

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1479

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### As Reported by House Committee On: Education

**Title:** An act relating to building capacity within the educator workforce to improve student mental health and well-being.

**Brief Description:** Building capacity within the educator workforce to improve student mental health and well-being.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Senn, Ortiz-Self, Harris, Dolan, Orwall, Stonier, Cody, Riccelli, Slatter, Callan, Fey, Eslick, Kilduff, Bergquist, Doglio, Paul, Reeves, Pollet, Hudgins, Davis, Leavitt, Macri and Steele.

#### **Brief History:**

##### **Committee Activity:**

Education: 2/5/19, 2/19/19 [DPS].

#### **Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Directs the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) and the Paraeducator Board to incorporate social emotional learning standards, benchmarks, and specified related competencies into standards for principals, teachers, and paraeducators.
- Directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to create and publish on its website an inventory of resources available for professional development of school district staff on specified topics.
- Requires school districts to use one of the state funded professional learning days to train staff on specified topics, every other school year.
- Directs the PESB to review preparation programs to assess whether and to what extent the programs are meeting knowledge, skills, and performance standards, and publish the results on its website.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass.  
Signed by 19 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Dolan, Vice Chair; Paul, Vice Chair;

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Steele, Ranking Minority Member; McCaslin, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Volz, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Caldier, Callan, Corry, Harris, Kilduff, Kraft, Ortiz-Self, Rude, Stonier, Thai, Valdez and Ybarra.

**Staff:** Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

**Background:**

Educator and Paraeducator Standards. Each educator role, such as teacher, administrator, school nurse, and school counselor, has a different set of knowledge and skills unique to that role. The Professional Educator Standards Board requires that educator preparation programs prepare candidates to meet certain knowledge, skill, and performance standards.

The Paraeducator Board was created in 2017 to adopt minimum employment standards for paraeducators and paraeducator standards of practice. Beginning September 1, 2019, when funding is provided by the state, all school districts must provide courses that meet the standards of practice to paraeducators working in school districts. Paraeducators who complete the courses receive a general paraeducator certificate.

Social Emotional Learning. Social emotional learning (SEL) is the process of developing and applying the skills, attitudes, behavior, and knowledge that afford individuals the opportunity to identify and regulate emotions and behaviors, form meaningful relationships, and make responsible decisions.

The 2015 Operating Budget directed the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to convene a work group to recommend comprehensive benchmarks for developmentally appropriate interpersonal and decision-making knowledge and skills of SEL for kindergarten through twelfth grade. The 2017 Operating Budget directed the OSPI to continue this work group to: identify and articulate grade-level developmental indicators for each of the SEL benchmarks; solicit feedback from stakeholders; and develop a model of best practices or guidance for schools on implementing the benchmarks and indicators. The work group must submit recommendations by June 30, 2019.

In 2016 the OSPI designed SEL professional learning modules to develop educators, administrators, other professionals, and students' families knowledge of SEL and integrating it in classrooms.

Plans Related to Emotional or Behavioral Distress in Students. School districts are required to have a plan for recognition, initial screening, and response to emotional or behavioral distress in students, including but not limited to indicators of possible substance abuse, violence, youth suicide, and sexual abuse. School districts must annually provide the plan to all district staff. The plan must include certain minimum components related to staff trainings, partnership development, communicating with students families, and district and staff response to certain situations. The OSPI developed a model plan for use by school districts that incorporates research-based best practices.

Professional Learning. Professional learning is a comprehensive, sustained, job-embedded, and collaborative approach to improving educators' effectiveness in raising student

achievement. State funding for professional learning days for certificated instructional staff must be provided to school districts as follows: one professional learning day in the 2018-19 school year; two professional learning days in the 2019-20 school year; and three professional learning days in the 2020-21 school year.

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### **Summary of Substitute Bill:**

Educator and Paraeducator Standards. By January 1, 2020, in order to ensure that teachers, principals, and paraeducators can recognize signs of emotional or behavioral distress in students and appropriately refer students for assistance and support:

- the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) must incorporate the social emotional learning (SEL) standards and benchmarks into teacher and principal knowledge, skill, and performance standards; and
- the Paraeducator Board must incorporate the SEL standards and benchmarks into the standards of practice for paraeducators.

