though there seems to be some belief that it is all about a "guaranteed and viable curriculum" or increasing edtech, it is teachers, the adults in the classroom, that build the relationships, that make the inaccessible accessible, and motivate students to become better versions of themselves. No human has ever said, "Remember how that new math curriculum pushed me to keep trying," or, "I wouldn't have made it through high school without that new technology initiative." Teachers do the work that makes the difference in students' lives, and yet our administration wants to cut a significant number of teachers, rather than find other ways to cut costs.

Cutting teachers should be the last straw. There is no public education without teachers. Period. There are many ways to save money without this major disruption to our students. Furlough days are a possibility and one that I remember us doing in the past. Yes, we all take a small monetary hit, but every teacher I talk to is willing to do that to save people's jobs and prevent the unsettling changes that Superintendent Hamilton is proposing. On top of this we could cut/freeze supply spending, cancel conference travel and postpone curriculum adoptions.

I teach at the Academy of Arts and Academics, a very small school. Losing any teacher would eliminate programs from our school. Programs that may not be able to be replaced, such as Spanish, choir, coding, or visual and performing arts classes. On top of that, our school is a very tight community. Losing teachers would be devastating for our students. Every adult in our building is a student's trusted adult. The impact of losing that person for those students will be disastrous for their well being and education.

If student success is truly the goal of the district and of this board, we cannot reduce teaching staff until all other cost-cutting avenues have been explored and attempted. There is no education without teachers.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter. Please do the right thing.

Jason Ray

Martie Steigleder

From: Stacie Ray <stacie1ray@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 11, 2026 4:54 PM
To: public comment
Subject: Projected Layoffs/ Budget Shortfall

Good evening,

As a former parent of two Springfield Public School students and current resident of Springfield, I am appalled to hear about the planned mid-year layoffs in Springfield schools. The possibility of students losing their teacher in the middle of the year is horrible. This cannot be the best way to deal with a budget problem. The ripple effects of the loss of a teacher from a team will hurt students and staff. Trying to shuffle everything mid-year to accommodate for the loss of staff is so difficult. Classes will get bigger, electives will be lost and team morale will be low.

Reports say that there is still \$13 million in reserves, which is a higher percentage than the state recommendation or legal requirements for the district. This does not seem like the level of emergency that mid-year cuts would indicate.

Other options must be utilized first, such as postponing purchases of new curriculum, supplies, equipment or other big ticket items. A better and less disruptive option would be to schedule some furlough days in the second half of the year.

Other school districts have done this in budget emergencies in the past. The February census numbers to predict next year's enrollment is not yet known, so it seems short-sighted to be making cuts now creating disruption and distress.

Furloughs would allow the district to maintain its current level of staff and support through the end of the year and plan more in depth for the 26-27 school year. This would remove the disruption and harm of mid-year layoffs and allow time for the district and staff to better plan for any necessary staff changes next year.

Please don't go to the drastic length of reducing staff mid-year. There are other options that should be used first.

Reduction in staff should be the absolute last choice.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Stacie Ray
845 Raintree Way
Springfield, OR

Martie Steigleder

From: Pauline Pham
Sent: Sunday, January 11, 2026 6:38 PM
To: public comment
Subject: Written Public Comment: Urgent Concern Regarding Licensed Staff Reductions and Budget Decisions

Dear Members of the Springfield Public Schools Board of Education,

I am writing to express deep concern regarding the proposed reduction in force for licensed staff and the budget decisions that have led to this moment. Over my eight years as a special educator at Springfield High School, I have experienced firsthand how consistent staffing supports student learning, access to services, and a positive school climate. While last week's message to staff acknowledged the emotional impact of these cuts, it did not fully address the systemic choices that made them necessary, choices that the Board approved last year and therefore bears responsibility for now.

The 2025–26 budget was adopted with a 0% cost-of-living adjustment despite rising living costs and increasing demands on educators. While the Budget Committee and School Board may not have intended to undermine negotiations, beginning with a 0% COLA in today's economic climate was unrealistic and set the stage for inequitable outcomes. Although the Board of Directors stated this was to avoid "pre-determined outcomes," a 0% COLA automatically limits negotiations and raises fairness concerns, especially as other employee groups secured raises while teachers now face mid-year cuts.

