
Education Committee

SB 5184

Brief Description: Establishing a building point of contact in all K-12 public schools for students in foster care.

Sponsors: Senators Nobles, Wellman, Billig, Carlyle, Conway, Das, Dhingra, Frockt, Hasegawa, Hunt, Kuderer, Lias, Lovelett, Nguyen, Randall, Saldaña, Salomon and Wilson, C.; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires each public school to establish a contact in each elementary, middle, and high school building to coordinate services and resources for students in foster care.
- Directs existing school district foster care liaisons to train the building points of contact.
- Tasks the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction with providing best practices for choosing and training building points of contact.

Hearing Date: 3/11/21

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

Background:

Legislation enacted in 2018 directed each school district to designate a foster care liaison to facilitate district compliance with state and federal laws related to students in out-of-home care. Some of the roles and responsibilities of a foster care liaison specified in statute are collaborating with the Department of Children, Youth, and Families to address educational barriers for these students, coordinating with foster care education program staff at the Office of the

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), leading and documenting the development of a process for making best interest determinations for students in out-of-home-care, and providing training to school staff on laws related to students in out-of-home care and their educational needs.

The state Juvenile Court Act in Cases Relating to Dependency of a Child and the Termination of a Parent and Child Relationship defines the following two terms. "Out-of-home care" means placement in a licensed foster family home or group care facility or placement in a home not required to be licensed. "Dependent child" means a child who has: (a) been abandoned; (b) is abused or neglected by a person legally responsible for the care of the child; (c) has no parent, guardian, or custodian capable of adequately caring for the child, such that the child is in circumstances which constitute a danger of substantial damage to the child's psychological or physical development; or (d) is receiving extended foster care services.

Legislation enacted in 2016, directed each public school to establish a point of contact in each elementary, middle, and high school to identify homeless and unaccompanied homeless youth and connect them with the school district's homeless education liaison. The OSPI must make available best practices for choosing and training building points of contact.

Summary of Bill:

Each public school must establish a point of contact in each elementary, middle, and high school to coordinate services and resources for students in foster care. These building points of contact must be appointed by the principal of the designated school, in consultation with the school district foster care liaison.

The district foster care liaison is responsible for training building points of contact. The OSPI must make available best practices for choosing and training building points of contact.

References to students in out-of-home-care are changed to students who are dependent.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.