

**HB2784 (Hirschauer) & SB 2052 (Villivalam)**

**Minimum Educational Employee Salary**

**SUPPORT**

**Background**

Education support professionals are school employees who provide essential services our students need to thrive. These employees include, but are not limited to, paraeducators and classroom assistants, administrative staff, custodial employees, transportation employees, and food service providers. They keep our schools running and our students safe, healthy, and ready to learn. They are the backbone of our public schools.

**Issue**

In Illinois, the average full-time education support professional’s annual salary is $34,289 or $16.49 per hour. Many education support professionals work two or more jobs just to make ends meet. Chronic low pay for these employees is one of the main contributors to high turnover rates and staff shortages across the state. The [Illinois State Board of Education](https://www.isbe.net/unfilledpositions) is currently reporting 3,073 unfilled education support professional positions. Approximately 1,000 more unfilled positions than the state reported last year.

HB 2784/SB 2052 establishes a minimum hourly rate of $20 for the 2024-2025 school year, $21 for the 2025-2026 school year, and $22 for the 2026-2027 school year. After that, the minimum hourly rate be adjusted by the Consumer Price Index. This is the same process that is used to increase the minimum teacher salary.

A recent report from the National Education Association, indicates that education support professionals are earning less than they did 10 years ago, when adjusted for inflation. This is a troubling trend that will only continue without legislative intervention.

**Rationale for Support**

HB 2784/SB 2052 ensures education support professionals receive a living wage and encourages qualified professionals to enter and stay in the profession. Additionally, this type of legislative proposal shows that the General Assembly recognizes the invaluable work that these professionals do everyday to care for our students.