

SSB 6129 - H COMM AMD  
By Committee on Education

ADOPTED AS AMENDED 03/06/2014

1 Strike everything after the enacting clause and insert the  
2 following:

3 "NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature acknowledges that  
4 paraeducators have become a significant resource to students who need  
5 additional education assistance. School districts have come to rely  
6 upon paraeducators who, for instance, provided more than half of the  
7 hours of instruction in the 2012-13 school year to students in the  
8 learning assistance program, the transitional bilingual instruction  
9 program, the federal disadvantaged program, head start, and the federal  
10 limited English proficiency program. Paraeducators are often the  
11 primary caretakers in the classroom for students with special needs and  
12 provided more than half of the hours of instruction in the 2012-13  
13 school year to students in special education.

14 The legislature further recognizes that there is significant  
15 variability in paraeducator standards. In some situations,  
16 paraeducators are expected to provide services for which they are not  
17 trained or qualified. In other situations, their knowledge, skills,  
18 and commitment to education are underused. A clear definition of the  
19 differentiated knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with  
20 different jobs will ensure that students receive the education services  
21 they need and deserve.

22 Paraeducator training and professional development varies  
23 significantly dependent upon school district and program. With few  
24 exceptions, paraeducator training has been significantly reduced over  
25 the last several years due to state and school district budget cuts.

26 A carefully constructed paraeducator development program is  
27 intended to place the highest qualified paraeducators working with the  
28 highest need students. Such a program when combined with a career  
29 ladder will offer paraeducators real opportunities for upward mobility.  
30 Since paraeducators more closely reflect the cultural diversity of the

1 student population, a development program and career ladder is likely  
2 to encourage more paraeducators to become teachers. Training teachers  
3 how to work with a paraeducator in their classrooms will increase  
4 paraeducators' ability to teach students who need additional  
5 assistance.

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The superintendent of public instruction  
7 shall convene a work group to examine the use of paraeducators across  
8 school districts, including their roles and types of assignments in the  
9 classroom and the variation in paraeducator deployment in support of  
10 teachers. The work group must include paraeducators, teachers, school  
11 and school district administrators, school directors, and  
12 representatives of their respective associations. The superintendent  
13 of public instruction shall submit the findings of the work group to  
14 the professional educator standards board by August 31, 2014, to inform  
15 the work of the board and the work group established under subsection  
16 (2) of this section.

17 (2)(a) The professional educator standards board shall  
18 simultaneously convene a work group to design program specific minimum  
19 employment standards for paraeducators, professional development and  
20 education opportunities that support the standards, a paraeducator  
21 career ladder, an articulated pathway for teacher preparation and  
22 certification, and teacher professional development on how to maximize  
23 the use of paraeducators in the classroom.

24 (b) The work group convened by the professional educator standards  
25 board must include representatives of:

26 (i) The professional educator standards board; the Green River  
27 Community College center of excellence for careers in education;  
28 educational service districts; community and technical college  
29 paraeducator apprenticeship and certificate programs; colleges of  
30 education; teacher, paraeducator, principal, school director, and  
31 administrator associations; career and technical education; special  
32 education parents and advocacy organizations; community-based  
33 organizations representing immigrant and refugee communities and  
34 communities of color; the educational opportunity gap oversight and  
35 accountability committee; and the office of the superintendent of  
36 public instruction; and

1 (ii) A maximum of two paraeducators from each program for which  
2 specific minimum employment standards will be designed.

