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**SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2365**

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**State of Washington**

**63rd Legislature**

**2014 Regular Session**

**By** House Appropriations Subcommittee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Bergquist, Dahlquist, Santos, Stonier, Haigh, Ryu, Reykdal, Fey, Orwall, Gregerson, Freeman, and Pollet)

READ FIRST TIME 02/11/14.

1       AN ACT Relating to paraeducator development; adding a new section  
2 to chapter 28A.410 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 28B.50 RCW;  
3 creating new sections; and providing an expiration date.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5       NEW SECTION.       **Sec. 1.**       The legislature acknowledges that  
6 paraeducators have become a significant resource to students who need  
7 additional education assistance. School districts have come to rely  
8 upon paraeducators who, for instance, provided more than half of the  
9 hours of instruction in the 2012-13 school year to students in special  
10 education, the learning assistance program, the transitional bilingual  
11 instruction program, the federal disadvantaged program, head start, and  
12 the federal limited English proficiency program.

13       The legislature further recognizes that there is significant  
14 variability in paraeducator standards. In some situations,  
15 paraeducators are expected to provide services for which they are not  
16 trained or qualified. In other situations, their knowledge, skills,  
17 and commitment to education are underused. A clear definition of the  
18 differentiated knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with

1 different jobs will ensure that students receive the education services  
2 they need and deserve.

3 Paraeducator training and professional development varies  
4 significantly dependent upon school district and program. With few  
5 exceptions, paraeducator training has been significantly reduced over  
6 the last several years due to state and school district budget cuts.

7 A carefully constructed paraeducator development program is  
8 intended to place the highest qualified paraeducators working with the  
9 highest need students. Such a program when combined with a career  
10 ladder will offer paraeducators real opportunities for upward mobility.  
11 Since paraeducators more closely reflect the cultural diversity of the  
12 student population, a development program and career ladder is likely  
13 to encourage more paraeducators to become teachers. Training teachers  
14 in how to work with a paraeducator in the classroom will increase  
15 paraeducators' ability to teach students who need additional  
16 assistance.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The superintendent of public instruction  
18 shall convene a work group to examine the use of paraeducators across  
19 school districts, including their roles and types of assignments in the  
20 classroom and the variation in paraeducator deployment in support of  
21 teachers. The work group must include paraeducators, teachers, school  
22 and school district administrators, school directors, and  
23 representatives of their respective associations. The superintendent  
24 of public instruction shall submit the findings of the work group to  
25 the professional educator standards board by August 31, 2014, to inform  
26 the work of the board and the work group established under subsection  
27 (2) of this section.

28 (2)(a) The professional educator standards board shall  
29 simultaneously convene a work group to design program specific minimum  
30 employment standards for paraeducators, professional development and  
31 education opportunities that support the standards, a paraeducator  
32 career ladder, an articulated pathway for teacher preparation and  
33 certification, and teacher professional development on how to maximize  
34 the use of paraeducators in the classroom.

35 (b) The work group convened by the professional educator standards  
36 board must include representatives of:

1 (i) The professional educator standards board; the Green River  
2 Community College center of excellence for careers in education;  
3 educational service districts; community and technical college  
4 paraeducator apprenticeship and certificate programs; colleges of  
5 education; teacher, paraeducator, principal, school director, and  
6 administrator associations; career and technical education; special  
7 education parents and advocacy organizations; community-based  
8 organizations representing immigrant and refugee communities and  
9 communities of color; the educational opportunity gap oversight and  
10 accountability committee; and the office of the superintendent of  
11 public instruction; and

12 (ii) A maximum of two paraeducators from each program for which  
13 specific minimum employment standards will be designed.

14 (3) By January 10, 2015, the work group convened by the  
15 professional educator standards board shall submit a report to the  
16 education committees of the legislature that recommends:

17 (a) Appropriate minimum employment standards and professional  
18 development opportunities for paraeducators who work in:

19 (i) English language learner programs, transitional bilingual  
20 instruction programs, and federal limited English proficiency programs;  
21 and

22 (ii) The learning assistance program and federal disadvantaged  
23 program;

24 (b) A career ladder that encourages paraeducators to pursue  
25 advanced education and professional development as well as increased  
26 instructional ability and responsibility;

27 (c) An articulated pathway for teacher preparation that includes:

28 (i) Paraeducator certificate and apprenticeship programs that offer  
29 course credits that apply to transferrable associate degrees and are  
30 aligned with the standards and competencies for teachers adopted by the  
31 professional educator standards board;

32 (ii) Associate degree programs that build on and do not duplicate  
33 the courses and competencies of paraeducator certificate programs,  
34 incorporate field experiences, are aligned with the standards and  
35 competencies for teachers adopted by the professional educator  
36 standards board, and are transferrable to bachelor's degree in  
37 education programs and teacher certification programs;

1 (iii) Bachelor's degree programs that lead to teacher certification  
2 that build on and do not duplicate the courses and competencies of  
3 transferrable associate degrees;

4 (iv) Incorporation of the standards for cultural competence  
5 developed by the professional educator standards board under RCW  
6 28A.410.270 throughout the courses and curriculum of the pathway,  
7 particularly focusing on multicultural education and principles of  
8 language acquisition; and

9 (v) A comparison of the current status of pathways for teacher  
10 certification to the elements of the articulated pathway, highlighting  
11 gaps and recommending strategies to address the gaps;

12 (d) Professional development for certificated employees that  
13 focuses on maximizing the success of paraeducators in the classroom.

14 (4) The work group convened by the professional educator standards  
15 board must submit a final report of its recommendations to the  
16 education committees of the legislature by January 10, 2016,  
17 concerning:

18 (a) Minimum employment standards for basic education and special  
19 education paraeducators;

20 (b) Aligning training requirements of paraeducators with existing  
21 training and certification standards for home care aides with the goal  
22 of creating a career ladder between the two occupations; and

23 (c) Appropriate professional development and training to help  
24 paraeducators meet the employment standards.

25 (5) This section expires June 30, 2016.

26 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.410  
27 RCW to read as follows:

28 The professional educator standards board and the state board for  
29 community and technical colleges may exercise their respective  
30 authorities regarding program approval to implement the articulated  
31 pathway for teacher preparation and certification recommended pursuant  
32 to section 2, chapter . . ., Laws of 2014 (section 2 of this act) in  
33 approved teacher certification programs and certificate and degree  
34 programs offered by community and technical colleges.

35 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.50 RCW  
36 to read as follows:

1       Beginning with the 2015-16 academic year, any community or  
2 technical college that offers an apprenticeship program or certificate  
3 program for paraeducators must provide candidates the opportunity to  
4 earn transferrable course credits within the program. The programs  
5 must also incorporate the standards for cultural competence, including  
6 multicultural education and principles of language acquisition,  
7 developed by the professional educator standards board under RCW  
8 28A.410.270.

9       NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** If specific funding for the purposes of this  
10 act, referencing this act by bill or chapter number, is not provided by  
11 June 30, 2014, in the omnibus appropriations act, this act is null and  
12 void.

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