

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## EHB 1942

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**As Passed House:**  
February 12, 2022

**Title:** An act relating to the provision of the paraeducator fundamental course of study.

**Brief Description:** Concerning the provision of the paraeducator fundamental course of study.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Donaghy, Stonier, Santos, Simmons, Riccelli, Wicks, Ormsby and Kloba.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Education: 1/28/22, 2/1/22 [DP].

**Floor Activity:**

Passed House: 2/12/22, 98-0.

**Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill**

- Changes the deadlines and in-person requirements for providing the paraeducator fundamental course of study.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Dolan, Vice Chair; Ybarra, Ranking Minority Member; Walsh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Berg, Bergquist, Callan, McCaslin, McEntire, Ortiz-Self, Rude, Steele and Stonier.

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

**Background:**

The paraeducator fundamental course of study is a four-day course on the state paraeducator

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standards of practice. School districts must provide the fundamental course of study to paraeducators who have not completed the course, either in the district or in another district within the state.

At least one day of the fundamental course of study must be provided in person. School districts must use best efforts to provide the course before the paraeducator begins to work with students and their families.

Subject to funding limitations described below, school districts must provide the four-day fundamental course of study by the following deadlines:

- For paraeducators hired on or before September 1: the first two days of the course must be provided by September 30 of that year, and the second two days of the course must be provided within six months of the date of hire.
- For paraeducators hired after September 1:
  - in districts with 10,000 or more students: the first two days of the course must be provided within four months of the date of hire, and the second two days of the course must be provided within six months of the date of hire or by September 1 of the following year, whichever is sooner; and
  - in districts with fewer than 10,000 students: the entire course must be provided by September 1 of the following year.

School districts are only required to provide to paraeducators the number of days of the fundamental course of study for which state funding is specifically provided. Since the 2019-20 school year, the state has appropriated funding for school districts to provide two days of the fundamental course of study each year.

### **Summary of Engrossed Bill:**

At least two days of the four-day fundamental course of study must be provided in person and up to two days of the fundamental course of study may be provided as synchronous online instruction; although, school districts are encouraged to provide the entire four-day fundamental course of study in person.

Subject to the funding limitations, school districts must provide the four-day fundamental course of study by the following deadlines:

- the first day of the course must be provided within 30 days of a paraeducator's date of hire; however, a school district that has a particular challenge or hardship meeting this deadline for a paraeducator hired after September 1 must provide the first day of the course within 60 days of the paraeducator's date of hire;
- the second day of the course must be provided within six months of a paraeducator's date of hire; and
- the third and fourth days of the course must be provided within one year of a paraeducator's date of hire; although, school districts are encouraged to provide the third and fourth days of the course within six months of a paraeducator's date of hire.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) Paraeducators are an integral part of the education system. The paraeducator training program was designed to ensure uniform standards across state. Surveys of paraeducators who complete this program indicate that they learn most from in-person training days. If people are not supported in their jobs, they might leave.

The bill provides school districts with more time to provide professional development to paraeducators who are hired at any point during the school year, which results in the greatest benefit to their learning and skill building for the students they serve. Allowing up to two days of the fundamental course of study to be provided as synchronous online instruction is good. Professional development should be provided by school districts to paraeducators in a smooth and timely manner. The state has a responsibility to give each child the best education possible. For the state, its economy, and the sake of every student, this bill is necessary.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) The 30-day deadline will impose a continuing challenge for school districts, especially during the pandemic and because paraeducators are hired on a rolling basis. Some paraeducators are hired and trained before the school year begins. These paraeducators are often trained at a new staff orientation in August. Other paraeducators are hired during the school year. Some of these paraeducators may be trained by an educational service district. Inevitably some paraeducators will miss the offered trainings. Under current law, these paraeducators can attend the next staff training and still comply by September 1.

If, instead, one day of the training must be provided within the first 30 days of hire, there will be instances where school districts are required to offer trainings monthly and possibly to only one paraeducator at a time, which is not efficient. In addition, it will result in paraeducators being pulled from their classrooms at a time when there are substitute shortages. Allowing more time for the training to be completed allows school districts to provide the training on conference and early release days when there won't be a negative impact to classroom learning and supervision. Changing the deadline to 60 or 90 days

would allow greater flexibility for districts to structure training while balancing workforce shortage issues.

The bill says that all four days of training must be provided to paraeducators in the first six months, but in practice school districts are only required to provide the number of days that are funded by the state and that has been two days per year. Requiring four days of in-person training, while only allowing for two days to be provided synchronously online, will negatively impact paraeducators in rural and small school districts that already face challenges providing in-person trainings. The bill should encourage offering training in-person, while allowing flexibility for asynchronous and online synchronous options.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Representative Brandy Donaghy, prime sponsor; and Rick Chisa, Public School Employees of Washington.

(Other) Liz Campeau, Walla Walla Public Schools; and Jack Busbee, Professional Educator Standards Board.

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