3 (3) By January 10, 2015, the work group convened by the  
4 professional educator standards board shall submit a report to the  
5 education committees of the legislature that recommends:

6 (a) Multiple options for assuring minimum employment standards and  
7 professional development opportunities for paraeducators who work in:

8 (i) English language learner programs, transitional bilingual  
9 instruction programs, and federal limited English proficiency programs;  
10 and

11 (ii) The learning assistance program and federal disadvantaged  
12 program;

13 (b) A career ladder that encourages paraeducators to pursue  
14 advanced education and professional development as well as increased  
15 instructional ability and responsibility;

16 (c) An articulated pathway for teacher preparation that includes:

17 (i) Paraeducator certificate and apprenticeship programs that offer  
18 course credits that apply to transferrable associate degrees and are  
19 aligned with the standards and competencies for teachers adopted by the  
20 professional educator standards board;

21 (ii) Associate degree programs that build on and do not duplicate  
22 the courses and competencies of paraeducator certificate programs,  
23 incorporate field experiences, are aligned with the standards and  
24 competencies for teachers adopted by the professional educator  
25 standards board, and are transferrable to bachelor's degree in  
26 education programs and teacher certification programs;

27 (iii) Bachelor's degree programs that lead to teacher certification  
28 that build on and do not duplicate the courses and competencies of  
29 transferrable associate degrees;

30 (iv) Incorporation of the standards for cultural competence  
31 developed by the professional educator standards board under RCW  
32 28A.410.270 throughout the courses and curriculum of the pathway,  
33 particularly focusing on multicultural education and principles of  
34 language acquisition; and

35 (v) A comparison of the current status of pathways for teacher  
36 certification to the elements of the articulated pathway, highlighting  
37 gaps and recommending strategies to address the gaps;

1 (d) Professional development for certificated employees that  
2 focuses on maximizing the success of paraeducators in the classroom.

3 (4) The work group convened by the professional educator standards  
4 board must submit a final report of its recommendations to the  
5 education committees of the legislature by January 10, 2016,  
6 concerning:

7 (a) Multiple options for assuring minimum employment standards and  
8 professional development opportunities for basic education and special  
9 education paraeducators;

10 (b) Whether there should be alignment of training requirements of  
11 paraeducators providing special education services for students during  
12 the school year with existing training for home care aides who provide  
13 similar services to students when they are not in school, and if so,  
14 how the alignment should be accomplished; and

15 (c) Appropriate professional development and training to help  
16 paraeducators meet the employment standards.

17 (5) This section expires June 30, 2016.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.410  
19 RCW to read as follows:

20 The professional educator standards board and the state board for  
21 community and technical colleges may exercise their respective  
22 authorities regarding program approval to implement the articulated  
23 pathway for teacher preparation and certification recommended pursuant  
24 to section 2, chapter . . ., Laws of 2014 (section 2 of this act) in  
25 approved teacher certification programs and certificate and degree  
26 programs offered by community and technical colleges.

27 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.50 RCW  
28 to read as follows:

29 Beginning with the 2016-17 academic year, any community or  
30 technical college that offers an apprenticeship program or certificate  
31 program for paraeducators must provide candidates the opportunity to  
32 earn transferrable course credits within the program. The programs  
33 must also incorporate the standards for cultural competence, including  
34 multicultural education and principles of language acquisition,  
35 developed by the professional educator standards board under RCW  
36 28A.410.270.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 5.**  If specific funding for the purposes of this  
2 act, referencing this act by bill or chapter number, is not provided by  
3 June 30, 2014, in the omnibus appropriations act, this act is null and  
4 void."

5        Correct the title.

EFFECT:        Makes the following changes to the underlying bill:  
Directs the SPI to convene a work group to examine the use of  
paraeducators across school districts and submit a report with its  
findings to the PESB by August 31, 2014, in order to inform the work of  
the PESB work group.  Adds up to two paraeducators from each program  
for which standards will be developed and a representative of school  
directors to the PESB work group.  Directs the PESB work group to  
examine options for assuring minimum employment standards.  Adds a  
topic to the final report from the PESB work group:  Whether and how  
there should be alignment in training for paraeducators who work with  
special education students during the school year with training for  
home care aides who provide similar services to students when they are  
not in school.  Requires CTC apprenticeship and certificate programs to  
provide transferrable course credits and include standards for cultural  
competence beginning in the 2016-17 academic year, rather than the  
2015-16 academic year.  Removes the appropriation of \$150,000.  Adds a  
null and void clause.

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