



NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT MEMORANDUM

TO: Esther Evikana, President
Members of the Board

THROUGH: David Vadiveloo, Superintendent *DSVadiveloo*

FROM: Michael Hautala, Director of Student Services *MH*
MH

DATE: December 1, 2025

SUBJECT: Salary Increase for Special Education Paraprofessionals and Special Education Intensive Paraprofessionals
**Memo No. SB26-067
(Action Item)**

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:

The North Slope Borough School District (NSBSD) is currently experiencing significant challenges in the recruitment and retention of qualified Special Education Paraprofessionals and Special Education Intensive Paraprofessionals. These paraprofessionals are a **vital, indispensable component** of 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 implementing Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals, managing challenging behaviors, providing personal care, and maintaining required documentation.

Current Staffing and Labor Challenges

- **Critical Labor Shortage:** NSBSD, consistent with the broader region, is facing a severe and persistent shortage of qualified personnel across all school-based roles, particularly within the Special Education department.
- **Recruitment and Retention:** Current salary ranges for these critical positions are not competitive with the **job market on the North Slope**, making both initial recruitment and long-term retention exceedingly difficult. High turnover directly impacts the continuity and quality of services provided to our most vulnerable students.
- **Value of the Role:** The duties of a SPED Paraprofessional, and particularly a SPED Intensive Paraprofessional (who often manages students with the most significant medical, behavioral, and self-help needs), require specialized skills, training, emotional resilience, and physical stamina that justify a higher compensation level.

Justification for Proposed Salary Increase

To address the severe staffing shortage and recognize the essential, high-demand nature of these roles, it is necessary to increase the salary ranges for Special Education Paraprofessionals. This action is a direct investment in the quality and legality of our Special Education services.



Proposed Salary Range Adjustments:

Position	Proposed New Range	Justification for Range Increase
SPED Paraprofessional	Range 15	To attract qualified individuals and recognize the specialized nature of SPED support.
SPED Intensive Paraprofessional	Range 17	To compensate for the highly demanding, critical, and often physically/emotionally challenging duties associated with students requiring intensive services.

Background:

The approval of this increase will require an investment from the district. However, this should be considered a strategic use of resources aimed at reducing overall turnover costs. The budget impact will vary based on participation, but the savings from reduced recruitment, onboarding, and lost productivity will help offset these expenditures.

Funding Source and Purchase/Contract Amount:

This initiative is estimated to cost the District \$558,000.00 and will be funded from the FY27 HR budget.

Recommendation:

It is highly recommended to approve the immediate adjustment of the salary schedule for Special Education Paraprofessionals to Range 15 and Special Education Intensive Paraprofessionals to Range 17. This action is a critical step for maintaining compliant, productive, and stable Special Education services across the North Slope Borough School District.

Proposed Motion:

“I move that the NSBSD Board of Education approve the Salary Increase for Special Education (SPED) and Special Education Intensive (SPED Intensive) Paraprofessionals as described in this memo.”

Moved by _____ Seconded by _____

Advisory Vote _____ Vote _____

Signature: *DS Vadiveloo*

Email: david.vadiveloo@nsbsd.org

Signature: *Michael Hautala*

Michael Hautala (Jan 26, 2026 14:28:23 AKST)

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