



Fairbanks North Star Borough School District

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Special Education Budget FY25

Budget Trends

FY 24 Budget: \$32,444,366

**reduction of \$1,044,474 (3.2% in addition to cost increases over time) since 2014*

FY 23 Budget: \$33,812,010

FY 20 Budget: \$34,124,055

FY 19 Budget: \$33,137,650

FY 18 Budget: \$33,510,612

FY 17 Budget: \$33,938,720

FY 16 Budget: \$33,888,994

FY 14 Budget: \$33,488,840

SPED Students and Staff

<u>Year</u>	<u>Hard Funded Positions*</u>	<u>OCT Sped Student Count</u>
FY14	366.6	2133
FY16	364.8	2112
FY20	364.3	2369
FY24	357.4	2658

Note: Since 2014 the number of students requiring special education rose by 25% (525 students) while staffing dropped by 2.5% (9.2 FTE).

*These totals do not include ELP positions nor students.

Maintenance of Effort

Special Education per pupil expenditures in:

FY 14= \$14,766 for 366.6 staff

FY 16= \$15,191 for 364.8 staff

FY 20= \$13,343 for 367.2 staff

FY 24= \$11,700 for 357.4 staff

**21% decrease in (-\$3066) per pupil spending

Ratio of Students to Staff

<u>Year</u>	<u>Ratio</u>	<u>Sped Students</u>
FY14	5.81	2133
FY17	6.05	2189
FY20	6.45	2369
FY23	6.84	2369
FY24	7.43	2658

Note: Currently 357.4* SPED positions in hard budget. To return to the FY14 ratio of 5.81/1 total FY24 positions would be at 457.4* SPED positions. To return to FY 23 ratio of 6.84/1 total FY 24 positions would be 388.6.

*Excludes ELP positions and students

Pressures on Current Staffing Levels & Programs reductions in recent years

- Persistent Vacancies
 - **31.5 ESSA** paraprofessional positions
 - **12 FEA** certified teachers
- Closed BASE program and relocated BRIDGE to school campus
- Reduced certified and classified staff in BRIDGE program
- Consolidated District-Wide program classrooms reducing overall number of locations (PK, IR, ER)
- Fewer school psychologist positions -currently working at 177% higher than recommended student load.
- Reduced Assistive Tech Teacher, Sped Math Mentor, Sign Language Specialist, Autism Behavior Aides, and Social Services Manager Positions
- Fewer SLP positions - 35% higher caseloads than national average
- ELP staffing reduced by 4 FTE - 39% reduction in expenditures

Considerations for Potential Budget Cuts

- Staffing
 - Sped student count is at a record levels with fewer positions to meet the need.
 - Current VIB and 619 grants are used entirely in staffing
- Supplies
 - Deep cuts in previous budgets. Represents only 2% of the overall budget.
- If cuts are required they must be limited to non-IDEA programming or alternative program services as core services are severely stretched.

Potential Investments

- Add IR classroom at elementary school level
- Add 1-1.5 sped PK classrooms at elementary school level
- Add ER classroom at elementary school level
- Improve retention and recruitment of special education staff through supportive bonuses or pay differentials in hard to fill positions
- Improve related services student ratios through staffing
- Add resource support to improve caseload sizes at elementary schools and allow case management time at the secondary level
- Targeted professional development for both certified and classified staff