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**SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1451**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2023 Regular Session**

**By** House Human Services, Youth, & Early Learning (originally sponsored by Representatives Senn, Harris, Fitzgibbon, Santos, Berry, Callan, Ortiz-Self, Chapman, Springer, Schmidt, Bergquist, Ryu, Abbarno, Reeves, Reed, Doglio, Fosse, Eslick, Pollet, Davis, Macri, Goodman, Leavitt, Cortes, and Simmons)

AN ACT Relating to expanding the child care workforce; adding a new section to chapter 28A.630 RCW; adding new sections to chapter 43.216 RCW; creating a new section; and providing expiration dates.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Like other states around the country, there is a child care workforce crisis in Washington state. High school students who already provide child care for young siblings and neighbors should be able to turn that experience into a rewarding career in an in-demand field. As we expand access to high quality child care in Washington, the opportunities in the child care industry will continue to increase. Therefore, the legislature intends to grow and support the pipeline of child care workers and nurture the development of new child care providers.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28A.630 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the office of the superintendent of public instruction shall establish a child care worker pilot program as described in this section. The purpose of the program is to support and promote opportunities for students to earn credit and experience by participating in courses and hands-on work practices in early childhood development and child care services.

(2) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall select one or two public high schools that offer established courses in the early childhood development and services career pathway for the purpose of consulting with the applicable schools and districts and developing model materials that may be employed by other school districts with an interest in establishing or expanding similar instructional offerings to students. The model materials must be developed by January 1, 2024.

(3) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall establish a child care worker pilot program in up to four school districts that choose to participate during the 2024-25 and 2025-26 school years. Participating school districts must agree to employ a program that aligns with the model materials created under subsection (2) of this section. Preference shall be given to school districts that have or are pursuing career launch programs under chapter 28C.30 RCW.

(4) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall:

(a) Administer a grant program to provide grants to eligible school districts that participate in the child care worker pilot program;

(b) Establish requirements for the application and grant award process, the number of awards, and the authorized use of grant funds; and

(c) Begin distributing funds by September 1, 2024, with the distribution of funds completed by September 1, 2025.

(5) To be eligible to participate in the child care worker pilot program and receive grant funding, a school district must, at a minimum:

(a) Describe how the funds would be used to employ a program that aligns with the model materials created under subsection (2) of this section;

(b) Demonstrate community support for the program, including describing the actual or perceived need and efforts to coordinate instructional offerings with community colleges, child care providers, and organizations that support access to high quality child care and early learning programs; and

(c) Agree to coordinate and collaborate with other school districts participating in the child care worker pilot program.

(6) School districts participating in the child care worker pilot program established in this section must:

(a) Coordinate background checks for participating students;

(b) Provide a stipend or hourly wage to the students which may be paid through the pilot program grant funds or other sources;

(c) Support efforts of qualifying students to earn dual credit, work credit, or both;

(d) Facilitate additional training relevant to early childhood education certification and a continuing professional pathway if desired by the student, including connecting students with local community colleges offering coursework in early learning that meets early achievers requirements under chapter 43.216 RCW; and

(e) Partner with an early learning organization and provide funding to that organization to:

(i) Identify sites and match students with programs that will work in partnership with the school district;

(ii) Support the participating child care providers and students throughout the duration of the program;

(iii) Provide incentives to child care educators in recognition of the on-site instruction and mentorship provided to students and the administrative work related to participation in the program. Pilot program grant funds may be used for this purpose;

(iv) Provide feedback about the areas of the curriculum that need to be expanded and strengthened to support students' success in the program; and

(v) Provide information as requested by the school district in order for the school district to comply with the requirement in subsection (7) of this section.

(7) School districts participating in the child care worker pilot program must submit information to the office of the superintendent of public instruction by September 1, 2025, and September 1, 2026, detailing the use of grant funds.

(8) By November 10, 2026, and in accordance with RCW 43.01.036, the office of the superintendent of public instruction shall report to the appropriate committees of the legislature with findings from and recommendations regarding the child care worker pilot program and its effectiveness in supporting the capacity for service delivery of participating child care programs. The report must include information as to: Whether the program is meeting the early learning community's needs and if it should be extended, expanded, or both; a compilation of the use of grant funds as reported under subsection (7) of this section; and options for further supporting and promoting opportunities for students to earn credit and relevant experience.

(9) This section expires July 1, 2027.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 43.216 RCW to read as follows:

(1) By December 1, 2023, the department must contract with an early learning organization to develop a model program manual for a program to assist middle and high school-aged youth who routinely care for younger relatives, such as siblings, cousins, nieces and nephews, and other young children while those children's parents are away at work or school. The purpose of this program is to support and promote opportunities for youth who care for young children to gain skills that help improve their care delivery and prepare them for future careers in the child care and early learning field.

(2) The program manual must contain guidance regarding the following:

(a) Providing key curriculum covering topics such as child development, nutrition, and home safety;

(b) Incorporating elements of experiential learning and peer learning and support;

(c) Proficiency with cardiopulmonary resuscitation and first aid; and

(d) The benefits of partnering with community-based organizations to provide program content and reach youth most in need of the program.

(3) The program manual must be completed by July 1, 2024.

(4) The department must provide training and technical assistance to community-based programs wishing to implement the program.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 43.216 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The department must develop detailed recommendations regarding ways to utilize funds, in line with the spending goals and strategies under RCW 43.216.772(1)(i), to continue to expand the substitute pool for child care and early learning providers and provide additional career coaching to substitute providers. In its recommendations, the department must include options for offering grants, scholarships, or other financial assistance to assist substitute providers in obtaining certificates or higher education degrees in early childhood education that will enable them to secure permanent employment in the child care and early learning field.

(2) The department must provide a report with relevant data to the appropriate committees of the legislature by December 1, 2023, in accordance with RCW 43.01.036, detailing the recommendations developed under subsection (1) of this section and including an update as to any milestones achieved as of the reporting date and projections for achievement of future goals.

(3) This section expires July 1, 2025.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 43.216 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Subject to amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the department must, by September 1, 2023, contract with an organization that provides relationship-based professional development support to family, friend, and neighbor, child care center, and licensed family care providers, to expand the child care workforce and establish new affordable high quality child care and early learning programs.

(2) At a minimum, to be eligible to be awarded a contract, an organization must:

(a) Provide professional development services for child care providers and early childhood educators, including training and mentorship programs;

(b) Provide mentorship and other services to assist with child care provider and facility licensing;

(c) Administer or host a system of shared services and consulting related to operating a child care business; and

(d) Administer a state-sponsored substitute pool of substitute child care providers.

(3) The department must compile and make available by December 1, 2024, information regarding the outcome of the contract, including the number of new child care businesses and additional child care slots created, the substitute hours provided, and the number of substitute child care providers who have entered into full-time employment in the child care industry. The contracted organization must provide information to the department that is needed to fulfill this requirement.

(4) This section expires July 1, 2026.

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