

***WSPTA recognizes the need to ensure that every child has outstanding paraeducators, educators, and administrators and supports expanding programs that grow, recruit and retain an effective and diverse workforce and provide equitable access to preparation or certificate programs.***

## **Background**

Contrary to popular belief, as a state and nation, we are not so much facing an overall education professional shortage, but rather targeted shortages in specific areas with underqualified personnel at times. While teacher retention beyond Year Three and Year Five continues to be a concern, chronic issues remain in overarching areas of:

- Content and specialty areas such as STEM, Special Education, and Multi-Language Learners.
- Geographical location, including disparities among rural, urban, and suburban communities.
- Diversity in educators. The ratios remain low, with the ratio of educators of color to students of color is 20% educators compared to 51% BIPOC students.<sup>(1)</sup>
- Shortages of support personnel such as paraeducators and substitute teachers. Data confirms there are more unfilled paraeducator, substitute paraeducator, and substitute teacher positions.<sup>(2)</sup> Additionally, an increasing number of emergency substitute teachers with little to no formal content or classroom management training are primary content providers for students in some districts.

By focusing on improving the areas above, we can make our education system stronger and more effective for our students, increase the leadership pipeline for the future, and address the systemic inequities that exist.

## **Proposed Solutions**

Washington State PTA shall support legislation, policies and funding that ensure that every child has outstanding paraeducators, educators and administrators by preparing all educators for supporting students with disabilities as part of their preservice, expanding programs that grow, recruit and retain an effective and diverse workforce, and providing equitable access to preparation or certificate programs.

## **Citations**

- (1) The Education Trust, “Many Students Across the Country Attend Schools without a Single Teacher of Color,” Press Release November 19, 2020. <https://edtrust.org/pres-release/many-students-across-the-country-attend-schools-without-a-single-teacher-of-color>
- (2) Goldhaber, D. & Gratz, T. (2021). [School District Staffing Challenges in a Rapidly Recovering Economy](#). CEDR Flash Brief No. 11082021-1. University of Washington, Seattle, WA.

### **For More Information**

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***For more information on the WSPTA advocacy program, please visit our website.***