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SENATE BILL 6298

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State of Washington

64th Legislature

2016 Regular Session

By Senators Frockt, Litzow, O'Ban, Fain, Mullet, Dammeier, Jayapal, Billig, Rivers, Pedersen, Rolfes, Darneille, McAuliffe, Hasegawa, Carlyle, Habib, Keiser, Conway, and Llias

Read first time 01/14/16. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to homeless student stability and opportunities;  
2 amending RCW 28A.300.540; adding a new section to chapter 28A.300  
3 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 43.185C RCW; adding a new  
4 section to chapter 28A.320 RCW; creating new sections; and making  
5 appropriations.

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

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that schools are  
8 places of academic as well as personal enrichment and that schools  
9 provide safety, stability, support, and relationships necessary to  
10 help students succeed. These resources are vitally necessary for tens  
11 of thousands of students in Washington with no permanent home who  
12 often struggle in school because they are worried about where their  
13 families are staying night after night.

14 (2) The legislature also recognizes the population of homeless  
15 students disproportionately includes students of color.

16 (3) The intent of the legislature is to start a competitive grant  
17 system for high-need school districts and to supplement federal  
18 McKinney-Vento Act dollars to ensure homeless students continue  
19 attending the same schools, maintain housing stability, and improve  
20 academic achievement.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 2.**    A new section is added to chapter 28A.300  
2    RCW to read as follows:

3        (1) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall  
4    create a competitive grant process to evaluate and award state-funded  
5    three-year grants to school districts to increase identification of  
6    homeless students and the capacity of the districts to provide  
7    support, which may include education liaisons, for homeless  
8    students. The process must complement any similar federal grant  
9    program or programs in order to minimize agency overhead and  
10   administrative costs for the superintendent of public instruction and  
11   school districts. School districts may access both federal and state  
12   funding to identify and support homeless students.

13        (2) Award criteria for the state grants must be based on the  
14   demonstrated need of the school district and may consider the number  
15   or overall percentage, or both, of homeless children and youths  
16   enrolled in preschool, elementary, and secondary schools in the  
17   school district, and the ability of the local school district to meet  
18   these needs. Award criteria for these must also be based on the  
19   quality of the applications submitted. Preference must be given to  
20   districts that demonstrate a commitment to serving the needs of  
21   unaccompanied youth.

22        (3) Districts receiving grants must measure during the academic  
23   year how often each student physically moves, what services families  
24   or unaccompanied youth could access, and whether or not a family or  
25   unaccompanied youth received stable housing by the end of the school  
26   year.

27        (4) Homeless students are defined as students without a fixed,  
28   regular, and adequate nighttime residence as set forth in the federal  
29   McKinney-Vento homeless education assistance act (P.L. 100-77; 101  
30   Stat. 482).

31        (5) School districts may not use funds allocated under this  
32   section to supplant existing federal, state, or local resources for  
33   homeless student supports, which may include education liaisons.

34        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 3.**    A new section is added to chapter 43.185C  
35   RCW to read as follows:

36        (1) The department, in consultation with the office of the  
37   superintendent of public instruction, shall administer a grant  
38   program that links homeless students and their families with stable  
39   housing located in the homeless student's school district. The goal

1 of the program is to provide educational stability for homeless  
2 students by promoting housing stability.

3 (2) The department, working with the office of the superintendent  
4 of public instruction, shall develop a competitive grant process to  
5 make grant awards of up to five hundred thousand dollars to school  
6 districts partnered with eligible organizations on implementation of  
7 the proposal. For the purposes of this subsection, "eligible  
8 organization" means any local government, local housing authority,  
9 regional support network established under chapter 71.24 RCW,  
10 nonprofit community or neighborhood-based organization, federally  
11 recognized Indian tribe in the state of Washington, or regional or  
12 statewide nonprofit housing assistance organization. Applications for  
13 the grant program must include contractual agreements between the  
14 housing providers and school districts defining the responsibilities  
15 and commitments of each party to identify, house, and support  
16 homeless students.

17 (3) The grant program is limited to fifteen schools per school  
18 year. In determining which school districts will receive grants,  
19 preference must be given to districts with a demonstrated commitment  
20 of partnership and history with eligible organizations.

21 (4) Activities eligible for assistance under this grant program  
22 include but are not limited to:

23 (a) Rental assistance, which includes utilities, security and  
24 utility deposits, first and last month's rent, rental application  
25 fees, moving expenses, and other eligible expenses to be determined  
26 by the department;

27 (b) Transportation assistance, including gasoline assistance for  
28 families with vehicles and bus passes;

29 (c) Emergency shelter; and

30 (d) Housing stability case management.

31 (5) All beneficiaries of funds from the grant program must be  
32 unaccompanied youth or from very low-income households. For the  
33 purposes of this subsection, "very low-income household" means an  
34 unaccompanied youth or family or unrelated persons living together  
35 whose adjusted income is less than fifty percent of the median family  
36 income, adjusted for household size, for the county where the grant  
37 recipient is located.

38 (6)(a) Grantee school districts must compile information and  
39 report to the legislature the findings of the grantee, the housing

1 stability of the homeless families, the academic performance of the  
2 grantee population, and any related policy recommendations.

