
Children, Youth & Families Committee

HB 1936

Brief Description: Concerning the membership and subcommittees of the oversight board for children, youth, and families.

Sponsors: Representatives Dent, Eslick, Sutherland, Wicks, Robertson and Chase.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Adjusts membership of the Oversight Board for the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (Oversight Board).
- Requires the Oversight Board to convene a foster youth subcommittee and a juvenile justice subcommittee.

Hearing Date: 1/20/22

Staff: Lena Langer (786-7192).

Background:

Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) was created in 2017. In 2018 the DCYF assumed responsibility over child welfare and early learning functions previously held by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and the Department of Early Learning. On July 1, 2019, the DCYF assumed responsibility over juvenile justice programs currently administered by the DSHS.

Oversight Board.

The Oversight Board for the DCYF (Oversight Board) was created in 2017, along with the creation of the DCYF. The Oversight Board held its first meetings in 2018. The Oversight

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Board is authorized for the purpose of monitoring and ensuring that the DCYF achieves certain outcomes and complies with policies and rules.

The Oversight Board has powers to:

- receive reports of the Office of the Family and Children's Ombuds (OFCO);
- obtain access to relevant records in the possession of the OFCO;
- select its officers and adoption of rules for orderly procedure;
- request investigations by the OFCO of administrative acts;
- request and receive information, outcome data, documents, materials, and records from the DCYF relating to children and family welfare, juvenile rehabilitation, juvenile justice, and early learning;
- determine whether the DCYF is achieving the performance measures;
- review whether the DCYF licensors appropriately and consistently applied agency rules in inspection reports; and
- conduct annual reviews of a sample of the DCYF contracts for services from a variety of program and service areas to ensure that those contracts are performance-based.

The Oversight Board consists of 21 members, outlined as the following:

- two Senators and two Members of the House of Representatives from the Legislature, with one member from each major caucus;
- one nonvoting representative from the Office of the Governor;
- one subject matter expert in early learning;
- one subject matter expert in child welfare;
- one subject matter expert in juvenile rehabilitation and justice;
- one subject matter expert in eliminating disparities in child outcomes by family income, race, and ethnicity;
- one tribal representative from west of the crest of the Cascade mountains;
- one tribal representative from east of the crest of the Cascade mountains;
- one current or former foster parent representative;
- one representative of an organization that advocates for the best interest of the child;
- one parent stakeholder group representative;
- one law enforcement representative;
- one child welfare caseworker representative;
- one early childhood learning program implementation practitioner;
- one current or former foster youth under age 25;
- one individual under age 25 with current or previous experience with the juvenile justice system;
- one physician with experience working with children or youth; and
- one judicial representative presiding over child welfare court proceedings or other children's matters.

Nonlegislative members of the board are nominated by the Governor, subject to approval of the appointed legislators and serve four-year terms. When nominating and approving members of the Oversight Board, the Governor and appointed legislators must ensure that at least five of the

Oversight Board members reside east of the Cascade Mountain range. The Oversight Board must convene at least two stakeholder meetings per year regarding contracting with the DCYF. The Oversight Board must also review surveys of providers, customers, parent groups, and external services to assess whether the DCYF is effectively delivering services.

The Oversight Board members must be reimbursed for travel expenses incurred while conducting business of the Oversight Board when authorized by the Oversight Board and within resources allocated for that purposes. Legislative members of the Oversight Board must be reimbursed for travel expenses according to current law.

Summary of Bill:

The membership of the Oversight Board is adjusted in the following manner:

- One representative of an organization that advocates for the best interest of the child may be either a current or former representative of such an organization; and
- the 25-year-old age limit on both the current or former foster youth and the individual with current or previous experience with the juvenile justice system is removed.

The Oversight Board must convene two subcommittees:

- a foster youth subcommittee to gather testimony from individuals with lived experiences in the child welfare system, focusing primarily on children and youth; and
- a juvenile justice subcommittee to focus on hearing from current and former youth with lived experience in the juvenile justice system.

Membership of the foster youth subcommittee must, at a minimum, include representatives from former or current youths in foster care, one subject matter expert in child welfare, and one Member of the House of Representatives or Senate.

Membership of the juvenile justice subcommittee must, at a minimum, include representatives with current or previous experience with the juvenile justice system, one subject matter expert in juvenile rehabilitation and justice, and one Member of the House of Representatives or Senate.

The foster youth subcommittee and the juvenile justice subcommittee must each convene at least two meetings per year. Each subcommittee must provide feedback and recommendations to the Oversight Board at the Oversight Board's stakeholder meetings.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 11, 2022.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.