

Submitter: Elizabeth Israel-Davis
On Behalf Of:
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Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

Paraeducators (also known as EAs, IAs, Teacher Assistants, and multiple other titles) play a critical role in our school systems. Often, they support our most vulnerable students and are the adult in the building who these students trust the most and who knows them the best. Sometimes they are also Aunties, cousins, or parents in our school communities and provide not only instructional support but offer a bridge of understanding between school and neighborhood. Despite these crucial supports they provide, they are often some of the first positions cut when budgets become lean. Please help protect funding for paraeducator positions. I have the honor and great responsibility of working with paraeducators across Multnomah County to train and coach them in early literacy instruction. I am constantly impressed with the dedication I've seen from every individual to improve their practice in order to better teach and support their students. They all work with 5 - 8 groups of students per day with 4 - 6 students per group. If just one paraeducator position is eliminated from a school that means somewhere between 20 - 48 fewer students will get the literacy support they need. And those aren't just 'someone's' students. They are our students because ALL students are our students. If we truly value children and truly consider them a priority, we must fully fund all aspects of education, including the vital positions of paraeducators.