

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5918

As of February 18, 2009

Title: An act relating to paraeducator tutors.

Brief Description: Regarding paraeducator tutor certification.

Sponsors: Senators Kauffman, King, McDermott, Holmquist, Hobbs and McAuliffe.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/18/09.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Juliana Roe (786-7438)

Background: Under current law, to become a paraeducator, a person must obtain a paraeducator associate of arts degree. Paraeducators are trained in the areas of introduction to childhood education, orientation to children with disabilities, fundamentals of childhood education, creative activities for children, instructional materials for children, fine art experiences for children, the psychology of learning, introduction to education, child health and safety, child development and guidance, first aid, and a practicum in a school setting. A paraeducator can be hired by a school district to assist certificated instructional staff in the direct instruction of children in small and large groups, individualized instruction, testing of children, recordkeeping, and preparation of materials. Paraeducators must work under the direction of instructional certificated staff.

Proponents believe that if paraeducators receive additional training, they can have a significant impact on struggling students.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (Proposed Substitute): The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) must adopt rules establishing paraeducator tutor certification. OSPI must develop paraeducator tutor certification standards, a certification process, and certification requirements as well as professional development courses required to maintain certification. Professional development courses must be available in varying formats. OSPI must develop an incentives plan to encourage people to pursue paraeducator tutor certification.

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

Certification lasts for five years.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 13, 2009.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: There is a need for a statewide standard for paraeducator career development. Many paraeducators are trained in areas that teachers are not and add value to the classrooms. Not all paraeducators come into the classroom with an AA, but rather come in by merely taking a test on a computer to make them highly qualified. Paraeducators should be uniformly certificated.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Doug Nelson, Public School Employees/SEIU; Pam Lux, Public School Employee; Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association; Ginger Cornwell, Public School Employees.