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SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2597

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State of Washington                      60th Legislature                      2008 Regular Session

By House Appropriations Subcommittee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Sullivan, Pedersen, Hasegawa, Ormsby, Haigh, Chase, Green, and Simpson)

READ FIRST TIME 02/05/08.

1            AN ACT Relating to creating a kindergarten readiness assessment;  
2 adding a new section to chapter 43.215 RCW; adding a new section to  
3 chapter 28A.300 RCW; and creating new sections.

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

5            NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds compelling evidence  
6 from research and from the efforts of innovative school districts in  
7 Washington that when students enter the K-12 public schools ready to  
8 learn, their progress and achievement is greatly enhanced. The  
9 legislature further finds that the foundational skills for kindergarten  
10 success can be assessed using a variety of assessment tools. Many  
11 school districts are using a kindergarten entry assessment and are  
12 working closely with early learning providers and parents in their  
13 communities. However, because there is no common kindergarten entry  
14 assessment, there is no statewide baseline for students' readiness to  
15 learn. Such a baseline is critical for developing new early  
16 interventions with struggling students and for measuring the impact of  
17 such initiatives as full-day kindergarten. A common kindergarten entry  
18 assessment could also serve as an accountability and quality measure  
19 for early learning programs.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 2.**    A new section is added to chapter 43.215 RCW  
2 to read as follows:

3        (1) The department and the office of the superintendent of public  
4 instruction, jointly and in collaboration with thrive by five  
5 Washington, shall study and make recommendations to the governor and  
6 the legislature regarding implementation of a statewide kindergarten  
7 entry assessment. The study and development of recommendations shall  
8 include consultation with the following:

9            (a) The Washington early learning advisory council;

10          (b) The Washington association for the education of young children;

11          (c) The foundation for early learning;

12          (d) Washington Indian tribes including, but not limited to, the  
13 confederated tribes of the Yakama nation and the Colville confederated  
14 tribes;

15          (e) Early childhood educators;

16          (f) Kindergarten teachers; and

17          (g) Specialists in early childhood assessments.

18        (2) In conducting the study and developing the recommendations, the  
19 department shall examine:

20          (a) Research on the critical knowledge and skills, including social  
21 skills, for successful entry and progress in kindergarten; and

22          (b) Examples of assessments used by schools and early learning  
23 providers in Washington state and in other states;

24        (3) The study and recommendations shall:

25          (a) Identify a preferred kindergarten entry assessment that  
26 addresses the following knowledge and skills, at a minimum:

27            (i) Letter and sound recognition;

28            (ii) Numbers and number concepts; and

29            (iii) Social skills for the school environment;

30          (b) Specify a plan for use of the assessment in a pilot phase and  
31 a voluntary use phase, and a time certain when school districts must  
32 offer the assessment;

33          (c) Describe a recommended methodology for conducting the  
34 assessments, including a plan for training or professional development  
35 of individuals who will administer the assessment to ensure reliable  
36 and comparable results;

37          (d) Describe a process for reporting results of the assessment to

1 parents, the office of the superintendent of public instruction, and  
2 the department of early learning in a common format; and

3 (e) Propose a plan for communicating with early learning providers  
4 and parents about the knowledge and skills covered by the assessment.

5 (4) In collaboration with thrive by five Washington and in  
6 consultation with others, the department and the office of the  
7 superintendent of public instruction shall: Analyze how the assessment  
8 can be used to improve instruction to be responsive to the needs and  
9 strengths of individual students entering kindergarten; whether and how  
10 the assessment results can be used to improve the early learning and  
11 K-12 systems, as well as the transition between systems; and the costs  
12 of the assessment, including the time required to administer the  
13 assessment.

14 (5) The kindergarten entry assessment selected must be sensitive to  
15 cultural and socioeconomic differences influencing the development of  
16 young children. The assessment shall not be used to screen or  
17 otherwise preclude children from entering kindergarten if they are  
18 otherwise eligible.

19 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** The department of early learning and the  
20 office of the superintendent of public instruction jointly shall submit  
21 a report with recommendations for implementing the kindergarten entry  
22 assessment to the governor and the appropriate committees of the  
23 legislature by October 15, 2009.

24 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.300  
25 RCW to read as follows:

26 The office of the superintendent of public instruction and the  
27 department of early learning, jointly and in collaboration with thrive  
28 by five Washington, shall study and make recommendations to the  
29 governor and the legislature regarding implementation of a statewide  
30 kindergarten entry assessment, in accordance with section 2 of this  
31 act.

32 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** If specific funding for the purposes of this  
33 act, referencing this act by bill or chapter number, is not provided by

1 June 30, 2008, in the omnibus appropriations act, this act is null and  
2 void.

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