
ENGROSSED SECOND SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5179

State of Washington

64th Legislature

2015 Regular Session

By Senate Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Hill, McAuliffe, Litzow, Mullet, Hobbs, and Dammeier)

READ FIRST TIME 02/13/15.

1 AN ACT Relating to paraeducators; amending RCW 28A.630.400 and
2 28B.50.891; adding a new section to chapter 28A.410 RCW; and creating
3 new sections.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** Paraeducators provide the majority of
6 instruction in programs designed by the legislature to reduce the
7 opportunity gap. By setting common statewide standards, training, and
8 career development for paraeducators, as well as training for
9 teachers and principals who have paraeducators in their classroom,
10 students in these programs have a better chance of succeeding in the
11 classroom.

12 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.410
13 RCW to read as follows:

14 (1) Effective September 1, 2015, the minimum employment standards
15 for a paraeducator who works in the learning assistance program, the
16 federal disadvantaged program, and English language learner programs
17 shall be as provided in this subsection. The paraeducator must:

18 (a) Be at least eighteen years of age, hold a high school diploma
19 or its equivalent, and have received a passing grade on the education
20 testing service paraeducator assessment; or

1 (b) Hold an associate of arts degree; or

2 (c) Have earned seventy-two quarter credits or forty-eight
3 semester credits at an institution of higher education.

4 (2)(a) By September 1, 2015, members of the paraeducator board
5 must be appointed. The board shall be composed of one paraeducator,
6 one teacher, one principal, one parent whose child receives
7 instructional support from a paraeducator, one representative of a
8 community or technical college, and one representative of a four-year
9 institution of higher education as defined in RCW 28B.10.016.

10 (b) Appointments to the board shall be made as follows:

11 (i) The superintendent of public instruction shall appoint the
12 paraeducator, the teacher, and the principal;

13 (ii) The Washington state parent teacher association shall
14 appoint the parent whose child receives instructional support from a
15 paraeducator;

16 (iii) The state board for community and technical colleges shall
17 appoint the representative of a community or technical college; and

18 (iv) The student achievement council shall appoint the
19 representative of an institution of higher education.

20 (c) A representative from the professional educator standards
21 board shall be the nonvoting facilitator of the board.

22 (d) The professional educator standards board shall be the
23 administrator of the board.

24 (3) Beginning September 1, 2015, the paraeducator board must
25 administer policies and rules for the preparation and certification
26 of paraeducators who work in the learning assistance program, the
27 federal disadvantaged program, or the English language learners
28 program, the paraeducator career ladder, or the pathway to teacher
29 certification.

30 (4)(a) During the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years, grants, as
31 funded by the legislature, shall be distributed by the board to a
32 diverse set of school districts that volunteer to field test the
33 implementation of the paraeducator certification and English language
34 learner endorsement.

35 (b) Effective September 1, 2017, all school districts must begin
36 implementing the paraeducator certification for paraeducators working
37 in the programs in the learning assistance program, the federal
38 disadvantaged program, or the English language learner
39 program. Paraeducators have three years to acquire their
40 certification.

1 (c) The certification standards shall be adopted by the board and
2 must include:

3 (i) Supporting instructional opportunities;

4 (ii) Demonstrating professionalism and ethical practices;

5 (iii) Supporting a positive and safe learning environment;

6 (iv) Communicating effectively and participating in the team
7 process; and

8 (v) Demonstrating cultural competency aligned with standards
9 developed by the professional educator standards board under RCW
10 28A.410.270.

11 (d) The board shall develop a practicum and must ensure that
12 paraeducators have multiple methods to access training necessary to
13 become certificated.

14 (e) The board has the authority to establish certification fees
15 paid by paraeducators.

16 (f) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall
17 be provided the necessary funds to administer the paraeducator
18 certificates and endorsements.

19 (5) Beginning September 1, 2017, all paraeducators working in
20 English language learning programs have three years to acquire their
21 endorsement.

22 (a) The board may adopt rules to implement the endorsement and
23 training standards.

24 (b) The board shall ensure that training is made available to
25 paraeducators in a variety of means that will limit cost and improve
26 access.

27 (6) Paraeducators must renew their certificate or necessary
28 endorsements every five years. In order to renew the certificate or
29 endorsement, they must complete the clock hours determined by the
30 board. The board may develop the training modules as well as ensure
31 that the clock hour training is made available to paraeducators in a
32 variety of means that will limit cost and improve access.

33 (7) The professional educator standards board must design and
34 implement a training program for teachers and principals as it
35 relates to their role working with paraeducators. Teacher training
36 must include how to direct a paraeducator working with students in
37 the paraeducator's classroom. Principal training must include how to
38 supervise and evaluate paraeducators.