The Board's decision to approve this budget reflects a troubling lack of respect for the financial realities teachers face and devalues the work educators do, especially as we are required to shoulder increased responsibilities without adequate support or compensation. We are now being asked to manage larger class sizes and potentially extend our workday by 30 minutes, all while being forced to say goodbye to colleagues mid-year without an assured COLA. For special education teachers who carry full teaching loads, manage complex caseloads and compliance demands, support intensive student needs, and attend after-school meetings almost daily, this lack of financial recognition fuels burnout, turnover, and staffing shortages that directly harm students.

What makes this especially concerning is that other districts facing significant financial challenges have taken a more transparent and proactive approach. For example, Eugene 4J has openly communicated about its projected \$30 million deficit, engaged stakeholders in the budgeting process, and made difficult decisions early to avoid disruptive mid-year cuts. Despite these challenges, 4J educators also received a 5% COLA in 2024.

In contrast, SPS seems to be the only district in our region threatening a 0% COLA and forcing mid-year teacher reductions. This lack of transparency and delayed decision-making has placed the consequences of budget shortfalls directly onto educators and students; this instability could have been avoided through earlier, more inclusive, and transparent planning.

The Board's role is not only to approve budgets, but to ensure they reflect the district's values. Approving a budget that results in the loss of teachers contradicts our commitment to student-centered decision-making

and supportive learning environments for all students. Mid-year teacher cuts disrupt instructional continuity, weaken student support systems, and disproportionately impact students who rely on consistent relationships and specialized services, especially students with disabilities, multilingual learners, and those facing instability.

Our students at Springfield High School deserve stability, and our educators deserve to feel valued, supported, and protected instead of treated as the first solution to budget shortfalls. Last year, we lost seven teachers, and the impact is impossible to ignore. One PE class now has 59 students, and several core classes exceed 35, forcing us to pull decades-old desks out of storage just to fit everyone in the room. Our classrooms are overcrowded, leaving little space to meet the needs of students with disabilities, multilingual learners, and those who require individualized support. How are we supposed to build meaningful relationships or improve outcomes when class sizes keep growing? After finally seeing an increase in graduation rates last year, it is devastating to imagine how easily that progress could be undone under these conditions.

We urge the Board to reconsider the timing and scope of these reductions, explore alternatives that do not remove classroom teachers, and engage transparently with the community. Student success must remain our highest priority, and teachers are inarguably the foundation of student learning, safety, and well-being.

Every student, every day.

Respectfully,

Pauline Pham

Special Education/English/Social Studies Teacher

Springfield High School

Phone: 541-744-4865

Please consider this email as confidential.

Martie Steigleder

From: Scott Olds
Sent: Sunday, January 11, 2026 7:54 PM
To: public comment
Subject: Licensed Staff Reduction

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

I have been teaching in the Springfield School District for 26 years. I'd like to take a moment to talk about the licensed staffing reductions being proposed by the district. I have experienced and witnessed the devastating effects from the deep cuts that were necessary after the 2008 financial crisis. I have also witnessed many different staffing changes that have happened at various points throughout a school year. Licensed staffing changes that directly impact the classroom during a school year are the most disruptive and consequential changes that will have an immediate negative impact on our students that the district could possibly make. Every year I have taught, we see a spike in behavior from our students before the holidays. This is because of the uncertainty that many of our students face. School is a place of stability and routines that our students need and rely on and the relationships they build with their teachers. When that stability is interrupted, behaviors spike and academic performance suffers. I feel it was irresponsible for the district to enter the school year with staffing levels that are above what the proposed budget could handle, knowing that a staffing reduction would be necessary at some point during the school year to balance the budget. How does this approach "minimize disruption to student learning and instructional continuity" as outlined by the superintendent in a recent email to staff. According to reporting by the "Lookout" on June 10th, the district has already cut nearly 40 licensed teaching positions this year alone, while adding 2 administrative positions. Eliminating an additional 27 positions at the semester will bring the total licensed staff reductions to 67. This is an approximate 10% reduction to licensed staff positions in the district. These are the same people who are in front of students right now. The same people who our students rely on to be there, every day. This sudden disruption to our student's learning and the people they trust and rely on during the school year will have significant long term negative consequences. I would also like to address the uncertainty regarding current negotiations with the SEA since the superintendent brought this up as a point of emphasis in a recent email to staff. Both the Eugene and Bethel school districts have recently negotiated robust COLA's for licensed staff and both districts have made a commitment to budget reductions that will not directly reduce licensed staff and directly impact the classroom this school year. Though it may be difficult, there is a way. I encourage you to consider other cost saving measures that will not have an immediate, direct impact on our students.

