

Submitter: Maria Scanelli
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

I support the professional development of our Paraeducators, Educational Assistants and Instructional Assistants who are vital resources and supports to our Educators, Youth and School Communities. Paraeducators have high impacts on outcomes for all students, including students with identified and unidentified disabilities. Investment in their onboarding, training, coaching and support is vital to prepare them for the challenges and opportunities they face in the classroom related to behavior and fostering learning and a sense of belonging. When students feel they belong they can be ready to learn. All of our staff, including our classified staff, deserve investment in their professional development to help them learn and implement strategies of Transformative Social Emotional Learning; culturally responsive teaching and relationship building skills that center inclusion and make accommodations and adaptations so ALL students, which includes our neurodiverse students, can learn and grow to their highest potential. These strategies support preparing our children to acquire the literacy, math, and critical thinking skills it takes to be civically engaged and ready for their crucial roles in jobs and careers that cannot be done by AI. Investing in the professional development of our Paraeducators/IAs/EAs is also investing in potential future certified teachers, administrators and career school staff professionals who have established relationships with our students, families and school communities, a long term win for all. Fully funding special education and attending to class size and caseloads are essential to ensuring our teaching staff (including paraeducators/IA's/EA's) are resourced and ready to provide the highest quality learning experience for our children. I encourage our legislators to take action against the dismantling of our public schools, support the union requests, and take every action necessary to fully fund our public schools and reinstate school librarians and resources for media literacy and digital access.