1 (8)(a) The board shall develop the rules for an advanced
2 paraeducator endorsement, training modules, and renewal process that
3 must be implemented by September 1, 2017.

4 (b) Some responsibilities of the advanced paraeducator position
5 are mentoring or coaching other paraeducators, assisting in highly
6 impacted classrooms, short-term teacher substitution, and assistance
7 in specific specialized instruction support or technology
8 applications.

9 (c) The rules must include provisions regarding the ability of a
10 person holding an advanced paraeducator endorsement that will qualify
11 the paraeducator to replace a teacher in short absence situations in
12 those districts that are experiencing difficulty finding substitute
13 teachers.

14 (9) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this
15 section.

16 (a) "Board" means the paraeducator board.

17 (b) "English language learner programs" or "English language
18 learner endorsement" refers to the English language learners program,
19 the transitional bilingual instruction program, and the federal
20 limited English proficiency program.

21 (c) "Paraeducator" means a school district employee who works
22 under the supervision of a certificated or licensed staff member to
23 support and assist in providing instructional services to students
24 and their families.

25 (10) This section is subject to the availability of amounts
26 specifically appropriated for this specific purpose.

27 **Sec. 3.** RCW 28A.630.400 and 2011 1st sp.s. c 11 s 132 are each
28 amended to read as follows:

29 (1) The professional educator standards board and the state board
30 for community and technical colleges, in consultation with the
31 superintendent of public instruction, the state apprenticeship
32 training council, and community colleges, shall adopt rules as
33 necessary under chapter 34.05 RCW to implement the paraeducator
34 associate of arts degree.

35 (2) As used in this section, a "paraeducator" is an individual
36 who has completed an associate of arts degree for a paraeducator. The
37 paraeducator may be hired by a school district to assist certificated
38 instructional staff in the direct instruction of children in small
39 and large groups, individualized instruction, testing of children,

1 recordkeeping, and preparation of materials. The paraeducator shall
2 work under the direction of instructional certificated staff.

3 (3)(a) If amounts are not appropriated specifically for the
4 purpose of (b) of this subsection, the training program for a
5 paraeducator associate of arts degree shall include, but is not
6 limited to, the general requirements for receipt of an associate of
7 arts degree and training in the areas of introduction to childhood
8 education, orientation to children with disabilities, fundamentals of
9 childhood education, creative activities for children, instructional
10 materials for children, fine art experiences for children, the
11 psychology of learning, introduction to education, child health and
12 safety, child development and guidance, first aid, and a practicum in
13 a school setting.

14 (b) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this
15 specific purpose, the training program for a paraeducator associate
16 of arts degree shall include, but is not limited to, the general
17 requirements for receipt of an associate of arts degree and training
18 in the adopted state standards for paraeducators, which include core
19 knowledge and skill competencies in (i) supporting instructional
20 opportunities, (ii) demonstrating professional and ethical practices,
21 (iii) supporting a positive and safe learning environment, (iv)
22 communicating effectively and participating in the team process, and
23 (v) demonstrating cultural competency aligned with standards
24 developed by the professional educator standards board under RCW
25 28A.410.270.

26 (4) Consideration shall be given to transferability of credit
27 earned in this program to teacher preparation programs at colleges
28 and universities.

29 **Sec. 4.** RCW 28B.50.891 and 2014 c 136 s 4 are each amended to
30 read as follows:

31 Beginning with the 2015-16 academic year, any community or
32 technical college that offers an apprenticeship program or
33 certificate program for paraeducators must provide candidates the
34 opportunity to earn transferrable course credits within the program.
35 The programs must also incorporate the standards for cultural
36 competence, including multicultural education and principles of
37 language acquisition, developed by the professional educator
38 standards board under RCW 28A.410.270. Subject to the availability of
39 amounts specifically appropriated for this specific purpose, the

1 programs must also include core knowledge and skill competencies in:
2 Supporting instructional opportunities, demonstrating professional
3 and ethical practices, supporting a positive and safe learning
4 environment, and communicating effectively and participating in the
5 team process.

6 NEW SECTION. Sec. 5. (1) Subject to the availability of amounts
7 appropriated for this specific purpose, the Washington state
8 institute for public policy shall conduct a study on the
9 effectiveness of paraeducators in improving student outcomes in
10 Washington state. The study shall examine variation in the use of
11 paraeducators across schools and districts and analyze whether and
12 the extent that any differences in students' academic progress can be
13 attributed to the use of paraeducators. The office of the
14 superintendent of public instruction and the education data center
15 shall provide the data necessary to conduct the analysis. The study
16 must also include a review of the national research literature on the
17 effectiveness of paraeducators in improving student outcomes.

18 (2) The institute shall submit a final report to the relevant
19 committees of the legislature by December 15, 2016.

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