Respectfully,

Scott Olds
8th Grade Math/Science
Agnes Stewart Middle School

Please consider this email as confidential.

Martie Steigleder

From: J Smith <javelina187@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 11, 2026 8:18 PM
To: Ken Kohl; Heather Quaas-Annsa; Jonathan Light; Nicole De Graff; Amber Langworthy; public comment
Subject: Concerns Regarding February 1 Reduction in Force and Its Impact on Students

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

I am writing regarding the SPS administration's decision to eliminate 27 teaching positions effective February 1 as a means of balancing the budget.

Midyear staffing reductions are especially disruptive and extend far beyond simple numbers on a spreadsheet. They directly impact instructional continuity, increase class sizes, raise teacher workloads, and negatively affect student morale. Students lose trusted relationships with teachers, schedules are reshuffled, and learning environments become less stable at a time when consistency matters most.

The Reduction in Force (RIF) structure adds an additional layer of disruption. Because teachers with greater seniority have the ability to displace more junior teachers, this process creates a cascading effect where teachers replace teachers, often across schools, grade levels, and subject areas. As a result, educators may be required not only to switch schools but also to shift from middle school to elementary, move into unfamiliar content areas, or take on entirely new grade levels with only days to prepare. This is not a simple staffing adjustment; it is a systemic reshuffling that affects dozens of classrooms and hundreds of students.

Class size is another critical concern. Reducing teaching positions inevitably means larger classes and heavier teaching loads. Decades of educational research consistently show that smaller class sizes lead to stronger academic outcomes, increased student engagement, and better support for students with diverse learning needs. Increasing class size works directly against goals such as improving test scores, increasing graduation rates, and supporting student well-being. Fewer teachers does not translate to better outcomes for students.

There are alternative approaches to fiscal responsibility that should be fully explored before increasing class sizes and overburdening classrooms. Ideas such as furlough days, canceling conference travel, and postponing curriculum adoption are a starting point. I am confident there are additional ways to reduce deficits that do not directly compromise the quality of education students receive and deserve.

It is my understanding that since COVID, the district has hired 12 additional administrators, representing an approximate 25% increase; enrollment has declined by about 15%, while teaching positions have been reduced by 12.5%. Just between last year and the current proposal, it is around 52 positions being cut. This imbalance raises serious concerns about priorities and the long-term impact on student learning and classroom stability.

If student success truly comes first, then every other possible avenue for budget reduction should be exhausted before cutting teaching positions. Teachers are the backbone of student achievement, and decisions that increase class sizes, disrupt instructional continuity, and destabilize school communities undermine the very outcomes the district is working to improve.

My previous experience in another district offered a very different model for how budget cuts can be approached. In two separate budget crises, the superintendent met with staff at every school and

walked us through the full financial picture: income, expenditures, local and state funding, ADM (current and projected), bond obligations, capital needs, and long-term projections. We were then asked what we believed should be reduced or restructured. Multiple meetings followed, where options were narrowed collaboratively, and student impact remained the central focus throughout. In both situations, furlough days were included as a *shared* solution.

Because of that experience, it is deeply disappointing that SPS has not taken a similar approach.

District staff have not been broadly engaged in conversation, transparency, or problem-solving.

Instead, teaching positions are being eliminated without meaningful opportunity for dialogue or creative alternatives. This sends the message that classroom stability and student continuity are secondary to administrative efficiency, rather than the foundation upon which all budgeting decisions should rest.

I call upon you to ask the district what other options have been considered and if teachers/staff and families have been able to provide feedback on those choices.

Warmly,

Jill

Martie Steigleder

From: Leah Price <leahjoyprice@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 11, 2026 8:27 PM
To: public comment
Subject: Written Public Comment

Dear springfield school board

My name is Clara Price. I'm in 6th grade and I go to a school in the pleasant hill school district. My mom is a teacher in springfield, and I heard her talking about how you are discussing at least 27 teachers teaching in middle to high school are being laid off because they can't be paid,27! That is way too many, and that's basically half a school's teachers. If we can't afford to pay teachers then how will students learn? These teachers are probably appreciated by the students, and they probably have kids, how will they afford to lose their job? If the school district fires so many teachers, how many hours of education will be lost just because they can't be paid? Being a teacher is hard enough, imagine being a mother duck trying to teach 84 baby ducks to not wander into traffic, and also trying to teach them what the square root of 9 is (it's 3 I know this because I have a great math teacher) And half of them probably have ADHD, that sounds hard to do right? That's what teachers go through almost every day, and they should be appreciated for it,not fired because the school district can't afford to pay them. So in conclusion this should be looked into,not ignored,we need to fund schools better so teachers can do what they went to college to do, teach.Thank you for spending time to read this,

