
SENATE BILL 6129

State of Washington

63rd Legislature

2014 Regular Session

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

Read first time 01/16/14. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & K-12 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 the professional
23 educator standards board; the Green River Community College center of
24 excellence for careers in education; educational service districts;
25 community and technical college paraeducator apprenticeship and
26 certificate programs; colleges of education; teacher, paraeducator,
27 principal, and administrator associations; career and technical
28 education; and the office of the superintendent of public instruction.

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

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

33 (i) English language learner programs, transitional bilingual
34 instruction programs, and federal limited English proficiency programs;
35 and

36 (ii) The learning assistance program and federal disadvantaged
37 program;

1 (b) A career ladder that encourages paraeducators to pursue
2 advanced education and professional development as well as increased
3 instructional ability and responsibility;

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

5 (i) Paraeducator certificate and apprenticeship programs that offer
6 course credits that apply to transferrable associate degrees and are
7 aligned with the standards and competencies for teachers adopted by the
8 professional educator standards board;

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

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

18 (iv) Incorporation of the standards for cultural competence
19 developed by the professional educator standards board under RCW
20 28A.410.270 throughout the courses and curriculum of the pathway,
21 particularly focusing on multicultural education and principles of
22 language acquisition; and

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

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

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

31 (a) Minimum employment standards for basic education and special
32 education paraeducators; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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