
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6656

State of Washington

56th Legislature

2000 Regular Session

By Senate Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Senators Eide, Kohl-Welles, Finkbeiner, Brown, Rasmussen, Goings, Patterson, Haugen, Gardner, Shin, Heavey, Jacobsen and Costa)

Read first time 02/04/2000.

1 AN ACT Relating to the educational needs of children and youth in
2 foster care; creating new sections; making an appropriation; and
3 providing an expiration date.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that many children
6 miss between weeks and months of school when they are placed in foster
7 care and when they change foster families. The legislature also finds
8 that these educational disruptions can have a profoundly negative
9 impact on student learning and educational persistence, with almost
10 seventy percent of children in foster care becoming high school
11 dropouts. The legislature further finds that a study of the
12 educational circumstances of children in foster care is needed to
13 determine the barriers to academic achievement these children face.
14 The legislature intends to commission a study to examine the
15 educational experiences and achievement levels of children in the
16 state's foster care system.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The Washington state institute for
18 public policy shall conduct a study that examines the educational

1 experiences and achievement levels of students who have spent at least
2 ninety days in the state's foster care system. The study may include
3 either all or a statistically valid subset of students in the system.
4 The study shall include, but need not be limited to an examination of:

5 (a) The number of students who change schools due to transportation
6 logistics, safety concerns, and other issues;

7 (b) The case management time needed to keep a student in his or her
8 original school and the time needed to enroll a student into a new
9 school, including the time required to meet the record and data needs
10 of the new school;

11 (c) The estimated transportation costs, not covered by a school
12 district, for keeping a student in the student's original school;

13 (d) The number and percentage of students who, during the period of
14 examination, are expelled or suspended, or who drop out of school;

15 (e) The number and percentage of high school age students who
16 graduate from high school;

17 (f) The achievement levels of students on required nationally
18 normed tests and on the Washington assessment of student learning, to
19 the extent such information is available;

20 (g) The number of students receiving special education services, by
21 area of special education eligibility;

22 (h) The average length of time between foster home placement and
23 school enrollment; and

24 (i) Access to school records by a new school from the student's
25 prior school or schools, and by foster parents and caseworkers
26 assisting the child.

27 (2) The study should include a student specific comparison of
28 discipline issues and special education services experiences prior to
29 and during placement in foster care.

30 (3) The Washington state institute for public policy may convene an
31 advisory committee to assist it in its design and implementation of the
32 study. The committee may include, but need not be limited to
33 educators, caseworkers, representatives of organizations providing
34 services to foster children, and other interested persons.

35 (4) The Washington state institute for public policy shall consult
36 with the office of the superintendent of public instruction and the
37 department of social and health services to assist in the design and
38 implementation of the study.

1 (5) By December 1, 2000, the Washington state institute for public
2 policy shall provide a preliminary report on its progress to the
3 governor and appropriate committees of the house of representatives and
4 the senate. By July 1, 2001, the Washington state institute for public
5 policy shall provide a final report on the results of the study to the
6 governor and appropriate legislative committees. The report may
7 include recommendations for improving the educational experience,
8 graduation rates, and achievement levels of students in foster care.

9 (5) This section expires September 1, 2001.

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** The sum of one hundred thousand dollars, or
11 as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal
12 year ending June 30, 2001, from the general fund to the Washington
13 state institute for public policy for the study in section 2 of this
14 act.

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