

Good morning. I am writing to let you know that USD 507 Satanta supports the state legislature meeting its statutory obligation to reimburse special education costs at the mandatory rate of 92% of excess costs to ensure student success. When the legislature fails to fully fund special education costs, districts are forced to shift funds away from the general student population to pay for mandated special education services.

In Satanta last year, \$109,292 of our special education costs were paid for out of our general fund. This equates to two teacher salaries, which may not seem like much until you consider that we are a small district with under 250 students and only 26 full time teachers. At the end of the 2022-23 school year, two USD 507 teachers retired, and we chose not to rehire those positions. As a result, we no longer have a full-time FACS program. We consolidated social studies classes to allow for a part-time FACS program, which increased class sizes in our junior high; and we combined two 1st grade classes into one section, leading to a larger 1st grade class. The legislature's failure to fully fund special education has a clear impact on general education students in our district through the loss of programs and larger class sizes.

If the legislature chose to use its surplus dollars to fully fund special education, USD 507 would be able to hire additional teachers to decrease class sizes and better support student learning outcomes.

Thank you for listening. Feel free to reach out with any questions.