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**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5065**

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**State of Washington 64th Legislature 2015 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Frockt, Liias, McCoy, Jayapal, Keiser, Litzow, Pedersen, Darneille, McAuliffe, Hasegawa, Ranker, Billig, Kohl-Welles, and Fain)

AN ACT Relating to improving educational opportunities for homeless students through increased state-funded in-school supports, housing stability, and reporting; amending RCW 28A.300.540; adding a new section to chapter 28A.300 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 43.185C RCW; creating new sections; and making appropriations.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) It is the policy of the state of Washington that all students have the opportunity to obtain a basic education. The legislature finds that the number of homeless students identified in the K-12 public school system has been increasing since at least the 2005-06 school year. Homeless students face significant barriers, such as housing instability and the stigma that prevents students from identifying themselves as homeless. These barriers make it difficult for homeless students to take full advantage of their educational opportunities provided by the state of Washington.

(2) The legislature acknowledges that the federal McKinney-Vento education for homeless children and youth program provides training, technical assistance, and monitoring, as well as federal funding to support school district programs that serve homeless students. The legislature recognizes that Washington receives approximately nine hundred fifty thousand dollars in funding each year from the United States department of education in support of this program.

(3) The legislature intends to improve educational opportunities for homeless children by creating a state-funded grant program to complement the federal program and funding to continue to reduce barriers to enrollment, retention, and graduation of homeless students. It is also the intent of the legislature to encourage collaboration between school districts and community housing agencies to help homeless families with children enrolled in the public school system access stable housing.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28A.300 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall create a competitive grant process to evaluate and award state-funded three-year grants to school districts to increase identification of homeless students and the capacity of the districts to provide support, which may include education liaisons, for homeless students. The process must complement any similar federal grant program or programs in order to minimize agency overhead and administrative costs for the superintendent of public instruction and school districts. School districts may access both federal and state funding to identify and support homeless students.

(2) Award criteria for the state grants shall be based on the demonstrated need of the school district and may consider the number or overall percentage, or both, of homeless children and youths enrolled in preschool, elementary, and secondary schools in the school district, and the ability of the local school district to meet these needs. Award criteria these also be based on the quality of the applications submitted.

(3) Homeless students are defined as students without a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence as set forth in the federal McKinney-Vento homeless education assistance act (P.L. 100–77; 101 Stat. 482).

(4) School districts may not use funds allocated under this section to supplant existing federal, state, or local resources for homeless student supports, which may include education liaisons.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 43.185C RCW to read as follows:

(1) The department, in consultation with the office of the superintendent of public instruction, shall administer a grant program that links homeless students and their families with stable housing located in the homeless student’s school district. The goal of the program is to provide educational stability for homeless students by promoting housing stability.

(2) The department, working with the office of the superintendent of public instruction, shall develop a competitive grant process to make grant awards of up to five hundred thousand dollars to school districts partnered with eligible organizations on implementation of the proposal. For the purposes of this subsection, "eligible organization" means any local government, local housing authority, regional support network established under chapter 71.24 RCW, nonprofit community or neighborhood-based organization, federally recognized Indian tribe in the state of Washington, or regional or statewide nonprofit housing assistance organization. Applications for the grant program must include contractual agreements between the housing providers and school districts defining the responsibilities and commitments of each party to identify, house, and support homeless students.

(3) The grant program is limited to fifteen schools per school year. In determining which school districts will receive grants, preference must be given to districts with a demonstrated commitment of partnership and history with eligible organizations.

(4) Activities eligible for assistance under this grant program include but are not limited to:

(a) Rental assistance, which includes utilities, security and utility deposits, first and last month's rent, rental application fees, moving expenses, and other eligible expenses to be determined by the department;

(b) Transportation assistance, including gasoline assistance for families with vehicles and bus passes;

(c) Emergency shelter; and

(d) Housing stability case management.

