



Agency Recommendation Summary

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), in collaboration with the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB), requests funding for additional paraeducator professional development as referenced in chapter 237, laws of 2017. The request is for six additional days in fiscal year (FY) 2021 (total of 8 for the 2019–21 biennium), and four days each year thereafter. This request also includes the allocation be provided to school districts in a timeframe more closely aligned to when districts provide the professional development. The estimated cost of this request is \$0 for FY 2020, \$39,600,000 for FY 2021, \$28,500,000 for FY 2022, and \$29,500,000 for FY 2023.

Program Recommendation Summary

055 - Education Reform

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Fiscal Summary

Fiscal Summary <i>Dollars in Thousands</i>	Fiscal Years		Biennial	Fiscal Years		Biennial
	2020	2021	2019-21	2022	2023	2021-23
Operating Expenditures						
Fund 001 - 1	\$0	\$39,550	\$39,550	\$28,465	\$29,464	\$57,929
Fund 17F - 1	\$0	\$50	\$50	\$35	\$36	\$71
Total Expenditures	\$0	\$39,600	\$39,600	\$28,500	\$29,500	\$58,000

Decision Package Description

Paraeducators are critical members of a student’s learning and instructional support team. This team includes teachers, school counselors, administrators, the student’s family, and the community. Many of our state’s paraeducators are the primary instructional support for our most vulnerable student populations. To ensure students have access to highly-trained paraeducators who can support their learning needs, paraeducators must have ongoing professional learning focused on the standards of practice for their profession. Funding for ongoing professional development includes fully funding the Fundamental Course of Study. The Fundamental Course of Study, combined with coursework toward completion of the General Paraeducator Certificate, will increase paraeducators’ capacity to serve all students, particularly those who need them most.

House Bill 1115 (2017) required, beginning September 1, 2019 and subject to funds appropriated, school districts to provide a four-day Fundamental Course of Study on the state standards of practice (as defined by the Paraeducator Board). The requirement applies to paraeducators who have not completed the course either in the district or in another district within the state. The 2019 Legislature funded two days of training toward the Fundamental Course of Study for the 2019–20 school year. Reimbursement for this training is disbursed in fiscal year 2021. This request includes funding for the additional two days of professional development in school year 2019–20 (to be paid in fiscal year 2021) and four additional days in fiscal year 2021 and each fiscal year thereafter.

In addition, beginning with school year 2020–21, this request proposes a change in the allocation methodology. The funding for these professional development days shall be provided at a guaranteed rate per employee per day, to be paid at specific periods throughout the year. Draft budget language for the purpose of allocating funds in this way is provided in the “what is your proposed solution?” section below.

What is the problem, opportunity or priority you are addressing with the request?

Currently, school districts are only required to provide two (out of four) days of professional development on the Fundamental Course of Study. In addition, there are no funds provided for the 2020–21 school year, creating a funding gap in state fiscal year 2021. Through the passage of House Bill (HB) 2225 (2017), the Legislature established the mechanism and requirements for quality professional development for our state’s paraeducators. The opportunity is now to fully fund the Paraeducator Certificate Program at four days a year and to change the allocation methodology.

What is your proposed solution?

Building on the \$12,001,000 allocated to the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) to distribute for trainings during the 2019–20 school year, the proposed solution is to provide school districts with funding for four days of professional development yearly, which aligns with the existing law. The proposed budget language providing the funding reads as follows:

“\$51,600,000 of the general fund-state appropriation for fiscal year 2021 are provided solely for four days of training, per fiscal year, on the Paraeducator Certificate Program for the implementation of chapter 237, Laws of 2017 (paraeducators). A minimum of \$12,001,000 of the funds in this section must be allocated for trainings provided prior to August 15, 2020 at a to be determined daily rate based on the number of individual paraeducators trained. Beginning with the 2020–21 school year, inclusive of trainings after August 15, 2020, the following daily reimbursement rate is to be adjusted by the regionalization factor of the district providing the professional development. The daily reimbursement rate is \$220.28 for the 2020–21 school year to be adjusted by the implicit price deflator for future year reimbursements. Starting with the 2020–21 school year, funds will be paid to districts in September, January, and May of each year, based on the number of paraeducators trained and not yet claimed for reimbursement.”

Note that the \$51,600,000 for fiscal year 2021 is inclusive of the funding already provided in the 2019–21 biennial budget for the Paraeducator Certificate Program.

What are you purchasing and how does it solve the problem?

These funds will provide a revenue source with which districts can help cover the costs of providing the professional development as required in state law.

Providing this funding aimed at increasing paraeducators’ capacity has additional benefits. Paraeducators represent more racial diversity in our schools than the diversity in our certificated teaching population. Increased professional learning will fortify the pathway for many paraeducators to become fully certificated teachers. This is a powerful strategy to open opportunities for students to learn from qualified educators who represent the diversity in our state and who contribute to the culture of learning in our schools.

