
SENATE BILL 5179

State of Washington 64th Legislature 2015 Regular Session

By Senators Hill, McAuliffe, Litzow, Mullet, Hobbs, and Dammeier

Read first time 01/15/15. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to paraeducators; amending RCW 28A.630.400 and
2 28B.50.891; adding a new section to chapter 28A.410 RCW; and creating
3 a new section.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** Paraeducators provide the majority of
6 instruction in programs designed by the legislature to reduce the
7 opportunity gap. By setting common statewide standards, training, and
8 career development for paraeducators, as well as training for
9 teachers and principals who have paraeducators in their classroom,
10 students in these programs have a better chance of succeeding in the
11 classroom.

12 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.410
13 RCW to read as follows:

14 (1) Effective September 1, 2015, the minimum employment standards
15 for a paraeducator who works in the learning assistance program, the
16 federal disadvantaged program, and English language learner programs
17 shall be as provided in this subsection. The paraeducator must:

18 (a) Be at least eighteen years of age, hold a high school diploma
19 or its equivalent, and have received a passing grade on the education
20 testing service paraeducator assessment; or

1 (b) Hold an associate of arts degree; or

2 (c) Have earned seventy-two quarter credits or forty-eight
3 semester credits at an institution of higher education.

4 (2)(a) By September 1, 2015, members of the paraeducator board
5 must be appointed. The board shall be composed of one paraeducator,
6 one teacher, one principal, one representative of a community or
7 technical college, and one representative of a four-year institution
8 of higher education as defined in RCW 28B.10.016.

9 (b) Appointments to the board shall be made as follows:

10 (i) The superintendent of public instruction shall appoint the
11 paraeducator, the teacher, and the principal;

12 (ii) The state board for community and technical colleges shall
13 appoint the representative of a community or technical college; and

14 (iii) The student achievement council shall appoint the
15 representative of an institution of higher education.

16 (c) A representative from the professional educator standards
17 board shall be the nonvoting facilitator of the board.

18 (d) The professional educator standards board shall be the
19 administrator of the board.

20 (3) Beginning September 1, 2015, the paraeducator board must
21 administer policies and rules for the preparation and certification
22 of paraeducators who work in the learning assistance program, the
23 federal disadvantaged program, or the English language learners
24 program, the paraeducator career ladder, or the pathway to teacher
25 certification.

26 (4)(a) During the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years, grants, as
27 funded by the legislature, shall be distributed by the board to a
28 diverse set of school districts that volunteer to field test the
29 implementation of the paraeducator certification and English language
30 learner endorsement.

31 (b) Effective September 1, 2017, all school districts must begin
32 implementing the paraeducator certification for paraeducators working
33 in the programs in the learning assistance program, the federal
34 disadvantaged program, or the English language learner
35 program. Paraeducators have three years to acquire their
36 certification.

37 (c) The certification standards shall be adopted by the board and
38 must include:

39 (i) Supporting instructional opportunities;

40 (ii) Demonstrating professionalism and ethical practices;

1 (iii) Supporting a positive and safe learning environment; and
2 (iv) Communicating effectively and participating in the team
3 process.

4 (d) The board shall develop a practicum and must ensure that
5 paraeducators have multiple methods to access training necessary to
6 become certificated.

7 (e) The board has the authority to establish certification fees
8 paid by paraeducators.

9 (f) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall
10 be provided the necessary funds to administer the paraeducator
11 certificates and endorsements.

12 (5) Beginning September 1, 2017, all paraeducators working in
13 English language learning programs have three years to acquire their
14 endorsement.

15 (a) The board may adopt rules to implement the endorsement and
16 training standards.

17 (b) The board shall ensure that training is made available to
18 paraeducators in a variety of means that will limit cost and improve
19 access.

20 (6) Paraeducators must renew their certificate or necessary
21 endorsements every five years. In order to renew the certificate or
22 endorsement, they must complete the clock hours determined by the
23 board. The board may develop the training modules as well as ensure
24 that the clock hour training is made available to paraeducators in a
25 variety of means that will limit cost and improve access.

