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**HOUSE BILL 2146**

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**State of Washington**

**68th Legislature**

**2024 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Rule, Connors, Callan, Reeves, and Davis

Prefiled 01/04/24. Read first time 01/08/24. Referred to Committee on Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to supporting students who are chronically absent  
2 and at risk for not graduating high school; adding a new section to  
3 chapter 28A.310 RCW; creating new sections; and providing expiration  
4 dates.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.310  
7 RCW to read as follows:

8 (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this  
9 specific purpose, each educational service district must develop and  
10 maintain the capacity to offer training and coaching for educators  
11 and other school district staff, including those designated under RCW  
12 28A.225.026 to address excessive absenteeism and truancy, on the  
13 development of robust early warning systems to identify and locate  
14 students who are chronically absent and connect them with the  
15 necessary supports to reengage them in academic learning. The  
16 training and coaching must include collecting, analyzing, and  
17 reporting early warning data, including attendance and other relevant  
18 data.

19 (2) For the purposes of this section, "students who are  
20 chronically absent" means students who miss 10 percent or more of

1 their school days for any reason including excused and unexcused  
2 absences and suspensions.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) Subject to the availability of amounts  
4 appropriated for this specific purpose, the office of the  
5 superintendent of public instruction shall establish a grant program  
6 to support students who are chronically absent.

7 (2) (a) The purpose of the grant program is to provide funding to  
8 support strategies to identify and locate students who are  
9 chronically absent and connect them with the necessary supports to  
10 reengage them in academic learning.

11 (b) Grant funds may be used for the following strategies and  
12 supports:

13 (i) Proactive engagement with all families about the impact of  
14 attendance on student outcomes;

15 (ii) Clear, supportive, and solution-oriented communication with  
16 families and caregivers of students who are chronically absent;

17 (iii) Visits to families of students who are chronically absent;

18 (iv) Academic, systemic, and economic supports for the families  
19 of students who are chronically absent, including removing barriers  
20 to students attending school as well as tutoring and mentoring  
21 students who are reengaging in the classroom; and

22 (v) Incentives and celebrations of students' improved attendance  
23 and engagement in the classroom.

24 (3) Community-based organizations and tribes may apply for these  
25 grants.

26 (4) The office of the superintendent of public instruction may  
27 adopt rules for the grant program established under this section.

28 (5) The office of the superintendent of public instruction may  
29 require the recipient of grant funding to report the impacts of the  
30 recipient's efforts in alignment with the measures of the Washington  
31 school improvement framework.

32 (6) For the purposes of this section, "students who are  
33 chronically absent" has the same meaning as in section 1 of this act.

34 (7) This section expires December 31, 2026.

35 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) Subject to the availability of amounts  
36 appropriated for this specific purpose, the office of the  
37 superintendent of public instruction must allocate funding to  
38 educational service districts, school districts, and public schools

1 to help eliminate barriers to high school completion for students who  
2 are 16 to 21 years of age, are severely deficient in academic  
3 credits, unable to graduate high school with their peer group, and  
4 enrolled in a statewide dropout reengagement program as defined in  
5 RCW 28A.175.105. Given that these students have varied needs, the use  
6 of these funds are flexible and can be used for supports such as:

7 (a) Academic supports such as covering testing fees, calculators,  
8 and laboratory and other school supplies;

9 (b) Adequate and appropriate clothing, including specific items  
10 needed for particular courses, such as work boots, gloves, and other  
11 items;

12 (c) Adequate and reliable access to food and nutrition; and

13 (d) Transportation, including bus passes, gas vouchers, and  
14 subsidized parking.

15 (2) The office of the superintendent of public instruction must  
16 allocate funding on a per-student basis to educational service  
17 districts, school districts, and public schools based on student  
18 enrollment in a statewide dropout reengagement program as defined in  
19 RCW 28A.175.105. The allocation of funding for either small school  
20 districts or rural school districts, or both, must be differentiated  
21 and include a base amount of funding.

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

24 (4) For the purposes of this section, "public schools" has the  
25 same meaning as in RCW 28A.150.010.

26 (5) This section expires December 31, 2026.

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