
HOUSE BILL 2365

State of Washington

63rd Legislature

2014 Regular Session

By Representatives Bergquist, Dahlquist, Santos, Stonier, Haigh, Ryu, Reykdal, Fey, Orwall, Gregerson, Freeman, and Pollet

Read first time 01/16/14. Referred to Committee on Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to paraeducator development; adding a new section
2 to chapter 28A.410 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 28B.50 RCW;
3 creating new sections; making an appropriation; and providing an
4 expiration date.

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

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

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

1 differentiated knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with
2 different jobs will ensure that students receive the education services
3 they need and deserve.

4 Paraeducator training and professional development varies
5 significantly dependent upon school district and program. With few
6 exceptions, paraeducator training has been significantly reduced over
7 the last several years due to state and school district budget cuts.

8 A carefully constructed paraeducator development program is
9 intended to place the highest qualified paraeducators working with the
10 highest need students. Such a program when combined with a career
11 ladder will offer paraeducators real opportunities for upward mobility.
12 Since paraeducators more closely reflect the cultural diversity of the
13 student population, a development program and career ladder is likely
14 to encourage more paraeducators to become teachers.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1)(a) The professional educator standards
16 board shall convene a work group to design program specific minimum
17 employment standards for paraeducators, professional development and
18 education opportunities that support the standards, a paraeducator
19 career ladder, an articulated pathway for teacher preparation and
20 certification, and teacher professional development on how to maximize
21 the use of paraeducators in the classroom.

22 (b) The work group must include representatives of:

23 (i) The professional educator standards board; the Green River
24 Community College center of excellence for careers in education;
25 educational service districts; community and technical college
26 paraeducator apprenticeship and certificate programs; colleges of
27 education; teacher, paraeducator, principal, and administrator
28 associations; career and technical education; and the office of the
29 superintendent of public instruction; and

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

32 (2) By January 10, 2015, the work group shall submit a report to
33 the education committees of the legislature that recommends:

34 (a) Appropriate minimum employment standards and professional
35 development opportunities for paraeducators who work in:

36 (i) English language learner programs, transitional bilingual

1 instruction programs, and federal limited English proficiency programs;
2 and

3 (ii) The learning assistance program and federal disadvantaged
4 program;

5 (b) A career ladder that encourages paraeducators to pursue
6 advanced education and professional development as well as increased
7 instructional ability and responsibility;

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

9 (i) Paraeducator certificate and apprenticeship programs that offer
10 course credits that apply to transferrable associate degrees and are
11 aligned with the standards and competencies for teachers adopted by the
12 professional educator standards board;

13 (ii) Associate degree programs that build on and do not duplicate
14 the courses and competencies of paraeducator certificate programs,
15 incorporate field experiences, are aligned with the standards and
16 competencies for teachers adopted by the professional educator
17 standards board, and are transferrable to bachelor's degree in
18 education programs and teacher certification programs;

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

22 (iv) Incorporation of the standards for cultural competence
23 developed by the professional educator standards board under RCW
24 28A.410.270 throughout the courses and curriculum of the pathway,
25 particularly focusing on multicultural education and principles of
26 language acquisition; and

27 (v) Comparing the current status of pathways for teacher
28 certification to the elements of the articulated pathway, highlighting
29 gaps and recommending strategies to address the gaps;

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

32 (3) The work group must submit a final report of its
33 recommendations to the education committees of the legislature by
34 January 10, 2016, concerning:

35 (a) Minimum employment standards for basic education and special
36 education paraeducators; and

37 (b) Appropriate professional development and training to help
38 paraeducators meet the employment standards.

1 (4) This section expires June 30, 2016.

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

4 The professional educator standards board and the state board for
5 community and technical colleges may exercise their respective
6 authorities regarding program approval to implement the articulated
7 pathway for teacher preparation and certification recommended pursuant
8 to section 2, chapter . . ., Laws of 2014 (section 2 of this act) in
9 approved teacher certification programs and certificate and degree
10 programs offered by community and technical colleges.

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

13 Beginning with the 2015-16 academic year, any community or
14 technical college that offers an apprenticeship program or certificate
15 program for paraeducators must provide candidates the opportunity to
16 earn transferrable course credits within the program. The programs
17 must also incorporate the standards for cultural competence, including
18 multicultural education and principles of language acquisition,
19 developed by the professional educator standards board under RCW
20 28A.410.270.

21 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** The sum of one hundred fifty thousand
22 dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for
23 the fiscal year ending June 30, 2015, from the general fund to the
24 professional educator standards board to convene a work group in
25 accordance with section 2 of this act.

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