26 (7) The professional educator standards board must design and
27 implement a training program for teachers and principals as it
28 relates to their role working with paraeducators. Teacher training
29 must include how to direct a paraeducator working with students in
30 the paraeducator's classroom. Principal training must include how to
31 supervise and evaluate paraeducators.

32 (8)(a) The board shall develop the rules for an advanced
33 paraeducator endorsement, training modules, and renewal process that
34 must be implemented by September 1, 2017.

35 (b) Some responsibilities of the advanced paraeducator position
36 are mentoring or coaching other paraeducators, assisting in highly
37 impacted classrooms, short-term teacher substitution, and assistance
38 in specific specialized instruction support or technology
39 applications.

1 (c) The rules must include provisions regarding the ability of a
2 person holding an advanced paraeducator endorsement that will qualify
3 the paraeducator to replace a teacher in short absence situations in
4 those districts that are experiencing difficulty finding substitute
5 teachers.

6 (9) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this
7 section.

8 (a) "Board" means the paraeducator board.

9 (b) "English language learner programs" or "English language
10 learner endorsement" refers to the English language learners program,
11 the transitional bilingual instruction program, and the federal
12 limited English proficiency program.

13 (c) "Paraeducator" means a school district employee who works
14 under the supervision of a certificated or licensed staff member to
15 support and assist in providing instructional services to students
16 and their families.

17 **Sec. 3.** RCW 28A.630.400 and 2011 1st sp.s. c 11 s 132 are each
18 amended to read as follows:

19 (1) The professional educator standards board and the state board
20 for community and technical colleges, in consultation with the
21 superintendent of public instruction, the state apprenticeship
22 training council, and community colleges, shall adopt rules as
23 necessary under chapter 34.05 RCW to implement the paraeducator
24 associate of arts degree.

25 (2) As used in this section, a "paraeducator" is an individual
26 who has completed an associate of arts degree for a paraeducator. The
27 paraeducator may be hired by a school district to assist certificated
28 instructional staff in the direct instruction of children in small
29 and large groups, individualized instruction, testing of children,
30 recordkeeping, and preparation of materials. The paraeducator shall
31 work under the direction of instructional certificated staff.

32 (3) The training program for a paraeducator associate of arts
33 degree shall include, but is not limited to, the general requirements
34 for receipt of an associate of arts degree and training in the
35 (~~areas of introduction to childhood education, orientation to~~
36 ~~children with disabilities, fundamentals of childhood education,~~
37 ~~creative activities for children, instructional materials for~~
38 ~~children, fine art experiences for children, the psychology of~~
39 ~~learning, introduction to education, child health and safety, child~~

1 ~~development and guidance, first aid, and a practicum in a school~~
2 ~~setting)) adopted state standards for paraeducators, which include~~
3 ~~core knowledge and skill competencies in (a) supporting instructional~~
4 ~~opportunities, (b) demonstrating professional and ethical practices,~~
5 ~~(c) supporting a positive and safe learning environment, and (d)~~
6 ~~communicating effectively and participating in the team process.~~

7 (4) Consideration shall be given to transferability of credit
8 earned in this program to teacher preparation programs at colleges
9 and universities.

10 **Sec. 4.** RCW 28B.50.891 and 2014 c 136 s 4 are each amended to
11 read as follows:

12 Beginning with the 2015-16 academic year, any community or
13 technical college that offers an apprenticeship program or
14 certificate program for paraeducators must provide candidates the
15 opportunity to earn transferrable course credits within the program.
16 The programs must also incorporate the standards for cultural
17 competence, including multicultural education and principles of
18 language acquisition, developed by the professional educator
19 standards board under RCW 28A.410.270. The programs must also include
20 core knowledge and skill competencies in: Supporting instructional
21 opportunities, demonstrating professional and ethical practices,
22 supporting a positive and safe learning environment, and
23 communicating effectively and participating in the team process.

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