
Education Committee

HB 1277

Brief Description: Establishing rules to improve the consistency and quality of the implementation of the fundamental courses of study for paraeducators.

Sponsors: Representatives Donaghy, Harris, Slatter, Kloba, Reeves, Reed, Ormsby and Pollet; by request of Professional Educator Standards Board.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Paraeducator Board to update rules to include: (a) guidance to school districts on how to provide the paraeducator fundamental course of study to improve consistency and quality of staff development; and (b) criteria for exemptions of in-person learning to the fundamental course of study.
- Specifies that school districts are no longer required to provide to paraeducators at least one day of the four-day fundamental course of study in person if there is an exemption under rules adopted by the Paraeducator Board.

Hearing Date: 1/19/23

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

Background:

Paraeducator Board.

The Paraeducator Board is a statutorily created 9-member board whose duties include establishment of requirements related to the paraeducator standards of practice, mandatory paraeducator certificates, and optional paraeducator certificates.

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.

Paraeducator Fundamental Course of Study.

The paraeducator fundamental course of study is a four-day course on the state paraeducator standards of practice. School districts must provide the fundamental course of study 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 fundamental course of study must be provided in person. School districts must use best efforts to provide the course before the paraeducator begins to work with students and their families.

Subject to funding limitations described below, school districts must provide the four-day fundamental course of study by the following deadlines:

- For paraeducators hired on or before September 1: the first two days of the course must be provided by September 30 of that year, and the second two days of the course must be provided within six months of the date of hire.
- For paraeducators hired after September 1:
 - in districts with 10,000 or more students: the first two days of the course must be provided within four months of the date of hire, and the second two days of the course must be provided within six months of the date of hire or by September 1 of the following year, whichever is sooner; and
 - in districts with fewer than 10,000 students: the entire course 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 fundamental course of study for which state funding is specifically provided. Since fiscal year 2020, the state has appropriated funding for school districts to provide two days of training to paraeducators each year. In fiscal year 2023, the state appropriated funding sufficient for new paraeducators to receive four days of training during their first year.

Summary of Bill:

Rules.

By July 1, 2024, the Paraeducator Board must update rules on the implementation of the fundamental course of study to include: (a) Guidance to school districts on how to provide the fundamental course of study to improve consistency and quality of staff development; and (b) criteria for exemptions of in-person learning to the fundamental course of study.

The Paraeducator Board must convene a work group consisting of paraeducators, teachers, principals, school district human resource professionals, superintendents, educational service districts, and labor organizations that represent paraeducators to make recommendations on the development of updated rules.

Implementation.

School districts are no longer required to provide at least one day of the four-day fundamental

course of study in person if there is an exemption under rules adopted by the Paraeducator Board.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 13, 2023.

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