
HOUSE BILL 1716

State of Washington 60th Legislature 2007 Regular Session

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 01/25/2007. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & Children's Services.

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) Not later than October 31, 2007, the oversight committee shall
37 select grant recipients and begin disbursing grant funds. The

1 committee shall, to the extent practicable, provide technical support
2 and assistance to the grant recipients with implementation and data
3 collection.

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 parent, guardian, or other entity authorized by the department of
2 social and health services to provide residential care to or
3 educational advocacy services on behalf of the student.

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

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

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