

**Stacy MacDonald, president of the Brockton Education Support Professional Association
Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
May 19, 2026**

Good morning. My name is Stacy MacDonald, president of the Brockton Education Support Professional Association.

Thank you for allowing me to address the budget concerns that districts across the state are feeling. My bargaining unit will be losing 63 ESP positions for the upcoming school year. As you all know, two key priorities of education are improving literacy rates and fulfilling individualized student education plans.

Both of these priorities will be severely undermined if we continue to lose staff. Many of our most essential educators — such as special education ESPs and the 38 English as a second language ESPs — provide the consistency and targeted support that Brockton's most vulnerable students rely on. Yet these staff members are frequently pulled away from their primary responsibilities to cover other duties. Leaving ESP positions within the special education setting unfilled, or cutting these positions altogether, places our highest-need students at significant risk.

Massachusetts has now enacted legislation to strengthen literacy instruction and implementing this law in a meaningful way will require adequate staffing. Educators and policymakers have long recognized the urgency of improving literacy outcomes; without the personnel to carry out this work, the law's promise cannot be realized.

Another area of concern is the increasing behavioral dysregulation in the student population. When students have outbursts within the classroom, learning typically shuts down for all students as educators try to restore the learning environment. The physical and emotional well-being of students requires a level of staffing that these potential cuts would undermine. ESPs, teachers, counselors, nurses, custodians and every other adult in a school building all play a role in creating safe and nurturing learning environments.

The classroom teachers cannot do their jobs without the support of these essential ESPs. At a time when we should be adding positions, districts across the state are eliminating them.

Staff cuts of this magnitude — both in Brockton and across the state — will have a punishing and long-lasting impact on students. We urge all stakeholders to come together immediately to develop a strategic, sustainable plan that

addresses the fiscal crisis facing our public schools and protects the educational futures of the children we serve.