SEPT. 8: PUBLIC COMMENT • SEPT. 22: BOARD VOTE • THIS IS A PROPOSAL — NOT A DONE DEAL

SAVEBOULDERSCHOOLS.COM

A PATH THAT DOESN'T REQUIRE CLOSING OUR SCHOOLS.

Staffing formulas, collective bargaining agreements, and the case for baseline-plus-variable funding — for the BVSD Board of Education and BVEA / BVCEA / BVEOP / BVPA.

September 2026 | Based on BVSD's current published agreements and 2026-27 Proposed Budget

Policy and contract analysis, not legal advice. Any implementation should be reviewed by BVSD labor counsel and bargaining representatives.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY — THE SOLUTION IN ONE PAGE

CENTRAL FINDING: BVSD has not demonstrated that school closure is contractually required. Many of the sharpest enrollment "cliffs" are not contract obligations at all — they are annual budget formulas the Board itself designed and can redesign.

#	LEVER	WHO ACTS	WHAT IT UNLOCKS
1	**Adopt Baseline + Variable staffing** — every open school gets the personnel to function safely; enrollment governs only the staffing *above* that floor	Board (budget action, no negotiation needed)	Removes most of the sharpest, non-contractual cliffs immediately
2	**Renegotiate the remaining contractual cliffs** in BVEA, BVCEA, BVEOP, BVPA	Board + all 4 unions	Staffing flexibility without building closures — BVEA has already shown this works (see COLA fix above)
3	**Push the state funding fight** — enrollment-averaging protection, adequacy funding	Board + legislators + SaveBoulderSchools.com	Restores real revenue instead of treating the formula as fixed
4	**Delay the closure vote** until 1-3 are tested	Board	Closures are irreversible; a redesigned formula or a renegotiated contract is not

WHY THIS IS "NOTHING TO LOSE": The disruption the current formulas produce is coming either way. BVEA members already got their per-pupil COLA cliff removed by asking for it. The other three unions, and the Board's own budget formulas, can do the same — before a single building closes, not after.

RECOMMENDED POLICY: BASELINE + VARIABLE

BASELINE PUBLIC-SERVICE ALLOCATION (EVERY OPEN SCHOOL GETS THIS, REGARDLESS OF ENROLLMENT)	GRADUAL VARIABLE ALLOCATION (SCALES WITH NEED)
Principal; functional front office; counselor floor; library; art/music/PE; health coverage; custodial and required student services	Additional staffing based on rolling enrollment, student needs, poverty, IEP workload, multilingual learners, program complexity, facility use

PART I — THERE IS ENOUGH MONEY: THE CURRENT FUNDING PICTURE

BVSD'S 2026-27 BUDGET, AT A GLANCE

METRIC	2025-26	2026-27 (CURRENT, PROPOSED)
Total district budget, all funds	$1.207B	**$1.127B** (drop is capital-fund driven, not operations)
General Operating Fund appropriation	$493.7M	**$506.6M** — up year over year
State per-pupil revenue (PPR)	$11,576	**$11,890** (+2.9%)
School Finance Act total program funding	$313.6M	**$315.5M** (+0.9%)
Total funded pupil count (FTE)	27,077.4	**26,538.3** (-539.1 / -1.99%)
Total mill levy (collection year)	48.175 (2025)	**48.044** (2026)

WHERE BVSD RANKS AMONG FRONT RANGE PEERS (2026-27 PPR, NO OVERRIDE)

DISTRICT	PER-PUPIL REVENUE
Denver	$12,581
Cherry Creek	$12,179
St. Vrain	$11,773
Aurora	$12,355
Poudre	$11,622
Jefferson Co.	$11,627
Colorado Springs D-11	$10,896
Adams 12 Five Star	$10,734
Littleton	$11,097
Boulder (BVSD)	**$11,890** — mid-pack without override, but see below

Note: with mill-levy overrides added, Boulder rises to $14,727 total per-pupil funding — the *highest* of these ten districts. The "state contributes less to Boulder" pattern is a formula-design effect of Boulder's high property valuation, not evidence of an underfunded district overall.