Sincerely clara price

Sent from my iPhone

Martie Steigleder

From: Corey Ellison <ellisoncorey1882@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 11, 2026 9:00 PM
To: public comment
Subject: Written Public Comment – Reduction in Force & Budget Priorities

Name: Corey E.
District Residency: Springfield Public Schools
Agenda Topic: Reduction in Force / Budget Priorities

Please include the following statement in the public record for the upcoming Board meeting.

I am a Springfield community member writing because the explanation being offered for proposed layoffs does not match what the public can plainly observe.

Families are being told that reductions in force are unavoidable due to declining enrollment and rising costs. At the same time, student-facing positions have been reduced repeatedly over the past several years, while district-level and administrative staffing has continued to grow. From the outside, this raises an obvious and reasonable concern: why are classrooms being cut again while the system above them remains protected?

This is not an abstract budget issue for families. Educators are the adults our children rely on every day for instruction, safety, stability, and support. Cutting licensed staff mid-year disrupts learning, breaks relationships, and signals that classroom continuity is expendable.

What is especially troubling is the timing. Issuing a reduction-in-force notice while educators are actively negotiating compensation sends a message that pressure is being applied rather than partnership sought. Whether intentional or not, this undermines public trust in the district's commitment to transparency and good governance.

If Springfield truly values students, the Board must be willing to ask harder questions than “How do we balance the budget?” The real questions are:

- Why are classroom educators consistently the first to absorb cuts?
- Why has administrative growth not been subjected to the same scrutiny as student-facing roles?
- How does destabilizing schools mid-year align with claims of prioritizing educational quality?

Budget constraints are real. But priorities are choices.

Before any educator is laid off, the public deserves a clear, transparent accounting of staffing growth, administrative costs, and what alternatives were meaningfully explored to protect classrooms. Layoffs should be the last resort — not the most convenient one.

Martie Steigleder

From: John Andersson <andersson.john541@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 12, 2026 7:42 AM
To: public comment
Subject: Written Public Comment – Reduction in Force & Student Impact

Name: John Andersson

District Residency: Springfield Public Schools

Agenda Topic: Reduction in Force / Student Impact

Please include the following statement in the public record for the upcoming Board meeting.

I am a parent in Springfield Public Schools, and I am writing because I am deeply concerned about what the proposed reduction in force means for students — not in theory, but in real classrooms, right now.

Springfield serves a diverse student population, including many children who face economic instability, trauma, disability, language barriers, or a combination of these factors. Some of our schools receive Title I support because of these realities, but the truth is that nearly every school in the district serves students who rely on stability, consistency, and strong relationships with trusted adults in order to learn and thrive.

Parents understand that budgets are complex. What we struggle to understand is how cutting licensed educators mid-year helps students — especially at a time when children are already navigating so much uncertainty in the world beyond school. Schools are one of the few places where kids experience predictability, safety, and belonging. That stability depends on people, not spreadsheets.

Parents in Springfield know that children growing up with economic disadvantage often need more, not fewer, supports — from experienced teachers to specialized services — in order to thrive academically and socially. Reducing licensed positions at the very

moment these students need continuity most risks reversing progress and widening opportunity gaps that our community has worked hard to address.

Research consistently shows that student outcomes improve when schools retain experienced educators and maintain consistent staffing. Relationships matter. Trust matters. When educators are laid off mid-year, students lose more than instruction time — they lose connection, momentum, and emotional security.

I am also troubled by the timing of the reduction-in-force notice while educators are actively in mediation. From a parent's perspective, this looks less like collaboration and more like pressure. That matters, because how adults in leadership handle conflict sends a message to families about values and priorities.

If Springfield is serious about improving outcomes and serving all students equitably, then destabilizing classrooms should be the absolute last resort, not an early response. Parents deserve transparency about what alternatives were explored before cutting licensed staff and how these decisions align with the district's stated commitment to students.

