



TO: Mid-Valley Special Education Cooperative Executive Advisory Board
FROM: Lisa Palese, Executive Director
DATE: June 3, 2026
RE: 1:1 Paraprofessional Decision-Making Checklist

The purpose of this memo is to provide the Board with information regarding the cooperative's process for determining when 1:1 paraprofessional support is appropriate for students. Currently, 28 students across the cooperative require 1:1 support. These needs may be related to safety concerns, behavioral challenges, medical or personal care needs, communication deficits, or significant difficulty accessing instruction without continuous adult support. While many of our students require this level of support to ensure safety and access to FAPE, we also recognize that 1:1 support is a highly restrictive and costly intervention. Because of this, decisions regarding 1:1 support should be made carefully, collaboratively, and through a data-driven IEP team process. To support consistency across teams, we have developed the following 1:1 Teaching Assistant Decision-Making Checklist. This process should be used not only when considering initial support but also to regularly reevaluate students' needs, with a continued focus on increasing independence and fading support whenever appropriate.

1:1 Teaching Assistant Decision-Making Checklist

Student Need and Impact

- The team has clearly defined the concern prompting consideration of a 1:1 paraprofessional
- The concern significantly impacts safety, access to instruction, or participation
- The data support the students' needs for 1:1 support

Review of Existing Supports

- Current staffing ratios and paraprofessional supports have been reviewed
- Instructional and behavioral interventions have been implemented with fidelity
- Environmental, scheduling, and instructional adjustments have been attempted

Safety Considerations

- Data indicate an ongoing risk that cannot be safely managed with existing staff
- Incident or behavior data support the need for immediate adult response

Access to Instruction

- The student is unable to meaningfully access instruction despite current supports
- Significant instructional time is lost without continuous adult support

Independence and Skill Development

- The impact of a 1:1 para on student independence has been discussed
- The support is designed to build skills, not replace student effort

Medical or Personal Care Needs (If Applicable)

- The student requires continuous monitoring or care beyond what existing staff can provide
- Needs are documented in a health or safety plan

IEP Documentation and Review

- The purpose of the 1:1 TA is clearly documented in the IEP
- Settings and times for support are specified
- Progress monitoring data are identified
- A plan for review and fading is included