

Paraprofessional-to-Teacher Pathway

What is this initiative?

The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction used ESSER funds to help pay for paraprofessional educators and substitute teachers already working in North Dakota schools to get their teaching license. Paraprofessionals perform support duties in our schools, ranging from teaching assistants and special education aides to school library technical assistants and tutors.

Why license paraprofessionals?

Because they are already familiar with the North Dakota K-12 public education, paraprofessionals are a natural choice to help address the teacher shortage in our state. Through their work at our schools, reporting directly to teachers and administrators, they have built professional relationships and proven they can help our students succeed. Compared to the average student in college-level education classes, they are much more likely to stay because they are already employed here.

What does this pay for?

This program provides scholarships for paraprofessionals to obtain their teaching degree. Many paraprofessionals already have some education credits, which allows them to “fast track” through the program.

What are the results?

Since the fall of 2020, more than 220 education professionals have completed the ESSER-funded Paraprofessional-to-Teacher Pathway. To qualify, they must already be working as paraprofessionals and substitute teachers working in North Dakota school districts. This program allows the participants to continue working in our schools while supporting their families and obtaining teaching license.