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Hello everyone. Thank you for taking the time to enable the public to speak their thoughts on the proposed budget.

My biggest concern is the elimination of special education paraeducator positions due to the inability to staff these positions. This decision will negatively impact the students in specialized programs, specifically those who need the most support to be successful in the school system, and ultimately successful citizens of society. Failing these students will be detrimental to their growth as individuals.

Not having adequate support in a special education classroom (specifically, not enough qualified paraprofessionals or teachers), will mean instruction for these students will continue to suffer and these students will fall further and further behind academically. Not to mention the negative their failures will have on their social and emotional well being and positive personal growth...

The lack of personnel support in these classrooms will also negatively impact the special education teachers and their ability to adequately provide educational plans and/or execute appropriate plans that will promote student achievement. Not having enough support in classrooms such as CORE, ASD, TEAM and the APPLES Program indicates poor working conditions, and SPS could see a potential of quality educators leaving special education positions, due to an effort that seems futile and endless, like a hamsters running on a wheel and getting nowhere.

I urge the leaders of the boards to consider these programs that are suffering, and the children who deserve quality education. Aside from cutting these positions, please also consider offering adequate compensation for these special education paraprofessional positions. Offering a better incentive, like any job, will increase the likelihood of qualified applicants. These educator roles are imperative for student achievement and it's vital to have them filled.