I urge the Board to pause reductions in force and prioritize solutions that protect student stability, educator retention, and trust between schools and the families they serve.

These comments are offered in good faith by a parent who wants Springfield Public Schools to remain a place where students are supported, educators are valued, and decisions are made with children at the center.

January 12, 2026

Dear District Leaders,

I am a teacher at Springfield High School. I have spoken at previous board meetings about the toxicity emanating from upper management. I shared results from our exit committee in which every respondent declared that they did not feel supported by upper management. I even shared data from ODE at the June 2025 meeting that showed that since 2019, the district has continued to cut certified and classified positions which are the lifeline to our students while adding more and more administrative jobs. My own school lost 7.5 FTE last year along with other major certified cuts throughout the district.

Then, we began this school year with the district wasting time and upwards of 35,000 dollars on a spurious formal complaint and investigation against a board member which could have been handled with a conversation about policy.

Now, we have upper management proposing a resolution that will eliminate over twenty-five certified positions at the middle and high school levels and the district office which would go into effect by the end of this month, a mere three weeks away.

It is obvious that those in upper management truly have no idea what life is like for teachers and students these days. If they did, they would find other ways to balance the budget. They also would allow teachers to invite elected board members to our classrooms to see the reality of our worlds without the bureaucratic red tape. Didn't upper management also make a formal complaint against that same board member for trying to visit a classroom after receiving an invitation from the teacher?

Please consider that if this resolution passes, you will be responsible for destroying the lives of educators who are fired, the lives of educators who are losing beloved colleagues, and let's not forget the most important lives that will be negatively impacted, OUR students. Our students will lose trusted adults who have differentiated instruction, put in countless hours to create meaningful lessons, and established inviting and safe spaces for them. It takes time to develop trust and to create a rapport with our students, especially our students who are living in one of the most terrifying times of their lives with the impact and looming threat of ICE agents terrorizing our communities.

To cut positions mid-year is unconscionable. It begs the question: Why is this happening NOW? Why didn't the district impose a hiring freeze this past school year? Why did the board even approve this budget last year?

Why is upper management choosing to cut costs with this highly disruptive and, quite frankly, cruel action? Why not balance the budget by cutting programs like AVID which other local districts have cut? Past administrations balanced the budget with creative solutions like having furlough days to protect our staff and students. Why isn't this administration doing the same?

I implore the school board to reject this cruel and shortsighted resolution and to demand that upper management get to work on finding ways to balance the budget that will not destroy our school communities.

Sincerely,

Laura Farrelly

Martie Steigleder

From: Cody Rosenberg <codyeuler2012@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 12, 2026 7:59 AM
To: public comment
Subject: Written public comment

The recommendation to fire 27 teachers mid-year is a disruption of monumental proportions. There are other ways to deal with this budget shortfall, like furlough days. Let's work together to figure out a way through this horrible situation.

Cody R
Teacher - A3
NO Firing 27 teachers

Martie Steigleder

From: Regan Jones
Sent: Monday, January 12, 2026 8:47 AM
To: ! Board; public comment
Subject: Concerns Regarding Budget Communication

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Good morning,

I am a teacher at Gateways High School and am newer to the district. I write to express my concern about the timing of the superintendent's message regarding a \$2.34 million shortfall, which was released the day before the district and the teachers' union entered mediation. Regardless of intent, this timing created unnecessary anxiety among staff and the community at a critical moment in the bargaining process. This has placed additional stress on teachers as we approach the end of the term, making it harder for us to fully show up for our students with this weighing so heavily on us.

I would also like to note that Gateways has a very small staff as it is, and that cutting any positions at the Brattain Campus would place a significant strain on our students, who are working hard to build positive relationships with staff and earn the credits they need to graduate. We work hard to show up for our students in every way we can, so it is deeply disheartening to feel that the district and the superintendent are not showing up for us in the same way. Cutting positions midyear will damage much of the progress students have made this year by removing them from trusted mentors, increasing class sizes, and eliminating classes and programs students are counting on for the second semester.

I urge you not to allow a RIFF to happen in SPS and to find an alternative way to address the budget deficit in order to support teachers, students, and the broader community.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Regan Jones
She/Her/Hers
Gateways High School Art Teacher

Please consider this email as confidential.

Martie Steigleder

From: moriah shanahan <moriahshanahan@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 12, 2026 9:48 AM
To: public comment
Subject: Balancing the budget in a thoughtful way

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Members of the Springfield Board of Education,

I am writing to express my serious concerns regarding the recent announcement to eliminate 27 teaching positions effective February 1 as a means of balancing the district budget.