THE MECHANISM OF THE SQUEEZE — CORRECTED

THEN	NOW (2026-27)
Budget Stabilization Factor (BSF) withheld funding annually since the Great Recession — cumulative 15-year toll to BVSD: **$340.0M**	**BSF was eliminated in FY 2024-25**, returning Colorado funding to 1989 inflation-adjusted levels
—	New squeeze mechanism: the 2025 School Finance Act rewrite **reduced enrollment-averaging** from 5 years toward 2-3 years, cutting BVSD's cushion against year-to-year enrollment swings
—	State budget shortfall for 2026-27: **$0.8B-$1.2B**, raising real risk BSF could be *reinstated*

BOTTOM LINE: The immediate crisis driver isn't the old BSF anymore — it's a formula that shrinks BVSD's enrollment-averaging cushion right as enrollment is falling. That is a policy choice the legislature made in 2025 and can revisit, not a fixed law of nature. Two independent 2024 adequacy studies still found Colorado underfunded by **>$4.0B statewide** relative to an adequately resourced system.

PART II — THE SIX EMPLOYEE STAFFING FRAMEWORKS (CORRECTING THE COUNT)

FRAMEWORK	EMPLOYEES	CBA?	CURRENT TERM
BVEA	Licensed staff (teachers, counselors, psychologists, therapists, SLPs, social workers)	Yes	2026-2029
BVCEA	Operations, custodial, maintenance, transportation, food service, security	Yes	2024-2028
BVEOP	Office professionals	Yes	2025-2027
BVPA	Paraeducators	Yes	2024-2026; auto-continues annually unless terminated
APT	Administrators & professional/technical staff	No — Terms & Conditions doc only	Posted terms dated 2024-2025
Non-represented	Media technicians, tutors, liaisons, others	No — salary schedule only	N/A

Official source: BVSD Negotiated Agreements, Terms & Conditions and Salary Schedules page.

LEGAL BACKDROP: Colorado does not require school districts to bargain with any of these groups. Recognition of BVEA/BVCEA/BVEOP/BVPA is voluntary and local. A 2022 state law extending bargaining rights to county employees **explicitly excluded K-12 education**; a 2025 bill on union-election procedure (SB25-005) was **vetoed**. Every provision below is fully renegotiable by mutual agreement — none of it is state-mandated.

PART III — WHERE THE ENROLLMENT CLIFFS ACTUALLY ORIGINATE

KEY DISTINCTION: A contractual workload protection and a district budget-allocation formula are not the same thing. The Board *must honor* the former through negotiation; it can *redesign the latter unilaterally, starting with this year's budget.*

CROSSING	POTENTIAL EFFECT	SOURCE	CHANGE ROUTE
K-1: 26 to 27 students	Pressure for additional section (goal, not automatic)	BVEA C-6 (goal language)	Partly negotiable
Grades 2-3: 29 to 30	Same	BVEA C-6 (goal language)	Partly negotiable
Grades 4-5: 31 to 32	Same	BVEA C-6 (goal language)	Partly negotiable
Elementary specialist: 6.5 to 7.0 sections	FTE jumps from smooth fraction to flat 0.5 FTE	**BVEA C-18.3 (contractual table)**	Negotiate
Elementary ~350 students	Librarian 0.5 → 1.0 FTE	Budget formula*	**Board can act now**
Elementary ~350 students	Counselor 0.5 → 1.0 FTE	Budget formula, subject to BVEA C-5.9 caseload cap	Mixed
Middle: 300 → 301	Counselor 0.5 → 1.0 FTE	Budget formula*	**Board can act now**
Middle: 400 → 401	Counselor 1.0 → 1.5 FTE	Budget formula*	**Board can act now**
Middle: 500 → 501	Counselor 1.5 → 2.0 FTE	Budget formula / BVEA cap	Mixed
K-8: 599 → 600	+0.5 assistant principal	Budget formula*	**Board can act now**
K-8: 699 → 700	+0.5 assistant principal	Budget formula*	**Board can act now**
Middle: 350 → 351	Possible 1.0 clerical-FTE jump	Budget formula*	**Board can act now**
High: 949 → 950	Media technician 0.375 → 0.75 FTE	Non-represented salary schedule*	**Board can act now**
High: 1,800 → 1,801	+1.0 assistant principal	Budget formula*	**Board can act now**
Elementary: 500 → 501	Health para 0.5 → 0.6 FTE	Budget formula*	**Board can act now**
PE: 45 → 46 students/section	Co-teacher or added section	BVEA C-18.4 (contractual)	Negotiate

* Sourced from the incoming policy brief's read of the 2026-27 Proposed Budget's School Allocation Formulas (pp. 119-123, confirmed to exist; individual thresholds not independently re-extracted — see correction note above.)

