

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 1015

C 19 L 23
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning minimum employment requirements for paraeducators.

Sponsors: House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Santos, Ybarra, Bergquist, Stonier, Leavitt, Rude, Jacobsen, Simmons, Reed, Lekanoff, Goodman, Pollet, Ortiz-Self, Callan, Doglio, Reeves, Tharinger, Wylie, Paul, Thai, Springer and Ormsby; by request of Professional Educator Standards Board).

House Committee on Education
Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education

Background:

Paraeducator Minimum Employment Requirements.

A paraeducator is a classified public school or school district employee who works under the supervision of a certificated or licensed staff member to support and assist in providing instructional and other services to students and their families. Paraeducators are also known as paraprofessionals, education assistants, and instructional assistants.

Federal law generally requires that paraeducators who work in programs supported by certain federal funds meet the following employment requirements:

1. have a high school diploma or its equivalent; and
2. either:
 - a. have completed at least two years of study at an institution of higher education;
 - b. hold an associate's or higher degree; or
 - c. meet a rigorous standard of quality, and can demonstrate, through a formal state or local academic assessment, knowledge of, and the ability to assist in instructing in reading, writing, and mathematics.

State law requires that all paraeducators meet the following employment requirements:

1. be at least 18 years of age;
2. have a high school diploma or its equivalent; and

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3. either:

- a. have earned 72 quarter credits or 48 semester credits at an institution of higher education;
- b. hold an Associate of Arts degree;
- c. have received a passing grade on the Education Testing Service (ETS) paraeducator assessment; or
- d. have completed a registered apprenticeship program.

Education Testing Service Paraeducator Assessment.

The private organization ETS offers a paraeducator assessment, called the ETS ParaPro Assessment. According to the ETS, the assessment was developed in response to federal law that allows paraeducators to meet minimum employment requirements by demonstrating knowledge of, and the ability to assist in, the instruction of reading, writing, and mathematics.

The assessment is available online at an individual's home or on a computer at certain test centers. Both options are monitored by a human proctor and are available during business hours. Test-takers have 2.5 hours to finish 90 multiple-choice questions.

Paraeducator Board.

The Paraeducator Board is a statutorily created nine-member board whose duties include establishing requirements related to the paraeducator standards of practice, mandatory paraeducator certificates, and optional paraeducator certificates.

Summary:

The Paraeducator Board must adopt one or more assessments that meet a rigorous standard of quality and can be used to demonstrate knowledge of, and the ability to assist in, instruction in reading, writing, and mathematics, as well as set a passing score for each assessment adopted. The Paraeducator Board may develop assessments to meet this requirement.

Minimum employment requirements for paraeducators are revised so that a paraeducator must have received a passing score on one of the assessments approved by the Paraeducator Board, rather than have received a passing grade on the Education Testing Service paraeducator assessment.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	97	0
Senate	49	0

Effective: July 23, 2023