
Education Committee

HB 1015

Brief Description: Concerning minimum employment requirements for paraeducators.

Sponsors: 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.

<p>Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revises minimum employment requirements for paraeducators.
--

Hearing Date: 1/17/23

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

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

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

- 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. are at least 18 years of age;
2. have a high school diploma or its equivalent; and
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 paraeducator assessment; or
 - d. have completed a registered apprenticeship program.

Education Testing Service Paraeducator Assessment.

The private organization Education Testing Service (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 so only available during specified business hours. Test-takers have 2.5 hours to finish 90 multiple-choice questions.

Paraeducator Board.

The Paraeducator Board is a statutorily created 9-member board whose duties include establishment of requirements related to the paraeducator standards of practice, mandatory paraeducator certificates, and optional paraeducator certificates.

Summary of Bill:

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

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.