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**SENATE BILL 6148**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2018 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Palumbo, Ranker, Saldaña, Darneille, Keiser, Wellman, Liias, Zeiger, Hunt, and Kuderer

AN ACT Relating to achieving equitable educational outcomes for vulnerable children and youth; creating new sections; and providing an expiration date.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds that thousands of vulnerable, homeless youth in Washington go to sleep without the safety, stability, and support of a family or home. Students experiencing homelessness and those in foster care face similar challenges and educational outcomes. Homeless students may be former foster youth and foster youth may be former homeless students. Despite these odds, children and youth experiencing homelessness want to and deserve to have the opportunity to succeed in school. The state must provide an ample and equitable education to all children and youth regardless of their housing status. The legislature intends to powerfully leverage current collaboration and investments to align services, outcome measures, accountability, and resources to achieve educational equity by 2027 for children and youth experiencing homelessness. The goal of this effort is that children and youth experiencing homelessness achieve educational outcomes at the same rate as their general student population peers throughout the educational continuum from prekindergarten to postsecondary.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The department of children, youth, and families, the office of the superintendent of public instruction, the department of commerce office of homeless youth prevention and protection programs, and the Washington student achievement council will convene a work group with aligned nongovernmental agencies to collaborate on creating a plan for children and youth experiencing homelessness to achieve educational equity with their general student population peers and close the disparities between racial and ethnic groups by 2027. The work group will:

(a) Review the educational outcomes of children and youth experiencing homelessness, including:

(i) Kindergarten readiness, early grade reading, school stability, high school completion, postsecondary enrollment, and postsecondary completion; and

(ii) Disaggregated data by race and ethnicity;

(b) Consider the outcomes, needs, and services for children and youth experiencing homelessness, and the specific needs of children and youth of color and those with special education needs;

(c) Map the current education support services including eligibility, service levels, service providers, outcomes, service coordination, data sharing, and overall successes and challenges;

(d) Engage stakeholders in participating in the analysis and development of recommendations, including youth experiencing homelessness, caseworkers, school districts and educators, early learning providers, postsecondary education advocates, and federally recognized tribes;

(e) Make recommendations for optimal continuum of education support services to homeless children and youth from prekindergarten to postsecondary that provide for shared and sustainable accountability to reach the goal of educational parity, including recommendations to:

(i) Align indicators and outcomes across organizations and programs;

(ii) Achieve racial and ethnic equity in educational outcomes;

(iii) Ensure access to consistent and accurate annual educational outcomes data;

(iv) Address system barriers such as data sharing;

(v) Detail options for governance and oversight to ensure educational services are continually available to children and youth experiencing homelessness regardless of status;

(vi) Detail a support structure that will ensure that educational records, educational needs, individualized education plans, credits, and other records will follow children and youth when they transition from district to district or another educational program or facility;

(vii) Explore the option of creating a specific statewide school district that supports the needs of children and youth experiencing homelessness and tracks their educational progress; and

(viii) Identify where opportunities exist to align policy, practices, and supports for students experiencing homelessness; and

(f) Outline which recommendations can be achieved through existing resources and regulations and which require policy, administrative, and resource adjustments.

(2) The purpose of the work group is to coordinate and implement the goals in subsection (1) of this section using research-based program strategies.

(3) The work group shall provide a report to the legislature by December 17, 2018, on the analysis, recommended plan, and legislative and administrative changes needed to achieve educational equity for children and youth experiencing homelessness with their general student population peers by 2027.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  This act expires December 31, 2018.

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