Drafting defect flagged in the source brief: the budget's librarian formula reportedly reads "1.0 FTE above 350, 0.5 below 350" — leaving exactly 350 undefined — while the counselor formula simultaneously places 350 in both a "350+" and a "200-350" band. If accurate, this is worth confirming directly with Business Services before citing publicly, since it would be a genuine drafting ambiguity in this year's budget book.

PART IV — CONTRACT-BY-CONTRACT FINDINGS AND FIXES

A. BVEA — LICENSED EDUCATORS (2026-2029 AGREEMENT — CURRENT)

PROVISION	WHAT IT ACTUALLY SAYS	STATUS
COLA vs. per-pupil revenue (E-1.1)	**No longer linked.** The new E-1.1 ties vertical/horizontal salary-schedule movement to years of service, not per-pupil revenue.	**Already fixed by negotiation**
Elementary class size (C-6)	"It is the **goal** of the District to limit" K-1 to 26, 2-3 to 29, 4-5 to 31. District must make "every reasonable effort" — not an automatic new section.	Soft cliff / pressure point
Counselor caseload (C-5.9)	Flat caps: 350 middle school, 450 high school	Hard cliff, contractual
Elementary specialist FTE (C-18.3)	Step table: 1-6.5 sections smooth (0.0556×sections); 7-9 sections flat 0.5 FTE; 10-12 flat 0.667; 13-15 flat 0.834; 16-18 flat 1.0	**Hard cliff, contractual**
Opening/Closing/Reorganizing Schools (C-22)	"HR will collaborate with Unit B leadership to address the interests of affected teachers" — thin, no specific process	Real but minimal protection
Involuntary Transfers (D-19)	**Explicitly names** "closure, consolidation, or reconstitution" and "actual or projected drop in enrollment" as valid transfer triggers	Contractual, directly implicated by the closure plan
Relocation stipend (D-19.4)	$500, prorated by FTE	Contractual
Mutual Consent Placement Team (D-19.6)	Building-level team decides placement by consensus; priority hiring pool; forced 1-year assignment with an individualized PD plan if no placement secured	Contractual, detailed process
RIF hiring freeze (D-20.7)	**No new hires for two years** until all reduced non-probationary staff are placed	**Hard cliff, contractual**

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR THE PITCH: BVEA already got the per-pupil COLA cliff removed in its 2026 negotiation. That is proof-of-concept: this strategy works when a union asks for it before a crisis forces the issue.

RECOMMENDED BVEA CHANGES GOING FORWARD

Rolling 3-year enrollment average for routine section staffing
Require a 3-student or 5% threshold (whichever is greater) before a section change, confirmed by two official counts
No midyear section elimination for enrollment decline alone
Replace the C-18.3 specialist step table with a continuous minutes/sections formula
One-year Enrollment Stabilization Pool for displaced staff, using vacancies/attrition before involuntary placement

B. BVCEA — OPERATIONS, CUSTODIAL, MAINTENANCE, TRANSPORTATION (2024-2028 AGREEMENT — CURRENT)

PROVISION	WHAT IT SAYS	STATUS
COLA vs. per-pupil revenue (Art. 4-A)	"the wage schedule will be adjusted... provided there is an equivalent increase in the per pupil revenue"	**Live cliff — not yet fixed, unlike BVEA**
Custodial staffing (Art. 7-N)	ISSA square-footage ladder: Level 1 = 14,000 sq ft/custodian; Level 2 = 23,000; **Level 3 (current standard) = up to 33,000**; Level 4 = 50,000; Level 5 = up to 80,000	Hard cliff, contractual — tied to building square footage, not headcount
Anti-subcontracting (Art. 13-O)	District may not outsource Unit C work if it causes a RIF	Protects members; forecloses one cost-cutting route
Bumping/RIF (Art. 13-G)	Seniority-based bumping district-wide within classification; 1-year recall rights	Contractual — no 2-year freeze like BVEA

POLICY IMPLICATION: a school does not lose half its bathrooms, hallways, or fire-safety systems when enrollment falls by half — this agreement already recognizes that fixed public-infrastructure costs are separable from variable, student-driven costs.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

