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SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1716

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State of Washington

60th Legislature

2007 Regular Session

By House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Roberts, Kagi, Hinkle, Haler, Walsh, Appleton, Pettigrew, Dickerson, Darneille, Anderson, Moeller, O'Brien, McDonald, Santos, Wood, Kenney, Simpson and Lantz)

READ FIRST TIME 3/5/07.

1 AN ACT Relating to supporting educational achievement for children  
2 in foster care; amending RCW 28A.150.510; adding a new section to  
3 chapter 28A.150 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 43.20A RCW;  
4 creating new sections; and providing an expiration date.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that the educational  
7 achievement of children in foster care continues to be significantly  
8 lower than students in the general population. Children in foster care  
9 are more likely to change schools frequently, be retained and repeat  
10 a grade, perform at lower levels on standardized tests, and graduate at  
11 a significantly lower rate than their peers. An important strategy for  
12 supporting the educational progress of children in foster care is to  
13 facilitate continuity of school placement when children are removed  
14 from their homes or when subsequent changes in placement are necessary.  
15 The legislature also finds that the primary barriers to continuity of  
16 school placement are inadequate numbers of local foster homes and a  
17 lack of funding to provide transportation when local placements are not  
18 available. Despite some efforts to support continuity of school  
19 placement for children in foster care, limited progress has been made.

1       The legislature further finds that an additional factor in  
2 supporting improved educational outcomes for children in foster care is  
3 timely data collection and analysis. Aggregate reporting about the  
4 educational attainment of children in foster care is crucial to  
5 understanding and assessing the impact of policy and practice changes  
6 on educational outcomes. The legislature, therefore, intends to  
7 promote the development, implementation, and evaluation of innovative  
8 and practical strategies for maintaining continuity of school placement  
9 for children in foster care, and to facilitate data sharing between the  
10 office of the superintendent of public instruction and the children's  
11 administration within the department of social and health services.

12       NEW SECTION.   **Sec. 2.** (1) Subject to availability of funding  
13 amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the oversight committee  
14 established in RCW 74.13.570, by August 1, 2007, shall: (a) Select  
15 stakeholders to assist the committee with facilitating innovation and  
16 effectiveness in the recruitment and retention of foster parents; (b)  
17 identify promising and effective strategies for school enrollment  
18 stabilization; (c) select strategies for implementation and evaluation  
19 in the ten school districts with the highest rate of removal of school-  
20 age children from their homes under chapter 13.34 RCW; and (d) develop  
21 a request for qualification to community agencies and the division of  
22 children and family services within the department of social and health  
23 services for grant funding to implement school enrollment stabilization  
24 strategies. Such strategies may include practice pilot programs  
25 designed to affect a geographical cohort of children as well as  
26 programs using child-specific strategies to maintain school enrollment  
27 stability, including but not limited to strategies relating to: (i)  
28 Foster parent recruitment, retention, and support; (ii) transportation  
29 within and between school districts; (iii) incentives for schools,  
30 foster parents, and regional offices of the division of children and  
31 family services to support enrollment stability; (iv) funding of  
32 individual safety and services plan-driven strategies for individual  
33 children; and (v) public relations and communications campaigns  
34 regarding the needs of children in foster care and the opportunities in  
35 foster parenting.

36       (2) Based on the recommendations of the oversight committee, the  
37 department of social and health services shall select grant recipients

1 and begin disbursing grant funds not later than October 31, 2007. The  
2 committee shall, to the extent practicable, provide technical support  
3 and assistance to the grant recipients with implementation and data  
4 collection.

5 (3) By July 31, 2009, the department of social and health services  
6 shall inform the appropriate committees of the legislature about the  
7 strategies and practices implemented, and shall make additional policy  
8 recommendations based on evaluations of the same.

9 (4) This section expires September 1, 2009.

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.150  
11 RCW to read as follows:

12 Subject to availability of funding amounts for this specific  
13 purpose, not later than January 1, 2008, the office of the  
14 superintendent of public instruction shall facilitate interagency  
15 agreements consistent with protocols developed under RCW 74.13.560 and  
16 execute data-sharing agreements with and between local school districts  
17 and the children's administration within the department of social and  
18 health services for the purposes of: (1) Promoting school enrollment  
19 continuity of children in foster care; and (2) evaluating and analyzing  
20 the impact of changes to state, school district, and department  
21 policies and practices on the educational outcomes of children in  
22 foster care. Data-sharing agreements required under this section shall  
23 include state and school district-level data as well as data about  
24 individual children in foster care.

25 **Sec. 4.** RCW 28A.150.510 and 2000 c 88 s 1 are each amended to read  
26 as follows:

27 In order to effectively serve students who are under the  
28 jurisdiction of the juvenile justice system as dependent pursuant to  
29 chapter 13.34 RCW, education records shall be (~~released upon request~~  
30 ~~to~~) transmitted to the department of social and health services within  
31 two school days after receiving the request from the department (~~of~~  
32 ~~social and health services~~) provided that the department of social and  
33 health services certifies that it will not disclose to any other party  
34 the education records without prior written consent of the parent or  
35 student unless authorized to disclose the records under state law. The  
36 department of social and health services is authorized to disclose

1 education records it obtains pursuant to this section to a foster  
2 parent, guardian, or other entity authorized by the department of  
3 social and health services to provide residential care to or  
4 educational advocacy services on behalf of the student.

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** A new section is added to chapter 43.20A RCW  
6 to read as follows:

7 The children's administration within the department of social and  
8 health services shall request funding and/or approval necessary to  
9 expedite the development and implementation of an interface between the  
10 statewide automated child welfare information system and the  
11 information system within the office of the superintendent of public  
12 instruction in order to facilitate ongoing effective data sharing  
13 between the two agencies regarding the educational achievement of  
14 children in foster care.

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