

---

## Education Committee

---

### HB 2698

**Brief Description:** Concerning paraeducators.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Bergquist, Muri and Ortiz-Self.

#### Brief Summary of Bill

- Delays for one year the minimum employment requirement for paraeducators employed and hired before September 1, 2018.
- Gives school districts from September 1, 2019, to September 1, 2020, to provide the fundamental course of study to paraeducators hired before September 1, 2019.
- Makes changes to the experience requirement to qualify for the Pipeline for Paraeducators Conditional Scholarship.
- Authorizes appropriations to support implementation of paraeducator certificates.

**Hearing Date:** 1/23/18

**Staff:** Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

#### **Background:**

A paraeducator means a classified school district employee who works under the supervision of a certificated or licensed staff member to support and assist in providing instructional services to students and their families. Paraeducators are not considered certificated instructional staff.

#### Minimum Employment Requirements.

Effective September 1, 2018, all paraeducators must meet the following minimum employment requirements. Paraeducators must:

1. be at least eighteen years of age and hold a high school diploma or its equivalent; and
2. have received a passing grade on the paraeducator assessment; hold an Associate of Arts degree; have met minimum higher education credit requirements; or have completed a registered apprenticeship program.

---

*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.*

Until September 1, 2018, only paraeducators who work in Title I, part A programs, which provide financial assistance to schools and districts with high numbers of children from low-income families, are required to meet minimum employment standards.

Fundamental Course of Study.

Subject to the appropriation of specific funds, beginning September 1, 2019, school districts must provide a four-day fundamental course of study on the state standards of practice to paraeducators who have not completed the course. Districts must use best efforts to provide the course before paraeducators begin to work with students and their families, and at a minimum by the following deadlines:

- for paraeducators hired on or before September 1, by September 30 of that year, regardless of the size of the district; and
- for paraeducators hired after September 1: for districts with 10,000 or more students, within four months of the date of hire; and for districts with fewer than 10,000 students, no later than September 1 of the following year.

Pipeline for Paraeducators Conditional Scholarship.

The Pipeline for Paraeducators Conditional Scholarship, administered by the Washington Student Achievement Council, provides financial assistance to paraeducators without a college degree who have at least three years of classroom experience. The Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) selects participants for the program using specified statutory criteria. Participants are expected to complete an Associate of Arts degree in two years and less and become eligible for a teacher certificate with an endorsement in a subject matter shortage area through route 1 of the Alternative Routes for Teacher Certification Program.

**Summary of Bill:**

Minimum Employment Requirements.

The requirement for paraeducators currently employed and hired before September 1, 2018 to meet minimum employment requirements by September 1, 2018 is delayed until September 1, 2019. The requirement for paraeducators hired on or after September 1, 2018 to meet the requirements when they are hired is maintained.

Non-Title I school districts should provide the PESB by September 1, 2018, a report of how many current paraeducators have met minimum employment requirements and how many have not met the minimum employment requirements.

Fundamental Course of Study.

School districts have from September 1, 2019, to September 1, 2020, to provide the fundamental course of study to paraeducators hired before September 1, 2019. There is no change to the minimum deadlines for districts to provide the course.

Pipeline for Paraeducators Conditional Scholarship.

Rather than requiring participants in the Pipeline for Paraeducators Conditional Scholarship to have at least three years of classroom experience, the PESB is directed to define the experience requirement.

**Appropriation:** \$500,000 is appropriated from the General Fund to the PESB for fiscal years ending June 30, 2019 and June 30, 2020. The funds must be used to provide overall oversight and procure or develop professional development for paraeducator specialty certificates and align courses with paraeducator general certificate professional development, including any necessary changes or edits to general certificate online modules.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 17, 2018.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.