

KS SPED Funding testimony

I am a former full time Shawnee Mission teacher who now substitute teaches. The week before Christmas, I did a 1/2 day sub in a self-contained special education class in a SM elementary school. The day I was there, there were three part time paras in the classroom and all three were 100% needed. One student needed constant and full-time care and the others, if any learning was going to take place, needed, at a minimum, a shared para.

The teacher I subbed for is a friend and after the day ended, she told me she had asked for a mid-year transfer due to the stress of the classroom, especially on the days when there were para shortages, which is common. The company that provides a few of the paras for this school, was ending its contract with the district, which I'm guessing is due to budget cuts. This teacher is leaving special ed at the end of the year due to lack of funding and support. This class had 6 5-7 year olds who were the sweetest most adorable boys. It breaks my heart to think they are losing a young, highly qualified teacher due to lack of support and funding. What will happen to these 6 and the many more in Shawnee Mission and other KS districts if we don't fully fund their teaching? Please fully fund special education. Regular Ed doesn't deserve to have funds re-directed to special ed. Special ed funding should be full and separate.

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