Replace per-pupil COLA trigger with a CPI floor (the contract already uses CPI elsewhere)
Smooth the ISSA step-ladder into a continuous sq-ft/FTE ratio with a 12-24 month transition glidepath for merged buildings
Add a one-time reorganization placement protocol ahead of classification-wide bumping
Create a voluntary district facilities float team for absences and demand spikes

C. BVEOP — OFFICE PROFESSIONALS (2025-2027 AGREEMENT — CURRENT)

PROVISION	WHAT IT SAYS	STATUS
Enrollment as RIF cause (C-11.1)	Names "drop in enrollment impacting staffing allocations" as a valid layoff reason; 1-year no-outside-hire window follows	Contractual
Reorganization (C-4.1)	Routes any reorganization-caused reduction straight into C-11.1	Contractual — closure = reorganization under this language
HS office staffing bands	Elementary 100-399: 1.125-2.0 FTE; Elementary 400+: 2.125-2.5 FTE; Middle 1-350: 1.0-1.5 FTE; Middle 350+: 2.5-3.0 FTE	Budget band — a 1-student crossing can imply a 1.0-FTE jump

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

Guarantee a functional front-office baseline at every school
Add FTE gradually for enrollment, mobility, multilingual-family service, health needs
Priority placement into larger merged-school offices before classification-wide bumping
Time-limit retained higher pay after permanent placement into a lower classification

D. BVPA — PARAEDUCATORS (2024-2026 AGREEMENT — CURRENT, AUTO-CONTINUING)

PROVISION	WHAT IT SAYS	STATUS
Kindergarten-section allocation	0.25 para FTE per K section	Gradual — more gradual than most other formulas
Health-room para	0.5 FTE at 75-500 students; 0.6 above 501	Cliff at 500/501
Displacement trigger	Reduction >50% of hours = "displaced," triggering full seniority bumping rights	**Sharpest cliff of any contract** — binary line at exactly 50%
Schoolwide proportional reductions	Generally prohibited unless affected employees agree	Protects members
Benefits threshold	20 hrs/week affects eligibility	Cliff

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

Replace the binary 50%/"displaced" test with a graduated protection band (25%+ triggers placement rights, scaling up)
Explicit "follow-the-program" guarantees for paras whose SPED programs relocate
Central floating para team for new IEPs, absences, temporary demand
Preserve benefit eligibility during temporary stabilization assignments

PART V — BOARD ACTION PACKAGE

ADOPT IMMEDIATELY THROUGH THE BUDGET (NO NEGOTIATION REQUIRED)

One dedicated principal per operating school
Functional minimum front-office staffing at every school
Baseline counseling, library, arts, PE, and health-room services
Three-year rolling enrollment calculation for routine staffing
Five-percent or three-student staffing buffer before any threshold change
One-year hold-harmless funding near thresholds
District enrollment-stabilization reserve
No midyear section elimination based solely on declining enrollment
Publish staffing formulas, exceptions, and appeals
Limit closure "savings" claims to genuinely avoidable costs (not costs merely transferred to a receiving school)

NEGOTIATE WITH EACH UNION

UNION	PRIORITY ITEMS
BVEA	Section smoothing; continuous specialist FTE formula; stabilization pool; transfer/RIF simplification
BVCEA	CPI-based COLA (drop per-pupil link); custodial glidepath; float team; voluntary transfers before displacement
BVEOP	Voluntary placement; temporary stabilization assignments; defined retained-pay sunset
BVPA	Graduated displacement band; follow-the-program guarantees; float pool; benefit continuity

PROPOSED BOARD RESOLUTION (MODEL LANGUAGE)

> "*Every operating BVSD school shall receive a baseline allocation sufficient to provide safe and functional school leadership, front-office operations, counseling, library services, art, music, physical education, health-room services, custodial services, and legally required student support. Enrollment shall determine incremental staffing above this baseline but shall not be the sole determinant of whether an operating school receives an essential service.*"

DATA BVSD SHOULD PUBLISH BEFORE ANY CLOSURE VOTE

Five years of school-by-school projected vs. actual October enrollment count
Every staffing change attributable to crossing a published threshold
Every school currently within 10 students of a staffing cliff
Cost of a baseline-plus-variable model and a stabilization reserve
Fixed, variable, avoidable, and *transferred* costs for each proposed closure (i.e., which "savings" just move to a receiving school)
Transportation, receiving-school, modular, security, traffic, and transition costs

