

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 6129

PARTIAL VETO C 136 L 14 Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning paraeducator development.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Hill, McAuliffe, Tom, Dammeier, Hobbs, Litzow, Baumgartner and Mullet).

Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education
Senate Committee on Ways & Means
House Committee on Education
House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Education

Background: Paraeducators are classified staff in a school who perform many functions, including providing instructional assistance and tutoring under the supervision of a teacher. There are no state requirements regarding the educational qualifications of paraeducators, although the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) has developed recommended core competencies and guidelines for paraeducators.

Under the federal No Child Left Behind Act, paraeducators who provide instruction and are paid in whole or in part by federal Title I funds must meet a federal definition of highly qualified. Since 2006 Title I paraeducators must have a high school diploma or equivalent, and one of the three of the following:

- have completed two years of study at an institution of higher education;
- have earned an Associate's Degree or higher; or
- demonstrate competency through an approved formal assessment.

In Washington, there are multiple options for the formal assessment, including an online assessment administered by the Educational Testing Service; a portfolio that is graded by a regional review panel; a school district assessment approved by OSPI; or an approved paraeducator apprenticeship program.

Paraeducators who are not associated with federal Title I are not required to meet these qualifications, although many districts encourage it to allow for flexibility in staffing.

Summary: Paraeducator Workgroup. The Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) must convene a workgroup to design program specific minimum employment standards for paraeducators, professional development and education opportunities that support the

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

standards, a paraeducator career ladder, an articulated pathway for teacher preparation and certification, and teacher professional development on how to maximize the use of paraeducators in the classroom.

The workgroup must include representatives from the following:

- PESB;
- the Green River Community College Center of Excellence for Careers in Education;
- Educational Service Districts;
- community and technical college paraeducator apprenticeship and certificate programs;
- colleges of education;
- teacher, paraeducator, principal, and administrator associations;
- career and technical education;
- special education parents and advocacy organizations;
- community-based organizations representing immigrant and refugee communities;
- community-based organizations representing communities of color;
- the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee; and
- OSPI.

By January 10, 2015, the workgroup must submit a report to the Legislature recommending:

- appropriate minimum employment standards and professional development opportunities for paraeducators who work in English language learner programs, transitional bilingual instruction programs, federal limited English proficiency programs, the Learning Assistance Program, and the Federal Disadvantaged Program;
- a career ladder that encourages paraeducators to pursue advanced education and professional development; and
- professional development for certificated employees that focuses on maximizing the success of paraeducators in the classroom.

The workgroup must also report on proposals for an articulated pathway for teacher preparation including the following:

- paraeducator certificate and apprenticeship programs that offer course credits that apply to transferrable associate degree programs and are aligned with the standards and competencies adopted by PESB;
- associate degree programs that build upon and do not duplicate the courses and competencies of paraeducator certificate programs, incorporate field experiences, are aligned with the standards and competencies for teachers adopted by PESB, and are transferrable to bachelor's degree in education programs and teacher certification programs;
- bachelor's degree programs that lead to teacher certification that build upon and do not duplicate the courses and competencies of transferrable associate degrees;
- incorporation of the standards for cultural competence developed by PESB and codified at RCW 28A.410.270 throughout the courses and curriculum of the pathway, particularly focusing on multicultural education and principles of language acquisition; and
- comparing the current status of pathways for teacher certification to the elements of the articulated pathway, highlighting gaps and recommending strategies to address those gaps.

The workgroup must submit a final report to the education committees of the Legislature by January 10, 2016, detailing minimum employment standards for basic education and special education paraeducators and appropriate professional development and training to help paraeducators meet the employment standards.

The section creating the workgroup expires June 30, 2016.

Implementation of Articulated Pathway. PESB and the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) are authorized to implement the articulated pathway regarding teacher preparation and certification recommended by the workgroup in approved teacher certification programs and certificate and degree programs offered by community and technical colleges.

Transferability of Credit. Beginning in the 2015-16 academic year, any community or technical college that offers an apprenticeship program or certificate program for paraeducators must provide candidates the opportunity to earn transferrable course credits within the program. The programs must also incorporate the standards for cultural competence, including multicultural education and principles of language acquisition, developed by PESB and codified at RCW 28A.410.270.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	48	0	
House	92	5	(House amended)
Senate			(Senate refused to concur/ asked House to recede)
House	92	6	House receded

Effective: June 12, 2014

Partial Veto Summary: The Governor vetoed intent language regarding the various experiences of current school paraeducators that was not necessary to implement or interpret the substantive provisions of the act.