A bill to be entitled

An act relating to K-12 educational support employees; creating s. 1012.411, F.S.; requiring district school superintendents to identify critical employment shortages of educational support employees within the school district; defining the term "critical employment shortage"; requiring school districts to fund specified incentives, subject to legislative appropriation; requiring district school superintendents to annually provide a report to the Legislature by a specified date; providing requirements for the report; amending s. 1012.38, F.S.; requiring, rather than authorizing, school districts to adopt and implement specified programs for the career development of education paraprofessionals by a specified date, subject to legislative appropriation; providing an effective date.

WHEREAS, the state has a vested interest in addressing the critical employment shortage of educational support employees, including education paraprofessionals, in the state, and

WHEREAS, educational support employees are valued and vital members of the education workforce whose work ensures student success from prekindergarten through grade 12, and
WHEREAS, educational support employees engage students, keeping them connected to the larger school community and emotionally and physically healthy and safe, and
WHEREAS, because educational support employees are vital to the success of Florida's students, it is in the state's best interests to provide funding to ensure that the state's public schools maintain adequate staffing levels for educational support employees, NOW, THEREFORE,

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 1012.411, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

1012.411 Critical employment shortages of educational support employees.—
(1) By April 1, 2023, and annually thereafter, each district school superintendent must compile a list of critical employment shortages of educational support employees as defined in s. 1012.40(1), including education paraprofessionals as defined in s. 1012.01(2)(e), aggregated by position, within the school district. For purposes of this section, the term "critical employment shortage" means that at least 20 percent of a specified position is vacant and unfilled within the school district.
(2) Subject to legislative appropriation, each school
district must fund incentives to help recruit and retain educational support employees for positions with a critical employment shortage.

(3) By December 1, 2023, and annually thereafter, each district school superintendent shall provide a report to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives that includes a list of positions with a critical employment shortage and how the school district used the funding under subsection (2) to implement the required incentives.

Section 2. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section 1012.38, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1012.38 Education paraprofessional career development.—
(1)(a) By July 1, 2023, and subject to legislative appropriation, each school district shall adopt and implement a program for the career development of education paraprofessionals. The purpose of the program is to provide to education paraprofessionals a system of career development which is based upon education and training advancement, and to furnish economic incentives to encourage excellence among education paraprofessionals.

Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2022.