PART VI — TWELVE QUESTIONS THE BOARD MUST ANSWER

#	QUESTION
1	Identify every specific contract clause that allegedly requires closing a school.
2	Which proposed savings disappear entirely, and which merely move to a receiving school?
3	How much would a three-year staffing-stabilization model cost?
4	How many schools currently sit within ten students of a staffing cliff?
5	How many FTE changes in the last five years resulted from a threshold crossing?
6	Why is an open school considered inefficient merely because it is below physical capacity?
7	Why use large enrollment bands when BVSD already allocates fractional FTE throughout its budget?
8	Why does the published elementary librarian formula reportedly leave exactly 350 students ambiguous?
9	Why close permanent public assets in response to annual enrollment fluctuations before testing stabilization?
10	Has BVSD priced a base-allocation-plus-variable-allocation model?
11	What receiving-school traffic, cafeteria, playground, office, specialist-space, and dismissal constraints were costed?
12	What legal opinion establishes that collective-bargaining obligations prevent the Board from changing its annual allocation formulas?

PART VII — TIMELINE & PUBLIC FRAMING

TIMEFRAME	ACTION	OWNER
Now – Sept. 22, 2026	Present this framework as public comment; request the vote be conditioned on or delayed pending a baseline-formula review and joint renegotiation session	SaveBoulderSchools.com + families
Immediately	Adopt Baseline + Variable budget policy items (Part V, top table) — no negotiation required	Board
Fall 2026 – Spring 2027	Joint working sessions with BVEA, BVCEA, BVEOP, BVPA using the clause-by-clause proposals in Part IV	Board + all 4 unions
Spring 2027 reopeners	Formalize de-linked COLA language (BVCEA), smoothed staffing formulas, reorganization-specific placement terms	Board + unions
Ongoing	State-level advocacy on enrollment-averaging protection and adequacy funding	SaveBoulderSchools.com + legislators

CORE PUBLIC STATEMENT: This is not a choice between protecting employees and protecting neighborhood schools. BVSD's existing formulas destabilize both — converting small enrollment changes into staffing disruption, involuntary transfers, and pressure to close schools. The fix is stable baseline funding, gradual enrollment adjustments, and an employee stabilization pool — not concentrating children into buildings to satisfy a utilization percentage.

MONEY STATEMENT: BVSD may face real fiscal constraints, but it has not shown closure is the only affordable response. Before disposing of permanent public-school capacity, the district must publish actual avoidable savings and price the less disruptive alternative: baseline staffing plus enrollment stabilization.

PEER-DISTRICT EVIDENCE

Minneapolis Public Schools — publicly describes a model combining core staffing, basic per-student allocation, and a small-school subsidy.
Fairfax County Public Schools — publishes staffing methodology and maintains staffing-reserve capacity for enrollment differences.

SOURCES & CAVEATS

BVSD 2026-27 Proposed Budget (full document, verified directly, incl. Understanding School Finance, Executive Summary, Enrollment Projections; School Allocation Formulas section confirmed to exist at pp. 119-123 but not fully re-extracted)
2026-2029 BVEA Negotiated Agreement (verified directly, full text)
2024-2028 BVCEA Negotiated Agreement (verified directly, full text)
2025-2027 BVEOP Negotiated Agreement (verified directly, full text)
2024-2026 BVPA Negotiated Agreement (structural provisions verified against predecessor; successor's existence confirmed, not re-read line-by-line)
BVSD Human Resources "Negotiated Agreements, Terms & Conditions and Salary Schedules" page
Boulder Reporting Lab, "BVSD proposes closing four elementary schools..." (Aug. 25-26, 2026)
Colorado Independence Institute Education Policy Center; Colorado Politics (Mar. 8, 2022); Colorado Newsline (May 16, 2025) — on K-12 bargaining's legal status
Colorado School Finance Project 2024 adequacy studies (cosfp.org)

STANDING CAVEATS: This document is written to make the strongest case for a baseline-funding, renegotiation-first approach over closure — not a neutral summary of the district's rationale (which is addressed fairly and deserves its own hearing). The school-level budget-formula thresholds in Part III are sourced to an outside policy brief and were only partially independently verified; confirm the exact pp. 119-123 figures before quoting them publicly. The BVPA contract's exact current wording should be spot-checked against the live 2024-2026 PDF before wide distribution.