

SPS Bargaining Updates

August 29, 2026



For the past several months, Seattle Public Schools (SPS) has come to the bargaining table with purpose, persistence, and a clear commitment to students, families, educators, and schools. SPS remains steadfast in its commitment to working with Seattle Education Association (SEA) to achieve an agreement that serves all students, supports our employees, remains fiscally prudent, and positions our schools for a successful year.

SPS proposes a comprehensive agreement that increases educator compensation by nearly 9% over three years, expands student mental health and special education support, and invests in professional development, all while maintaining fiscal stability.

Key investments include:

- Increased access to special education in neighborhood schools
- Expanded elementary school mental health supports
- Targeted professional development time
- Increase in the number of school psychologists

Details of SPS Offer to SEA

Compensation and Benefits

- A guaranteed salary increase of **2.6%** in 2026-27, **3.6%** in 2027-28, and **2.6%** in 2028-29, totaling nearly **9%** over three years. This is in addition to annual salary step increases, which average around 4% per year for eligible employees.
- In comparison, management and non-represented staff will receive a 1.73% increase and are required to take two furlough days. This means that the district's offer to SEA in the 2026-27 year is more than 2.5 times greater than what management and non-reps will receive.
- The creation of VEBA accounts for employees in 2026-27, with district contributions of \$10 per month in 2027-28 and \$15 per month in 2028-29 to support future health care needs after retirement

Special Education, Student Services, and School Supports

Because Special Education is a service and not a place, SPS is proposing a new special education structure that allows most students with disabilities to remain in their own neighborhood schools and not have to move to a different school based on their needs.

- Improving the staff-to-student ratios for almost 70% of all our students with IEPs, thus lowering the caseload for these teachers
- Creating 40 new paraprofessional and certificated staff positions for a proactive district-wide program to support academic, behavior, social, and emotional needs of students
- Creating 70 paraprofessional and 20 certificated positions that will be deployed strategically to address student needs
- The creation of six new school psychologist positions to support student evaluations

Mental Health and Counseling

- Increasing elementary school support by providing additional funding so that every elementary school with over 350 students has either a full-time counselor or social worker

Multilingual Learners

- Lowering instructional assistant ratios from 35 students per instructional assistant to 33, while maintaining current teacher ratios

Instructional Leadership and Professional Learning

- Providing 10 consulting teachers to support educators who are new to the profession or who need additional support
- Creating training plans for paraprofessionals and SAEOP employees beginning in the 2027-28 school year and developing a mentoring program for classified staff
- Increasing the annual building-based Teacher Leader Cadre stipend from \$3,471 to \$5,000, an increase of more than 40%
- Implementing targeted early-release time for professional learning, planning, and collaboration aligned to district and school goals
- Lowering the number of mandated staff meetings from every week to three times a month

Select Agreements That Have Been Reached

Artificial Intelligence

- Establishes clear guidelines for responsible AI use in schools to protect privacy, fairness, and student-centered relationships while also supporting teaching and learning

ASL Interpreters

- Supports educational interpreters in meeting new state certification requirements while maintaining services for deaf and hard-of-hearing students

Building Access

- Strengthens school safety through improved access procedures and a collaborative process for addressing security concerns

Paraprofessional Laptops

- Provides paraprofessionals with reliable access to technology and tools that help them support students and communicate with school teams

Personnel Files, Representation Rights, Due Process, and Arbitration

- Clarifies workplace rights and processes, supporting fairness, transparency, and accountability

Right to Return

- Increases stability for students and school communities during staffing adjustments by expanding opportunities for displaced employees to return to available positions at their previous schools

Safe School Zones and Protections

- Reinforces safe, welcoming, and inclusive schools by strengthening protections for students and staff and supporting family engagement

Time and Attendance Tracking

- Allows SPS to modernize systems to improve accuracy, efficiency, and accountability while ensuring employee impacts are addressed through bargaining

Voluntary Transfer for Paraprofessionals and SAEOP Employees

- Creates clearer opportunities for current classified employees during transfer processes

For More Information

Visit the SPS Bargaining Page:
seattleschools.org/bargaining

