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**SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1277**

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**State of Washington**

**68th Legislature**

**2023 Regular Session**

**By** House Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Donaghy, Harris, Slatter, Kloba, Reeves, Reed, Ormsby, and Pollet; by request of Professional Educator Standards Board)

READ FIRST TIME 01/30/23.

1 AN ACT Relating to improving the consistency and quality of the  
2 implementation of the fundamental course of study for paraeducators;  
3 amending RCW 28A.413.060; adding a new section to chapter 28A.413  
4 RCW; and creating a new section.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature acknowledges that it  
7 created the paraeducator board to adopt standards of practice and  
8 required school districts to provide to paraeducators a four-day  
9 fundamental course of study on the standards to paraeducators. The  
10 legislature finds that it required that at least one day of the  
11 fundamental course of study be provided in person due to the benefits  
12 of face-to-face instruction, including that instructors can confirm  
13 the participant's application of learning objectives.

14 (2) The legislature recognizes that some school districts  
15 experience barriers to providing the fundamental courses of study in  
16 person due to long commute times for paraeducators, dangerous weather  
17 events, irregular hiring dates in small school districts, and other  
18 extenuating circumstances.

19 (3) It is the intent of the legislature to ensure that all  
20 paraeducators in Washington receive high quality and consistent  
21 professional development through the fundamental course of study,

1 with a significant majority of paraeducators being trained in person.  
2 It is also the intent of the legislature to provide individual  
3 exemptions from in-person requirements for paraeducators with  
4 extenuating circumstances.

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.413  
6 RCW to read as follows:

7 (1) By July 1, 2024, the board must update rules on the  
8 implementation of the fundamental course of study under RCW  
9 28A.413.060 to require that a significant majority of paraeducators  
10 are provided with the course in person. Under the rules, the board  
11 may grant an exemption from the in-person requirement of RCW  
12 28A.413.060 for an individual paraeducator based on an application  
13 from a school district that describes the extenuating circumstances  
14 that prevent the paraeducator from being able to complete the in-  
15 person requirement. The criteria for individual exemptions may  
16 include a burdensome commute, dangerous weather events, being hired  
17 by a small school district at an irregular time of year, and other  
18 extenuating circumstances.

19 (2) By July 1, 2024, the board must publish guidance for school  
20 districts on how to provide the fundamental course of study under RCW  
21 28A.413.060 to improve the consistency and quality of staff  
22 development.

23 **Sec. 3.** RCW 28A.413.060 and 2019 c 268 s 3 are each amended to  
24 read as follows:

25 (1) School districts must implement this section only in school  
26 years for which state funding is appropriated specifically for the  
27 purposes of this section and only for the number of days that are  
28 funded by the appropriation.

29 (2) (a) School districts must provide a four-day fundamental  
30 course of study on the state standards of practice, as defined by the  
31 board, to paraeducators who have not completed the course, either in  
32 the district or in another district within the state. (~~(At least one  
33 day of the fundamental course of study must be provided in person.)~~)

34 (b) School districts must use best efforts to provide the  
35 fundamental course of study before the paraeducator begins to work  
36 with students and their families, and at a minimum by the following  
37 ~~deadlines ((provided in subsection (3) of this section.~~

1       ~~(3) Except as provided in (b) of this subsection, school~~  
2 ~~districts must provide the fundamental course of study required in~~  
3 ~~subsection (2) of this section by the deadlines provided in (a) of~~  
4 ~~this subsection):~~

5       ~~((a))~~ (i) For paraeducators hired on or before September 1st,  
6 the first two days of the fundamental course of study must be  
7 provided by September 30th of that year and the second two days of  
8 the fundamental course of study must be provided within six months of  
9 the date of hire, regardless of the size of the district; and

10       (ii) For paraeducators hired after September 1st:

11       (A) For districts with ~~((ten thousand))~~ 10,000 or more students,  
12 the first two days of the fundamental course of study must be  
13 provided within four months of the date of hire and the second two  
14 days of the fundamental course of study must be provided within six  
15 months of the date of hire or by September 1st of the following year,  
16 whichever is sooner; and

17       (B) For districts with fewer than ~~((ten thousand))~~ 10,000  
18 students, no later than September 1st of the following year.

19       ~~((b) (i) For paraeducators hired for the 2018-19 school year, by~~  
20 ~~September 1, 2020; and~~

21       ~~(ii) For paraeducators not hired for the 2018-19 school year, but~~  
22 ~~hired for the 2019-20 school year, by September 1, 2021.~~

23       ~~(4))~~ (c) At least two days of the four-day fundamental course of  
24 study must be provided in person to each paraeducator unless the  
25 school district is granted an individual exemption by the board under  
26 section 2 of this act.

27       (3) School districts may collaborate with other school districts  
28 or educational service districts to meet the requirements of this  
29 section.

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