(5) All beneficiaries of funds from the grant program must be from very low-income households. For the purposes of this subsection, "very low-income household" means a family or unrelated persons living together whose adjusted income is less than fifty percent of the median family income, adjusted for household size, for the county where the grant recipient is located.

(6)(a) Grantee school districts must compile information and report to the legislature the findings of the grantee, the housing stability of the homeless families, the academic performance of the grantee population, and any related policy recommendations.

(b) Data on all program participants must be entered into and tracked through the Washington homeless client management information system as described in RCW 43.185C.180.

(7) In order to ensure that school districts are meeting the requirements of an approved program for homeless students, the office of the superintendent of public instruction shall monitor the programs at least once every two years. Monitoring shall begin during the 2015-16 school year.

(8) Any program review and monitoring under this section may be conducted concurrently with other program reviews and monitoring conducted by the department. In its review, the office of the superintendent of public instruction shall monitor program components that include but need not be limited to the process used by the district to identify and reach out to homeless students, assessment data and other indicators to determine how well the district is meeting the academic needs of homeless students, district expenditures used to expand opportunities for these students, and the academic progress of students under the program.

**Sec.**  RCW 28A.300.540 and 2014 c 212 s 2 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) For the purposes of this section, "unaccompanied homeless student" means a student who is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian and is homeless as defined in section 2(3) of this act.

(2) By December 31, 2010, the office of the superintendent of public instruction shall establish a uniform process designed to track the additional expenditures for transporting homeless students, including expenditures required under the McKinney Vento act, reauthorized as Title X, Part C, of the no child left behind act, P.L. 107-110, in January 2002. Once established, the superintendent shall adopt the necessary administrative rules to direct each school district to adopt and use the uniform process and track these expenditures. The superintendent shall post on the superintendent's web site total expenditures related to the transportation of homeless students.

((~~(2)~~)) (3)(a) By January 10, 2015, and every odd-numbered year thereafter, the office of the superintendent of public instruction shall report to the governor and the legislature the following data for homeless students:

(i) The number of identified homeless students enrolled in public schools;

(ii) The number of identified unaccompanied homeless students enrolled in public schools;

(iii) The number of students participating in the learning assistance program under chapter 28A.165 RCW, the highly capable program under chapter 28A.185 RCW, and the running start program under chapter 28A.600 RCW; and

((~~(iii)~~)) (iv) The academic performance and educational outcomes of homeless students and unaccompanied homeless students, including but not limited to the following performance and educational outcomes:

(A) Student scores on the statewide administered academic assessments;

(B) English language proficiency;

(C) Dropout rates;

(D) Four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate;

(E) Five-year adjusted cohort graduation rate;

(F) Absenteeism rates;

(G) Truancy rates, if available; and

(H) Suspension and expulsion data.

(b) The data reported under this subsection ((~~(2)~~)) (3) must include state and district-level information and must be disaggregated by at least the following subgroups of students: White, Black, Hispanic, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Pacific Islander/Hawaiian Native, low income, transitional bilingual, migrant, special education, and gender.

((~~(3)~~)) (4) By July 1, 2014, the office of the superintendent of public instruction in collaboration with experts from community organizations on homelessness and homeless education policy, shall develop or acquire a short video that provides information on how to identify signs that indicate a student may be homeless, how to provide services and support to homeless students, and why this identification and support is critical to student success. The video must be posted on the superintendent of public instruction's web site.

((~~(4)~~)) (5) By July 1, 2014, the office of the superintendent of public instruction shall adopt and distribute to each school district, best practices for choosing and training school district-designated homeless student liaisons.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The sum of one million dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2016, from the general fund to the office of the superintendent of public instruction for the purposes of section 2 of this act.

(2) The sum of one million dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2017, from the general fund to the office of the superintendent of public instruction for the purposes of section 2 of this act.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  If specific funding for the purposes of section 3 of this act, referencing section 3 of this act by bill or chapter number and section number, is not provided by June 30, 2015, in the omnibus appropriations act, section 3 of this act is null and void.

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