AN ACT Relating to improving student achievement by promoting social emotional learning throughout the calendar year; adding a new section to chapter 43.215 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 28A.630 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 28A.300 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 28A.215 RCW; creating new sections; and providing an expiration date.

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

NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. (1) The legislature finds that:

(a) Researchers at the University of Washington Tacoma's Center for Strong Schools who recently conducted a meta-analysis of 213 social emotional learning programs found that: (i) Social and emotional learning approaches increase students' mathematics and reading performance by eleven percentile points;

(b) The department of early learning reported that, in the 2013-14 school year, the social emotional development of nearly fifty percent of children in the early learning childhood and assistance program improved;

(c) The Washington state institute for public policy concluded in 2014 that the state's early childhood education and assistance program has a positive impact on third, fourth, and fifth grade test
scores, and the program generates about four dollars and seventy-five cents of benefits for every dollar of cost; and

(d) Researchers at the University of Washington Tacoma's Center for Strong Schools also found that two-thirds of the ninth grade academic achievement gap between disadvantaged youngsters and their more advantaged peers can be explained by what happens over the summer during the elementary school years.

(2) The legislature intends to improve student achievement by promoting social emotional learning throughout the calendar year in the following ways:

(a) Increasing the number of summer early childhood education and assistance programs at K-12 school building sites;

(b) Identifying developmental indicators for every grade level, kindergarten through twelve, for each of the six benchmarks described in the 2016 social emotional learning benchmarks report, that is, self-awareness, self-management, self-efficacy, social awareness, social management, and social engagement, as well as best practices and guidance;

(c) Requiring the superintendent of public instruction to employ a social emotional learning technical advisor to assist and advise schools in implementing social emotional learning programs throughout the calendar year; and

(d) Providing summer step-up grants to increase the number of summer learning programs that combine academics and social emotional learning.

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

(1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, by March 1, 2018, the department must contract for up to an additional six hundred slots in summer early childhood education and assistance programs at K-12 school building sites. The department must distribute the slots across the state.

(2) The department must give priority to summer early childhood education and assistance programs operated in K-12 school buildings that: (a) Plan to include four-year old children; (b) are in low-income areas or areas underserved by early childhood education programs; and (c) plan to fund summer meals using reimbursements from the United States department of agriculture or other nonstate sources.
(3) The department may adopt rules to implement this section.

(4) By October 1, 2019, and in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the department shall submit a report to the governor and the education committees of the legislature that describes how many summer early childhood education and assistance program slots were funded, participant's school readiness outcomes compared to children that did not receive the summer school programming, lessons learned in combining academics and social emotional learning in summer early childhood education and assistance programs, and lessons learned in funding summer meals using reimbursements from the United States department of agriculture or other nonstate sources; and that includes recommendations for continuing, modifying, or expiring the program.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 3. A new section is added to chapter 28A.630 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The superintendent of public instruction shall convene a work group to build upon the 2016 social emotional learning work group established under section 501(34), chapter 4, Laws of 2015 3rd sp. sess.

(2) The work group must include:

(a) The members of the social emotional learning benchmarks work group established under section 501(34), chapter 4, Laws of 2015 3rd sp. sess.;

(b) Representatives of the following groups: The Washington state commission on African American affairs, the Washington state commission on Asian Pacific American affairs, the Washington state commission on Hispanic affairs, the governor's office of Indian affairs, federally recognized tribes and urban tribal centers, an organization that specifically works to close the educational opportunity gap, grassroots organizations engaged with communities of color, and an organization that works with immigrant populations; and

(c) Experts in social emotional learning curriculum development, early childhood development, and adverse childhood experiences and trauma-informed care.

