

15 November, 2024

Dear Brian Fechter,

CC: Shea Hamilton & Maddy Thompson

On November 8, 2024, the PESB received a memorandum from OFM requesting proposals for budget reductions in response to the state's projected budget shortfall. Although PESB and the Paraeducator Board are not part of the executive cabinet, PESB recognizes the need for all state agencies to contribute to budgetary solutions.

In the interest of responsibly managing public funds, PESB proposes a \$2,000,000 reduction for FY25, with additional reductions of up to \$4,000,000 over the 2025-27 biennium from PESB's paraeducator training funding (expenditure authority SU1/SU2). As requested by OFM, this funding was identified because it has historically been underutilized, and PESB believes that sufficient reimbursements can still be provided even with this proposed reduction.

PESB's paraeducator funding proviso allocates \$17,535,000 to PESB for paraeducator-related work during FY25, including \$16,873,000 for paraeducator training and \$662,000 to support the administrative functions of the Paraeducator Board. For FY25 through FY27, PESB proposes decreasing the total to \$15,535,000 and decreasing the paraeducator training portion to \$14,873,000. PESB is still receiving reimbursement requests for FY25, and this level of reduction leaves a healthy reserve that will be sufficient to reimburse all qualifying districts.

Below are proposed budget bill revisions to reflect these reductions.

Sec. 503(5) State Budget (2023-25 Biennium):

\$12,335,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2024 and \$15,535,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2025 are provided solely for implementation of chapter 237, Laws of 2017 (paraeducators). Of the amounts provided in this subsection:

\$11,550,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2024 and \$14,873,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2025 are provided solely for grants to districts to provide two days of training per school year in the paraeducator certificate program to all paraeducators. Funds in this subsection are provided solely for reimbursement to school districts that provide paraeducators with two days of training in the paraeducator certificate program in each of the 2022-23 and 2023-24 school years. Funding provided in this subsection is sufficient for new paraeducators to receive four days of training in the paraeducator certificate program during their first year. School districts receiving grants under this subsection must prioritize funding toward compensation for paraeducators who complete the required hours of instruction per school year.



Sec. 503(5) State Budget (2025-27 Biennium):

\$15,535,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2026 and \$15,535,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2027 are provided solely for implementation of chapter 237, Laws of 2017 (paraeducators). Of the amounts provided in this subsection:

\$14,873,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2026 and \$14,873,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2027 are provided solely for grants to districts to provide two days of training per school year in the paraeducator certificate program to all paraeducators. Funds in this subsection are provided solely for reimbursement to school districts that provide paraeducators with two days of training in the paraeducator certificate program in each of the 2023-24 and 2024-25 school years. Funding provided in this subsection is sufficient for new paraeducators to receive four days of training in the paraeducator certificate program during their first year. School districts receiving grants under this subsection must prioritize funding toward compensation for paraeducators who complete the required hours of instruction per school year.

Sincerely,

Dr. Erica Hernandez-Scott
Executive Director
Professional Educator Standards Board