This decision appears to have been made without a transparent or inclusive process. I am troubled by the lack of meaningful engagement with parents, community members, teachers, and administrators—all of whom are vital stakeholders and could have provided valuable insight during this process.

Our district is undoubtedly facing challenges, including declining enrollment and reduced funding. However, these difficulties make collaboration even more essential. I question why we have not brought our community together to openly confront these changes and work collectively toward solutions. What better way is there to address such significant challenges?

At a time when district leadership has already drawn public attention for the wrong reasons, it is concerning that we continue to rely on a “business as usual” approach. Clearly, that approach is no longer working.

Now is the time to change how we engage our community. We must bring families, educators, administrators, and district leaders to the same table to develop thoughtful, sustainable solutions. Transparency and collaboration are not optional—they are necessary.

Our community, our schools, our teachers, and most importantly, our students deserve a stable and hopeful future.

Sincerely,

Moriah Shanahan

Behavioral interventionist
Ridgeview Elementary
SEA VP

Martie Steigleder

From: Jonathan Gault <jonathan.gault@oregoned.org>
Sent: Monday, January 12, 2026 9:52 AM
To: public comment
Subject: Written Public Comment

Dear Directors of the Springfield Board of Education:

Let me first thank you each for your decision to serve our community in the essential role of board director for our public schools. I appreciate the time and effort spent to fulfill your vows made to serve with the best of your ability.

As a nearly 50 year Springfield resident, a father of three Springfield schools graduates (as of this coming spring), and a second-generation SPS career educator, I implore you to reject any proposal for reductions to certified FTE (Resolution #25-26.032) prior to first receiving ample input from all impacted parties, as well as considering all other options to solve the current financial situation of the district.

A proposal for layoffs (let alone midyear) is not something that has been common in Springfield. I would think there ought to be a thorough process of collecting input from not just district administration, but also certified and classified staff, as well as members of our community, before making such an unusual decision with such far-reaching consequences. This level of input would require active recruitment, more than just an open door to meetings in the board room. It would be a long look at ALL expenditures that could be reduced, to potentially identify a more equitable plan than cutting solely from the ranks of our district's educators. It might also be valuable to consider what other Oregon districts have done to partially solve their own current fiscal issues - a couple of examples are Eugene 4J (reductions in administration) and Reynolds (furlough days) school districts.

I know you are (and will be) receiving input from many in the community regarding this topic and upcoming vote. I don't believe the amount you will receive by tonight's meeting will be sufficient for the level of decision you will be responsible for making. My request is that you table the resolution and demand the district either create a more substantial input gathering effort to guide next steps or that they find other ways to fund our current staff through this school year.

Respectfully,

Jonathan M. Gault
Springfield, Oregon

(Regarding Resolution #25-26.032)

Martie Steigleder

From: M R <duckfan97478@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, January 12, 2026 11:36 AM
To: public comment
Subject: Written public comment

My name is Morgan Rees. I am a kindergarten teacher on my 8th year with the district. I am also on a few different leadership and work teams within our district. I live in Springfield and grew up going to SPS schools. I care deeply about this district, the staff, our students, and our families. I write to ask you to consider all of the ramifications of reducing student-facing adults halfway through a school year and ask you to consider where SPS's focuses lie.

Staff have heard both publicly and during bargaining that the district plans to cut teacher positions for more than a year. They argued that this was to prepare staff, but I also argue these comments were targeted around bargaining conversations and they had ample time to make changes outside of the school year or to reallocate funds for consistency in the year. The district staff argue that these changes must happen because certified staff are asking for more than a 0% budgeted COLA. I want to point out that bargaining isn't even finished, so this is a preemptive move and a threatening one given the stage we are at in bargaining. It's not unreasonable for professionals with specific higher educational degrees to ask for their wages to reflect the value of their position and to reflect that livable wages increase generally.

