

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6388

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Early Learning & K-12 Education, January 30, 2018

Title: An act relating to paraeducators.

Brief Description: Concerning paraeducators.

Sponsors: Senators Mullet and Rivers.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/25/18, 1/30/18 [DPS-WM].

Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill

- Creates a timeline for paraeducators to meet certain minimum employment standards.
- Specifies that experienced paraeducators hired before or during the 2017-18 school year must meet employment standards by the 2019-20 school year.
- Specifies that new paraeducators must meet employment standards by the 2018-19 school year.
- Revises requirements for participation in the Pipeline for Paraeducators Conditional Scholarship Program.
- Requires school districts to provide fundamental paraeducator training courses to paraeducators in school years for which state funding is appropriated.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6388 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Wellman, Chair; Rolfes, Vice Chair; Zeiger, Ranking Member; Billig, Hawkins, Hunt, Mullet, Padden, Pedersen and Rivers.

Staff: Benjamin Omdal (786-7442)

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.

Background: Paraeducators provide instructional services to students while working under the direct supervision of instructional certificated staff. These services can include direct instruction of children in small and large groups, individualized instruction, testing of children, recordkeeping, and preparation of materials. Paraeducators are categorized under Washington law as classified instructional employees.

Paraeducator Requirements. Requirements for paraeducators are set by state and federal law. In addition, school districts may apply additional requirements. In 2017, the Legislature passed ESHB 1115, which created new standards for paraeducator certification in Washington State. Beginning on September 1, 2018, paraeducators must be at least 18 years of age, and:

- receive a passing grade on the education testing service paraeducator assessment; or
- hold an associates of arts degree; or
- have earned 72 quarter credits or 48 semester credits at an institution of higher learning; or
- completed a registered apprenticeship program.

Paraeducators may also receive specialized certificates, as set by the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB).

Beginning September 1, 2019, school districts must provide a four-day fundamental course of study on state standards of practice to paraeducators who have not completed the course. School districts must use best efforts to provide the course before paraeducators begin work.

Paraeducator Board. EHB 1115 also created the nine-member Paraeducator Board, administered by PESB. The Paraeducator Board has powers and duties to, among other things, adopt minimum employment requirements for paraeducators and paraeducator standards of practice, establish requirements and policies for paraeducator certificates, and approve certification courses.

Pipeline for Paraeducators Conditional Scholarship. The Pipeline for Paraeducators Conditional Scholarship program provides scholarships for individuals with at least three years of student interaction as a classified employee. The scholarship is limited to paraeducators without a college degree, with the expectation that candidates will complete their associates degree in two years or less and become eligible for an endorsement in a subject matter shortage area.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (First Substitute): Effective Dates for Paraeducator Qualifications. Paraeducators working for a district before or during the 2017-18 school year must meet minimum employment requirements by the date of hire for the 2019-20 school year. Persons that have not previously worked as a paraeducator for a district must meet these requirements by the date of hire for the 2018-19 school year or any subsequent school year.

Fundamental Course of Study. For paraeducators hired for the 2018-19 school year, school districts must provide the fundamental course of study for paraeducators by September 1,

2020. For those hired for the 2019-20 school year, districts must provide the course by September 1, 2021. In addition, school districts must implement fundamental course of study requirements only in school years for which state funding is specifically appropriated for this purpose.

Pipeline for Paraeducators Conditional Scholarship. Eligibility requirements are changed to paraeducators without a college degree who have experience as defined by the PESB. In addition, participants must make satisfactory progress toward completion of an associate of arts degree with an educational plan that includes enrollment in an alternative route teacher certification program.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION COMMITTEE (First Substitute):

- Removes an appropriation for the purposes of the bill.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Proposed Substitute: *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: New deadlines will help individuals be more prepared for paraeducator assessments. The new timeline created will allow all districts to provide required professional development and to better train paraeducators. Scholarship changes will allow more paraeducators to become teachers.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Mark Mullet, Prime Sponsor; Cathy Smith, Professional Educator Standards Board, Paraeducator Board; Doug Nelson, Public School Employee, Service Employees International Union 1948; Andy Jensen, Washington State PTA; Cindy Rockholt, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.