

*WSPTA acknowledges that quality education is dependent on the excellence of the educators working with students. Paraeducators are classified staff who perform many functions in schools, including instructional assistance and tutoring under the supervision of a teacher. Establishing Standards for Paraeducators was a top 5 legislative priority the 2017 and 2018 sessions. In 2019, the Legislature funded two days of training tied to the new standards, which is two days short of the statutory-required four days of basic training. The Legislature must fund the additional two days for these staff who work with the most vulnerable students, and whose work is critical to closing the opportunity gap.*

## Background

- In Washington state, paraeducators provide most of the instruction (62%) to students with disabilities, students learning English, and students from low-income families.<sup>1</sup> There are more than 27,000 paraeducators working in Washington's public schools (pre-K and K-12).<sup>2</sup>
- In 2017, the State Legislature established the first Paraeducator Board in the nation.<sup>3</sup> The Board seeks to professionalize the work of paraeducators by providing them with foundational training and opportunities for career development and is required to:
  - Adopt minimum employment requirements and standards of practice for paraeducators.
  - Establish requirements and policies for general and advanced paraeducator certificates.
  - Develop requirements and policies for paraeducator subject matter certificates in English Language Learners and Special Education.
  - Approve and develop courses required to meet paraeducator certification requirements.
  - Make policy recommendations for a paraeducator career ladder that will increase opportunities for professional advancement.<sup>4</sup>
- Tied to the requirements around standards is a requirement that the Legislature fund 28 hours of a fundamental course of study for paraeducators within certain timeframes, and an additional 70 hours of professional development training within the first three years of employment. To meet the letter and intent of the law, and ensure adequate training and supports for paraeducators, the Legislature needs to fund the additional 14 hours in FY21.<sup>2</sup>

## Proposed Solutions

The Washington State PTA shall support legislation or policies that:

- **Fully funds the training requirements for paraeducators mandated by law, including the 28-hour fundamental course of study and the additional 70 hours of professional development required within the first three years of employment.**

## For More Information

Sherry Rudolph, WSPTA Advocacy Director  
[ptaadvocacydir@wastatepta.org](mailto:ptaadvocacydir@wastatepta.org)

Marie Sullivan, WSPTA Legislative Consultant  
[legconsultant@wastatepta.org](mailto:legconsultant@wastatepta.org)

*For more information on the WSPTA advocacy program, please visit our website ([www.wastatepta.org](http://www.wastatepta.org))*

## Citations

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2. 2019 Paraeducator Legislative Overview Factsheet  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mExaulAbDZQhPICg5K0-sEstlo760Gxx/view>
3. ESHB 1115 (Chapter 237, Laws of 2017). Paraeducators  
<http://lawfilesexternal.wa.gov/biennium/2017-18/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/House/1115-S.SL.pdf>
4. State of Washington Professional Educator Standards Board – the Paraeducator Board  
<https://www.pesb.wa.gov/paraeducator-board/>