
SENATE BILL 5376

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2021 Regular Session

By Senators Wilson, C., Wellman, Conway, Das, Hunt, Kuderer, Lias, Nobles, and Saldaña

Read first time 01/28/21. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to promoting awareness of the governor's office
2 of the education ombuds; adding a new section to chapter 28A.600 RCW;
3 and creating a new section.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature recognizes that the
6 office of the education ombuds within the office of the governor was
7 established by the legislature in 2006 to reduce educational
8 opportunity gaps by supporting families, students, educators, and
9 communities in understanding the K-12 school system and resolving
10 concerns collaboratively. The legislature recognizes that it placed
11 the education ombuds within the office of the governor to ensure
12 independence and impartiality.

13 (2) The legislature recognizes that the education ombuds provides
14 services including:

15 (a) Informing students, parents or guardians, employees, and
16 members of the public about the state's public elementary and
17 secondary education system;

18 (b) Identifying obstacles and recommending strategies to help
19 students and community members to participate effectively in schools;

20 (c) Identifying and recommending strategies for improving student
21 success;

1 (d) Referring individuals and families to appropriate resources,
2 agencies, or departments;

3 (e) Facilitating the resolution of informal complaints made by
4 parents and students with regard to the state's public elementary and
5 secondary education system; and

6 (f) Serving as the lead agency to provide resources and tools to
7 parents and families about public school antiharassment policies and
8 strategies.

9 (3) The legislature intends for public schools to annually notify
10 parents or guardians, students, and school employees about these
11 services.

12 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.600
13 RCW to read as follows:

14 (1) At least annually, public schools must notify parents or
15 guardians; students, including students in residential schools,
16 detention facilities, and adult correctional facilities; and school
17 employees about the services available through the office of the
18 education ombuds within the office of the governor established under
19 chapter 43.06B RCW.

20 (2)(a) Beginning September 1, 2021, public schools must:

21 (i) Include a link on its website to the education ombuds website
22 with a description of the services provided under chapter 43.06B RCW;
23 or

24 (ii) Provide a description of the services provided under chapter
25 43.06B RCW and the contact information for the education ombuds in
26 existing materials that are shared annually with families, students,
27 and school employees, such as welcome packets, orientation guides,
28 and newsletters.

29 (b) Public schools are encouraged to comply with both (a)(i) and
30 (ii) of this subsection (2).

31 (3) Beginning September 1, 2021, the education ombuds must
32 annually develop and make a template of the notification information
33 required in this section available upon request. The education ombuds
34 must translate this template into Spanish and include other languages
35 as resources allow.

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