3 (b) Data on all program participants must be entered into and  
4 tracked through the Washington homeless client management information  
5 system as described in RCW 43.185C.180.

6 (7) In order to ensure that school districts are meeting the  
7 requirements of an approved program for homeless students, the office  
8 of the superintendent of public instruction shall monitor the  
9 programs at least once every two years. Monitoring shall begin during  
10 the 2016-17 school year.

11 (8) Any program review and monitoring under this section may be  
12 conducted concurrently with other program reviews and monitoring  
13 conducted by the department. In its review, the office of the  
14 superintendent of public instruction shall monitor program components  
15 that include but need not be limited to the process used by the  
16 district to identify and reach out to homeless students, assessment  
17 data and other indicators to determine how well the district is  
18 meeting the academic needs of homeless students, district  
19 expenditures used to expand opportunities for these students, and the  
20 academic progress of students under the program.

21 **Sec. 4.** RCW 28A.300.540 and 2015 c 69 s 28 are each amended to  
22 read as follows:

23 (1) For the purposes of this section, "unaccompanied homeless  
24 student" means a student who is not in the physical custody of a  
25 parent or guardian and is homeless as defined in RCW 43.330.702(2).

26 (2) By December 31, 2010, the office of the superintendent of  
27 public instruction shall establish a uniform process designed to  
28 track the additional expenditures for transporting homeless students,  
29 including expenditures required under the McKinney Vento act,  
30 reauthorized as Title X, Part C, of the no child left behind act,  
31 P.L. 107-110, in January 2002. Once established, the superintendent  
32 shall adopt the necessary administrative rules to direct each school  
33 district to adopt and use the uniform process and track these  
34 expenditures. The superintendent shall post on the superintendent's  
35 web site total expenditures related to the transportation of homeless  
36 students.

37 (3)(a) By January 10, 2015, and every odd-numbered year  
38 thereafter, the office of the superintendent of public instruction

1 shall report to the governor and the legislature the following data  
2 for homeless students:

3 (i) The number of identified homeless students enrolled in public  
4 schools;

5 (ii) The number of identified unaccompanied homeless students  
6 enrolled in public schools, which number shall be included for each  
7 district and the state under "student demographics" on the Washington  
8 state report card web site;

9 (iii) The number of identified homeless students of color;

10 (iv) The number of students participating in the learning  
11 assistance program under chapter 28A.165 RCW, the highly capable  
12 program under chapter 28A.185 RCW, and the running start program  
13 under chapter 28A.600 RCW; and

14 (~~(iv)~~) (v) The academic performance and educational outcomes of  
15 homeless students and unaccompanied homeless students, including but  
16 not limited to the following performance and educational outcomes:

17 (A) Student scores on the statewide administered academic  
18 assessments;

19 (B) English language proficiency;

20 (C) Dropout rates;

21 (D) Four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate;

22 (E) Five-year adjusted cohort graduation rate;

23 (F) Absenteeism rates;

24 (G) Truancy rates, if available; and

25 (H) Suspension and expulsion data.

26 (b) The data reported under this subsection (3) must include  
27 state and district-level information and must be disaggregated by at  
28 least the following subgroups of students: White, Black, Hispanic,  
29 American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Pacific Islander/Hawaiian  
30 Native, low income, transitional bilingual, migrant, special  
31 education, and gender.

32 (4) By July 1, 2014, the office of the superintendent of public  
33 instruction in collaboration with experts from community  
34 organizations on homelessness and homeless education policy, shall  
35 develop or acquire a short video that provides information on how to  
36 identify signs that indicate a student may be homeless, how to  
37 provide services and support to homeless students, and why this  
38 identification and support is critical to student success. The video  
39 must be posted on the superintendent of public instruction's web  
40 site.

1 (5) By July 1, 2014, the office of the superintendent of public  
2 instruction shall adopt and distribute to each school district, best  
3 practices for choosing and training school district-designated  
4 homeless student liaisons.

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.320  
6 RCW to read as follows:

7 Each school district that has identified more than ten  
8 unaccompanied youth must establish a building point of contact in  
9 each middle school and high school. These points of contact must be  
10 appointed by the principal of the designated school and are  
11 responsible for identifying homeless and unaccompanied youth and  
12 connecting them with the school district's homeless student liaison.  
13 The school district homeless student liaison is responsible for  
14 training building points of contact.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** This act may be known and cited as the  
16 homeless student stability and opportunity gap act.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** (1) The sum of two million dollars, or as  
18 much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal year  
19 ending June 30, 2017, from the general fund to the office of the  
20 superintendent of public instruction for the purposes of section 2 of  
21 this act.

22 (2) The sum of two million dollars, or as much thereof as may be  
23 necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2018,  
24 from the general fund to the office of the superintendent of public  
25 instruction for the purposes of section 2 of this act.

26 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** If specific funding for the purposes of  
27 section 3 of this act, referencing section 3 of this act by bill or  
28 chapter number and section number, is not provided by June 30, 2016,  
29 in the omnibus appropriations act, section 3 of this act is null and  
30 void.

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