

**Christine Mulroney, president of the Framingham Teachers Association
Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
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I am speaking today to raise concerns about the dire impact large-scale staff cuts will have in our public schools. In my district alone, more than 80 positions will be cut.

Eliminating teachers and other school staff feeds a growing disconnect between the expectations being placed on school districts and the resources being provided to meet them.

For example, educators support strong safeguards around seclusion and timeout practices. We all want learning environments that are safe, supportive and responsive to students' needs. However, the proposed changes to the regulations will require significant staffing, training, supervision and support systems in order to be implemented effectively and safely.

At the very same time that these new responsibilities are being introduced, districts across Massachusetts are facing serious budget shortfalls that are leading to educator layoffs, position reductions and increased class sizes. Schools are being asked to do more with less, and that reality is not sustainable.

These regulations cannot exist in isolation from the funding crisis facing public education. If the Commonwealth believes these changes are necessary — and districts are expected to comply with them fully — then the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education must also advocate for the funding required to make compliance possible. The implementation of expanded requirements around seclusion and timeout will require more trained staff, not fewer.

When educators, counselors, paraprofessionals and behavioral support staff are reduced, the burden falls on already-stretched school personnel, and students ultimately feel the impact. Without adequate staffing levels, even well-intentioned regulations risk becoming difficult to implement consistently and safely.

We urge BESE to recognize the realities that districts are facing and to use its voice to advocate for increased state investment in public education. Regulations without resources place schools in an impossible position. Our students and educators deserve policies that are matched by the funding necessary to carry them out responsibly.

Thank you.