

Escambia County Public Schools
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Escambia County Public Schools Fills Vacancies

School administrators see staffing success, even as national shortages persist

ESCAMBIA COUNTY, Fla. (July 31, 2023) — Amid a national trend of staffing shortages in education, Escambia County Public Schools (ECPS) is making significant strides in its staffing efforts for the upcoming 2023-24 school year.

At the end of the last school year, ECPS projected they would need to fill 340 teacher vacancies before the end of this summer. Now, with classes set to start in ten days, only 47 openings remain, and administrators say they're confident those remaining positions would be filled by the time students return to the classroom.

This progress is noteworthy, especially against the backdrop of national teacher shortages. The Florida Education Association reported 5,294 teacher vacancies in January, a stark increase from 2,219 just four years ago.

Meanwhile, at the national level, nearly three-fourths of principals and district officials said that the number of teaching applicants was not enough to fill their open positions, according to a survey this summer by Education Week.

"Our hiring process is ongoing and robust," said Melia Adams, Director of Human Resource Services for ECPS, adding "we have a strong pool of substitute teachers ready to step in as needed to fill any remaining vacancies."

The district is also filling vacant bus driver positions, even as many school districts across the state and nation struggle to do so. The FEA reported in January that Florida schools had 4,631 vacant support staff positions, a category that includes bus drivers.

Darlene Hart, Director of Transportation for ECPS, said last week that the district had just 11 routes without drivers and was actively recruiting for these positions via job fairs, billboards, and community events.

In the meantime, she said, existing employees and others from the community had volunteered to cover each of these routes until additional drivers could be hired.

"People from the community as well as people in other positions throughout the district are helping us to make sure that students are transported to school," she said. "On the first day of school, we're going to be covered."

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student to succeed**

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