What alternatives did you explore and why was this option chosen?

This is the only funding option that will fulfill the intent of HB 1115 (2017), HB 1658 (2019), and Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 28A.413.060.

An alternative allocation methodology of using the prototypical school model was considered. It was not selected for two primary reasons. First, the prototypical school model allocates staff on a full-time equivalent basis, while professional development costs are per individual. Second, the number of paraeducators hired by school districts is significantly higher than what gets allocated in the prototypical school model.

Assumptions and Calculations

Expansion or alteration of a current program or service:

Assumptions were made in this request with respect to the projected number of paraeducators employed by school districts (headcount) in future school years, and the average daily rate of salary and fringe benefits paid to these employees.

This is an expansion of the 2019 legislation that funded two days of the Fundamental Course of Study, and would fulfill the intent of HB 1115 (2017), HB 1658 (2019), and RCW 28A.413.060. It also provides funding for professional learning for coursework toward the General Paraeducator Certificate codified in RCW 28A.413.070. We believe the intent of these laws is to ensure our most vulnerable student populations, including students with disabilities and students for whom English is not their first language, have access to highly-skilled paraeducators. The expansion would provide paraeducators ongoing professional development so they can best serve as critical members of a student's learning and instructional support team.

Detailed assumptions and calculations:

OSPI used personnel data reported by school districts through the S-275 to determine the actual headcount of employees hired as aides (duty root 91) serving in instructional roles. This headcount data for the school years of 2014–15 through 2018–19 was used to estimate the increase in total paraeducators hired in future years as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Estimated Paraeducators to be Hired in Future Years

School Year	Estimated Paraeducators Hired
2019–20	26,734
2020–21	27,916
2021–22	29,149
2022–23	30,438

The estimated statewide average cost per day of salary and fringe benefits was calculated using preliminary S-275 data for the 2018–19 school year at \$211.52. OSPI used this data and the implicit price deflator as an annual percentage increase as shown in Figure 3 to arrive at the base estimated reimbursement rate.

Figure 3: Base Estimated Reimbursement Rate for Future Years

School Year	Implicit Price Deflator	Base Reimbursement Rate
2019–20	2.0%	\$215.72
2020–21	2.1%	\$220.28
2021–22	2.1%	\$224.91
2022–23	2.0%	\$229.41

Workforce Assumptions:

None.

Strategic and Performance Outcomes

Strategic framework:

This request provides fiscal support to school districts targeted to help students in need with the goal of reducing or eliminating achievement gaps. It is aligned with the strategic goal of preparing all students for success after their K–12 experience.

Performance outcomes:

Per House Bill 1115 (2017), paraeducators provide most of the instruction in programs designed by the Legislature to reduce opportunity gaps. By setting common statewide standards, requiring training in those standards, and offering career development for paraeducators, students in these programs are better supported for success.

Other Collateral Connections**Intergovernmental:**

None.

Stakeholder response:

School districts, as well as other stakeholders, will support this request for additional funding to help pay for the statutorily required number of paraeducator professional development days.

Legal or administrative mandates:

Not applicable.

State workforce impacts:

Funding for these professional development days is through reimbursement to districts after staff has taken the required professional development. Since there is a legislative requirement to provide these professional learning days, it is assumed that compensation for such has already been collectively bargained.

State facilities impacts:

Not applicable.

Changes from current law:

State law will have to change in either bill or budget to meet this request to change the allocation methodology. Draft language of this proposed approach is as follows:

“\$51,600,000 of the general fund-state appropriation for fiscal year 2021 are provided solely for training on the Paraeducator Certificate Program for the implementation of chapter 237, Laws of 2017 (paraeducators). A minimum of \$12,001,000 of the funds in this section must be allocated for trainings provided prior to August 15, 2020 at a to be determined daily rate based on the number of individual paraeducators trained. Beginning with the 2020–21 school year, inclusive of all trainings after August 15, 2020, the following daily reimbursement rate is to be adjusted by the regionalization factor of the district providing the professional development. The daily reimbursement rate is \$220.28 for the 2020–21 school year to be adjusted by the implicit price deflator for future year reimbursements. Starting with the 2020–21 school year, funds will be paid to districts in September, January, and May of each year, based on the number of paraeducators trained and not yet claimed for reimbursement.”

Please note that the \$51,600,000 for fiscal year 2021 is inclusive of the funding already provided in the 2019–21 biennial budget for the Paraeducator Certificate Program.

Puget Sound recovery:

Not applicable.

IT Addendum**Does this Decision Package include funding for any IT-related costs, including hardware, software, (including cloud-based services), contracts or IT staff?**

No

Objects of Expenditure

Objects of Expenditure <i>Dollars in Thousands</i>	Fiscal Years		Biennial	Fiscal Years		Biennial
	2020	2021	2019-21	2022	2023	2021-23
Obj. N	\$0	\$39,600	\$39,600	\$28,500	\$29,500	\$58,000

Agency Contact Information

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