(3) The work group must:

(a) Build upon the 2016 social emotional learning benchmarks work group report;

(b) Identify and articulate developmental indicators for every grade level, kindergarten through twelve, for each of the six
benchmarks described in the 2016 social emotional learning benchmarks report, that is, self-awareness, self-management, self-efficacy, social awareness, social management, and social engagement. These indicators must be:

(i) Culturally inclusive and responsive;
(ii) Developmentally appropriate; and
(iii) Aligned with the benchmarks identified in the 2016 social emotional learning benchmarks report;

(c) Solicit, and incorporate, feedback from stakeholders and experts across the state on the social emotional learning benchmarks and indicators;

(d) Develop a model of best practices for educators, schools, districts, and families to monitor students' social emotional development and progress, and communicate this information to students' families. This model must:

(i) Not stigmatize or label individual students;
(ii) Not place one set of cultural norms or practices above another;
(iii) Be developmentally appropriate; and
(iv) Not be used as a state assessment or learning standard, nor affect students' grades;

(e) Develop guidance for schools, school districts, and educators in promoting developmentally appropriate interpersonal and decision-making knowledge and skills of social and emotional learning throughout the calendar year that:

(i) Is culturally competent;
(ii) Is linguistically appropriate;
(iii) Provides a positive learning environment for students;
(iv) Is inclusive of parental involvement;
(v) Promotes school safety and a positive school climate;
(vi) Includes best practices in assisting students through school transitions between elementary, middle, and high school; and
(vii) Incorporates best practices to address the mental health continuum of children, from mental well-being and mental health to mental illness, and acknowledges research around adverse childhood experiences;

(f) Provide technical advice on how developmentally appropriate interpersonal and decision-making knowledge and skills of social emotional learning fits within existing teacher and principal
evaluations, particularly as it relates to school safety and school climate; and

(g) Create a state implementation plan that provides a framework for incorporating, and aligning, social emotional learning with other Washington state education initiatives including college and career readiness, STEM education, twenty-first century skills, and the Washington state learning standards.

(4) To inform the work of the work group, the office of the superintendent of public instruction shall survey schools to:

(a) Ascertain how many schools in the state are teaching interpersonal and decision-making knowledge and skills of social emotional learning; and

(b) Understand individual districts' capacity to implement the social emotional learning benchmarks and indicators.

(5) By September 1, 2019, and in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the work group shall submit a report to the education committees of the legislature, the governor, and the superintendent of public instruction that details the work group's activities required under this section.

(6) The superintendent of public instruction may adopt rules to implement this section.

(7) This section expires July 1, 2020.

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

(1) The superintendent of public instruction shall select and employ a social emotional learning technical advisor to assist and advise schools in implementing social emotional learning programs throughout the calendar year.

(2) The superintendent of public instruction shall adopt, periodically update, and post on its web site, social emotional learning developmental benchmarks and indicators, best practices, and guidance, based on the recommendations of the social emotional learning work group convened under section 3 of this act.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 5. A new section is added to chapter 28A.215 RCW to read as follows:

(1)(a) The summer step-up grant program is established to increase the number of summer learning programs that combine academics and social emotional learning.
(b) The office of the superintendent of public instruction must develop and administer the competitive grant program.

(2) (a) By March 1, 2018, the office of the superintendent of public instruction must award grants to summer learning programs that are at least four weeks in length, for any of grades kindergarten through twelve that agree to create or expand summer learning programs that combine academics and social emotional learning.

(b) The office must identify criteria to evaluate applicants. The application must require, among other things, that the applicant describe: (i) The number and grade levels of the students that grant money will serve; (ii) how the summer learning program will combine academics and social emotional learning; and (iii) how summer meals will be funded, including whether meals will be reimbursed by the United States department of agriculture or other nonstate sources.

(c) In awarding grants, the office must give priority to applicants that plan to fund summer meals using reimbursements from the United States department of agriculture or other nonstate sources.

(d) Grant money must be used to support summer learning programs that combine academics and developmentally appropriate interpersonal and decision-making knowledge and skills of social emotional learning using the social emotional learning benchmarks recommended by the work group established under section 501(34), chapter 4, Laws of 2015 3rd sp. sess.

(e) The grant period is two years. Throughout the grant period, the grantees must cooperate with the office to evaluate program effectiveness and to draft the report required in this section.

(3) The superintendent of public instruction may adopt rules to implement this section.

(4) By October 1, 2019, and in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the superintendent of public instruction shall submit a report to the governor and the education committees of the legislature that describes how many students were supported during the summer learning programs funded by the summer step-up grants described in this section, lessons learned in combining academics and social emotional learning in summer learning programs, lessons learned in funding summer meals using reimbursements from the United States department of agriculture or other nonstate sources, and includes recommendations for continuing, modifying, or expiring the summer step-up grant program.
NEW SECTION.  Sec. 6.  This act may be known and cited as the summer step-up act.

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