

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6074

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Early Learning & K-12 Education, February 3, 2014

Title: An act relating to improving educational outcomes for homeless students.

Brief Description: Enacting provisions to improve educational outcomes for homeless students.

Sponsors: Senators Frockt, O'Ban, Mullet, Litzow, Rolfes, Fain, Billig, Rivers, Hasegawa, Kohl-Welles, Conway, Keiser, McAuliffe, Darneille, Fraser, Ranker, Kline and Brown.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/29/14, 2/03/14 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6074 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Litzow, Chair; Dammeier, Vice Chair; McAuliffe, Ranking Member; Rolfes, Assistant Ranking Member; Billig, Brown, Cleveland, Fain, Hill, Mullet and Rivers.

Staff: Katherine Taylor (786-7434)

Background: The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is the primary agency charged with overseeing K-12 public education in Washington State. OSPI works with the state's 295 school districts.

OSPI has a brochure for parents posted on its website that explains the educational rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness and informs parents about ways in which they can support their children's education during times of homelessness. The brochure was created by the National Center for Homeless Education.

According to OSPI, Washington school districts reported a total of 27,390 homeless students enrolled in school during the 2011-12 school year.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute): By January 10, 2015, and every odd-numbered year thereafter, OSPI must report to the Governor and the Legislature the following data regarding homeless students:

1. the number of identified homeless students enrolled in public schools;

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2. the number of students participating in a certain learning assistance program, the highly capable program, and the Running Start program; and
3. the academic performance and educational outcomes of homeless students, including but not limited to the following performance and educational outcomes:
 - a. student scores on the statewide administered academic assessments;
 - b. English language proficiency;
 - c. dropout rates;
 - d. four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate;
 - e. five-year adjusted cohort graduation rate;
 - f. absenteeism rates;
 - g. truancy rates, if available; and
 - h. suspension and expulsion data.

This reported data must include state and district-level information and must be disaggregated by at least the following subgroups of students: White, Black, Hispanic, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Pacific Islander/Hawaiian Native, low income, transitional bilingual, migrant, special education, and gender.

By July 1, 2014, OSPI, in collaboration with experts from community organizations on homelessness and homeless education policy, must develop or acquire a short video that provides information on how to identify signs that indicate a student may be homeless, how to provide services and support to homeless students, and why this identification and support is critical to student success. The video must be posted on OSPI's website.

By July 1, 2014, OSPI must adopt and distribute to each school district, best practices for choosing and training school district-designated homeless student liaisons.

On an annual basis each school district must strongly encourage:

- all school staff to annually review the video posted on OSPI's website on how to identify signs that indicate a student may be homeless, how to provide services and support to homeless students, and why this identification and support is critical to student success to ensure that homeless students are appropriately identified and supported; and
 - every district-designated homeless student liaison to attend trainings provided by the state to ensure that homeless children and youth are identified and served.
- Each school district must include in existing materials that are shared with students at the beginning of the school year or at enrollment, information about services and support for homeless students. School districts may use the brochure posted on OSPI's website as a resource. Schools are also strongly encouraged to use a variety of communications each year to notify students and families about services and support available to them if they experience homelessness, including but not limited to:
 - distributing and collecting an annual housing intake survey;
 - providing parent brochures directly to students and families;
 - announcing the information at school-wide assemblies; or
 - posting information on the district's website or linking to OSPI's website.

Each school district must account for the educational progress of each of its students. To achieve this, school districts must report annually to OSPI on a number of issues, including but not limited to dropout rates for student populations in each of the grades seven through 12 by identified homeless status.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute): Requires school districts to include information about services and support for homeless students in existing materials that are shared with students. Strongly encourages school districts to use a variety of communications each year to notify students and families about services and support available to them if they experience homelessness. Changes the date and pattern by which OSPI must report to the Governor and Legislature data on homeless students. Changes the frequency by which each school district must strongly encourage certain training activities by its staff.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: PRO: Homeless students should get the services they deserve. There are over 27,000 homeless students in Washington schools. We need to close the opportunity and achievement gap. We need to identify patterns to see where we are helping and where we are failing homeless students. Many school staff do not know the signs of homelessness. A quick video would help to raise awareness. Families need to know what resources are available to them. Early intervention is important for homeless students. Homelessness is on the rise. Most homeless liaisons also have other duties or jobs, so the resources in this bill are very important. Homelessness leads to poor attendance. In the Redmond area, there were a lot of students asking for help related to homelessness. Kids need a caring adult in schools. Homelessness can manifest in several ways. Each time a student moves, they miss four to six months of progress in school. In Tukwila, 11 percent of students are homeless. Tukwila spends about \$350,000 a year on homeless student services. That money comes out of local levy funds. I am homeless because my house burnt down, my mother has substance abuse issues, and my father died when I was 16 years old. The homeless liaison helped me get resources and now I am going to college. Homeless students are nine times more likely to repeat a grade. Teachers would benefit from a bill like this. We need to track this data and raise awareness at schools. We support this bill. We need to track these students. We need to be aware of how OSPI collects this data so that we get a detailed picture of how many students are homeless.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Steve Leahy, America's Edge; Katara Jordan, Columbia Legal Services; Miles Nowlin, Shelton School District; Keandra Radchenko, student in the Shelton School District; Liz Allen, UW Children and Youth Legislative Advocacy Clinic; Dave Larson, Tukwila School District; Elizabeth Richer, League of Education Voters.