

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6223

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As of January 30, 2018

**Title:** An act relating to equitable educational outcomes for foster children and youth from preschool to postsecondary education.

**Brief Description:** Concerning equitable educational outcomes for foster children and youth from preschool to postsecondary education.

**Sponsors:** Senators Carlyle, O'Ban, Walsh, Frockt, Darneille, Zeiger, Palumbo, Hunt, Kuderer, Wellman and Liias.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/29/18.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Directs certain state agencies to convene a workgroup with aligned nongovernmental agencies to create a plan for children and youth in foster care to facilitate educational equity with their general student population peers.
- Tasks the workgroup with addressing certain topics and submitting a report to the Legislature by December 31, 2018.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Staff:** Ailey Kato (786-7434)

**Background:** Students in Foster Care. State and federal law include certain requirements to support students in foster care. The federal Every Student Succeeds Act provided new requirements to provide educational stability for children in foster care with an emphasis on collaboration between state agencies, local school districts, and child welfare agencies. School districts are required to designate a foster care liaison.

Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). In 2017, the Legislature created this new department. On July 1, 2018, early learning programs from the Department of Early Learning (DEL) and child welfare programs from the Children's Administration (CA) within the Department of Social and Health Services will move to DCYF. CA programs include

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Child Protective Services, the Family Assessment Response program, foster care, and adoption support.

Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). This state agency supports students in foster care by encouraging innovative practices that reduce educational disruptions, strengthen school stability, and improve academic performance.

Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC). This Council provides strategic planning, oversight, advocacy, and programs to support increased student success and higher levels of educational attainment in Washington. The agency's responsibilities include administration of student financial assistance programs and student outreach.

**Summary of Bill:** DCYF, OSPI, and WSAC must convene a work group with aligned nongovernmental agencies to create a plan for children and youth in foster care to facilitate educational equity with their general student population peers and close the disparities between racial and ethnic groups by 2027.

The work group must:

- review certain educational outcomes of children and youth in foster care;
- consider the outcomes, needs, and services for children and youth in foster care, including children and youth of color and those with special education needs;
- map the current education support services;
- engage certain stakeholders to participate in the analysis and development of recommendations;
- make certain recommendations for optimal continuum of education support services to foster children and youth from preschool to postsecondary; and
- outline which recommendations can be implemented using existing resources and regulations and which require policy, administrative, and resource adjustments.

The work group must provide a report to the Legislature by December 31, 2018, on the analysis, recommended plan, and legislative and administrative changes needed to facilitate educational equity for children and youth in foster care.

Children and youth in foster care means children and youth under the placement and care authority of DCYF, a federally recognized tribe, or another child-place agency; and children and youth who have experienced foster care and have achieved permanency.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 15, 2018.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: Children and youth in foster care and those experiencing homelessness face similar barriers and struggles and have similar needs. It makes sense to have one workgroup look at both. These children and youth deserve to

achieve at the same rate as their peers from preschool through college and have the same access to supports. Wraparound services work for children and youth in foster care and those experiencing homelessness. This bill will help institutions of government stop working in silos and have them come together to work in a coordinated and accountable way. It can be a confusing experience for children and youth when there are different rules and requirements for different programs designed to help them. With the creation of DCYF, it is an ideal time to align educational supports. This bill provides an aspirational framework and policy goals that show commitment to these children and youth. Youth voices need to be part of this workgroup because youth are affected by this bill.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Reuven Carlyle, Prime Sponsor; Georgia Spurrier, Legislative Youth Advisory Council; Keya Roy, Legislative Youth Advisory Council; Carrie McKenzie, Washington State PTA; Annie Blackledge, The Mockingbird Society; Rachelle Sharpe, Washington Student Achievement Council; Dawn Rains, Treehouse; Mark Richards, Treehouse.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.