



**NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
MEMORANDUM**

TO: Frieda Moore, President
Members of the Board

THROUGH: Dr. Caitlin Santos, Superintendent 

THROUGH: Megan Williams, Director of Finance 

FROM: Michael Hautala, Director of Student Services 

DATE: October 6, 2026

SUBJECT: SPED Intensive Para Signing Bonus

Memo No. SB27-058
(Action Item)

NSBSD Policy Manual:

Board Policy 3312, Contracts: The Superintendent or designee may enter into contracts and memoranda of agreement (MOA's) on behalf of the District. All contracts and MOA's with a dollar value of \$50,000 or greater must be approved by the School Board.

NSBSD Strategic Plan Summary:

Staff Support & Professional Development

Goal 6: Build and sustain a thriving workforce aligned with the mission of this District

Issue Summary:

Special Education Intensive Paraprofessionals fill critical, high-need roles within our district. These positions are essential for maintaining legal compliance with federal and state special education laws, specifically ensuring the provision of Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and required instructional/behavioral support for our intensive-funded student population.

Proposed Bonus Structure:

Up to \$3,000 incentive/retention bonus will be awarded to qualifying Special Education Intensive Paraprofessionals within the North Slope Borough School District, based on completion of the current school year* in the role of SPED intensive paraprofessional and as follows:

- Existing SPED Intensive Paraprofessionals: Eligible for the \$3,000 bonus upon agreement and completion of the current school year. The amount of \$1500 will be paid in the January pay period and the second payment of \$1500 will be paid in the April pay period or the last pay period of the school year.
- Internal Transfers and New Hires: Any Existing staff member who transfers into a Central Office approved SPED Intensive Paraprofessional placement and site from another position within the district, OR any new hire SPED Intensive Paraprofessional, will qualify for the \$3,000 bonus upon completion of transfer paperwork before October 15, 2026 and completion of the current school year in the role of SPED intensive paraprofessional. If employment paperwork is completed before October 15, 2026, the amount of \$1500 will be paid during the January pay period and the second payment of \$1500 will be paid in the April pay period or the last pay period of the school year.



If employment paperwork is completed between October 16 and November 15, 2026, the amount of \$1000 will be paid in the January pay period and the second payment of \$1500 will be paid in the April pay period or the last pay period of the school year. If employment paperwork is completed after November 15, 2026 the amount of \$500 will be paid in the January payroll and the second payment of \$1500 will be paid in the April pay period or the last pay period of the school year. If employment paperwork is completed after January 1, 2027, the \$1500 second semester payment will be prorated based on workdays in the intensive special education paraprofessional position.

*If a person who is eligible for this incentive payment fails to complete the school year, that person's incentive payment will be prorated to reflect the days worked.

Background:

The North Slope Borough School District (NSBSD) is currently experiencing significant challenges in the recruitment and retention of qualified Special Education Intensive Paraprofessionals. These paraprofessionals are vital, indispensable component to the Special Education Program, directly supporting the academic, behavioral, and functional needs of students with disabilities as mandated by federal and state law. Their roles involve complex duties, including managing challenging behaviors, providing personal care, and maintaining required documentation.

Current Staffing and Labor Challenges

- **Severe Staffing Shortages:** There is an acute labor shortage across the Slope and within our schools. In Utqiagvik, while we pursue every avenue for recruitment and maintain our efforts to find suitable staff, there is a required FTE of 9 positions with only 5 currently filled. Currently projecting that this number will increase by 2 during the October count.
- **High-Level Responsibilities:** Intensive paraprofessionals carry the highest level of responsibility among paraprofessional staff, requiring specialized skills, physical demands, and continuous training to effectively support intensive-needs students.
- **Recruitment & Retention Barriers:** The competitive salary climate on the North Slope adversely impacts our ability to attract and retain qualified candidates against other local opportunities.

Funding Source and Purchase/Contract Amount:

This initiative is estimated to cost the District \$78,000 and will be funded from the FY27 Special Education budget.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Superintendent direct and authorize a \$3,000 signing/incentive/retention bonus for all existing, newly hired, and internal transfer Special Education Intensive Paraprofessionals to directly address critical staffing deficits, maintain legal compliance, and ensure quality educational support for our intensive-funded students.

Proposed Motion:

“I move that the NSBSD Board of Education approve the one time **SPED Intensive Paraprofessional Signing/Incentive/Retention Bonus** for FY27 as described in this memo.”



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