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**Children & Family Services  
Committee**

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**HB 1058**

**Brief Description:** Addressing educational attainment for foster children.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Kagi, Boldt, McIntire, Nixon, Dickerson, Fromhold, O'Brien, Lantz, Linville, Kenney, Kessler, Clibborn, Talcott, Simpson and Wood.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Requires the Department of Social and Health Services to maximize the educational continuity and achievement for foster children.

**Hearing Date:** 1/20/03

**Staff:** Cynthia Forland (786-7152).

**Background:**

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), in cooperation with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), is required to convene a working group to prepare a plan for the Legislature that addresses educational stability and continuity for school-age children who enter into short-term foster care, and assures that the best interests of the child are a primary consideration in the school placement of a child in short-term foster care.

The DSHS reported to the Legislature on the recommendations developed by the working group in November 2002. The working group's recommendations included the following:

- The Children's Administration (CA) of the DSHS and the OSPI should develop a formal policy statement that maintains foster children in their home school whenever practical.
- Foster parent recruitment priorities should shift to develop more foster homes in school districts with high rates of foster care removal.
- An oversight committee consisting of staff from the CA, the OSPI, and advocacy agencies should be established to develop best practice standards to maintain foster children in their home school whenever practical.
- The CA and the Administrative Office of the Courts should work together to ensure educational stability is addressed during the shelter care hearing by the local CA social

worker and the presiding Judge or Commissioner.

**Summary of Bill:**

The administrative regions of the DSHS must develop protocols with school districts specifying strategies for communication, coordination, and collaboration in order to maximize the educational continuity and achievement for foster children.

The DSHS must establish an oversight committee, composed of staff from the CA, the OSPI, and advocacy agencies, to develop best practice standards to maintain foster children in their home school whenever practical. The duties of the oversight committee must include, but are not limited to:

- Developing strategies for school-based recruitment of foster homes;
- Monitoring the progress of current pilot projects and overseeing the expansion of the number of pilot projects;
- Promoting the use of best practices throughout the pilot projects; and
- Informing the Legislature of the status of efforts to improve educational attainment of foster children.

The DSHS must work with the Administrative Office of the Courts to develop protocols to ensure that education stability is addressed during the shelter care hearing.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not Requested.

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