

Dear Families,

We want to share important updates regarding elementary special education services starting in the **2024-2025 school year**. Special Day Class services are returning to neighborhood schools, and this letter marks the beginning of ongoing communication between families and the district over the next few months. Further details and an opportunity to share ideas will be available this spring, including a virtual family and community meeting scheduled on **March 20, 2024**. Note that Resource/Learning Support programs are not directly affected.

FCUSD is initiating a two-year process called the **Neighborhood Schools Service Model**, allowing most students in Special Day Classes (SDCs) to return to their neighborhood schools. This means your student(s) may move to their neighborhood school or one nearby within the next two school years. Unsure about your student's neighborhood school? Please use this search tool: <https://www.fcusd.org/Page/2456>

Why the change?

- FCUSD is committed to fostering students' sense of belonging in schools.
- Attending a neighborhood school is more favorable for children and families compared to a school far from home.
- The current SDC model has only 13-21% of students attending their neighborhood schools.
- Over 70 students endure bus rides longer than one hour each way, and many attend 3 or more schools from Preschool to 5th grade.
- Recent California school dashboard data indicates that our district does not meet Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) targets set by the California Department of Education.
- A need to bring services to students rather than having students travel extensively.
- Traditionally, 4 or 5 SDC programs have been relocated every year, disrupting the bonding of students, teachers, and families to their schools.

What does the new model look like?

- A two-year transition aims to establish three non-categorical special education programs at nearly all elementary schools: Learning Support, Moderate, and Intensive.
- By the 2025-2026 school year, over 96% of students with SDC services can attend their neighborhood school of residence.
- Initially, 19 programs will be relocated at the end of this school year, with a smaller number the following year.
- Except for highly specialized programs, all elementary SDC programs will become K-5 moderate or K-5 intensive non-categorical programs, focusing on students' needs rather than grouping by disability.
- Once established, programs in neighborhood schools will not close or relocate due to population fluctuations, allowing more children to attend their neighborhood schools through elementary school.
- Elementary schools will be organized into regional triads, and if a program becomes full, two nearby schools in the same feeder pattern will serve as overflow sites, collaborating as special educator teams.

How do I find out if and when my student/program is moving?

- Our Special Education Program Specialists are available to assist you in determining if a move is anticipated for the 2024-2025 or 2025-2026 school year. Please reach out to the Program Specialist at your CURRENT school, as indicated in the attached chart, for further details. Alternatively, you may contact our main Special Education Office at 916-294-9007 to leave a message for your Program Specialist, and they will promptly return your call.