

RCW 28A.300.544 Students in foster care, experiencing homelessness, or in or exiting juvenile rehabilitation facilities—Work group—Report. (Expires December 31, 2028.)

(1) The office of the superintendent of public instruction, in collaboration with the department of children, youth, and families, the office of homeless youth prevention and protection programs of the department of commerce, and the student achievement council, shall convene a work group to address the needs of students in foster care, experiencing homelessness, or in or exiting juvenile rehabilitation facilities. Nothing in this section prevents the office of the superintendent of public instruction from using an existing work group created under the authority of section 223(1)(bb), chapter 299, Laws of 2018, with modifications to the membership and duties, to meet the requirements of this section. The work group, which shall seek to promote continuity with efforts resulting from section 223(1)(bb), chapter 299, Laws of 2018, must include representatives of nongovernmental agencies, representation from the educational opportunity gap oversight and accountability committee, representation from the education data center, and meaningful consultation with youth and young adults who have lived experience in foster care, homelessness and juvenile rehabilitation. The work group must also include four legislative members who possess experience in issues of education, child welfare, homeless youth, and juvenile rehabilitation, appointed as follows:

(a) The president of the senate shall appoint one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the senate.

(b) The speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the house of representatives.

(2) The work group shall develop recommendations to promote the following for students who are in foster care, experiencing homelessness, or in or exiting juvenile rehabilitation facilities:

(a) The achievement of parity in education outcomes with the general student population; and

(b) The elimination of racial and ethnic disparities for education outcomes in comparison to the general student population.

(3) In developing the recommendations required by subsection (2) of this section, the work group shall:

(a) Review the education outcomes of students in foster care, experiencing homelessness, or in or exiting juvenile rehabilitation facilities, by examining data, disaggregated by race and ethnicity, on:

(i) Kindergarten readiness, early grade reading and math, ninth grade students on track to graduate, high school completion, postsecondary enrollment, postsecondary completion, and other outcomes of students after high school; and

(ii) School attendance, school mobility, special education and other student support programs, and school discipline;

(b) Evaluate the outcomes, needs, and service array for students in foster care, experiencing homelessness, or in or exiting juvenile rehabilitation facilities, and the specific needs of students of color and students with special education needs;

(c) Engage stakeholders, including students in foster care, experiencing homelessness, or in or exiting juvenile rehabilitation facilities, foster parents and relative caregivers, birth parents, caseworkers, school districts and educators, early learning providers,

postsecondary institutions, and federally recognized tribes, to provide input on the development of recommendations; and

(d) (i) Submit a report to the governor, the appropriate committees of the legislature, and the educational opportunity gap oversight and accountability committee by October 31, 2023, and annually thereafter until 2027, that identifies:

(A) Progress the state has made toward achieving education parity for students in foster care, experiencing homelessness, or in or exiting juvenile rehabilitation facilities; and

(B) Recommendations that can be implemented using existing resources, rules, and regulations, and those that would require policy, administrative, and resource allocation changes prior to implementation.

(ii) Reports required by (d) of this subsection may include findings and recommendations regarding the feasibility of developing a case study to examine or implement recommendations of the work group.

(4) The work group, in accordance with RCW 43.01.036, must submit a final report to the governor, the appropriate committees of the legislature, and the educational opportunity gap oversight and accountability committee by July 1, 2028. The final report must include the recommendations required by subsection (2) of this section and may include a plan for achieving the recommendations specified in subsection (2) of this section.

(5) To assist the work group in the completion of its duties, the following apply:

(a) The office of the superintendent of public instruction, department of children, youth, and families, the student achievement council, and the office of homeless youth prevention and protection programs of the department of commerce shall provide updated education data and other necessary data to the education data center established under RCW 43.41.400; and

(b) The education data center shall provide a report to the work group regarding education outcomes specified in subsection (3) (a) (i) and (ii) of this section by August 31, 2023, and annually thereafter until 2027. If state funds are not available to produce the reports, the work group may pursue supplemental private funds to fulfill the requirements of this subsection (5) (b).

(6) Nothing in this section permits disclosure of confidential information protected from disclosure under federal or state law, including but not limited to information protected under chapter 13.50 RCW. Confidential information received by the work group retains its confidentiality and may not be further disseminated except as permitted by federal and state law.

(7) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this section unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(a) "Students in foster care" means students who are the subject of a dependency proceeding as defined in RCW 26A.150.510.

(b) "Students experiencing homelessness" means students without a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence in accordance with the definition of homeless children and youths in the federal McKinney-Vento homeless assistance act, 42 U.S.C. Sec. 11431 through 11435.

(c) "Students in or exiting juvenile rehabilitation facilities" means youth and postresident youth as those terms are defined in RCW 26A.190.005.

(8) This section expires December 31, 2028. [2023 c 300 s 1; 2020 c 233 s 2.]

Findings—Intent—2020 c 233: See note following RCW 74.13.1051.