Teacher contracts aside, the district seems to have shut down several conversations offering other funding allocation opportunities. I don't pretend to be an expert on how funds can be spent or what funds come from certain sources (ex. grant and bond funds). I do see a distinct lack of prioritizing students in the way some funds are spent. Our neighboring districts no longer focus on 1:1 devices being sent home every day to get lost or abused and replaced constantly. I get the access argument, but I believe checking out devices for home could be on a case-by-case basis. I personally just see waste and frustration that they don't even come back to get used in the classroom. I see funds allocated for district staff input surveys where promised results are never made public nor have I seen tangible/noticeable action from these. They feel like funds used for the sake of pretending to collaborate with teachers... but that's a different discussion. I also see a distinct disproportionate number of administrative positions that have been created the last few years as opposed to maintaining certified positions (this is even taking administrative cuts they have had this past year into consideration). What our administrators do is important work!! But is it at the cost of certified teachers?

I truly appreciated some of the questions the board members brought to last week's budget meeting! Please do follow up on true and updated capacity quotas for our school buildings. Please keep asking questions about how to retain enrollment and why so many families are pulling their students from our classrooms to opt for other educational alternatives. Please keep the conversations student-centered.

Cuts financially anywhere are difficult and emotionally charged. I ask both the district and board members to take full responsibility for these decisions. Please consider the repercussions that follow for staff, students, and families as well as if these decisions truly support Every Student, Every Day.

Thank you for your time, your dedication, and your true reflection before you make these difficult decisions.

Sincerely,
Morgan Rees
Morgan.rees@springfield.k12.or.us
My cell phone number is 541-359-9700

Martie Steigleder

From: Casey Leonard
Sent: Monday, January 12, 2026 12:31 PM
To: public comment
Subject: Written Public Comment

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Name: Casey Leonard
Residency: Live in Eugene but work at Springfield School District
Contact: casey.leonard@springfield.k12.or.us
Topic: Mid-Year RIF

I am writing to express my outrage at the proposed Reduction in Force. The way teachers are being treated in this district makes me feel disrespected and undervalued. The RIF proposal alone has caused a lot of stress and has tanked morale among teaching staff. Doing this at the end of the semester would still be massively disruptive to student learning. There are other places that cuts could be made that would not impact student-facing positions in the middle of the school year. Have you considered furlough days, offering early retirements, or asking staff if they might willingly reduce their FTE in order to save jobs? Please consider ALL options before laying off your teachers in the middle of our school year.

Casey Leonard
Art Teacher
Thurston High School
casey.leonard@springfield.k12.or.us
Pronouns: she/her | [Why Pronouns Matter](#)

Please consider this email as confidential.

Martie Steigleder

From: Jarrett Thompson <jdalthompson@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 12, 2026 12:32 PM
To: public comment
Subject: Written Public Comment

Name: Jarrett Thompson

I am unclear the information you are looking for with "district residency" I live within the district. I live in the Mt. Vernon Elementary boundaries.

Email address- jdalthompson@gmail.com

Topic- Staff Reduction vote

Dear Members of the Springfield Public Schools Board,

As both a graduate of Springfield Public Schools and a current parent within the district, I am writing to express my serious concerns regarding the current budgetary direction and its impact on our students' education.

The decision to cut teaching positions mid-year contradicts the principle of putting students first. The research is clear that supportive teachers are the single biggest in-school factor for student success. Severing these established relationships so abruptly is not a trauma-informed approach and negatively affects the learning environment, again putting students below first. Furthermore, a budget that effectively imposes a pay cut on teachers by offering a 0% COLA amidst inflation—while not requiring similar sacrifices from other areas—is neither reasonable nor sustainable. I would be interested to hear the rationale behind this approach.

I understand that difficult financial decisions are necessary; however, I am deeply concerned that the quality of education provided to my children will not meet even the standard I received as a student here. I urge the board to reconsider these priorities to ensure a stable and supportive educational experience for all students.

Martie Steigleder

From: Maria Sayre <mariasayre@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 12, 2026 12:45 PM
To: public comment
Subject: Public Written Comment

Maria Sayre-Heiss
1360 Aspen Street
Springfield, OR
mariasayre@gmail.com
541-255-9867

Topic: Cutting Certified FTE

I am writing as a former student of Springfield School District (SHS, class of 95), a parent of 2 students at SHS (class of 26 and class of 27), and a teacher in the SPS district since 2000. I am a math teacher at Springfield High School and the current bargaining chair. I am disappointed with how our district administration is coming forward tonight to ask to cut certified staff members. I was just as upset when I heard that they cut our classified staff members this year because "they received a COLA but only a 0% COLA was budgeted". I understand the need to keep the budget committee separate from the bargaining table and not wanting to give away bottom lines. I do not understand budgeting for 0% and then the first offer is equal to a 2% COLA. If the district could not afford anything above 0% then that should have been the offer. 0% COLA is the type of pay we were getting in the early 2000's with the recession. We started this year with \$20,000,000 in reserves and were budgeted to end with over \$13,000,000. Even with the increased cost of living for employees we would not fall under the minimum required reserve percentage.