In incorporating the SEL standards and benchmarks, the PESB and the Paraeducator Board must include related competencies, such as trauma-informed practices, consideration of adverse childhood experiences, mental health literacy, antibullying strategies, and culturally sustaining practices.

The PESB must periodically review approved preparation programs to assess whether and to what extent the programs are meeting knowledge, skill, and performance standards, and publish on its website the results of the review in a format that facilitates program comparison.

Inventory of Resources. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction must create and publish on its website an inventory of resources available for professional development of school district staff on the following topics: SEL, trauma-informed practices, recognition and response to emotional or behavioral distress, consideration of adverse childhood experiences, mental health literacy, antibullying strategies, and culturally sustaining practices.

Professional Learning. Beginning in the 2020-21 school year, and every other school year thereafter, school districts must use one of the state funded professional learning days to train school district staff in SEL, trauma-informed practices, using the model plan related to recognition and response to emotional or behavioral distress, consideration of adverse childhood experiences, mental health literacy, antibullying strategies, and culturally sustaining practices.

### **Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

The substitute bill replaces the substantive provisions of the original bill with provisions that have the following effect:

- directs the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) and the Paraeducator Board to, by January 1, 2020, incorporate social emotional learning standards,

- benchmarks, and specified related competencies into standards for principals, teachers, and paraeducators;
- directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to create and publish on its website an inventory of resources available for professional development of school district staff on specified topics;
  - requires, beginning in the 2020-21 school year, and every other school year thereafter, school districts to use one of the state funded professional learning days to train staff on specified topics; and
  - directs the PESB to review preparation programs to assess whether and to what extent the programs are meeting knowledge, skills, and performance standards, and publish the results on its website.
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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Preliminary fiscal note available. New fiscal note requested on February 20, 2019.

**Effective Date of Substitute Bill:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) This bill is meant to help boost mental health training for educators. There is a short term, immediate step of a professional development day built around a variety of mental health topics that schools might need and want to provide. Mid-tier would be access through the University of Washington Bothell program to provide mental health training for educators already in the field. Longer term, working with the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) on creating a microcredential for educators who want more robust training on mental health and even more support for themselves and their students. Other bills are related to school safety and school climate issues.

Social emotional learning (SEL) is the key to the success of our students. School nurses are an integral part to delivering health services and should be added to the work group. The Washington Association of Colleges for Teacher Education would be able to pick the most representative member to contribute to the work group and communicate back to their colleagues the results of the work group. There is a lot of work going on in colleges of education on SEL, but the work is not consistent. This bill will develop a common language and framework. The bill should not narrow down to one set of college courses to develop as professional education because lots of colleges and universities are creating courses on these topics.

Educators are in a unique position to notice the emotional behavioral changes in their students' and those changes can impact students ability to learn, overall motivation, and academic performance. When left unaddressed, those behavioral changes can escalate to the point of a serious mental health concerns, such as toxic stress. Building administrators must have the skills to lead safe, healthy, and inclusive school climate work. Mental health

training for educators is crucial. The PESB has been piloting a SEL microcredential, and microcredentials, and has seen these as an effective way to demonstrate competency, both for in-service and pre-service teachers.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) Educational staff associates are needed to address student mental health issues because they have specific training in this topic. General education teachers should be trained to quickly recognize stress and get students to the proper person for help. It is appropriate for the PESB to examine possible standards, but they have to be careful about what will be added to the preparation programs. There is only a limited time in these programs.

Microcredentials, as a product, are relatively new to the education world, can be quite expensive to the user, and the level of quality varies. It will be interesting to see the results of the PESB's microcredential pilot. Preparation programs might have concerns about adding microcredentials to their programs and what this will cost to the student. A license lets educators work. There are concerns about adding requirements to licenses. If this training is important, then the state needs to provide the time for educators to receive the training.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Representative Senn, prime sponsor; Melissa Johnson, School Nurse Organization of Washington; Bob Cooper, Washington Association of Colleges for Teacher Education; Sarah Butcher; Mona Johnson, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; and Alex Manuel, Professional Educator Standards Board.

(Other) Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.