
SECOND SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5179

State of Washington

64th Legislature

2015 Regular Session

By Senate Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Hill, McAuliffe, Litzow, Mullet, Hobbs, and Dammeier)

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 new sections.

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 parent whose child receives
7 instructional support from a paraeducator, one representative of a
8 community or technical college, and one representative of a four-year
9 institution of higher education as defined in RCW 28B.10.016.

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

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

13 (ii) The Washington state parent teacher association shall
14 appoint the parent whose child receives instructional support from a
15 paraeducator;

16 (iii) The state board for community and technical colleges shall
17 appoint the representative of a community or technical college; and

18 (iv) The student achievement council shall appoint the
19 representative of an institution of higher education.

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

22 (d) The professional educator standards board shall be the
23 administrator of the board.

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

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

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

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

- 3 (i) Supporting instructional opportunities;
- 4 (ii) Demonstrating professionalism and ethical practices;
- 5 (iii) Supporting a positive and safe learning environment; and
- 6 (iv) Communicating effectively and participating in the team
7 process.

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

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

13 (f) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall
14 be provided the necessary funds to administer the paraeducator
15 certificates and endorsements.

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

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

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

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

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

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

39 (b) Some responsibilities of the advanced paraeducator position
40 are mentoring or coaching other paraeducators, assisting in highly

1 impacted classrooms, short-term teacher substitution, and assistance
2 in specific specialized instruction support or technology
3 applications.

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

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

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

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

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

20 (10) This section is subject to the availability of amounts
21 specifically appropriated for this specific purpose.

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

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

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

37 (3)(a) If amounts are not appropriated specifically for the
38 purpose of (b) of this subsection, the training program for a
39 paraeducator associate of arts degree shall include, but is not

1 limited to, the general requirements for receipt of an associate of
2 arts degree and training in the areas of introduction to childhood
3 education, orientation to children with disabilities, fundamentals of
4 childhood education, creative activities for children, instructional
5 materials for children, fine art experiences for children, the
6 psychology of learning, introduction to education, child health and
7 safety, child development and guidance, first aid, and a practicum in
8 a school setting.

9 (b) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this
10 specific purpose, the training program for a paraeducator associate
11 of arts degree shall include, but is not limited to, the general
12 requirements for receipt of an associate of arts degree and training
13 in the adopted state standards for paraeducators, which include core
14 knowledge and skill competencies in (i) supporting instructional
15 opportunities, (ii) demonstrating professional and ethical practices,
16 (iii) supporting a positive and safe learning environment, and (iv)
17 communicating effectively and participating in the team process.

18 (4) Consideration shall be given to transferability of credit
19 earned in this program to teacher preparation programs at colleges
20 and universities.

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

23 Beginning with the 2015-16 academic year, any community or
24 technical college that offers an apprenticeship program or
25 certificate program for paraeducators must provide candidates the
26 opportunity to earn transferrable course credits within the program.
27 The programs must also incorporate the standards for cultural
28 competence, including multicultural education and principles of
29 language acquisition, developed by the professional educator
30 standards board under RCW 28A.410.270. Subject to the availability of
31 amounts specifically appropriated for this specific purpose, the
32 programs must also include core knowledge and skill competencies in:
33 Supporting instructional opportunities, demonstrating professional
34 and ethical practices, supporting a positive and safe learning
35 environment, and communicating effectively and participating in the
36 team process.

37 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** (1) Subject to the availability of amounts
38 appropriated for this specific purpose, the Washington state

1 institute for public policy shall conduct a study on the
2 effectiveness of paraeducators in improving student outcomes in
3 Washington state. The study shall examine variation in the use of
4 paraeducators across schools and districts and analyze whether and
5 the extent that any differences in students' academic progress can be
6 attributed to the use of paraeducators. The office of the
7 superintendent of public instruction and the education data center
8 shall provide the data necessary to conduct the analysis. The study
9 must also include a review of the national research literature on the
10 effectiveness of paraeducators in improving student outcomes.

11 (2) The institute shall submit a final report to the relevant
12 committees of the legislature by December 15, 2016.

--- END ---