I am concerned that no other options to balance the cost of living increases for all staff groups were considered besides cutting staff. Our classified and certified staff already lost FTE over the summer due to shrinking enrollment. We should never be looking at changing our students' teachers and laying off staff in the middle of the year unless we are going to drop below the minimum threshold for our budget and we have already cut our budget to the bare bones (minimums to run the district). We have not cut in any areas that I have heard about besides classified staff members. I read that the administration lost 2 FTE this year but I do not know of a person who lost their jobs, unlike the classified who lost their jobs this summer and the certified staff members who will lose theirs with this proposal. I believe the administration just had jobs not filled.

At this point we should look at cutting places that will not affect our students (and our staff members via a layoff) for the rest of the school year. I encourage you to find other areas that can be cut for the rest of the year, or possible furlough days to help balance the increased costs. The other valid option is to let the ending fund balance drop to a lower percentage than the projected 8.5%. As a district we can then look into the tough decisions around closing schools, layoffs to all staff groups, and cutting back items to only the essentials in order to get back to a sustainable budget. These conversations around major cuts should be thought out and communicated to the parents, students, families and staff for input. With enough time and ways for input we can then make sure we are thinking through the repercussions of our actions and decisions.

I appreciate all of your hard work on the board. I know you love this district just like I do and want to make sure that we are doing all we can to make it the best it can be for our students and staff.

Thank you for your time,
Maria Sayre-Heiss

Martie Steigleder

From: Megan Thompson <mfthompson79@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 12, 2026 1:29 PM
To: public comment
Subject: Written Public comment- layoffs

Good afternoon,

I am writing to express my shock and discouragement regarding the email sent out last week regarding impending layoffs. This feels manipulative considering contract negotiations are still in mediation. Is this meant to be a threat to the union, do what we want or else?

My son's school doesn't have extra "fat" that can be trimmed. If anything they always make-do with the resources they have. Where exactly are these cuts going to be made?

Will there also be a hiring freeze?

How about Admin pay and cuts/layoffs? Why/how has it come down to cutting front-line employees?

I must say, it feels like the District and School Board have been a part of a hostile takeover. It does not feel like parents or students voices matter, or that the District has students' best interest in mind.

Thank you,

Megan T.
Mfthompson79@gmail.com

Martie Steigleder

From: Alex Lowe <lowe.pressure.system@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 12, 2026 1:30 PM
To: public comment
Subject: Written Public Comment

To the Springfield Board of Education,

Thank you for reading. As an educator in Springfield, I have several reasons to urge you to vote NO on the Workforce Reduction resolution tonight, if it is brought forth.

First, and most importantly, please weigh the educational (and financial) cost of removing staff in the middle of the year on our students. For example, at the high school senior level, students could easily lose teachers who offer curriculum they need to graduate, complete a pathway of study, or possibly even complete a college scholarship application. And, there are other such examples at all grade levels affected by a change like this, throughout K-12. We need to keep the promises we made to our students, their education, and their future.

Secondly, and almost as important, please weigh the cost of removing staff with extremely short notice and with questionable reasoning on the trust between the word of the District and its employees. It takes only a little bit of thought to see the inherent contradiction between the claimed justifications of this motion, and the reality of the situation. For example, If the reason for the workforce reduction is the anticipated outcome of a contract still in negotiations, why does it make sense to lay off part of the workforce before contract negotiations finish? How does that justify all the damage and hardship this would create on the Springfield education system? Wouldn't it be so much better for all involved if the district could find any other way at all to manage the budget through the rest of the 25-26 school year? This is about choosing options that benefit all the people in our education system, and the integrity of the word of the District.

Laying off licensed teachers does not seem like the right path to be on. We need to reject this resolution, or possibly even expunge this resolution from this or further budget meetings this school year. It is much more difficult to pick up the pieces and rebuild than it is to keep ourselves together, whatever the budget shortfall.

Thank you for your time,
Alex Lowe
Teacher at Springfield High School
(541) 515-0752
Comment for Business Meeting re: Motion to Reduce Workforce