

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## ESHB 1277

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Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Improving the consistency and quality of the implementation of the fundamental course of study for paraeducators.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Donaghy, Harris, Slatter, Kloba, Reeves, Reed, Ormsby and Pollet; by request of Professional Educator Standards Board).

**House Committee on Education**  
**Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education**  
**Senate Committee on Ways & Means**

### **Background:**

#### Paraeducator Board.

The Paraeducator Board is a statutorily created nine-member board whose duties include the establishment of requirements related to the paraeducator standards of practice, mandatory paraeducator certificates, and optional paraeducator certificates.

#### Paraeducator Fundamental Course of Study.

The paraeducator fundamental course of study (FCS) is a four-day course on the state paraeducator standards of practice. School districts must provide the FCS to paraeducators who have not completed the course, either in the district or in another district within the state.

At least one day of the FCS must be provided in person. School districts must use best efforts to provide the FCS before the paraeducator begins to work with students and their families.

Subject to funding limitations described below, school districts must provide the four-day FCS by the following deadlines:

1. For paraeducators hired on or before September 1: the first two days of the FCS must

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be provided by September 30 of that year, and the second two days of the FCS must be provided within six months of the date of hire.

2. For paraeducators hired after September 1:
  - a. in districts with 10,000 or more students: the first two days of the FCS must be provided within four months of the date of hire, and the second two days of the FCS must be provided within six months of the date of hire or by September 1 of the following year, whichever is sooner; and
  - b. in districts with fewer than 10,000 students: the entire FCS must be provided by September 1 of the following year.

School districts are only required to provide to paraeducators the number of days of the FCS for which state funding is specifically provided. Since fiscal year 2020, the state has appropriated funding for school districts to provide at least two days of training to paraeducators each year.

### **Summary:**

By July 1, 2025, the Paraeducator Board must update rules on the implementation of the fundamental course of study (FCS) to require that a significant majority of paraeducators are provided with the FCS in person. Under the rules, the Paraeducator Board may grant an exemption from the in-person requirement of the FCS for school districts with fewer than 2,000 enrolled students hiring paraeducators after the beginning of the school year.

By July 1, 2025, the Paraeducator Board must publish guidance for school districts on how to provide the FCS to improve consistency and quality of staff development.

The deadlines, and in-person requirements, for provision of the FCS are modified by, among other things: changing the district size threshold for certain deadlines; referring to the beginning of the school year, rather than September 1; and requiring two days, rather than one day, be provided in-person. The resulting requirements are as follows:

1. Paraeducators hired before the beginning of the school year must be provided the first two days of the FCS in person before the beginning of the school year and the second two days of the FCS within six months of the date of hire.
2. Paraeducators hired after the beginning of the school year, by school districts with 2,000 or more enrolled students, must be provided the first two days of the FCS in person within four months of the date of hire and the second two days of the FCS within six months of the date of hire or by September 1 of the following year, whichever is sooner.
3. Paraeducators hired after the beginning of the school year, by school districts with fewer than 2,000 enrolled students, must be provided the FCS no later than September 1 of the following year, with two of the days provided in person unless the district has applied for and received an exemption from the Paraeducator Board.

### **Votes on Final Passage:**

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|--------|----|---|-------------------|
| House  | 95 | 0 |                   |
| House  | 98 | 0 |                   |
| Senate | 49 | 0 | (Senate amended)  |
| House  | 95 | 0 | (House concurred) |

**Effective:** June 6, 2024