

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## 2SSB 5882

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### As Passed House - Amended:

February 29, 2024

**Title:** An act relating to increasing prototypical school staffing to better meet student needs.

**Brief Description:** Increasing prototypical school staffing to better meet student needs.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Stanford, Wellman, Hunt, Pedersen, Wilson, C., Conway, Hasegawa, Kuderer, Nobles, Salomon, Shewmake, Valdez and Van De Wege).

### Brief History:

#### Committee Activity:

Appropriations: 2/15/24, 2/26/24 [DPA].

#### Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/29/24, 90-2.

### Brief Summary of Second Substitute Bill (As Amended by House)

- Increases staff allocations for paraeducators, office support staff, and noninstructional aides in the prototypical school funding model beginning in the 2023-24 school year.
- Directs the Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop rules that require school districts to use the additional funding to support increased staffing, prevent layoffs, or increase salaries for those staff types in the 2024-25 school year.

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## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended. Signed by 29 members: Representatives Ormsby, Chair; Bergquist, Vice Chair; Gregerson, Vice Chair; Macri, Vice Chair; Corry, Ranking

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

Minority Member; Chambers, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Connors, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Couture, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Berg, Callan, Chopp, Davis, Fitzgibbon, Harris, Lekanoff, Pollet, Riccelli, Rude, Ryu, Sandlin, Schmick, Senn, Simmons, Slatter, Springer, Stokesbary, Stonier, Tharinger and Wilcox.

**Staff:** James Mackison (786-7104).

**Background:**

Prototypical School Funding Model Allocations.

The prototypical school funding model allocates general apportionment funding to school districts based on assumed levels of staff and other resources necessary to support "prototypical" elementary, middle, and high schools. These prototypical schools are assumed to have the following full-time student enrollments: 400 students for elementary school, 432 students for middle school, and 600 students for high school. In addition to other allocations, for each prototypical school, the model includes minimum allocations for the following types of staff:

| <b>Staff Type</b>  | <b>Elementary</b> | <b>Middle</b> | <b>High</b> |
|--|-------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Teaching assistance, including any aspect of educational instructional services provided by classified employees | 0.936             | 0.700         | 0.652       |
| Office support and other noninstructional aides  | 2.012             | 2.325         | 3.269       |

Discretionary Spending of Allocations.

Subject to some limits, the funding provided to school districts through the prototypical school funding model is for allocation purposes only. This means that school districts have discretion over spending decisions and can, for example, use funding allocated for aides to hire teachers, to purchase technology, or on other costs. However, there are exceptions to this discretionary spending allowance, including that funding for average kindergarten through grade 3 (K-3) class sizes may be provided only to the extent of and proportionate to the school districts' demonstrated actual class size in grades K-3, up to the funded class sizes.

Additional Allocations Specified for School Staff.

In addition to the staffing units funded through the prototypical school funding model, certain additional staffing units are specified in statute. These additional staffing units are not allocated until they are specifically appropriated and designated for those staff in the omnibus operating appropriations act. These are additional units specified for the following types of staff:

| <b>Staff Type</b>   | <b>Elementary</b> | <b>Middle</b> | <b>High</b> |
|---|-------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Teaching assistance, including any aspect of educational instructional services provided by | 1.0640            | 0.3000        | 0.3480      |

|   |        |        |        |
|---|--------|--------|--------|
| classified employees                            |        |        |        |
| Office support and other noninstructional aides | 0.9880 | 1.1750 | 0.2310 |

**Summary of Amended Bill:**

The "teaching assistance" staff type is renamed to "paraeducators." The minimum allocations in the prototypical school funding model for paraeducators, office support staff, and noninstructional aides are increased from the current ratios to the following amounts beginning in the 2023-24 school year:

| School Year                  | Staff Type   | Elementary | Middle | High  |
|------------------------------|--|------------|--------|-------|
| For the 2023-24 school year: | Paraeducators, including any aspect of educational instructional services provided by classified employees | 1.012      | 0.776  | 0.728 |
|                              | Office support and other noninstructional aides  | 2.088      | 2.401  | 3.345 |

The Superintendent of Public Instruction must establish rules requiring the additional funding provided under the bill to be used to support increased staffing, layoff prevention, or increased salaries for paraeducators, office support, and noninstructional aides in the 2024-25 school year.

The additional allocations specified in statute beyond the prototypical formula for paraeducators, office support, and other noninstructional aides are removed.

The full amount for paraeducators, office support, and noninstructional aides provided in the 2023-24 school year under the bill, including additional amounts, must be provided in that school year. The first month's payment for these staff allocations after the bill is enacted must include the additional amounts from the beginning of the 2023-24 school year through that month. The 2023-24 allocation requirements also clarify that the scheduled phase-in of increases for nurses, counselors, psychologists, and social workers that began in 2022 is unchanged by the bill.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) Paraeducators and office staff perform important roles in schools. Paraeducators are on the front lines helping students. They support students that need it most. They deal with mental health issues and disruptive behaviors. There is a need for more staff who care for students. Increasing staffing allocations and funding can help students and fulfill the state's promise to fund education. A comprehensive and thoughtful approach to school funding is needed.

State funding formulas have not sufficiently recognized the importance of classified school staff. Increasing allocations for paraeducators and other classified staff is a step forward. State support for paraeducators and classified staff is a priority for school directors. School districts are facing a shortfall and use their local levies to fund these positions. More funding like this is needed to support learning. Ratios of students to counselors are too high and should be lower. Costs for staff are small compared to the benefits they provide students and the community. The prototypical school formula does not provide adequate staffing levels for these roles. The increases bring the state closer to recommendations made by the staffing enrichment workgroup. Paraeducators should receive a living wage.

(Opposed) This policy would reduce teachers in schools; ratios of teachers to students and other staff are already low. The use of COVID-19 emergency funding is ignored, as are failing scores on statewide student assessments. Available funds should be used to address learning loss. Students are leaving public schools.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Justin McKaughan; Julie Salvi, Washington Education Association; Marissa Rathbone, Washington State School Directors' Association; Rick Chisa, Public School Employees of Washington and Service Employees International Union 1948; Satvik Reddy; Amish Patra; and Mikhail Cherniske, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

(Opposed) Liv Finne, Washington Policy Center.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.