
SENATE BILL 6656

State of Washington

56th Legislature

2000 Regular Session

By Senators Eide, Kohl-Welles, Finkbeiner, Brown, Rasmussen, Goings, Patterson, Haugen, Gardner, Shin, Heavey, Jacobsen and Costa

Read first time 01/21/2000. Referred to Committee on Education.

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 office of the superintendent of
18 public instruction, in cooperation with the department of social and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

36 (4) The office may contract with one or more outside entities to
37 assist in the design and implementation of the study.

38 (5) By December 1, 2000, the office shall provide a preliminary
39 report on its progress to the governor and appropriate committees of

1 the house of representatives and the senate. By July 1, 2001, the
2 office shall provide a final report on the results of the study to the
3 governor and appropriate legislative committees. The report may
4 include recommendations for improving the educational experience,
5 graduation rates, and achievement levels of students in foster care.

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

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** The sum of one hundred thousand dollars, or
8 as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal
9 year ending June 30, 2001, from the general fund to the office of the
10 superintendent of public instruction for the study in section 2 of this
11 act.

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